

inspection report

Fostering Services

Fostering People Ltd

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

31st March 2003

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 9145301

Address

St Clement's House, 61 Trent Boulevard West Bridgford,
Nottingham, NG2 5BE

Fax No

0115 9145303

Email Address

info@Fosteringpeople.co.uk

Registered Number of IFA

Name of Registered Provider

Fostering People Ltd

Name of Registered Manager (if applicable)

Sarah Byatt

Date of first registration

Date of latest registration certificate

Registration Conditions Apply ?

NO

Date of last inspection

Date and Time of Inspection Visit		31/3/03 9am	ID Code
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)			
Name of Interpreter/Signer (if applicable)			

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(National Minimum Standards For Fostering Services)

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- 3. Management of the fostering service**
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INTRODUCTION TO REPORT AND INSPECTION

Independent and local authority fostering services which fall within the jurisdiction of the National Care Standards Commission (NCSC) 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 2001 and the Children Act 1989 as amended.

This document summarises the inspection findings of the NCSC 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 2001 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 NCSC 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 2001. 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 a small agency with six members of staff. The agency is at present looking to recruit more staff. The staff team are highly motivated and conscientious in their respective roles within the agency. The agency provides foster families for children aged between 0-19years old, including siblings, parent and child and in particular teenagers.

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.)

Statement of Purpose – Is in final draft, however is clear and concise, identifying the aims and objectives of the agency. The young peoples guide letter to the agency is excellent and informative. Also Inspectors viewed it had been translated into the first language for one young person.

Fitness to provide a fostering service – The agency has suitably qualified staff that support foster carers.

Management of the fostering service – Recent changes to the manager's role, now entails a greater emphasis on monitoring, overseeing and controlling the activities of the service.

Securing and promoting welfare - The agency regularly seeks the views of young people placed within the agency. The standards within the foster homes viewed are high and well supported.

Recruiting, checking, managing, supporting and training staff and foster carers – The small size of the agency is an advantage for both staff and foster carers. It enables a good level of support to all; knowledge of training needs for individuals and an overall professional service.

Records – Confusion of the new standards have impacted on the recording systems within the agency, however the introduced management monitoring systems will address any short falls.

Fitness of Premises – The agencies premises are in good order and do have space to expand. IT systems are of a good standard and security is well addressed.

Financial requirements – The agency informed Inspectors only registered accountants are used. A clear written set of principles and procedures are needed regarding the governing of finances. Foster carer's state that they receive prompt payments.

Fostering Panels – The agency has its own panel made up of independent and professional people and regularly seek their recommendations on several different issues from approvals to complaints.

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 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 2001.

No.	Regulation	Standard	Required actions	

Action is being taken by the National Care Standards Commission 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		

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 and recommendations 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 2001, 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, schedule 7	FS4	Ensure there are clear procedures for monitoring and controlling the activities of the fostering agency.	End October 2003
2	11	FS7	Ensure before placements are made, due consideration is given to the Child's religious persuasion, racial origin and cultural linguistic background. Support and training needs to be in place with foster carers when transracial placements are made.	November 2003
3	21	FS5	Ensure all staff have a job description outlining their responsibilities.	July 2003
4	16	FS13	Ensure a system for monitoring educational attainment of the young people is implemented.	October 2003
5	16	FS14	Ensure the fostering agency assist with the making of, and give effect to, the arrangements made for his education, training and employment.	March 2004
6	21	FS16	Ensure all staff have training and appraisals.	November 2003
7	22 schedule 2	FS24	Ensure young people's files contain information specified in schedule 2	September 2003

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	FS8	Ensure all aspects of the matching process are evidenced and address to promote the welfare of the young person.
2	FS12	Ensure all young people have a written health record that is up dated and can move with the young person.
3	FS24	A recording policy needs to be established
4	FS25	A written procedure for foster carers and young people needs to be established which encourages access and input into files and records.
5		A clear written set of principles describing the procedure and standards governing the management of the agencies finances needs to be established.

* 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	6
Survey of placing authorities	YES
Foster carer survey	YES
Foster children survey	YES
Checks with other organisations and Individuals	YES
• Directors of Social services	NO
• Child protection officer	YES
• Specialist advisor (s)	NO
• Local Foster Care Association	NO
Tracking Individual welfare arrangements	YES
• Interview with children	YES
• Interview with foster carers	YES
• Interview with agency staff	YES
• Contact with parents	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	YES
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	YES
Date of Inspection	31/3/03
Time of Inspection	9:00
Duration Of Inspection (hrs)	63

The following pages summarise the key findings and evidence from this inspection, together with the NCSC 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.

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 agency has a draft copy of the Statement of Purpose, Inspectors found it in need of slight amendments, however on the whole it is clear and in line with the National Minimum Standards for Fostering Services. Staff informed Inspectors they have viewed the revised Statement of Purpose and feel it reflects the aims and objectives of the agency. The young peoples guide letter is personalised, a foster carer informed Inspectors, that the guide had been translated into the children's first languages, Arabic and Albanian, which is excellent good practice.		

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 has substantial experience. At present she is undertaking an Open University course - Professional Certificate in Management. Due to recent staff recruitment, Inspectors were informed, more time is now dedicated to the management of the agency.		

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
Inspectors found both the Manager and responsible individual suitable 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?

2

Through the agencies policies and procedures, carers, staff and management are clear about their individual accountability.

The agency is reviewing its procedure for monitoring and quality performance. Inspectors were informed that due to the recent newly appointed social workers; the manager will now be able to focus more on the monitoring procedures.

Number of statutory notifications made to NCSC 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.

1

Serious complaint about a foster parent.

1

Initiation of child protection enquiry involving a child.

1

Number of complaints made to NCSC 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?

2

Accountability and level of delegation are clear within the agency The Manager is aware of her responsibilities, however does not have a job description.

Inspectors were informed who would deputise in the absence of the Manager, this is also clear to staff.

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

Foster homes viewed by Inspectors were of a good standard in pleasant environments. Foster carers informed Inspectors that health and safety is addressed by the agency through training and health and safety check lists, which are carried out on their homes by the agency.

Standard 7 (7.1 - 7.7)

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

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

2

On occasions trans-racial placements have been made within the agency. The Manager informed Inspectors information and support is given as requested. Inspectors visited some very positive trans- racial placements, however this was not the case for one. Training needs to be addressed before placements of this nature are made. During the matching process, all issues need to be addressed and agreements of support in place before the young person is placed.

Standard 8 (8.1 - 8.7)

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

Key Findings and Evidence**Standard met?**

2

Inspectors did not find written evidence of the matching process or risk assessment, however were informed by the Manager that each match is carefully considered and risks to other children in the household addressed within the team and children's social worker before a placement is made.

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

Fostering People's policies and procedures which address child protection, whistle blowing, bullying and absconding are found in the Foster Carers Handbook which is given to all foster carers. The Manager informed Inspectors that foster carers are requested to sign an agreement that corporal punishment is not acceptable. Safe caring is also addressed through training and supervision.

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

99

%

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, Fostering People address the contact arrangements for young people and consider this before a placement is made.

Young people Informed Inspectors that they can have friends over to visit.

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

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
Inspectors viewed evidence that birth parents opinions are taken into account during reviews. Young People are encouraged to attend their reviews and views sought. Fostering people request the young peoples views for annual reviews of foster carers, within the first two weeks of placements and after a placement finishes. The Manager informed Inspectors supervising social workers also build up relationships with children that are placed at the foster carers, which enables the young people to discuss aspects of the fostering service.		

Standard 12 (12.1 - 12.8) The fostering service ensures that it provides foster care services which help each child or young person in foster care to receive health care which meets her/his needs for physical, emotional and social development, together with information and training appropriate to her/his age and understanding to enable informed participation in decisions about her/his health needs.		
Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?	2
Inspectors found not all young people had medical records on their files. During interviews with carers, it was brought to the Inspectors attention that carers do not see medical records or have specific medical records which they up date during the child's stay with them. Foster carers ensure young people are register with local doctors, dentist and opticians. Unless medical issues are raised at reviews, foster carers have very little knowledge of the medical needs of the young person.		

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?	2
The agency have an expectation that all foster carers promote the education of the young people in their care and this issue is discussed during the assessment process and ongoing through supervision and support from supervising 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. Fostering People are addressing education for young people and approximately seven foster carers have attended an education-training course for children looked after. Inspectors found no evidence of information systems, which demonstrate the educational attainment of the young people in their fostering service.		

Standard 14 (14.1 - 14.5)

The fostering service ensures that their foster care services help to develop skills, competence and knowledge necessary for adult living.

Key Findings and Evidence**Standard met?****2**

Foster carers informed Inspectors that decisions made at reviews form the framework for support and guidance given to young people.
Inspectors found very little evidence of pathways plans for young people.
Through supervision sessions, young people's progression is discussed, but it appears questions are raised regarding whose responsibility it is to plan for independence of young people. No evidence of training was seen that addressed young people and how independent skills could be met within the foster home.

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

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. They have in place a leaflet on recruitment of foster carers, which is in the process of being reviewed.

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. Inspectors viewed a selection all were found to be in date.

Total number of staff of the agency:

6

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

0

Standard 16 (16.1 - 16.16)

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

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

2

Of the staff files viewed, all appeared up to date and contained supervision notes and training logs, however, Inspectors did not view training plans or staff appraisals.

The small staff team, work closely together in an efficient and effective way that is evident in the standards the agency sets.

Standard 17 (17.1 - 17.7) The fostering service has an adequate number of sufficiently experienced and qualified staff and recruits a range of carers to meet the needs of children and young people for whom it aims to provide a service.		
Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?	3
The agency has sufficient qualified and experienced staff at present but are very much aware as carers numbers grow they may need to recruit to maintain the current good practices. Fostering People have policies for both staff and foster carers recruitment; the foster carers information is in leaflet form, which can be given to prospective carers.		

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 Inspectors they are aware of the 24-hour support system the agency operates and gave examples when they had used this service. Inspectors viewed insurance cover letters, which indicated adequate cover from allegations directed at staff or foster carers. The agency has recently up dated many of its policies and procedures that clarify work practices for both staff and foster carers.		

Standard 19 (19.1 - 19.7) There is a good quality training programme to enhance individual skills and to keep staff up-to-date with professional and legal developments.		
Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?	2
Staff informed Inspectors that after the induction period, they do not have regular training or a training plan for the future. All acknowledged the ever-changing legal developments, which they feel they need constant up dating on. Inspectors evidenced joint training taking place with staff and carers.		

Standard 20 (20.1 - 20.5) All staff are properly accountable and supported.		
Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?	2
The agency hold regular staff meetings which all staff attend. Evidence was seen of supervision and job descriptions on the staff files. Staff appraisals need to be addressed.		

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?	2
The foster carers handbook explains the strategy for working with and supporting carers. Foster carers spoken to feel they are supported adequately and the agency discusses the frequency of support visits with them. Inspectors did evidence a carer who was in need of a great deal of support, however the support given was not evident within the carers file.		

Standard 22 (22.1 - 22.10) The fostering service is a managed one that provides supervision for foster carers and helps them to develop their skills.		
Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?	2
Foster carers informed Inspectors that supervision takes place regularly. These notes were evident on carers files however not all were signed by supervising social worker.		

Standard 23 (23.1 - 23.9)

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

Key Findings and Evidence**Standard met?****2**

Inspectors were informed all foster carers attend preparation training before young people are placed with them.

The agency runs regular training sessions throughout the year and consults with foster carers on what training they feel would enhance the quality of care for young people.

The agency strives to get all foster carers on to the training courses, however this is not always the case. Evidence was seen which highlighted the amount of carers that have not attended training for some time.

Evidence was viewed of annual reviews addressing appraisals and training needs

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?

1

Inspectors viewed the case records for foster carers and young people. The agency discussed with Inspectors the difficulties regarding what information should be kept on what file. It was evident that on some files information was kept, which was not pertaining to that relevant file. At the time of the inspection no recording policy was evident. Information kept on young people is that which was discussed during the matching process. Many files viewed did not have relevant LAC forms and care plans, however the agency informed Inspectors they have requested them from the local authority.

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?

1

The Manager informed Inspectors she would be introducing monitoring procedures as the agency had grown and she no longer had a 'hands on' role of supervising foster carers. Inspectors found no evidence of a procedure on how children, carers and parents can access records. Inspectors found no evidence of young people reading and commenting on personal records. Inspectors found evidence that a foster carer had acted inappropriately. The agency must record and take appropriate action immediately. Inspectors found evidence that not all complaints are recorded in accordance with the agencies policies and procedures.

Number of current foster placements supported by the agency:

15

Number of placements made by the agency in the last 12 months:

32

Number of placements made by the agency which ended in the past 12 months:

17

Number of new foster carers approved during the last 12 months:

8

Number of foster carers who left the agency during the last 12 months:

1

Current weekly payments to foster parents: Minimum £

336

Maximum £

406

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
Fostering People are located on the second and third floors of the building. The offices are suitable for the agency at its present size, however the Manager informed Inspectors that there is a possibility of expanding the office area as the agency grows. Suitable IT equipment is available for staff and security is addressed with locked cupboards, doors and alarms.		

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

Inspectors viewed recent accounts that appear in good order with sufficient finances to fulfil its obligations.

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?

2

The Manager informed Inspectors that the agency uses a registered accountant. Inspectors did not view a clear written set of principals describing the procedure and standards governing the management of the agencies finances.

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**

Carers informed inspectors that payments are prompt and the agency does inform them of what the payment is expected to cover.

Within the carer's handbook, the terms and process for payments are explained in depth, including tax issues.

The handbook does state rates of pay will be reviewed annually

Fostering Panels

The intended outcome for the following set of standards is:

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

Standard 30 (30.1 - 30.9)

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

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

2

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 education, health, independent children's social worker, previous and present foster carers, in general an independent panel and chair.

The agency is in the process of ensuring all panel members are CRB checked

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?

0

Standard not assessed

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?
Standard not assessed	0

PART C**LAY ASSESSOR'S SUMMARY****(where applicable)****Lay Assessor**

Signature

Date

Lead Inspector

Lynn Smith**Signature**

Date

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

We would welcome comments on the content of this report relating to the Inspection conducted on 31st march2003 of inspection here Fostering People and any factual inaccuracies:

Please limit your comments to one side of A4 if possible

- Overall, the report accurately reflects the state of the Agency at the time of the inspection.
- A number of issues were deemed to be less than satisfactory are a result of lack of clarity/guidance on interpreting the regulations. For example, monitoring children's educational attainment and accessing health information is clearly a statutory function of the Local Authority social worker. It would seem to us that in order to acquire this information accurately for ourselves, we would have to seek this directly from other parent partners (e.g. schools/health departments). We are not clear we have the right or authority to do this. Whilst we will endeavour to undertake this function in order to support foster carers provide appropriate care to children placed, there seems to be an outstanding confusion of role and responsibility.
- With regards Reg 11 (FS 7) we consider that a general opinion has been drawn from one particular issue, which surfaced co-incidentally with the Inspector. We do not think the carer required more support and training to undertake a trans-racial placement, but it did give rise to questions about overall match. Generally, the Agency would not promote trans-racial placements and would therefore not offer training specifically on this issue. Although the practical and legal requirements of meeting a child's religious, cultural, racial and linguistic needs are discussed with every placement. However we now recognise that the implications of trans-racial placements need more attention at the assessment and preparation stage.
- Since 1st July the Agency has recruited 2 more professional staff, which has allowed the Manager more time for the overall running of the Agency. We have begun to implement most of the statutory requirements but specific timings are supplied in the Action Plan that accompanies this report. Some of the requirements (e.g. sch 7) have many facets, some of which are already satisfied. More details on Agency plan of action can be supplied if necessary.
- The Agency remains reliant on Local Authority supplying some information for children's files, such as official copies of the care plan. The Agency will specifically note when these are not forthcoming.

Sarah Byatt

Action taken by the NCSC 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 25/7/03, 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 NCSC inspection reports are public documents. Reports on children's homes are only obtainable on personal application to NCSC 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 Sarah 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 Sarah 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 _____

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