

inspection report

Fostering Services

Catholic Caring Services

218 Tulketh Road

Ashton

Preston

Lancashire

PR2 1ES

15th November- 2nd December 2004

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

Catholic Caring Services

Tel No

01772 732313

Address

218 Tulketh Road, Ashton, Preston, Lancashire, PR2 1ES

Fax No

Email Address

Registered Number of IFA

F090000599

Name of Registered Provider

Catholic Caring Services (Diocese of Lancaster) Ltd

Name of Registered Manager (if applicable)

Mrs Susan Bernadette Swarbrick

Date of first registration

13th November 2003

Date of latest registration certificate

13th November 2003

Registration Conditions Apply ?

YES

Date of last inspection

09/02/04

Date of Inspection Visit		15th November 2004	ID Code
Time of Inspection Visit		09:00 am	
Name of Inspector	1	Monica Farrimond	
Name of Inspector	2	Felicity Lacey	
Name of Inspector	3		
Name of Inspector	4		
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.			
Name of Specialist (e.g. Interpreter/Signer) (if applicable)			
Name of Establishment Representative at the time of inspection			

Introduction to Report and Inspection

Inspection visits

Description of Fostering Service

Part A: Summary of Inspection Findings

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)

- 1. Statement of purpose**
- 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

D.1. Provider's comments

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 Catholic Caring Services. 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.
<p>Catholic Caring Services fostering agency is a well established voluntary agency that provides a range of social care facilities for children and adults. The Board of Management oversees the agency and is responsible defining policies and agreeing annual budgets. The director is the responsible individual for the fostering services. The assistant director (children), and the team leader (fostering) complete the management team. There are two senior social work practitioners; 3 qualified social workers and one foster care development worker, who is a foster carer for another agency. The fostering service provides long term, task centred, short term and pre adoption placements on behalf of local authorities.</p>

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 of Catholic Caring Services fostering agency is based on measuring the service against the Fostering Services Regulations 2002 and the National Minimum Standards. The inspection is wide ranging, the methods used included case tracking, interviews with foster carers, observation of training and collation of information gathered from questionnaires. There were 18 questionnaires returned from children and young people, foster carers and placing authority social workers. The views of all parties were positive, and included the following comments: -

'Support, help and guidance ...are available 24/7'(foster carer)

'They do an excellent job. They're a small but caring agency' (foster carer)

'I am always asked if I think anything can be improved and what suggestions I may have' (foster carer)

'Everyone who interviewed us was friendly, clear and open' (foster carer)

'They look after you and they support you where ever you go and they give you what you need' (young person)

'Social workers are human to and they don't always get everything right' (young person)

'They are good workers. They have fun days and days out' (young person)

'This is an excellent placement and the foster carers receive a good level of support' (placing social worker)

'Good communication is maintained with this fostering service' (placing social worker)

This inspection found the fostering service to be functioning at a highly professional level with sound practice backed up by appropriate policies and procedures.

Statement of Purpose: Standard met.

Catholic Caring Services' fostering agency has a clearly written statement of purpose that includes all relevant information. The children's guide is presented in a way that is appealing to children and young people. The 'Fostering Fax' contains much useful information and makes use of digital photography and graphics. Children and young people have been involved in developing a CD-rom for the aid of those children who have communication or learning difficulties.

Fitness to Provide or Manage a Fostering Service: All Standards met.

The Director of Catholic Caring Services has many years experience of working in social work and children's services, and holds relevant qualifications. The fostering service is managed by a team leader who is registered with the Commission. The staff and foster carers spoken with as part of this inspection were confident in the management and leadership of the service. The service is organised, managed and staffed in a manner that promotes the best possible childcare, this view was supported by foster carers, children and social workers that completed questionnaires. The responsible individual and the team leader have had all required references and checks completed and are registered with the Commission for Social Care Inspection.

Management of the Fostering Service: All Standards met.

Catholic Caring Services' fostering agency has appropriate policies and procedures for monitoring and controlling the activities of the service for the purpose of quality assurance. The Agency has appropriate financial procedures in place, and these are over seen by the assistant director responsible for finance. There was evidence throughout the inspection that the fostering service is managed effectively and efficiently. The levels of delegation and responsibilities of the management, and the lines of accountability, are clearly defined.

Securing and Promoting Welfare: 1 standard was exceeded, 7 were met and 1 was not fully met.

The homes of foster carers visited during the inspection, where seen to be safe and comfortable. The commitment of the foster carers and their dedication to ensuring that the needs of the children they look after are met was clear.

One foster carer commented that one of the best features of Catholic Caring Fostering Agency is the standard of training offered, which covers many aspects of child welfare and development, she felt this training was provided by the best people available. During the inspection examples were found that reflected a commitment to working cooperatively, both within the agency and with external agencies, to help build a child's self confidence and feelings of self worth. The service specification document declares a "complete acceptance" of the importance of diversity, as well as a commitment to anti-discriminatory practice and equality of opportunity.

Evidence from children and young people and foster carers indicate that they are encouraged to pursue their talents, interest and hobbies. The questionnaires completed by the children and young people described a range of activities that they were involved in including, swimming, drama, and guides.

The comments received from existing placing authorities supported the view that the matching process was successful, and confirmed that placement agreements were in place. The placement agreement comprehensively sets out the expectations of all those involved in the arrangement and contains specific reference to the elements of matching that were taken into consideration in agreeing the placement.

Catholic Caring Services has a comprehensive child protection policy which is set within the parameters of the local authority's child protection procedures. All carers have a copy of The Fostering Network's publication: Safer Caring. Each foster carer has an individual safe caring policy drawn up with the help of the foster care development worker. It is recommended that the agency ensure that foster carers keep a record of any sanctions used. The children who completed questionnaires indicated that any sanctions used were fair. The agency has a procedure for ensuring that a record is maintained of any allegations made (and their outcomes) against foster carers, however this was not always completed. It is important that this information is collated and monitored by the manager of the agency.

The agency has developed and implemented a written policy and attendant procedures, to be followed if a child is absent from a foster carers' home without permission. It is recommended that this policy is considered at each placement meeting, and if being missing from home is identified as an area of concern that an individual risk assessment is completed.

Catholic Caring Services fostering agency has a commitment to ensure that children are

supported to maintain contact with their birth families in line with their placement plan. The foster carers spoken with confirmed this expectation. Foster carers maintain a record of the outcomes of contact arrangements and their perceived impact on the child. The inspectors saw evidence that this happens, and importantly that this information is taken account of and acted upon.

The comments received from the children placed with the agency confirmed that they felt their views were actively sought and listened to. All children placed with foster carers receive the children's guide, this contains information regarding how to complain and provides a stamped addressed envelope to allow the child to make contact with the agency independently.

Catholic Caring Services exceeded the standard relating to promoting development and health because of the additional support provided to foster carers in relation to health matters. A number of examples of this support were found by the inspectors, these included the provision of practical support whilst a child was hospitalised and an immediate response to a health crisis by the foster care development worker. There was evidence that the fostering agency has been proactive in securing therapeutic services, and that foster children and their carers are supported when accessing health services.

The value of education is emphasised during initial training, as is the need to work cooperatively, with all involved parties, to ensure children attend and benefit from school. Evidence was seen on files, and was provided by questionnaires and in discussions, that the agency is supportive of the foster carers in identifying educational needs, and ensuring these are met.

The fostering agency's social workers, through supervision, monitor and support carers to ensure that carers develop the skills and knowledge necessary to help prepare young people for independent living.

Recruiting, Checking, Managing, Supporting and training Staff and Foster Carers: 3 Standards Exceeded 6 Standards met.

Catholic Caring Services has in place sound staff recruitment processes. All social work staff have an appropriate professional qualification. Individual interviews and group discussions with foster carers confirmed that all staff members demonstrate a sound understanding of the fostering task, as well as the appropriate knowledge, skills and abilities. The foster care development worker was seen as a source of great support and advice. One carer commented that the staff team at Catholic Caring Services 'Inspire confidence –a vital ingredient when coming into such a demanding area of child care'.

The social workers' handbook sets out clearly the procedures involving assessments, approvals and reviews. There was evidence from talking to carers and staff, inspecting files and observing the foster care panel that these procedures are managed and implemented effectively. Placing social workers who completed questionnaires agreed that they had very good working relationships with the Catholic Caring Services' staff.

Staff and carers participate in training and undergo professional and skills development. There are clear administrative procedures laid down in relation to dealing promptly with enquiries from prospective carers and new requests for services. One carer said she felt valued from the very first contact she had with the agency.

It is evident from interviews with various staff members that there is a wealth of knowledge

and experience of the family placement task within the team. It is commendable that there is a foster care development worker employed by the agency. The provision of this level of support is highly valued by all foster carers, who see the development worker as some one who really understands the fostering task, from first hand experience.

Those team members spoken with were very positive about their experience of being employed by Catholic Caring Services. The team leader continues to be enthusiastically praised as being clear thinking and effective in her leadership role. The agency has sound practices when conducting assessments, and maintains all information that contributes to the Form F assessment. The foster carers spoken with during the inspection felt that the assessment process was in depth, one foster carer said that it was like 'being turned inside out' in a positive way, another carer commented that the assessment procedure was never rushed.

The consistent view throughout this inspection was that Catholic Caring Services fostering agency is a fair and competent employer, with sound employment practices and excellent support for its staff and carers. There is 24 hours support available to all carers. One carer commented 'They do an excellent job-all staff seem fully informed and willing to do that extra bit!'. It would be fair to say that this sentiment was expressed by all the foster carers who contributed to this inspection.

The agency has set up an appropriate management system which incorporates the supervision, appraisal and support of carers. Formal supervision is held on a quarterly basis. The agency has a comprehensive training plan that incorporates induction training for new employees. Training needs and outcomes are monitored and assessed through annual appraisals for staff, and annual reviews for foster carers. Joint training between fostering services staff and foster carers is held regularly. The agency is aware of the need to ensure that training can be accessed by all carers as the agency expands into other geographical areas.

A consistent theme during this inspection was the inclusive nature of the agency, this was reflected in the view that the opinions of all people connected with agency were equally valued and that the fostering task was very much seen as a team effort. Communication between the fostering agency's social workers and the children's social workers is evident through joint attendance at planning and review meetings. The fostering agency facilitates regular meetings for carers and young people and organises days out for carers, their children and the children who are looked after.

Catholic Caring Services has a complaints and representations policy and attendant procedures, a copy of which is included within the foster carers' manual

Records: 1 standard was met, 1 standard was not fully met.

The fostering agency keeps good records in relation to the children and young people cared for. The inspectors would recommend that a separate diary sheet is maintained for each child in placement. Foster carers are recommended by the agency to maintain a diary, this should be maintained in a way that allows a separate record for each child placed, and further thought should be given to what happens to the diary at the end of placement. A record of any sanctions used should be maintained and this should be monitored by the registered person. The team leader regularly audits files, signs and dates them as evidence. Legibility and content of records are monitored through supervision and file checks.

Fitness of Premises for Use as a Fostering Service: Standard met.

The fostering agency has recently located to new premises which are fit for purpose. The new premises remain linked to the established premises, which continues to receive all post and phone calls.

Financial Requirements: All Standards met.

Catholic Caring Services is a registered charity and as such is required to maintain a capital reserve to ensure its continued operation in times of crisis. Catholic Caring Services has clearly documented financial arrangements for control and supervision of its financial affairs and powers. Each foster carer is paid an allowance and agreed expenses in line with the Fostering Network recommendations. Evidence from carers suggested that the allowances are paid promptly and at the agreed time.

Fostering Panels: Standard met.

Observation of the panel indicated that the panel provides a quality assurance function in relation to the assessment process as laid down in the policy. The panel considers all annual reviews of foster carers, the outcomes of which are recorded. The standard of assessment within the Forms F was of a high quality. They showed clear analysis and discussion of them was focused and relevant. The chair is independent to the agency and has many years experience in the field of child care.

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	YES
The agency shall at all times employ a suitably experienced and qualified manager who is registered with the National Care Standards Commission.		
Comments		

Condition	Compliance	YES
The agency shall, by December 1st 2003: a) Produce a Statement of Purpose and Children's Guide b) Ensure that there is documentary evidence of proof of identity and relevant qualifications of staff on personnel files c) Develop and implement a written procedure for when a child is missing from a foster carer's home d) Update the fostering agreement to take account of all issues referred to under schedule 5 e) Adapt the foster carer's manual to include all relevant agency guidance and good practice policies.		
Comments The missing from home procedure should be considered at each placement meeting and an individual risk assessment drawn up if appropriate.		

Condition	Compliance	
Comments		

Condition	Compliance	
Comments		

Lead Inspector	_____	Signature	_____
Second Inspector	_____	Signature	_____
Regulatory Manager	_____	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	42(1) Schedule 7	FS9	Foster carers should maintain a record of any sanctions used, which must be monitored by the registered person.	02/02/05
2	13(3)	FS9	The fostering service shall prepare and implement a written procedure to be followed if a child is absent from a foster parents home without permission.	02/02/05
3	Regulation 42(1) Schedule 7	FS9	The registered person must monitor any allegations or suspicions of abuse in respect of children placed with foster carers and their outcomes. Currently a procedure is in place but was not always being followed.	02/02/05

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	FS24	Where a number of children are in placement, a separate record should be maintained for each child in placement on the foster carers file. Information regarding other children should not be placed on a child's file.

2	FS24	Consideration should be given to the information collated by foster carers, and what happens to this information at the end of placement.

* 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	10
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	NO
• Interview with foster carers	YES
• Interview with agency staff	NO
• Contact with parents	NO
• 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	NO
Observation of foster carer training	YES
Observation of foster panel	YES
Inspection of policy/practice documents	YES
Inspection of records	YES
Interview with individual child	NO
Date of Inspection	15/11/04
Time of Inspection	10.00
Duration Of Inspection (hrs)	75

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

Catholic Caring Services' fostering agency has a clearly written statement of purpose that includes all relevant information. The manager confirmed that this document will be reviewed on an annual basis and that carers will be consulted as a part of the process.

The children's guide is presented in a way that is appealing to children and young people. The 'Fostering Fax' contains much useful information and makes use of digital photography and graphics. The guide explains the role of the agency and also highlights what a child may expect when living with foster carer, for example it includes information about pocket money, and what to do if something is not right. The guide also includes sections that a child can complete and to keep a record of their experience. The guide also includes a stamped addressed envelope and a contact card, which ensures that the child can contact the foster team at all times without involvement of a third party.

Children and young people have been involved in developing a CD-rom for the aid of those children who have communication and or learning difficulties. This work has now been completed and it is hoped that the CD-rom will be of benefit for some children and young people.

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?

3

The Director of Catholic Caring Services has many years experience of working in social work and children's services, and holds relevant qualifications. The fostering service is managed by a team leader who is registered with the commission. She is currently working towards achieving a management qualification by the 2005. She is an experienced childcare professional. The staff and foster carers spoken with as part of this inspection were confident in the management and leadership of the service. The service is organised, managed and staffed in a manner that promotes the best possible childcare, this view was supported by foster carers, children and social workers who completed questionnaires.

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?

3

Catholic Caring Services' fostering agency asserts that safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children underpins its core business. The responsible individual and the team leader have had all required references and checks completed and are registered with the Commission for Social Care Inspection.

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?

3

Catholic Caring Services' fostering agency had developed appropriate policies and procedures for monitoring and controlling the activities of the service for the purpose of quality assurance. Evidence of these procedures was seen during the inspection, for example the team leader monitors and signs the entries on the foster carers files. The team leader also produces a quarterly report which monitors the activities of the agency which informs the strategic plan for the organisation as a whole.

The Agency has appropriate financial procedures in place, and these are over seen by the assistant director responsible for finance. The agency provides the required information regarding charges and fees, to purchasers of services. Individual agreements are made with regard to specialist equipment, and are covered in the placement agreement.

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

0

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.

0

Initiation of child protection enquiry involving a child.

0

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

0

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**

There was evidence throughout the inspection that the fostering service is managed effectively and efficiently.

The assistant director and the registered manger have clear job descriptions and work exclusively for Catholic Caring Services. The levels of delegation and responsibilities of the management, and the lines of accountability, are clearly defined.

Staff spoken with during the inspection confirmed the arrangements in the absence of the Team Leader. Foster Carers also confirmed that in the absence of their named social worker there was always support available from the other members of the team and the team leader.

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?	3
<p>The homes of foster carers visited during the inspection, where seen to be safe and comfortable. Where adaptations have been needed to ensure that a child's needs continue to be met, foster carers have been supported in ensuring that funding is secured and that these are carried out. All foster carers have an unannounced visit carried out by their social worker and have an annual review.</p> <p>All foster carers have a safe caring assessment in place. Risk assessments in relation to children who have been abused or who have abused others are undertaken and recorded prior to any placement being made as part of the matching process.</p> <p>A health and safety check is completed as part of the assessment process, and annually thereafter as part of the foster carer review procedure. Initial training covers all health and safety issues and each carer has a copy of the agency's health and safety guidelines. Foster carers' transport is checked as part of this audit.</p> <p>Foster carers were interviewed during this inspection, and also completed questionnaires. The commitment of the foster carers and their dedication to ensuring that the needs of the children they look after are met was clear. The support and training provided by the agency was seen by the foster carers as useful and helped foster carers provide a safe and nurturing environment. One foster carer commented that one of the best features of the agency was the standard of training offered, which she felt was provided by the best people available.</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?****3**

The service specification document declares a “complete acceptance” of the importance of diversity, as well as a commitment to anti-discriminatory practice and equality of opportunity. Catholic Caring Services has an equal opportunities policy which is included in the foster carers’ manual. The agency will only provide an emergency placement if it is suited to the child’s needs, and insists on holding a placement meeting within 24 hours.

During the inspection examples were found that reflected a commitment to working cooperatively, both within the agency and with external agencies, to help build a child’s self confidence and feelings of self worth. These included supporting a foster carer and child through a difficult period of therapy, and engaging the Children’s Rights Officer to support a child with severe physical disabilities in ensuring consistent treatment in an education setting.

The inspectors attended parts of the initial training, and a support group meeting. Initial and subsequent training covers issues to do with the child’s confidence and self-worth and ensuring respect for preservation of each child’s ethnic, religious, cultural and linguistic background. The team leader, staff and carers confirmed that this training was very challenging but ultimately worthwhile.

In the foster carers’ manual there is a section that outlines the carer’s role in relation to equal opportunity and which includes practical information about various religions.

The fostering agency expects the placing authority to supply appropriate equipment to carers who look after children who have a disability. There was evidence of workers successfully advocating on behalf of the child and carer in relation to this issue.

Evidence from children and young people and foster carers indicate that they are encouraged to pursue their talents, interest and hobbies. The questionnaires completed by the children and young people described a range of activities that they were involved in including, swimming, drama, and guides.

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?****3**

Catholic Caring Services' fostering agency has an explicit policy and procedure dedicated to ensuring that a child or young person placed by them is carefully matched with a carer capable of meeting their assessed needs.

The team leader is responsible for facilitating discussions on potential matches with the placing agencies. The agency uses the British Agencies for Adoption and Fostering's (BAAF) Forms E and F system for linking a child's assessed needs (outlined in Form E) to suitable carers (Form F). If a placement is seen to be suitable a planning meeting is arranged, which involves all relevant parties. The comments received from existing placing authorities supported the view that the matching process was successful, and confirmed that placement agreements were in place.

The placement agreement comprehensively sets out the expectations of all those involved in the arrangement and contains specific reference to the elements of matching that were taken into consideration in agreeing the placement. It indicates areas where foster carers might need additional support to compensate for any gaps in the match between the child and the carer.

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?****2**

Catholic Caring Services has a comprehensive child protection policy which is set within the parameters of the local authority's child protection procedures. There is clearly written guidance in relation to all forms of child abuse and neglect and their effects, which supplements the information given during initial and subsequent training. This is all included in the foster carers' manual.

All carers have a copy of The Fostering Network's publication: Safer Caring. Each foster carer has an individual safe caring policy drawn up with the help of the foster care development worker. These policies are agreed with the child's placing social worker and explained to the child. The foster carers spoken with demonstrated a thorough understanding of the need for these policies.

The fostering agency has a form that sets out the policy banning any form of corporal punishment, which every carer is expected to sign. It is recommended that the agency ensure that foster carers keep a record of any sanctions used. The children who completed questionnaires indicated that any sanctions used were fair.

The agency has a procedure for ensuring that a record is maintained of any allegations made (and their outcomes) against foster carers, however this was not always completed. It is important that this information is collated and monitored by the manager of the agency.

Catholic Caring Services expects the placing authorities to supply full information on the child so that the individual needs and those of other children placed can be properly considered. The placing authority is asked, as part of the placement agreement, to sign an undertaking to present information to the agency. There was a common theme amongst foster carers spoken with during the inspection, which indicated a degree of frustration with placing authorities regarding the quality and fullness of information made available at the time of placement. The agency is aware of this and makes consistent efforts to ensure full information is obtained prior to placement.

The agency has developed and implemented a written policy and attendant procedures, to be followed if a child is absent from a foster carers' home without permission. It is recommended that this policy is considered at each placement meeting, and if being missing from home is identified as an area of concern that an individual risk assessment is completed.

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**

Catholic Caring Services fostering agency has a commitment to ensure that children are supported to maintain contact with their birth families in line with their placement plan. The foster carers spoken with confirmed this expectation. The agreements regarding contact are reviewed, and there was evidence of this on the children's files. Contact is maintained through letters, phone calls and visits. Foster carers maintain a record of the outcomes of contact arrangements and their perceived impact on the child. The inspectors saw evidence that this happens, and importantly that this information is taken account of and acted upon.

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**

The comments received from the children placed with the agency confirmed that they felt their views were actively sought and listened to. Foster carers receive training, at the initial stage and on going, regarding the need to listen to children and respect their views. The agency regularly refers children and young people to the local Children's Right Officer. The inspectors attended a get together for children who are fostered and birth children of foster carers. One child commented in a questionnaire that one of the best things about Catholic Caring Services was that " They have fun days and fun days out". All children placed with foster carers receive the children's guide, this contains information regarding how to complain and provides a stamped addressed envelope to allow the child to make contact with the agency independently.

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?****4**

This standard is exceeded because of the additional support provided to foster carers in relation to health matters. A number of examples of this support were found by the inspectors, these included the provision of practical support whilst a child was hospitalised and an immediate response to a health crisis by the foster care development worker.

Individual health matters are addressed at the placement agreement meeting and areas of particular responsibility are identified. Staff and the team leader confirmed that no child would be placed if their continuing health needs could not be met within the locality of the placement. There was evidence that the fostering agency has been proactive in securing therapeutic services, and that foster children and their carers are supported when accessing health services.

Health needs are identified at the time of placement, and are updated. All children placed by the agency are registered with a GP. The fostering service has produced a written policy on health matters and there was evidence that children and young people are given guidance and advice on health, personal care and health promotion issues.

Training on health and hygiene issues and first aid is given pre and post approval. Basic first aid information is included in the foster carers' manual.

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 value of education is emphasised during initial training, as is the need to work cooperatively, with all involved parties, to ensure children attend and benefit from school. Evidence was seen on files, and was provided by questionnaires and in discussions, that the agency is supportive of the foster carers in identifying educational needs, and ensuring these are met.

The foster carers' manual has a section dedicated to working with schools, and one that explains what support is available to carers if a child does not have a place in school. At the time of the inspection all children were receiving full time education. Schooling issues are addressed at the placement agreement meeting, including such issues as to who attends parents' evenings, sports days etc. The fostering agency had developed a written policy and attendant procedures in relation to promotion of educational achievement. There were no children who are excluded from school at the time of this inspection.

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?****3**

The fostering agency had developed appropriate policies and attendant procedures that comply with this standard and 16(5) of the Regulations; however there has been limited experience of this aspect to date.

The fostering agency's social workers, through supervision, monitor and support carers to ensure that carers develop the skills and knowledge necessary to help prepare young people for independent living.

The foster carers' manual includes a section on skills for independence. This outlines the agency's expectations of carers in relation to preparing young people for independent living. The team leader confirmed that supplementary training was available as needed, and that young people are consulted and encouraged to be involved actively in the decision-making process and implementation of the pathway plan.

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?

3

Catholic Caring Services has in place sound staff recruitment processes. These include the external advertising of vacancies in appropriate publications and appropriate short listing and interviewing methods that are underpinned by the agency's Equal Opportunities Policy. Written references are followed up by telephone enquiries and are recorded on the checklist at the front of the individual's file. Catholic Caring Services has a dedicated administrative team to deal with CRB checks. This team has set up a system to ensure that clearance is obtained every three years.

All social work staff have an appropriate professional qualification. Individual interviews and group discussions with foster carers confirmed that all staff members demonstrate a sound understanding of the fostering task, as well as the appropriate knowledge, skills and abilities. The foster care development worker was seen as a source of great support and advice.

Social workers who are involved in the assessment and approval of carers are appropriately experienced. Students on placement are supervised by qualified social workers.

One carer commented that the staff team at Catholic Caring Services 'Inspire confidence –a vital ingredient when coming into such a demanding area of child care'.

The agency utilises recognised professionals when needed, for example they have links with the NSPCC and educational psychology service.

Total number of staff of the agency:

X

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

X

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?****3**

There is a clear management structure within Catholic Caring Services and clear lines of accountability. Staff are managed and monitored by people who have appropriate skills and qualifications. The supervision and appraisal systems in place oversee priorities and workloads. Staff expressed satisfaction with the systems and said that although they each had their own caseload, they felt that they worked very much as a team together.

The social workers' handbook sets out clearly the procedures involving assessments, approvals and reviews. There was evidence from talking to carers and staff, inspecting files and observing the foster care panel that these procedures are managed and implemented effectively. There was evidence of some exemplary work undertaken by the foster care workers; particularly in the area of assessment.

All fostering agency social workers understand the role of the placing social workers and there is a clear understanding of how the two disciplines should work together effectively. These issues are also addressed at the placement agreement meeting. Placing social workers who completed questionnaires agreed that they had very good working relationships with the Catholic Caring Services' staff.

Staff and carers participate in training and undergo professional and skills development. The appraisal system monitors the training on behalf of the staff. The agency has a training plan for carers from which individual training needs are identified and met. Supervising social workers will use this information to build up individual training and development portfolios for carers.

There are clear administrative procedures laid down in relation to dealing promptly with enquiries from prospective carers and new requests for services. One carer said she felt valued from the very first contact she had with the agency. The agency has access to a range of appropriate services and advice. Catholic Caring Services is a corporate member of BAAF and pays for all their foster carers to become individual members of the Fostering Network.

All employees' personnel files contained written contracts, job descriptions and conditions of service. The director confirmed that all employees have copies of the documents listed under item 16.16 of the National Minimum Standards.

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?****4**

It is evident from interviews with various staff members that there is a wealth of knowledge and experience of the family placement task within the team. It is commendable that there is a foster care development worker employed by the agency. This person has fostered for another agency for many years and makes all initial visits to prospective carers as well as being on call to all carers to offer advice and support. The provision of this level of support is highly valued by all foster carers, who see the development worker as some one who really understands the fostering task, from first hand experience.

The fostering agency had two members of staff on long term leave at the time of the inspection however there are sufficient contingency arrangements in place to cover these vacancies.

Staffing policies and practice encourage the retention of staff. Those team members spoken with were very positive about their experience of being employed by Catholic Caring Services. The team leader continues to be enthusiastically praised as being clear thinking and effective in her leadership role. The assistant director responsible for Children's Services is actively involved in the development and expansion of the agency.

The agency uses the BAAF Form F assessment format is used in all approvals, which incorporates all of the points under items 17.6 and 17.7 of the National Minimum Standards. The standard of these assessments was excellent, giving sound evidence of the competencies of the foster carers. The foster carers spoken with during the inspection felt that the assessment process was in depth, one foster carer said that it was like 'being turned inside out' in a positive way, another carer commented that the assessment procedure was never rushed. The agency has sound practices when conducting assessments, and maintains all information that contributes to the Form F assessment.

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?****4**

The consistent view throughout this inspection was that Catholic Caring Services fostering agency is a fair and competent employer, with sound employment practices and excellent support for its staff and carers.

There is 24 hours support available to all carers. This is supplied on two levels as the agency recognises that carers do not always want to speak with a social worker when seeking different types of advice. The foster care development worker has a mobile phone whose number is issued to all carers and is contactable day or night. The foster care development worker lets it be known if a social worker needs to be involved. The development worker records all contact on the foster carers' files. The social work team, who each take turns of being on call for the carers, supplies the other more formal service of out of hours support. Again, all such contact is recorded appropriately. This level of support exceeds the minimum standard.

One carer commented 'They do an excellent job-all staff seem fully informed and willing to do that extra bit!'. It would be fair to say that this sentiment was expressed by all the foster carers who contributed to this inspection.

The agency has set up an appropriate management system which incorporates the supervision, appraisal and support of carers. Staff and carers welcomed this more formal approach; being able to appreciate the mutual benefits. Formal supervision is held on a quarterly basis.

The agency has appropriate policies and procedures in relation to health and safety and whistleblowing.

Catholic Caring Services fostering agency has appropriate public liability and professional indemnity insurance.

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?****3**

Staff and carers confirmed that training needs were identified through the supervision process and that there were opportunities to access good quality training. . The agency had developed a comprehensive training plan that incorporates induction training for new employees. Training needs and outcomes are monitored and assessed through annual appraisals for staff, and annual reviews for foster carers. Joint training between fostering services staff and foster carers is held regularly. The agency recently held joint training looking at the issues around challenging behaviour, this was facilitated by an external trainer and was regarded as very useful by those who attended.

Employees are kept informed of relevant legislative changes through staff meetings and agency briefings. The fostering agency is a member of BAAF and their practice documents and other publications are distributed among the team. Staff and carers do sometimes attend training events jointly.

The agency is aware of the need to ensure that training can be accessed by all carers as the agency expands into other geographical areas. Currently training takes place at the Preston office and arrangements are made to facilitate attendance by those carers who have a long way to travel.

Standard 20 (20.1 - 20.5)

All staff are properly accountable and supported.

Key Findings and Evidence**Standard met?****3**

All members of staff have a job description and are aware of their responsibilities. They have all had sight of existing policies and procedures. All workers who have contact with foster carers have regular, planned and recorded supervision with the team leader.

There is an annual appraisal system in place. All staff have the opportunity to attend regular team meetings.

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?****4**

A consistent theme during this inspection was the inclusive nature of the agency, this was reflected in the view that the opinions of all people connected with the agency were equally valued and that the fostering task was very much seen as a team effort. The initial training attended by prospective foster carers, stressed that they were fully supported in the fostering task by Catholic Caring Services. The experience of existing foster carers confirmed that this was how the agency operated. There are excellent on call systems which provide 24 hour information, advice and assistance, the effectiveness on these systems was confirmed throughout the inspections by foster carers.

The agency provides respite care for the children in foster placements. There are a number of carers who are approved to provide respite care. Joint events such as support groups and family days out, ensure that children and foster carers develop supportive relationships and meet one another.

Carers and staff demonstrated a clear understanding of the role of the supervising social worker. Social workers prepare annual review reports, which include consultation with young people and their families, on all carers and these are presented to the foster care panel for consideration.

Communication between the fostering agency's social workers and the children's social workers is evident through joint attendance at planning and review meetings. Other communication occurs via telephone and email contact. The agency social workers have experienced difficulty in maintaining contact with some local authority social workers post-placement, and are now addressed at management level as and when they arise. The questionnaires received from placing agencies were positive regarding the level of communication with the agency.

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?****3**

The agency's fostering agreement clearly sets out the expectations of all parties involved in the placement and which takes account of Schedule 5 of the Regulations.

All carers are supervised by a named, professionally qualified social worker and carers have access to appropriate support, information and advice. The agency has developed a formal model of supervision which takes place on a quarterly basis. Social workers make the required unannounced visits to carers.

The Foster Carers' Manual provides carers with wide-ranging information and it has been updated to include all relevant agency policies.

The fostering agency facilitates regular meetings for carers and young people and organises days out for carers, their children and the children who are looked after.

There is appropriate insurance cover for carers via the Fostering Network organisation.

Catholic Caring Services has a complaints and representations policy and attendant procedures, a copy of which is included within the foster carers' manual. Part of the assistant director's remit is to monitor complaints and evaluate their outcomes. Carers and some young people confirmed that they were aware of how to make a complaint or an allegation; and the procedures to deal with investigations into allegations made is set out in the children's guide.

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?****3**

All training courses are designed and delivered within the agency's equal opportunities policy and encompass the tenet of anti-discriminatory practice. Initial training is currently held on weekdays, this was not seen as a problem by prospective foster carers. There are a number of opportunities for prospective foster carers to meet established and experienced foster carers. The agency provides on going training, and this is timed to suit the needs of those participating. The agency utilises established foster carers in on going training. All foster carers and their families (as appropriate) are trained in safe care. One foster carer commented that the training offered gave a 'realistic and grounded' view of the fostering task.

The team leader and social workers confirmed that training was reviewed regularly and adapted to meet needs as they arise. The agency had produced a foster carer training plan that includes a wide range of courses. The fostering agency holds regular meetings and outings for the children of families who foster. Each carer is reviewed at least annually and the process and subject headings are set out in the foster carers' manual. The foster care panel considers all review reports and a recommendation is made to the agency decision maker.

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?	2
---------------------------	---------------	---

The fostering agency keeps good records in relation to the children and young people cared for. There was evidence that staff understand the rights of young people to access this information which is explained in the children's guide. The agency had produced appropriate written policies and procedures, which establishes the purpose, format and contents of files. The inspectors would recommend that a separate diary sheet is maintained for each child in placement. Where a foster carer has a number of children in placement a system must be established to ensure that information is properly recorded in a format that respects confidentiality and that will enable all records to be passed back to the authority at the end of placement. Foster carers are recommended by the agency to maintain a diary, this should be maintained in a way that allows a separate record for each child placed, and further thought should be given to what happens to the diary at the end of placement. A record of any sanctions used should be maintained and this should be monitored by the registered person.

The placement meeting and placement agreement ensures that foster carers are aware fully of the issues surrounding any placement. Looked After Children (LAC) documentation is required by the service before a placement is agreed.

It was clear from talking to agency staff and foster carers that preparation and subsequent training and support enable the carers to help children and young people to reflect on and understand their history. The service seeks agreement on issues such as life-story work at the planning meeting.

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?	3
<p>Separate and appropriate records are kept in relation to all staff, carers and children. These should be further developed as recommended under standard 24. As stated elsewhere in this report; allegations against carers should be recorded at the front of each carer's file and regularly audited by the managers.</p> <p>The team leader regularly audits files, signs and dates them as evidence. Legibility and content of records are monitored through supervision and file checks.</p> <p>All panel members have signed a statement of confidentiality.</p> <p>All records are kept securely in the offices of the agency. The agency has appropriate written policy and procedural guidance in relation to all aspects of record keeping.</p>			
Number of current foster placements supported by the agency:			18
Number of placements made by the agency in the last 12 months:			X
Number of placements made by the agency which ended in the past 12 months:			X
Number of new foster carers approved during the last 12 months:			X
Number of foster carers who left the agency during the last 12 months:			X
Current weekly payments to foster parents: Minimum £	X	Maximum £	X

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

The fostering agency has recently located to new premises which are fit for purpose. The new premises remain linked to the established premises, which continues to receive all post and phone calls. The new premises benefits from having a large training room. The building is protected by appropriate security systems and the premises and its contents are adequately insured. There are efficient and robust administrative systems in place. Records are kept within a lockable room and IT systems are safeguarded with passwords.

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?

3

Catholic Caring Services is a registered charity and as such is required to maintain a capital reserve to ensure its continued operation in times of crisis. The agency has a dedicated assistant director of finance. Accounts are externally audited. Procedures are in place to ensure the welfare of children is safeguarded in the event of a financial crisis.

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

Catholic Caring Services has clearly documented financial arrangements for control and supervision of its financial affairs and powers.

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

The director confirmed that the agency's accounts are maintained and properly audited by a registered accountant, and that he receives regular information on the financial state of the agency.

The fostering agency makes available in writing its fees and expenses for any additional services for the benefit of purchasers and others with a legitimate interest.

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**

Each foster carer is paid an allowance and agreed expenses in line with the Fostering Network recommendations. Evidence from carers suggested that the allowances are paid promptly and at the agreed time.

Allowances and fees are reviewed annually and made known to all carers.

Foster carers receive clear information about the allowances and expenses payable and how to access them, before a child is placed. Any items required by a child which are considered to be extraordinary purchased, would be negotiated at the time of placement or as a child's needs change.

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?

3

The agency has a written policy in relation to its panel, which covers decision-making when all members of the panel are not in agreement. Observation of the panel indicated that the panel provides a quality assurance function in relation to the assessment process as laid down in the policy.

The panel considers all annual reviews of foster carers, the outcomes of which are recorded.

At the time of the inspection all panel members had received clearance from the Criminal Records Bureau. All panel members had relevant experience and the membership included a medical advisor, head teacher and a foster carer from another agency.

The standard of assessment within the Forms F was of a high quality. They showed clear analysis and discussion of them was focused and relevant. The chair is independent to the agency and is highly experienced in matters of childcare.

The foster care panel is organised and operates efficiently and effectively and ensures that the welfare of children is central to its business

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?
This standard is not applicable.	

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
This standard is not applicable.		

PART C

LAY ASSESSOR'S SUMMARY

(where applicable)

Lay Assessor

Signature

Date

PART D

PROVIDER'S RESPONSE

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 15th November to 2nd December 2004 and any factual inaccuracies:

Please limit your comments to one side of A4 if possible

Provider's comments and Action Plan are available at the Area Office.

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

Amendments to the report were necessary

NO

Comments were received from the provider

NO

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 2nd February 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

YES

Action plan was received at the point of publication

YES

Action plan covers all the statutory requirements in a timely fashion

YES

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 _____ of Catholic Caring Services 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 _____

Signature _____

Designation _____

Date _____

Or

D.3.2 I _____ of Catholic Caring Services 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.

Commission for Social Care Inspection
33 Greycoat Street
London
SW1P 2QF

Telephone: 020 7979 2000
Fax: 020 7979 2111

National Enquiry Line: 0845 015 0120
www.csci.org.uk

S0000037797.V190900.R01

© This report may only be used in its entirety. Extracts may not be used or reproduced without the express permission of the Commission for Social Care Inspection



The paper used in this document is supplied from a sustainable source