



*Making Social Care
Better for People*

inspection report

Fostering Services

New Routes Fostering

Father Hudson`s Society

Coventry Road

Coleshill

Birmingham

West Midlands

B46 3ED

13th 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

New Routes Fostering

Tel No

01675 434000

Address

Father Hudson`s Society, Coventry Road, Coleshill,
Birmingham, West Midlands, B46 3ED

Fax No

Email Address

Registered Number of IFA

E040000362

Name of Registered Provider

Father Hudson`s Society

Name of Registered Manager (if applicable)

Lesley Carol Malley

Date of first registration

15th January 2004

Date of latest registration certificate

15th January 2004

Registration Conditions Apply?

NO

Date of last inspection

13/10/03

Date of Inspection Visit		13th September 2004	ID Code
Time of Inspection Visit		10:00 am	
Name of Inspector	1	Christy Wannop	073698
Name of Inspector	2		
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		Lesley Malley	

Introduction to Report and Inspection

Inspection visits

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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**
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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 New Routes Fostering. 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.

Father Hudson's Society is the social care agency of the Catholic Archdiocese of Birmingham. It provides Fostering and adoption, community projects, residential and day care for older people with dementia and younger adults with learning and physical disabilities. These services are largely within the old father Hudson's site in the town of Coleshill. There are two other social work offices in Whitney, Oxfordshire and in Newcastle under Lyme, Staffordshire. The Fostering Service operates solely from Coleshill.

New Routes was established in 1992 with funding from Children in Need. It is a small fostering project for young people, often "hard to place", aged between 8 and 18 in short term placements of up to 2 years, though long-term placements may be negotiated if a short-term placement is successful. Younger children may be cared for if part of a larger sibling group.

It offers foster care and can provide additional input such as life story work by social workers if required. The service covers a geographical area surrounding Coleshill of up to 20 miles, though this catchment area has been expanded. Foster Carers live in the Coventry, Warwickshire, Worcester and Birmingham areas. They must be prepared to travel to the office for training and meetings.

There are currently 17 carer households and 22 children placed. 9 children have been placed this year.

Lesley Malley, who also manages the Adoption service, manages new Routes. Perm Ghag is the Team leader with day-to-day responsibility and there is a team of two full time and two part time social workers. There is one full time and one part time administrators.

The society has a separately established fostering panel with nine current members. (One post is vacant.) The Chair of the fostering panel in his last year of office and the manager is seeking more members drawn from fostering background.

The panel makes proposals to the panel of the child's placing authority for matching and ultimate approval. The decision maker is Kevin Caffrey, Responsible Individual for the organisation.

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.)

The focus of inspections undertaken by The Commission for Social Care Inspection is upon outcomes for children and young people and progress on meeting National Minimum Standards. The inspection will also focus on aspects of service provision that need further development or that pose the most significant potential risk to children.

Throughout this report scores are given to dictate the extent to which this service complies with each National Minimum Standard. The current performance of the service is summarised under the headings outlined below.

The inspector is pleased to see the action taken to meet the requirements made at the last inspection, thus further developing the quality of the service provided by New Routes. Shortages in the administrative team and within the social work team prior to appointment of new Team Leader have meant that all staff have had to undertake extra duties and it is to their credit that they have made such progress in this period.

This second inspection under the National Minimum Standards for Fostering was positive. Carers were helpful, welcoming, straightforward and skilled. Social work staff well informed and open. This is a service that does its job very well.

The fostering inspection took place throughout a week in September. Placing authorities were consulted, but of 22 placements only four social workers responded. Those that did made largely positive comments, praising the carers for, "patient and loving carers" who provided a "secure and happy base", an "excellent foster home" and the service for its their good communication, positive working relationships and child centred focus. They also said that carers could sometimes be a little soft with boundaries" and "overprotective".

Children who responded in questionnaires said " a big thank you to my foster parents for caring for us and treating us as part of the family". Another said it was impossible to be sad with his carers. There were negative comments too, but not many.

The inspector met with a group of foster children for the first time. This was not a success and the message from children was that they would rather be spoken to individually rather than brought together as a group. This view will be respected in future. Foster carers were consulted and gave positive feedback about the support and the service generally.

The inspector visited four foster homes, chosen at random, spoke with carers and children placed there and tracked the care of the foster children through reading records, interviews and observations. The inspector observed and spoke with panel members and the Foster care support group.

Statement of Purpose

There is an excellent clear statement of the aims and objectives of the fostering service and of what facilities and services they provide. Children's information is accessible and has been created through consultation.

Fitness to Provide or Manage a Fostering Service

The fostering service is provided by Father Hudson's and managed by Lesley Malley. She has skills and experience to do so efficiently and effectively. The manager proposes to carry out a quality audit of the service. The inspector made suggestions about how the reports currently compiled to fulfil organisational functions can be adapted slightly to cover the Regulation 42 requirement for a review of quality of care.

Management of the Fostering Service

The fostering service is managed ethically and efficiently, delivering a good quality foster care service and avoiding conflicts and confusion of role. The previous very competent Team Leader has left and a new Team leader successfully appointed, confirmed in post and bringing new ideas and energy to the service. The fostering social work team works well together and have a range of skills and experience. The inspector was impressed with the depth of knowledge and understanding shown by social work staff of the carers and the children in placement.

Securing and Promoting Welfare

The fostering service promotes and safeguards the child/young person's physical, mental and emotional welfare. The inspection found many examples where social work staff and carers had put in considerable effort and energy into advocating for children to achieve the best, where additional support was needed. The inspector is satisfied that staff and carers have a real and meaningful commitment to promoting the physical and emotional welfare of children from the small detail to the wider picture. A requirement has been made to ensure that carers have evidence of the devolved responsibility under which they may make decisions about health, medical and educational matters such as trips and medical treatment.

Recruiting, Checking, Managing, Supporting and Training Staff and Foster Carers.

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. Carers particularly enjoy being part of a "small" service where they and the children are known. Social work staff appreciate the opportunities they have found outside of local authority children's services.

Records

With one exception, all appropriate records are kept and are accessible in relation to the fostering service and the individual foster carers. A requirement was made to ensure that the legal situation of each placement is fully understood and addressed and that Placement Agreements are accurate. No shortfall in care was found and indeed, New Routes social workers had worked to secure the outcome that best promoted the welfare of the children in placement. The manager has since informed Commission for Social Care Inspection that all legally required documentation is in place.

The inspector encourages further strengthening of the importance of the placement

agreement and associated Looked after Children documentation at the initial placement stage as the basis of work with the child.

It is recommended that any presentation to the fostering panel, change of approval category should trigger consideration of the need to update the placement agreement.

Fitness of Premises for use as a Fostering Service.

The premises used as offices by the fostering provider are suitable for the purpose.

Financial Requirements

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

Fostering Panels

The Fostering panels is 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. The manager is aware that the panel is "light" on independent members and is actively seeking to recruit a wider range of members.

Short Term Breaks

New Routes has developed an imaginative "back up" carer scheme that gives carers a break and also keeps foster children within a known circle of the caring "family".

Family and Friends as Carers.

New Routes does not recruit and manage carers from within the child's family or circle of friends.

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	

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	Christy Wannop	Signature	_____
Second Inspector	_____	Signature	_____
Regulation Manager	Joan Hawtin	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	34	FS12	Evidence of devolved responsibility to consent to medical treatment must be detailed in the placement agreement, on carers' file and with carers.	1/2/05
2	34	FS24	Placement agreements must be in place to cover each child placed in foster care. These must be updated where there is a significant change in circumstances. (The Manager has reported this now to be in place for each child)	1/2/05

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	FS3	Consider a "Front sheet" of Sch 1 information that can also evidence safe recruitment practice and organisational employment requirements.
2	FS4	Inform carers of their responsibility to declare any possible conflicts of interest that may impact on their employment as foster carers.
3		Equal consideration should be given to carers' suitability to foster regardless of sexual orientation.
4	FS12	Arrangements for safe storage and administration of medication should be addressed in the safe Care plan.
5	FS16	Obtain a legal "checklist" to cover legal requirements for fostering documentation and to help social workers understand the responsibilities of placing authority and fostering agency in relation to the range of placements as defined in the Statement of Purpose, particularly for mothers and babies.
6	FS18	Father Hudson's Whistle blowing procedure, for staff and carers, should refer to the external organisations, including the Commission for Social Care Inspection with whom people can raise concerns.
7	FS24	The manager should include an audit of compliance with Foster Placement Agreement in her annual report and review of quality. It is recommended that the file audit sheet be adapted to include the placement agreement and the original date.
8	FS24	It is recommended that the annual foster carer review should also address storage of required documentation in the foster home.
9	FS24	The most recent placing authority assessment/care plan should be obtained for each child in foster placement.
10	FS24	It is recommended that any presentation to the fostering panel, change of approval category should trigger consideration of the need to update the placement agreement.

* 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	7
Survey of placing authorities	YES
Foster carer survey	YES
Foster children survey	YES
Checks with other organisations and Individuals	YES
• Directors of Social services	NO
• 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	YES
• 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	YES
Date of Inspection	13/09/04
Time of Inspection	10AM
Duration Of Inspection (hrs)	48

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?

4

The service has a Statement of Purpose, which sets out the health, educational and therapeutic services that are provided for children. The registered provider approved, reviewed and updated the Statement of Purpose in June 04.

The Statement of Purpose includes all information required. It covers status and constitution, management structure, services provided, the principle of care/aims and objectives, numbers, relevant qualifications and experience of staff, numbers of foster carers, numbers of children placed, numbers of complaints and their outcomes and procedures and processes for recruiting, approving, training and reviewing carers.

A children's guide is available. This is accessible to meet the needs of the children. This includes information about contacting an independent advocate and how to complain. Policies, procedures and written guidance are consistent with the Statement of Purpose. The service has developed and further improved the excellent quality of information this year. A young people's newsletter has been started.

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?	
<p>The manager has the relevant social work and management qualifications, CQSW; Certificate in management Studies, a Teaching certificate, B. Ed, and a certificate in group work. She also has over ten years management experience of local authority fostering and family placement schemes.</p> <p>The Manager also manages Father Hudson's two other social work services, an adoption service and an "origins" service for ex- service users of the organisation tracing their roots.</p> <p>The Team Leader, who deputises for the fostering service in the Manager's absence, is newly appointed and has recently completed her probationary period satisfactorily. She also has significant experience in local authority fostering and children's work.</p> <p>The inspection process showed that the service was organised, managed and staffed effectively.</p>	4	

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

Schedule 1 information in relation to all staff is in place.

Two written references, including the person's most recent employer are followed up by telephone enquiries. CRB checks are renewed every three years.

The Personnel Manager keeps records of checks and references. The records are well organised. The Personnel Manager has improved the recruitment processes through a near finalised set of recruitment procedures.

Staff of Father Hudson's care homes and the adoption service are covered by different regulations and it may be helpful to draw up similar front sheets to ensure compliance with the three different sets of regulations that govern recruitment.

It is again recommended that a front sheet of Schedule 1 information be used on staff files of Father Hudson's Fostering Service workers. Whilst there is no shortfall in practice, this would make clear the different legal responsibilities for recruitment.

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

Manager and staff roles are clear. The lines of communication and accountability are clear. There are proper financial procedures, which are reviewed by the Finance Manager.

Information is provided to purchasers of services, this includes charges for each of its services, statements of the amounts paid to carers and itemised amounts paid for wider services, such as health and education.

Managers and staff are formally informed of their responsibility to declare conflicts of interest. This should be extended to carers.

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

3

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.

1

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.

1

Serious complaint about a foster parent.

0

Initiation of child protection enquiry involving a child.

1

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

The manager has a job description, which details responsibilities, level of delegation and lines of accountability. The manager has overall responsibility for three services within the social work department as previously mentioned.

There are clear arrangements to identify the person in charge of the Fostering service when the manager is absent. This is the Team Leader.

There is a comprehensive five-year development plan. There is an annual position statement and monitoring by the Trustees and the senior management team. Action has been taken on all the requirements and the majority of the recommendations made at last year's inspection.

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 suitability of the foster home, its size, and number of bedrooms is addressed during the recruitment and selection of foster carers. It is inspected annually as part of the Foster carer review process. There is an annual unannounced visit.

Foster homes visited were warm, adequately furnished, decorated and maintained to a good standard of cleanliness and hygiene.

Children had their own bed. Father Hudson's believes that all foster children should have their own bedroom, unless the child wants to share. There was sufficient privacy and space. Children who had been abused or were abusers had a written needs/risk assessment and safe care plan in place.

The team leader would like to see the Safe Care Plan considered as part of the initial assessment process. The home environment is free from avoidable hazards. The service uses a checklist to ensure that basic areas of risk are prevented. This is updated annually. Child safety barriers and equipment are fitted where needed.

Foster carer preparation and training covers health and safety issues. Carers are provided with written guidelines about their health and safety responsibilities. The service ensures that foster carers' vehicles are safe. Risk assessments cover transport arrangements where this has been identified as an issue.

Foster care agreements require that carers may be interviewed or visited as part of the Commission's inspection process.

Standard 7 (7.1 - 7.7)

The fostering service ensures that children and young people, and their families, are provided with foster care services which value diversity and promote equality.

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

3

The fostering service arranges care that meets children's gender, religious, ethnic origin, linguistic, cultural, disability and sexuality needs through its considered matching processes. Father Hudson's promotes recruitment of married or single carers. It was reported that there is an unwritten understanding that carers must be heterosexual and if a couple, married.

There is an audit of applications from unmarried couples. The equal opportunities policy applies to staff and states only that practising Roman Catholics must fill certain posts. The inspector was informed that as religious organisation, Father Hudson's is exempt from implementing a full anti discriminatory recruitment policy. A recommendation from last year

remains.

Foster carer and social worker training covers promotion of children's self worth and confidence, respecting ethnic, religious, cultural and linguistic diversity. Anti discriminatory practice is encouraged.

Support and services for children with disabilities and additional needs are provided through the placing authority in the form of physiotherapy, Occupational Therapy, Speech and Language Therapy, community nursing support, education, leisure and health.

In practice New Routes social workers act as advocates on behalf of children to secure essential services. New Routes can formally feed into the Looked after Children review system where needs of foster children in placement have not been met. Talents, interests and hobbies are encouraged.

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 matching process takes account of the child's care plan and recent assessments of the child, family and carers. This information is available to people making the match. Match involves discussions, meetings of all relevant people including the child.

Foster placement agreements refer to elements taken into account when matching and identifying support needed to compensate for gaps in the match between the child and carers. Placement decisions consider ethnic, religious, cultural, religious and linguistic needs.

The placing authority should supports trans-racial or trans-community placements by providing additional training, support and information to foster carers. New Routes advocates formally on behalf of children where this has not happened.

Introductions take place with all placements so that the child can make informed decisions about the placement. New and experienced carers spoke of the confidence they had in the matching process and the key role they felt they had in assessing compatibility.

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**

There was evidence of training for carers in working with children who have been abused, safe caring skills, managing behaviour, recognising abuse and boosting self-esteem. Child protection training and annual updates have been identified as a training need for staff and carers. Participation in joint training with local authority workers is encouraged to promote “working together”.

There is a written policy on safe caring and each home has safe caring guidelines. These have been cleared with placing social worker and are understandable to the child. Foster carers are informed through the foster care agreement that corporal punishment is forbidden along with other forms of humiliating treatment and punishment. This is also contained in the carers’ handbook and in policy.

The manager monitors and coordinates information on the circumstances, number and outcome of neglect or abuse of a child in foster care as part of responsibilities under Schedule 7.

There is a policy and procedure in relation to bullying. Instances of bullying are recorded. Foster carers receive training in managing bullying behaviour and its results. Children did not report bullying in questionnaires. Foster carers have full information about the foster child and his/her family in order to protect the child and any other people for whom they have responsibility. There was evidence of New Routes workers pursuing additional information for children where placing authorities had not always supplied the child’s Looked after Children care plan or core assessment.

New Routes does not accept emergency placements and there is a thorough process of information gathering at the referral stage. There is a clear procedure for use if the foster child is missing from home. The manager monitors when and why children go missing as part of Schedule 7 responsibilities.

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

100

%

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 service has procedures to ensure that contact arrangements are established, monitored and reviewed. Consideration is given to contact when suggesting an appropriate carer for a child.

The service seeks the views of young people and children in determining contact arrangements. This is done at the time of placement agreement. Foster carers are trained in issues and have skills relating to maintaining contact.

The child’s social worker makes a risk assessment and supervision arrangements before the

fostering service allows any contact to take place, unless a court order exists to direct contact.

Arrangements for supporting and supervising contact are detailed in the foster placement agreement. Foster carers are supported in their work in this area by the New Routes social worker who discusses contact at each support visit. This is documented. .

Carers are reimbursed for any additional costs incurred in supporting contact arrangements. Carers record outcomes and impact of contact on child. This is fed directly to the child's social worker through the fostering services' contribution to the Looked after Children review. Carers spoken to had a mature clear understanding of the need to maintain real relationships and had worked through some difficult contact issues.

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

Foster carers receive training and information about the importance of listening and responding to the views of children.

The service asks for the views of children and young people about matters that affect them on a regular basis that focuses on live issues. For example, when compiling the Children's Guide. Young People's comments about their care form part of the carers' annual review along with the views of carer's own children.

Information is accessible to children. Children are informed about their right and routes of complaint to placing authority, Fostering agency, Commission for Social Care Inspection and independent advocate. This information is contained in the Children's Guide.

The manager is conscious of "consultation fatigue". The inspector found that whilst children where happy to consulted by the inspector individually, they found it embarrassing and some were strongly resentful to be brought together as a group.

Standard 12 (12.1 - 12.8)

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

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

2

The fostering service has links with and is knowledgeable about specialist health services in its area. Placements take into account how a child will continue to access specialist health services.

Before a placement begins, the service has secured a full description of health needs for each child and arrangements for governing the consent to medical treatment are in place. This is in the form of Looked After Children documentation. Quality and quantity of information is dependent on that supplied by social workers. If this has not been possible before placement, high importance is placed on obtaining this information and delivering it to carers.

Consent to medical treatment is detailed in the Looked after Children placement agreement. Some carers did not have a document that granted them authority to consent to medical treatment, though this should be part of the placement agreement signed by the local authority. In one case this section was not complete and in others carers did not have the placement agreement. Father Hudson has made sure that for all new placements this consent is clear. A requirement has been made.

The carer has a basic written health record for each child. This is updated and moves with the child. Children have access to their own records dependent on age and understanding. Training in health and hygiene and first aid is given, this includes health promotion and communicable diseases.

Children are supported by carers to be registered with a GP or dentist, taken to health, dental and optical, appointments, able to access services required, given dietary, personal hygiene, health promotion support and advocated on behalf of.

Foster carers report on the child's health needs for the planning and review process. The manager records and monitors health information as part of her Schedule 7 responsibilities.

The inspector found that arrangements for safe storage of medication were not addressed formally. A recommendation has been made.

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 service prioritises education by ensuring that it is discussed at every placement support visit. The service gives carers a booklet about the importance of education.

Carers report on educational needs and progress for the planning and review process. They actively support Personal Education Plans, where these are in place.

Arrangements for birth parent and foster carer responsibilities for attending school meetings, parents' evenings etc are detailed in placement agreement and care plan.

Carers encourage attendance at school, provide uniform and equipment, support homework, and finance for attending school trips and after school activities.

Where children are not in full time education, the service makes sure that children have structured occupation during school hours.

Foster placement agreements identify financial responsibilities for all school and educational costs.

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**

There is a policy and guidelines for carers in respect of preparing young people for independent or semi-independent living.

Foster carers are trained and supported so that they can carry this out. The service ensures that carers understand that they need to provide these opportunities for all children to learn independence skills according to age and development.

The service consults with young people about their futures and encourages active involvement in deciding their "Pathway Plans". There was no evidence of the local authorities "Pathway Plan" for one young person, but plenty of evidence of the pro-active approach of New Routes social workers in covering these matters.

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

There is a written recruitment and selection process for appointing staff. This is based on good practice as defined the National Foster Care Association Code of Practice on the recruitment, assessment, approval training, management and support of foster carers.

Prospective employees are interviewed, references are checked and referees spoken to either on the phone or are interviewed as recommended by NFCA code of practice. Records of checks and references are kept. CRB checks are renewed every 3 years. Social work staff have appropriate professional qualifications, DIPSW/CQSW and have a good understanding of foster care. There is an established plan for all social workers to obtain the Post Qualifying award.

Interviews and observations during the inspection evidenced knowledge and skills in understanding of childcare law and good practice, child development, communication, complaints procedure, promoting equality and diversity, inter agency working and health and education.

Staff have experience of family placement work and foster carer and have been trained in assessment. BAAF and Fostering Network training is undertaken.

Total number of staff of the agency:

9

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

2

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

There is a management structure map that shows clear lines of accountability. Managerial responsibilities are delegated appropriately to people who have the right skills, qualifications and experience.

The Manager has a system of workload management that can prioritise and assign tasks. Social workers have a maximum of 10 and a minimum of 5 families to support. It was suggested that workload management needed also to consider the number of children in placement as this had considerable implications for time management.

The Manager can ensure assessments, approvals, and reviews of carers happen effectively. It is expected that the assessment process can be completed in 6 months, though this is, by necessity, longer for part time workers undertaking assessments.

No placing authority has contacted the commission to check on registration status of the organisation. New Routes is a member of the West Midlands Child Care Consortium, who contracts with New Routes without reference to the Commission for Social Care Inspection. It is a frustration for the manager that there is duplication of function and no link between Commission for Social Care Inspection and the Consortium to promote "joined up" quality control in relation to contracts and placement agreements. Some placing authorities have refused to use New Routes Placement Agreements and keep in place "old" agreements that do not contain the detail required by law in the Fostering regulations 2002.

Staff are supervised by and can consult with qualified and experienced staff. Staff and carers have ongoing training and professional development. Carers have a training portfolio and this is to be linked to the bonus payment system.

There is administrative back up, office equipment and infrastructure to enable staff to work, as they need. The service has a vacant clerical post at the moment. Enquires from prospective carers and requests for services are dealt with promptly through a shared duty system. The service has access to legal, medical, childcare, educational advice. The Fostering Panel identified that they would like advice from a psychologist and someone with working knowledge of educational systems.

A recommendation is made about legal advice to support the types of placement routinely offered by the service. This results from the unclear legal situation surrounding a current "mother and baby" placement. The manager sought to rectify the situation during the inspection.

Employees, sessional workers and consultants have contracts, job descriptions and conditions of service. Fostering and children's social workers communicate and work effectively together. Staff confirmed they had access to grievance and disciplinary procedures, details of services offered, equal opportunity policy and health and safety procedures. One social worker requested a forum for discussing terms and conditions of service outside of the usual managerial and supervisory chain.

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**

There is one manager and one Team leader, two full time fostering social workers and two part time workers. All are qualified and experienced. This is in line with Statement of Purpose.

There is no current staffing shortfall. A vacancy in the administrative team is to be filled shortly.

Staff confirmed that retention is encouraged through good training, supervision, study leave, clear workloads and terms and conditions. Retention of carers is encouraged through support, training and services. Both groups confirmed that pay is not the defining factor in joining and staying with New Routes.

There is a recruitment policy aimed at recruiting a range of carers to meet the needs of the children for whom it provides a service. New Routes seeks to recruit largely married or single heterosexual carers.

There is a clear assessment process. Qualities and competencies are assessed against a range of indices as defined in BAAF Form F. Fostering Network publication "Skills to Foster" is used as a basis for group and individual preparation. Back up carers are identified and assessed using a scaled down but thorough process. Their details are included with the main carers' application and are subsequently reviewed by the panel.

Standard 18 (18.1 - 18.7)

The fostering service is a fair and competent employer, with sound employment practices and good support for its staff and carers.

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

The service provides out of hours management and support services for carers. This is well organised and carers cited this as a crucial support for them. Carers are managed through supervision, appraisal and support. The manager monitors this quality.

There is a comprehensive health and safety policy for carers, children and staff, which covers all legal requirements. There is public liability and professional indemnity insurance for all staff and carers. The insurance policy covers costs arising as a result of child abuse claims against any staff or carers.

The service has a whistle blowing policy, which is known to all. There is now a "Whistle blowing policy". Two versions of this were presented, one for the organisation and one specifically for Foster carers. This latter did not include reference to Commission for Social Care Inspection and ended with The Responsible Individual for the organisation. A recommendation has been made.

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
<p>The service has a training and development plan for all staff, through induction, post qualifying and in service. Effectiveness of staff training is evaluated, reviewed and updated annually. This is part of the review of quality of care.</p> <p>There is an appraisal system. Programmes of training are linked to assessment and carer need and are task based. Training reflects the Statement of Purpose and policies of the service.</p> <p>The service makes available current information about fostering legislation, guidance or national changes. Joint training is held between fostering service staff and carers. Joint training around child protection is to be prioritised. Social work staff join the monthly Foster carer support group for discussion and training. Carers made useful suggestions about training in relation to the experience of appearing before the panel.</p>		

Standard 20 (20.1 - 20.5)		
All staff are properly accountable and supported.		
Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?	3
<p>Staff have job descriptions and person specifications and access to policies and procedures. All staff have recorded management supervision. Supervision is regular and planned in advance.</p> <p>Line managers carry out staff appraisal. Staff attend regular staff meetings. The Team leader directly supervises social work staff. The manager undertook this task during the break following the departure of the previous and arrival of the new team leader.</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

Father Hudson's provides excellent support to carers within the service. The service has in place a clear strategy for working with and supporting carers. These include arrangements for training and development, encouragement for the monthly support group, supervision, and support services.

The service also provides information and advice, assistance in dealing with other services, health and education and out of hours support. Respite care and arrangements for reviews are also included in this strategy. Back up carers are identified for each foster family. Other carers also offer respite. Bonus payments are made for attendance at training and for placements of over 12 months. An NVQ programme is now established.

The role of the supervising social worker is clearly understood. Annual review reports are prepared and available to the fostering panel. Social worker and carers communicate well. Carers commented on this factor as crucial in the work. Social workers believe that the small size of the service means that all carers are known and carers can feel confident when they ring up for advice. A weekly update is shared between fostering social workers so that all are familiar with the current situation and issues with all 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?**

4

Foster Care agreements are understood by carers and make clear expectations of carers, agency and local authority. The foster care agreement as detailed in Schedule 5 contains all the required information and is a working document that enables carers to carry out their functions effectively.

Each carer is supervised and managed by a qualified social worker. The supervising social worker is responsible for informing in writing and ensuring acceptance of all standards, policies and guidance agreed by the fostering service. On approval, carers receive a handbook covering policies, procedures, legal information and insurance details. This was updated in July 2004.

Supervising social workers meet monthly with carers. Meetings are recorded on carers' files. There is a clear expectation, made clear to carers, that there will be one at least unannounced visit each year to their home.

There are practical working systems in place to ensure that carers have out of hour's management support, prompt payment and insurance cover. The service also ensures carers have support for foster care associations, respite care where appropriate and access to social work support.

Complaints and representations information is available. Complaints are monitored, recorded and outcomes are evaluated by the manager as part of the Schedule 7 monitoring. Records of allegations of abuse are kept and monitored.

There is a clear policy about the circumstances in which a foster carer should be removed from the register. The Manager is clear about POCA Notifications where foster carers' approval has been terminated on grounds that mean that they are not suitable to work with children and young people. New Routes staff have built upon good practice last year and further improved the service they offer.

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

Pre-approval and induction training includes the opportunity to benefit from experience and knowledge of existing carers. Training is guided by equal opportunities and anti-discriminatory practice within the context previously noted of not approving homosexual carers.

Training is carried out to maximise carers' attendance at different venues and times. Reasonable childcare costs and expenses are paid to facilitate attendance. Training is given in identified key areas before any child is placed. (Health and safety, child protection, Safe Care) There is a men's foster carer group that can meet to discuss specific gender issues. Specific consideration is given to the support needs of sons or daughters of foster carers and their views are sought through the annual review process.

Carers' annual review includes appraisal of training and development needs and is documented in the review report. The manager plans to link attendance at training groups to the payment of a bonus.

The manager reviews effectiveness of training annually. This is included in the annual report of the operation. Three carers have achieved NVQ 3 in Working with Children and Young People. There is consideration of the use of Warwickshire's NVQ centre for future candidates.

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?

2

A case record is maintained for each child. This details the nature and quality of care provided and contributes to an understanding of life events. Relevant information is available to child and carer.

There is a policy on case recording. The Manager audits the content of case files. It is recommended that this sheet be adapted to include the placement agreement and the original date.

The agency works with the placing authority to ensure information in agency and responsible authority files is integrated. It is a frustration for the manager that placing authority and West Midlands Consortium Placement Agreements are often insisted on in place of New Routes Foster Placement agreements, which the Manager is confident contain the required information under the Fostering Regulations. It is recommended that the manager include an audit of compliance with Foster Placement Agreement in her annual report and review of quality.

The agency is able to provide copies of its records and documents in relation to children placed on receipt of a written request. All relevant records to the placing authority on ending of a foster care placement.

The fostering service ensures that carers know why they children in foster care and the current placement, how long it will last and the child's legal status. This information is contained in the foster placement agreement and supplemented by Looked After Children documentation or additional reports.

The inspector found that for an existing placement that had become a "Mother and Baby" placement, there was no placement agreement to detail the legal status of the new baby in placement and the arrangement by which New Routes provided a foster placement for the mother. A requirement was made, which has now been met. The Manager sought immediate legal advice and should confirm to Commission for Social Care Inspection that this matter has been clarified.

The inspector notes that Father Hudson's staff led on much of the planning and coordination for this mother and new child. Full information was obtained and documentation in every other respect supported the placement that was thought by all to be a good one.

A recommendation has been made earlier for a through legal framework to be applied by the Society's legal advisor addressing the range of placements offered.

Foster carers are trained and have skills in helping children to understand and to keep reminders of their history. They are provided with equipment to record significant life events. Carers have sufficient information about the child to help them do this. A life story CD tool and training has been offered to all carers.

Copies of written requests for information from placing social workers are kept on child's file. Carers store information securely. It is recommended that the annual foster carer review should also address storage of required documentation in the foster home. Some carers visited did not have a copy of the placement agreement, though had plenty of Looked after Children review forms.

Staff and foster carers are familiar with Schedule 8 notification information and daily reports/ monthly summaries written by carers and the monthly supervision sessions provide the agency with the information it needs to ensure quality of care. Communication channels and responsibilities are clearly identified and monitored at regular supervision.

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

The low score here reflects that placement agreements were not in place to cover a mother and baby placement.

Other than this the Manager keeps good records of staff employed, carers, children, complaints, allegations, and accidents.

The manager has systems in place to monitor the quality and adequacy of records under Schedule 7 responsibilities. Confidential records are stored securely. There is a policy on access and retention of files.

Records are in a form that can be passed on if child moves placement, leaves care or if references are requested about a foster carer or member of staff. Records of children and foster carers are permanent, private and secure and can be seen in compliance with legal requirements by the child, parents or carers.

There is a policy on managing confidential information that is known to panel members, specialist advisors and staff.

Records are clear, legible, non-stigmatising and factual. They are kept in congruence with the Looked After Children/Integrated Children's System. Children and carers are encouraged to access their records, make changes, record dissent and personal statements, though they rarely do this.

Records are kept on carer, child and staff files of allegations and complaints. Separate records are also kept which bring together data on allegations and complaints.

Number of current foster placements supported by the agency:	22
Number of placements made by the agency in the last 12 months:	9
Number of placements made by the agency which ended in the past 12 months:	7
Number of new foster carers approved during the last 12 months:	1
Number of foster carers who left the agency during the last 12 months:	1
Current weekly payments to foster parents: Minimum £	345.27
Maximum £	375

Fitness of Premises for use as Fostering Service

The intended outcome for the following standard is:

- The premises used as offices by the fostering service are suitable for the purpose.

Standard 26 (26.1 - 26.5)

Premises used as offices by the fostering service are appropriate for the purpose.

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

3

New Routes is based in the Father Hudson's administrative centre in Coleshill. Offices are shared with the other social work services provided by Father Hudson's and the administrative offices for the residential provision. There is access for people with physical disabilities and plans are in place to increase accessibility of the reception area in the longer term. It is noted that new office accommodation could be built on the existing site. There are a range of rooms available for training, groups, and NVQ study. Social work staff share an office, there is an administrative office and both managers have their own office. There is a comfortable waiting room for applicants attending panel.

There is one computer for use of the social work staff and an administrative vacancy. Social workers reported that they would like better access to workstations.

IT and communication systems were reported to be workable. There is secure retention of records in lockable cabinets.

The Manager reported that measures were in place to safeguard IT system and to protect and make accountable, records that were maintained on computer. Premises are suitably equipped. New computer systems were arriving during the inspection. There is adequate insurance for premises and contents.

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 Finance Manager is a Fellow of the Institute of Chartered accountants and reported that the business was financially successful. It covers direct costs, allocated administrative costs and can enable extra for investment when needed. Additional resources have been made available to nurture the agency. The Statement of Purpose reports the financial status as income generating and able to make a small profit. Budgets are linked to the Development Plan, which is devised by the senior management team.

There is no financial crisis procedure. The Finance manager reported that FHS had sufficient financial reserves to meet any crisis. There are procedures to prompt disclosure of information to purchasers and financial planning systems safeguard the welfare of children placed.

The Finance Manager reports compliance with Income tax (PAYE) and national Insurance. The organisation is not required to be VAT registered and there have been three reviews to ensure that this is so. The Manager considers that good practice is promoted by sound financial management by Finance manager and monitoring of financial information through senior management group and Trustees.

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 Finance manager reports arrangements for control of financial affairs and powers are satisfactory. There has been a programme of modernisation of systems and business planning as the organisation has moved away from administration by Clergy and members of religious orders to being professionally managed. There are financial procedures to be followed by all staff at all levels.

The agency's accounts are maintained and properly audited by a registered accountant. Deloitte and Touche have independently audited the organisation. This arrangement is subject to a new tendering process.

Charges for services are made available through the statement of purpose. There is a policy to guide fees and expenses for any additional service it is asked to provide. Purchasers and others with legitimate interest can have a copy of this and information about financial state of the agency on request.

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 finance department, who have an understanding of the task, deals with foster carer payments. Foster carers report prompt and satisfactory payment arrangements.

There is a policy on fostering allowances. Current levels are well publicised and provided annually to each carer. Information about how to access payment and expenses is given to foster carers before a child is placed. Payments are issued promptly direct to carers in advance. New Routes does not pay a "retainer", though there is payment to cover introductory periods. There is a system of bonus payments for length of placement and this will be extended to include attendance and fulfilment of training.

Additional payment is made for one off pieces of work, day-care, direct work, contact support. Clear written details are available of the allowances. Allowances and fees are reviewed annually.

Fostering Panels

The intended outcome for the following set of standards is:

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

Standard 30 (30.1 - 30.9)

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

Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?	3
<p>The society has a separately established fostering panel with nine current members. (One post is vacant.) The decision maker is Kevin Caffrey, Responsible Individual for the organisation. He attends Fostering Panel as an observer, but does not take part in discussions.</p> <p>This is highly unusual. The Manager reports that he does not take part in any decision made by the agency. The panel has an experienced independent chair, now in his final term of office. There is an n experienced Vice chair.</p> <p>Policies and procedures are in place based on BAAF “ Effective panels” publication. The Registered Manager, Lesley Malley, has written procedures. The panel has access to a legal adviser, with whom it has a contract. He has previously confirmed that he was able to attend 2 panels a year if required and could offer legal advice to social work staff from time to time. Recommendation has been made about commissioning a piece of work framing the legal basis of the different placements offered by the service.</p> <p>This should be added to the Panel procedures. The Mother and baby placement was discussed at panel but no legal direction was made. The medical advisor attends panel.</p> <p>Procedures cover:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decision making in cases of disagreement. • CRB checks and suitability for panel members. There are clear terms and conditions. • Access to medical advice. Procedures state the medical advisor attends panel. • QA function in relation to assessment, consistency, feedback, problems, thoroughness and rigour. <p>Panels receive management information about outcome of foster carers annual reviews. Local authority panels monitor and formally approve the process at the point of matching a child with New Routes carers.</p> <p>One independent member is a foster carer for another agency. The Manager would like to recruit another foster carer or someone who has been in care. The inspector observed that fostering panel. In attendance was a carer from a neighbouring authority, who may join as an independent member.</p>		

There is an annual joint training day. Panel members are expected to attend. The Registered manager recommends members of panel. There is a guide for carers attending panel, aimed at enabling full and professional participation.

The inspector had a discussion with the panel members, who made valuable suggestions about training and advice they would welcome from psychologists and educational advisors. These were passed to the manager.

Foster carers made some suggestions for a video of the panel in action that could be used as part of preparation and on going training.

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?

3

New Routes does not provide short break as part of its' service "per se". Young people do have short breaks with other carers within the scheme to enable carers to have a break if needed. Requirements reflect the short-term nature of the placement and differ from those expected of long-term placements. Introductions are made and matching is a key element to finding the right carers so that the experience is equally positive for young people.

The scheme asks carers to identify "back up" carers who can assist with childcare. These carers undergo essential elements of the assessment process including interview, references and CRB checks. Back up carer suitability is considered at the annual review. Carers with responsibility for a child with a disability reported a greater need for "respite" than that experienced by other carers. The Manager was aware of this issue.

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?
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This standard does not apply. New Routes does not offer family and friends placements.	
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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 New Routes 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 published report. In the meantime responses received are available on request".

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

Amendments to the report were necessary	<input type="checkbox"/> YES
Comments were received from the provider	<input type="checkbox"/> YES
Provider comments/factual amendments were incorporated into the final inspection report	<input type="checkbox"/> YES
Provider comments are available on file at the Area Office but have not been incorporated into the final inspection report. The inspector believes the report to be factually accurate	<input type="checkbox"/> NO

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 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	<input type="checkbox"/> YES
Action plan was received at the point of publication	<input type="checkbox"/> YES
Action plan covers all the statutory requirements in a timely fashion	<input type="checkbox"/> YES
Action plan did not cover all the statutory requirements and required further discussion	<input type="checkbox"/> NO
Provider has declined to provide an action plan	<input type="checkbox"/> NO
Other: <enter details here>	<input type="checkbox"/>

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 _____ confirm that the contents of this report are a fair and accurate representation of the facts relating to the inspection conducted on the above date(s) and that I agree with the statutory requirements made and will seek to comply with these.

Print Name _____

Signature _____

Designation _____

Date _____

Or

D.3.2 I _____ of _____ am unable to confirm that the contents of this report are a fair and accurate representation of the facts relating to the inspection conducted on the above date(s) for the following reasons:

Print Name _____

Signature _____

Designation _____

Date _____

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

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S0000034855.V165060.R01

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