

inspection report

Fostering Services

Barnardo`s Breakaway Project

Trinity House

Trinity Road

Dudley

West Midlands

DY1 1JB

14th September 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

Barnardo's Breakaway Project

Tel No

0121 550 5271

Address

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

Fax No

Email Address

Registered Number of IFA

E070000434

Name of Registered Provider

Barnardo's Midlands Regional Office

Name of Registered Manager (if applicable)

Ann Tanner

Date of latest registration certificate

21st January 2004

Date of first registration

21st January 2004

Registration Conditions Apply ?

NO

Date of last inspection

19/05/03

Date of Inspection Visit		14th September 2004	ID Code
Time of Inspection Visit		10:00 am	
Name of Inspector	1	Christine Lancashire	106038
Name of Inspector	2	Linda Elsaleh	
Name of Inspector	3		
Name of Inspector	4		
Name of Lay Assessor (if applicable) Lay assessors are members of the public independent of the CSCI. They accompany inspectors on some inspections and bring a different perspective to the inspection process.			
Name of Specialist (e.g. Interpreter/Signer) (if applicable)			
Name of Establishment Representative at the time of inspection		Julia Tanner	

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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**
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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 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 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.
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. 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 recently incorporated 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.

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 fostering service was previously inspected by the National Care Standards Commission. On 1st April this year the Commission for Social Care Inspection (CSCI) became the regulating body for this service. The project has amended its policies and procedures to reflect this change. As part of the inspection process the inspectors sought comments about the service from the children/young people, foster carers and other professionals. Those who chose to comment expressed their general satisfaction with the service being provided.

The inspectors would like to thank everyone who participated in this inspection.

Statement of Purpose (Standard 1)

This standard was met

The project has available all the information required to be included in its Statement of Purpose and Children's Guide. Information is produced in a 'user friendly' format.

Fitness to provide or manager a fostering service (Standards 2-3)

Both of these standards were met

The responsible individual and manager have relevant qualifications and many years experience of working with children and young people. Criminal Record Bureau checks have now been completed on existing staff who had been checked through the previous system.

Management of the fostering service (Standards 4-5)

Both of these standards assessed were met.

The team have clear roles and responsibilities. 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. Over the past year the project has been working to assimilate the Dudley Shared-Care service.

Securing and promoting welfare (Standards 6-14)

9 of the 9 standards assessed were met, including one that was exceeded.

The project has its own equal opportunities statement, which makes clear the standards to which the service aspires and expects from the staff and all users of the service. The project is in the process of reviewing its recruitment processes to better target the recruitment of carers from more diverse backgrounds. 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. The project and its foster carers support children/young people in their educational placements and, where appropriate, actively promote and facilitate contact with their own families.

Recruiting, checking, managing, supporting and training staff and foster carers

(Standards 15-23)**8 of the 9 standards assessed were met.**

The company has clear procedures for the recruitment and selection of staff. There are suitable systems for the induction of newly appointed staff and all receive supervision on a regular basis. 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. However, discussions need to take place with regards to the role of the 'out of hours' service and how this can best meet the needs of foster carers. There is evidence of a comprehensive and well-planned training programme for carers. Staff were also complimentary about the company's training and access to relevant courses.

Records (Standards 24-25)**1 of the 2 standards assessed was met.**

The project has developed good recording systems in relation to foster carers and children/young people's files. However, greater care needs to be taken in relation to accuracy in the recording of basic details. The storage of records and recording practices complies with the Data Protection Act 1998 and other associated regulations and professional guidance.

Fitness of Premises for use as Fostering Service (Standard 26)**This standard was not fully met.**

At the time of this inspection redecoration was taking place to the interior of the building. There is access to the ground floor of the building for wheelchair users, but the main office for this project is situated on the second floor. From observations made by the inspectors and comments received, the company needs to explore ways in which the best use can be made of the limited space available.

Financial Requirements (Standard 27-29)**3 of the 3 standards assessed were met.**

The company has suitable systems for the management of the project and financial information is made available as part of the project's public annual report. There is a clear written policy detailing the allowances paid to foster carers.

Fostering Panels (Standard 30)**This standard was not met.**

The written policies and procedures for the fostering panel have been revised and verification has been obtained that satisfactory criminal record bureau checks have been carried out on the majority of the members of the fostering panel. For a joint panel to be quorate the manager must ensure that a social worker from each service is present.

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

Over the past year staff have worked hard to assimilate the Dudley Shared-Care service into the Breakaway Project. The project provides a variety of short break opportunities and support to meet the diverse needs of the children/young people with disabilities.

Family and friends as carers (Standard 32)**This standard is not applicable to this service.**

Reports and Notifications to the Local Authority and Secretary of State

(Local Authority Fostering Services Only)

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

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

NO

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

NO

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

NO

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

NO

The grounds for the above Report or Notice are:

Implementation of Statutory Requirements from Last Inspection

Requirements from last Inspection visit fully actioned?

YES

If No please list below

STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS

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

No.	Regulation	Standard	Required actions	
			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	Chris Lancashire	Signature	_____
Second Inspector	Linda Elsaleh	Signature	_____
Regulation Manager	Mike Gerard	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	
1	17	FS18FS21	The manager must ensure that the - project provides clarity in relation to the purpose and scope of the 'out of hours' service 'out of hours' service meets the needs of the foster carers	3 rd January 2005
2	30/31	FS25	The manager must ensure that - all registers and records contain accurate details in respect of carers and children/young people. - records of all meetings which have taken place are available at the Project.	3 rd January 2005
3	25 24	FS30	In order for the joint panel to be quorate the manager needs to ensure that there is one social worker from each fostering service The manager must ensure that action is taken for CRB checks to be carried out on all foster panel members	3 rd January 2005

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	FS1	The inspectors recommend that a short explanation of the role of the inspectors from the Commission for Social Care Inspection should be included in the Statement of Purpose and Children's Guides.
2	FS26	The inspectors recommend that the manager explores the use of office space in view of the prospective staff appointments

* 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

10

Survey of placing authorities

YES

Foster carer survey

YES

Foster children survey

YES

Checks with other organisations and Individuals

- Directors of Social services

NO

- Child protection officer

NO

- Specialist advisor (s)

NO

- Local Foster Care Association

NO

Tracking Individual welfare arrangements

YES

- Interview with children

YES

- Interview with foster carers

YES

- Interview with agency staff

NO

- 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

NO

Interview with panel chair

NO

Observation of foster carer training

NO

Observation of foster panel

NO

Inspection of policy/practice documents

YES

Inspection of records

YES

Interview with individual child

NO

Date of Inspection

13/09/04

Time of Inspection

10:00

Duration Of Inspection (hrs)

64

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 Breakaway Project produces a variety of literature about the service it provides to prospective/approved foster families, children & young people and the placing authorities. This includes a Statement of Purpose which is updated on an annual basis and guides to long term fostering & short breaks projects. These guides are provided in user friendly formats for use by children/young people and include pictorial information. This information is sent out at the point of initial enquiry. In the case of long term placements copies are provided to the relevant local authorities, who pass this information on to parents. This literature includes details of how to contact the Commission for Social Care Inspection and the inspectors recommend that a short explanation of the role of the inspectors should be added. The project's social workers ensure this information is provided to parents of children who are receiving short breaks. A copy of the Statement of Purpose and the Children's Guide has been forwarded the Commission for Social Care Inspection.

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 responsible individual and manager hold social work qualifications and have many years experience in working with children and young people. The current manager has been employed by the project since 1986. Discussions with staff, foster carers and other professionals revealed that the manager exercises effective leadership skills that ensures the service is organised, managed and staffed in an appropriate manner. The manager is aware that to fully satisfy this standard and meet the requirements of the Fostering Service Regulations 2002 she must hold the National Vocational Qualification Level 4 in management, or equivalent, by 2005 and has recently commenced this training.

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

The project follows the company's recruitment and selection procedures. These are accessible via computer. Shadow files containing individual recruitment information is kept available on the premises, with the exception of those relating to the responsible individual. Examination of a random selection of these files found that they contained information required by the Fostering Services Regulations 2002 and the National Minimum Standards. The records showed that appropriate checks had been completed on all staff. The manager stated that checks are carried out on staff via the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB), prior to appointment, by the company's personnel section. The results of these checks were seen by the inspectors. The manager views the results of these checks. These checks are renewed every three years. Written references are kept available and there is now a system in place to verify these by means of a follow up telephone call. Information is kept in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998.

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

There are clear roles and areas of responsibilities within the staff team. These are reflected in the relevant job descriptions. From the observations made and discussions held, staff demonstrated their abilities to carry out their duties. The service has proper financial procedures and is regularly audited by the company. Senior managers monitor the activities of the project by means of unannounced visits and remote sampling of electronic records. The inspectors were informed that the manager regularly monitors the work of the project and the individual performance of its workers. The manager has formalised this process to ensure compliance with Regulation 42, Schedule 7 of the Fostering Services Regulations 2002. The manager meets regularly with the Assistant Director/responsible individual, to discuss the project's performance. Information is provided to purchasers and other interested parties on a regular basis. The foster carers visited by the inspectors had different levels of service and experience. All were complimentary about the project.

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

4

Death of a child placed with foster parents.

2

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.

2

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 CSCI about the agency in the past 12 months:

0

Number of the above complaints which were substantiated:

X

Standard 5 (5.1 - 5.4)

The fostering service is managed effectively and efficiently.

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

3

The manager is suitably qualified and experienced. She does not hold a similar position in any other organisation. A clear job description, which sets out the duties and responsibilities of this post, is available. Discussions with the manager and staff showed these were understood. The project has a deputy who takes responsibility for making day-to-day decisions in the absence of the manager. Over the past year the project has been working to assimilate the Dudley Shared-Care service into the more established Breakaway Project.

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 inspectors made visits to some foster carers' homes. All were decorated and furnished to a good standard. Each child/young person has his/her own bedroom that reflects his/her individual personality and interests. Health and safety risk assessments are carried out on the foster carers' homes. Records are kept of documentation seen by the project's social workers for foster carers who provide transport for children/young people. This information is reviewed regularly. The training provided for prospective foster carers includes information and discussions about health and safety issues and safe care.

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?

4

In addition to the company's equal opportunities statement the project has its own statement, which makes clear the standards to which the service aspires and expects from the staff and all users of the service. The training provided for prospective foster carers includes valuing diversity. The project makes every effort to ensure each child/young person is found a placement appropriate to his or her needs. The manager has identified the need to recruit more carers from diverse ethnic backgrounds in order to provide a choice of placements for black and ethnic minority children/young people. The project is in the process of reviewing its recruitment strategies and materials to better target the recruitment of carers from more diverse backgrounds. It is also recruiting a Development Worker to determine the service needs of Asian families within the Dudley area. A local radio campaign is planned using Radio Ramadan, to attract carers from the Muslim community. Conversations with staff and foster carers revealed that children are encouraged and supported to access as wide a range of activities as possible to enable them to lead full and active lives. The inspectors are pleased to report that foster carers provided examples of occasions on which they had advocated on behalf of the child/young person in an effort to ensure that their care needs were fully met and their rights respected.

Standard 8 (8.1 - 8.7)

Local authority fostering services, and voluntary agencies placing children in their own right, ensure that each child or young person placed in foster care is carefully matched with a carer capable of meeting her/his assessed needs. For agencies providing foster carers to local authorities, those agencies ensure that they offer carers only if they represent appropriate matches for a child for whom a local authority is seeking a carer.

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

The inspectors are pleased to report that the project's matching process has a high success rate. Efforts are made to ensure that the proposed foster family can meet the ethnic, religious, cultural and linguistic needs of the child/young person. However, staff report that they have to make great efforts to obtain up to date information from the placing authorities in some cases. Examination of a random selection of foster carers and children/young people's files showed meetings are held to discuss care needs with the proposed foster carers. The pace of introductory visits is planned on an individual basis. Foster carers confirmed that their views had been respected when the initial 'matching' processes took place. Comments received by the inspectors were generally positive about the information provided about a child/young person.

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**

Training programmes for prospective foster carers include child protection issues, safe care and self-protection skills. This training is mandatory for all foster carers and staff. The Foster Carers' Handbooks detail the project's policies, procedures and information on a wide range of issues including safe care, managing behaviour, positive control and the use of permitted sanctions, countering bullying, child protection and what to do if a child/young person is missing from the home. Barnardo's has also produced a booklet entitled "Safeguarding and Protecting Children" which includes guidance on internet abuse. Barnardo's whistle blowing policy and leaflet together with their video "Sounding the Alarm" is shared with all staff and carers. Regular project social workers' visits take place to foster carers including unannounced visits and children/young people are seen separately from carers. There is an annual staff training event on child protection and it is a standing agenda item on staff supervision sessions. There are discussions about child protection issues at carers' meetings. In discussions carers demonstrated a good level of awareness of the signs and symptoms of possible abuse and the actions which they need to take. The inspectors were informed that no child protection issues had been reported prior to this inspection. In the event of such, the project would follow the local Area Child Protection Committee (ACPC) procedures. A copy is available on the premises. The project has systems available for collating and evaluating information on this issue. Due to the level of disability of many of the children placed by the project only three responses were received to the questionnaires. There was no indication that any of these children/young people were being bullied.

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?****3**

The project and foster carers recognise the importance for children/young people to maintain contact with their family and friends, wherever possible. Specific contact arrangements are identified and discussed at planning meetings. The project and foster carers are committed to promoting family contact, where appropriate, and foster carers provided examples of such arrangements. Prospective foster carers are given training on the importance of helping children/young people to maintain appropriate contacts. There is close communication between short break foster carers and the child/young person's parents. This had led to arrangements with regard to dates being made on an informal basis in the past and the project has now formalised the process of planning for short breaks.

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 project provides children/young people with guides to the services being provided. This contains information about the project, explains the role and responsibilities of foster carers and identifies some adults who the child/young person may wish to speak to if they are unhappy about something. For children/young people receiving the short-break service there is a 'passport' which details all relevant information to ensure the foster carers are aware of matters affecting the child and their usual routines. This is child focussed and asks the child directly about their preferences and needs. There is a section about communication, which asks about the child's usual words and gestures for a range of common emotions and needs. This 'passport' is exchanged between the short-break carers and the parents or usual carers and is updated as necessary. Many of the children using the service prefer to have fixed routines throughout their day and this booklet is useful in providing consistency of care. Foster carers and project social workers receive training in various methods of communication, depending on the specific needs of the child. For example, use is made of Makaton and PECS where appropriate. The inspectors were informed that the project is working on a communication CD-Rom for use by the more able children/young people. The foster carers who were interviewed demonstrated that they had a good understanding of the importance of listening to the views of the children in their care and making efforts to ascertain their preferences through various means of communication. They provided the inspectors with examples of their detailed knowledge of the variety of means by which children make their opinions and views known and demonstrated appropriate sensitivity towards gestures and moods.

Information about how to make a complaint is included in the passports and Children's Guide to the service. In practice, due to the specific needs of many of the children, parents are the advocate for their child, should they feel their child was uncomfortable or unsettled after a stay away. The project actively seeks independent advocates for the children/young people, but have found a shortage of people in this field. The inspectors were informed that there have been no reported complaints about the staff, foster carers or service made to the project or the company.

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**

Discussions with 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. Consent to medical treatment and administration of medication from parents is kept in the child's 'passport' for short breaks.

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**

The child/young person's educational needs are included on some of the care plans seen by the inspectors and requests are made for copies of any significant reports such as statements of educational needs. Foster carers encourage and support children/young people to attend educational placements. Foster carers discuss the child/young person's progress or any areas of concern with their project social worker and arrangements are made to ensure the placing social worker is kept informed. LAC reviews often take place at the child's school and a school representative is always invited to contribute. Project staff advocate for specialist equipment and services to enable the child to reach their potential within the educational setting. Children/young people receiving a short break service are provided with transport to their place of education. Educational issues arising are addressed with the school by the child/young person's parent/s.

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**

Foster carers are encouraged to attend a young person's Transitional Review, which takes place after a young person's 14th birthday. A 'pathway plan' is determined at this meeting. In terms of the levels of disabilities affecting the young people in most cases the young people will not attain fully independent living skills and carers are made aware of this from the outset of the placement. As the young person reaches the end of her/his placement, the carers are encouraged to consider various options to enable future care to be provided. These may include registration under the Adult Placement Scheme. The project offers advice and support to the carer and young person throughout this process. In the case of short-breaks foster carers are often able to assist a young person to develop some independent skills during their stay and the project enables parents to identify future adult care.

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

As previously stated the company, has clear procedures for the recruitment and selection of staff. The reader is referred to Standard 3 of this report. Staff are appropriately qualified and demonstrated to the inspectors that they have the knowledge and skills in order to carry out their duties. The project makes use of agency staff to cover vacancies whilst the recruitment process is being carried out.

Total number of staff of the agency:

13

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

1

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 has a clear management structure with well-defined lines of accountability. There is a deputy manager who takes on the responsibility for making any day-to-day decisions in the absence of the manager. The staff team has good working relationships with foster carers, the children/young people and other professionals. There is a team of administrative staff to support the project's social workers. The company has suitable systems in place for the induction of newly appointed staff and all receive planned supervision on a regular basis. Individual development plans are identified at their annual appraisals. Records are kept of all supervision sessions, team meetings and training. All employees are provided with appropriate written contracts, job descriptions and conditions of service. Information about equal opportunities, health & safety matters and grievance and disciplinary matters is also provided. All the company's policies and procedures are available via the computer, which staff are able to access. An information pack giving details about the project's work and referral process is made available to placing authorities. Project social workers understand the roles and responsibilities of the local authority social workers.

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**

Since the assimilation of the services the project has been active in its efforts to recruit suitably qualified and experienced social workers to complete the new staffing complement. Creative use has been made of support workers who undertaken duties which do not require a qualified worker. Appropriate arrangements are made to cover short-term absences such as annual leave or sickness. Recruitment policy and strategy is developed to attract a range of foster carers to meet the needs of the children/young people being referred. The inspectors were informed of the variety of methods used to recruit suitable foster carers such as; football programmes, advertising on television and radio and a recruitment stand in the centre of Dudley. However, word of mouth continues to be the most successful method of recruiting carers. Workers have carried out the project's assessment process in a professional and competent manner. The assessment covers the qualities, competencies and aptitudes required of prospective foster carers. Detailed reports are prepared for presentation to the Fostering Panel. Foster carers are aware of the details included in report and provide their own written statement and are encouraged to attend the Fostering Panel. Evidence is available on prospective foster carers' files of the discussions held and the processes carried out. Once approved, foster carers receive regular supervision with their allocated worker. Written records of these sessions are provided to them. The foster carers informed the inspectors that they are well supported by their allocated worker and other members of the team. Any issues and/or concerns are dealt with appropriately.

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?****2**

Staff informed the inspector that they consider the company and their managers to be fair and competent and operate sound employment practices. Health and safety policies are available for foster carers, children and staff. The information contained in the company's whistle-blowing policy is for use by staff and volunteers. Foster carers and young people are referred to the complaints procedures. The inspectors were informed that the company has appropriate public liability and professional indemnity insurance. As previous stated, foster carers receive regular, planned supervision and annual appraisals form part of their review. Foster carers are provided with a telephone 'helpline' number for use outside office hours. Discussions revealed that the project needs to provide clarity in relation to the purpose and scope of this service. Further discussions need to take place to review the effectiveness and suitability of the current arrangements to ensure it meets the needs of the foster 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?****3**

The inspector was informed that some joint training is arranged for 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. They also made positive comments in relation to a regional training course about child protection for children with disabilities. 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 and discussed, with the inspectors, the possibility of offering professional training for support workers in the future.

Standard 20 (20.1 - 20.5)

All staff are properly accountable and supported.

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

As previously stated, staff are provided with clear job descriptions which set out their duties and responsibilities and receive regular supervision and appraisals, for which records are kept. Policies and procedures are accessed via computer. Regular planned meetings take place for discussing different aspects of the service and appropriate minutes are taken. The minutes examined during this inspection showed that relevant and focussed discussions take place. In addition to formal meetings, the project workers meet over coffee each morning to discuss pertinent issues.

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 Foster Carers' Handbook outlines the aims and objectives of the project and the roles and responsibilities of foster carers, project social workers and the local authority social worker. Discussions with project social workers and foster carers indicated that they have a clear understanding of these roles. Information is also provided on meeting the needs of children/young people. Feedback from the carers indicated a high level of satisfaction with the support provided from the project. However, comments were made about the helpline/'out of hours' service provided by the company. Feedback and comments made by foster carers and workers were discussed with the manager during this inspection. This has been reported on in Standard 18 of this report. Foster carers stated they would contact the child/young person's social worker about immediate concerns. Generally, a child/young person's progress is discussed with the project social worker in supervision, who, in turn, provides the child/young person's social worker with regular updates. Local authorities are responsible for carrying out statutory reviews on the children/young people. Foster carers' annual review reports are prepared and made available to the Fostering Panel, the content of which is discussed with the foster carers.

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**

Comments received from the children/young people's social workers were positive about the service being provided by their foster carers and the project. As previously stated, all foster carers have an allocated project social worker, who has appropriate qualifications and relevant experience in working with children and young people. These workers ensure foster carers are provided with a copy of their Foster Care Agreement and other written information and guidance as required. Practical support systems are in place for dealing with issues such as foster carers' fees. Areas such as supervision, respite-care, complaints and allegations of abuse have been reported on in other sections of this report.

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**

Since the last inspection, foster carers have received training in manual handling (10), epilepsy (9), autism (10), first aid (10), recording (11), disability awareness (4), sexuality and learning disability (6), first aid (8), safe care and safeguarding children (42), loss and bereavement (15), first aid (16), and further training is planned in first aid for the near future. 4 foster carers are also attending NVQ level 3 training. Foster carers' comments with regard to the provision of training were generally positive and some provided examples of training which they found useful. There is evidence that discussions have been held with foster carers about their personal development needs at annual appraisals/reviews.

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
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The company has a written policy on case recording detailing the information to be kept and how paper and electronic files are to be compiled. Foster carers are provided with information about the child/young person's legal status and other relevant information that has been made available by the child/young person's social worker. Information with regards to the child/young person's progress is provided to the project social workers by the carers during their supervision sessions. The project worker, in turn, provides the child/young person's social worker with regular updates on their progress. Information on record keeping is included in the Foster Carers' Handbook. Foster carers are provided with facilities and guidance on the safe storage children/young people's files.

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? 2**

All information is kept in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998 and associated regulations and professional guidance. The project has clear policies on confidentiality and access to information. Separate files are kept as required, and compiled in a 'user friendly' format for efficient updating by workers. It also enables the project to make arrangements more easily to accommodate requests for access to information. Examination of a sample of files revealed a need for more accuracy in the information recorded in relation to basic details; such as addresses. In some cases a record of the minutes of meetings that had taken place were not available. Case recordings distinguish between fact, opinion and third party information and handwritten entries are legible. The electronic recording system has recently been updated and improved, but staff are still experiencing some difficulties with the system and Barnardo's IS services are working to resolve these. As previously mentioned, no complaints or allegations have been made to the project or the company about the service or anyone connected with it. In the event of such incidents, appropriate recording systems are available. No concerns have been reported to the Commission for Social Care Inspection about this service. The inspectors were not made aware of any concerns from foster carers with regards to the payment of fostering fees. These fees are identified below. The figures provided do not include the 'boarding out' payments, which range from £82.32 to £292.66.

Number of current foster placements supported by the agency:			89
Number of placements made by the agency in the last 12 months:			16
Number of placements made by the agency which ended in the past 12 months:			22
Number of new foster carers approved during the last 12 months:			7
Number of foster carers who left the agency during the last 12 months:			14
Current weekly payments to foster parents: Minimum £	210.00	Maximum £	250.00

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?

2

The Breakaway & Dudley Short-Breaks Project is situated in Dudley town. There are limited allocated parking facilities to the side and rear of the building. The three-storey building is shared with another Barnardo's fostering service. Those who have legitimate business are able to access the building during normal office hours. The ground floor is accessible to wheelchair users and toilet facilities are available. There is a reception area and ground floor meeting room. These are shared with the other service. The administrative and staff facilities are on the second floor, to which there is restricted access for people with limited mobility. Staff commented on the limited space. This is an issue that needs to be explored in view of the prospective staff appointments. A programme of re-decoration was underway at the time of this inspection. There are appropriate administrative systems in place, records are securely stored and appropriate security systems fitted.

Financial Requirements

The intended outcome for the following set of standards is:

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

Standard 27 (27.1 - 27.3)

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

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

3

The company has suitable procedures for the management of the project in the event of a financial crisis. The inspector did not assess Standard 27.3 in relation to income tax, national insurance and VAT. The inspectors were informed that payments to staff are made through the company's usual procedures and carers are regarded as self-employed.

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 company has documented financial arrangements for the control and supervision of its finances. The project's accounts are maintained and properly audited. The manager receives regular information on the financial status of the project. The Dudley Shared-Care provision has a service level agreement with Dudley Social Services Department and therefore its budget is separate from that of the Breakaway provision. Financial information is made available as part of the project's public annual report. The inspectors were made aware of the contractual arrangements between purchasers of the service and the project.

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

The project has a clear written policy and contract detailing the allowances and any agreed expenses paid to the foster carers. The carers receive information about the allowances and expenses before each child/young person is placed with them.

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?

2

The inspectors were informed that the Foster Panel Members Handbook has recently been updated to reflect that there is now a 'joint panel' with Barnardo's 8-18 Family Placement Project. The handbook is made available to all panel members and provides information about the projects, the panel's function and the role and responsibilities of its members. Written procedures include details of how the decision-making process will take place when panel members are not in agreement. Any comments and concerns raised by panel members are discussed with the project manager or her line manager. In order for the joint panel to be quorate the projects need to ensure that there is one social worker from each fostering service. Each panel member receives an agenda, minutes of the previous meeting, reports and other additional information in advance. Minutes show that previous meetings have been well-organised and have addressed all the agenda issues. The authors of the reports were present and provided the panel with additional information, where requested. The inspectors were informed that foster carers will be encouraged to attend the panel when their reports are being presented. Evidence was made available of satisfactory Criminal Record Bureau checks carried out on individual members of the fostering panel. Two panel members' CRB checks remain outstanding and the manager continues to follow this up.

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 provides a variety of short break opportunities and support to meet the diverse needs of children/young people with disabilities, both in terms of children/young people living with long term carers and children/young people living with their parents or carers in Dudley. Many of the comments in previous standards relate to the short-break provision. Over the past year staff have worked hard to integrate the Dudley Shared-Care service into the Breakaway Project and there are now more children and parents who are receiving an improved service.	3
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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 14 September 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

☐

Comments were received from the provider

☐

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

☐

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

☐

Note:

In instances where there is a major difference of view between the Inspector and the Registered Provider responsible Local Authority fostering service Manager both views will be made available on request to the Area Office.

D.2 Please provide the Commission with a written Action Plan by (please see date on 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

☐

Action plan was received at the point of publication

☐

Action plan covers all the statutory requirements in a timely fashion

☐

Action plan did not cover all the statutory requirements and required further discussion

☐

Provider has declined to provide an action plan

☐

Other: <enter details here>

☐

Public reports

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

D.3 PROVIDER'S AGREEMENT

Registered Person's or responsible Local Authority Manager's statement of agreement/comments: Please complete the relevant section that applies.

D.3.1 I _____ of Barnardo's Breakaway 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 Barnardo's Breakaway
am unable to confirm that the contents of this report are a fair and accurate
representation of the facts relating to the inspection conducted on the above
date(s) for the following reasons:

--

Print Name _____

Signature

Designation _____

Date _____

Note: In instance where there is a profound difference of view between the Inspector and the Registered Provider both views will be reported. Please attach any extra pages, as applicable.

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