



*Making Social Care
Better for People*

inspection report

FOSTERING SERVICE

Breakaway & Dudley Shared Care Project (Midlands Region)

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

Lead Inspector
Christine Lancashire

Announced Inspection
5th September 2005 10:00

The Commission for Social Care Inspection aims to:

- Put the people who use social care first
- Improve services and stamp out bad practice
- Be an expert voice on social care
- Practise what we preach in our own organisation

Reader Information	
Document Purpose	Inspection Report
Author	CSCI
Audience	General Public
Further copies from	0870 240 7535 (telephone order line)
Copyright	This report is copyright Commission for Social Care Inspection (CSCI) and may only be used in its entirety. Extracts may not be used or reproduced without the express permission of CSCI
Internet address	www.csci.org.uk

This is a report of an inspection to assess whether services are meeting the needs of people who use them. The legal basis for conducting inspections is the Care Standards Act 2000 and the relevant National Minimum Standards for this establishment are those for *Fostering Services*. They can be found at www.dh.gov.uk or obtained from The Stationery Office (TSO) PO Box 29, St Crispins, Duke Street, Norwich, NR3 1GN. Tel: 0870 600 5522. Online ordering: www.tso.co.uk/bookshop

Every Child Matters, outlined the government's vision for children's services and formed the basis of the Children Act 2004. It provides a framework for inspection so that children's services should be judged on their contribution to the outcomes considered essential to wellbeing in childhood and later life. Those outcomes are:

- Being healthy
- Staying safe
- Enjoying and achieving
- Making a contribution; and
- Achieving economic wellbeing.

In response, the Commission for Social Care Inspection has re-ordered the national minimum standards for children's services under the five outcomes, for reporting purposes. A further section has been created under 'Management' to cover those issues that will potentially impact on all the outcomes above.

Copies of *Every Child Matters* and *The Children Act 2004* are available from The Stationery Office as above

This report is a public document. Extracts may not be used or reproduced without the prior permission of the Commission for Social Care Inspection.

SERVICE INFORMATION

Name of service	Breakaway & Dudley Shared Care Project (Midlands Region)
Address	Trinity House Trinity Road Dudley West Midlands DY1 1JB
Telephone number	0121 550 5271
Fax number	
Email address	
Provider Web address	
Name of registered provider(s)/company (if applicable)	Barnardo`s Midlands Region
Name of registered manager (if applicable)	Ann Tanner
Type of registration	Fostering Agencies
No. of places registered (if applicable)	0
Category(ies) of registration, with number of places	

SERVICE INFORMATION

Conditions of registration:

Date of last inspection 14th September 2004

Brief Description of the Service:

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 19 years. The aim of the project is to provide long term/permanent family based placements for children aged between 0 to 16 years who have various degrees of learning disabilities and/or physical disabilities. The service also provides family based short breaks, sitters and befrienders for children and young people living with their long term foster carers.

The project has the Dudley Shared Care Project from Dudley Social Services Department to provide short term breaks for children with disabilities who live at home with their families and are not accommodated by the Local Authority.

SUMMARY

This is an overview of what the inspector found during the inspection.

This inspection was undertaken by two inspectors and took place over a week. The inspectors examined records and sampled three families to visit for discussion with carers and children. Questionnaires were sent to a sample of foster carers, placing officers and to those children in placement who were able to provide a response. Responses were received from one child, three fostering households and three placing officers. The inspectors also interviewed the manager and several social workers employed by the project. All provided positive comments. The fostering service was described as 'organised and accessible'.

What the service does well:

This service fulfils its aim of recruiting and selecting carers who possess a wide range of qualities which make them suitable to care specifically for children with severe disabilities. Placing officers described carers as 'fully understanding of the individual needs of the children in their care' 'enthusiastic and committed'. There are suitable arrangements for the protection of children/young people. There are good arrangements for ensuring that all aspects of the child/young person's routines are followed during their stay with carers.

This service employs suitable workers in sufficient numbers to provide support and supervision to the carers. The workers are well managed and supervised and have access to relevant training opportunities.

The organisation has appropriate policies and procedures. There is a formal system in place for recording the monitoring and evaluation of the service by the manager and the company's senior managers.

Confidential information, documents and records are securely stored. There is a high level of satisfaction amongst foster carers in relation to the information and support provided by the project.

What has improved since the last inspection?

A short explanation of the role of the inspectors from the Commission for Social Care Inspection is now included in the Statement of Purpose and Children's Guides.

Changes have been made to the composition of the fostering panel so that it is now quorate. All panel members have now been checked through the Criminal Records Bureau.

Some additional space has now been identified within the building for use by the project and this, together with the increased use of home working and IT has alleviated the overcrowding.

The project has reviewed its recruitment strategy and materials in order to better target black and ethnic minority families. It has recruited an Urdu speaking development worker to determine the needs of Asian families in the area and anticipates the recruitment of appropriate families to meet the needs of Muslim children.

What they could do better:

The project has identified the need to research and meet the needs of black and ethnic minority families in the area. It has been proactive in beginning this work, but this will need to be developed further as awareness of the service among the ethnic minority communities is raised and the need for carers increases.

The service has experienced some difficulties in recruiting qualified social workers and has identified the need to review pay structures, in the light of scales in other sectors.

Since the project is on the top floor of the building, a lift would greatly facilitate access for people whose mobility is restricted.

Comments from carers and staff revealed that they would appreciate and benefit from more advanced training in protection and more diversity and HIV training, which is mainly provided to carers who have children with specific needs.

Please contact the provider for advice of actions taken in response to this inspection.

The report of this inspection is available from enquiries@csci.gsi.gov.uk or by contacting your local CSCI office.

DETAILS OF INSPECTOR FINDINGS

CONTENTS

Being Healthy

Staying Safe

Enjoying and Achieving

Making a Positive Contribution

Achieving Economic Wellbeing

Management

Scoring of Outcomes

Statutory Requirements Identified During the Inspection

Being Healthy

The intended outcomes these Standards are:

- The fostering service promotes the health and development of children.(NMS 12)

The Commission considers Standard 12 the key standard to be inspected at least once during a 12 month period.

JUDGEMENT – The intended outcomes for these Standards are

The health and development of children is promoted by the service.

EVIDENCE:

Foster carers demonstrated that health care issues are dealt with appropriately. The children/young people in long-term placements are registered with local general practitioners and arrangements are made for routine health checks. The Foster Carer's Handbooks contain information about health care issues and the administration of prescribed medication and homely remedies. Written consent is obtained for the administration of medication and medical treatment from the child/young person's parent, or person with parental responsibility. Some of the children need to have specific procedures carried out due to their particular medical needs and carers confirmed that they are given appropriate training and support to carry these out. The details of the consent to medical treatment and administration of medication is provided to foster carers. In the opinion of the inspectors and that of some people interviewed, it may be beneficial to offer additional training to all carers and staff in relation to issues relating to HIV and infection control.

Staying Safe

The intended outcomes these Standards are:

- Any persons carrying on or managing the service are suitable. (NMS 3)
- The fostering service provides suitable foster carers.(NMS 6)
- The service matches children to carers appropriately.(NMS 8)
- The fostering service protects each child or young person from abuse and neglect.(NMS 9)
- The people who work in or for the fostering service are suitable to work with children and young people.(NMS 15)
- Fostering panels are organised efficiently and effectively.(NMS 30)

The Commission considers Standards 3, 6, 8, 9, and 15 the key standards to be inspected at least once during a 12 month period.

JUDGEMENT – The intended outcomes for these Standards are

3,6,8,9,15

The service is managed and staffed by suitable workers and provides suitable foster carers.

The service matches children to appropriate foster carers and protects children from abuse and neglect.

EVIDENCE:

The manager and deputy of the service are suitably qualified in social work and are completing a relevant qualification in management. They have relevant experience to undertake the responsibilities of the post. Workers who were interviewed by the inspectors demonstrated appropriate knowledge and skills in relation to the tasks required to be carried out by them.

Barnardo's has a standard company procedure for the recruitment of staff and this is followed.

Checks through the Criminal Records Bureau are made on all workers and these are renewed every three years.

The service carries out appropriate checks on prospective foster carers. Carers described this process as thorough and fair, although some made adverse comments about the inevitable amount of paperwork and meetings involved. Records demonstrated the detailed process which is employed to assess the suitability of prospective carers.

The carers' homes which were visited were warm, adequately furnished and decorated and maintained to a good standard of cleanliness and hygiene. The project social workers make regular supervisory visits to the carers and carers indicated that they value this support. The foster carers' preparation and training covers health and safety issues and these are outlined in booklets.

Examination of records and discussions with carers and social workers at the service revealed that, in matching children with carers, the written assessments, care plans for the child and the views of the child and the carers are taken into account. Efforts are made to ensure that the ethnic, religious, cultural and linguistic needs of the child are matched as closely as possible to those of the 'host' family. Carers made positive comments about the care which had been taken to ensure that particular children fitted into their families.

Foster carers, social workers and children described the process of introduction and confirmed that their views had been sought at each stage of the process.

The service works to the Local Authority's Child Protection procedures for the area in which the child lives and those of the company, in addition to having a Child Protection Statement for the service which is reviewed on an annual basis. The statement and the procedures are included in the Carers' Handbook. Child protection training for staff is mandatory and is provided annually. Staff and managers attend relevant events and protection issues are an agenda item in staff supervision. Training for foster carers on child protection, suitable methods of control and physical intervention is compulsory. Some workers commented that the training provided is at a basic level and that they would appreciate a more detailed follow up course.

The Project has its own guidelines for foster carers on safer care and the care and control of children and young people. Barnardo's policy manual includes a section on bullying and further guidance is provided in the Project's own anti-bullying policy.

Barnardo's 'Whistle Blowing' policy includes procedures for raising concerns.

Enjoying and Achieving

The intended outcomes these Standards are:

- The fostering service values diversity.(NMS 7)
- The fostering service promotes educational achievement.(NMS 13)
- When foster care is provided as a short-term break for a child, the arrangements recognise that the parents remain the main carers for the child.(NMS 31)

The Commission considers Standards 7, 13, and 31 the key standards to be inspected at least once during a 12 month period.

JUDGEMENT – The intended outcomes for these Standards are

7,13,31

This service demonstrates its commitment to valuing diversity.

This service ensures that children's educational achievement is promoted.

When short-term breaks are arranged for children, the arrangements recognise the role of the child's usual carers.

EVIDENCE:

The Project works to its company's Children's Services Equality Statements and these cover the provision of information that is readily understandable to parents and takes account of their children's needs. There is an expectation that carers will play a key role in celebrating each child's race and culture. Conversations with staff and foster carers revealed that children receive specific services and support to enable them to maximise their potential and lead as full as life as possible. Same race placements are made wherever possible. Trans-racial placements are supported by additional advice and training for the carers. However, in the opinion of the inspectors and that of some people interviewed, all carers and staff could benefit from this training.

Recognising that there are many potential service users from black and ethnic minority backgrounds, who presently may not know about the project, or who may not feel confident about accessing the services, the services of an Asian worker have been secured. She is working to build relationships within the community and to determine the potential need. It is anticipated that this will lead to the recruitment of more suitable carers from more diverse background, who will be able to meet the needs of people who are not currently receiving a service. The service plans to make this post permanent and the inspectors look forward to seeing the developments at the next inspection.

Records indicated that during the assessment of the carers, the significance of education to the applicants and their attitude towards the education of the child is assessed. Carers provided examples of co-operation with schools. Records showed that the LAC reviews of the child's progress often take place at the school and that a school representative is always invited to attend these. Foster carers were able to demonstrate their commitment to ensuring that each young person is encouraged to attain his/her full potential.

There is a separate guide to short term breaks arranged through the project. Careful consideration is given to matching and to considering the purpose of each respite placement. The inspectors spoke to carers who provide short-term breaks. The experience had clearly been a positive one for the carers and the children concerned. Carers reported good and co-operative relationships with the children's birth parents or usual carers and provided examples of good communication in this respect.

Making a Positive Contribution

The intended outcomes these Standards are:

- The fostering service promotes contact arrangements for the child or young person. (NMS 10)
- The fostering service promotes consultation.(NMS 11)

The Commission considers Standards 10 and 11 the key standards to be inspected at least once during a 12 month period.

JUDGEMENT – The intended outcomes for these Standards are

10,11

The service promotes contact arrangements for the child where appropriate.
The service promotes consultation.

EVIDENCE:

Project staff and carers confirmed that staff ensure that the carers are aware of their role and responsibilities in terms of supporting the child to have appropriate and agreed contact with family members and other significant people. However, it is the prime role of the placing authority to carry out direct work with the birth family. Carers who provide short break care demonstrated a good level of awareness of the importance of communicating with the usual carers and described good relationships in this respect.

The project provides children, young people and their parents with information about the project. This explains the purpose of the project and the roles and responsibilities of social workers and carers. This contains information about the methods of making a complaint, including details of the Commission for Social Care Inspection's local office. The right to an independent advocate is also explained and suitable contact numbers are included.

The documentation for use at the reviews includes the views of all parties on the placement. It is acknowledged that many of the children placed experience difficulties in communicating in writing or verbally. Carers demonstrated an appreciation of the importance of interpreting non-verbal indications of mood and advocating on the child's behalf.

Achieving Economic Wellbeing

The intended outcomes these Standards are:

- The fostering service prepares young people for adulthood.(NMS 14)
- The fostering service pays carers an allowance and agreed expenses as specified.(NMS 29)

The Commission considers Standards 29 the key standard to be inspected at least once during a 12 month period.

JUDGEMENT – The intended outcomes for these Standards are

29

The service pays allowances and expenses to foster carers according to an agreed scale.

EVIDENCE:

There is a clear written policy and contract detailing the allowances paid to the foster carers. The carers confirmed that they receive information about the allowances and expenses before each child/young person is placed with them and that payments are made appropriately.

Management

The intended outcomes these Standards are:

- There is a clear statement of the aims and objectives of the fostering service and the fostering service ensures that they meet those aims and objectives.(NMS 1)
- The fostering service is managed by those with the appropriate skills and experience. (NMS 2)
- The fostering service is monitored and controlled as specified. (NMS 4)
- The fostering service is managed effectively and efficiently.(NMS 5)
- Staff are organised and managed effectively.(NMS 16)
- The fostering service has an adequate number of sufficiently experienced and qualified staff.(NMS 17)
- The fostering service is a fair and competent employer.(NMS 18)
- There is a good quality training programme. (NMS 19)
- All staff are properly accountable and supported.(NMS 20)
- The fostering service has a clear strategy for working with and supporting carers.(NMS 21)
- Foster carers are provided with supervision and support.(NMS 22)
- Foster carers are appropriately trained.(NMS 23)
- Case records for children are comprehensive.(NMS 24)
- The administrative records are maintained as required.(NMS 25)
- The premises used as offices by the fostering service are suitable for the purpose.(NMS 26)
- The fostering service is financially viable. (NMS 27)
- The fostering service has robust financial processes. (NMS 28)
- Local Authority fostering services recognise the contribution made by family and friends as carers.(NMS 32)

The Commission considers Standards 17, 21, and 24 the key standards to be inspected at least once during a 12 month period.

JUDGEMENT – The intended outcomes for these Standards are

4, 17,19,21,23,24,26

This fostering service is effectively monitored and controlled.
This fostering service is adequately staffed by workers who are sufficiently qualified and experienced and who have access to suitable training courses.
There is a clear and effective strategy for working with and supporting carers and carers are pleased with the support and training received.
Case records for children and carers are generally clear and well detailed.

The premises are suitable for the purpose, although the majority of the offices are not accessible to people with restricted mobility.

EVIDENCE:

Barnardo's has robust systems for monitoring and controlling the activities of each service. Policies and procedures are reviewed and updated on a regular basis and performance is monitored. In addition, the manager of the project monitors the performance of the team and identifies areas where practice can be improved, such as the recent initiative to recruit more Asian carers.

Barnardo's holds Investors in People status.

There are sufficient workers, although the difficulties in recruiting suitably qualified social workers are acknowledged. A major factor influencing this is the differences in pay between the organisation and employers in other sectors and this is being explored by the organisation. The inspectors were informed about some joint training which had been undertaken by project workers and foster carers. There are opportunities for staff to undertake external professional training and attend short courses and seminars. Social workers described the post qualifying training which they had received. Training in first aid, autism and Health and Safety risk assessment has also been provided.

Social workers were pleased with the access to and the quality of the training provided by Barnardo's. Records of staff appraisals confirm that discussions take place about individual training needs and areas of personal development. The manager is pro-active in identifying training needs for the staff. Workers report good access to training courses, but consultation revealed that some would appreciate more advanced training in child protection issues.

The Project has a Handbook for carers which outlines the aims and objectives of the Project, makes clear the roles and responsibilities of workers and carers and outlines the Project's policies in relation to a wide range of issues affecting carers. It is apparent that project workers and carers have a clear understanding of each other's roles. Feedback from carers indicated a high level of satisfaction with the overall support provided from the project social workers.

There is now an established pre-approval and post-approval training programme for carers and sessions are arranged at a variety of times to facilitate access. Foster carers' comments with regard to the provision of training were generally positive and they provided examples of training which they had found useful. There is evidence that discussions have been held with foster carers about their personal development needs at annual appraisals/reviews. Comments revealed that diversity training for all carers would be welcomed and useful and that some feel that they would benefit from an opportunity to explore issues relating to HIV. The inspectors' opinion is that all carers would benefit from basic training in these areas.

There is a written policy on case recording. Electronic records are maintained in addition to paper ones. Records were found to be better organised and more accurate than at the previous visit.

Foster carers are provided with information about the young person's legal status and relevant information is made available in relation to the care to be provided. Carers are encouraged to maintain a record of any significant details of the young person's behaviour and events of importance. Guidance on record keeping is provided in the Foster Carers' Handbook.

The service is located close to the centre of Dudley. Although the service is based on the top floor of the building, the whole building houses Barnardo's workers. It has been possible to identify additional space elsewhere in the building to alleviate the overcrowding noted at last year's visit. Access to people with restricted mobility is possible to the ground floor. A lift would greatly enhance the facilities, but funding is not currently available.

SCORING OF OUTCOMES

This page summarises the assessment of the extent to which the National Minimum Standards for Fostering Services have been met and uses the following scale.

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

"X" in the standard met box denotes standard not assessed on this occasion

"N/A" in the standard met box denotes standard not applicable

BEING HEALTHY	
<i>Standard No</i>	<i>Score</i>
12	3

STAYING SAFE	
<i>Standard No</i>	<i>Score</i>
3	X
6	3
8	3
9	3
15	3
30	X

ENJOYING AND ACHIEVING	
<i>Standard No</i>	<i>Score</i>
7	4
13	3
31	3

MAKING A POSITIVE CONTRIBUTION	
<i>Standard No</i>	<i>Score</i>
10	3
11	3

ACHIEVING ECONOMIC WELLBEING	
<i>Standard No</i>	<i>Score</i>
14	X
29	3

MANAGEMENT	
<i>Standard No</i>	<i>Score</i>
1	X
2	X
4	4
5	X
16	X
17	3
18	X
19	3
20	X
21	4
22	X
23	3
24	3
25	X
26	3
27	X
28	X
32	X

No

Are there any outstanding requirements from the last inspection?

STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS

This section sets out the actions, which must be taken so that the registered person/s meets the Care Standards Act 2000, Fostering Services Regulations 2002 and the National Minimum Standards. The Registered Provider(s) must comply with the given timescales.

No.	Standard	Regulation	Requirement	Timescale for action

RECOMMENDATIONS

These recommendations relate to National Minimum Standards and are seen as good practice for the Registered Provider/s to consider carrying out.

No.	Refer to Standard	Good Practice Recommendations
1	FS19FS23	The inspectors recommend that staff are enabled to access more advanced training in relation to child protection and that all staff and foster carers are provided with access to further training in diversity and issues relating to HIV.
2	FS26	The inspectors recommend that a lift is installed to facilitate access to the project's main office by people with restricted mobility.

Commission for Social Care Inspection

Halesowen Record Management Unit

Mucklow Office Park, West Point, Ground Floor

Mucklow Hill

Halesowen

West Midlands

B62 8DA

National Enquiry Line: 0845 015 0120

Email: enquiries@csci.gsi.gov.uk

Web: www.csci.org.uk

© This report is copyright Commission for Social Care Inspection (CSCI) and may only be used in its entirety. Extracts may not be used or reproduced without the express permission of CSCI