

inspection report

Fostering Services

Barnardo`s Shared Care N.E

Suite 4

Durham Business centre

Littleburn Industrial Estate

Langley Moor

Co.Durham

DH7 8HG

31st January 2005

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 Shared Care N.E

Tel No

0191 378 4800

Address

Suite 4, Durham Business centre, Littleburn Industrial Estate, Langley Moor, Co.Durham, DH7 8HG

Fax No

0191 378 4801

Email Address

nefamilyplacement@barnardos.org.uk

Registered Number of IFA

B040000387

Name of Registered Provider

Barnardo's North East

Name of Registered Manager (if applicable)

Judith Latheron

Date of first registration

22nd October 2003

Date of latest registration certificate

17th August 2004

Registration Conditions Apply ?

NO

Date of last inspection

12/1/04

Date of Inspection Visit		31st January 2005	ID Code
Time of Inspection Visit		09:30 am	
Name of Inspector	1	Michele Hargan	076522
Name of Inspector	2	Dr Michela Griffin	
Name of Inspector	3	Glynis Horner	
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			

Introduction to Report and Inspection

Inspection visits

Description of Fostering Service

Part A: Summary of Inspection Findings

Reports and Notifications to the Local Authority and Secretary of State

Implementation of Statutory Requirements from last Inspection

Statutory Requirements from this Inspection

Good Practice Recommendations from this Inspection

Part B: Inspection Methods & Findings

(National Minimum Standards For Fostering Services)

- 1. Statement of purpose**
- 2. Fitness to carry on or manage a fostering service**
- 3. Management of the fostering service**
- 4. Securing and promoting welfare**
- 5. Recruiting, checking, managing, supporting and training staff and foster carers**
- 6. Records**
- 7. Fitness of premises**
- 8. Financial requirements**
- 9. Fostering panels**
- 10. Short-term breaks**
- 11. Family and friend carers**

Part C: Lay Assessor's Summary (where applicable)

Part D: Provider's Response

D.1. Provider's comments

D.2. Action Plan

D.3. Provider's agreement

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 Shared Care N.E. 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.
<p>Barnardo's Shared Care North East provides services to children with physical and or learning disabilities or life limiting conditions. The project provides regional, short-break, sitting and befriending services to children and young people up to the age of 18 years. Some carers are also provided with full time care on a temporary basis. Carers who are assessed for specific care tasks provide care in all instances.</p> <p>This inspection relates to the inspection of the short-term break and temporary care aspect of the project's work, this forms the major part of the project's work and involves the assessment, linking supporting and approval process of foster carers.</p> <p>Care is predominantly provided within the Durham and Darlington areas, though the project is continuing to expand and there are now children from other Northern Counties being Looked After.</p>

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 announced inspection took place between the 31st of January and the 3rd of February 2005 and was conducted by Michele Hargan and Dr Michaela Griffin. A third inspector Glynis Horner also assisted with interviewing foster carers identified as part of the "tracking" process. (Tracking is aimed at identifying individual foster carers and children from within the agency and documents relating to them are read and considered against NMS and regulatory requirements). The inspection examined the progress of requirements and recommendations since the time of the last inspection. Fuller reporting in each of the Standard areas is contained within the main body of the report.

From the inspection it is evident that a very good Standard of care continues to be provided by the project to the foster carers, parents/carers and the children and young people using the service.

The inspection focused upon key Standards. This is in line with current CSCI policy of 'proportionality'. As a result, for some of the Standard areas in the report no comment has been made. It should also be noted that new report templates are in the process of being developed, which will be of benefit to service users, those seeking care and service providers.

Statement of Purpose Standard 1

The requirement made at the time of the last inspection has now been completed and contact details for the CSCI are included within the children's guide. Consultation work is being undertaken with children and young people. The Standard is met.

Fitness to provide or manage a fostering service Standards 2 and 3.

The managerial team clearly possess the necessary skills and competencies in order to run a fostering service. The previous requirement made so that there is a system for signing off recruitment files by the registered person, has been met. In addition all files examined were found to be well ordered and structured. Standard 2 is exceeded and Standard 3 is met.

Management of the fostering service Standards 4 and 5.

It was evident that appropriate monitoring of this service takes place by the Responsible Individual and any matters of note or significance are also properly reported. The Deputy Manager is waiting to commence managerial training with the intention of achieving qualifications in this area. It was clear that the managerial arrangements work well for the benefit of service users and staff. Standard 4 is met, Standard 5 is exceeded.

Securing and promoting welfare Standard 6-14.

An inspector visited four foster carers and questionnaires were sent out to foster carers and placing authority social workers. Foster carers described themselves as very well supported by the project link workers. Carers were obviously knowledgeable and aware of the need to promote and protect the welfare of the children and young people they had placed with them. There are plans in place for recruitment strategies to be further developed with the aim of improving the number and diversity of carers. Links made by the project are well established and remain long running. Matching is carefully considered and the proforma used for matching has been amended and improved by the inclusion of a risk assessment element. Generally training was described as well attended. A proforma is also in place for the supervision of carers and diaries are signed off by link workers at each visit.

The lead inspector observed a visit to the foster carers support group by a mediation worker from Fostering Network. The meeting was well attended and there was discussion of appropriate issues for foster carers. Expectations concerning contact are made very clear to foster carers. Regarding temporary care arrangements any issue about contact are specified within the placement agreement. A consultation forum is in place for carers, which is convened four times a year. Social gatherings for foster carers take place and there are plans for awards to be made to individual foster carers in recognition of their longstanding service.

Some health care information is contained within children files. However health care plans were not in place within children's files and such documents are not routinely supplied by placing authorities. The involvement of carers with regard to reviews varies according to the expectation of the local authority and the level of involvement of the carers. Four Standards are met, four are exceeded and one Standard was not assessed.

Recruiting checking and managing, supporting and training staff and foster carers Standard 15-23.

Three staff hold a post qualifying award (PQA) and one member of staff has a child care award. Another two members of staff were undertaking the PQA and one member of staff is a qualified Social Work Practice Teacher. The Foster Carers Handbook has been made more accessible by the introduction of a tab type system. In addition a statement clearly outlining "The Abilities We Require of Carers" has also been included within this document. A previous requirement so that staff disciplinary procedures fully comply with The Fostering Services Regulations 2002 has been met. Foster carers reviews take place on an annual basis and all reviews are presented to panel. During the past year Child

Protection, Administration of Medication, Transporting of Children Safely, Advocacy and Participation of Disabled Children training has taken place. Preparation Training takes place throughout the year. Four Standards are exceeded and five Standard areas were not fully assessed.

Records Standards 24-25.

The files of four foster carers and the children linked with them were looked at as part of the inspection. All of the required information was found to be in place on the files of foster carers. Some Looked After Children's documentation was missing. However there was evidence that this information had been requested by the project. One Standard was exceeded and one Standard was not assessed.

Fitness of premises for use of fostering service Standard 26.

This Standard was not assessed.

Financial requirements Standard 27-29.

These Standards were not fully assessed on this occasion (they were considered during the last announced inspection and found to be fully met). However it was noted that the project was undergoing a period of transition in response to contractual changes. The Responsible Individual stated that Barnardo's was committed to ensuring the continued financial viability of the project whatever the current changes. Information about the budget of the project was supplied to the inspector. This information appeared to be comprehensive and detailed.

Fostering panels Standard 30.

Very good quality panel minutes are produced which make clear the reasons for decision-making by panel. An independent and very experienced chair continues to preside at panel meetings. Consultation with the chair confirms that panel are able to fulfill a quality assurance role for the project and that assessments are appropriately carried out by link workers. There were plans for panel members to receive training to take into account the planned changes for the project to place children on a permanent basis with foster carers. The Standard is met.

Short-term breaks Standard 31.

As was the case when the project was last inspected, the service continues to be able to draw on many years of experience and good practice in the area of short-term breaks. Foster carers receive support and training which is specifically designed to meet the needs of the children and young people with disabilities. The Standard is exceeded.

Family and friends as carers Standard 32.

The project is able to undertake a full Family and Friends assessments. A policy in relation to such assessments of prospective carers is included within the carers handbook. The Standard is met.

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:

NA

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:

NA

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:

NA

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:

NA

The grounds for the above Report or Notice are:

Implementation of Statutory Requirements from Last Inspection

Requirements from last Inspection visit fully actioned?

NO

If No please list below

STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS

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

No.	Regulation	Standard	Required actions	

Action is being taken by the 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	<u>Michele Hargan</u>	Signature	<u></u>
Second Inspector	<u>Michaela Griffin</u>	Signature	<u></u>
Regulation Manager	<u>Michele Hargan</u>	Signature	<u></u>
Date	<u>30 June 2005</u>		

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	11	FS6	The registered person must ensure that risk assessments are completed regarding each child in liaison with local authorities. This is an outstanding requirement made at the time of the last inspection.	31/5/05
2	27 Schedule 3 13	FS30	The registered person must ensure that CRB checks are always available to panel at the same time that assessments or reviews are presented.	31/5/05

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	NMS13	The registered person should ensure that statements of special educational needs are provided to the project by the placing authority and shared with foster carers.

2	NMS 23	The registered person should ensure that where foster carers complete external training relevant to their role as carers that documentary evidence is obtained to verify such attendance and in order to make sure that such training actually meets the needs of the child/young person placed in their care.
3	NMS 6	The registered person should ensure that health and safety checks are always available to panel at the same time that assessment or reviews are presented. Storage arrangements for medication should be kept under review to ensure that arrangements remain safe.

* Note: You may refer to the relevant Standard in the remainder of the report by omitting the 2-letter prefix e.g FS10 refers to Standard 10.

PART B**INSPECTION METHODS & FINDINGS**

The following inspection methods have been used in the production of this report

Number of Inspector days spent

4

Survey of placing authorities

YES

Foster carer survey

YES

Foster children survey

YES

Checks with other organisations and Individuals

YES

- Directors of Social services

YES

- Child protection officer

YES

- 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

NA

- Contact with parents

NO

- Contact with supervising social workers

YES

- Examination of files

YES

Individual interview with manager

YES

Information from provider

YES

Individual interviews with key staff

YES

Group discussion with staff

YES

Interview with panel chair

YES

Observation of foster carer training

YES

Observation of foster panel

YES

Inspection of policy/practice documents

YES

Inspection of records

YES

Interview with individual child

NO

Date of Inspection

31/1/2005

Time of Inspection

9.30

Duration Of Inspection (hrs)

52
APPROX

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

This Standard was not fully assessed on this occasion (it was considered during the last announced inspection when it was found to be fully met). However the requirement made at the time of the last inspection has now been completed and contact details for the CSCI are included within the children's guide. Consultation work is being undertaken with children and young people. Information about the service and about how to raise a concern or complaint is made available to children and young people in a variety of ways. This is in keeping with Barnardo's policy and approach of anti-discriminatory practice and service user inclusiveness.

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?

4

This Standard was exceeded at the time of the last inspection and was not fully assessed during the course of this inspection. However it was sufficiently evident that the Standard outcome continues to be exceeded. The managerial team possess the necessary skills and competencies. At the time of the inspection the agency was experiencing a transition with regards to a contractual arrangement. The implications of these changes are not as yet fully realised. It is clear that managers at all levels are attempting to manage and progress matters as necessary and as sensitively as possible with parents, carers and staff.

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

At the time of the last inspection this Standard was almost met. The previous requirement made so that a system for signing off recruitment files by the registered person has been met. In addition, all files examined were found to be well ordered and structured. An audit of files had been carried out by the Responsible Individual (RI) who had also signed off each file as complete. The Standard is now met.

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

This Standard was met at the time of the last inspection. Whilst the Standard was not fully assessed during the course of this inspection there was sufficient evidence to demonstrate that the Standard continues to be met. Discussion with the RI for the service and documentary evidence demonstrates that there are effective communication systems in place between the registered manager and the RI. It was also evident that appropriate monitoring of this service takes place by the RI and any matters of note or significance are also reported appropriately. Agreement was reached with the RI and the registered manager that regulation 42 reports would be supplied by the project to CSCI on a monthly basis.

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

Death of a child placed with foster parents.

0

Referral to Secretary of State of a person working for the service as unsuitable to work with children.

0

Serious illness or accident of a child.

0

Outbreak of serious infectious disease at a foster home.

0

Actual or suspected involvement of a child in prostitution.

0

Serious incident relating to a foster child involving calling the police to a foster home.

0

Serious complaint about a foster parent.

0

Initiation of child protection enquiry involving a child.

Number of complaints made to CSCI about the agency in the past 12 months:

0

Number of the above complaints which were substantiated:

0

Standard 5 (5.1 - 5.4)**The fostering service is managed effectively and efficiently.****Key Findings and Evidence****Standard met?****4**

This Standard was exceeded at the time of the last inspection. Whilst the Standard was not fully assessed during the course of this inspection there was sufficient evidence to demonstrate that the Standard continues to be exceeded. The Deputy Manager is waiting to commence managerial training with the intention of achieving qualifications in this area. It was clear that the managerial arrangements work well for the benefit of service users and staff.

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
<p>This area was fully achieved at the time of the last inspection. Requirements made at the time of the last inspection have been actioned. An audit of storage arrangements for medication has been carried out and decision has been taken not to supply carers with locked boxes. This matter should be kept under review to ensure continuing arrangements remain safe. Risk assessments are not in place as yet for all children placed, however progress has been made in proactively requesting and chasing such assessments from the responsible placing authorities. Equipment loaned out by the agency is checked in and out and assurance was given that mechanical equipment is maintained in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.</p> <p>For some children cot sides are used of a mesh type. The service must be satisfied that these are only used on the basis of appropriate recommendation for example by means of an Occupational Therapy assessment and that the manufacturer's and Health and Safety Executive's guidance is also fully complied with.</p> <p>An inspector visited four foster carers and another inspector attended a training group. Questionnaires were also sent out. Carers described support by fostering link workers as "very good" and "excellent." Foster carers consulted were obviously knowledgeable and aware of the need to promote and protect the welfare of the children and young people they had placed with them. Questionnaires returned by placing authority workers also expressed their satisfaction with the service being provided. This Standard could be exceeded upon completion of appropriate risk assessments for all children.</p> <p>The registered person should ensure that storage arrangements for medication should be kept under review to ensure that arrangements remain safe. See recommendation 3.</p>		

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

Currently foster carers reflect the demographic population. There are plans in place for recruitment strategies to be further developed with the aim of improving the number and diversity of carers. The RI for the project stated that a Black Emphasis Scheme is based at another Barnardo's project and the services of Urdu speaking workers are available if necessary. The recruitment of Black and Ethnic minority workers was viewed as a priority. Presently carers are providing either shared care or full time care on a temporary basis.

The service is moving towards providing foster care on a permanent basis and where necessary foster carers will undergo an appropriate re-assessment. Staff training is also to be delivered to take this into account. Consultation with the panel chair confirms that panel members will receive the necessary training to reflect these changes. Anti-discriminatory practice continues to be effectively promoted. The project continues to meet a wide and varying level of need and has a diverse range of carers. The project has a good supply of equipment available to carers which ranges from aids such as a practical stair walker to a useful selection of toys.

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?**

4

Links made by the project are well established and remain long running. Matching is carefully considered and the proforma used for matching has been amended and improved by the inclusion of a risk assessment element. Consultation with both staff and foster carers provided further evidence that effective matches are achieved. Questionnaires completed by placing authorities workers also reported their satisfaction with links made to foster carers.

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**

At the time of the last inspection this Standard was met. The registered manager scrutinises the "Live Link" IT system on a six monthly basis. In addition to this, individual files are checked and signed off by her so that issues are being identified and addressed appropriately. Child protection training updates take place. The project recognise the need to ensure that even very experienced foster carers are encouraged and reminded of the need to attend ongoing training. Generally training was described as well attended. A proforma is in place for the supervision of cares and foster carers diaries are signed off by link workers at each visit. The inspector observed a visit to the foster carers' support group by a mediation worker from Fostering Network. The meeting was well attended and dealt with the appropriate issues for foster carers. The provision of this service meets a recommendation made at the time of the last inspection. Carers were given information about the support available to them should they be subject to any allegation. There are systems in place concerning any reportable incidents.

Questionnaires confirmed that link workers are supportive of foster carers attendance at reviews, core groups, conferences etc. Copies of Area Child Protection Committee (ACPC) guidance are in place. Carers visited demonstrated a good awareness of the need to keep children safe. The project has lobbied placing authorities since the time of the previous inspection with regards to a risk assessment being provided to them for each child placed. Some progress is beginning to be made and as soon as such assessments become available these should be shared with foster carers. With this achievement the Standard is capable of being exceeded.

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

NA

%

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?****4**

This Standard was exceeded at the time of the last inspection and this continues to be the case. Expectations concerning contact remain very clear to foster carers. Regarding temporary care arrangements any issue about contact are specified within the placement agreement. This continues to be an area of strength which the project has built up over many years and clearly demonstrates a commitment to working in partnership with parents and significant others.

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**

At the time of the last time inspection this Standard was almost met. Due to the profound communication needs of children and young people placed by the project it was acknowledged that to meet this Standard represents a significant piece of work for the service if meaningful consultation with children is to take place. However good progress has been made in this area with the provision of the young persons guide now being made available in CD Rom format. Further work still needs to take place and it was clear that the service are invested in establishing effective consultation systems for the benefit of children and young people. A participation group meets on a monthly basis and it was evident that there is continuing commitment in this area. A participation worker is based at Newcastle. A consultation forum is in place for carers, which is convened four times a year. Social gatherings for foster carers take place and there are plans for awards to be made to individual foster carers in recognition of their longstanding service. The Standard is met.

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?****4**

At the time of the last inspection this Standard was met. Further progress has been made in this area; information about healthcare is now contained within the statement of purpose. Some health care information is contained within children's files. However health care plans were not in place within children's files and such documents are not routinely supplied by placing authorities. Where children are placed for shared care this is not an issue, however where temporary care takes place and where permanency is being considered at a future time a health care record should be supplied. Agreement was reached that this would be addressed. On the basis of further information being made within the statement of purpose concerning health care needs the Standard is exceeded.

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**

At the time of the last inspection this Standard was met. Education primarily remains the responsibility of parents where children and young people receive shared care. Consultation with staff concludes that statements of special education need are not routinely supplied to the project as required, for example where children are in receipt of full time temporary care. The involvement of carers with regard to reviews varies according to the expectation of the local authority and the level of involvement of the carers.

The registered person should ensure that statements of special educational needs are provided to the project by the placing authority and shared with foster carers. See recommendation 1.

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?****0**

This Standard was not assessed on this occasion (it was considered during the last announced inspection when it was found to be fully met).

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?

4

At the time of the last inspection this Standard was met. Further progress has been made in this area as all social work staff have now achieved senior practitioner status. Three staff hold a post qualifying award (PQA) and one member of staff has a child care award. Another two members of staff were undertaking the PQA and one member of staff is a qualified Social Work Practice Teacher. The responsible individual for the project is carrying out Schedule 7 monitoring as required by the Fostering Services Regulations 2002. Recommendations made in the last inspection report about improvements to the staff recruitment and selection procedures have also taken place. On the basis of the additional qualifications and training completed by staff of the project this Standard is exceeded.

Total number of staff of the agency:

9.5

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

0

Standard 16 (16.1 - 16.16)

Staff are organised and managed in a way that delivers an efficient and effective foster care service.

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

4

This Standard was not fully assessed on this occasion (it was considered during the last announced inspection when it was found to have been exceeded.) However there was sufficient evidence provided to demonstrate that the previous organisational arrangements and management of the project continue to the same level.

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?	4
<p>At the time of the last inspection this Standard was met. Progress has been made since that time by the inclusion within the Foster Carers Handbook of a statement clearly outlining "The Abilities We Require of Carers". Secretarial support to the project has been improved by increasing the administrators post from half to a full time position. On the basis that previous Standards have been maintained and the above advisory recommendation has been implemented this Standard is exceeded.</p>		

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?	4
<p>Although this area is not a key Standard it was partially assessed because a requirement was made at the time of the last inspection. Previously the Standard was assessed as met. Progress has been made with this by the implementation of the requirement so that staff disciplinary procedures fully comply with The Fostering Services Regulations 2002. Support and supervision of carers has also progressed with proformas in place to demonstrate that supervision is taking place and carer's diaries are being signed off. Foster carers continue to describe support from the project as excellent. On this basis the Standard is exceeded.</p>		

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?	4
<p>This Standard was not fully assessed on this occasion (it was considered during the last announced inspection when it was found to have been exceeded.) However there was sufficient evidence provided which demonstrated that the previous Standard continues at the same level.</p>		

Standard 20 (20.1 - 20.5) All staff are properly accountable and supported.		
Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?	4
<p>This Standard was not fully assessed on this occasion (it was considered during the last announced inspection when it was found to have been exceeded.) However there was sufficient evidence provided which demonstrated that the Standard in this area continues to the same level.</p>		

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?	4
<p>This Standard was previously met. The Foster Carers' Handbook has been improved making it easier to access with a tab type system being introduced. The requirement previously made that all foster carers' reviews take place on an annual basis has been implemented and the registered manager stated that "ninety eight percent" of reviews had taken place on an annual basis and all reviews are presented to panel. The Family Placement Unit continues to work with the foster carers support group to look at corporate issues including issues of support. On the basis that the previous good practice recommendation have been implemented this Standard is exceeded.</p>		

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
<p>This Standard was not assessed on this occasion (it was considered during the last announced inspection when it was found to be fully met). However sufficient evidence was made available which demonstrated that the standard continues to be met. Tracking of foster carers and checking of the IT systems for the project confirms that written supervision of carers takes place. Questionnaires completed by foster carers and documentary evidence demonstrates that foster carers are provided with opportunities to develop their skills.</p>		

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?****4**

This Standard was not fully assessed on this occasion (it was considered during the last announced inspection when it was found to have been exceeded.) However sufficient evidence was made available during the course of the inspection, which demonstrated that this Standard continues to be exceeded. Training for carers continues on a rolling programme basis. During the past year Child Protection, Administration of Medication, Transporting of Children Safely, Advocacy and Participation of Disabled Children training has taken place. Preparation Training has taken place throughout the year. Foster carers reviews takes into account attendance at training events and health and safety assessments are revisited. Training sessions are repeated at two different locations to enable better attendance by foster carers. Update of training for foster carers continues to be well monitored. It was identified that some foster carers are able to take advantage of training provided to them by their employers for example First Aid so that they deem attendance at such training provided by the project to be unnecessary.

The registered person should ensure that where this is the case, documentary evidence is obtained to verify such attendance and in order to make sure that this actually meets the needs of the child/young person placed in their care. See recommendation 2.

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?

4

At the time of the last inspection this Standard was met. As previously indicated staff recruitment files were noted to be well ordered and signed off by a senior manager. The files of four foster carers and the children linked with them were looked at as part of the inspection. All of the required information was found to be in place on the files of foster carers. Some Looked After Children's documentation was missing. However, there was evidence that this information had been requested by the project. The necessary records are maintained by the project as required by The Fostering Services Regulations 2002. A recommendation made at the time of the last inspection that an audit of records retained by foster carers be undertaken in order to ensure consistency and make sure that no unnecessary documents are being held has been carried out. On the basis that this good practice recommendation has been implemented the Standard is exceeded.

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?

0

Although this Standard was not assessed on this occasion (it was considered during the last announced inspection when it was found to be fully met).

Number of current foster placements supported by the agency:			55
Number of placements made by the agency in the last 12 months:			6
Number of placements made by the agency which ended in the past 12 months:			14
Number of new foster carers approved during the last 12 months:			2
Number of foster carers who left the agency during the last 12 months:			10
Current weekly payments to foster parents: Minimum £	231	Maximum £	463.68

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?

0

This Standard was not assessed on this occasion (it was considered during the last announced inspection when it was found to be exceeded).

Financial Requirements

The intended outcome for the following set of Standards is:

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

Standard 27 (27.1 - 27.3)

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

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

0

This Standard was not fully assessed on this occasion (it was considered during the last announced inspection when it was found to be fully met). However, it was noted that the project was undergoing a period of transition in response to contractual changes. The RI stated that Barnardo's was committed to ensuring the continued financial viability of the project whatever the current changes. Information about the budget of the project was supplied to the inspector. This information appeared comprehensive and detailed.

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?

0

This Standard was not assessed on this occasion (it was considered during the last announced inspection when it was found to be fully met).

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?**

0

This Standard was not assessed on this occasion (it was considered during the last announced inspection when it was found to be fully met).

Fostering Panels

The intended outcome for the following set of Standards is:

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

Standard 30 (30.1 - 30.9)

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

Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?	3
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At the time of the last inspection this Standard was met. A panel meeting was observed during the course of the inspection and panel members were noted to be vocal. At the beginning of the panel meeting the registered manager provides members with information relating to recruitment and the current functioning of the project, which is clearly good practice. Very good quality panel minutes are produced which make clear the reasons for decision-making by panel. An independent and very experienced chair continues to preside at panel meetings. Consultation with the chair confirms that panel are able to fulfil a quality assurance role for the project and that assessments are appropriately carried out by link workers. There were plans for panel members to receive training to take into account the planned changes for the project to place children on a permanent basis with foster carers. It was reported that there had been some instances in which CRB and health and safety checks were not always readily available to panel. Prospective foster carers do not currently attend panel, however assurance was made that when panel members had received the necessary training applicants would be invited to do so. Agreement was reached that profile of panel members would be kept alongside references and CRB's. It is possible that when the further developments as indicated above are in place and when the requirement and recommendation below are achieved that this Standard could be exceeded.

The registered person must ensure that CRB checks are always available to panel at the same time that assessments or reviews are presented. See Requirement 2

The registered person should ensure that health and safety checks are always available to panel at the same time that assessment or reviews are presented. See recommendation 3

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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At the time of the last inspection this Standard was exceeded. As was the case when the project was last inspected, the service continues to be able to draw on many years of experience and good practice in the area of short-term breaks. Foster carers receive support and training which is specifically designed to meet the needs of children and young people with disabilities. Staff, foster carers and operational practice continue to ensure that the central position of parents of children is preserved. The Standard continues to be exceeded.	4
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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?	3
At the time of the last inspection this Standard was met. The project is able to undertake a full Family and Friends assessments. A policy in relation to such assessments of prospective carers is included within the carers' handbook. At the time of the inspection no such assessments were taking place. The Standard continues to be met.		

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

N/A

Lay Assessor

N/A

Signature**Date**

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 31st January 2005 and any factual inaccuracies:

Please limit your comments to one side of A4 if possible

We are working on the best way to include provider responses in the final report. In the meantime any responses received are available on request.

Action taken by the CSCI in response to the provider's comments:

Amendments to the report were necessary

NO

Comments were received from the provider

YES

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

NO

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

YES

Note:

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

D.2 Please provide the Commission with a written Action Plan by 21 June 2005 , which indicates how statutory requirements and recommendations are to be addressed and stating a clear timescale for completion. This will be kept on file and made available on request.

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

Action plan was required

YES

Action plan was received at the point of publication

YES

Action plan covers all the statutory requirements in a timely fashion

YES

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

NO

Provider has declined to provide an action plan

NO

Other: <enter details here>

NO

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 Deborah Gaskin of Barnardo's North East 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 Deborah Gaskin of Barnardo's North East 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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S0000042759.V159196.R01

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