



Making Social Care  
Better for People

# inspection report

## FOSTERING SERVICE

### Catholic Caring Services

**218 Tulketh Road  
Ashton  
Preston  
Lancashire  
PR2 1ES**

*Lead Inspector*  
Lynn Paterson

*Announced Inspection*  
11<sup>th</sup> September 2006 09:00

The Commission for Social Care Inspection aims to:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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# SERVICE INFORMATION

<b>Name of service</b>	Catholic Caring Services
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<b>Name of registered provider(s)/company (if applicable)</b>	Catholic Caring Services (Diocese of Lancaster) Ltd
<b>Name of registered manager (if applicable)</b>	Mrs Susan Bernadette Swarbrick
<b>Type of registration</b>	Fostering Agencies
<b>Category(ies) of registration, with number of places</b>	

# SERVICE INFORMATION

## Conditions of registration:

1. The agency shall at all times employ a suitably experienced and qualified manager who is registered with the Commission for Social Care Inspection.

**Date of last inspection**      23rd January 2006

## Brief Description of the Service:

Catholic Caring Services fostering agency is a well -established voluntary agency that provides a range of social care facilities for children and adults. The Board of Management oversees the agency and is responsible defining policies and agreeing annual budgets. The director is the responsible individual for the fostering services. The assistant director (children), and the team leader (fostering) complete the management team. There are two senior social work practitioners; 3 qualified social workers and one foster care development worker, who has many years experience as a foster carer for another agency. The fostering service provides long - term, task centred, short term and pre adoption placements on behalf of local authorities.

# SUMMARY

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

The inspection of Catholic caring Services commenced on 11<sup>th</sup> September 2006 and was carried out over a five -day period. Prior to the inspection a meeting had been held with the manager of the service and a timetable had been arranged as to how the visit would be organised. Pre inspection documentation had been provided by the agency, which provided valuable information about the way the service was managed.

The first day was spent meeting with the manager and staff of the agency, reading files and other documentation. The following days involved discussions with staff, visits to foster carers and young people and observing various foster carer- training sessions and children and young peoples groups.

Six carers had been contacted by telephone for discussion about their views of the agency and questionnaires had been sent to all foster carers and young people registered by the agency to gain insight into how they viewed the level of support provided to them from Catholic Caring Services.

Fieldwork also included discussions with health workers, social workers, safeguarding officers, foster carers families and local authority placing social workers.

Over forty completed questionnaires were returned from foster carers, social workers and young people and sixteen pre approval/post approval foster carers and fourteen young people were spoken with.

## **What the service does well:**

The staff of the agency demonstrated through discussion and observation that they were totally committed to the provision of quality placements for young people.

Comments received from foster carers included: -

"The service provide me great support and aids for my foster daughter and are always there if I need them"

"The service provides me with enormous support to enable me to care for my foster child, even out of hours".

"I feel that the staff of the service are well trained in child care as they always know what to do in an emergency, I don't know what I would do without them".

"Catholic Caring, give great support to their carers and families. I know they are always available any time we need them. They are not only professional and caring they are friendly and helpful also".

"I couldn't wish for a better agency to work for."

Foster carers said they were provided with good quality training and felt the recruitment and selection processes were thorough and enabled potential foster carers to discuss issues and reflect about what they were aiming to do, prior to them becoming foster carers.

Children and young people spoken with said they were always encouraged to discuss their feelings with the fostering agency social workers and comments included: -

"They are very nice to us and ask us our opinions on everything"

"They help us and make sure that the foster homes we live in are nice and that the foster carers understand about how to care for us"

"They arrange for us to have children's groups and get to know other kids who are in foster care and have fun".

Other comments from young people included: -

"My foster carer is great, I want to stay here forever";

"I love being at my foster home, I am very happy here".

"I am well looked after and loved".

Observations of children's groups revealed the staff of the agency used the art of play therapy to ensure that children and young people were able to be open and clear about their feelings. This group work was seen to be most innovative and of a very high standard and all social work staff spoken with identified they held professional qualification in child -care and had full knowledge and experience to carry out their role.

The agency values diversity and respects the choices of the individual.

Staff said they were well supported by their line manager and were able to work well together as a team.

The service continue to update their policies and protocols as a good practice issue and it was noted that behavioural management procedures were in the process of update at the time of the visit.

Agency staff and foster carers spoken with revealed they worked together to ensure wherever possible that the young people living in foster care were happy, had stability of placement and assessed educational, health and social needs were met.

## **What has improved since the last inspection?**

As a good practice issue the agency continues to monitor review and update its policies and procedures and examination of the updated policies revealed that they had been updated to a high standard.

Quality assurance systems have been updated to include children and young people being consulted with as part of the foster cares review.

The service, have developed a specialist fee paying fostering scheme which aims to meet the needs of a wider range of children. This scheme involves the agency recruiting carers with recognised skills to meet the diverse needs of children living in foster care.

Training has been updated with post approval training now including BAAF Learn the Child, Understanding Behaviour.

Agency foster carers groups have been further developed to include the introduction of a men's support group. This group appears to be welcomed within the foster carers arena.

## **What they could do better:**



Whilst Catholic caring Services have continued to develop their policies and practices to a high standard it would be recommended that the service continue to expand upon the training venues. Foster carers comments have included that they would like training to take place in areas that were more accessible to them as the current training venues can be "far away" from the foster carers homes. Other comments made from foster carers included: -

"Would it be possible for training to be held during the summer holidays as it would suit some of us",

"Could training be offered in different formats for the people who find it difficult to get along to training venues. For example, videos, which can be viewed in our own homes".

It was also noted that whilst the current training programme includes some aspects of behavioural management this does not cover restraint techniques. This was discussed with the manager and her staff and it was agreed that this training would be introduced as part of the programme.

However feedback received from agency staff, foster carers, placing social workers and young people and observational practice of staff, foster carers and young people reveal the agency provide an excellent service in the placement and protection of looked after children.

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

The report of this inspection is available from [enquiries@csci.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@csci.gsi.gov.uk) or by contacting your local CSCI office.

# **DETAILS OF INSPECTOR FINDINGS**

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# Being Healthy

## **The intended outcome for this Standard is:**

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

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

## **JUDGEMENT – we looked at the outcome for Standard:**

12

Quality in this outcome area is good. This judgement has been made using available evidence including a visit to this service. The fostering service promotes the health and development of children and provides foster carers with training and support in respect of health and medication management

## **EVIDENCE:**

The agency records identified that the foster carers receive ongoing training to enable them to deal with all the health related issues that the young people may experience. Foster carers spoken with said they were supported by their social workers to promote the health and development of the children in placement, comments included:-

“We receive good support from the social workers who are professional and friendly so it makes it easy to work with them to provide a good joint service. We receive training and encouragement to enable us to provide all the young people who come to live in our homes with the health and social care they need”.

“We receive support and guidance from our social workers to enable us to make sure the young people looked after are provided with the appropriate health packages, we go along with them to doctors, dentists etc.and generally make sure they keep all their health appointments.”

“My social worker was able to get all the aids and adaptations that my foster child needed so that s/he could be comfortable here. They also gave me full information about his/ her health needs so that I could make sure all appointments and things were covered”.

Foster carers advised that they were provided with ongoing training in both pre and post approval and examination of the foster carers handbook revealed that basic first aid information is included.

Young people spoken with said they were supported to remain healthy and comments included: -

" I am encouraged to stay clean, encouraged to eat fruit and vegetables and to exercise"

"My carer looks after me and makes sure that I go to the doctors and dentist and have health checks because s/he , cares about me"

"I am encouraged to eat proper food like fruit and vegetables and not always eat McDonalds food ",

"I tell my carers when I don't feel well and they look after me".

Case tracking methods show that all individual health matters are discussed and recorded at reviews placement meetings and at general support visits.

Records show that all children accommodated by Catholic Caring Services are registered with a GP and the children and young people spoken with said they had been given information and advice about health promotion.

A number of young people said they had been given information about the dangers of drugs and alcohol and of general health care, which they felt was useful.

Staff spoken with said the agency provides support for the foster carers in relation to health and development for example attending appointments. They said that individual health issues were noted in placement agreement and foster carers agreement and was supported by the agencies health care policy. Staff advised that health information was provided in the Children's Guide and the agency provided open access to The Agency Medical Advisor for health related issues. As a consequence foster carers advised that the consultation process with carers and GP's as part of the annual review has much improved.

The manager advised that as good practice issue the agency is introducing extra refresher training for all foster carers in respect of health and first aid.

# Staying Safe

## **The intended outcomes for these Standards are:**

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

**The Commission considers Standards 3, 6, 8, 9, 15 and 30 the key standards to be inspected at least once during a 12 month period.**

## **JUDGEMENT – we looked at outcomes for the following Standard(s):**

3.6.8.9.15.30.

Quality in this outcome is generally excellent. This judgement has been made using available evidence including a visit to the service. Staff, are provided with training and support to provide suitable safe placements for children and young people. Policies and procedures are also in place, which are designed for the protection of young people looked after.

## **EVIDENCE:**

Records show that all staff and foster carers have enhanced Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) checks and references are obtained in writing prior to commencement to the service.

Records viewed and discussions held identified that the manager of the fostering service has extensive experience of working with children and families and is a well qualified and experienced professional. In all discussions the manager demonstrated knowledge and understanding of protection issues, including safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. The manager advised that the agency has revised the policy for dealing with disclosure and the procedure for dealing with allegations against carers and has issued DFES guidelines to all carers. The manager proved in discussion and the provision of

full pre inspection documentation that she is fully fit and able to provide the management and leadership of the service.

Agency staff confirmed they were well supported and motivated by the manager.

Records show that new carers are approved through pre approval training, statutory checks and a competency- based assessment. All prospective foster carers are provided with a final pre approval visit to ensure that the assessment process has addressed all the requirements of form F, and a report is then provided for the fostering panel. Prior to approval foster carers homes are subject to a health and safety assessment to ensure that the premises provides a safe nurturing and healthy environment for the young people to live.

Prior to any placement being commenced safe care plans are drawn up with every household and recognition given to individual children.

All files examined held a home safety checklist, which included information in respect of what pets, were acceptable to have in the home when a foster child was in placement.

All placements visited were seen to provide most comfortable and homely accommodation and all young people spoken with said they felt safe and at home with their foster carers.

Discussions with foster carers revealed that they receive announced and unannounced visits from their supervising social workers and foster carers files viewed held records of these visits and details about individual safe care policies and procedures. Comments from foster carers included: -

"We are fully supported by the agency social workers, they are helpful knowledgeable and very nice people";

"Catholic Caring Society give me 100% back up at all times",

"I think they do a terrific job and really put the children as top priority. Children have great faith in them, as do the foster carers. I can always talk to someone if I need to ".

"They provide full information about the child prior to placement, wherever possible and try to ensure that the child will fit in with the family".

"They are better than social services. They have a family approach and can always provide respite to help and support the carers and their own family. They don't put on you and always ensure that they serve the best interest of all concerned."

Foster carers said they understand the matching process and advised that pre placement visits were usually carried out prior to a full placement agreement being made. All foster carers spoken with said they receive training and support from their social worker and were also provided with support through membership of The Fostering Network.

Staff advised that the agency has a policy and protocol, which is used to make sure; children and young people placed in foster care are suitably matched. File records show that this procedure involves the use of British Agencies for Adoption and Fostering (BAAF) forms E and F. These forms contain information to enable foster carers to be identified as possibly being suitable to care for the young person looked after. When this is identified a planning meeting takes place to decide if the placement would be suitable to meet the needs of the child.

Staff said the foster carers are expected to maintain placement diaries and diaries seen identified that foster carers understood the need to record relevant information about the young person looked after.

The Six care records viewed as part of the case tracking method showed that all the young people living in current foster care placements had been subject to a thorough matching process. The young people spoken with said they were happy with their foster carers and felt "at home". Comments included: -

"I like it here they understand me",

"I get on well with everybody and feel at home here",

"They treat me well and give me support and advice about my future"

"My mum is kind and helpful, she listens to me if I am sad or happy"

"My foster carers are cool, they treat me well and help me to see my dad sometimes".

All staff spoken with displayed excellent knowledge and understanding of childcare and all social work staff has an appropriate social work qualification. Foster carers and young people said they were invaluable to them as they provided much help and support. The fostering team includes a foster care development worker who has many years experience in the fostering arena. Foster carers and agency social work staff said that this role enabled the development worker to provide advice and support to all foster carers as first line contact and also as an out of hour help line.

Staff of the agency, were observed during a children's development group meeting and also during a foster carers pre approval training session and were

seen to display exceptional skills and professionalism whilst carrying out their remit. This was seen to exceed the expectations of standard 15.

Discussion was undertaken with the manager and staff and foster carers in respect of behavioural management and it was noted that whilst the current training programme includes some aspects of behavioural management this does not cover restraint techniques. This was discussed with the manager and she advised that this training had now been reviewed and a new behavioural management policy would be introduced as part of the programme

Foster carers said they had been given guidance that Corporal punishment will not be used in any circumstances and they had been given guidance on the use of sanctions and of how to keep written record of any implementation.

The carer's handbook and young peoples guide to the service has clear guidelines on safe care, child protection anti bullying and behaviour management.

Foster carers said they had received good training in child protection and behavioural management but revealed they had not as yet had any training or guidance in restraint. Whilst this action would be used as a "last resort" it is recommended that restraint techniques be introduced as part of the behavioural management training to ensure that all carers are able to use safe restraint systems if ever required.

The agency has a policy in relation to The Fostering Panel, which was seen to be clear and covered all procedures. Staff advised that the panel is well organised and the panel members are all equipped with the appropriate knowledge, experience and qualification for the role. It was not possible to observe a panel meeting, however it was noted that the panel had not changed since CSCI inspectors last observed its function in February 2006 and therefore the comments recorded from the previous inspection stand.



# Enjoying and Achieving

## **The intended outcomes for these Standards are:**

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

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

## **JUDGEMENT – we looked at outcomes for the following standard(s):**

7.13.

Quality in this outcome area is good. This judgement has been made using available evidence including a visit to this service. The fostering service values diversity and have made great efforts to recruit carers from a wide variety of differing backgrounds, ethnic origins and religions to ensure the matching process can be effective. Foster carers are trained and supported to ensure that education is promoted and young people are enabled to meet their maximum educational achievements.

## **EVIDENCE:**

The agency records show that they have recruited carers from a range of social backgrounds and have a number of single carers.

Information in the foster carers handbook promotes equal opportunity.

Files examined revealed foster carer placement agreements promote equality and diversity. Children's questionnaires held information to show that they are encouraged to pursue their individual interests and hobbies.

Placement plans held information to show the wishes of birth parents were respected with regard to religious and cultural needs.

The agency has recently developed a specialist fee paying fostering scheme which aims to meet the needs of a wider range of children by recruiting carers

with recognised skills and abilities to meet the diverse needs of children and as a consequence is providing training more training and guidance to enable this scheme to expand.

Case files examined show that all individual needs are recorded and care plans are provided to identify assessed need.

Discussions with staff confirmed they had received appropriate training around equality and diversity, which they fully understood.

Observations of staff carrying out their remit further evidenced staff have full understanding of equality and diversity, an understanding, which they carry through to their practice.

Foster carers spoken with said they had received training in equality and diversity and observation of foster carer training sessions revealed that equality and diversity issues were a common theme throughout.

Comments received from placing social workers included: -

"Service has done exceptionally well in striving to meet the young persons cultural and ethnic needs"

"A lot of work is done by the agency to ensure needs led support is provided in order to maintain placements".

The policy "Educational Achievement" shows the fostering service supports the children and young people to achieve an education suitable to meet their need.

Foster carers said they were provided with information and training to enable them to promote education and support the young people to obtain education.

One foster carer spoken with said that S/he was due to attend a review that was being held at a school to make decisions about the future educational needs of the child. S/he said that if a child is excluded from a school the agency social workers do all they possibly can to find an alternative form of education to include the use of therapeutic services for both the young person and the foster carer to enable them to deal with issues and anxieties.

Agency staff advised they do their best to find appropriate educational placements for young people, however they said this is not always possible. It is the aim of the service to develop additional sources of support for children excluded from school and whilst this is not seen as a shortfall of the service it is seen to be a good practice recommendation for the future.

# **Making a Positive Contribution**

## **The intended outcomes for these Standards are:**

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

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

## **JUDGEMENT – we looked at outcomes for the following standard(s):**

10.11

Quality in this outcome area is excellent. This judgement has been made using available evidence including a visit to this service. Systems are in place for consultation with children and these systems continue to be monitored and reviewed to ensure that all young people can “have their say”. The arrangements for contact are good and consultation is encouraged.

## **EVIDENCE:**

Catholic Caring Services demonstrated a commitment to ensuring that children are supported to maintain contact with their birth families in line with their placement plan. Agency staff said links with birth families were promoted wherever appropriate for the child and good clear record keeping was utilised which recognised the impact upon the child and provided guidelines as to how the contact was arranged.

The foster carers spoken with said that detailed plans were made at the time of placement which addressed contact arrangements and they were received training and support from their supervising social workers to enable them to assist the young people with their contact arrangements. Foster carers said many forms of contact were arranged to include telephone calls, letters, meetings and visits.

Agency social workers said they had good communication systems in place between the agency social workers, placing social workers and foster carers and they all worked together to ensure that all children and young people had

suitable contact with their birth families and other people who had significance to their lives.

Foster carers said that the agreements regarding contact are reviewed on a regular basis and social workers always kept them informed about any changes.

Young people said that contact is maintained through letters, phone calls and visits and all young people spoken with said they were happy with their individual contact arrangements.

Foster carers revealed they maintain a record of the outcomes of contact arrangements and the reactions of the child. They said that if a child/young person appeared unhappy upon their return from contact or expressed a wish not to have contact then this would be discussed with the agency social worker, the young person's social worker and the young person with a view to resolving any difficulties.

Young people spoken with appeared happy with their individual contact arrangements and comments included: -

" I can see my dad very week and I look forward to it"

"My social worker is good because s/he helps me to have contact with my mum and my sisters",

"My foster carer takes me to meet with my sister, I like doing that".

Children and young people spoke with at the children's group identified they knew who their social workers were and were supported by them and the social workers from Catholic Caring Services to "have their say".

Children placed with the agency said they felt their views were actively sought and listened to. The responses to questionnaires in the main indicated that children were encouraged to give their opinions and make decisions. Comments from young people included: -

" My mum is kind, she listens to me when I am sad or happy".

"Carers listen and help me to understand",

"My foster carer asks me what I want and how I feel and I know s/he listens because if I don't like things they are death with."

The agency policies and procedures ensure that all children in placement are consulted with and asked to contribute to their annual review and that of their foster carer and records show they are supported in this by the foster carer development worker.

Foster carers said they receive training, at the initial stage and on going, regarding the need to listen to children and respect their views and carers comments included: -

"We receive good training on listening skills and how to hear what the young people have to say",

"The training we get is very good on how to communicate with young people, I can now really understand what the young people are telling us",

"We respect the fact that all young people have rights and we listen to their views and help them to express them".

"We are trained to enable us to get to know what the children/young people are really saying both in actions and words".

All children placed with foster carers spoken with said they had received the children's guide, which they said was good and contained information regarding how to complain. None of the young people spoken with had made a complaint but said they would know what to do if they needed to complain.

Young people said they were asked their views at their own Looked After Children reviews, which they could pass on by attending the review meeting or passing on information either verbally or in writing.

Discussions with the manager and social workers revealed that Catholic Caring Services have worked hard to implement good clear communication systems to enable young people to express their views. These systems include feedback forms, newsletter, advocacy services and the fostering development worker. The young people attend a children's development group, which is usually held on a Saturday morning and enables children and young people to meet up, get to know each other and share information. These systems were seen to be a most commendable addition to enabling children and young people to enjoy effective consultation between each other and the service providers.



# Achieving Economic Wellbeing

## The intended outcomes for these Standards are:

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

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

## JUDGEMENT – we looked at outcomes for the following standard(s):

29

Quality in this outcome area is good. This judgement has been made using available evidence including a visit to the service. The agency has a carers allowance policy guide and all financial details are clearly recorded

## EVIDENCE:

Catholic Caring Services Foster Care allowances are clearly recorded as to what allowance is paid to foster carers per child per week. Foster carers said they fully understood the payment systems and revealed that the fee is reviewed annually and amended in accordance with cost of living increases. Foster carers said they receive clear information about the allowances and expenses payable and of how to access payments before a placement commences.

The agencies policy states that any additional expenses or funding regarding contact, clothing, equipment, school uniform, specialist hobbies or interests are negotiated prior to placement.

Staff advised that the agency have improved payment systems since the last inspection and they now have a protocol for advance funding to carers where appropriate following placement in order to ensure placement quality is maintained. Staff said that the agency has also developed a “foster ability” specialist fee paying scheme information of which is provided to all foster carers who participate.

# Management

## **The intended outcomes for these Standards are:**

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

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

## **JUDGEMENT – we looked at outcomes for the following standard(s):**

1.17.19.21.22.23.24.

Quality in this outcome area is excellent. This judgement has been made using available evidence including a visit to the service. Catholic Caring Service is well managed by people who are qualified and experienced in the child -care arena and staff are trained and motivated to provide a high level of support to foster carers.

## **EVIDENCE:**





It is evident from discussions with various staff members that there is a wealth of knowledge and experience of the family placement task within the team.

Previous CSCI reports have highlighted the positive aspects of the management team and it was noted that since the last inspection all policies, procedures and practices have been monitored and reviewed and amended as appropriate.

Documentation amended includes: -

Training programme

Charging policy

Safe Care policy.

Child protection procedures in respect of allegations against carers.

System for informing children staff and carers about child protection procedures.

Recruitment and selection of carers.

New audit process,

Enhanced staff training and development systems.

The agency uses the BAAF Form F assessment format is used in all approvals, which incorporates all of the points under items 17.6 and 17.7 of the National Minimum Standards.

The case files viewed showed the standard of these assessments was excellent, giving sound evidence of the competencies of the foster carers.

The agency has clear practices when conducting assessments, and maintains all information that contributes to the Form F assessment. All case files viewed were seen to be in order.

It was noted that the social work staff of the agency are a professional, experienced staff team who are assisted by good administrative systems and support.

Foster carers said they enjoy regular formal supervision visits from their agency social worker and also informal visits as appropriate. All carers spoken with said they felt very much part of the service and felt valued and appreciated by the agency staff and other professional associated with the care of the child/young person looked after.

Staff and foster carers stated that the foster carers development workers role was a valuable asset to the service with out of hours help and advice being provided .It was also said that the service utilised an additional 24 hour out of hour service to enable foster carers to seek assistance as and when required.

Existing foster carers said agency staff respect them as a valuable source of support and information and are regularly involved in the training of new carers.

Observations of foster carer training sessions identified that foster carers worked together with supervising social workers in the delivery of training to good effect.

Foster carers said they were provided with good quality training however some carers said they were not always able to travel to the current training venue and suggested that an alternative venue be sought perhaps in the Blackpool area to allow carers more access and choice when training was provided.

Foster carers spoken with and information received from questionnaires confirmed they felt very much supported by Catholic caring services. They said they were provided with excellent on call systems that provide 24-hour information, advice and assistance and gained support also through regular visits and formal supervision in which training needs were identified and any concerns discussed.

The agency provides respite care for the children in foster placements.

Records show there are a number of carers who are approved to provide respite care.

Joint events such as foster care support groups and family days out, ensure that children and foster carers develop supportive relationships and meet one another.

Comments received from foster carers in discussion and information gained from returned questionnaires included: -

'The agency is very good, staff are very supportive and very nice people'

' I get great support at any time night or day'

' I am supported by phone calls and home visits.'

"I like this service, I have been involved with other fostering agencies but they were no where as good as Catholic caring Services, I think they are the best agency around",

"I know I am valued as a foster carer and treated as a professional",

"I think this is an excellent service I know they really care for the young people and go out of their way to ensure that young people are treated as individuals and that foster carers get training to ensure they can look after them properly".

All of the feedback received from young people, foster carers, placing social workers and agency staff about the service and the way it conducts its business was most positive, with the overall views being that the service is very well managed and staffed by professional, knowledgeable people who are reliable and supportive in their role. Comments received from placing social workers included " Catholic Caring Services have never let me or the young people down. They provide top class placements with foster carers who really do know what they are doing. They put systems in place to make sure wherever possible that the young people are treated with respect and provided with the care as appropriate to their needs. A great service".

# SCORING OF OUTCOMES

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

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

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

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

BEING HEALTHY	
<i>Standard No</i>	<i>Score</i>
<b>12</b>	4

STAYING SAFE	
<i>Standard No</i>	<i>Score</i>
<b>3</b>	4
<b>6</b>	3
<b>8</b>	4
<b>9</b>	3
<b>15</b>	4
<b>30</b>	3

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

MAKING A POSITIVE CONTRIBUTION	
<i>Standard No</i>	<i>Score</i>
<b>10</b>	4
<b>11</b>	4

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

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

Are there any outstanding requirements from the last inspection?

## **STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS**

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

No.	Standard	Regulation	Requirement	Timescale for action

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

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

No.	Refer to Standard	Good Practice Recommendations
1	FS21	It is recommended that the service review location, times and venues for foster carer support groups to enable all carer's fair access.
2	FS23	It is recommended that the service provide training in restraint techniques as part of the going foster carers training.

## **Commission for Social Care Inspection**

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