Commission for Social Care Inspection

Champions for Social Care Improvement

inspection report

Independent Fostering Services

Jay Fostering Limited
Unit 1 Edward House
Grange Business Park
Whetstone
Leicester
LE8 6EP

7th April 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
Jay Fostering Limited

Tel No
0116 277 0066

Address
Unit 1 Edward House, Grange Business Park, Whetstone, Leicester, LE8 6EP

Fax No
0116 277 9859

Email Address
enquiries@jfostering.co.uk

Registered Number of IFA

C010000561

Name of Registered Provider
Jay Fostering Limited

Name of Registered Manager (if applicable)
Mrs Coral Jane McDonnell

Date of first registration
2nd December 2003

Date of latest registration certificate
2nd December 2003

Registration Conditions Apply ? NO

Date of last inspection First inspection

Date of Inspection Visit		7th April 2004	**ID Code**
Time of Inspection Visit		09:00 am	
Name of Inspector	**1**	Sharon Treadwell	071369
Name of Inspector	**2**	Trisha Gibbs	
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.		NA	
Name of Specialist (e.g. Interpreter/Signer) (if applicable)		NA	
Name of Establishment Representative at the time of inspection		Coral McDonnell. Richard Berry.	

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INTRODUCTION TO REPORT AND INSPECTION

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

This document summarises the inspection findings of the CSCI in respect of Jay Fostering Limited. 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.

Jay Fostering Limited is a private limited company with shares and operates as an Independent Fostering Agency. The shareholders have appointed two directors to run the company. The executive director and Responsible Individual is Mr. Richard Berry and the non-executive director is Ms. Lara Harwood. Both directors have legal backgrounds and Mr. Berry additionally holds office as Company Secretary.

The agency is in the early stages of operation having been first registered in December 2003.

The agency's Statement of Purpose clearly defines the nature of placement types, which will ultimately be provided as short term, long term (task centred of for permanency), bridging and respite and full details are also supplied of the additional services available through the agency. Jay has negotiated contractual access to the services of an Education Liaison Officer and a qualified Play Therapist.

The agency has a full time Registered Manager and employs two part time qualified Social Workers and an Office Manager.

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 agency has been operational since December 2003 and aims to recruit between fifteen and twenty carers. At the time of this inspection five carers had been approved by Jay Fostering and a further two were being supervised by the agency whilst awaiting completion of Form F assessments. In the interim, the approval in respect of these two carers is held by the local authorities, which have children in those placements.

All the carers currently supervised by Jay transferred from another Fostering Agency, which ceased operation at the time that Jay was first registered. In general therefore all of these are experienced carers and all made the transfer with children already in placement.

In the four months since registration Jay has not therefore placed any children. The agency has fourteen children in placement at the time of this inspection.

At the time of this inspection four new carers had just commenced pre approval training and form F assessments of these carers were due to commence imminently.

This has been a positive inspection with many areas of agency practice commended particularly in relation to its policy and procedural documentation, which was found to have an extremely sound legal basis.

It has been difficult within this inspection however to fully inspect the agency's capacity to operate in compliance with its policy and procedural guidance due to the extremely short duration of its operation and the limitations of initial operational status as detailed above.

Both carers and placing Social Workers, in their questionnaire responses have reflected on the difficulty of commenting on the agency's functional capacity due to their limited experience to date.

The effect of the above position has been to make it impossible to assess the agency as exceeding any of the standards inspected and to make it impossible to appropriately inspect the agency's performance under some of the standards.

Four standards have not been scored within this report and have been marked as not inspected. Some comments have been entered under these standards to reflect the evidence observed during the inspection of appropriate policy and procedural guidance and there is reflection of the inability of the inspectors to evidence practical implementation of this.

The agency is however commended on fully meeting all of the standards inspected and no requirements have been identified within this report. The agency has however been recommended to take action in two areas.

Questionnaires.

Carers:

Questionnaires were received from four carers who spoke highly of the support, which they received from the agency. All four carers felt that they were well consulted and that their opinions were listened to by the agency. Comments were made about the agency being 'completely child focussed', 'totally professional', 'perceptive and approachable' and 'simply the best'.

Three carers were visited during this inspection.

Children:

Questionnaires were received from ten children who all spoke positively about their carers. One child spoke particularly positively about support from carers in respect of culturally specific requirements. All of the children were fully aware of how to complain if they were unhappy and nine of the ten said that they had received a Children's guide. Some of the best things about their fostering placements were 'going to school', 'being looked after properly', 'food and love'.

Placing Social Workers:

Questionnaires were received from six placing social workers, all of who spoke positively of children's current foster placements. They spoke of foster homes as being 'stable and supportive', 'a nurturing environment' and 'homely and inclusive'. All felt that the child was well looked after by the carers and all except one felt that the carers worked well with the child's birth family.

In general placing social workers stated that it was too early to comment on their working relationship with the agency but none identified any problems to date.

Statement of Purpose (Standard 1).

One standard was inspected and was fully met.

The agency is commended on the preparation of a comprehensive Statement of Purpose, which has been compiled with appropriate reference to the legislative framework, which determines the agency's operational status.

The agency is commended on the production of three guides for children and young people to reflect the needs of different age ranges.

Fitness to provide or manage a fostering service (Standards 2 & 3).

Two standards were inspected and were fully met.

Both the Responsible individual and the Registered Manager have successfully undergone 'fit person' interviews with the National Care Standards Commission.

The agency manager was working her notice at the time of this inspection and the agency was in the process of attempting to recruit a replacement. Appropriate arrangements are in place for service management in the interim.

Management of the fostering service (Standards 4 & 5).

Two standards were inspected and were fully met.
Jay Fostering is currently a small operation with only three members of staff. . Whilst lines of accountability are very clear and management responsibilities are well defined in job descriptions there was evidence during this inspection that staff work very much as a team.

Full financial records were made available to the inspectors during this inspection and confirmation of financial viability and appropriate accounting systems was received at the time of registration in December 2003.

The agency has been reminded during this inspection of the need, as it grows and develops, to identify clear arrangements for someone to deputise when the manager is absent.

Securing and promoting welfare (Standards 6-14)
Eight standards were inspected and were fully met. One standard was not fully inspected and was not scored.

The agency has clear and comprehensive policy and procedural guidelines on safe caring practices and he homes visited during this inspection were found to provide a high standard of care. However the standards detail the requirement for each household to have written safe caring guidelines and this was found not to be the case.

The agency has been recommended to ensure that safe caring guidelines are completed with each carer, in relation to their household, at the earliest opportunity and to ensure that these guidelines are updated whenever a new child is placed.

The agency has a general Equal Opportunities Policy document and a separate policy addressing 'Equal Opportunities and Valuing Diversity in relation to children placed within the agency'. This is a commendably comprehensive document detailing the steps, which the agency will take to ensure that all children's needs are appropriately addressed in all areas and clarifying the rights of the children to complain if they feel that this has not been achieved.

Referral and matching procedures are clearly detailed in policy documentation but the inspectors felt unable to assess the agency's capacity to implement these since no placements have yet been made.

The agency has a commendably comprehensive Child Protection Policy, which appropriately addresses bullying, allegations, children involved in prostitution and procedures in relation to children missing from placement.

The agency has clear guidelines on the importance of facilitating contact for children in foster care and policies clearly detail the differential roles and responsibilities of carers, placing Social Workers and agency Supervising Social Workers in relation to children's rights of contact.

Jay is currently in the process of developing strategies for appropriate consultation with both children in placement and the children of foster carers and is talking with young people about the most useful ways of achieving this.

The agency has clear and comprehensive policies and procedures detailing both agency and carer responsibilities in relation to the active promotion of the health and educational

achievement of children placed as well as the development of appropriate independence skills. Carers are required to complete a written monthly report, which fully addresses all these areas and accommodates children's comments on the information recorded.

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

Seven standards were inspected and were fully met. Two standards were not fully inspected and were not scored.

The agency has a highly commendable 'Recruitment and selection Handbook', which covers the recruitment process from the point of advertising a vacant position through to the completion of a probationary period of employment.

The procedure is the most comprehensive and explicit, which the inspectors have come across to date.

The agency currently has only a small staff team. Apart from the directors only the Agency Manager, Office Manager and two part-time Supervising Social Workers are employed.

Staff were observed during this inspection to be appropriately managed and supervised. All staff have access to agency policy and procedural documentation and a training session has been undertaken with carers transferring to Jay Fostering to clarify the aims, objectives and working practices of the agency.

Due to the fact that the agency is in the very early stages of operation the inspectors felt that it was not possible to establish that 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. Carer and staff recruitment is an ongoing process and no referrals have yet been taken.

Staff training was equally impossible to assess at the time of this inspection. Individual learning profiles are in the process of being compiled for staff currently in post detailing relevant experience and qualifications and identifying future training needs but to date these are incomplete and the agency has not had staff in post long enough to implement programmes of training. Supervising Social Work staff are very recent appointments.

The Carers' Handbook clearly details the support, which carer's can expect from Jay Fostering and clarifies arrangements for annual review, out of hours support systems, training and respite provision.

At the time of this inspection the inspectors were able to observe evidence that support networks for carers were being progressively developed and that carers were being appropriately consulted about systems, which they would find most helpful. The first Carers Group Meeting took place on April 22nd and was attended by one of the inspectors and the first newsletter was prepared and circulated to carers during the inspection.

The agency has prepared an Induction Training Manual for new carer applicants and the proposed programme covers child development, identity and self esteem, child care law and

safe caring along with a range of other relevant issues.

The Carers' Handbook contains good information in relation to complaints and allegations procedures detailing child, carer and agency rights and responsibilities.
No complaints have been received by the agency to date.

Records (Standards 24 & 25).
Two standards were inspected and were fully met.

The agency information storage systems are almost exclusively electronic. Jay Fostering has developed a comprehensive database system and all written information received is scanned onto the database and shredded. No paper files are retained on carers or children.

The agency has excellent policy and procedural guidance on 'Record keeping, filing and maintaining records on the main server'. There are varying levels of access to the system within the agency and a password access is operational.

Records examined during this inspection, in relation to both carers and children, were found to contain appropriate information.

Fitness of premises for use as a fostering service (Standard26)
One standard was inspected and was fully met.

The agency has office premises on the Grange Business Park in Enderby, Leicester. The office consists of a large ground floor room, which can be used for meetings, training and activities with young people and is the venue for the panel and a large first floor office, petitioned to create two work areas for staff.

All required insurances are in place.

Financial requirements (Standard 27-29).
Three standards were inspected and all were fully met.

Full checks were completed on the financial viability of the agency as part of the initial registration process in December 2003.

Details of the company's accountants/auditors are supplied in the Statement of Purpose, which also clarifies that annual financial accounts will be open to inspection by all placing authorities.

Details of fostering allowances are clearly stated and the agency's Statement of Purpose details that additional funding will be provided during the main school holiday period to allow for each child placed to pursue a leisure activity or day trip once each week. Carers spoken to during the inspection confirmed that payments were made promptly.

The agency has comprehensive policy and procedural documentation detailing its financial systems and processes.

Fostering Panels (Standard 30).
One standard was inspected and was fully met.

A fostering panel was attended during this inspection and the Panel Chair was interviewed. The Chair is Team Manager for Fostering and Adoption Services for a local authority and has extensive experience in both fostering and Child Care Operations with both local authority and independent providers.

The agency has a booklet of Panel Members' Guidance, which details that each member is issued with a copy of the Fostering Services Regulations 2002 (commended) and the Fostering Network publication 'A panel member's guide to competency in assessments'.

The panel is constituted in accordance with Regulation 24.

The panel observed during this inspection was only the fourth to take place. The inspectors were advised that the format for minutes was still very much experimental and the minutes of the first three panel meetings are reflective of this in their differential formats. The Office Manager operates as minute taker for the panel and arrangements are already in place for her to attend BAAF training in July (the first available course). This arrangement and discussions with the Panel Chair satisfied the inspector that the agency was developing appropriate systems for more comprehensive recording of panel discussions and recommendations.

Whilst discussion with the Panel Chair during this inspection evidenced an excellent awareness of the procedures which would be followed in the event of panel members' disagreement, these are not well detailed in the Panel Manual and **it is recommended within this inspection that detail regarding these procedures be incorporated into the Panel Manual as stated under Standard 30.2.**

Short term breaks (Standard 31).
This standard was not inspected.

Family and friends as carers (Standard 32).
This standard is not applicable. The agency does not deal with Kinship Care provision.

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	
			None	

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	**Sharon Treadwell**	**Signature**	
Second Inspector		**Signature**	
Locality Manager	**Sue Shaw**	**Signature**	
Date			

STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS IDENTIFIED DURING THIS INSPECTION

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

STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS

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

No.	Regulation	Standard *	Requirement	
			None	

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	FS6	The Registered Person is recommended to ensure that safe caring guidelines are completed with each carer, in relation to their household, at the earliest opportunity and to ensure that these guidelines are updated whenever a new child is placed.
2	FS30	The Registered Person is recommended to extend written guidelines for the panel to include action to be taken should the panel be in disagreement.

* 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	YES
Foster carer survey	YES
Foster children survey	YES
Checks with other organisations and Individuals	YES
• Directors of Social services	NO
• Child protection officer • Letter sent to Child Protection Officers for Leicester City Council and Leicestershire County Council. No response received.	NO
• Specialist advisor (s)	YES
• Local Foster Care Association • Contact established by Business Services Team-not prepared to comment under Data Protection.	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	NO

Date of Inspection	7/4/04
Time of Inspection	8.30
Duration Of Inspection (hrs)	60

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

The scale ranges from:

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

"0" in the "Standard met?" box denotes standard not assessed on this occasion.
"9" in the "Standard met?" box denotes standard not applicable.
“X” is used where a percentage value or numerical value is not applicable.

Statement of Purpose

The intended outcome for the following standard is:

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

Standard 1 (1.1 - 1.6)
There is a clear statement of the aims and objectives of the fostering service and of what facilities and services they provide.

Key Findings and Evidence	**Standard met?**	3

The agency's Statement of Purpose is a comprehensive document detailing the provision of a 'comprehensive care package', which can be tailored by Jay Fostering Service to include 'educational, therapeutic or other support systems' as determined in negotiation with the placing authority.

The inspectors commend the agency's reference to its preparation of the Statement of Purpose in accordance with Regulation 3 of the Fostering service Regulations 2002 and Standard 1.

The agency is commended on the production of three guides for children and young people to reflect the needs of different age ranges. Two Children's Guides cover ages four to seven years and seven to twelve tears and a Young Peoples' Guide is available for twelve to sixteen year olds. All three of the guides are colourful, well presented and readable and contain contact numbers for the National Care Standards Commission (to be updated to the Commission for Social Care Inspection), The National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children Helpline and 'Childline' as well as details of the agency's Complaints Procedure, appropriately summarised according to age.

All three guides contain good reference to tackling bullying and the Young Peoples' Guide contains information about preparing for independent living.

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 Registered Manager is Coral McDonnell who has a Batchelor of Science degree (honours), a Certificate of Qualification in Social Work and a Post Qualification 1 (Social Work).

Coral has been a qualified Social Worker for eleven years and has operated as a senior practitioner for four years.

Coral successfully underwent a 'fit person' interview with the National Care Standards Commission on November 20th 2003.

During this inspection both staff and carers spoke highly of Coral's leadership capacity and supportive skills.

Coral is shortly due to cease employment with the agency and interim arrangements have been negotiated with the inspector for an Acting Manager to assume management responsibility whilst advertising and recruitment for a new manager is undertaken.

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

Both the Responsible individual and the Registered Manager have successfully undergone 'fit person' interviews with the National Care Standards Commission.

Staff files examined during this inspection evidenced that the agency is making appropriate telephone checks on references and a written record of this is retained on file.

All staff currently employed by the agency have been subject to appropriate Criminal Records Bureau clearance and evidence is retained on file.

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?**	3

Jay Fostering is currently a small operation with only three members of staff. Whilst lines of accountability are very clear and management responsibilities are well defined in job descriptions there was evidence during this inspection that staff work very much as a team.

Full financial records were made available to the inspectors during this inspection and confirmation of financial viability and appropriate accounting systems was received at the time of registration in December 2003.

The agency intends to hold regular Carers' Groups, the first of which was attended by the inspector on April 22nd as part of the inspection process.

Richard Berry will undertake monitoring of the agency's operations, as detailed under Schedule 7 of The Fostering Regulations 2002 and will report to the directors and shareholders on his findings. Richard is also fully responsible and accountable for company spending and for submitting regular reports on the company finances to the shareholders.

Only one of the placing Social Workers completing a questionnaire prior to this inspection said that they had received the agency's Statement of Purpose however the inspectors were assured by Richard Berry that copies had been forwarded directly to all placing authorities.

One notification has been received from the agency relating to the initiation of a child protection inquiry. This inquiry relates to an historical allegation.

Number of statutory notifications made to CSCI in last 12 months:	0

Death of a child placed with foster parents.	0
Referral to Secretary of State of a person working for the service as unsuitable to work with children.	0
Serious illness or accident of a child.	0
Outbreak of serious infectious disease at a foster home.	0
Actual or suspected involvement of a child in prostitution.	0
Serious incident relating to a foster child involving calling the police to a foster home.	0
Serious complaint about a foster parent.	0
Initiation of child protection enquiry involving a child.	1

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

Standard 5 (5.1 - 5.4) The fostering service is managed effectively and efficiently.		
Key Findings and Evidence	**Standard met?**	3

See Standard 4.

In the course of this inspection and in their questionnaire responses prior to the inspection several carers spoke highly of the management of the service.

Lines of accountability are clear and written job descriptions clearly identify roles and responsibilities.

Currently there are no clear arrangements to identify the person in charge when the manager is absent and as the agency grows and develops it will need to address this issue.

Securing and Promoting Welfare

The intended outcome for the following set of standards is:

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

Standard 6 (6.1 - 6.9)
The fostering service makes available foster carers who provide a safe, healthy and nurturing environment.

Key Findings and Evidence	**Standard met?**	3

The Carers' Handbook contains a highly commendable section on 'Safe Care', which includes clear summaries for carers on what the constituents of a safe environment should be as well as agency procedural guidelines such as the requirement for each child to have their own bedroom unless a risk assessment has been undertaken in relation to siblings sharing.

Some of the carers spoken to during the inspection told the inspectors that they did not have current Safe Caring guidelines specific to their home (see Standard 9.2) and the agency did confirm that these had not been completed with carers since their approval.

The agency is recommended to ensure that safe caring guidelines are completed with each carer, in relation to their household, at the earliest opportunity and to ensure that these guidelines are updated whenever a new child is placed.

During attendance at the first Carers' Support Group meeting on April 22nd the inspector noted that the agency was arranging to visit carers to complete safe caring guidelines.

The inspectors were assured that all carers will undergo a safe care training programme as part of their induction and all will be issued with a copy of the 'Safer Caring' booklet issued by the Fostering Network, which is commendable in it's presentation and detail.

Three foster homes were visited during this inspection and all were considered by the inspectors to provide a good standard of care to the children in placement.

Standard 7 (7.1 - 7.7)
The fostering service ensures that children and young people, and their families, are provided with foster care services which value diversity and promote equality.

Key Findings and Evidence	**Standard met?**	3

The agency Statement of Purpose details that it will 'promote anti discriminatory practice and positively promote children's needs in terms of health, education, culture, gender, sexuality, disability, race and language.'

The agency has a general Equal Opportunities Policy document and a separate policy addressing 'Equal Opportunities and Valuing Diversity in relation to children placed within the agency'. This is a commendably comprehensive document detailing the steps, which the agency will take to ensure that all children's needs are appropriately addressed in all areas and clarifying the rights of the children to complain if they feel that this has not been achieved.

The agency's pro-forma for the recording of carer supervision specifically addresses anti discriminatory practices evidenced.

The agency Placement Agreement specifically addresses the action needed in order to ensure that the child's religious, cultural and leisure needs will be appropriately met within the proposed placement.

In the questionnaire responses prior to this inspection one child specifically told of how carers had helped in understanding of cultural identity.

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

The agency's referral procedure is clearly detailed within policy and procedural documentation and equally clear guidelines clarify the requirement for appropriate matching. Excellent reference is made within these policies and procedures to the relevance of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and the resultant requirement for the prioritization of children's individual needs within the matching process.

Agency policy requires the attachment of a task sheet to every referral form to evidence the completion of each necessary step of the placement process.

The Jay Fostering Foster Placement Agreement format is highly commended.
The agreement is extremely comprehensive, fully covering all areas listed under Schedule 6 of the Fostering Services Regulations and clearly detailing the roles and responsibilities of the agency and its employees, the carers and the placing authority. The agency is further commended for attaching to the agreement, a copy of its confidentiality policy.

To date the agency has not placed any children with carers. All those children currently placed transferred with their carers.

It is not therefore possible for the inspectors to assess within this inspection the agency's capacity to appropriately match referrals to placement and therefore no score has been entered.

Standard 9 (9.1 - 9.8) The fostering service protects each child or young person from all forms of abuse, neglect, exploitation and deprivation.		
Key Findings and Evidence	**Standard met?**	3

The Annual Review process for carers includes the requirement for completion of an annual Health and Safety check of the home. This is commended.

The agency has a commendably comprehensive Child Protection Policy, which appropriately addresses bullying, allegations, children involved in prostitution and procedures in relation to children missing from placement. The agency also has separate policy documents relating to several of these specific areas. All policies reflect detailed and appropriate reference to other relevant legislation and are clear in their definition of procedures to be followed and responsibilities for taking action.

The procedure for children missing from care is particularly commendable in detailing the requirement for consideration to be given at the time of placement to previous absconding behaviour and for a risk assessment to be completed accordingly.

The agency is additionally commended on its separate policy document addressing bullying and on its requirement for carers to record and report any instances of bullying in order that the agency can enter this information into a central log for the purposes of monitoring the incidence of bullying amongst children placed with Jay Fostering.

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 agency has written policy guidelines on promoting contact between children in placement and their birth family. The policy details the duty imposed in this respect by the Children's Act 1989 (Paragraph 15 Schedule 2) and clarifies that contact covers meetings, telephone calls, letters and 'any action required to promote and maintain family links'.

The policy details the requirement for a child's contact requirements to be fully considered within the matching process and for the placing authority to be encouraged to address appropriate funding and maintenance of contact especially if the placement being contemplated is distanced from the child's home area.

The policy is commended on addressing the differential contact needs, which may arise from a child's particular legal status.

The monthly report submitted by each carer to the agency requires them to report specifically on any issues around facilitating contact.

Policies clearly detail the differential roles and responsibilities of carers, placing Social Workers and agency Supervising Social Workers in relation to children's rights of contact.

The agency's Placement Agreement also includes coverage of contact including the requirement, as detailed under Standard 10.6 for appropriate risk assessment.

Standard 11 (11.1 - 11.5)
The fostering service ensures that children's opinions, and those of their families and others significant to the child, are sought over all issues that are likely to affect their daily life and their future.

Key Findings and Evidence	**Standard met?**	3

The monthly report format, which is completed each month by every carer contains a section for the young person in placement to comment on what has been said within the report.

Jay is currently in the process of developing strategies for appropriate consultation with both children in placement and the children of foster carers and is talking with young people about the most useful ways of achieving this. The plan is to send out a questionnaire to secure children's views on this.

Carers' children are consulted within the Form F assessment process about their feelings with regard to their parents becoming foster carers.

In their questionnaire responses prior to this inspection all ten children said that they were fully consulted by their carers.

The agency was reminded during this inspection of the need to ensure that all carers are aware of each child's right of access to their own local authority Children's Rights Officer and the need to ensure that each child is provided, by their placing Social Worker, with full contact details. In the course of this inspection one of the carer's visited was advised by the inspector to establish contact with a child's local authority Children's Rights Service to obtain advocacy services in respect of contact.

The agency has a separate complaints procedure for children, which is appropriately summarised in all three of the Children's Guides.

In their questionnaire responses prior to this inspection all ten children said that they were aware of how to make a complaint.

Standard 12 (12.1 - 12.8)
The fostering service ensures that it provides foster care services which help each child or young person in foster care to receive health care which meets her/his needs for physical, emotional and social development, together with information and training appropriate to her/his age and understanding to enable informed participation in decisions about her/his health needs.

Key Findings and Evidence	**Standard met?**	3

See Standard 24 (monthly reports).

The agency has a comprehensive Health Care Policy, which details agency and carer responsibility in the promotion of health awareness amongst children in placement. The policy details the agency's intention to complete its own assessment of each child's health history and present/future health needs and to supply copies of the carer's monthly report to placing authorities (this covers health issues). This is in order to ensure that a permanent record is retained relating to each child's individual health as detailed under Standard 12.4 and that this record remains accessible to the child should they leave the agency.

The policy details the responsibility of Jay Fostering to retain up to date information regarding the geographical location of both general and specialist health resources.

The section on health care in the Carers' Manual outlines the correct procedures for responding to incidents/accidents and clarifies the duty to report appropriately to the agency. There is also information provided about the Jay Medical Advisor. Dr. Piper was contacted prior to this inspection and a letter was received from her confirming her role with the agency.

There is commendable additional information for carers in respect of their responsibilities in terms of health promotion and an excellent section relating to 'sex, young people and the law'.

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

Key Findings and Evidence	**Standard met?**	3

See Standard 24 (monthly reports).

The agency Statement of Purpose details that it will offer 'positive incentives to encourage educational attainment'. There is information regarding the availability of an Education Liaison Officer for attendance at reviews or to negotiate additional support services where such a need is identified. Linda Smith is contracted by Jay Fostering for support/consultation as needed and the Statement of Purpose gives full clarification of her qualifications and experience.

The agency has a similar contractual arrangement with a qualified Play Therapist for advice or direct therapeutic work with children.

An integral element of the Foster Care Agreement is that all children must be supported to enrol in the local library.

The agency's Education Policy details the active promotion of attendance and attainment and clarifies the expectation that carers will be instrumental in securing these. The policy states that each child will be provided with an educational profile containing information relating to attendance, attainment and progress in order that the agency may appropriately monitor education and report back to placing authorities. There is consideration within the matching process of individual educational needs and potential resource implications.

At the time of this inspection only one child was not receiving regular education and a school place had already been identified by the local authority.

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?**	3

The agency Statement of Purpose states that carers will be provided with appropriate training to enable them to support the development of young peoples' independence skills and emphasises the importance of carers' active involvement in Pathway planning for young people in their care.

The agency has procedural guidance dealing with young people leaving the care system, which details care leavers as 'a potentially vulnerable and unhappy group' and reinforces the responsibility of carers to appropriately prepare young people in placement to move on successfully. There is emphasis in the requirement for close liaison between carer, Supervising and placing Social Worker to ensure that the best interests of the child are served.

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

The intended outcome for the following set of standards is:

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

Standard 15 (15.1 - 15.8)
Any people working in or for the fostering service are suitable people to work with children and young people and to safeguard and promote their welfare.

Key Findings and Evidence	**Standard met?**	3

The agency has a highly commendable 'Recruitment and selection Handbook', which covers the recruitment process from the point of advertising a vacant position through to the completion of a probationary period of employment. The handbook contains excellent reference to the requirements under the Fostering Services Regulations and the National Minimum Standards as well as comprehensive reference to other relevant employment and equal opportunities legislation. The handbook additionally contains pro forma letters and forms for reference requests, interviews, probationary period assessments etcetera.

The procedure is the most comprehensive and explicit, which the inspectors have come across to date.
The agency additionally has a written 'Capability Procedure'.

Mr. Berry informed the inspectors that the agency was aware that in its initial recruitments, prior to registration, some of the items listed under Schedule 1 had been overlooked but evidence was seen on staff files examined during this inspection that all elements of Schedule 1 were now covered by the agency in their appointment of staff.

The agency currently employs two part-time Supervising Social Workers, both of whom are qualified, though with limited experience of the Supervising Social Worker role in relation to fostering. Both are supervised and supported by the agency manager.

Currently interviews are conducted by the agency on a formal verbal basis to a preset agenda and discussions took place between the inspectors and Mr. Berry during this inspection with regard to potential alternative interview techniques, which might better provide evidence of the skills and experiences required for the roles advertised.

Advice was also given to Mr. Berry by the inspectors, in relation to the pro-forma currently used for reference requests.

Total number of staff of the agency:	6	**Number of staff who have left the agency in the past 12 months:**	0

Standard 16 (16.1 - 16.16)
Staff are organised and managed in a way that delivers an efficient and effective foster care service.

Key Findings and Evidence	**Standard met?**	3

See Standard 25-all agency records are electronically stored on database.

The agency currently has only a small staff team. Apart from the directors only the Agency Manager, Office Manager and two part-time Supervising Social Workers are employed.

The agency manager is responsible for supervision of the Supervising Social Workers and the Office Manager and supervision is regular and appropriately recorded. The Agency Manager receives external supervision from an appropriately qualified practitioner. See Standard 20.

Currently Form F assessment of carers is undertaken by external assessors on contract to the agency although training (BAAF) in assessment is planned for the agency's Supervising Social Work staff.

At the time of this inspection a decision had been made by the agency for the Manager to step down from the panel to be replaced by the two Supervising Social Workers in order that she may assume a role in scrutinising all Form F assessments prior to submission to the panel to monitor consistency (see Standard 30).

The management structure of the agency is clearly spelt out in the Statement of Purpose and lines of accountability clearly delineated and individual responsibilities are well clarified in job descriptions.

The inspectors observed that a good level of clerical/administrative support was provided by the Office Manager.

All staff have access to agency policy and procedural documentation and a training session has been undertaken with carers transferring to Jay Fostering to clarify the aims, objectives and working practices of the agency.

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

Agency's Statement of Purpose clearly defines the nature of placement types, which will ultimately be provided as short term, long term (task centred of for permanency), bridging and respite and during this inspection Mr. Berry detailed the agency's intention to recruit carers accordingly.

At the time of the inspection only five carers had been approved by Jay and all of these had transferred from another fostering agency, which had ceased to operate.

It was felt by the inspectors that it was not possible at this early stage to adequately assess the agency's capacity to meet this standard.

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 agency Statement of Purpose details that all social work staff will be available for 'out of hours' enquiries '365 days of the year'. Currently the out of hours duty system involves all calls being diverted to the Agency Manager's mobile telephone but the agency is reminded of the need to keep the appropriateness of this system under review as it grows and develops.

One of the agency directors, Mr. Richard Berry has overall responsibility for Health and Safety and the agency has comprehensive Health and Safety policy and procedural guidance for both staff and carers. The Health and Safety audit of each carer's household is comprehensive and takes place initially as an integral part of the Form F assessment process and thenceforth annually as part of the annual review process.

Full details of the agency's insurance cover are printed in the Statement of Purpose. Public liability cover of £5,000,000 and professional indemnity cover of £1,000,000 are provided in addition to employer's liability cover and an all risk extension.

Undertakings in the Foster Care Agreement clarify the responsibilities of Jay fostering and the expectations of carers in all areas of care provision including the responsibilities and legal requirements associated with a carer wishing to transfer to a different fostering service provider.

The agency has a written whistleblowing policy covering staff and carers.

Standard 19 (19.1 - 19.7)
There is a good quality training programme to enhance individual skills and to keep staff up-to-date with professional and legal developments.

Key Findings and Evidence	**Standard met?**	0

Individual learning profiles are in the process of being compiled for staff currently in post detailing relevant experience and qualifications and identifying future training needs but to date these are incomplete and the agency has not had staff in post long enough to implement programmes of training. Supervising Social Work staff are very recent appointments.

***It was felt by the inspectors that it was not possible at this early stage to adequately assess the agency's capacity to meet this standard*.**

Standard 20 (20.1 - 20.5)
All staff are properly accountable and supported.

Key Findings and Evidence	**Standard met?**	3

A comprehensive Staff Handbook has been issued to each member of staff detailing their Terms and Conditions of employment and clarifying the grievance and disciplinary procedures.

Contracts of employment and job descriptions are clear in their terms and identify roles and responsibilities associated with the post appointed to.

The agency has a comprehensive Supervision Policy, which clarifies that all staff will receive monthly supervision and that sessions will be recorded on a pro-forma. Records checked during this inspection and discussions with staff indicated that this policy was being adhered to. All staff will receive an annual appraisal.
See Standard 19.

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

Policy and procedural documentation evidences clear and comprehensive strategies for carer support and supervision and the carers spoken to during this inspection and those completing questionnaires spoke highly of the agency support received to date.

The Carers' Handbook clearly details the support, which carer's can expect from Jay Fostering and clarifies arrangements for annual review, out of hours support systems, training and respite provision.

At the time of this inspection the inspectors were able to observe evidence that support networks for carers were being progressively developed and that carers were being appropriately consulted about systems, which they would find most helpful. The first Carers Group Meeting took place on April 22nd and was attended by one of the inspectors and the first newsletter was prepared and circulated to carers during the inspection.

The Carers' group was attended by eight carers and evidenced appropriate consultation regarding the purpose of support group meetings and proposals for venues and frequency of future sessions. Carers spoke positively about the need to establish informal systems of support and of the value of drawing on each others experiences.

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

The Foster Care Agreement contains full information as detailed under Schedule 5 of the Fostering services Regulations. The inspectors particularly commend the inclusion in the agreement of the requirement 'to permit visits to the foster home by anyone authorised by the Secretary of State or by the local or area authority'.

There is excellent cross-reference within the agreement to the relevant regulations and standards.

The requirement for unannounced visits to be made to every carer's home, as detailed under Standard 22.6 is detailed in the agency's policy and procedural guidance on the recruitment, assessment and approval of carers.

The agency has developed an excellent pro-forma recording system for carer supervision, particularly in its detailing of the duration of the session and the requirement for the carer to sign to confirm that it represents a true record.

The Carers' Handbook contains good information in relation to complaints and allegations procedures detailing child, carer and agency rights and responsibilities.

No complaints have been received by the agency to date.

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

The agency Statement of purpose details the requirement for all carers to be willing to attend a minimum of six training sessions each year and to hold 'a recognized certificated first aid qualification'.

Carer questionnaires received detail attendance at an initial training session in early January covering Jay's policies and procedures.

Jay held an Induction training day for six carers on March 29th and a copy of the programme was examined during this inspection. The programme was found to appropriately address issues such as safe caring, decision making and relevant legislation.

The agency has prepared an Induction Training Manual for new carer applicants and the proposed programme covers child development, identity and self esteem, child care law and safe caring along with a range of other relevant issues. The inspectors are not able, within this inspection to comment on the implementation of this programme since the agency is just at the point of starting its first newly recruited carers onto this training.

One of the Supervising Social Workers spoken to during this inspection is currently developing a database record of the training undertaken to date by carers transferring from another agency in order that appropriate additional training can be scheduled for these experienced carers.

Records

The intended outcome for the following set of standards is:

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

Standard 24 (24.1 - 24.8)
The fostering service ensures that an up-to-date, comprehensive case record is maintained for each child or young person in foster care which details the nature and quality of care provided and contributes to an understanding of her/his life events. Relevant information from the case records is made available to the child and to anyone involved in her/his care.

Key Findings and Evidence	**Standard met?**	3

A monthly report is completed by each carer, in relation to each child in placement. The pro-forma for the recording of these reports is commended in its inclusion of a section for the child's comments on the information, which has been recorded. Discussions with carers during this inspection evidenced that carers are pro-active in encouraging children in placement to add comments to their monthly report reflecting their views.

The report format requires the carer to detail dates of visits by the placing Social worker as well as full details of any contacts between the child and birth family and the dates and nature of any medical appointments (see Standard 12). Comments are additionally requested in relation to the child's educational progress and the carer's input in respect of education (see Standard 13).

The agency referral procedure appropriately ensures that all Looked After children (LAC) paperwork is requested from the placing authority.

Children's records examined during this inspection contained all relevant paperwork.

Standard 25 (25.1 - 25.13)
The fostering service's administrative records contain all significant information relevant to the running of the foster care service and as required by regulations.

Key Findings and Evidence	**Standard met?**	3

The agency information storage systems are almost exclusively electronic. Jay Fostering has developed a comprehensive database system and all written information received is scanned onto the database and shredded. No paper files are retained on carers or children.

The agency has excellent policy and procedural guidance on 'Record keeping, filing and maintaining records on the main server'. There are varying levels of access to the system within the agency and a password access is operational.

The agency also has a 'file Review policy, which clarifies that the Registered Manager will review files regularly to monitor quality and consistency. The policy details that experienced Supervising Social workers will have one of their carer files reviewed every month whilst inexperienced workers will have three files reviewed.

No complaints have been received to date by the agency but one child protection referral has been made. This concerns an historical allegation, which pre-dates the child's placement with the current carers. Appropriate notification was made to the Commission regarding this.

Number of current foster placements supported by the agency:			13
Number of placements made by the agency in the last 12 months: ALL CURRENT CARERS WERE APPROVED BY THIS AGENCY WITH CHILDREN ALREADY IN PLACEMENT.			0
Number of placements made by the agency which ended in the past 12 months:			1
Number of new foster carers approved during the last 12 months:			6
Number of foster carers who left the agency during the last 12 months:			0
Current weekly payments to foster parents: Minimum £	313	**Maximum £**	393

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 agency has office premises on the Grange Business Park in Enderby, Leicester. The office consists of a large ground floor room, which can be used for meetings, training and activities with young people and is the venue for the panel and a large first floor office, petitioned to create two work areas for staff.

All Jay Fostering Service records are retained electronically. The server is located in a separate, lockable room and discs are removed each evening and stored in a fireproof safe.

The job description of the Office Manager details her responsibility for securing the premises at the end of each day and agency policy and procedural documentation clearly records the need for security of information.

Full insurance cover is in place and certificates were examined during this 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?**	3

Full checks were completed on the financial viability of the agency as part of the initial registration process in December 2003.

A letter of confirmation of financial viability was received prior to this inspection from Mr. Richard Berry, the responsible Individual for the company. The agency Statement of Purpose incorporates a statement of the agency's financial position and details finance by shareholders via a loan and property, repayable over five years.

Mr. Berry's letter clarifies the potential access to further capital should this be required and the expectation of financial loss during the first year of trading due ti initial set-up costs.

Mr. Berry confirmed during this inspection that all financial regulations and guidelines imposed on businesses were strictly adhered to.

Standard 28 (28.1 - 28.7)
The financial processes/systems of the agency are properly operated and maintained in accordance with sound and appropriate accounting standards and practice.

Key Findings and Evidence	**Standard met?**	3

The agency Statement of Purpose details all additional services, which may be purchased by placing local authorities such as contact venues with supervising staff, therapeutic interventions and teaching support systems.

Full costings of placement are discussed in preparing the Foster Placement Agreement with the placing authority.

Details of the company's accountants/auditors are supplied in the Statement of Purpose, which also clarifies that annual financial accounts will be open to inspection by all placing authorities.

The agency has comprehensive policy and procedural documentation detailing its financial systems and processes.

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

Details of fostering allowances are clearly stated and the agency's Statement of Purpose details that additional funding will be provided during the main school holiday period to allow for each child placed to pursue a leisure activity or day trip once each week.

Carers may choose to waive their entitlement to respite and receive payment for their respite entitlement.

All carers spoken to during this inspection said payments were made appropriately and promptly.

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 agency has a booklet of Panel Members' Guidance, which details that each member is issued with a copy of the Fostering Services Regulations 2002 (commended) and the Fostering Network publication 'A panel member's guide to competency in assessments'.

The panel is constituted in accordance with Regulation 24 and, in line with Standard 30.9 has an independent member with experience of the care system as well as a member who operates as a foster carer with a local authority fostering service.

All panel members evidence relevant experience and/or qualifications and together they represent a wide spectrum of appropriate knowledge bases.

The panel member's guidance fully details panel responsibilities in the areas of approval, annual review and termination of approval and includes details of the protocol, which should have been followed if a carer is transferring from another fostering agency.

All panel members have Criminal Records Bureau clearance and each has signed a confidentiality agreement.

The Agency Decision Maker is Mr. Richard Berry who, during this inspection, was able to evidence a full understanding of his role in relation to the panel processes. He told the inspectors that he both used and valued panel members' experience and knowledge and would be guided by their expertise. The format for notification to carers of their approval reflects this.

A fostering panel was observed by one of the inspectors on April 26th 2004. The panel considered two approval applications of carers who have been supported by Jay Fostering for some months following the closure of another agency. The approval for these carers has been temporarily held by the local authority, which has children already in placement.
Both Form F assessments had been completed by external assessors and both were comprehensive.
The inspector observed relevant questioning of carers, comprehensive discussion of recommendations and sensitive leadership by the Panel Chair.

The Panel Chair was interviewed as part of the inspection process. The Chair is Team Manager for Fostering and Adoption Services for a local authority and has extensive

experience in both fostering and Child Care Operations with both local authority and independent providers. She has previously managed an independent fostering service. None of the other panel members had previous experience of being part of a fostering panel prior to joining the Jay Panel and those spoken to during this inspection spoke of the value to each of them of the Panel Chair's experience.

The panel observed during this inspection was only the fourth to take place. The inspectors were advised that the format for minutes was still very much experimental and the minutes of the first three panel meetings are reflective of this in their differential formats. The Office Manager operates as minute taker for the panel and arrangements are already in place for her to attend BAAF training in July (the first available course). This arrangement and discussions with the Panel Chair satisfied the inspector that the agency was developing appropriate systems for more comprehensive recording of panel discussions and recommendations.

Constitution of the panel has recently been amended due to the imminent departure of the manager. She has been replaced as a member of the panel by the agency's two Supervising Social Workers. On the occasion of the panel observation the social worker who was a panel member was also operating in a supervisory capacity to one of the applicants. This is not appropriate and the agency is reminded that, in using its supervising Social Workers as panel members it must ensure that conflict of interests is avoided.

Standard 30.2 details that written procedures should cover decision-making when all members of the panel are not in agreement.

Whilst discussion with the Panel Chair during this inspection evidenced an excellent awareness of the procedures which would be followed in the event of disagreement these are not well detailed in the Panel Manual and **it is recommended within this inspection that detail regarding these procedures be incorporated into the Panel Manual as stated under Standard 30.2.**

Short-Term Breaks

The intended outcome for the following set of standards is:

- **When foster care is provided as a short-term break for a child, the arrangement recognises that the parents remain the main carers for the child.**

Standard 31 (31.1 - 31.2)
Where a fostering service provides short-term breaks for children in foster care, they have policies and procedures, implemented in practice, to meet the particular needs of children receiving short-term breaks.

Key Findings and Evidence	**Standard met?**	0

The agency Statement of Purpose details the potential provision of short term breaks but none are currently provided.

No carers have yet been provided with respite but the agency has appropriate policy and procedural guidance.

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

The agency does not deal with kinship care placements.

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

Not applicable

Lay Assessor Not applicable **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 between April 7th 2004 and April 26th 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	NO
Comments were received from the provider	YES
Provider comments/factual amendments were incorporated into the final inspection report	NO
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	YES

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 Friday, 11 June 2004, which indicates how statutory requirements and recommendations are to be addressed and stating a clear timescale for completion. This will be kept on file and made available on request.

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

Action plan was required	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: The provider has supplied evidence to the inspector that both recommendations have been fully implemented at the time of publication of this report.	YES

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 Richard Berry of Jay Fostering Limited 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 Richard Berry of Jay Fostering Limited 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.