



Leicester
City Council

WARDS AFFECTED
All (City-wide)

FORWARD TIMETABLE OF CONSULTATION AND MEETINGS:

**Social Services and Personal Health Scrutiny Committee
Cabinet**

**29 October 2003
24 November 2003**

**FINAL REPORT OF THE NATIONAL CARE STANDARDS COMMISSION INSPECTION OF
LEICESTER CITY COUNCIL FOSTERING SERVICE**

Report of the Corporate Director of Social Care and Health

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1** This report introduces the outcome of the National Care Standards Commission Inspection of the Leicester City Council Fostering Service, which took place in May 2003. The report is attached for Members (further copies available from Mark Tingley, Service Manager, Children and Family Resources. Tel. 299 5876).
- 1.2** A presentation will be give at the Scrutiny meeting on the results of the inspection.

2. Summary

- 2.2** All independent and local authority fostering services fall within the jurisdiction of the National Care Standards Commission (NCSC). These services are subject to annual inspections to establish if the local authority is meeting the standards required by the Care Standards Act 2000, the Fostering Services Regulations 2001 and the amended Children Act 1989.
- 2.3** Fostering service providers are expected to meet the National Minimum Standards. The standards are used by NCSC Inspectors as the basis for judgments to be made on the performance of fostering services.
- 2.4** The fostering inspection took place at the same time as the SSI Inspection of Children's Services. Some aspects of the inspections were therefore undertaken jointly, including interviews with foster carers and children.
- 2.5** The outcome of the inspection was positive, with the fostering service being commended for its work in a number of areas. With the exception of one standard, the inspectors found the Leicester City Council Fostering Service performed within the scoring range of 3 or 4, denoting that the relevant standard was either 'met' or 'exceeded'.

2.6 The inspectors highlighted two ‘Statutory Requirements (area where the service did not comply with the National Standards). Ten ‘Good Practice Recommendations were also made (areas to be considered for implementation by the Authority).

3 Recommendations

3.1 Scrutiny and Cabinet

It is recommended that Scrutiny and Cabinet: -

- a. note the Final Report of the National Care Standards Commission Inspection into the Leicester City Council Fostering Service; and
- b. note that the ‘Statutory Requirements’ identified in the Final Report have been acted upon and that the ‘Good Practice Recommendations’ have either been implemented or are in progress.

3.2 Scrutiny Committee

It is recommended that Scrutiny discuss the Final Report in the light of presentation at the meeting.

4 Financial and Legal Implications

4.1 The implementation of the National Minimum Standards has resulted in increased costs, particularly as a result of additional administrative requirements, additional demands on social work time, provision of a standards compliant fostering panel and written material such as a new foster carer’s handbook and new fostering service procedures. To the extent that they cannot be met from existing budgetary provision, they will be considered alongside other pressures in 2004/05 financial strategy. There are no further financial comments to add to the report at this stage –Rohit Rughani, Principal Accountant, Social Care and Health (tel. 252 8801).

4.2 Given the outcome of the statutory inspection there are no legal implications arising from this report (Guy Goodman, Assistant Head of Legal Services – tel. 252 7054).

5 Other Implications

OTHER IMPLICATIONS	YES/NO	Paragraph Within Supporting information	References
Equal Opportunities	Yes	The welfare of children in foster care has important equal opportunities implications.	
Policy	Yes	The NCSC report has policy implications for the Fostering Service.	
Sustainable and Environmental	No		
Crime and Disorder	No		

Human Rights Act	No	
Elderly/People on Low Income	No	

6 Background Papers

Report of the National Care Standards Commission.

7 Consultations

None.

8 Report Author/Officer to contact:

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