

CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD – 23rd May 2016

Title of paper:	Regulation 44 Visits Nottingham city council internal children’s residential homes including short breaks unit. Quality assurance visits of non regulated internal semi-independent homes.	
Director(s)/ Corporate Director(s):	Helen Blackman, Director – Children's Integrated Services helen.blackman@nottinghamcity.gov.uk	Wards affected: All
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Other colleagues who have provided input:		
Date of consultation with Portfolio Holder(s) (if relevant)	N/A	
Relevant Council Plan Strategic Priority:		
Cutting unemployment by a quarter		<input type="checkbox"/>
Cut crime and anti-social behaviour		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Ensure more school leavers get a job, training or further education than any other City		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Your neighbourhood as clean as the City Centre		<input type="checkbox"/>
Help keep your energy bills down		<input type="checkbox"/>
Good access to public transport		<input type="checkbox"/>
Nottingham has a good mix of housing		<input type="checkbox"/>
Nottingham is a good place to do business, invest and create jobs		<input type="checkbox"/>
Nottingham offers a wide range of leisure activities, parks and sporting events		<input type="checkbox"/>
Support early intervention activities		<input type="checkbox"/>
Deliver effective, value for money services to our citizens		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Summary of issues (including benefits to citizens/service users):		
<p>Regulation 44 of The Children’s Home (England) Regulations) 2015 require monthly visits to be completed to all children’s homes and units run by a local authority or independent registered children’s home provider by a person referred to as a Regulation 44 Inspector not employed at the home nor directly responsible for it.</p> <p>The Inspector must compile a written report of their findings, which must be submitted to the Registered Responsible provider and Ofsted within 4 weeks of completion of the visit.</p> <p>The purpose of the regulation 44 visits is to ensure that all children and young people within the placement are being appropriately cared for and that their individual assessed needs are being met in line with their care plans and (England) Regulations and standards 2015.</p> <p>This is achieved through a combination of:</p> <p>a) examination of all appropriate written records and reports with particular reference to daily logs, significant events and notifiable incidents including any complaints or compliments received. Before an inspector can read a child or young person’s file they must have written or verbal consent from the child or young person themselves. In the case of a child or young person with complex disabilities where communication is not possible, permission must be sought from parents/carers.</p>		

b) interviewing of children/young people, parents, relatives other professionals and staff as they feel necessary to establish the standard of care being provided.

The independent person must produce a report about a visit and form an opinion as to whether the children/young people are effectively safeguarded and the conduct of the home promotes children's wellbeing.

The independent persons report may recommend actions for the registered manager to take in order to improve the general running of the home.

Colleagues and other relevant professionals including those from Human Resources, Nottingham City Homes, Placements Service and our Internal Commissioning Team are included on the Rota managed by the Service Manager.

Before people are recruited onto the regulation 44 Rota, the Service Manager establishes if they have the relevant experience, skills and qualifications to be on the Rota. Once this is established they attend a training course to look in detail at the standards and regulations and the role they are expected to perform. They are also given advice on whom to contact and liaise with should they come across a serious safeguarding concern during the course of their inspection.

Independent members of the Rota have produced some very robust reports with recommendations on improving the service further, which have been taken on board and acted upon by managers and staff teams. Currently all of our internal residential homes are rated by Ofsted as either Good or Outstanding.

Some of the recent recommendations made by Quality Assurance Inspectors for improvements to the semi-independent homes are as follows:

Staff Signing sheet should be updated yearly re H&S Fire Log Book.

Conversations with parents need to be recorded on Castle/Care first. This does not seem to be happening. Managers to discuss this in team meetings and supervision.

Minor (non Health and Safety) repairs to semi-independent homes were needed.

Check and update YP risk assessments – particularly NB with info regarding partner visiting. The garden to the side of the property would benefit from the grass/plants cutting back to enhance the look of the property from the outside.

For private providers of semi-independent accommodation for Nottingham city care leavers our internal placement service carries out quality assurance and compliance visits.

Recommendation(s):

1	To support continued involvement and recruitment of relevant independent professionals undertaking Regulation 44 visits and to welcome members' involvement in quality assurance visits of unregulated semi-independent homes for care leavers.
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1.1 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

Due to the nature of the provision, it is imperative that the service is scrutinised independently to ensure it is delivering cost-effective services and improving outcomes for children and young people in care. People carrying out Regulation 44 and quality assurance visits on our children's homes, short breaks unit and semi-independent homes can make recommendations to improve practice as well as ensuring that 2015 regulations and standards are being adhered to. Thus ensuring that children and young people are effectively safeguarded and that the homes are managed in a way that promotes their well being.

In the last three months Regulation 44 Inspectors have identified recent performance issues such as:

- Manual training folder needing to be archived now that electronic database is implemented, to avoid duplication/inconsistency;
- Update Safeguarding Children's Procedures (see detail within report) in hard file and ensure that all staff sign their confirmation that they have been read and understood;
- Staff to check items taken to and from contact;
- Ensure all residents know about their PEP and what it contains;
- Training Records – The front sheet of non-mandatory individual training records need to be updated to show training that has been attended;
- Ensure all copies of Regulation 45's are available to view as paper copies in the homes file.

Each Inspector formulates an Action Plan which is completed by the Registered Manager or Senior Duty Officer and checked by the Inspector on the next visit. Recommendations/Action plans have continued to be varied due to having a good mix of Inspectors who are from different professional backgrounds which has continued to serve to improve how each of the homes operate.

Ofsted look closely at regulation 44 reports and use the content during their inspections to check that action plans have been addressed by the Registered Manager and staff team. Ofsted continue to be rigorous with their Ofsted ratings. Last April saw the launch of the new standards and regulations which aim to further drive and support improvement and raise expectations by setting even higher standards of performance and effectiveness of children's homes as well as provide a sharp challenge and incentive to act where improvement is needed.

Currently Nottingham City Council runs 7 registered homes which include a short breaks unit. Ofsted have rated all of our homes as either 'Good' or 'Outstanding'.

The Reports continue to describe Homes as pleasant, clean, well maintained and nicely decorated with a very homely feel.

Staff in the homes are described by the Inspectors as extremely warm, welcoming, caring and going the extra mile for the children and young people they work with.

Regulation 44 Inspectors and Quality Assurance Inspectors, as part of their role, contact parents/carers, relatives and social workers for their views on the care their child is

receiving from the home, semi-independent unit or short breaks unit. Those contacted on the whole are very complimentary about the care young people receive.

Young people too are very complimentary about the care and support they receive in the homes with very few complaints. Young people generally feel well supported by the staff. Often young people say they don't want to ever leave the children's homes or Units. Some children and young people say that although they like living in the homes and units their hearts are set on returning back home to their parents/carers. They are also aware of how to make a complaint should they not be happy about anything and have access to an independent advocate.

Managers receive regular supervision and Operational Management meetings take place on a monthly basis with Development days taking place quarterly where any current issues or relevant themes/ongoing issues are raised and discussed. The management team within residential have a vision for the next 12 months and beyond for both their individual homes and the Residential Service as a whole. As a team they are united in their strong and passionate vision to further raise the standards of care they offer to the city's most vulnerable children and young people.

Each home has an individual policy on steps to take to prevent young people from going missing in the first place in line with the children's homes amended Regulations which came into force in January 2014.

Young people's access to education and employment is improving all of which is recorded in the Regulation 44 Reports. All of the children and young people in our semi-independent, short term and long term homes are offered relevant education packages and support with getting into work or further education. The challenge for the staff teams is one of motivating young people, as many have not been in school or education for a long time before coming into the care of the local authority. Staff work very hard to stress to young people the importance and value of education and work very closely with the Virtual Head and his team to look at tailored packages for young people to enable them to transition into school or an alternative provision. The staff have high aspirations for the children and young people and achievements are celebrated as a matter of high priority. Each year the City Council holds an awards ceremony in which most of our children and young people attend and receive certificates of achievement.

2. BACKGROUND (INCLUDING OUTCOMES OF CONSULTATION)

Residential services since April 2011 have been re-configured into a Small Group Homes Model which is an umbrella term. The specifics are set out below:

There are now 13 settled beds in 5 Children's Homes including a 4 bed home for children and young people with complex disabilities, 4 Emergency beds and an increase from 16 to 18 Semi-Independence beds within the last year throughout the city.

Our Short Breaks Unit continues to offer 11 beds for children and young people with disabilities.

Regulation visits and quality assurance visits are an important quality assurance process and also serve as a safeguarding measure for children in care and care leavers. They are able to inform practice and performance and ensure young people have access to someone independent, should they need to complain or disclose information about the care and service they are receiving.

Regulation 44 visits are also a legislative requirement and completed reports are sent to Ofsted on a monthly basis. Reports will also be sent to the social worker or to the team manager of a child who lives in the home.

Quality assurance reports are sent to the Service Manager, Service Head and the managers of the semi-independent homes to aid scrutiny for further development and improvements.

3. OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED IN MAKING RECOMMENDATIONS

None Required.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS (INCLUDING VALUE FOR MONEY/VAT)

The re-configuration of Children's Residential continues to be cost effective for the City Council. Internal beds remain cost effective currently in line with or lower than external provision. Also the increase in internal beds prevents some young people from being placed outside of the city as it is good practice wherever possible to keep children and young people near their family, friends, school/ college and within the city they have grown up in and are familiar with.

5. RISK MANAGEMENT ISSUES (INCLUDING LEGAL IMPLICATIONS AND CRIME AND DISORDER ACT IMPLICATIONS)

Regulation 44 reports include legislative requirements (amended to meet new regulations and Standards, April 2015)

Record and capture information in relation to young people's offending and anti-social behaviours.

They also report as to whether young people's cultural and diversity needs are being met within their identified Care Plan.

6. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Has the equality impact been assessed?

Not needed (report does not contain proposals or financial decisions)

No

Yes – Equality Impact Assessment attached

Due regard should be given to the equality implications identified in the EIA.

7. LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS OTHER THAN PUBLISHED WORKS OR THOSE DISCLOSING CONFIDENTIAL OR EXEMPT INFORMATION

N/A

8. PUBLISHED DOCUMENTS REFERRED TO IN COMPILING THIS REPORT

N/A