



Making Social Care
Better for People

inspection report

Fostering Services

Norfolk County Council Fostering Services

Social Services, County Hall

Martineau Lane

Norwich

Norfolk

NR1 2SQ

10th May 2004

Commission for Social Care Inspection

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

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

The role of CSCI is to:

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

Inspection Methods & Findings

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

The 4-point scale ranges from:

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

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

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

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

FOSTERING SERVICE INFORMATION

Local Authority Fostering Service?

YES

Name of Authority

Norfolk County Council Fostering Services

Address

Social Services, County Hall, Martineau Lane, Norwich,
Norfolk, NR1 2SQ

Local Authority Manager

Malcolm Griffiths; Chris Sell; Stuart Marpole

Tel No:

01603 222141

Address

Social Services, County Hall, Martineau Lane, Norwich,
Norfolk, NR1 2SQ

Fax No:

01603 223096

Email Address

Registered Fostering Agency (IFA)

NO

Name of Agency

Not Applicable

Tel No

Address

Fax No

Email Address

Registered Number of IFA

Name of Registered Provider

Not Applicable

Name of Registered Manager (if applicable)

Date of first registration

Date of latest registration certificate

Registration Conditions Apply ?

NO

Date of last inspection

N/A

Date of Inspection Visit		10th May 2004	ID Code
Time of Inspection Visit		10:00 am	
Name of Inspector	1	Clive Lucas	132597
Name of Inspector	2	Hilary Richards	
Name of Inspector	3	Jerry Crehan	
Name of Inspector	4	Susan Golphin	
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		Mr Malcolm Griffiths	

Introduction to Report and Inspection
Inspection visits
Description of Fostering Service

Part A: Summary of Inspection Findings
Reports and Notifications to the Local Authority and Secretary of State
Implementation of Statutory Requirements from last Inspection
Statutory Requirements from this Inspection
Good Practice Recommendations from this Inspection

Part B: Inspection Methods & Findings
(National Minimum Standards For Fostering Services)

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

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

Part D: Provider's Response

- D.1. Provider's comments**
- D.2. Action Plan**
- D.3. Provider's agreement**

INTRODUCTION TO REPORT AND INSPECTION

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

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

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

The report will show the following:

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

This report is a public document.

INSPECTION VISITS

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

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE SERVICES PROVIDED.

Norfolk Social Services Fostering Service is contained within the Children and Families division of Norfolk Social Services. The Service is divided into 3 main areas, mainstream fostering, specialist fostering and short term breaks. The short term break scheme is managed within the children with disabilities team.

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.)

This was the first inspection of Norfolk Social Services Fostering Service. Inspectors were consistently told that the Service had improved since the re organisation of June 2003. The full impact of this has not yet taken effect and a number of requirements and recommendations made in this report are likely to be addressed as the changes settle down. Next year's inspection will better measure the outcome of the re organisation, but overall it appears to have made a very positive difference.

1. Statement of Purpose (standard 1)

Standard nearly met.

The Statement of Purpose accurately describes the services that are provided, and is available in other languages, Braille or on audio cassette. Details of complaints received and their outcomes need to include all complaints made to the service.

With a few exceptions the Statement of Purpose was found to be accurate and included all of the required information.

The Children's Guide(s) need to be produced as a matter of priority.

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

2 standards nearly met.

All managers are experienced, 1 manager must undertake a management qualification at NVQ level 4, or another qualification, which matches the competencies required by NVQ level 4. References are present for all 3 managers, but 2 did not have police checks or CRB checks on their files

3. Management of the fostering service (standards 4-5)

1 standard met, 1 standard nearly met.

The service has recently introduced a Monthly Fostering Report, while still relatively new, these should help to ensure efficient monitoring of the service. The Monthly Fostering Reports may form the basis for reviews under regulation 42 of the Fostering Service Regulations 2002, and additional information regularly received by the manager of the mainstream service would cover all of the areas of Schedule 7. There will need to be consultation with those specified in regulation 42, and the managers of the other 2 areas of the service will need to ensure that they also receive all the required information to enable them to carry out reviews under regulation 42.

There are job descriptions for all managers and lines of accountability are clear. There are also arrangements to identify the person in charge when the manager is absent.

Requests for placements are made to the Provider Team, with the exception of short term breaks which are referred directly to the FPSWs. Through discussions with foster carers and FPSW/CSWs the inspectors are of the opinion that attempts are made to match as much as possible, but this can be limited by the available resources. Norfolk Fostering Service does not use dedicated foster placement agreements, but relies on the national Looked After Children paperwork, this needs to include reference to matching.

The Fostering Service must ensure that in all cases the potential mix of all children in the placement is taken into account.

4. Securing and promoting welfare (standards 6-14)
3 standards met, 6 standards nearly met.

Response to placing social workers' and children's questionnaires indicated that in the vast majority of cases foster carers were providing safe healthy and nurturing environments. Health and safety checks are carried out on foster carers homes as part of the assessment process and reviewed if circumstances change. All foster homes should be inspected annually to ensure that they meet the needs of the children fostered and to review any health and safety issues. At the time of the inspection this happened in some, but not all cases.

The service recognises that it has a lack of carers able to offer diversity for children placed within the service, and are seeking to rectify this through recruitment of new carers. Children with disabilities who are placed in either the short term break scheme or mainstream foster care, have their needs taken fully into account.

Training in child protection is provided for foster carers and information is provided in the Foster Carer Handbook. Safe care guidance is provided and all carers complete a safe care policy document, the quality of these was variable and they will require monitoring. The number and outcomes of all child protection allegations is recorded by team managers on Monthly Fostering Reports (see Standard 4). It is recommended that a system be established to collate this information on a county wide and ongoing basis, which allows for regular scrutiny. The Fostering Service must ensure that carers are given full information about foster children placed with them, to enable them to protect the child, their own children and other children in the placement.

Overall there were very positive comments made by children about the level of care they received from foster carers.

The service encourages contact and carers support children in their contact with families. A number of children indicated that they did not know how to make a complaint. When the Children's Guide is produced this will provide additional information on making complaints.

The Fostering Service is well aware of the health services in its area. Norfolk Social Services have an inter-agency (Lifescape) team who work with looked after children.

Carers are provided with information on helping to prepare children for adulthood. Evidence from case tracking and files showed that there had been some very good practice in this area.

5. Recruiting, checking, managing, supporting and training staff and foster carers (standards 15-23)

3 standards met, 5 standards nearly met, 1 standard not met.

Recruitment is done in line with Norfolk Social Services policies and procedures, which meet the required standard. CRB checks are not renewed every 3 years and should be. It is recommended that those responsible for the service satisfy themselves that the necessary information on disclosures is made available to those responsible for making decisions about suitability of individuals to work with children.

FPSWs are qualified as social workers, CSWs are unqualified. The Fostering Service must ensure that unqualified staff are supervised to an appropriate level and are provided with the knowledge and skills set out in NMS 15.

There is a clear structure and defined lines of accountability within the service. Norfolk Social Services have appropriate employment policies and procedures in place.

Out of hours support for carers differs for the 3 areas of the service. It is recommended that the out of hours support for mainstream carers be reviewed.

The inspectors found that induction training was in place and that ongoing training is also provided. Appraisals for fostering staff are not taking place throughout the service and should be.

All staff have access to the policies and procedures of the organisation, and have clear details of the duties and responsibilities expected of them. Carers and fostering staff reported that the system for communication between the child's social worker and the Fostering Service can be problematical at times. The Fostering Service has plans to visit social work teams with "road-shows" to promote and explain the work of the service.

Foster carers are regularly supervised in the mainstream and specialist services. The short term break FPSWs have regular contact with carers, but this does not meet the requirements of supervision in NMS 22. Supervision of carers is undertaken by both qualified and unqualified staff. This is contrary to this NMS 22, which states that each foster carer is supervised by a named, appropriately qualified social worker.

Some FPSW/CSWs undertake annual unannounced visits to carers, this should happen in all cases.

6. Records (standards 24-25)

1 standard met, 1 standard nearly met.

Foster carers receive clear guidance about recording in the Foster Carer's Handbook. There is written guidance for staff on record keeping. Records are securely stored.

Records are kept and collated of complaints made in respect of the service, which involve Norfolk Social Services complaints officer. Records of complaints that do not involve the complaints officer and records of allegations are kept by individual team managers and passed on to their managers. A system should be developed for recording and monitoring all allegations and complaints about the service, including those which do not involve the

complaints officer.

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

1 standard nearly met.

Norfolk Fostering service uses offices located around the County. All of these offices have secure storage for records. In some offices there is insufficient administrative back up and office equipment (IT) to enable staff to carry out their duties in an efficient and effective manner. A planned move may address some of these problems. Accommodation should be reviewed.

8. Financial requirements (standards 27-29)

3 standards met.

Norfolk Social Services Fostering Service is funded by Norfolk County Council. There are appropriate systems for running the Fostering Service.

9. Foster panels (standard 30)

Standard nearly met

Norfolk Fostering Service operates 5 Foster Panels, all of which have independent chairs. Access to administrative support for Panels varies.

One panel member began work on the panel before the return of her CRB. The Fostering Service must ensure that no panel members begin work until all checks have been satisfactorily completed.

Training is provided for panel members and panel chairs. The inspectors felt that some panel members would benefit from further training and information on fostering matters.

10. Short-term breaks (standard 31)

Standard met

Norfolk's short-term break (STB) scheme has 146 carers. Recruitment and training is undertaken by the STB Social Workers.

In general STB carers gave positive feed back on the training and support that they receive.

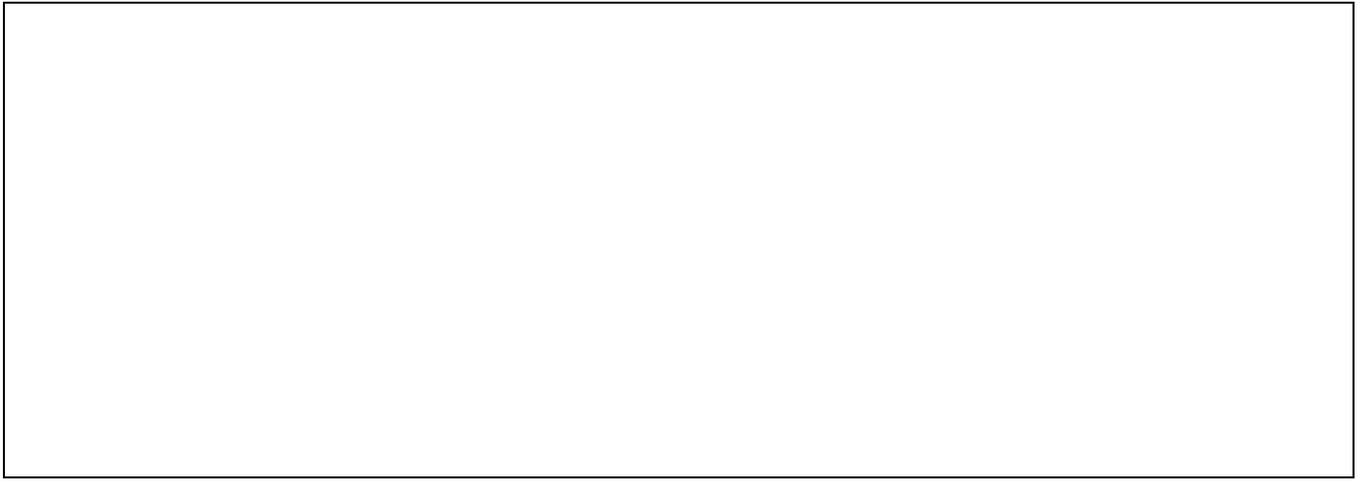
12. Family and friends as carers (standard 32)

Standard nearly met

Norfolk Fostering Service is not managing to complete emergency approvals of family and friends in the set time, but is making all reasonable efforts to do so.

The inspectors found some examples of family carers who had not been reviewed annually, and with a history of little involvement from FPSWs and social workers. The support and training needs of family and friends as carers should be assessed and met in the same way as for any other carers.

The inspectors would like to thank the staff and managers of the service as well as the foster carers and children for help and co-operation during the inspection.



Reports and Notifications to the Local Authority and Secretary of State

(Local Authority Fostering Services Only)

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

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

NO

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

YES

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:

There is a failure to meet some of the Fostering Service Regulations 2002. The failure is not substantial and can be dealt with the CSCI issuing a Section 47 (5) Notice.

Implementation of Statutory Requirements from Last Inspection

Requirements from last Inspection visit fully actioned?

NA

If No please list below

STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS

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

No.	Regulation	Standard	Required actions	

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

COMPLIANCE WITH CONDITIONS OF REGISTRATION (IF APPLICABLE)

(Registered Independent Fostering Agencies only)

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

Condition	Compliance	
Not applicable as service not registered.		
Comments		

Condition	Compliance	
Comments		

Condition	Compliance	
Comments		

Condition	Compliance	
Comments		

Lead Inspector Clive Lucas **Signature** _____
Second Inspector Hilary Richards **Signature** _____
Locality Manager Frances Chatten **Signature** _____
Date _____

STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS IDENTIFIED DURING THIS INSPECTION

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

STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS

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

No.	Regulation	Standard *	Requirement	
1	FSR 3	FS1	Children's guide(s) must be produced as a matter of priority.	31/08/04
2	FSR 7	FS2	The specialist fostering manager must undertake a management qualification at NVQ level 4, or another qualification, which matches the competencies required by NVQ level 4.	31/12/04
3	FSR 20	FS3	CRB checks must be obtained for all staff.	With immediate effect upon receipt of this report
4	FSR 29	FS6	Foster homes must be inspected annually to ensure that they continue to be suitable.	With immediate effect upon receipt of this report
5	FSR 29	FS6	Caravans used within the specialist fostering team must be checked annually as part of carer reviews and advice must be sought about the frequency of servicing and checking of heaters and gas appliances needed to ensure they operate safely.	With immediate effect upon receipt of this report

6	FSR 33	FS8	The Fostering Service must ensure that in all cases the potential mix of all children in the placement is taken into account.	With immediate effect upon receipt of this report
7	FSR 33	FS9	The Fostering Service must ensure that carers are given full information about foster children placed with them, to enable them to protect the child, their own children and other children in the placement.	With immediate effect upon receipt of this report
8	FSR 21	FS15	Fostering Service must ensure that unqualified staff are supervised to an appropriate level and are provided with the knowledge and skills set out in paragraph 15.5 of this Standard.	With immediate effect upon receipt of this report
9	FSR 21	FS19	Staff must receive appraisals.	The process to begin by 30/10/04
10	FSR 23	FS26	Norfolk Fostering Service must review their office accommodation to ensure that any forthcoming changes are effective in providing premises which are appropriate for the purpose of achieving the aims and objectives set out in the Statement of Purpose.	30/10/04
11	FSR 20	FS30	The Fostering Service must ensure that no panel members begin work until all checks have been satisfactorily completed.	With immediate effect upon receipt of this report

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
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1	FS1	It is recommended that the fostering service pro-actively distributes its Statement of Purpose and encourages placing social workers to read it.
2	FS4	It is recommended that Norfolk Fostering service undertake reviews as set out in regulation 42 of the FSR 2002.
3	FS9	It is recommended that the content of these documents be reviewed to ensure that they are all of an acceptable standard. It is further recommended that consideration be given to these documents being completed in relation to specific children in placement.
4	FS12	It is recommended that a system be developed to monitor which carers have completed first aid training and which are due to do so.
5	FS15	It is recommended that CRB checks be renewed every 3 years.
6	FS15	It is recommended that those responsible for the service satisfy themselves that the necessary information on disclosures is made available to those responsible for making decisions about suitability of individuals to work with children.
7	FS18	It is recommended that the out of hours support for mainstream and STB carers be reviewed.
8	FS22	It is recommend that all foster carers are regularly supervised in accordance with this Standard.
9	FS22	It is recommended that unannounced visits to carers take place at least once a year.
10	FS22	It is recommended that supervision of carers be only undertaken by qualified staff.
11	FS23	It is recommended that efforts continue to provide training that is accessible.
12	FS23	It is recommended that specific consideration be given to any help or support needed by the sons and daughters of foster carers
13	FS25	It is recommended that a system be developed for recording and monitoring all allegations and complaints about the service, including those that do not involve the complaints officer.

14	FS26	It is recommended that the Fostering Service reviews the availability of IT equipment and systems and administrative back up, and develop an action plan of areas that need addressing.
15	FS30	It is recommended that an audit of training needs of panel members be carried out and any identified training be provided.
16	FS32	It is recommended that the support and training needs of family and friends as carers are assessed and met in the same way as for any other carers.
17	FS1	It is recommended that the summary of complaints in the Statement of Purpose include all complaints made to the service.
18	FS8	In order to evidence matching and to identify any additional support needed by carers, the Fostering Service must include reference to matching in whatever form it uses to meet the requirements of the foster placement agreement.

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

Number of Inspector days spent	23
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	NO
• Specialist advisor (s)	NO
• Local Foster Care Association	NO
Tracking Individual welfare arrangements	YES
• Interview with children	YES
• Interview with foster carers	YES
• Interview with agency staff	YES
• Contact with parents	YES
• Contact with supervising social workers	YES
• Examination of files	YES
Individual interview with manager	YES
Information from provider	YES
Individual interviews with key staff	YES
Group discussion with staff	YES
Interview with panel chair	YES
Observation of foster carer training	NO
Observation of foster panel	YES
Inspection of policy/practice documents	YES
Inspection of records	YES
Interview with individual child	YES
Date of Inspection	10/05/04
Time of Inspection	0900
Duration Of Inspection (hrs)	165

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?

2

The service has 1 Statement of Purpose, which covers all three areas:

- short term breaks,
- specialist fostering and
- mainstream fostering.

The Statement of Purpose accurately describes the services that are provided, and is available in other languages, Braille or on audio cassette.

Details of complaints received and their outcomes, included in the Statement of Purpose, are only those that are passed to Norfolk Social Service's complaints officer. It is recommended that this includes all complaints made to the service (see comments for Standard 25)

The Statement of Purpose states that there are support groups for short term break carers, when currently there are not. It also states that foster carers own children will contribute to the review process; the inspectors found this to be variable, depending largely upon the individual Family Placement Support Workers (FPSW), Short Term Break Social Worker (STBSW) or Carer Support Workers (CSW). With these exceptions the Statement of Purpose was found to be accurate and included all of the required information. The Statement of Purpose must be amended to accurately reflect the areas detailed above.

There is no Children's Guide. A draft guide was produced, but when it was put before Norfolk Social Service's user involvement group, it was felt to need complete re-writing. The intention is to provide 3 different guides to reflect the differing abilities and ages of children who are fostered. It is hoped that the guide will be ready in June 2004. The inspectors commend the intention to produce different guides for different ages and abilities. The guide(s) must be produced as a matter of priority.

Responses in questionnaires from placing social workers indicated that most had not seen the Statement of Purpose. Although these social workers also work for Norfolk Social Services, given some comments from foster carers and (to a lesser degree) social workers, there does appear to be a perceived lack of understanding about each other's role. It is recommended that the fostering service pro-actively distributes its Statement of Purpose and encourages placing social workers to read it.

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?	2
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At present the service has 3 managers for the 3 different areas (short term breaks, specialist fostering and mainstream fostering). The manager of the specialist fostering, although having considerable management experience, does not have a management qualification. The specialist fostering manager must undertake a management qualification at NVQ level 4, or another qualification, which matches the competencies required by NVQ level 4.

The other 2 managers have suitable management qualifications and substantial management experience. All managers have suitable professional qualifications.

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?	2
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The 3 managers have all worked for Norfolk Social Services for a considerable period of time, and have held other management posts within the Department. References are present for all 3, but 2 did not have police checks or CRB checks on their files. CRB checks must be obtained and renewed every 3 years.

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

The service has recently introduced a Monthly Fostering Report. This consists of a pro forma report that is completed by team managers (through consultation with FPSWs STBSWs and CSWs) and sent to the manager for that part of the service. They are subsequently discussed in supervision between the team manager and the service manager. The reports cover complaints; serious illness, accident or medical issues; unauthorised absences; episodes of restraint; breaches in departmental policy regarding planning and placement policy, and any allegations made. While still relatively new, these should help to ensure efficient monitoring of the service.

Regulation 42 of the Fostering Services Regulations 2002 (FSR 2002) requires registered managers to establish and maintain a system for monitoring the matters set out in Schedule 7 of the FSR 2002 at appropriate intervals and improving the quality of foster care provided. This system should provide for consultation with foster parents, children placed with foster parents and their responsible authority. A copy of any reports prepared in respect of any reviews should be sent to the CSCI. As Local Authority fostering services are not registered this regulation does not apply to them. However, it is the view of the CSCI that as a matter of good practice Local Authority fostering services should also undertake such reviews. The Monthly Fostering Reports may form the basis for these reviews, and additional information regularly received by the manager of the mainstream service would cover all of the areas of Schedule 7. There will need to be consultation with those specified in regulation 42, and the managers of the other 2 areas of the service will need to ensure that they also receive all the required information. Reviews under regulation 42 should take place as appropriate and not monthly. It is recommended that Norfolk Fostering service undertake reviews as set out in regulation 42 of the FSR 2002.

Norfolk Social Services has a clear policy on conflicts of interest.

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

Death of a child placed with foster parents.

1

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

0

Serious illness or accident of a child.

0

Outbreak of serious infectious disease at a foster home.

0

Actual or suspected involvement of a child in prostitution.

0

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

0

Serious complaint about a foster parent.

0

Initiation of child protection enquiry involving a child.

4

Number of complaints made to CSCI about the agency in the past 12 months:	0
Number of the above complaints which were substantiated:	X

Standard 5 (5.1 - 5.4)		
The fostering service is managed effectively and efficiently.		
Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?	3
There are job descriptions for all managers and lines of accountability are clear. There are also arrangements to identify the person in charge when the manager is absent.		

Securing and Promoting Welfare

The intended outcome for the following set of standards is:

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

Standard 6 (6.1 - 6.9)

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

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

2

Response to placing social workers' and children's questionnaires indicated that in the vast majority of cases foster carers were providing safe healthy and nurturing environments. A large number of very positive comments were made, especially by the children who were living with foster carers. A very few negative comments or concerns were recorded.

Eight sets of foster carers were case tracked as part of the inspection process. This included reading carers' files, the files of children placed with them, and interviewing carers, children and FSWs/CSWs/STBSWs. The evidence gained from this supported the views expressed above.

Health and safety checks are carried out on foster carers homes as part of the assessment process and reviewed if circumstances change. Additional assessments are made if the carer has a dog or is a registered shotgun or firearm owner. These checks are practical and sensible.

This Standard and regulation 29 of the FSR 2002 require that foster homes be inspected annually to ensure that they meet the needs of the children fostered. This is being done by some FPSW/CSWs/STBSWs but is not always happening at the present time. Foster homes must be inspected annually to ensure that they continue to be suitable.

Reviews of foster carers are undertaken annually. The first review of carers goes to the Fostering Panel. Subsequent reviews that identify significant changes (for example a change in level of the carers) will also go to the panel. Other annual reviews are seen by an independent manager. As part of the case tracking, inspectors noted one review for short term break carers, that stated there had been a change in home circumstances, but did not specify if this was the child's home or the carers home. As this was not made clear, the inspectors question how the independent manager could make an assessment of the review. Other records of reviews seen by the inspectors contained sufficient information.

Some carers for the specialist foster care team have been provided with caravans for foster children. The inspectors were informed that this was to provide accommodation that was acceptable to young people who were not able to live full time with a family. A bedroom would also be available in the house and some young people had moved into the house once they felt settled. Young people in caravans would also be able to use the other accommodation (living rooms and bathrooms) as would any child placed in the home. Two caravans were looked at during the inspection and found to be of a good standard. As with all foster homes these caravans must be checked annually as part of carer reviews and advice must be sought about the frequency of servicing and checking of heaters and gas appliances needed to ensure they operate safely. This area will be looked at in more detail

during the next inspection.

This Standard also requires that if a child has been abused, or has abused another child, then the child's needs and the needs of all other children in the home be assessed before any decisions are made to allow the sharing of bedrooms. The assessment should be recorded in writing. As part of the case tracking inspectors found one example of a child being placed and sharing a room. Subsequently the carers began to hear suggestions that the child may have been abused. They have asked the social worker for clarification, but to date have not received it (see comments for Standard 9).

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

The service recognises that it has a lack of carers able to offer diversity for children placed within the service, and are seeking to rectify this through recruitment of new carers.

Training for foster carers seeks to promote diversity and equality of opportunity.

Children with disabilities who are placed in either the short term break scheme or mainstream foster care, have their needs taken fully into account.

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

In January 2004 the Looked After Children Provider Team was set up to act as the first stage in identifying placements for children. The team consists of 3 staff, an assistant manager and a manager. Requests for placements are made by social workers and the Provider Team will identify potential placements (residential or foster care). This would be the first part of the matching process for children in foster care. This would not include referrals for places within the short term break scheme, which are made to FPSWs.

The Looked After Children Provider Team will not consider requests for placements until a risk assessment and placement request profile have been provided. Then the team will look at available placements and contact the FPSW or CSW for likely foster carers. Further discussions will take place between the social worker, FPSW/CSW and foster carers to decide if the placement is a suitable one. The inspectors were informed that attempts are made at matching, but that pressure on the system is such that often the Looked After Children Provider Team are just looking for a placement. Through discussions with foster carers and FPSW/CSWs the inspectors are of the opinion that attempts are made to match as much as possible.

The short term break service is able to operate a higher degree of matching as placements

are usually able to wait until a suitable match is found. Discussions with carers and STBSWs evidenced this.

Norfolk Fostering Service does not use dedicated foster placement agreements, but relies on the national Looked After Children paperwork. This does not contain specific reference to elements of matching which were taken into consideration in agreeing the placement, nor does it identify any areas where foster carers need additional support to compensate for any gaps in the match between the child and the carer. In order to evidence matching and to identify any additional support needed by carers, it is recommended that the Fostering Service includes reference to matching in whatever form it uses to meet the requirements of the foster placement agreement.

When a placement is made in a foster home where 1 child is already accommodated the FPSW/CSW is responsible for identifying this and initiating an assessment of the suitability of the subsequent placements. Feedback from FPSW/CSWs and social workers suggests that this is not always done. Regulation 33 of the FSR 2002 states that a responsible authority shall not place a child with a particular foster carer unless it is satisfied that it is the most suitable having regard to all the circumstances. This Standard requires that consideration be given to other children in placement as part of the matching process. The Fostering Service must ensure that in all cases the potential mix of all children in the placement is taken into account.

Standard 9 (9.1 - 9.8)

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

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

2

Training in child protection is provided for foster carers and information is provided in the Foster Carer Handbook.

Safe care guidance is provided and all carers complete a safe care policy document, which is reviewed annually as part of the foster carer review. Inspectors found considerable differences in the quality of these completed policies, some being very basic and not very useful, while others were much more comprehensive. It is recommended that the content of these documents be reviewed to ensure that they are all of an acceptable standard. It is further recommended that consideration be given to these documents being completed in relation to specific children in placement.

Information on the circumstances, number and outcomes of all child protection allegations is recorded by team managers on Monthly Fostering Reports (see Standard 4). It is recommended that a system be established to collate this information on a county wide and ongoing basis, which allows for regular scrutiny and could be fed into any review of the service under regulation 42 of the FSR 2002 (see comments for Standard 25). It is understood that there are plans for this to happen.

Through the case tracking process one case was identified where foster carers had not been provided with information about children's previous abusive experiences. Through discussions with carers and staff the inspectors were told of unspecific cases where full information was not given before placement. The Fostering Service must ensure that carers are given full information about foster children placed with them, to enable them to protect the child, their own children and other children in the placement.

Overall there were very positive comments made by children about the level of care they received from foster carers.

As not all foster children placed with the service completed a questionnaire it is not possible to specify what percentage of children report never or hardly ever being bullied.

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

X

%

Standard 10 (10.1 - 10.9)

The fostering service makes sure that each child or young person in foster care is encouraged to maintain and develop family contacts and friendships as set out in her/his care plan and/or foster placement agreement.

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

3

From the evidence of case tracking and questionnaires, the inspectors are of the opinion that the service encourages contact and that carers support children in their contact with families. Details of contact were recorded on children's files. Some carers had limitations on what level of contact they could manage. For example one couple could not manage more than 3 contacts a week, but were registered for very young children, an age group that may often be considered to need a higher level of contact. Consequently this limited the suitable placements. The carers and the service acknowledged this. Placements were only made if it was in the child's interest to have this level of contact.

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?

2

Responses to children's questionnaires and discussions with children indicated that while they are frequently asked their opinions by carers, they are less often asked by the service about their views on their carers and much less often about the running of the service. Inspectors found that the degree to which the fostering service asks children about their placement (as opposed to their social workers) depends upon the FPSW/CSW. See also comments for Standard 4.

Children are given information on Norfolk's complaints procedure and in responses to questionnaires out of 82 completed questionnaires, 22 children indicated that they had not been told how to make a complaint. When the Children's Guide is produced this will provide additional information on making complaints (see comments for Standard 1).

Standard 12 (12.1 - 12.8)

The fostering service ensures that it provides foster care services which help each child or young person in foster care to receive health care which meets her/his needs for physical, emotional and social development, together with information and training appropriate to her/his age and understanding to enable informed participation in decisions about her/his health needs.

Key Findings and Evidence**Standard met?**

2

The Fostering Service is well aware of the health services in its area. Norfolk Social Services have an inter-agency (Lifescape) team who work with looked after children. The team includes a clinical psychologist and a designated nurse who are available for children who are fostered and who can help to access other health services.

It is expected that all foster carers take part in first aid training. This is arranged through the FPSW/CSWs/STBSWs rather than the training team. It is recommended that a system be developed to monitor which carers have completed first aid training and which are due to do so.

Health details are provided for carers on the Looked After Children paperwork. Inspectors were informed that the health records are updated and move with the child. This is an area that will be covered in more detail in the next inspection.

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?**

4

The evidence from children's questionnaires and inspector's case tracking is that foster carers do promote educational attainment. Examples were given of computers being provided to help children with educational work. A number of very positive comments were made by children about the support they received from carers with their education.

The specialist fostering teams provide staff who can supervise and support children who are excluded from school. This service is only available for placements within the specialist teams. While this is the responsibility of the Education Service, the Fostering Service recognise that pragmatic action is needed to support carers and children in these circumstances.

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?**

4

Carers are provided with information on helping to prepare children for adulthood. Evidence from case tracking and files showed that there had been some very good practice in this area.

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

The intended outcome for the following set of standards is:

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

Standard 15 (15.1 - 15.8)

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

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

2

Recruitment is done in line with Norfolk Social Services policies and procedures, which meet the required standard. CRB checks are not renewed every 3 years as specified in this Standard. It is recommended that CRB checks be renewed every 3 years.

Assessment of foster carers includes 6 references, 3 of which are followed up. This is in line with recommendations made following a serious case review in Brighton. Records available in the recruitment team office (to the inspectors and the recruitment team) did not evidence that there had been satisfactory CRB checks. There were letters from Social Services personnel section stating that checks had been done and that there was no disclosure, however evidence of this was not seen. The inspectors were informed that should a CRB check come back with a disclosure, they did not see this, nor receive written details of the offences, but could telephone the personnel department for a verbal report. For next year's and subsequent inspections, inspectors will examine copies of disclosures for the preceding year. It is recommended that those responsible for the service satisfy themselves that the necessary information on disclosures is made available to those responsible for making decisions about suitability of individuals to work with children.

FPSWs and STBSWs are qualified as social workers, CSWs are unqualified. Only qualified staff undertake assessment and approval of foster carers. With this exception inspectors could find little difference between the work of qualified and unqualified staff, or of differences in their levels of supervision. Some unqualified staff expressed a view that their work does not differ from their qualified colleagues, for example both undertake supervision of foster carers. The Fostering Service must ensure that unqualified staff are supervised to an appropriate level and are provided with the knowledge and skills set out in paragraph 15.5 of this Standard. See also comments for Standard 22.

Total number of staff of the agency:

42

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

5

Standard 16 (16.1 - 16.16) Staff are organised and managed in a way that delivers an efficient and effective foster care service.		
Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?	3
There is a clear structure and defined lines of accountability within the service. There is access to the range of advice needed to provide a full service for children and young people and to support carers.		

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
As stated in Standard 7, the service recognises that it needs to recruit additional carers to meet specific areas of need, and are attempting to do this. Furthermore the service is aiming to increase the number of carers in provides over the next 2 years.		

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?	2
Norfolk Social Services have appropriate employment policies and procedures in place.		
Out of hours support for carers differs for the 3 areas of the service. Specialist carers have access to on call fostering staff through an answer-phone with telephone numbers of the on-call worker. Specialist carers reported that this worked well. Mainstream carers have to phone the out of hours emergency duty team, who in turn will have a telephone number of an on call fostering worker. Mainstream foster carers reported dissatisfaction with this system. The STB carers reported having direct access to support out of hours, although their contact is officially through the emergency duty team. It is recommended that the out of hours support for mainstream and STB carers be reviewed.		

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
<p>The inspectors found that induction training was in place. Ongoing training is also provided, in particular training was provided for all staff before they undertook supervision of foster carers. The service is beginning to look at training specifically for FPSW/STBSWs and CSWs .</p> <p>There have been some changes and a long-term vacancy in the training team, which have restricted the availability of some training. However, at the time of the inspection, the situation appeared to have been resolved. Both fostering staff and foster carers informed the inspectors that they appreciated the joint training that had been taking place and would like to receive more of it.</p> <p>Appraisals for fostering staff are not taking place without exception throughout the service. Staff must receive appraisals.</p>		

Standard 20 (20.1 - 20.5)		
All staff are properly accountable and supported.		
Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?	2
<p>All staff have access to the policies and procedures of the organisation, and have clear details of the duties and responsibilities expected of them. Team meeting take place regularly across the service.</p> <p>See comments in Standard 19 about appraisals.</p>		

Standard 21 (21.1 - 21.6)		
The fostering service has a clear strategy for working with and supporting carers.		
Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?	3
<p>The Foster Carers Handbook provides details of the service’s strategy for working with and supporting carers.</p> <p>Carers reported that the system for communication between the child’s social worker and the Fostering Service can be problematical at times, they felt this to be dependent upon the individual social workers. Some FPSW/CSWs also reported that there could be communication problems with some placing social workers. The vast majority of carers who were spoken with, or who responded to questionnaires expressed overall satisfaction with the Fostering Service, but many perceived a lack of understanding by social workers of the work they and the fostering staff undertook.</p> <p>The Fostering Service has plans to visit social work teams with “road-shows” to promote and explain the work of the service.</p>		

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?**

1

Foster Care Agreements were found to include the information required by the FCR 2002.

Supervision agreements were in place on the carers' files. Specialist carers are supervised a minimum of 6 weekly and mainstream carers a minimum of 3 monthly.

Short term break carers would have at least 4 contacts a year with STBSWs, these could be visits, telephone or focussed upon another purpose such as a child's review. These visits would not constitute supervision under this Standard, which states that meetings should have a clear purpose and provide the opportunity to supervise the foster carer's work; foster carer's files should include records of supervisory meetings.

It is recommend that all foster carers are regularly supervised in accordance with this Standard.

In order to meet this Standard, it is recommended that unannounced visits to carers take place at least once a year. The inspectors were informed that this does happen in some cases, but not consistently across the whole service. These visits are part of the monitoring role of FPSW/CSWs and apply to the short-term break scheme as well as other parts of the service. It is recognised that for short-term breaks this may be difficult to achieve, as children are only there some of the time, but the service has a responsibility to ensure such unannounced visits take place.

Supervision of carers is undertaken by both qualified and unqualified staff. This is contrary to this Standard, which states that each foster carer is supervised by a named, appropriately qualified social worker. It is recommended that supervision of carers is only undertaken by qualified staff.

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

The foster carer training function has recently moved within Norfolk Social Services and currently sits in the Training and Development section. There is a training and development officer, a training manager and an administrator. The training and development officer was off work due to illness for much of 2003 and this had an impact upon the team's work.

Training is provided in different venues around the County and at differing times. However, both fostering staff and carers informed the inspectors that for some carers it can still be difficult to attend. This is perhaps not surprising given the rural nature of Norfolk. It is recommended that efforts continue to provide training that is accessible.

The inspectors were informed by fostering staff that it can be difficult to encourage some carers to attend training, while others are very keen to attend. It is an expectation of all newly approved carers that they will continue to take part in training throughout their time as carers. Foster panels consider training as part of their reviews of carers.

Some carers are able to work for the NVQ 3 caring for Children and Young People. In order to be put forward for this, carers must be recommended by a fostering panel, as completion of the award results in automatic advancement to level 4 for a carer. Consequently panel assess if the carer is sufficiently experienced to care for level 4 children before agreeing to carers undertaking the award.

At the time of the inspection the Service did not provide any specific support for the birth children of carers, rather this depended upon the individual FPSW/CSWs/STBSWs (some good examples of this were noted). The inspectors were informed that future work with this group of children is planned. It is recommended that specific consideration be given to any help or support needed by the sons and daughters of foster carers.

The inspectors will look at training issues in more depth as part of the next 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
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As this is a Local Authority Fostering Service, separate case files for children are kept by the placing social workers. These records meet the requirements of the FSR 2002.

Foster carers receive clear guidance about recording in the Foster Carer's Handbook. During the inspection the inspectors noted some good examples of carers helping children maintain records of significant life events.

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?	2
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Records are kept of complaints made in respect of the service, which involve Norfolk Social Services complaints officer. A summary of these is included in the Statement of Purpose. Records of complaints that do not involve the complaints officer and records of allegations are kept by individual team managers and passed on to their managers. There is not a system to collate and monitor these across the whole Service. Regulation 42 of the FSR 2002 requires that these are matters be monitored by the registered person. Although there is no registered person for this service, as a matter of good practice CSCI would expect this monitoring function to be carried out. It is recommended that a system be developed for recording and monitoring all allegations and complaints about the service, including those that do not involve the complaints officer.

There is written guidance for staff on record keeping. Records are securely stored.

Number of current foster placements supported by the agency:			490
Number of placements made by the agency in the last 12 months:			440
Number of placements made by the agency which ended in the past 12 months:			356
Number of new foster carers approved during the last 12 months:			63
Number of foster carers who left the agency during the last 12 months:			77
Current weekly payments to foster parents: Minimum £	X	Maximum £	X

Fitness of Premises for use as Fostering Service

The intended outcome for the following standard is:

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

Standard 26 (26.1 - 26.5)

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

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

2

Norfolk Fostering service uses offices located around the County. All of these offices have secure storage for records. In some offices there is insufficient administrative back up and office equipment (IT) to enable staff to carry out their duties in an efficient and effective manner. In particular the offices at the Oaks (Norwich) and Greyfriars (Kings Lynn) are extremely crowded. It is understood that some of the staff based at the Oaks may be re-locating, which will ease the problem. Inspectors were informed that IT equipment is limited, with up to 4 workers sharing 1 computer, and that the IT system is slow. This limits the work of staff when information is increasingly passed on through e-mail. The Provider team all have access to their own computer, but report that the speed of the system can cause problems. It is recommended that the Fostering Service reviews the availability of IT equipment and systems and administrative back up, and develop an action plan of areas that need addressing.

Norfolk Fostering Service must review their office accommodation to ensure that any forthcoming changes are effective in providing premises that are appropriate for the purpose of achieving the aims and objectives set out in the Statement of Purpose.

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
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Norfolk Social Services Fostering Service is funded by Norfolk County Council.

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
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Norfolk Social Services have appropriate systems for running the Fostering Service.

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

Through discussions with carers and the foster carer questionnaires, the inspectors only received a very few comments about problems with payment of allowances. Reading files evidenced some problems, but these were historical. The Service acknowledged that this area could be problematic at times.

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

Norfolk Fostering Service operates 5 Foster Panels, all of which have independent chairs. These Panels are used for all areas of the service. Inspectors sat in on 2 Panels and interviewed the chairs of these Panels.

Access to administrative support varies. The inspectors were informed by fostering staff that poor administrative support leads to delays in minutes being produced and subsequently in the agency decision maker being able to agree to the registration of new carers.

The inspectors became aware of 1 panel member who began work on the panel before the return of her CRB. The Fostering Service must ensure that no panel members begin work until all checks have been satisfactorily completed.

One of the panels attended had sent away 2 reviews that had come with insufficient information. One of those cases was re submitted at the panel attended by the inspector. It was positive to see that the panel were addressing such issues and did not feel obliged to make a recommendation without sufficient information.

Training is provided for panel members and panel chairs. The inspectors felt that some panel members would benefit from further training and information on fostering matters. It is recommended that an audit of training needs of panel members be carried out and any identified training be provided.

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?
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Norfolk's short-term break (STB) scheme has 146 carers. They are recruited by the STBSWs (all STB staff are qualified) and approval is through the same panels as other carers for the Service.	3
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Training is also arranged by STB workers, rather than the mainstream training team. Training includes Moving and Handling; Invasive Medication; First Aid and Makaton. It is focussed on the particular needs of STB carers.

In general STB carers gave positive feed back on the training and support that they receive. Carers and staff showed an awareness that it is the parents of the children using the STB scheme who remain the main carers for the child.

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?
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Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?
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Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?
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Regulation 38 of the FSR 2002 states that when a child may be placed with family or friends as an immediate placement, providing the carers are interviewed, the accommodation is inspected and information is sought about persons living in the household, for a period not exceeding 6 weeks. In order for the placement to remain legal, the carers should be approved as carers within this period. Norfolk Fostering Service is not managing to complete these approvals in this time, but are making all reasonable efforts to do so.	
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The inspectors found some examples of family carers who had not been reviewed annually, and with a history of little involvement from FPSWs and social workers. It is recommended that the support and training needs of family and friends as carers are assessed and met in the same way as for any other carers. This area will be looked at in more detail during the next inspection.

PART C

LAY ASSESSOR'S SUMMARY

(where applicable)

Lay Assessor _____ **Signature** _____
Date _____

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

We would welcome comments on the content of this report relating to the Inspection conducted on 10 May 2004 and any factual inaccuracies:

Please limit your comments to one side of A4 if possible

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

Amendments to the report were necessary

Comments were received from the provider

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

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

Note:

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

D.2 Please provide the Commission with a written Action Plan by 12th August 2004, which indicates how statutory requirements and recommendations are to be addressed and stating a clear timescale for completion. This will be kept on file and made available on request.

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

Action plan was required

Action plan was received at the point of publication

Action plan covers all the statutory requirements in a timely fashion

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

Provider has declined to provide an action plan

Other: <enter details here>

Public reports

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

D.3 PROVIDER'S AGREEMENT

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

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

Print Name _____
Signature _____
Designation _____
Date _____

Or

D.3.2 I _____ of _____ 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.