



*Making Social Care
Better for People*

inspection report

Fostering Services

London Borough Bromley Fostering

Bromley Social Services Civic Centre

Stockwell Close

Bromley

Kent

BR1 3UH

21st February 2005

Commission for Social Care Inspection

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

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

The role of CSCI is to:

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

Inspection Methods & Findings

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

The 4-point scale ranges from:

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

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

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

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

FOSTERING SERVICE INFORMATION

Local Authority Fostering Service?

YES

Name of Authority

London Borough Bromley Fostering

Address

Bromley Social Services Civic Centre, Stockwell Close,
Bromley, Kent, BR1 3UH

Local Authority Manager

Gill Barnard

Tel No:

Address

Bromley Social Services Civic Centre, Stockwell Close,
Bromley, Kent, BR1 3UH

Fax No:

Email Address

Registered Fostering Agency (IFA)

NO

Name of Agency

Tel No

Address

Fax No

Email Address

Registered Number of IFA

NO

Name of Registered Provider

Name of Registered Manager (if applicable)

Date of first registration

Date of latest registration certificate

Registration Conditions Apply ?

NO

Date of last inspection

08.03.04

Date of Inspection Visit		21st February 2005	ID Code
Time of Inspection Visit		09:30 am	
Name of Inspector	1	Cheryl Carter	135535
Name of Inspector	2		
Name of Inspector	3		
Name of Inspector	4		
Name of Lay Assessor (if applicable) Lay assessors are members of the public independent of the CSCI. They accompany inspectors on some inspections and bring a different perspective to the inspection process.			
Name of Specialist (e.g. Interpreter/Signer) (if applicable)			
Name of Establishment Representative at the time of inspection			

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 London Borough Bromley Fostering. 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.

Bromley Fostering is a Local Authority Fostering Service that provides temporary and permanent foster carers for children and young people.

The service is based in Lancaster House at the Civic Centre Bromley.

The day-to-day management of the service is the responsibility of the Fostering Manager. The types of services offered are: (a) Short term Foster Care (b) Long Term Foster Care (c) Short Breaks Scheme and Kinship Care.

PART A SUMMARY OF INSPECTION FINDINGS

Inspector's Summary

(This is an overview of the inspector's findings, which includes good practice, quality issues, areas to be addressed or developed and any other concerns.)

The Inspection took place over seven days. The majority of standards were met and the overall quality of the service has improved since the last inspection. The standard was good. Comment cards were received from 22 foster carers (which is a response from approximately 20% of carers) who were on the whole quite positive about the support given. Common issues reported were lack of communication from the placing social workers and poor communication between departments. Foster carers also commented on the frequent changes of the children's social worker and some commented about the lack of information and delay in getting information regarding children especially those placed in an emergency. Children and young people who were positive about the care received returned nine questionnaires. All the children were aware of the Commission for Social Care Inspection. One child highlighted an issue in his questionnaire. This is being followed up with the Fostering Manager and the Children's Rights Officer. The matter will be investigated and a copy of the outcome must be sent to the CSCI. Seventeen placing officers questionnaires were received. Social workers were on the whole, positive about the care given by foster carers and generally showed satisfaction with the service.

The inspector will like to thank all the children, their carers, social workers and administrative staff for their co-operation with this inspection.

Statement of Purpose (Standard 1). This Standard had a shortfall.

The Fostering Service has a Comprehensive Statement of Purpose that meets with Regulation 3 of the Fostering Regulations . The Fostering service must produce a children's Guide as set out in Regulation 3 and the guide should be produced in different formats to meet the needs of different groups of children.

Fitness to carry on or to Manage a Fostering Service (Standard 2-3) Both standards were met.

From the feedback, observation and information received, the Inspector concluded that the operation of the service is organised, managed and staffed in a manner that delivers the best possible childcare. The staff are experienced and nearly all are qualified. The unqualified member of staff on the team is due to start her course in September. This will make a full compliment of qualified staff. Staff files examined contained the required details.

Management of the Fostering Service (Standards 4-5) One standard was met.

The fostering manager and her team are aware of their roles and responsibilities. In line with good practice the fostering Service is reminded of the need to notify the CSCI of all events listed under Schedule 8 of the Fostering Regulations.

Securing and promoting welfare (Standards 6-14) Six standards were met.

The fostering service provides a variety of training to prospective foster carers prior to foster carers being approved. Foster carers are also interviewed and references and various checks are undertaken including enhanced CRB checks. Efforts are made to ensure that children are adequately matched with foster carers and support and encouragement given to maintain their cultural beliefs. Foster children are encouraged to feedback their views before their reviews.

Recruiting, Checking, Managing and Training staff and Foster Carers (Standards 15-23) All standards were met.

All foster carers and staff have Criminal Records Bureau checks. Social workers have an allocated caseload. Supervision takes place with line managers on a four weekly basis. Foster carers said that they feel well supported. All foster carers have Foster Carers Agreements, which they are expected to sign. These agreements sets out the terms of approval, details what the local authority will do and what the foster carer must do.

Records (Standards 24-25) One standard was met.

The files of the Foster Carers that are maintained by the Fostering Social Workers were well maintained, but the files of the children in foster care that were tracked were totally unsatisfactory. A requirement was made to address this.

Fitness of premises for use as a Fostering Service (Standard 26) This standard was met.

The office accommodation is adequate and fit for its purpose.

Financial Requirements (Standards 27-29) All three standards were met.

This is a local authority service and is financed by the finance department of the council. Foster carers reported they receive payments on time.

Fostering Panels (Standard 30) This Standard was met.

Fostering Panels meet monthly. The Panels are child-centred and focused on outcomes for children.

Short-term Breaks (Standard 31) This standard was met.

There are policies and procedures in place for short-term care.

Family and Friends as Carers (Standard 32) This standard was met.

Bromley recognises the importance of carers who are family and friends of the child. They are fully assessed and have the same rights and entitlements as 'in house' carers in terms of financial support, supervision and training.

Reports and Notifications to the Local Authority and Secretary of State

(Local Authority Fostering Services Only)

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

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

NO

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

NO

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

NO

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

NO

The grounds for the above Report or Notice are:

Implementation of Statutory Requirements from Last Inspection

Requirements from last Inspection visit fully actioned?

YES

If No please list below

STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS

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

No.	Regulation	Standard	Required actions	

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

COMPLIANCE WITH CONDITIONS OF REGISTRATION (IF APPLICABLE)

(Registered Independent Fostering Agencies only)

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

Condition	Compliance	
Comments		

Condition	Compliance	
Comments		

Condition	Compliance	
Comments		

Condition	Compliance	
Comments		

Lead Inspector _____
Second Inspector _____
Regulation Manager _____
Date _____

Signature _____
Signature _____
Signature _____

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	3(3)	FS1	The Fostering service must produce a children's Guide as set out in Regulation 3 and where necessary the guide should be produced in different formats to meet the needs of different groups of children.	31.04.05
2	15	FS12	The provider must ensure that each child has their individual health care plan on file.	05.04.05
3	16	FS13	The provider must ensure that each child has Personal Education Plans on file.	05.04.05

GOOD PRACTICE RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THIS INSPECTION

Identified below are areas addressed in the main body of the report which relate to the National Minimum Standards and are seen as good practice issues which should be considered for implementation by the Authority or Registered Person(s).

No.	Refer to Standard *	Recommendation Action
1	FS4	The service manager should address the issue of the blurring of the boundaries between the supervising social workers and the placing social workers.

2	FS11	The inspector recommends that there should be a written policy on how concerns and complaints are recorded and followed up appropriately and this should be included in The Statement of Purpose and the Children's Guide.
3	FS13	The inspector recommends that there is a written policy for foster carers to access repairs for computers.
4	FS14	The inspector recommends that Pathway planning must begin at 15 and a half and additional training packages that includes relevant topics such as promoting independence, further education, employment, and promoting health be included in the planning.
5	FS24	The inspector recommends that the provider ensures that the children's files contain all the necessary documentation as detailed in the standard and that the relevant parties sign these.

* 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 7

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) YES

- Local Foster Care Association NO

Tracking Individual welfare arrangements YES

- Interview with children YES

- Interview with foster carers YES

- Interview with agency staff YES

- Contact with parents NO

- Contact with supervising social workers YES

- Examination of files YES

Individual interview with manager YES

Information from provider YES

Individual interviews with key staff YES

Group discussion with staff NO

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 21/02/05

Time of Inspection 09.30

Duration Of Inspection (hrs) 45

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 Fostering Service has a Statement of Purpose that meets with Regulation 3. The Service has adopted the Children's Guide written by BAAF. This is unsatisfactory, as the guide does not reflect Bromley's policies for children in foster care. The Fostering service must produce a children's Guide as set out in Regulation 3 and where necessary the Guide should be produced in different formats to meet the needs of different groups of children. (Requirement 1)

Fitness to Carry On or Manage a Fostering Service

The intended outcomes for the following set of standards are:

- The fostering service is provided and managed by those with the appropriate skills and experience to do so efficiently and effectively and by those who are suitable to work with children.

Standard 2 (2.1 - 2.4)

The people involved in carrying on and managing the fostering service possess the necessary business and management skills and financial expertise to manage the work efficiently and effectively and have the necessary knowledge and experience of childcare and fostering to do so in a professional manner.

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

3

The current manager is qualified for the post. She has a Social work qualification and has now completed the Executive Diploma of Management Studies (Level 5 NVQ). The manager also has many years experience as a family placement worker and manager. Discussion with staff indicated that the service is organised and managed in a way to deliver the best possible service within the constraints of the resources available. From my discussions with the manager it was evident that she has considerable knowledge and experienced of childcare and fostering issues.

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

All documentation required under Schedule 1 (Regulations 5, 7, & 20) in respect of the manager were seen by the Inspector.

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 Fostering Service has written referral and assessment processes. Discussions with the manager indicated she was aware of the situation within the service at any given time in terms of foster placement vacancies, recruitment and staff workloads. Staff members spoken to during the inspection felt that their workload was fairly allocated. It was clear from staff members and foster carers spoken to that there was a good understanding of roles and responsibilities. However, there continues to be problems with the blurring of the boundaries between the supervising social workers and the placing social workers. The Service Manager should now address this issue. (Recommendation 1)

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

1

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.

1

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

1

Number of the above complaints which were substantiated:

0

Standard 5 (5.1 - 5.4)

The fostering service is managed effectively and efficiently.

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

3

The manager demonstrates a high degree of skill in managing the service effectively despite resource restrictions. The Assistant Team Manager who was in post at the last inspection has left and a senior practitioner is now acting Assistant Team Manager.

Securing and Promoting Welfare

The intended outcome for the following set of standards is:

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

Standard 6 (6.1 - 6.9)

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

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

3

There was evidence on file that the assessment and recruitment process is thorough. The inspector visited five foster homes meeting a total of seven carers, caring for a total of 14 children.. Two of the homes visited provided care for sibling groups of three. The inspector found these family homes to be comfortable, homely and well maintained. The inspector saw evidence of annual health and safety assessments. Foster Carers said that training is provided in a number of health and safety areas such as child car seat safety. Foster Carers were aware that they could be interviewed or visited as part of the Commissions inspection process.

Standard 7 (7.1 - 7.7)

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

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

3

The Fostering Service now has policies in place regarding trans-racial placements and there is some work being done with children around identity. There is also financial support for children in trans racial placements, which is needs led. Trans-racial placements are reviewed every 4 weeks. The fostering service continues to look at initiatives to increase recruitment of carers from ethnic minority groups.

Standard 8 (8.1 - 8.7) Local authority fostering services, and voluntary agencies placing children in their own right, ensure that each child or young person placed in foster care is carefully matched with a carer capable of meeting her/his assessed needs. For agencies providing foster carers to local authorities, those agencies ensure that they offer carers only if they represent appropriate matches for a child for whom a local authority is seeking a carer.		
Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?	3
The inspector is satisfied that efforts are made wherever possible to secure an appropriate match of carers and young people. Many placements are made as a result of a crisis situation and therefore cannot be planned in advance. While the inspector acknowledges that it is not always possible to arrange planned placements, the inspector was satisfied that the service acted in the best interests of each child. Concerns were expressed in the foster carers surveys about the lack of information provided by the child's social worker and in cases of emergencies and not being kept fully informed. Emergency placements are kept under review and more appropriately matched placements sought if necessary.		

Standard 9 (9.1 - 9.8) The fostering service protects each child or young person from all forms of abuse, neglect, exploitation and deprivation.		
Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?	3
There is a range of training available to foster carers, which include NVQ Level 3, child protection training and safe caring procedures. Foster carers visited spoke about the need to achieve a balance between the needs of both the foster children and their own children. One foster carer spoke very favourably about support she received with her own children in getting them to gain an understanding about the needs of the foster child thus preventing a break down of the placement. The foster carers spoken to are knowledgeable about the punishments that are permissible. Children's questionnaire indicated examples of punishments for poor behaviour in returned surveys as being grounded, sent to their room being told off and reduction in pocket money. There is a missing person's policy.		
Percentage of foster children placed who report never or hardly ever being bullied:	0	%

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
The service actively encourages contact with family and friends. Contact arrangements form part of the placement agreement meeting and are recorded. Risk assessments are carried out by the child's social worker. If necessary contact arrangements are arranged outside of the foster home. Support with transport in respect of contact can also be arranged.		

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
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The young people consulted at this inspection were ten and above. One young person expressed concern that his foster carers rewired his bedroom while he was away at Christmas so they could turn off his lights at 11.00 pm, as he was in the habit of falling asleep with his television and/or computer games on. The young person also indicated that this matter was addressed with his social worker but not addressed appropriately. The inspector is concerned that all the relevant people knew about this complaint but it was not recorded. Young people have access to independent advocates who would attend reviews if the young person wished. Examination of the young people's files demonstrated reviews were held in accordance with statutory requirements. The inspector recommends that there should be a written policy on how concerns and complaints are recorded and followed up appropriately and this should be included in The Statement of Purpose and the Children's Guide. (Recommendation 2)

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?	1
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Policies and procedures are in place to cover the health of 'looked after children' and young people. Specialist services can be accessed if necessary, for example, psychologists. At the previous inspection it was stated that the LAC Nurse collects information on past medical history where possible. The inspector found from the case files tracked that previous medical history was missing. In nearly all cases there were no Personal Health Care plans on file, no record of past immunisations and in one case the consent to a medical was not signed. Training for foster carers is provided in health topics including first aid and moving and handling. The fostering service must ensure that each child has individual health care plans on file. (Requirement 2)

Standard 13 (13.1 - 13.8)
The fostering service gives a high priority to meeting the educational needs of each child or young person in foster care and ensures that she/he is encouraged to attain her/his full potential.

Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?	2
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All young people seen at the time of the inspection were attending an education resource. The education worker interviewed insisted that all children have Personal Education Plans. Not all the files had Personal Education Plans. Foster carers said they were involved in parent's evenings and open days. The service provides some young people with computers to assist with schoolwork. However in one case the computer has not been working for sometime and both the foster carer and the child is frustrated by the delay in getting the computer repaired. The fostering service must ensure that each child has Personal Education Plans on file. (Requirement 3) The inspector recommends that there is a written policy for foster carers to access repairs for computers (Recommendation 3)

Standard 14 (14.1 - 14.5)

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

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

2

During this inspection one of the families tracked had a young person approaching adulthood. The inspector found that there were no Pathway plans for the young person. Discussions with the sixteen plus manager and the manager of the Fostering Service indicates that the sixteen plus team will undertake Pathway planning. The inspector recommends that Pathway planning must begin at 15 and a half and additional training packages that includes relevant topics such as promoting independence, further education, employment, and promoting health be included in the planning. (Recommendation 4)

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

The intended outcome for the following set of standards is:

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

Standard 15 (15.1 - 15.8)

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

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

3

The local authority has clear written recruitment and selection procedures. All files contained the majority of information required by Schedule 1. However not all files had proof of their appraisals and qualifications. The staff team have access to the skills and expertise of the LACS team that includes a nurse, teachers, psychologist, CAMHS, social workers and Family Support workers.

Total number of staff of the agency:

14

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

2

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

The lines of accountability are much more clearly defined within the management structure. Since the last inspection there is a New Principal Service Manager who has responsibility for The Fostering and Adoption Team, Commissioning Team, Looked after Children Team and the Leaving Care Team. All staff members have contracts, job descriptions and conditions of service. It was clear from discussions with the Principal Service Manager, the Fostering Manager and other staff members that workloads are monitored and staff supervision is given priority. A range of policies and procedures are in place including equal opportunities, disciplinary and grievance. The inspector was informed that permission is now being sought to use Bank Staff who will take on Form F assessments. Permission has now been established to use Bank staff and this will free up social workers to concentrate on supporting foster carers. There is a 24-hour support line for foster carers and this is managed by social workers from the fostering team.

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
Some foster carers in the survey still complain that there are not enough social workers in the team. All the staff in the team has experience of working in childcare services. There has been an increase in the publicity budget since the last inspection. There are now three locums in the fostering team. The unqualified social worker in the team is currently applying to do her social work training. The latest advertising campaign has attracted an increased number of enquiries from black and ethnic minority carers.		

Standard 18 (18.1 - 18.7)		
The fostering service is a fair and competent employer, with sound employment practices and good support for its staff and carers.		
Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?	3
The inspector examined copies of staff contracts, recruitment and selection and equal opportunities. There is a whistle blowing policy in place. Thorough checks are made for both staff and foster carers for instance CRB checks. From the questionnaires returned and from discussion with foster carers foster carers said that they had good relationships with their link workers and received good support from them as a team. This was not the same for the child's social worker. The Emergency Duty Team is accessible to the foster carers out of hours and workers from the Fostering team man this service.		

Standard 19 (19.1 - 19.7)		
There is a good quality training programme to enhance individual skills and to keep staff up-to-date with professional and legal developments.		
Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?	3
At the last inspection there was no evidence of appraisals, which include training and development. Not all files examined had appraisals, however there was a definite improvement on last year's inspection. The personnel officer informed me that all appraisals were done but the paperwork had not caught up with the files. The inspector is unclear as to what further development courses have been undertaken by the staff team. The inspector was informed that there is only one unqualified member of staff and she is due to start her social work training later this year.		

Standard 20 (20.1 - 20.5)		
All staff are properly accountable and supported.		
Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?	3
<p>Staff interviewed said that they receive regular formal planned supervision from their manager and this is seen as a priority. Staff said that they felt supported and valued by the manager. It was clear from discussions that staff understood their responsibilities and accountability to the service.</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>There are a number of strategies in place to support carers. These include a carers' handbook, foster carers' support group, a newsletter and a foster carers network. Last December a Black Foster Carers support group was started. There was evidence on file of the provision of regular supervision from the link worker. This included identification of training needs. Family support workers provide an invaluable service in terms of practical support to both foster carers and children. In order to support placements for a large sibling group support have been given to a foster carer in converting her loft.</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?	3
<p>Foster Carer agreements included sections on support, confidentiality, complaints and allegations and discipline. All foster carers consulted during the inspection said they had a link worker. They were all confident that if they needed advice and support from the link worker this would be provided. Carers are provided with copies of the foster carers handbook. There are written complaints and allegations procedures. Records of both complaints and allegations of abuse are maintained. A record of concerns is also maintained, however the inspector is unsure that all concerns are being recorded.</p>		

Standard 23 (23.1 - 23.9)

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

Key Findings and Evidence**Standard met?**

3

Bromley has a training programme available for carers. About 15 carers have completed their Level 3 NVQ. There are seven carers about to complete their NVQ training and nine more have started their training. Foster Carers interviewed said that they have received training in a number of other courses that included child protection, First Aid, and Moving and Handling. Foster carers training needs are regularly reviewed and documented. Foster carers spoke positively about the training opportunities available to them.

Records

The intended outcome for the following set of standards is:

- All appropriate records are kept and are accessible in relation to the fostering services and the individual foster carers and foster children.

Standard 24 (24.1 - 24.8)

The fostering service ensures that an up-to-date, comprehensive case record is maintained for each child or young person in foster care which details the nature and quality of care provided and contributes to an understanding of her/his life events. Relevant information from the case records is made available to the child and to anyone involved in her/his care.

Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?	2
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Each child has two files, which are retained, at the allocated social worker's office. One file is the LAC file the other is the working file. This arrangement is very confusing and none of the social workers interviewed could explain what documentation should be on each file. The LAC files, which should contain the LAC paperwork, were incomplete and placement agreements were unsigned. LAC files were missing health information and some Personal Education Plans were also missing. Key people did not sign care plans. The sixteen year olds whose files were seen did not have Pathway plans. Generally, these files were totally unsatisfactory. The inspector was unsure how often the files were monitored, as there was no record of monitoring by the Team Manager. The inspector recommends that the provider ensure that children's files contain all the necessary documentation as detailed in the standard and that the relevant parties sign these. (Recommendation 5)

Standard 25 (25.1 - 25.13)

The fostering service's administrative records contain all significant information relevant to the running of the foster care service and as required by regulations.

Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?	3
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The fostering service's administrative records contained the majority of information required by the regulations.

Number of current foster placements supported by the agency:			153
Number of placements made by the agency in the last 12 months:			104
Number of placements made by the agency which ended in the past 12 months:			X
Number of new foster carers approved during the last 12 months:			X
Number of foster carers who left the agency during the last 12 months:			X
Current weekly payments to foster parents: Minimum £	316.89	Maximum £	441.49

Fitness of Premises for use as Fostering Service

The intended outcome for the following standard is:

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

Standard 26 (26.1 - 26.5)

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

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

3

The fostering offices remains in the same building as was at the last inspection. Records are kept in locked cabinets. All staff members have access to internal e-mail system. The manager pointed out that there are more computer terminals available to staff. However some staff members are still required to share a computer. There remains no disabled access to the upper floors of the building.

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

The Fostering Service has a clear budget that is increased annually. Foster Carers are paid an allowance to reflect the full costs of fostering plus a reward comprising developing a fee for skills and a retainer. The reward element increases with skills and experience.

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

This is a local authority service and allowances are paid by the finance department of the council. Foster carers reported they receive payments on time.

Standard 29 (29.1 - 29.2)

Each foster carer receives an allowance and agreed expenses, which cover the full cost of caring for each child or young person placed with him or her. Payments are made promptly and at the agreed time. Allowances and fees are reviewed annually.

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

3

Foster care allowances include payments for weekly maintenance, pocket money and clothing allowances. There were no complaints received about the allowances paid.

Fostering Panels

The intended outcome for the following set of standards is:

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

Standard 30 (30.1 - 30.9)

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

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

3

The fostering panel has written procedures and guidelines which include details of its decision making process.

The panel exhibits a very thorough approach to examining prospective Foster Parents and reviewing existing ones. Panel Members make a useful and professional contribution. Review of cases is given comprehensive and appropriate consideration of ethnicity with suitable matches. The diverse nature of the Panel from varying backgrounds ensure optimal contribution to the decision making process. The Chairperson's approach was open ensuring adequate contribution from members and inclusive. The fact that members are able to contribute easily as a working group, respecting each other's views keeps the foster child at the centre of the Panel's consideration.

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?	3
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Policies and procedures are in place for short term breaks . More carers are taking advantage of this service.

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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Bromley recognises the importance of carers who are family and friends of the child. They are fully assessed and have the same rights and entitlements as 'in house' carers in terms of financial support, supervision and training.	3
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PART C

LAY ASSESSOR'S SUMMARY

(where applicable)

Lay Assessor _____ **Signature** _____
Date _____

PART D

PROVIDER'S RESPONSE

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

We would welcome comments on the content of this report relating to the Inspection conducted on <enter date(s) of inspection here> 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 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.

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