

## CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD – JUNE 2017

<b>Title of paper:</b>	Quality Assurance Visits of Regulated and Non-regulated Residential Provisions	
<b>Director(s)/ Corporate Director(s):</b>	Helen Blackman – Director, Children’s Integrated Services	<b>Wards affected:</b> All
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<b>Other colleagues who have provided input:</b>		
<b>Date of consultation with Portfolio Holder(s) (if relevant)</b>		
<b>Relevant Council Plan Key Theme:</b>		
Strategic Regeneration and Development		<input type="checkbox"/>
Schools		<input type="checkbox"/>
Planning and Housing		<input type="checkbox"/>
Community Services		<input type="checkbox"/>
Energy, Sustainability and Customer		<input type="checkbox"/>
Jobs, Growth and Transport		<input type="checkbox"/>
Adults, Health and Community Sector		<input type="checkbox"/>
Children, Early Intervention and Early Years		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Leisure and Culture		<input type="checkbox"/>
Resources and Neighbourhood Regeneration		<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Summary of issues (including benefits to citizens/service users):</b>		
<p>Regulation 44 of The Children’s Home (England) Regulations 2015 requires 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 visitor not employed at the home nor directly responsible for it.</p> <p>The visitor must compile a written report of their findings, which must be submitted to the registered responsible provider and Ofsted within four weeks of completion of the visit.</p> <p>The purpose of the Regulation 44 visits is to ensure that all the 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> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Examination of all appropriate written records and reports, with particular reference to daily logs, significant event 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.</li> <li>b) Interviewing children / young people, parents, relatives other professionals and staff as they feel necessary to establish the standard of care being provided.</li> </ol>		

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 visitor's report may recommend actions for the Registered Manager to take in order to improve the general running of the home.

Members of the Corporate Parenting Board and other relevant professionals including colleagues from Human Resources, Service Managers, Local Councilors, 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.

In April of last year the Service Manager also created a rota for Nottingham City council's semi-independent homes to be quality assured on a regular basis. These homes were specifically set up to support young people leaving the care of the Local Authority to further develop skills before living independently in accommodation of their own. These homes are not registered under Ofsted as there is no legal requirement to do so, hence why we have set up a rota to have them regularly inspected. Managers from the Council's internal Residential Service and Leaving Care Service, Targeted Support Team and Targeted Support Hub Team including a volunteer with relevant skills have all been a part of this rota. An unprecedented move included the opening of a further three bed semi-independent home for care leavers. We now have a total of five semi-independent Units. It involved close partnership working with Nottingham City Homes which has culminated in the Council being able to offer value for money and a less expensive alternative to private provision. Since our six bed semi-independent home was de-registered, outcomes for young people have continued to improve in general and young people have successfully been prepared to move into accommodation of their own. The project was so successful that in October 2014 Nottingham City Council and Nottingham City Homes won the Chartered Institute of Housing's Innovation of the Year Award, for their partnership working in providing excellent accommodation and vital support to vulnerable young people at a critical stage in their lives. Again in April 2015, MJ Awards judges commended the project for its innovation in Social Care.

In April 2015 Managers from within Nottingham City Council received training in order to carry out quality assurance visits on all five of the councils semi-independent homes, the aim being to further improve the service as well as ensure that the accommodation for our Care Leavers is of the highest quality and standard, and that sufficient safeguards are in place which are suitable for the young people's needs. During their quality assurance visits Managers will check running records, health and safety compliance, reports, pathway plans as well as speaking to young people, Social Workers, parents / carers and Personal Advisors to ensure that they are receiving a good, safe and appropriate service. The visitor will also check the fabric and decor of the buildings and homes, to ensure that they continue to be of good and excellent quality. Once the visit is concluded a report is produced by the visitor and is passed to the Service Manager for Residential and Targeted Support and Head of Service for Children in Care, to scrutinize and ensure that they are being run as efficiently and effectively as possible and that the homes are operating to a good and safe standard. The report will also go to the Managers of the semi-independent homes, as visitors can and will make recommendations for further improvement as well as commend what is working well. These visits take place on a quarterly basis.

For private providers of semi-independent accommodation for Nottingham City Care Leavers, our

internal Placements Service carries out quality assurance and compliance visits.

**Recommendation(s):**

<b>1</b>	To support continued involvement and recruitment of relevant independent professionals undertaking Regulation 44 visits and to welcome member's involvement in quality assurance visits of unregulated semi-independent homes for care leavers.
<b>2</b>	Corporate Parenting Board to continue to receive regular updates in respect of outcomes of visits.

**1 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

1.1 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 Regulation 44 and quality assurance visits on our semi-independent homes can make recommendations to improve practice, as well as ensuring in our regulated children's homes that 2015 regulations and standards are being adhered to and that children are effectively safeguarded, and that the homes are conducted in a way that promotes their well-being.

1.2 Since April 2011 Regulation 44, previously called Regulation 33, visits have been undertaken in all Children's Homes within Nottingham City's internal Residential provision.

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

Ensuring all staff supervision files are signed, young people have copies of the children's guide in their bedrooms, the removal of a notice board from a dining room and ensuring that new staff member's training records are updated on the home's training matrix.

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

1.4 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. In April 2015 came the launch of the new Standards and Regulations with the aims to further drive and support improvement, and raise expectations by setting even higher standards of performance and effectiveness in children's homes as well as providing a sharp challenge and incentive to act where improvement is needed.

1.5 Nottingham City council has seven Registered Homes, which includes a Short Breaks Unit. Last year all of our homes were rated as 'Good' or 'Outstanding'. Currently Ofsted have rated one of our homes as 'Outstanding', one as 'Good with Outstanding features', four as 'Good' and one as 'Requires Improvement' which we are working very hard to bring back to 'Good'.

1.6 The Reports continue to be very positive with Regulation 44 visitors describing the Homes as generally small and cosy, well maintained, and nicely decorated with a very homely feel.

1.7 Visitors also commented as follows:

"New staff have a full induction and training programme with reviews after three and six months".

"Managers report that staff are consistently enthusiastic and committed, demonstrating a passion for working with young people with disabilities, adopting an approach to care that is not necessarily the traditional one, but one which is appropriate to the needs of the young people".

"Colleagues at the home have a comprehensive range of training and development opportunities and, having looked at the training file, many have accessed relevant safeguarding training. Colleagues are supervised monthly and team meetings take place".

"The home was very welcoming and secure. We were asked to show our ID badges on entering and to sign in on arrival and to sign out on leaving. The home was surrounded by high fencing and gates were locked. The home was appointed to a very high standard and had been recently enhanced with a sensory garden, designed by the young people".

"Good practice is consistent – new starters have been inducted very positively, and are integrating with the pre-existing staff culture".

"The files show lots of activities which the young people enjoy such as disco, bowling, youth club as well as the unit holidays, jigsaws and books".

1.8 Regulation 44 visitors 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 or Short Breaks Unit. Parents on the whole are very complimentary about the care their child receives. Visitors included some of the following comments from parents, Social Workers and carers in their reports:

"Mum was very positive about her child in the home and feels they are settled – praised a particular staff member who she described as having a positive working relationship with her child and appreciates that they can be difficult to look after but is hopeful that the home can be the settled environment that her child needs".

"I spoke to a parent of LT over the phone. She was full of praise for the home and couldn't say anything critical. Her daughter's key worker in her opinion is amazing as

are all the staff that she has come in contact with. Any problems that she or her daughter has are quickly addressed and resolved”.

“I spoke to the young person’s allocated Social Worker, who stated that they are very settled at the home despite only being there a relatively short space of time. The Social Worker stated that they receive an update every Monday about what the child has been doing over the weekend; this update also includes photographs. The Social Worker said that staff have been very good with the child and they genuinely seem to like them and vice versa. The child is involved in decisions at the home and is encouraged to make choices. The child said that if they were given something for dinner that they did not like they would inform staff members and they would be allowed something else to eat. The Social Worker had no concerns about the care provided by the staff at the home”.

1.9 Young people too are very complimentary about the care they receive in the homes with hardly any complaints. Visitors included the following in their reports:

“Spoke to young person, stated there were no concerns, was not very vocal himself, I asked if they were happy at the home and got on with everyone and they said yes. When I asked if they had any concerns they said no”.

“Spoke to the young person who informed me they had been living at the home for three months. They said living here is alright, they feel that all the staff are approachable and they get along with them”.

“I spoke to one of the young people who gave me a tour of the Unit. They like being at the home, their favourite thing is listening to music on their CD player where their favourites are Jess Glynne and One Direction. They would like to come to the Short Breaks Unit more often (they are currently allocated 75 nights per year.) They are particularly attached to having a ‘star blanket’ on their bed when they stay and enjoy going swimming, bowling and to the cinema”.

“Spoke to young person – when I first arrived they were a little agitated I don’t think they knew what about. Given time they came round. Clearly whilst some of their behaviours are challenging they had a good rapport with the staff, they know them well and how best to handle them when they are being difficult. They had been to Blackpool. They helped to plan the holiday and what they did when they were there. Photos have been taken to put into their life book. They had a room next to the staff team. Their behaviour was exemplary and this was feed back to them. When repeated in front of me their face beamed. A special moment had been the young person writing their name and the 2 staff member’s names in the sand”.

1.10 Young people are also aware of how to make a complaint should they not be happy about anything, and have access to an Independent Advocate.

1.11 Unit 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 / on-going 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.

- 1.12 The number of missing young people continues to fluctuate in Nottingham City's one short-term home, depending on the young people placed there. The long-term homes generally have very few missing episodes as young people are more settled. 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.
- 1.13 All Children and Young people have access to education and / or employment, all of which is recorded in the Regulation 44 reports. A good proportion of our young people in our semi-independence homes and long term homes are in some form of work or education.
- 1.14 Staff members continue to work very closely with the Virtual School 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. Staff members have high aspirations for the children and young people, and achievements are celebrated as a matter of high priority. Nottingham City each year holds an awards ceremony, in which most of our young people attend and receive a certificate of achievement for which they are always extremely proud.

## **2 BACKGROUND (INCLUDING OUTCOMES OF CONSULTATION)**

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

There are now thirteen settled beds in five Children's Homes, including a four bed home for children and young people with complex disabilities, four emergency beds in one home and an increase from sixteen to eighteen semi-independence beds within the last year.

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

- 2.2 Regulation 44 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.
- 2.3 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 Unit Manager of a child who lives in the home.
- 2.4 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 improvement.

### **3 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED IN MAKING RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 3.1 Not undertaking Regulation 44 - undertaking Regulation 44 visits is a requirement of statutory guidance. The local model for delivering this is well established, and delivers value for money. Therefore this is not an option that could be explored.

### **4 FINANCE COLLEAGUE COMMENTS (INCLUDING IMPLICATIONS AND VALUE FOR MONEY/VAT)**

- 4.1 The re-configuration of Children's Residential Services continues to be cost effective for Nottingham City. Internal beds remain cost effective, and are currently in line with or lower than external provisions. Also the increase in internal beds prevents some young people from being placed outside of the City; 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 LEGAL AND PROCUREMENT COLLEAGUE COMMENTS (INCLUDING RISK MANAGEMENT ISSUES, AND LEGAL, CRIME AND DISORDER ACT AND PROCUREMENT IMPLICATIONS)**

- 5.1 Regulation 44 reports include legislative requirements, amended to meet new Regulations and Standards, April 2015.
- 5.2 Reports also record and capture information in relation to young people's offending and anti-social behaviours.
- 5.3 Reports also detail how young people's cultural and diversity needs are being met within their identified Care Plan.

### **6 STRATEGIC ASSETS & PROPERTY COLLEAGUE COMMENTS (FOR DECISION RELATING TO ALL PROPERTY ASSETS AND ASSOCIATED INFRASTRUCTURE) (AREA COMMITTEE REPORTS ONLY)**

- 6.1 None.

### **7 EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

- 7.1 Has the equality impact of the proposals in this report been assessed?

No



An EIA is not required because:

(Please explain why an EIA is not necessary)

Not required as the report does not contain proposals or financial decisions

### **8 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS OTHER THAN PUBLISHED WORKS OR THOSE DISCLOSING CONFIDENTIAL OR EXEMPT INFORMATION**

- 8.1 None.

**9 PUBLISHED DOCUMENTS REFERRED TO IN COMPILING THIS REPORT**

9.1 None.