

**CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD – 31 MARCH 2014**

<b>Title of paper:</b>	<b>Regulation 33 Visits – Internal Residential</b>	
<b>Director(s)/ Corporate Director(s):</b>	Helen Blackman Acting Director Safeguarding	<b>Wards affected: All</b>
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<b>Date of consultation with Portfolio Holder(s) (if relevant)</b>	N/A	
<b>Relevant Council Plan Strategic Priority:</b>		
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"/>
<b>Summary of issues (including benefits to citizens/service users):</b>		
<p>Internal Residential Homes are required to be inspected on a monthly basis by suitable persons independent to Residential Services as part of legislative requirements under National Minimum Standards (2000).</p> <p>In January 2014 the Department for Education made some amendments to the Children’s Homes Regulations with specific changes relating to Regulation (Reg) 33 visits which come into force in April of this year.</p> <p>These changes include ensuring that Reg 33 visitors are not involved in the operational running of a children’s home or in the preparing of a care plan of a child who lives in the home they are inspecting. Neither can they be involved in managing nor supervising the person who prepares the care plan of a child placed in the children’s home to be visited. The registered provider will have an increased role in being aware of and acting on any conflicts of interest in relation to the Independent visitor. A Reg 33 visitor shall also inspect the premises and any records they require. Where these include children’s case records the child should confirm their consent. From April 2014 reports will also have to be sent to a child’s social worker or relevant team manager.</p> <p>Members of the Corporate Parenting Board and other relevant professionals are included on the Rota managed by the Residential Service Manager. Reports are sent monthly as statutorily</p>		

required to Ofsted. The person carrying out the visit shall –

- (a) interview, with their consent and in private, such of the children accommodated there, their parents, relatives and persons working at the home as appears necessary in order to form an opinion as to whether children are effectively safeguarded; and the conduct of the home promotes the wellbeing of the children
- (b) inspect the premises of the children's home, its daily log of events and records of any complaints; and
- (c) prepare a written report on the conduct of the home.

**Recommendation(s):**

1	Continued involvement and recruitment of relevant independent professionals undertaking Regulation 33 visits including making reciprocal arrangements with neighbouring local authority.
2	Outcomes of Reports analysed and monitored by the Residential Service Manager to identify trends and patterns to improve performance as well as to share good practice.
3	In order to increase the understanding of Corporate Parenting Board members into running of internal Residential Homes, arrangements will be made for members to visit the homes with an Officer in the near future.
4	Corporate Parenting Board updated regularly in respect of outcomes of visits.

### **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 in Care. People carrying out Reg 33 visits can make recommendations to improve practice as well as ensuring that minimum standards are being adhered to and that children are effectively safeguarded and that the home is conducted in a way that promotes their well being.

Since April 2011 Reg 33 visits have been undertaken in all Children's Homes within Nottingham city's internal Residential provision.

In the last six months Reg 33 visitors have identified recent performance issues such as:

- Statement of Purpose in need of updating with change of manager and staff.
- Updating of paperwork
- Missing signatures on staff supervision
- Staff not having access to Carefirst. This is primarily due to there being limited availability of corporate Carefirst training
- Young people not writing their views on their care plan

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

Ofsted look closely at Reg 33 reports and use the content during their inspections to check that action plans have been addressed by the Registered Manager and staff team. In the last year Ofsted have become more rigorous with their Ofsted ratings. However, one of our homes has maintained an Outstanding judgment, two homes are rated Good with Outstanding features, one maintains Good and three are judged as Adequate.

The Reports continue to be very positive with Inspectors describing the Homes as well kept, warm, welcoming and homely environments; an environment that a young person would take pride in being their home. Staff in the homes are described by the visitors as having good working relationships, having a good mix of personalities, dedicated and passionate to making a difference to the lives of the children they care for. Visitors comment that children in the homes are encouraged to develop emotionally, intellectually, socially and creatively. Young people on the whole are very complimentary about the care they receive in the homes with few complaints. Young people when asked by the inspectors say they feel well supported by the staff and generally feel happy in the home and get on well with the staff. They are also aware of how to make a complaint if they are unhappy. They also 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 have more internal residential homes within the city in order to reduce children and young people being placed in out of County private children's homes.

The young people have reported to visitors the positives about living in the houses. Some of the recent comments from children and young people are as follows:

"I feel happy, safe and cared for. Staff are approachable and helpful and I have no concerns or issues to raise"

"I am very happy in my current placement and I get on well with the staff. I am happy with the support staff are giving me with my independence skills and I have no concerns"

"This is a very positive place to live. I wouldn't change anything"

"I have some concerns about my education, but staff are supporting me with the issue"

"Having lived in foster care I much prefer living at this home because I feel more supported and more cared for, I have been able to get very good advice towards my independent skills"

"Staff at the home have helped me to get a job and I have an apprenticeship for two years which I am very excited about"

"The food is amazing and the staff cook for you"

"I was glad when I came into care when I did so it did not get worse with my mum"

"I prefer to live in residential than in someone else's home".

"The home feels like my home and I am really proud to call it my home".

The levels of missing young people fluctuates in each of the homes depending on the young people placed. 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 33 Reports. Currently the majority of our young people in our semi-independence home and long term homes are in some form of work or education. Staff continue to work very closely with the Virtual Head in supporting our children and young people in school and ensuring that educational packages are put in place for those children who don't currently have a school placement. The staff have high aspirations for the children and young people and achievements are celebrated as a matter of high priority. In September of last year the City Council held an awards ceremony in which most of our young people attended and received a certificate of achievement for which they were extremely proud.

## **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 ten settled beds in four Children's Homes, seven Emergency beds which accommodate three young people in the Bestwood area each on a short-term basis and twelve Semi-Independence beds (six in Sherwood Rise, four in Hyson Green, two in Lenton and two transition houses in the NG7 area).

Last year Crocus Fields Unit came over to the Residential Service offering eleven beds for short breaks for children and young people with disabilities.

In December 2013 we opened our first four bedded home within the city offering long-term care for children/young people with complex disabilities.

The number of internal beds in Nottingham City has increased from twenty-five to twenty-nine which require further Reg 33 visitors.

Reg 33 visits are an important quality assurance process and also serve as a safeguarding measure for Children in Care. 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 they are receiving.

Reg 33 visits are also a legislative requirement and completed reports are sent to Ofsted on a monthly basis. From April 2014, in line with the amended regulations, reports will also be sent to the social worker or to the team manager of a child who lives in the home.

## **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 and are 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 or college.

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

Regulation 33 reports include legislative requirements (amended to meet new Minimum Standards, April 2011)

Record and capture information in relation to young peoples offending and anti-social behaviours.

They also report as to whether young peoples 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**

None

**8. PUBLISHED DOCUMENTS REFERRED TO IN COMPILING THIS REPORT**

None