

CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD - MAY 2018

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| Title of paper: | Quality Assurance Visits of Regulated and Non-regulated Residential Provision | | |
| Director(s)/ Corporate Director(s): | Helen Blackman – Director, Children’s Integrated Services | Wards affected: | All |
| Report author(s) and contact details: | Kay Sutt - Service Manager, Residential Services Kay.Sutt@nottinghamcity.gov.uk | | |
| Other colleagues who have provided input: | | | |
| Date of consultation with Portfolio Holder(s) (if relevant) | | | |
| Relevant Council Plan Key Theme: | | | |
| 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"/> |
| 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 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 4 weeks of completion of the visit.</p> <p>Since April 2011 Residential services have been configured into a Small Group Homes Model. There are now 13 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 18 to 21 Semi-Independence beds within the last year. Our Short Breaks Unit continues to offer 11 beds for children and young adults with disabilities. All of our children’s homes are rated as Good or Outstanding. Ofsted have recently rated two of our homes as Outstanding, one as Good with Outstanding Features and four as Good</p> <p>In April of 2016 the Service Manager also created a rota for Nottingham City Council’s semi-independent homes to be quality assured on a regular basis.</p> <p>For private providers of semi-independent accommodation for Nottingham City care leavers, our internal placement service carries out quality assurance and compliance visits.</p> | | | |

| Recommendation(s): | |
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| 1 | 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. |
| 2 | For the Corporate Parenting Board to continue to receive regular updates in respect of outcomes of visits. |

1 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1.1 Young people in Residential Care and Semi-Independent provisions are often highly vulnerable, given their level of need and life experiences. It is imperative therefore that such provision is scrutinised independently to ensure it is improving outcomes for children in care and delivering cost-effective services. People carrying out Regulation 44 and quality assurance visits on our semi-independent homes undertake a key role in improving practice as well as ensuring that regulations and standards are being adhered to, that children are effectively safeguarded and that the homes are conducted in a way that promotes their well-being. Visits also ensure young people have access to someone independent, should they need to complain or disclose information about the care and service they are receiving.
- 1.2 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 team manager of a child who lives in the home.

BACKGROUND (INCLUDING OUTCOMES OF CONSULTATION)

- 1.3 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.
- 1.4 This is achieved through a combination of:
 - 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.
 - Interview children/young people, parents, relatives other professionals and staff as they feel necessary to establish the standard of care being provided.
- 1.5 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.
- 1.6 The independent persons report may recommend actions for the registered manager to take in order to improve the general running of the home.

- 1.7 Members of the Corporate Parenting Board and other relevant professionals including colleagues from Human Resources, Service Managers, Local Councillors, Nottingham City Homes, Placements Service, Children's Strategy Team and our Internal Commissioning Team are included on the rota managed by the Service Manager.
- 1.8 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 2016 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. They are not registered under Ofsted as there is no legal requirement to do so, we have a total of five semi-independent Units. In November 2017 some minor refurbishment to Vivian Avenue semi-independent unit increased the beds from 6 to 8. Outcomes for young people have continued to improve in general and young people have successfully been prepared to move into accommodation of their own.

Managers from within Nottingham City Council receive regular training refreshers by the Service Manager in order to carry out quality assurance visits on all five of the council's semi-independent homes. 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 excellent quality. Once the visit is concluded a report is produced by the visitor and is passed to the Service Manager for Residential and Head of Service for Children in Care to scrutinize. The report also goes 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.

- 1.9 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 continued to improve how the homes operate.
- 1.10 Ofsted look closely at Regulation 44 reports and use the content during their inspections to check that action plans have been addressed. Regulation 44 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.
- 1.11 In the last three months Regulation 44 Visitors have identified issues such as:
- Update the Tri.x Statement of Purpose and Home Guide for the next publication.
 - Ensure that the most recent Regulation 44 and 45 inspections are on file.

- Re-schedule Family Network Meeting.
- No staff signing sheet to evidence that all policies have been read.

Visitors also commented as follows:

- “I observed the staff to have positive relationships with both young people, these positive relationships would provide the foundation for them to share any worries or anxieties”.
- “Staff reacted calmly to the complex situation that had been building up over-night and the environment was contained”.
- “There was evidence of the young person’s wishes and feelings in the Residents Action Plan’s, detailing favourite things to do, how the young people are best supported and what is important to them”.
- “The home is very well maintained and provides a clean and homely environment for both staff and residents. Entrance to the home is very welcoming – very tidy with pots of winter flowers. I saw each of the residents’ bedrooms, which were in an excellent state of repair and were individually decorated to the requirements of each resident”.
- “The registered Manager clearly leads a skilled team, which provides quality care for the children at the home”.
- “Two young people were attending further education and one who was studying Mechanics. There appears to be an active focus on getting young people engaged with education in preparation for potential employment”.

As part of their role Regulation 44 visitors 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:

- “Spoke to young person’s mother via telephone. She felt her son was well looked after at the Home and the he was safeguarded. She had no concerns about his welfare”.
- “Spoke to current social worker / previous social worker re young person as on Care Order and would not be appropriate to speak to parents. Social Worker states he was pleased that his young person had moved to a small group home with a warm and nurturing environment and that he is thriving and benefiting from 1 to 1 support and the attention he receives. Clear safeguards in place with regards to community access, relationships, contact with family. Current SW states: I have observed a close relationship between the young person and staff and feel they have created a nurturing and safe environment for him. Young person is very articulate and able to express his views and he has told me he likes living at the home and he feels cared for”.

- “The staff are competent and I think each worker strives to understand the complex needs of these children and are able to improve on their life skills. The home is often calm and well organised, I am overall really pleased with the level of care my young person is receiving”.

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

- “After introducing myself to the young person, she informed me that she was happy staying at the home and felt Staff were friendly and supportive. She said she felt safe living at the home and had no concerns and could speak to anyone if she wanted to”.
- “I spoke to the young person. Initially he was reluctant to speak to me however once engaged he remained sat in the dining room with me for approximately an hour. He spoke positively about his hobbies and his family. He counted on two hands the staff that he really liked. He said that there was nothing that could be made better at the home and that he had not liked his previous placement”.
- “Both young people agreed to speak with me and we spent a good 20 minutes discussing the home together. Both were engaged and happy to talk with me in private .One young person stated that the home is the best home he had stayed in. Staff are good and they notice issues and respond”.
- “Spoke to young person on arrival at the Home. He was on his way to college as this was his first day. He stated that he felt safe at the Home but his only complaint was the lack of access re: Wi-Fi signal. He also said that he feels supported by the staff in his first day of college”.
- “Spoke to young person who stated that her time at the home has been alright and that she knows that things at the home for herself and staff have been difficult due to some of the decisions she has made in the past. She states that she is moving out soon and going to a foster placement and that she would not change anything in the home and feels that she has built some good relationships during her stay here”.
- “Young people state they are aware of how to make a complaint should they not be happy about anything and have access to an independent advocate”.

1.13 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.

1.14 All Children and Young people have access to Education and Employment all of which is recorded in the Regulation 44 Reports. A good proportion of our young people in our semi-independence homes and children’s 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 do not 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. The City Council hold an celebration event each year in which most of the young people from residential care attend and receive a certificate of achievement, which they are always extremely proud of .

3 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED IN MAKING RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 None.

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

4.1 The re-configuration of Children's Residential continues to be cost effective for Nottingham City Council. Internal beds remain cost effective and are 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 address legislative requirements (amended to meet new regulations and Standards, April 2015). They 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 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 the report does not contain proposals or financial decisions.

Yes



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.