

inspection report

Fostering Services

Barnardo`s Breakaway Project

Trinity House

Trinity Road

Dudley

West Midlands

DY1 1JB

19th May 2003

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

Barnardo's Breakaway and Dudley Shared Care Project

Tel No

01384 458585

Address

Trinity House, Trinity Road, Dudley, West Midlands, DY1 1JB

Fax No

01384 459672

Email Address

Julia.tanner@barnardos.org.uk

Registered Number of IFA

Name of Registered Provider

Barnardos`

Name of Registered Manager (if applicable)

Ann Tanner

Date of first registration

Date of latest registration certificate

Registration Conditions Apply ?

NO

Date of last inspection

N/a

Date of Inspection Visit		19 th ,20 th ,21 st ,22 nd ,23 rd ,27 th , 28 th ,29 th May and 11 th ,21 July and 2 nd ,23 rd September 2003		ID Code
Time of Inspection Visit		10:00 am		
Name of Inspector	1	Sally Woodget	113975	
Name of Inspector	2	Alistair Smith	073082	
Name of Inspector	3			
Name of Inspector	4			
Name of Lay Assessor (if applicable) Lay assessors are members of the public independent of the NCSC. 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				

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Part B: Inspection Methods & Findings

(National Minimum Standards For Fostering Services)

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- 2. Fitness to carry on or manage a fostering service**
- 3. Management of the fostering service**
- 4. Securing and promoting welfare**
- 5. Recruiting, checking, managing, supporting and training staff and foster carers**
- 6. Records**
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INTRODUCTION TO REPORT AND INSPECTION

Independent and local authority fostering services which fall within the jurisdiction of the National Care Standards Commission (NCSC) 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 NCSC in respect of Barnardo's Breakaway Project. 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 NCSC 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.

The Breakaway Project and Dudley Shared Care Project is one of a number of similar projects run by Barnardos. The Breakaway Project has been in operation for over 18 years and was derived according to local need for children with a disability who were required to be moved from the local long stay Hospital called Lea Castle to live in the community in Worcestershire and surrounding areas.

Dudley Shared Care Project has only recently been taken over from Dudley Social Services Department and it's purpose is different from Breakaway in that it provides short term breaks for children with disabilities who live at home with their families and are not accommodated by the Local Authority.

The project is a member of the Fostering Network and the Shared Care Network, national organisations representing foster care and short break care schemes respectively.

The Dudley Shared Care Project provides family and community based care in the form of overnight care, day care, a sitting and befriending service for young people with learning and/or a physical disability who live in the Metropolitan Borough of Dudley

Since all children who use the Dudley Shared Care project live with their parents some of the regulations and standards are a strange concept to parents who don't regard their children as being in foster care. The project tries to move away from the concept of respite care.

This project operates through a Service Level Agreement with Dudley Social Services Department and Barnardos, who fund the project.

The Breakaway project continues to provide long term foster placements for children with disabilities and referrals are received by the project from all over the country.

Each child is assessed individually and the project is able to adapt carers' accommodation to meet the individual disability needs of children.

The project is based in Dudley.

PART A SUMMARY OF INSPECTION FINDINGS

Inspector's Summary

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

This service has not been previously inspected. This report is the first by the National Care Standards Commission under the minimum standards for fostering services and therefore serves as an audit of the service against the new requirements and minimum standards, identifying areas which are creditable and where development is needed. Since this is the services first inspection this report may contain a substantial number of recommendations and requirements. If so, these should fall significantly at the next inspection when the agency will have had time to take account of the new regulation and standards and to take action to meet them within a reasonable period of time. Any more urgent issues are identified in the report.

The project is generally of a good standard. There are only a few significant shortfalls and these are mostly in relation to the Dudley Shared Care Project which the agency had only taken responsibility for a month before the inspection. The manager of the service was already aware that there were shortfalls in relation to the Dudley Shared Care Project and plans to develop future improvements and bring the project in line with the standards of the Breakaway service was intended. The inspector believes that there is considerable strength in the management team to provide a service and that it is committed to improving the welfare of children to whom the project provides a service. The carers, children's parents and social workers praised the project for the support and training it provided.

The project has managed to acquaint itself with the standards and regulations. This is reflected in the need for few requirements to be made.

Reports and Notifications to the Local Authority and Secretary of State

(Local Authority Fostering Services Only)

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

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

NO

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

NO

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

NO

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

NO

The grounds for the above Report or Notice are:

Implementation of Statutory Requirements from Last Inspection

Requirements from last Inspection visit fully actioned?

NA

If No please list below

STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS

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

No.	Regulation	Standard	Required actions	

Action is being taken by the National Care Standards Commission 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**Signature****Second Inspector****Signature****Locality Manager****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 and recommendations 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	Regs 3 and 4	FS1.4	The agency must produce a statement of purpose and a children's guide which includes the different aims, objectives, services and facilities of the two projects, as outlined in these regulations.	To be arranged
2	Regs 5, 7 and 20	FS15 and FS3.2	The agency must in respect of persons seeking to work with the fostering service make sure that all the matters contained in Schedule 1 are addressed, specifically: An enhanced criminal record certificate Telephone references after receiving written references. Positive proof of identity including a recent photograph.	To be arranged
3	Reg 42.1 Schedule 7	FS4.1	The agency must ensure that all matters listed in this schedule are monitored.	To be arranged
4	Reg 11 a	FS6.4	The agency must ensure that the welfare of children placed or to be placed with foster carers is safeguarded and promoted at all times, and that specifically each child has his/her own bed and accommodation arrangements which reflect the child's assessed need for privacy and space and any need arising from a disability.	To be arranged

5	Reg 11 a	FS9	The agency must ensure that it manages the shared care project in such a way as to ensure that the welfare of children placed or to be placed is safeguarded and promoted at all times, in particular; by ensuring an appropriate number of children are linked to each carer, that there is an agreement with each carer about which children can receive their shared care at the same time, taking into account the individual child's assessed needs and the carers skills and experience.	To be arranged
6	Reg 12.1.a	FS9.4	The agency must ensure that <u>all</u> it's carers are fully signed up to the child protection policy and that appropriate training is provided to assist carers to understand the needs and rights of young people with disabilities particularly in the area of sexuality and sexual health matters.	To be arranged
7	Reg 13.1	FS9	The agency must ensure that <u>all</u> it's carers fully understand the behaviour management policy and that appropriate training is provided to assist carers to understand the needs and rights of young people with disabilities and specifically in the area of sexuality and sexual health matters.	To be arranged
8	Reg 28 5 b Schedule 5	FS22.4	The agency must ensure that all the matters outlined in the Foster Care Agreement are covered in line with Schedule 5 of the Fostering Services Regulations 2001.	To be arranged
9	Reg 24 3 b ii	FS30	The project must appoint one of its directors or the responsible individual to be a Panel member.	To be arranged
10	Reg 24 3 d	FS30	The project must appoint to its panel a person who has been a foster parent for a fostering service other than Barnardos.	To be arranged

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	FS2.2	The manager should undertake a qualification at level 4 NVQ in management or equivalent by 2005.
2	FS8.2-4	The agency should ensure that the child's care plan and recent written assessments of the child and their family are taken into account before a placement is made, and that written foster placement agreements (as outlined in Schedule 6) contain specific reference to elements of matching as well as identifying the areas where foster carers need additional support to compensate for any gaps in the match.
3	FS10	The agency should ensure that contact arrangements are clearly articulated in the foster placement agreement. Schedule 6.
4	FS11	The agency should ensure that suitable means are provided frequently, for any child with communication difficulties to make their wishes and feelings known regarding their care and treatment.
5	FS12.3	The agency should ensure that they provide the carers with as full a description of the health needs of the child as is possible and that clear procedures are in place governing consent for the child to receive medical treatment including the administration of any medication. The agency should ensure that all parties understand that it is the responsibility of the agency to pass information relating to the placement of the child to the foster carers.
6	FS30.5	The agency should ensure that its quality assurance function is both thorough and rigorous.
7	FS30.3	The project should ensure, that all of its' Panel members have been checked by the Criminal Records Bureau.

* 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	20
Survey of placing authorities	YES
Foster carer survey	YES
Foster children survey	YES
Checks with other organisations and Individuals	YES
• Directors of Social services	YES
• Child protection officer	YES
• Specialist advisor (s)	NA
• Local Foster Care Association	YES
Tracking Individual welfare arrangements	YES
• Interview with children	YES
• Interview with foster carers	YES
• Interview with agency staff	YES
• Contact with parents	YES
• Contact with supervising social workers	YES
• Examination of files	YES
Individual interview with manager	YES
Information from provider	YES
Individual interviews with key staff	YES
Group discussion with staff	YES
Interview with panel chair	YES
Observation of foster carer training	NO
Observation of foster panel	YES
Inspection of policy/practice documents	YES
Inspection of records	YES
Interview with individual child	YES
Date of Inspection	19/5/03
Time of Inspection	10.00 AM
Duration Of Inspection (hrs)	140

The following pages summarise the key findings and evidence from this inspection, together with the NCSC 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?

1

At the time of the inspection the Agency had recently taken over the responsibility of running the Dudley Shared Care Project and the Statement of Purpose had not been altered to include this service or explain the differences between the 2 projects. The present Statement of purpose needs to be altered to ensure that all the matters outlined in Standard 1.4 and Regulation 3 and 4 are covered.

The agency have devised a comprehensive Children's guide for the Breakaway project which is child friendly and sensitive to the needs of children and young people who have a disability. This guide is also available in makaton for those children and young people with communication difficulties. The manager stated that the guide could be adapted to suit the specific needs and communication style of individual children and also that there were plans to produce the guide in CD and audio-cassette format in the near future. This guide needs to include all aspects of this Standard and Regulations 3 and 4.

A guide also needs to be devised for the children and young people using the Shared Care Project.

The address of the National Care Standards Commission needs to be corrected in all these documents.

Fitness to Carry On or Manage a Fostering Service

The intended outcomes for the following set of standards are:

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

Standard 2 (2.1 - 2.4)

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

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

2

Both the responsible individual and the manager of this service are qualified social workers and have many years experience in working with children and young people who have a disability and of managing a children's provision.

At the time of the inspection the manager did not have an NVQ level 4 in management and needed to identify a course which would satisfy this criteria as outlined by standard 2.2.

The inspectors were satisfied that the manager exercises effective leadership skills and that the service was organised and managed in a way that provides the best possible child care. The National Care Standards Commission (NCSC) has interviewed the proposed provider and the manager and has recommended that they should be approved for registration.

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?

1

The Barnardo's Human Resources Department oversees the requirements set out in this standard and Schedule 1. The manager of the project creates a shadow file for each member of staff which is held in the project office. The Human Resources Dept should ensure that telephone enquiries are made to follow up written references and Criminal Records Bureau check. Outcomes should be kept for inspectors to authenticate. There are some staff who have not had enhanced Criminal Records Bureau checks and some staff had no proof of their ID in their files.

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?

1

The project has a robust system in place for monitoring and controlling the activities of the service. The project is internally inspected and audited by Barnardos, these inspection visits are unannounced. The manager has to produce an annual report and business plans and quarterly statistics. However the system does not monitor all the matters listed in Schedule 7 in particular the project need to;

- ♣ establish a central system for recording all measures of control, restraint and discipline used in respect of children or young people accommodated in the foster home.
- ♣ Develop a system of monitoring the medication, medical treatment and first aid administered to any child placed with foster carers.

The project should ensure that all staff and carers declare any possible conflict of interest.

Number of statutory notifications made to NCSC 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.

0

Number of complaints made to NCSC 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
The manager has a job description detailing her duties and responsibilities. This, the inspectors were told, is regularly reviewed. The manager has been assessed as fit and competent. It should be noted that the requirements to meet this standard have been covered elsewhere in this report.		

Securing and Promoting Welfare

The intended outcome for the following set of standards is:

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

Standard 6 (6.1 - 6.9)

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

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

2

Most of the elements of this standard were met. The inspectors were impressed by the warm and caring environment provided by the foster carers they visited as part of the inspection process, both from the Short break project and the Breakaway project.

However inspectors were concerned to note that one carer for the Dudley Short Break project had moved house and there was no evidence that the carers new circumstances had been health and safety checked which was a significant omission considering the range of disabilities of the young people the carer was expected to care for. In another instance inspectors were concerned to note that one carer living in a 2 bedroomed property was providing long term care to 1 young person and respite to another young person, which required bed and bedroom swapping. These are not satisfactory arrangements and do not meet Standards 6.2, 6.4 or 6.6 or comply with Regulation 11.

The project had been involved in assisting in building extensions and adapting properties to meet particular children's needs. Those carers interviewed were dedicated to the task and were able to offer a range of different support in partnership with the children's parents. Carers were aware of health and safety procedures and how this should be applied to their circumstances.

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 project has made every effort to ensure that each placement for a child is appropriate to the child's needs. The project staff work closely with occupational health and education services to ensure the young people for whom they provide a service have the opportunity to achieve their potential.

The project as a whole provide specific services to support each child with a disability to help them and to lead as full a life as possible.

The parents of the children placed with the Dudley Shared Care project are heavily involved in the whole process.

Written evidence of policy documents and of practice indicates that positive procedures for promoting equality and valuing diversity have been developed.

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**

This is an area of work that the project do well on the whole. Due to the very complex needs of the young people who are referred to this project, the matching process is recognised as crucial in determining the right placement for a child. There was evidence of careful planning and preparation. Foster carers were asked to produce videos and photograph albums of their family and home as an initial introduction to a child who may be placed. Introductions invariably took place over 2-3 months to ensure all the necessary adaptations and equipment was in place and to ensure that all parties understood and were happy with the arrangements.

In one case, which was tracked for the purposes of the inspection however, a young person was placed in the Breakaway scheme as an emergency, despite this not being the remit of this project. This placement had raised a number of concerns due to the lack of future planning for this young man by the placing authority. Despite several attempts to address the issue with the placing authority by the project manager, the young person had not been allocated a social worker for a prolonged period of time and the placement's long term suitability had not been formally reviewed.

Standard 9 (9.1 - 9.8)

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

Key Findings and Evidence**Standard met?****2**

The Barnardos project has a thorough and comprehensive child protection policy. The Breakaway carers had received training on child protection though this was lacking with some of the carers who were providing the care for the Dudley Shared Care Project. The manager had recognised this omission and there were plans to address the training needs of carers from the Dudley Shared Care Project in the near future. The project has procedures in the foster carers handbook and the staff policies and procedures manual. These were known to staff and carers. The manager advised that all allegations of child abuse are notified directly to her or to her deputy who then make the necessary notifications. Inspectors were concerned to note that one carer for the Dudley Shared Project was sometimes caring for the children that she was linked with at the same time, occasionally 4 or up to 7. All these young people have learning disabilities. In another case inspectors were concerned to note some inappropriate responses by a carer who was coping with an adolescent who was exhibiting sexualised behaviour, which indicated a need for some training. Another carer was identified as requiring careful monitoring to ensure that safe caring guidelines are being maintained at all times. These arrangements need urgent attention as they are not conducive to securing children's welfare or to protecting children.

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

X

%

Standard 10 (10.1 - 10.9)

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

Key Findings and Evidence**Standard met?****2**

This standard is not applicable to the Dudley Shared Care Project.

This is an area of work that needs developing in relation to the Breakaway service. Many children placed live some distance from their birth families. The manager and responsible individual described the Breakaway service as being like an adoption in all but name, in that some families had no contact. It is suggested that where no contact is possible or advisable that independent advocates could be considered to offer a service to these young people where possible.

There was some evidence however, of positive contact taking place in individual cases, which was commendable.

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**

Only 2 questionnaires were received by inspectors, from children and young people being provided a service, from The Dudley Shared Care Project and The Breakaway Project. The reason for this was due to the fact that nearly all the children placed had complex and/or multiple disabilities and would have been unable to complete the forms. The manager stated that their staff worked very hard to ensure that children and young people's views were taken into account at all stages in their placement within the project. The children and young people's views were sought before placement using the very useful and comprehensive "child's profile" which explores the children's and young people's likes and dislikes as well as their routines. Whilst there were only a few instances of duties being delegated by the responsible authorities, the supervising social workers made sure that children and young people placed were seen on a regular basis and that their views were sought. It has been suggested that these views are recorded on the supervision document as a matter of course.

The project had also set up contracts with responsible authorities on an individual basis to provide direct work for those children and young people who needed it.

Inspectors were very impressed by the commitment of the foster carers, sitters, befrienders and respite carers providing a service for the Breakaway Project and their determination to advocate for the rights of the children and young people for who they were involved with. Again it has been suggested that advocates are involved in assisting children and young people who may wish to make a complaint as outlined in Standard 11.5.

Staff and carers are regularly trained in communication methods for the children and young people they care for to ensure they can communicate with them as effectively as possible.

The Dudley Shared Care Project was still a new undertaking at the time of the inspection and the manager and staff were aware that there was some work to be done in terms of ensuring Children and young people were fully consulted about the arrangements for their care. Some parents and carers had got into the habit of making informal arrangements with each other under the auspices of the project and staff had not been involved therefore in being able to fully consult all parties to ensure the balancing of young people's needs and wishes these against the needs and wishes of their parents requiring regular respite.

Standard 12 (12.1 - 12.8)

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

Key Findings and Evidence**Standard met?****2**

The Breakaway Project staff are heavily involved in liaising with occupational therapists, physiotherapists, health visitors and local hospitals and health services to arrange appropriate services for the children and young people who are placed with their carers, in order to ensure that their individual needs are met. This is a time consuming process but one that all staff know is crucial to the safety and wellbeing of both the child and the success of their placement. There were a number of examples of good practice in this area, which impressed the inspectors.

As stated earlier in this report the Dudley Shared Care Project had only recently become Barnardos' responsibility and the staff were aware that there was some work to do in this area. Inspectors were concerned to note that informal arrangements were being made between parents and carers that the Dudley Shared Care Project were unaware of; in that carers were not keeping any records of the medication that they were administering to children and young people in their care. In another instance inspectors were concerned that little information had been provided to the carers concerning a child who had regular fits, and that a risk assessment had not been undertaken to ascertain the number of carers to be present.

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**

This standard is not applicable to The Dudley Shared Care Project.

This is an area of work that The Breakaway Project does well. A great deal of work is done to ensure good working relationships with the local special schools where most of the children placed go to school. Foster carers are heavily involved with the local special schools and systems are in place to ensure information is passed between school and home on a daily basis where children and young people are unable to communicate effectively. Barnardos has systems in place to demonstrate the educational achievement of their children and young people placed with them via their live link system.

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**

This standard is not applicable to The Dudley Shared Care Project.

Most of the children and young people placed by The Breakaway Project will not be able to live independently due to the nature of their complex and multiple disabilities. The inspectors were impressed to note that most of the foster carers who had cared for children and young people through this project had continued to provide care for them long after their 18th birthday. Project staff had been actively involved in assisting the foster carers to apply for adult placement status (when this was appropriate) so the young people could continue to be part of the family. The project staff and foster families are actively involved in liaising with the local authority social services department adult disability services to ensure full community care assessments are completed and appropriate services provided.

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?

1

The Barnardo's Human Resources Department takes responsibility for the recruitment of staff. The Human Resources Department must ensure that telephone enquiries take place after written references are obtained. The department records the dates and outcomes of Criminal Records Bureau, however, the outcome needs to be kept for authenticating via an NCSC inspection. There are still some staff who have not had a criminal record check.

Total number of staff of the agency:

9

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

The project's management structure is clearly defined. All staff have delegated duties and job descriptions.

The inspectors were told by staff and carers, that they had confidence in the way the project was managed and organised. All staff had a good understanding of their roles and knowledge about the service.

All staff received regular and purposeful supervision, and were expected to attend regular staff meetings and identified training.

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
At the time of the inspection the agency were experiencing some staffing problems, part of the reason for this was due to the recent take over of the Dudley Shared Care Project in that not all the staff anticipated to move across via the TUPE arrangements did so. The agency had however employed agency staff as a contingency measure. Barnardos has a clearly set out assessment process for prospective carers and inspectors were impressed by the quality of these assessments.		

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
All staff interviewed felt that Barnardos was a fair employer and offered a good range of training and encouraged personal development. The project has a seven-day duty system for carers. It was of some concern that this is provided by non-project staff who may need more information made available to them about carers. It was felt however that if the problem required the skill of a project worker this would be achieved.		

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
This standard was not assessed during this inspection.		

Standard 20 (20.1 - 20.5) All staff are properly accountable and supported.		
Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?	3
As already stated elsewhere, all staff have job descriptions and were aware of their roles and responsibilities. The Barnardo's policies and procedures are accessed through the computer system. The project has a strategy and management group that meets three times a year. All staff have annual appraisals.		

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
The Breakaway Project values its carers and to that end has a very clear strategy for supporting them. The Dudley Shared Care Project staff need to develop good links with carers, children and most importantly the children's parents, known as family links, in order to fully understand how this service has been operating and develop a strategy that is unique to this service as well as incorporating all the matters outlined in standard 21.2. All carers have a foster carer handbook and the manager and staff recognise the need for this to be updated on a regular basis. Questionnaires received from the placing authorities regarding The Breakaway Project were generally very positive.		

Standard 22 (22.1 - 22.10) The fostering service is a managed one that provides supervision for foster carers and helps them to develop their skills.		
Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?	1
The Foster Care Agreements must include the arrangements for the review of approval of the foster parent as outlined in Schedule 5 Regulation 28.5.b. All carers reported receiving a regular supervision and that if they needed additional support this would be made available. Carer support groups have, in the past, been regularly available for both The Breakaway Project and The Dudley Shared Care Project and well supported by the foster carers. Records of supervision are held electronically.		

Standard 23 (23.1 - 23.9)

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

Key Findings and Evidence**Standard met?**

0

This Standard was not assessed during this inspection

Records

The intended outcome for the following set of standards is:

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

Standard 24 (24.1 - 24.8)

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

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

3

The project uses the "Live link" system for case recording. The recording is well organised, factual and overseen by the manager.

There was some evidence of misfiling on some files which needs addressing (i.e. one child's information was placed in the wrong child's file).

The project has a policy on recording and confidentiality.

There was some evidence of good practice in relation to storing information in such a way as to help a child understand and come to terms with their life events. Carers were encouraged to record significant life events and were storing information in diaries and life story boxes.

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 project's confidential records are held on the Live link recording system. The files are organised in an accessible manner. A number of files are kept centrally, (e.g. complaints accidents and allegations).

There is an open access policy for carers, the child and their birth parents to see their own records. There is a clear policy on record keeping.

Once a child has left the project all records are kept in the Barnardo's regional office.

Number of current foster placements supported by the agency:

22

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

3

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

0

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

4

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

0

Current weekly payments to foster parents: Minimum £

185

Maximum £

185

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 premises are a good size for the number of staff employed. There are good security systems to safeguard the building and the records. The office administration has responsibility for the office.

There was evidence of health and safety procedures being followed, through, for example, regular fire drills and equipment checks.

There are facilities such as a conference room and interview rooms, (which are occasionally used for supervised contact between children and young people and their birth parents) that are shared with another Barnardos fostering project in the same building.

All staff who use the computers have user ids and the computers are anti virus protected.

Issues remain regarding access for children and young people as well as any potential staff who have physical disabilities but these were being addressed at the time of the inspection.

Financial Requirements

The intended outcome for the following set of standards is:

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

Standard 27 (27.1 - 27.3)

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

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

0

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 Breakaway Project has its own budget that is audited internally once a year, which is managed by the manager. The Dudley Shared Care Project has a service level agreement with Dudley Social Services Department and therefore a separate budget from The Breakaway Project.

The budgets are set in October and are discussed at a quarterly review between the manager and the responsible individual

The project has a corporate plan for finances.

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**

Carers were paid via the BACS system for The Breakaway Project and this seemed to be working well. Arrangements for the payment of The Dudley Shared Care Project carers was not assessed as it was still new to the staff in the office.

There were clear policies on fostering allowances and fees that were reviewed annually.

Fostering Panels

The intended outcome for the following set of standards is:

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

Standard 30 (30.1 - 30.9)

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

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

1

The Fostering Panel has written procedures to advise the Panel. The Panel is shared with another project the Short Breaks Project in Worcestershire. It is the project's intention however, in the future, to share it's Panel with another Barnardos project, which is geographically closer to them.

The Chair of the Panel was interviewed and the Panel process was observed. The inspector was told that Panel members all receive training twice a year, and that the Panel experiences difficulty in obtaining carers from other agencies to become Panel members.

The Panel has an independent chair, this person also acts as the education adviser. The inspector was told that all Panel members have received a Criminal Records Bureau check however not all the information required by Schedule 1 was available on each panel member and this needs to be addressed. The project was already aware of some of the shortfalls identified with the current Panel. This will be resolved, the inspector has been told, by the project creating its own Panel.

The shortfalls identified were:

- The vice chair, who is the Responsible Individual and decision maker for the project, should not be on the Panel.
- There needs to be some caution about the role of the project manager, who at the time of the inspection was used by the Chair as an adviser, because of her obvious experience. However, since the manager manages the project and supervises the staff and Form F assessments, the independence of the panel becomes undermined.
- There needs to be a more robust quality assurance function particularly in relation to annual reviews and when approving carers from another project (for example when Barnardos assumes responsibility of short break fostering projects from local authorities, such as; Shropshire and Dudley, under service level agreements)

Short-Term Breaks

The intended outcome for the following set of standards is:

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

Standard 31 (31.1 - 31.2)

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

Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?
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The Breakaway Project foster carers are provided with regular short term breaks for the children and young people placed with them, these carers are often extended family members who can provide continuity and support to both the foster carers and to the young person concerned.

Both elements of this standard are met in relation to The Dudley Shared Care Project.

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?
This standard is not applicable	9

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 NCSC in response to the provider's comments:

Amendments to the report were necessary

YES

Comments were received from the provider

YES

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

YES

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

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 (see attached letter), 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

Provider has declined to provide an action plan

Other: <enter details here>

Public reports

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