



*Making Social Care
Better for People*

inspection report

Fostering Services

Hythe House Support Ltd

59 Staplehurst Road

Sittingbourne

Kent

ME10 2NY

21st February 2005

Commission for Social Care Inspection

Launched in April 2004, the Commission for Social Care Inspection (CSCI) is the single inspectorate for social care in England.

The Commission combines the work formerly done by the Social Services Inspectorate (SSI), the SSI/Audit Commission Joint Review Team and the National Care Standards Commission.

The role of CSCI is to:

- Promote improvement in social care
- Inspect all social care - for adults and children - in the public, private and voluntary sectors
- Publish annual reports to Parliament on the performance of social care and on the state of the social care market
- Inspect and assess 'Value for Money' of council social services
- Hold performance statistics on social care
- Publish the 'star ratings' for council social services
- Register and inspect services against national standards
- Host the Children's Rights Director role.

Inspection Methods & Findings

SECTION B of this report summarises key findings and evidence from this inspection. The following 4-point scale is used to indicate the extent to which standards have been met or not met by placing the assessed level alongside the phrase "Standard met?"

The 4-point scale ranges from:

- 4 - Standard Exceeded (Commendable)
- 3 - Standard Met (No Shortfalls)
- 2 - Standard Almost Met (Minor Shortfalls)
- 1 - Standard Not Met (Major Shortfalls)

'O' or blank in the 'Standard met?' box denotes standard not assessed on this occasion.

'9' in the 'Standard met?' box denotes standard not applicable.

'X' is used where a percentage value or numerical value is not applicable.

FOSTERING SERVICE INFORMATION

Local Authority Fostering Service?

NO

Name of Authority

Address

Local Authority Manager

Tel No:

Address

Fax No:

Email Address

Registered Fostering Agency (IFA)

YES

Name of Agency

Hythe House Support Ltd

Tel No

01795 438634

Address

59 Staplehurst Road, Sittingbourne, Kent, ME10 2NY

Fax No

Email Address

Registered Number of IFA

H060000570

Name of Registered Provider

Hythe House Support Ltd

Name of Registered Manager (if applicable)

Mr Vernal Jeffers

Date of first registration

20th March 2003

Date of latest registration certificate

7th May 2003

Registration Conditions Apply ?

NO

Date of last inspection

NA

Date of Inspection Visit		21st February 2005	ID Code
Time of Inspection Visit		09:30 am	
Name of Inspector	1	Alex Turner	099984
Name of Inspector	2	Felicity Reeves	
Name of Inspector	3	Not applicable	
Name of Inspector	4	Not applicable	
Name of Lay Assessor (if applicable) Lay assessors are members of the public independent of the CSCI. They accompany inspectors on some inspections and bring a different perspective to the inspection process.		Not applicable	
Name of Specialist (e.g. Interpreter/Signer) (if applicable)		Not applicable	
Name of Establishment Representative at the time of inspection		Gary Duffy	

Introduction to Report and Inspection

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Reports and Notifications to the Local Authority and Secretary of State

Implementation of Statutory Requirements from last Inspection

Statutory Requirements from this Inspection

Good Practice Recommendations from this Inspection

Part B: Inspection Methods & Findings

(National Minimum Standards For Fostering Services)

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- 2. Fitness to carry on or manage a fostering service**
- 3. Management of the fostering service**
- 4. Securing and promoting welfare**
- 5. Recruiting, checking, managing, supporting and training staff and foster carers**
- 6. Records**
- 7. Fitness of premises**
- 8. Financial requirements**
- 9. Fostering panels**
- 10. Short-term breaks**
- 11. Family and friend carers**

Part C: Lay Assessor's Summary (where applicable)

Part D: Provider's Response

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D.2. Action Plan

D.3. Provider's agreement

INTRODUCTION TO REPORT AND INSPECTION

Independent and local authority fostering services which fall within the jurisdiction of the Commission for Social Care Inspection (CSCI) are subject to inspection, to establish if the service is meeting the National Minimum Standards for Fostering Services and the requirements of the Care Standards Act 2000, the Fostering Services Regulations 2002 and the Children Act 1989 as amended.

This document summarises the inspection findings of the CSCI in respect of Hythe House Support Ltd. The inspection findings relate to the National Minimum Standards for Fostering Services published by the Secretary of State under sections 23 and 49 of the Care Standards Act 2000, for independent and local authority fostering services respectively.

The Fostering Services Regulations 2002 are secondary legislation, with which a service provider must comply. Service providers are expected to comply fully with the National Minimum Standards. The National Minimum standards will form the basis for judgements by the CSCI in relation to independent fostering agencies regarding registration, the imposition and variation of registration conditions and any enforcement action, and in relation to local authority fostering services regarding notices to the local authority and reports to the Secretary of State under section 47 of the Care Standards Act 2000. The report follows the format of the National Minimum Standards and the numbering shown in the report corresponds to that of the standards.

The report will show the following:

- Inspection methods used
- Key findings and evidence
- Overall ratings in relation to the standards
- Compliance with the Regulations
- Notifications to the Local Authority and Reports to the Secretary of State
- Required actions on the part of the provider
- Recommended good practice
- Summary of the findings
- Report of the Lay Assessor (where relevant)
- Providers response and proposed action plan to address findings

This report is a public document.

INSPECTION VISITS

Inspections will be undertaken in line with the agreed regulatory framework with additional visits as required. This is in accordance with the provisions of the Care Standards Act 2000. The following inspection methods have been used in the production of this report. The report represents the inspector's findings from the evidence found at the specified inspection dates.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE SERVICES PROVIDED.

Hythe House Support Limited is an independent foster agency. Services offered include home finding for children referred by local authorities, organising and supervision of family contact, meeting daily travel requirements, and working within the context of children's individual care plans. Additional services that can be provided include access to the company's education unit, arrangements made for therapy and counselling and driver and escort services for home visits.

PART A SUMMARY OF INSPECTION FINDINGS

Inspector's Summary

(This is an overview of the inspector's findings, which includes good practice, quality issues, areas to be addressed or developed and any other concerns.)

The inspection was announced and was conducted over four consecutive days with an additional visit to observe the functions of the fostering panel. This was the first inspection of the agency since the initial registration. Thirty out of a total of thirty-two standards were inspected (two standards were not applicable). Fourteen standards have been rated as met. Fifteen standards have been rated as nearly met. In the standard relating to child protection major shortfalls were identified; the inspectors were reassured to some degree by the agencies response to these shortfalls being identified. The inspectors acknowledge the receptiveness of the registered provider and staff of the agency to the inspection process. The registered provider and the head of the agency demonstrated commitment and ability to address areas where shortfalls were highlighted during the inspection. Three foster homes were visited; the children, young people and foster carers who took part in the inspection are thanked for the valuable contribution they made.

Statement of Purpose (Standard 1)

The statement of purpose and children's guide includes useful information about the services offered in formats suitable for the intended audience.

Fitness to provide or manage a fostering service (Standards 2-3)

The people carrying on and managing the service are fit to do so.

Management of the fostering service (Standards 4-5)

The business management of the fostering service has been

Securing and promoting welfare (Standards 6-14)

The agency has been active in promoting and supporting contact between children and their families. The educational facilities provided by the agency together with the links established with mainstream education providers has promoted children's attainment in this area. Good practice recommendations have been made in relation to the standards covering health and safety and the health needs of children. Requirements have been made in relation to child protection procedures and practice and the matching process.

Recruiting, checking, managing, supporting and training staff and foster carers (Standards 15-23)

Recruitment procedures were satisfactory though a good practice recommendation has been made. Staff interviewed during the inspection expressed satisfaction with employment practices. The arrangements for the training and supervision should be reviewed. Foster carers have been assessed and approved in line with current guidelines and regulatory requirements. There are clear strategies for the management and support of carers. Good practice recommendations have been made with regard to foster placement agreements and

the professional supervision of foster carers.

Records (Standards 24-25)

Records were organised and legible. Records relating to children and young people were detailed and contained relevant information regarding history, background, services and care provided. There was evidence of a good exchange of information between the service and foster carers. Administrative records were also well maintained however there were some omissions in terms of details required by regulations.

Fitness of premises to be used as fostering service (Standards 26)

The premises used by the fostering service were suitable for the purpose they served.

Financial Requirements (Standards 27-29)

Records indicate that the service is well resourced and financially viable. Payments to carers have been prompt and in accordance with service policy.

Fostering Panels (Standards 30)

The functions of the fostering panel have been carried out in a manner that reflects current good practice guidelines. Areas of good practice have been noted and include the process of assessment and presentation to panel of prospective foster carers.

Short-term breaks (Standards 31)

Not applicable at the time of this inspection

Family and friends as carers (Standards 32)

Not applicable at the time of this inspection

Reports and Notifications to the Local Authority and Secretary of State

(Local Authority Fostering Services Only)

The following statutory Reports or Notifications are to be made under the Care Standards Act as a result of the findings of this inspection:

Report to the Secretary of State under section 47(3) of the Care Standards Act 2000 that the Commission considers the Local Authority's fostering service satisfies the regulatory requirements:

NO

Notice to the Local Authority under section 47(5) of the Care Standards Act 2000 of failure(s) to satisfy regulatory requirements in their fostering service which are not substantial, and specifying the action the Commission considers the Authority should take to remedy the failure(s), informing the Secretary of State of that Notice:

NO

Report to the Secretary of State under section 47(4)(a) of the Care Standards Act of a failure by a Local Authority fostering service to satisfy regulatory requirements which is not considered substantial:

NO

Report to the Secretary of State under section 47(1) of the Care Standards Act 2000 of substantial failure to satisfy regulatory requirements by a Local Authority fostering service:

NO

The grounds for the above Report or Notice are:

Implementation of Statutory Requirements from Last Inspection

Requirements from last Inspection visit fully actioned?

NA

If No please list below

STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS

Identified below are areas not addressed from the last inspection report which indicate a non-compliance with the Care Standards Act 2000 and Fostering Services Regulations 2002.

No.	Regulation	Standard	Required actions	

Action is being taken by the Commission for Social Care Inspection to monitor compliance with the above requirements.

COMPLIANCE WITH CONDITIONS OF REGISTRATION (IF APPLICABLE)

(Registered Independent Fostering Agencies only)

Providers and managers of registered independent fostering agencies must comply with statutory conditions of their registration. The conditions applying to this registration are listed below, with the inspector's assessment of compliance from the evidence at the time of this inspection.

Condition	Compliance	
Comments		

Condition	Compliance	
Comments		

Condition	Compliance	
Comments		

Condition	Compliance	
Comments		

Lead Inspector

Alex Turner

Signature



Second Inspector

Felicity Reeves

Signature

Regulation Manager

John Walker

Signature

Date

STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS IDENTIFIED DURING THIS INSPECTION

Action Plan: The appropriate Officer of the Local Authority or the Registered Person (as applicable) is requested to provide the Commission with an Action Plan, which indicates how requirements are to be addressed. This action plan will be made available on request to the Area Office.

STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS

Identified below are areas addressed in the main body of the report which indicate non-compliance with the Care Standards Act 2000, the Children Act 1989, the Fostering Services Regulations 2002, or the National Minimum Standards for Fostering Services. The Authority or Registered Person(s) is/are required to comply within the given time scales in order to comply with the Regulatory Requirements for fostering services.

No.	Regulation	Standard *	Requirement	
1	7	FS2	The registered provider shall ensure the registered manager commences training to attain a qualification at level 4 NVQ in management or another qualification that matches the competencies required by the NVQ Level 4.	27/09/05
2	42	FS4	The registered person shall refer to and ensure compliance with all elements of regulation 42 (Fostering Service Regulations 2002)	27/05/05
3	28, 34	FS8	The registered provider shall ensure the approval status of foster carers put forward as a potential match is consistent with the proposed placement.	27/05/05
4	13	FS9	The registered person should review the child protection procedures with reference to the regulations.	27/06/05
5	13	FS9	The registered person shall ensure prompt referral to the area authority of any allegation of abuse or neglect affecting any child placed by the fostering service.	27/05/05
6	13	FS9	The registered person shall ensure that all persons employed to work for the fostering service receive training in child protection procedures.	27/06/05

7	5,7,20	FS15	The Fostering Service Provider shall ensure full and satisfactory information is available in relation to the matters set out in paragraphs 1 to 6 of Schedule 1 (Fostering Service Regulations 2002) for all persons employed to work for the purposes of the fostering service.	27/05/05
8	28	FS22	The registered provider shall make arrangements to review Foster Care Agreements and update these in line with regulations.	27/05/05

GOOD PRACTICE RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THIS INSPECTION

Identified below are areas addressed in the main body of the report which relate to the National Minimum Standards and are seen as good practice issues which should be considered for implementation by the Authority or Registered Person(s).

No.	Refer to Standard *	Recommendation Action
1	FS6	The registered person should make arrangements to ensure risk management plans are devised where specific hazards have been identified in foster carers homes.
2	FS6	The registered person should ensure that all foster carers have undertaken health and safety training.
3	FS8	The registered person should develop a means to record the matters taken into consideration in the matching process and where gaps have been identified articulate the means by which these will be addressed.
4	FS9	The registered person should ensure safe caring guidelines are provided, based on a written policy, for each foster home, in consultation with the carer and everyone else in the household. The guidelines should be cleared with the child's social worker and explained clearly and appropriately to the child.
5	FS12	The registered person should make arrangements to ensure medical consents are obtained in relation to each child that is placed.

6	FS15	The Fostering Service Provider should include in the written recruitment procedures reference to ensuring full and satisfactory information is available in relation to the matters set out in paragraphs 1 to 6 of Schedule 1 (Fostering Service Regulations 2002) prior to employing a person (for a definition of employing a person please refer to regulation 2 (3) of the Fostering Service Regulations 2002 (FSR2k2)) to work for the purposes of the fostering service.
7	FS16	The fostering service provider should review the arrangements regarding the professional supervision of the manager and social work staff.
8	FS19	The registered person should make arrangements to ensure that a training needs assessment is carried out in relation to tasks assigned to staff and carers and written plans are put in place detailing how training needs are to be addressed.
9	FS21	The registered person should ensure the scope and nature of the role of the supervising social worker is clear both to the worker and the carers whom they are supervising.
10	FS22	The registered person should make arrangements to issue (or if applicable reissue) the Foster Care Agreement at each formal review that is undertaken regarding individual foster carers suitability to foster, and their approval status; update it where necessary and for each party to sign their agreement in the first instance and / or subsequently where changes to the foster carers approval status have been made.
11	FS23	The registered person should endeavour to strengthen the relationship between training provided and training needs identified in the course of carers reviews and any gaps identified in the matching process.
12	FS25	The Fostering Service Provider should audit the records kept and ensure those required by the Fostering Service Regulations 2002 are maintained in accordance with the and include the detail specified in the regulations.
13	FS27	The Fostering Service Provider should ensure written procedures exist to deal with situations of financial crisis, such as disclosing information to purchasers and liaising with them to safeguard the welfare of children receiving services through the agency.
14	FS30	The registered provider to review the operation of the panel and ensure that all elements of this standard are addressed

* Note: You may refer to the relevant standard in the remainder of the report by omitting the 2-letter prefix e.g FS10 refers to Standard 10.

PART B**INSPECTION METHODS & FINDINGS**

The following inspection methods have been used in the production of this report

Number of Inspector days spent	4
Survey of placing authorities	YES
Foster carer survey	YES
Foster children survey	YES
Checks with other organisations and Individuals	NO
• Directors of Social services	NO
• Child protection officer	NO
• Specialist advisor (s)	NO
• Local Foster Care Association	NO
Tracking Individual welfare arrangements	YES
• Interview with children	YES
• Interview with foster carers	YES
• Interview with agency staff	YES
• Contact with parents	YES
• Contact with supervising social workers	YES
• Examination of files	YES
Individual interview with manager	YES
Information from provider	YES
Individual interviews with key staff	YES
Group discussion with staff	YES
Interview with panel chair	YES
Observation of foster carer training	NO
Observation of foster panel	NO
Inspection of policy/practice documents	YES
Inspection of records	YES
Interview with individual child	NO
Date of Inspection	21/02/05
Time of Inspection	0930
Duration Of Inspection (hrs)	28

The following pages summarise the key findings and evidence from this inspection, together with the CSCI assessment of the extent to which the National Minimum Standards have been met. The following scale is used to indicate the extent to which standards have been met or not met by placing the assessed level alongside the phrase "Standard met?"

The scale ranges from:

- | | |
|-------------------------|--------------------|
| 4 - Standard Exceeded | (Commendable) |
| 3 - Standard Met | (No Shortfalls) |
| 2 - Standard Almost Met | (Minor Shortfalls) |
| 1 - Standard Not Met | (Major Shortfalls) |

"0" in the "Standard met?" box denotes standard not assessed on this occasion.

"9" in the "Standard met?" box denotes standard not applicable.

"X" is used where a percentage value or numerical value is not applicable.

Statement of Purpose

The intended outcome for the following standard is:

- There is clear statement of the aims and objectives of the fostering service and the fostering service ensures that they meet those aims and objectives.

Standard 1 (1.1 - 1.6)

There is a clear statement of the aims and objectives of the fostering service and of what facilities and services they provide.

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

3

The statement of purpose made available for inspection includes the aims and objectives and describes the services and facilities that the agency aims to provide. It was confirmed that the statement of purpose is made available to prospective purchasers and others with a legitimate interest in the service. There is a welcome pack for children containing the children's handbook summarising services offered, details regarding the complaints and problems process and booklets providing information relevant to living away from home, children's rights and information about various other support agencies that can be utilised.

Fitness to Carry On or Manage a Fostering Service

The intended outcomes for the following set of standards are:

- The fostering service is provided and managed by those with the appropriate skills and experience to do so efficiently and effectively and by those who are suitable to work with children.

Standard 2 (2.1 - 2.4)

The people involved in carrying on and managing the fostering service possess the necessary business and management skills and financial expertise to manage the work efficiently and effectively and have the necessary knowledge and experience of childcare and fostering to do so in a professional manner.

Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?
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	2
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At the time of this inspection the manager of the agency had yet to attain a management qualification. A requirement has been made for him to do so. The manager's previous experience includes 3+ years employed as a supervising social worker for another independent fostering agency. The manager is supported by the head of the agency who has experience in management and controlling financial affairs.

Standard 3 (3.1 - 3.4)

Any persons carrying on or managing the fostering service are suitable people to run a business concerned with safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children.

Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?
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	3
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The people carrying on and managing the service were assessed as fit to do so in the registration process of the agency.
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Management of the Fostering Service

The intended outcomes for the following set of standards are:

- The fostering service is managed ethically and efficiently, delivering a good quality foster care service and avoiding confusion and conflicts of role.

Standard 4 (4.1 – 4.5)

There are clear procedures for monitoring and controlling the activities of the fostering service and ensuring quality performance.

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

2

Though it has been confirmed that aspects of the service are monitored there were no established procedures for improving and reporting on the quality of care provided by the agency. Financial matters were managed professionally with information provided to the board on a regular basis. Information about charges and payments is made available to the relevant parties.

Number of statutory notifications made to CSCI in last 12 months:

2

Death of a child placed with foster parents.

0

Referral to Secretary of State of a person working for the service as unsuitable to work with children.

0

Serious illness or accident of a child.

0

Outbreak of serious infectious disease at a foster home.

0

Actual or suspected involvement of a child in prostitution.

0

Serious incident relating to a foster child involving calling the police to a foster home.

0

Serious complaint about a foster parent.

1

Initiation of child protection enquiry involving a child.

1

Number of complaints made to CSCI about the agency in the past 12 months:

1

Number of the above complaints which were substantiated:

0

Standard 5 (5.1 - 5.4)

The fostering service is managed effectively and efficiently.

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

3

The business of the fostering service has been carried on by the registered provider in a professional and diligent manner. It was clear there is a strong commitment from the registered provider to reflect on practice and bring about improvements where shortfalls have been highlighted. The manager of the agency was clear about their responsibilities; lines of accountability were well defined.

Securing and Promoting Welfare

The intended outcome for the following set of standards is:

- The fostering service promotes and safeguards the child/young person's physical, mental and emotional welfare.

Standard 6 (6.1 - 6.9)

The fostering service makes available foster carers who provide a safe, healthy and nurturing environment.

Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?	2
<p>The inspectors visited three foster homes as part of the inspection process. Evidence was obtained from foster carers files and from discussion with the head of IT/Transport which confirmed that homes are inspected annually. A recommendation is made to ensure risk management plans are devised where specific hazards have been identified. The homes were warm, hygienic and appropriately decorated and children had their own rooms. The carers understood that they might be interviewed as part of the inspection process, however this was not reflected in the foster care agreement. The agency's handbook provides written guidelines on the health and safety responsibilities of carers however health and safety training for carers is outstanding.</p>		

Standard 7 (7.1 - 7.7)

The fostering service ensures that children and young people, and their families, are provided with foster care services which value diversity and promote equality.

Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?	2
<p>The agency states that it offers equal opportunities to all employees, foster carers and children. The manager asserted that the racial and cultural needs of children are addressed at the initial matching stage and that children are encouraged to pursue their chosen religion. Pre inspection questionnaires completed by foster children confirm that children have been supported to pursue hobbies and interests including for example swimming, singing, music, army cadets and computing. The training syllabus covers culture and diversity however further evidence that the matching process incorporates the elements of this standard combined with evidence that all foster carers attend training in enhancing children's confidence and self worth and developing skills to challenge discrimination would be needed to obtain a higher rating.</p>		

Standard 8 (8.1 - 8.7)

Local authority fostering services, and voluntary agencies placing children in their own right, ensure that each child or young person placed in foster care is carefully matched with a carer capable of meeting her/his assessed needs. For agencies providing foster carers to local authorities, those agencies ensure that they offer carers only if they represent appropriate matches for a child for whom a local authority is seeking a carer.

Key Findings and Evidence**Standard met?**

2

Although some consultation takes place, there was little evidence available to demonstrate that the child's care plan and recent written assessments of the child have been taken into account when matching children with carers. When specific matching considerations have been identified at the time of approval, there is no evidence to suggest that these have been included in the matching process. The foster carers handbook states 'sometimes you will be asked to take children outside your age range, this may be temporary, but if proving well matched, approval recommendations will be presented to panel'. A requirement is made to ensure that children are not placed outside a foster carers approval status. The foster placements do not contain reference to specific elements of matching taken into consideration in agreeing the placement. Neither did they identify support to compensate for any gaps.

Standard 9 (9.1 - 9.8)

The fostering service protects each child or young person from all forms of abuse, neglect, exploitation and deprivation.

Key Findings and Evidence**Standard met?**

1

Many of the carers in the agency have fostered previously and in one case they were not offered initial training for this reason. Although the behaviour management policy covers the use of physical intervention, there was no evidence that training had been provided in relation to this. A recommendation is made to ensure each foster carer develops a safe care policy specific to their circumstances and to review and where necessary update these when a new placement is made. Whilst the agency's child protection policy sets out the procedure to be followed in the event of any allegation of abuse or neglect evidence obtained during the inspection indicated that practice in this area had been lacking. A recommendation is made to review the current child protection policy. The agencies foster carer agreement clearly states never, in any circumstances, to administer corporal punishment to a child.

Percentage of foster children placed who report never or hardly ever being bullied:

X

%

Standard 10 (10.1 - 10.9)		
The fostering service makes sure that each child or young person in foster care is encouraged to maintain and develop family contacts and friendships as set out in her/his care plan and/or foster placement agreement.		
Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?	3
Contact arrangements were included in the case notes inspected. It was confirmed by speaking with foster carers that they are made aware of any restrictions on contact that were in place. Foster carers commented that the support provided regarding the management of difficult contacts has been satisfactory. Young people have confirmed that their views were taken into account with regard to contact arrangements made.		

Standard 11 (11.1 - 11.5)		
The fostering service ensures that children's opinions, and those of their families and others significant to the child, are sought over all issues that are likely to affect their daily life and their future.		
Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?	3
Foster carers visited as part of the inspection demonstrated their commitment to listening to the views of the children in their care. Training has not be offered specifically in relation to listening to children it is linked with such topics as managing behaviour, culture and diversity and life story work which have been included in the training programme. Evidence obtained from children's reviews and foster carers reviews confirmed that children are consulted as part of the process.		

Standard 12 (12.1 - 12.8)		
The fostering service ensures that it provides foster care services which help each child or young person in foster care to receive health care which meets her/his needs for physical, emotional and social development, together with information and training appropriate to her/his age and understanding to enable informed participation in decisions about her/his health needs.		
Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?	2
The foster carers handbook contains guidance on promoting health care and development and states the responsibilities of carers and others involved in health care. The handbook includes information and guidance on the procedures governing consent. Health and hygiene and first aid training were not included in the training programme viewed by the inspector. Discussion with carers confirmed their commitment to promoting the health of the children in their care. One carer indicated the process of securing consent with regard to obtaining specific medication for a young person could have been better managed. Access to therapy has been arranged by the agency in conjunction with placing authorities.		

Standard 13 (13.1 - 13.8)		
The fostering service gives a high priority to meeting the educational needs of each child or young person in foster care and ensures that she/he is encouraged to attain her/his full potential.		
Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?	3
The agency has its own school and discussion with the head of education confirmed the agency gives a high priority to meeting the educational needs of the children in foster care. Carers confirmed that they contribute to the assessment of children's educational needs and are very clear of their role in school contact. The head of education confirmed that all children are currently receiving education and cited an example of enabling a child to transfer from Hythe House school into mainstream education. The inspector was informed that the school is currently developing the GCSE syllabus so as to meet the needs of the most able students.		

Standard 14 (14.1 - 14.5)		
The fostering service ensures that their foster care services help to develop skills, competence and knowledge necessary for adult living.		
Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?	2
The foster carers handbook contains guidance for carers on preparing young people for adult life in relation to both practical and emotional issues however this is not reflected in the training offered to carers The manager acknowledges that this is an area for development.		

Recruiting, Checking, Managing, Supporting and Training Staff and Foster Carers

The intended outcome for the following set of standards is:

- The people who work in or for the fostering service are suitable to work with children and young people and they are managed, trained and supported in such a way as to ensure the best possible outcomes for children in foster care. The number of staff and carers and their range of qualifications and experience are sufficient to achieve the purposes and functions of the organisation.

Standard 15 (15.1 - 15.8)

Any people working in or for the fostering service are suitable people to work with children and young people and to safeguard and promote their welfare.

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

2

Personal files sampled demonstrated the backgrounds of people working fulltime for the agency have been checked with regard to their suitability to work with children. Checks on panel members and people employed on a "sessional" basis were not carried out with the same rigour and a requirement has been made to do so. The recommendation has also been made to include in the written procedures reference to ensuring all the checks specified in the Fostering Service Regulations are completed for all persons working for the agency.

Total number of staff of the agency:

13

Number of staff who have left the agency in the past 12 months:

1

Standard 16 (16.1 - 16.16)

Staff are organised and managed in a way that delivers an efficient and effective foster care service.

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

2

The fostering staff team include two qualified social workers one of whom is the manager. Both have opportunities to receive supervision and undertake training. The quality and focus of supervision was discussed with the registered provider. It was suggested that it might be sensible to review the current arrangements. Discussion with social work staff indicated that further guidance and instruction might be needed to ensure they had adequate understanding of their role and that of the children's social worker. Workload has been managed in a manner that has resulted in timely processing of assessments, approvals and reviews of foster carers. Administrative procedures and support was in line with the needs of the service.

Standard 17 (17.1 - 17.7)

The fostering service has an adequate number of sufficiently experienced and qualified staff and recruits a range of carers to meet the needs of children and young people for whom it aims to provide a service.

Key Findings and Evidence**Standard met?**

3

The staffing arrangements are in line with the statement of purpose. Foster carers have commented there is always someone from the agency to talk to or provide support when the need has arisen. Placing authorities have been complimentary about the service provided and of the quality of foster carers provided by the agency. Young people and children placed with foster carers have commented positively about the foster carers looking after them.

Standard 18 (18.1 - 18.7)

The fostering service is a fair and competent employer, with sound employment practices and good support for its staff and carers.

Key Findings and Evidence**Standard met?**

3

The people working for the agency have stated that their colleagues, seniors, the responsible individual and board of directors value their contributions and support them in their work. Foster carers have also stated that they were supported by the agency to fulfil their fostering functions both during and outside of office hours when the need has arisen. Carers are supervised by an allocated social worker. The carer's handbook includes health and safety procedures and guidelines.

Standard 19 (19.1 - 19.7)

There is a good quality training programme to enhance individual skills and to keep staff up-to-date with professional and legal developments.

Key Findings and Evidence**Standard met?**

2

The agency have written procedures relating to training for staff. The procedures recognise the need for and place value in ongoing professional development. There was not however evidence to demonstrate that individual training and development needs had been formally identified and plans developed to address them; the recommendation is made to do so.

Standard 20 (20.1 - 20.5)**All staff are properly accountable and supported.****Key Findings and Evidence****Standard met?****3**

It was confirmed and evidence was seen to demonstrate that staff have received written details of what is expected of them in their role and are provided with access to the policies and procedures of the organisation. Staff receive management supervision on a regular basis (please see text to standard 16). Annual appraisal of staff performance is conducted by the registered provider. Staff confirmed that that they have the opportunity to attend team meetings and are involved in decisions made about the provision of services.

Standard 21 (21.1 - 21.6)**The fostering service has a clear strategy for working with and supporting carers.****Key Findings and Evidence****Standard met?****3**

The agency has written strategies for working with and supporting carers. The strategies include such issues as out of hours support, respite care, arrangements for reviews, training and development and the provision of general information and advice.

Standard 22 (22.1 - 22.10)**The fostering service is a managed one that provides supervision for foster carers and helps them to develop their skills.****Key Findings and Evidence****Standard met?****2**

From discussion with social workers with responsibility for supervising carers and from reading through carers supervision notes the inspectors failed to find evidence to demonstrate that carers are encouraged to reflect on their practice and experiences in order to develop in their role as foster carers. The fostering service and foster carers are obliged to enter into an agreement that sets out what is expected from the fostering service, the foster carers and placing authorities. Such an agreement (The Foster Care Agreement) had been entered into by the carers whose files were sampled though did not contain the detail required as reported on elsewhere in this report. A carer's handbook has been produced and distributed accordingly. Information about how to make a complaint or representation has been distributed. Records demonstrate that complaints made had been dealt with according to the agencies written procedures. Records of allegations of abuse are kept though not formally monitored and reported on as required by regulation 42 (Fostering Services Regulations 2002). A requirement that encompasses this shortfall has been made under standard 4.

Standard 23 (23.1 - 23.9)

The fostering service ensures that foster carers are trained in the skills required to provide high quality care and meet the needs of each child/young person placed in their care.

Key Findings and Evidence**Standard met?**

2

Information provided by the manager of the service in relation to the training that has been provided to foster carers between January 2004 and this inspection details sessions on culture & diversity, record keeping, behaviour management, life story work, recognising signs of abuse and discussion regarding national vocational qualifications. Attendance levels have been recorded as being between 5 to 7 carers at each of the training sessions provided. The recommendation is made to strengthen the relationship between the training provided and training needs identified in the course of carers' reviews and any gaps identified in the matching process. The manager confirmed that pre approval and induction training for carers is delivered as and when the need arises.

Records

The intended outcome for the following set of standards is:

- All appropriate records are kept and are accessible in relation to the fostering services and the individual foster carers and foster children.

Standard 24 (24.1 - 24.8)

The fostering service ensures that an up-to-date, comprehensive case record is maintained for each child or young person in foster care which details the nature and quality of care provided and contributes to an understanding of her/his life events. Relevant information from the case records is made available to the child and to anyone involved in her/his care.

Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?
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	3
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Foster carers commented that the fostering service makes efforts to ensure they know why a child or young person is in foster care and that they understand the basis for the current placement, its intended duration and purpose, and details of the child's legal status. Foster carers expressed a pragmatic understanding that due to individual circumstances and development of children and young people a degree of flexibility is required in terms of plans and arrangements made. Carers were aware of the need to maintain day to day records of placements made and to store these records securely. Foster carers mentioned various ways in which they have supported children and young people to reflect on and understand her/his history including the use of photographs, chronologies, keepsakes and memory boxes.

Standard 25 (25.1 - 25.13)

The fostering service's administrative records contain all significant information relevant to the running of the foster care service and as required by regulations.

Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?
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	2
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Administrative records required by regulations were being maintained though in some instances required additional details for example in the children's and foster carers register and in the records recording individual placements with foster carers. The registered provider demonstrated commitment to address shortfalls fed back during the inspection and acted promptly to do so. The recommendation is made to cross reference records kept with those that are required by regulation and ensure where any omissions are found these are rectified forthwith. The fostering service maintains records relating to foster carers in terms of their assessment, approval, subsequent reviews, and support meetings. There is a system for keeping records about allegations and complaints and for handling these confidentially and securely. Records of complaints and allegations are recorded including details of the investigation, conclusion reached and action taken.

Number of current foster placements supported by the agency:			17
Number of placements made by the agency in the last 12 months:			6
Number of placements made by the agency which ended in the past 12 months:			4
Number of new foster carers approved during the last 12 months:			6
Number of foster carers who left the agency during the last 12 months:			2
Current weekly payments to foster parents: Minimum £	385.00	Maximum £	420.00

Fitness of Premises for use as Fostering Service

The intended outcome for the following standard is:

- The premises used as offices by the fostering service are suitable for the purpose.

Standard 26 (26.1 - 26.5)

Premises used as offices by the fostering service are appropriate for the purpose.

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

3

There are identifiable office premises to which staff and others with a legitimate interest have access during normal office hours. Administrative systems were established and suited to the needs of the agency. The premises have facilities for the secure retention of records in a lockable room, measures are taken to safeguard electronically stored information and a security system protects against access by unauthorised persons.

Financial Requirements

The intended outcome for the following set of standards is:

- The agency fostering services are financially viable and appropriate and timely payments are made to foster carers.

Standard 27 (27.1 - 27.3)

The agency ensures it is financially viable at all times and has sufficient financial resources to fulfil its obligations.

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

2

Budget sheets for the year ending February 2005 indicate the agency has sufficient financial resources to fulfil its obligations. It was confirmed by the head of the agency that regulations and guidelines imposed upon businesses are conformed with. Procedures that may be followed in situations of financial crisis were discussed though have yet to be incorporated in the policies and procedures of the agency.

Standard 28 (28.1 - 28.7)

The financial processes/systems of the agency are properly operated and maintained in accordance with sound and appropriate accounting standards and practice.

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

3

The head of agency confirmed that the financial standing of the agency is closely monitored and reported back to the directors on a regular basis. The agency has a written set of principles and standards relating to financial management.

Standard 29 (29.1 - 29.2)

Each foster carer receives an allowance and agreed expenses, which cover the full cost of caring for each child or young person placed with him or her. Payments are made promptly and at the agreed time. Allowances and fees are reviewed annually.

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

3

Foster carers have confirmed that allowances and fees have been paid promptly at the agreed rate. Allowances and fees are reviewed each year. It was confirmed information about fees and allowances is distributed to the relevant parties.

Fostering Panels

The intended outcome for the following set of standards is:

- Fostering panels are organised efficiently and effectively so as to ensure that good quality decisions are made about the approval of foster carers, in line with the overriding objective to promote and safeguard the welfare of children in foster care.

Standard 30 (30.1 - 30.9)

Fostering panels have clear written policies and procedures, which are implemented in practice, about the handling of their functions.

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

2

The panel has met on four occasions and the panel chair informed the inspector that it is still in the process of developing and consolidating its functions. There are clear written policies. It is recommended that members undertake further training to ensure that these are fully understood and implemented in practise. Criminal Record Bureau checks are completed on all panel members. Recruitment records in relation to panel members did not meet regulatory requirements. The panel has access to medical expertise. Panel minutes did not fully reflect discussions regarding foster carers' assessments. Decisions made by the fostering service provider reflected the recommendations of the panel. Discussion with the panel chair confirmed that the panel is currently developing its quality assurance function in relation to the assessment process. Examination of panel minutes indicated that the panel receives management information regarding the outcome of foster carers' annual reviews. The independent members of the panel include expertise in education and child health and also a person who has been placed with foster carers. It should be noted that it was not possible for the inspector to attend a panel meeting during the course of the inspection.

Short-Term Breaks

The intended outcome for the following set of standards is:

- When foster care is provided as a short-term break for a child, the arrangement recognises that the parents remain the main carers for the child.

Standard 31 (31.1 - 31.2)

Where a fostering service provides short-term breaks for children in foster care, they have policies and procedures, implemented in practice, to meet the particular needs of children receiving short-term breaks.

Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?	9
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Not applicable at the time of this inspection.

Family and Friends as Carers

The intended outcome for the following set of standards is:

- Local authority fostering services' policies and procedures for assessing, approving, supporting and training foster carers recognise the particular contribution that can be made by and the particular needs of family and friends as carers.

Standard 32 (32.1 - 32.4)

These standards are all relevant to carers who are family and friends of the child, but there is recognition of the particular relationship and position of family and friend carers.

Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?	9
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Not applicable at the time of this inspection.

PART C

LAY ASSESSOR'S SUMMARY

(where applicable)

Lay Assessor _____ **Signature** _____
Date _____

D.1 Registered Person's or Responsible Local Authority Manager's comments/confirmation relating to the content and accuracy of the report for the above inspection.

We would welcome comments on the content of this report relating to the Inspection conducted on 21st – 24th February 2005 and any factual inaccuracies:

Please limit your comments to one side of A4 if possible

Action taken by the CSCI in response to the provider's comments:

Amendments to the report were necessary

Comments were received from the provider

Provider comments/factual amendments were incorporated into the final inspection report

Provider comments are available on file at the Area Office but have not been incorporated into the final inspection report. The inspector believes the report to be factually accurate

Note:

In instances where there is a major difference of view between the Inspector and the Registered Provider responsible Local Authority fostering service Manager both views will be made available on request to the Area Office.

D.2 Please provide the Commission with a written Action Plan by 31 May 2005, which indicates how statutory requirements and recommendations are to be addressed and stating a clear timescale for completion. This will be kept on file and made available on request.

Status of the Provider's Action Plan at time of publication of the final inspection report:

Action plan was required

Action plan was received at the point of publication

Action plan covers all the statutory requirements in a timely fashion

Action plan did not cover all the statutory requirements and required further discussion

Provider has declined to provide an action plan

Other: <enter details here>

Public reports

It should be noted that all CSCI inspection reports are public documents. Reports on children's homes are only obtainable on personal application to CSCI offices.

D.3 PROVIDER'S AGREEMENT

Registered Person's or responsible Local Authority Manager's statement of agreement/comments: Please complete the relevant section that applies.

D.3.1 I Gary Duffy of Hythe House Support Limited confirm that the contents of this report are a fair and accurate representation of the facts relating to the inspection conducted on the above date(s) and that I agree with the statutory requirements made and will seek to comply with these.

Print Name	<u>Mr Gary Duffy</u>
Signature	<u>On File</u>
Designation	<u>Agency Head</u>
Date	<u>14.6.05</u>

Or

D.3.2 I Gary Duffy of Hythe House Support Limited am unable to confirm that the contents of this report are a fair and accurate representation of the facts relating to the inspection conducted on the above date(s) for the following reasons:

Print Name	_____
Signature	_____
Designation	_____
Date	_____

Note: In instance where there is a profound difference of view between the Inspector and the Registered Provider both views will be reported. Please attach any extra pages, as applicable.

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