



*Making Social Care
Better for People*

inspection report

Fostering Services

Fostering Matters Ltd

3 College Green

Gloucester

GL1 2LR

19th & 20th July 2004

Commission for Social Care Inspection

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

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

The role of CSCI is to:

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

Inspection Methods & Findings

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

The 4-point scale ranges from:

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

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

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

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

FOSTERING SERVICE INFORMATION

Local Authority Fostering Service?

NO

Name of Authority

Address

Local Authority Manager

Tel No:

Address

Fax No:

Email Address

Registered Fostering Agency (IFA)

YES

Name of Agency

Fostering Matters Ltd

Tel No

07714 808185

Address

3 College Green, Gloucester, GL1 2LR

Fax No

Email Address

Registered Number of IFA

Name of Registered Provider

Fostering Matters Ltd

Name of Registered Manager (if applicable)

Date of first registration

Date of latest registration certificate

Registration Conditions Apply ?

N/A

Date of last inspection

N/A

Date of Inspection Visit		19th July 2004	ID Code
Time of Inspection Visit		09:30 am	
Name of Inspector	1	Diana Waters	093866
Name of Inspector	2	Mike Williams	
Name of Inspector	3		
Name of Inspector	4		
Name of Lay Assessor (if applicable) Lay assessors are members of the public independent of the CSCI. They accompany inspectors on some inspections and bring a different perspective to the inspection process.			
Name of Specialist (e.g. Interpreter/Signer) (if applicable)			
Name of Establishment Representative at the time of inspection			

Introduction to Report and Inspection

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Reports and Notifications to the Local Authority and Secretary of State

Implementation of Statutory Requirements from last Inspection

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Good Practice Recommendations from this Inspection

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(National Minimum Standards For Fostering Services)

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2. Fitness to carry on or manage a fostering service

3. Management of the fostering service

4. Securing and promoting welfare

5. Recruiting, checking, managing, supporting and training staff and foster carers

6. Records

7. Fitness of premises

8. Financial requirements

9. Fostering panels

10. Short-term breaks

11. Family and friend carers

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

Part D: Provider's Response

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 Fostering Matters Ltd. The inspection findings relate to the National Minimum Standards for Fostering Services published by the Secretary of State under sections 23 and 49 of the Care Standards Act 2000, for independent and local authority fostering services respectively.

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

The report will show the following:

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

This report is a public document.

INSPECTION VISITS

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

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE SERVICES PROVIDED.

Fostering Matters is an independent Fostering agency who have been inspected for the first time in July 2004.

Fostering Matters have a registered responsible individual and manager who are both social work qualified; they currently assess prospective foster carers. The agency's Foster Care Panel is planned to be operational in Sept 2004.

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 agency were registered in August 2004 and inspected for the first time in July 2004 as part of the registration process. There are a large number of areas the inspectors have not been able to assess fully at this early stage of operation and the report reflects this.

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

1 STANDARD MET

The service has a Statement of purpose that describes the work of the company. The agency has a children's guide.

FITNESS TO PROVIDE OR MANAGE A FOSTERING SERVICE

2 STANDARDS MET

Those involved in the management of the service have the necessary skills and experience to take on their respective roles and have successfully undergone the registration process

MANAGEMENT OF THE FOSTERING SERVICE

1 STANDARD NOT ASSESSED, 1 STANDARD NOT MET

The 2 staff are currently responsible for all aspects of the business, the human resource aspects are still to be completed

SECURITY AND PROMOTING WELFARE

9 STANDARDS NOT ASSESSED IN DETAIL

At this early stage there were aspects of the service that were not fully assessed. Some policies and procedures were in place including a comprehensive child protection policy

RECRUITING, CHECKING, MANAGING, SUPPORTING AND TRAINING STAFF AND FOSTER CARERS

9 STANDARDS NOT ASSESSED IN DETAIL

At the time of inspection the main focus of the agency was the recruitment and assessment of foster carers.

RECORDS

2 STANDARDS NOT ASSESSED IN DETAIL

There were no children in placement at the time of inspection. Foster carers files were held securely.

FITNESS OF PREMISES FOR USE AS A FOSTERING SERVICE

1 STANDARD MET

The premises used as offices are suitable for the purpose.

FOSTERING PANELS**1 STANDARD NOT FULLY ASSESSED**

The policies and procedures for the fostering panel were complete, training had been scheduled, and panel was to commence in Sept 2004 subject to all the required checks.

SHORT TERM BREAKS**1 STANDARD NOT APPLICABLE****FRIENDS AND FAMILY AS CARERS****1 STANDARD NOT APPLICABLE**

Reports and Notifications to the Local Authority and Secretary of State

(Local Authority Fostering Services Only)

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

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

NO

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

NO

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

NO

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

NO

The grounds for the above Report or Notice are:

Implementation of Statutory Requirements from Last Inspection

Requirements from last Inspection visit fully actioned?

NA

If No please list below

STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS

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

No.	Regulation	Standard	Required actions	

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

COMPLIANCE WITH CONDITIONS OF REGISTRATION (IF APPLICABLE)

(Registered Independent Fostering Agencies only)

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

Condition	Compliance	
Comments		

Condition	Compliance	
Comments		

Condition	Compliance	
Comments		

Condition	Compliance	
Comments		

Lead Inspector	<u>Diana Waters</u>	Signature	_____
Second Inspector	_____	Signature	_____
Locality Manager	<u>Ian Godfrey</u>	Signature	_____
Date	<u>10th January 2005</u>		_____

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	21	FS5	The Fostering Service Provider must ensure that all the Human Resource components of Reg 21 are fulfilled.	TBA

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	FS1	The agency is advised to make the process of the complaints procedure clear to young people.
2	FS9	The agency should ensure that each foster home has a safe care policy for their household and family prior to approval and this is reviewed with each young person placed.
3	FS16	The agency is advised to obtain professional supervision for the responsible individual and that all supervision should be documented.
4	FS30	The agency is advised to continue to seek an independent member for Panel who has been placed with carers or whose child has been placed with carers.

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

PART B**INSPECTION METHODS & FINDINGS**

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

Number of Inspector days spent	4
Survey of placing authorities	NO
Foster carer survey	NO
Foster children survey	NO
Checks with other organisations and Individuals	NO
• Directors of Social services	NO
• Child protection officer	NO
• Specialist advisor (s)	NO
• Local Foster Care Association	NO
Tracking Individual welfare arrangements	NO
• Interview with children	NO
• Interview with foster carers	NO
• Interview with agency staff	NO
• Contact with parents	NO
• Contact with supervising social workers	NO
• Examination of files	NO
Individual interview with manager	YES
Information from provider	NO
Individual interviews with key staff	YES
Group discussion with staff	YES
Interview with panel chair	NO
Observation of foster carer training	NO
Observation of foster panel	NO
Inspection of policy/practice documents	YES
Inspection of records	NO
Interview with individual child	NO
Date of Inspection	19/07/04
Time of Inspection	10.00
Duration Of Inspection (hrs)	32

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

The scale ranges from:

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

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

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

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

Statement of Purpose

The intended outcome for the following standard is:

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

Standard 1 (1.1 - 1.6)

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

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

3

There is a clear statement of the agency's aims, objectives and the services they intend to provide.

There is a children's guide that summarises the fostering service. The agency intends to make this guide available to young people on, or prior to, admission. It includes telephone numbers of an advocacy service for young people, and how to sort out concerns. The inspectors advise the agency to make the process of the complaints procedure clear to young people. The children's guide is also available in C.D. format as an alternative method to communicate it to young people; the inspectors commend this.

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

Both the responsible individual and registered manager are professionally qualified as social workers. Both have extensive experience of child protection work within local authority social work and have worked in and managed childcare team. Both also have previous experience of working in independent fostering agencies.

The responsible individual has a Diploma in Social Work gained in 1995 and Diploma in Management Studies.

The manager has a C.Q.S.W. gained in 1987 and a Public service management post - graduate business degree.

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

Enhanced C R Bs are held on both the responsible individual and the manager and, both have been satisfactorily fit person interviewed by C.S.C.I in July 2004 as part of the registration process. This process involves C.S.C.I satisfactorily verifying Schedule 1 information. This information must also be held in the agency office, Additionally telephone enquiries should be made to follow up written references on staff employed by the agency and as far as practicable, verification should be obtained and retained on file explaining why employment with children/vulnerable adults ended for staff employed (Schedule 1.4).

Management of the Fostering Service

The intended outcomes for the following set of standards are:

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

Standard 4 (4.1 – 4.5)

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

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

0

It is not possible to fully assess this standard at this inspection.

Fostering Matters are currently a very small agency with 2 full time staff members, the registered manager and responsible individual.

Financial information provided was clear for the purchasers of services.

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

N/A

Death of a child placed with foster parents.

0

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

0

Serious illness or accident of a child.

0

Outbreak of serious infectious disease at a foster home.

0

Actual or suspected involvement of a child in prostitution.

0

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

0

Serious complaint about a foster parent.

0

Initiation of child protection enquiry involving a child.

0

0

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

0

Number of the above complaints which were substantiated:

0

Standard 5 (5.1 - 5.4)

The fostering service is managed effectively and efficiently.

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

0

The agency have yet to complete the human resource components and will be completing job descriptions/duties /responsibilities/salaries/hours of work before appointing other staff. The agency have stated that their current arrangements are for each member of staff to cover for the other during leave /absence. Future contingency arrangements are still to be confirmed.

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?	0
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It is not possible to assess this standard fully at this inspection.

Carers are currently assessed by qualified social workers using the BAAF F format and the competency based element S 4, This assessment is submitted to Foster Care Panel to make recommendations about the carers suitability to foster to the Director of Fostering Matters. Health and safety questionnaires are conducted as part of this assessment and cover checking car safety, pets and guns.

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?	0
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It is not possible to fully assess this standard at this inspection

The agency reported that they are currently recruiting carers and undertaking assessments on prospective carers, which include couples who are, of the same gender, Muslim, Jehovah Witness, black, Welsh and Protestant.

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?	0
It is not possible to fully assess this standard at this inspection, as the service is not yet operational. Evidence from the B.A.A.F assessment of carers, and evidence from the response to fit persons interviews, indicates clear understanding of the issues.		

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?	0
<p>The agency has a comprehensive child protection policy and it is made clear that carers will not administer physical punishment.</p> <p>Systems are in place to monitor and collate information on child abuse allegations.</p> <p>The agency is planning to subscribe carers to Fostering Network, where a helpline is available.</p> <p>Appropriate child protection training is reported to be provided during the pre- approval training for carers, with plans to continue more specific training post -approval.</p> <p>The inspectors recommend that each foster home has a safe care policy for their household/ family prior to their approval and that this is then reviewed with each young person placed.</p> <p>The agency recognises bullying as an issue for young people and have produced an anti - bullying policy.</p> <p>The Agency has a clear written procedure to be followed for children missing from placements.</p> <p>The inspectors recognise the considerable child protection experience of both the responsible individual and the registered manager, which should stand the service in good stead in this area.</p>		
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?**

0

It is not possible to fully assess this standard until young people are placed. There are procedures for young people in placement maintaining appropriate contacts, and the agency state they will be able to facilitate contact if this is problematic at the foster home. Contact and the importance of appropriate contact are covered in the pre approval training for carers.

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?**

0

The young person's guide contains details of how to appropriately raise concerns about day –to- day matters .The inspectors advise a clear statement is made about the steps that are taken after a concern is raised and refer the young people to the complaints procedure and its time scales.

Whilst there are not yet any young people in placement with the agency to consult, the inspectors advise this is an area, which the agency should consider in more depth and afterwards include in their statement of purpose.

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?**

0

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?**

0

The agency state they are able to provide education support to those young people placed should their placing authority request it.

Standard 14 (14.1 - 14.5)

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

Key Findings and Evidence**Standard met?**

0

It is not possible to assess this standard at this inspection.

The agency state they are currently undertaking assessments on potential carers for young people who are preparing for independence.

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?

0

It is not possible to fully assess this standard at this inspection

The two staff currently in the agency have the relevant qualifications, experience and knowledge to work with, safeguard and promote the welfare of young people.

The agency reported that all Panel members had applied for CRB clearance and at the time of the inspection most of the members of panel had received CRB clearance.

When the agency expands and needs to recruit staff recruitment and selection procedures will need to be developed which met the requirements of Schedule 1.4 and include telephone checks on staff employed.

Total number of staff of the agency:

2

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?

0

It is not possible to assess this standard fully at this inspection as the agency is in the very early stages of operation. When there are no staff in the office, the phones are currently diverted to one of the 2 social work staff.

The agency states that when it expands/develops the appointment of an administrator would be the first priority, followed by a social work appointment.

The agency states a maximum workload of 1:10 carers for each worker, but at this early stage this will also include assessment and training of carers.

Job descriptions/contracts and conditions of service will be in place for new staff appointed and supervision of staff will be formalised. The inspectors advise that professional supervision is sought for the responsible Individual that the current supervision of the existing staff is documented.

The agency advises that reviews of all carers will, at this early stage of their operation, go to Foster care panel. The agency have policies on staff disciplinary procedures and equal opportunity. Health and safety policies are still to be finalised.

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?**

0

At this early stage of the agency is development, the two existing staff are recruiting carers and undertaking assessments. There were sufficient staff at the time of the inspection for the tasks currently undertaken

Assessments were being carried out in line with BAAF F and S4: the assessment process for carers was clear.

A range of carers were being assessed at the time of the inspection.

The agency reported that all personnel procedures for staff were still to be finalised.

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?**

0

At this early stage of the agency operation it was not possible to fully inspect this standard

The agency state that carers will be supported 24 hours, by staff known to them, and that carers will receive supervision as and when required, but as a minimum at monthly intervals.

Clearly, appraisals will not yet be due

The agency have public liability and professional indemnity insurance cover commencing on 15/9/04 and have a clear whistle-blowing policy.

Standard 19 (19.1 - 19.7)

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

Key Findings and Evidence**Standard met?**

0

It is not possible to assess this standard at this inspection. The current staff are well motivated to keep up to date with professional developments.

Joint training with carers is currently done at the pre approval stage; post approval training is in the planning stages.

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

0

Within this small agency duties and responsibilities are shared and much informal supervision and communication takes place. It is recommended that supervision /team meeting, appraisals and records of meetings between the director and responsible individual are recorded and systems set in place in preparation the expansion of the agency. Supervision is currently on a buddying basis between the 2 staff members of the agency. The inspectors advise some external supervision of the responsible individual for objectivity.

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?**

0

It is not possible to fully assess this standard.

The agency state carers will receive 24-hour support and regular supervision from the agency workers.

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

0

It is not possible to fully assess this standard at this inspection

Each carer will have a named, qualified social worker who will provide supervision, support and training.

Foster Carer agreements have been drawn up which include: supervision and support recording, training, review and placement procedures.

A Foster Carers Handbook was being finalised at the time of the inspection

Standard 23 (23.1 - 23.9)

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

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

0

It is not possible to fully assess this standard at this inspection.
All prospective carers will undertake pre-approval training. Staff intend to support carers fully and provide individual training as required in the first instance. The Agency has requested that carers initially access local courses for first aid, health and safety and food hygiene.

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?

0

It is not possible to fully assess this standard at this inspection.

Prior to placement carers are be given lockable files in which to retain confidential information.

There is a written agency policy referring to records for children.

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?

0

There is an agency policy detailing records relating to carers, staff, children, complaints and allegations.

Number of current foster placements supported by the agency:

0

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

0

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

0

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

0

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

0

Current weekly payments to foster parents: Minimum £

350

Maximum £

400

Fitness of Premises for use as Fostering Service

The intended outcome for the following standard is:

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

Standard 26 (26.1 - 26.5)

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

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

3

The office is identifiable and accessible during normal office hours, when staff are present. It consists of two rooms, one for the social work staff and one for the proposed administrator. Both rooms are independently lockable and the main building door is kept locked and is accessible only by registered key holders to the building or their occupants. The I.T system is reported as being password protected; the agency possess a comprehensive information technology security policy. The insurance cover note was available on inspection.

Financial Requirements

The intended outcome for the following set of standards is:

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

Standard 27 (27.1 - 27.3)

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

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

0

Fostering Matters is a new fostering agency and at this stage reports that they have sufficient resources to fulfil their obligations.

This standard has not been fully inspected at this inspection.

Standard 28 (28.1 - 28.7)

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

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

0

The agency has an accounting policy and procedure in place for sound financial planning and monitoring, but it is not possible to fully assess this standard at this inspection as the agency is not operational.

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?

0

It is not possible to fully assess this standard at this inspection.

The agency has a written policy on payments to carers, which includes a clear breakdown of fees and allowances. It carefully defines the expectation of the agency in respect of the allowances for caring for young people, which is helpful without being prescriptive. The agency states each carer will receive a yearly breakdown of payments received. Carers will be paid fortnightly, directly into their bank accounts.

The agency reports that fostering fees and allowances 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?

0

It is not possible to fully assess this standard at this inspection, however:

A panel procedure has been established and a panel appointed. The agency director, responsible individual and registered manager are all members. The chair of Panel is an experienced member of staff of a Social Services Department, a vice chair has been appointed. The independent members represent health (registered mental health nurse), early years, education and a current foster carer from another independent agency. Medical expertise to panel is reported to be via the health professional who is able to access advice from an independent G.P.

As yet there is no representation by an independent member who has been fostered or whose child has been fostered.

The service has provided appropriate foster panel procedures, which set out: the membership required; the functions of panel; the decision making process, including where there is disagreement; the protocol for panel members; guidelines for prospective and approved carers attending panel; and the procedure for ensuring turn over of panel members. This guidance identifies the agency decision maker as the Director of Fostering Matters.

The panel members have met for Panel training; applications forms and confidentiality agreements have been completed; CRB's and references on all members have been requested. A panel date has been set for Sept 2004, pending successful outcomes on these checks.

The inspectors noted the thorough application that has been given to this process to date, and the helpful aide memoir for panel members.

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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These standards are not applicable.

Family and Friends as Carers

The intended outcome for the following set of standards is:

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

Standard 32 (32.1 – 32.4)

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

Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?	9
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These standards are not applicable.

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 19th & 20th July 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

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 8th February 2005, which indicates how statutory requirements and recommendations are to be addressed and stating a clear timescale for completion. This will be kept on file and made available on request.

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

Action plan was required

YES

Action plan was received at the point of publication

YES

Action plan covers all the statutory requirements in a timely fashion

YES

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

NO

Provider has declined to provide an action plan

NO

Other: <enter details here>

NO

Public reports

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

D.3 PROVIDER'S AGREEMENT

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

D.3.1 I Ms Eileen McKay of Fostering Matters 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 Ms Eileen McKay of Fostering Matters Ltd am unable to confirm that the contents of this report are a fair and accurate representation of the facts relating to the inspection conducted on the above date(s) for the following reasons:

Print Name _____
Signature _____
Designation _____
Date _____

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

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S0000061740.V170396.R01

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