

inspection report

Fostering Services

Fostering People Ltd

Level 2 Bridgford House
Pavilion Road
West Bridgford
Nottingham
NG2 5JG

21st March 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

Fostering People Ltd

Tel No

0115 9455445

Address

Level 2

Bridgeford House

Pavillion Rd

West Bridgford

Nottingham, NG2 5GJ

Fax No

0115 9822554

Email Address

Registered Number of IFA

C030000608

Name of Registered Provider

Fostering People Ltd

Name of Registered Manager (if applicable)

Sarah Byatt

Date of first registration

22nd May 2003

Date of latest registration certificate

22nd May 2003

Registration Conditions Apply ?

NO

Date of last inspection

31/3/03

Date of Inspection Visit		21st March 2005	ID Code
Time of Inspection Visit		9:30am	
Name of Inspector	1	Lynn Smith	094143
Name of Inspector	2		
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		Sarah Byatt	

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(National Minimum Standards For Fostering Services)

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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 Fostering People 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.

Fostering People Ltd is an independent fostering agency based in Nottingham, recruiting and managing foster carers across the East Midlands area. It seeks to approve foster carers of a high calibre to provide safe family placement for children who need to be looked after by local authorities.

The agency consists of one manager, four full-time supervising social workers, two part-time supervising social workers, one office and finance manager, two part-time administrative assistants and six freelance workers undertaking occasional work such as independent reviewing, assessments and direct childcare work.

The agency can offer emergency, short-term, bridging or long-term placements for children aged between 0 and 19 years old.

Fostering People currently has thirty-two approved fostering households.

The agency does not offer any additional services, such as therapy or education however, it can assist placing authorities with accessing appropriate local services.

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 fieldwork took place over three days by one inspector. Not all standards were assessed on this inspection.

Questionnaires were received from foster carers, young people and placing social workers. Forty-four in total.

Young people said the best thing about fostering was, the families and the opportunities you get when you are looked after properly. All felt that foster carers gave them healthy food, lots of fruit and vegetables and supported them with education or job.

The foster carers said the agency was very supportive including 24hour, good training, regular visits, consulting them and overall doing an excellent job.

Foster carers felt there were a few issues around delays in getting consent for young people to do activities and not always getting full information on young people prior to placement. Foster carers informed the inspector during the interviews and on the questionnaires that the agency places no pressure on them to take young people. They feel the agency consults with them over matching, enabling placements to be made in the best interest of the young people and children already living in the home.

Foster carers said the agency is professional, well organised with polite and supportive staff that do not talk down to them.

All placing social workers said they feel the agency works in partnership with the local authority very well. "Carers provide a relaxed non-judgmental safe place for children". One social worker said that one of Fostering People's foster carers provides the best placement currently he is involved with, this was also the feeling of one of his colleagues who had placed a child with this particular carer some time ago.

One social worker raised the issue that carers have limited knowledge of adoption. The manager stated that she is looking into training for foster carers to enable them to move young people on to successful future placements.

Placing social workers said, "the foster carers have the patience of a saint". "The foster carers are a credit to the agency and positively boost the children's self-esteem".

Overall both carers and the agency work well with Social Services Department and work positively towards achieving the best outcomes for looked after children.

Statement of Purpose (standard 1)

Standard met

The Statement of Purpose was reviewed in November 2004. It gives clear aims and objectives of the agency. Staff have viewed the Statement of Purpose and feel it is a good reflection of the agency.

Fitness to carry on or manage a fostering service (standards 2&3) Standards met

The Manager of this agency is suitably qualified in childcare and management. She also has a wealth of substantial experience in the field of fostering.

Staff informed the inspector that the manager is very supportive and gives effective leadership.

The agency was very organised and child focused.

Management of the fostering service (standards 4 &5) One standard not assessed, one standard met

Accountability and level of delegation is clear within the agency The manager is aware of her responsibilities, which are reflected in the job description.

Staff informed the inspector that the deputy manager would deputise in the absence of the manager.

Securing and promoting welfare (standards 6 to 14) One standard was not assessed, eight standards met

The agency has attracted a range of foster carers who represent the diverse communities in British Society. The manager said the agency intends to compile directory of the local services available that provide religious, linguistic, ethnic and cultural provisions so foster carers can support each child's individual needs.

Placing social workers informed the inspector via the questionnaires that the foster carers 'positively boost children's self esteem'.

Young people said that the foster carers give them lots of opportunities and they feel looked after properly.

The agency has policies and procedures in place that address child protection, whistle blowing, bullying and absconding. All can be found in the Foster Carers Handbook, which all foster carers have. The manager informed the inspector that foster carers are requested to sign an agreement that corporal punishment is not acceptable.

Safe caring is addressed through training and supervision. Safer caring is a compulsory post-approval course that must be updated by carers regularly.

All carers have a written safe caring statement that is reviewed annually.

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

Four standards were not assessed, one partly met, two met and two exceed the standards

The agency has in place a policy on recruitment of staff, which entails two references followed up with telephone calls, CRB checks and a six months probationary period.

The agency has in place a leaflet on recruitment of foster carers.

Staff files viewed by inspectors contained references and relevant qualifications. The agency holds CRB checks for staff, panel and carers separately in a locked facility. The Inspector viewed a selection all were found to be in date. The agency does insist on all administrative staff also having enhanced CRB checks as good practice.

The forms F viewed were in-depth however some gaps were evident. Competences were addressed throughout but in some cases not fully explored. Overall the inspector viewed good analytical assessments by several staff members. CRB and statutory checks were in place on all over 18 year old within the fostering household. The agency clearly takes into account Brighton and Hove Recommendations and requests references from previous partners.

The inspector observed at panel foster carers that had lived in England for less than three years. The panel was informed that CRB equivalent checks had been pursued in the other country however not returned as yet. The panel correctly only approve subject to the receipt of a satisfactory CRB check.

Foster carers informed the inspector that they are aware of the 24-hour support system the agency operates and gave examples when they had used this service. The questionnaires also supported the excellent support service offered.

The Foster Carer's handbook explains to foster carer's the strategy the agency has for working with carers.

The agency has enabled foster carers to meet and support each other. At the time of the inspection two support groups were running. The agency provides lunch and organises a meeting place for both groups. Agency staff do not attend unless that are asked to by members of the groups.

Staff were aware of their role and have a clear strategy for working and supporting foster carers.

All annual reviews go to an independent reviewing officer, then to panel to consider.

Records (standards 24 to 25)

Both standards met

The inspector viewed very good case files for each young person. A comprehensive recording policy ensured a consistent approach by all staff.

Evidence was viewed on young peoples files of requests from the agency to placing social workers for missing LAC information.

Signed placement agreements on files indicated that foster carers understood the basis for the placement, its intended duration and purpose and the details of the child's legal status. Foster carers informed inspectors that they do keep safe memorabilia for young people that are placed with them.

The manager regularly monitors all records in line with schedule 7 of the Fostering Services National Minimum Standards.

Fitness of premises for use as fostering service (standard 26)

Standard exceeds the minimum standard

Fostering People have recently moved to new premises. These premises are identifiable, accessible during office hours, however secured doors are operated via intercom and code systems. The offices have ample parking for staff and visitors.

The office suite is spacious, well equipped and staff say a very pleasant work environment. Files are locked away and computer systems backed –up and password protected.

Areas are set-aside for young people, equipped with table tennis and other activities. A separate room is available for staff and foster care training and a suitable meeting room is available for panel meeting.

The manager informed the inspector that adequate insurance is in place.

Financial requirements (standards 27 to 29)

One standard not assessed, two standards met

The manager informed the inspector that the agency uses a registered accountant. The inspector was informed that a clear written set of principals describing the procedure and standards governing the management of the agencies finances is in place.

Foster carers informed the inspector that they always receive prompt payment as agreed at the start of placements.

Foster carers did say that if a retainer could be paid when they have no placements, it would be good.

Within the foster carers manual is a breakdown of payments, which is reviewed regularly. Evidence was viewed in foster carers files of letters that had been sent with updated allowances on.

Fostering panels (standard 30)

Standard met

Fostering People have a clear written policy for the fostering panel that is in line with the Fostering National Minimum Standards. Panel members are from relevant backgrounds including education, independent social worker, previous and present foster carers and a previously fostered young person. The chair is an independent member.

Evidence was viewed of all relevant checks including CRB on panel member's files.

The inspector observed the panel that formulated good probing questions.

Panel monitor the foster carers at annual reviews. It was discussed that reviews would be brought to panel every two years however panel member would receive the independent reviewing officer's report to keep them up to date on each foster family.

Short term breaks (standard 31)

Not applicable

Family and friends as carers (standard 32)

Not applicable

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?

YES

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	Lynn Smith	Signature	_____
Second Inspector	_____	Signature	_____
Regulation Manager	Rachel Cook	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	

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	FS25	Separate records should be kept for notifications.

* 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	3
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	YES
• Contact with parents	NO
• Contact with supervising social workers	NO
• 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	NO
Observation of foster panel	YES
Inspection of policy/practice documents	YES
Inspection of records	YES
Interview with individual child	YES
Date of Inspection	21/3/05
Time of Inspection	9.30
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 was reviewed in November 2004. It gives clear aims and objectives of the agency. Staff have viewed the Statement of Purpose and feel it is a good reflection of the agency. The agencies complaints process was not clear however, was addressed. The agency has recently moved premises. The Statement of Purpose needs to have the new address on.

The young peoples guide letter is personalised, a foster carer did inform the inspector, at the last inspection the guide had been translated into the children's first languages, Arabic and Albanian, which is excellent good practice. The manager informed the inspector that the guide letter has also been translated into Portuguese for an asylum-seeking child.

The agency should consider producing the letter in a form suitable for younger children. In its present form, young children may have difficulties understanding the guide.

The manager informed the inspector that they have recently drafted a letter that will be provided to local authority social workers which explains how birth parents can access the agencies Statement of Purpose.

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 Manager of this agency is suitably qualified in childcare and management. She also has a wealth of substantial experience in the field of fostering. Staff informed the inspector that the manager is very supportive and gives effective leadership. The agency was very organised and child focused.		

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
The inspector found both the manager and responsible individual suitable to carry on a fostering agency in line with schedule 1 of the National Minimum Standards for Fostering Services.		

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?

0

Not assessed at this inspection.

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.

1

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.

1

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

Accountability and level of delegation is clear within the agency The manager is aware of her responsibilities, which are reflected in the job description.

Staff informed the inspector, that the deputy manager would deputise in the absence of the manager.

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

The fostering agency carries out robust checks and assessments before approval of all prospective foster homes. Evidence was viewed in Forms F that foster carers competencies in child care were considered. Health and safety checks along with pet ownership assessments and driving licence and insurances were evidenced within the foster carers files. The foster carers handbook addresses health and safety and foster carers informed the inspector that it was also addressed on the preparation training. Foster carers are given additional training in first aid.

The homes viewed by the inspector were friendly, adequately furnished and decorated and maintained to a high standard.

Foster carers informed the inspector that the agency requires them to write a safe caring statement, this outlines house rules that promote safe caring, for example all members of the household must be fully dressed around the house. These statements are reviewed annually.

The inspector was aware of two foster homes that were accommodating more children than the foster carers were approved for. In both cases the local authority where the home was located had granted an exemption. Evidence was viewed of risk assessments, letters to all social workers who had young people accommodated within these homes and that regular visits from supporting social workers were taking place. The manager informed the inspector that she regularly monitors the situation in both these homes.

An independent assessment officer assesses all foster carers annually. Evidence was viewed of updated health and safety checks which were presented to panel on the first review along with the independent reviewing officers report, the supporting social workers views and comments, present and previous foster children's views and comments as well as birth children's views and comments about their fostering experience.

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 agency has attracted a range of foster carers who represent the diverse communities in British Society. The manager said the agency intends to compile directory of the local services available that provide religious, linguistic, ethnic and cultural provisions so foster carers can support each child's individual needs.

Placing social workers informed the inspector via the questionnaires that the foster carers 'positively boost children's self esteem'.

Young people said that the foster carers give them lots of opportunities and they feel looked after properly.

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**

The agency use a matching format as well as information sharing with all relevant professionals, foster carers and young people when able to. The agency requests all 'Looked After Children' (LAC) forms prior to placement including chronologies. Evidence was viewed in files of placement plans. Foster carers were also aware and had copies of placement plans.

The manager informed the inspector that the agency is looking into additional training regarding diversity and cultures to support any future trans-racial placements. At the time of the inspection, the manager was also working on a policy document regarding the agencies position on trans-racial placements.

The foster carers informed the inspector that when possible, young people visit the foster home prior to the placement. Respite carers normally know the young people before respite takes place.

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?****3**

The agency has policies and procedures in place that address child protection, whistle blowing, bullying and absconding. All can be found in the Foster Carers Handbook, which all foster carers have. The manager informed the inspector that foster carers are requested to sign an agreement that corporal punishment is not acceptable.

Safe caring is addressed through training and supervision. Safer caring is a compulsory post-approval course that must be updated by carers regularly.

All carers have a written safe caring statement that is reviewed annually.

Percentage of foster children placed who report never or hardly ever being bullied:	100	%
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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

At the point of referral, the agency addresses the contact arrangements for young people and considers this before a placement is made. Foster carers sign this agreement as well as placing social workers.

Young people informed inspectors that they can have friends over to visit and they are also able to stop over at friends.

Foster Carers explained how on occasions the foster child's parents visit the foster home; this is only after discussions and agreements with the children's social worker.

The manager informed the inspector that they are looking to send a letter from the agency to birth families explaining the role of the agency, the Statement of Purpose.

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 inspector viewed evidence of birth parents opinions being taken into account during reviews recorded on the minutes. Young people are encouraged to attend their reviews and give their opinions regarding their care. Consultation forms are sent by social workers. The young person spoken to informed the inspector that they have and always would attend their review.

Fostering People request young people's views about their placements for the annual review of the foster carer. This is normally sought within the first two weeks of the placement and again after a placement finishes. Birth family children are also asked for their views and foster children will also be consulted during the placement.

The manager informed the inspector that supervising social workers also build up good relationships with the children that are placed at the foster carers. This enables young people to discuss aspects of the fostering service or any other concerns if their own social worker is not available.

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?****3**

Foster carers said that they do receive the 'red book' for younger a child that informs them of health matters. Unfortunately information on older children is not readily available. On occasions medical information is contained within the LAC paperwork or specialist reports but on the whole, very little information is available at the start of a placement. Foster carers spoken to were aware that it is their responsibility to register children within the first week of the placement with doctors and dentist unless otherwise stated on the placement agreement. The inspector observed this was the case in the files viewed, however one young person was awaiting a dental check-up. The placement agreement identifies any specialist services the young person may require and the foster carer signs to agree to facilitate these appointments.

All foster carers write daily records for the young people. Within these records, any medical appointments are evidenced with outcomes. The support social worker then records this information on a separate sheet within the child file. This information is sent to the placing social worker.

Foster carers attend first aid training.

Young people informed the inspector that they receive healthy food, lots of fruit and vegetables. The young people also said that foster carers encourage them to address their own personal hygiene.

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 an expectation that all foster carers promote the education of the young people in their care. This issue is discussed during the assessment process and ongoing through supervision and support from social workers.

The financial issues are addressed during the planning of the placement and the expectation is, foster carers approach schools to enrol the young people and attend relevant functions.

Foster carer informed the inspector that they get very good support from the agency via their supervising social workers.

Fostering People are addressing education for young people and approximately seven foster carers have attended an education-training course for children looked after.

The manager and staff team informed the inspector that all young people have educational placements or work.

The manager informed the inspector that they do have systems in place at present to monitor education attainment, however they are in the process of designing a new IT system that will monitor educational attainment more closely.

Evidence was viewed in each young person's file a specific sheet that identified educational issues.

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?	0
Not assessed at this inspection		

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?

4

The agency has in place a policy on recruitment of staff, which entails two references followed up with telephone calls, CRB checks and a six months probationary period. The agency has in place a leaflet on recruitment of foster carers. Staff files viewed by inspectors contained references and relevant qualifications. The agency holds CRB checks for staff, panel and carers separately in a locked facility. The Inspector viewed a selection all were found to be in date. The agency does insist on all administrative staff also having enhanced CRB checks as good practice. During interviews with staff members, the inspector found the team to have a wealth of experience and knowledge between them that enhanced the practice of the agency. The Statement of Purpose states all social workers are qualified and possess experience in the field of fostering, adoption and /or childcare fieldwork/residential. Post qualifying training is being offered to all eligible social work staff. Two members of staff have achieved the PQ 1 qualification. All social workers have sought registration with GSCC.

Total number of staff of the agency:

12

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?

0

Not assessed at this inspection.

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?	2
The agency is adequately staffed to meet the aims and objectives of its Statement of Purpose. Freelance workers are used when required. Fostering People have policies for both staff and foster carers recruitment; the foster carers information is in leaflet form, which is given to prospective carers. The forms F viewed were in-depth however some gaps were evident. Competences were addressed throughout but in some cases not fully explored. Overall the inspector viewed good analytical assessments by several staff members. CRB and statutory checks were in place on all over 18 year old within the fostering household. The agency clearly takes into account Brighton and Hove Recommendations and requests references from previous partners. The inspector observed at panel foster carers that had lived in England for less than three years. The panel was informed that CRB equivalent checks had been pursued in the other country however not returned as yet. Approval was subject to this being received.		

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
Foster carers informed the inspector that they are aware of the 24-hour support system the agency operates and gave examples when they had used this service. The questionnaires also supported the excellent support service offered. The manager informed the inspector that the agency has relevant insurance cover. The agency has up dated many of its policies and procedures that clarify work practices for both staff and foster carers. Recently a new recording policy has been introduced. .		

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?	0
Not assessed during this inspection.		

Standard 20 (20.1 - 20.5) All staff are properly accountable and supported.		
Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?	3
The agency holds regular staff meetings that all staff attend. Evidence was seen of supervision and job descriptions on the staff files. Evidence was viewed in foster carer's files of case supervision. This is easily identifiable by the green paper. Staff informed the inspector that they felt very well supported by the management team. Staff appraisals were in place and addressed training needs. .		

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
The Foster Carer's handbook explains to foster carers the strategy the agency has for working with carers. The agency has enabled foster carers to meet and support each other. At the time of the inspection two support groups were running. The agency provides lunch and organises a meeting place for both groups. Agency staff do not attend unless that are asked to by members of the groups. Foster carers are able to access a wide range of training. The manager and the staff team informed the inspector that an external training would be going to foster carers to do a training analysis. Staff spoken to are aware of their role and have a clear strategy for working and supporting foster carers. All annual reviews go to an independent reviewing officer, then to panel to consider. The manager and panel members have recently decided that in the future every 1st and every third review will go to panel unless any issues arise between. The placing social worker's questionnaires returned to the CSCI indicated that they feel the agency work in partnership with the local authority very well. One stated they felt 'both foster carers and the agency work well with the Social Services Department and work positively towards achieving the best outcomes for local authority children'.		

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?	0
Not assessed at this inspection		

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?**

0

Not assessed at this inspection.

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?**

3

The inspector viewed very good case files for each young person. A comprehensive recording policy ensured a consistent approach by all staff. Evidence was viewed on young peoples files of requests from the agency to placing social workers for missing LAC information. Signed placement agreements on files indicated that foster carers understood the basis for the placement, its intended duration and purpose and the details of the child's legal status. Foster carers informed inspectors that they do keep safe memorabilia for young people that are placed with them.

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
The manager regularly monitors all records in line with schedule 7 of the Fostering Services National Minimum Standards. Fostering People has a robust policy governing the recording. A procedure is in place where foster carers and children can access their personal file and are encouraged to make any additions and comments including any dissent on their files. The inspector found the records legible, clearly expressed and distinguishing from fact, opinion and third party information. All daily records are typed and sent to social workers bi-monthly. Notifications should be kept in separate files. At the time of the inspection compliments, complaints, allegations and schedule 8 notifications were all kept together. Evidence that the relevant people identified in schedule 8 have been notified in writing needs to be put in place. See Recommendation Number 1			
Number of current foster placements supported by the agency:			39
Number of placements made by the agency in the last 12 months:			36
Number of placements made by the agency which ended in the past 12 months:			28
Number of new foster carers approved during the last 12 months:			14
Number of foster carers who left the agency during the last 12 months:			3
Current weekly payments to foster parents: Minimum £	329	Maximum £	429

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?

4

Fostering People have recently moved to new premises. These premises are identifiable, accessible during office hours, however secured doors are operated via intercom and code systems. The offices have ample parking for staff and visitors.

The office suit is spacious, well equipped and staff say a very pleasant work environment.

Files are locked away and computer systems backed –up and password protected.

Areas are set-aside for young people, equipped with table tennis and other activities. A separate room is available for staff and foster care training and a suitable meeting room is available for panel meeting.

The manager informed the inspector that adequate insurance is in place.

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?

0

Not assessed during this inspection.

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 manager informed the inspector that the agency uses a registered accountant. The inspector was informed that a clear written set of principals describing the procedure and standards governing the management of the agencies finances is in place.

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 informed the inspector that they always receive prompt payment as agreed at the start of placements.

Foster carers did say that if a retainer could be paid when they have no placements, it would be good.

Within the foster carers manual is a breakdown of payments, which is reviewed regularly.

Evidence was viewed in foster carers files of letters that had been sent with updated allowances on.

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

Fostering People have a clear written policy for the fostering panel that is in line with the Fostering National Minimum Standards. Panels member are from relevant backgrounds including education, independent social worker, previous and present foster carers and a previously fostered young person. The chair is an independent member. Evidence was viewed of all relevant checks including CRB on panel member's files. The inspector observed the panel that formulated good probing questions. Panel monitor the foster carers at annual reviews. It was discussed that reviews would be brought to panel every two years however panel member would receive the independent reviewing officer's report to keep them up to date on each foster family. If there is a 'declaration of interest' it needs to be clearly evidenced at each panel and within the panel minutes.

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?
Not applicable.	9

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?
Not applicable.	9

PART C

LAY ASSESSOR'S SUMMARY

(where applicable)

Not 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 21/03/05 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

YES

Comments were received from the provider

YES

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

YES

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

NO

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 29th April 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

NO

Provider has declined to provide an action plan

NO

Other: <enter details here>

NO

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 Mr Byatt of Fostering People Ltd 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 Mr Byatt of Fostering People Ltd 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

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