

CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD
3 JUNE 2019

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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: | N/A | |
| Date of consultation with Portfolio Holder(s) (if relevant) | N/A | |
| 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 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 4 weeks of completion of the visit.</p> <p>Since April 2011, Residential services have been configured into a Small Group Homes Model. In the last year there has been an increase from 13 to 15 settled beds in seven Children’s Homes, including a 4-bed home for children and young people with complex disabilities, 4 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 but one are rated as ‘Good’ or ‘Outstanding’. Ofsted have recently rated three of our homes as ‘Outstanding’, three as ‘Good’ with an ‘Outstanding’ feature for Leadership and Management, one as ‘Requires Improvement’ and one as ‘Good’.</p> <p>In April 2016, the Service Manager also created a rota for Nottingham City Council’s semi-</p> | | |

independent homes to be quality assured on a regular basis.

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):

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| 1 | To support continued involvement and recruitment of relevant independent professionals to undertake Regulation 44 visits, and to welcome member's involvement in quality assurance visits of unregulated semi-independent homes for care leavers. |
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| 2 | To continue to receive regular updates in respect of the outcomes of these visits. |
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1 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1.1 Young people in residential care and semi-independent provision 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.

2 BACKGROUND (INCLUDING OUTCOMES OF CONSULTATION)

- 2.1 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 the 2015 Regulations and standards.
- 2.2 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;

- Interviews with children/young people, parents, relatives other professionals and staff as they feel necessary to establish the standard of care being provided.
- 2.3 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.
 - 2.4 The independent persons report may recommend actions for the registered manager to take in order to improve the general running of the home.
 - 2.5 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, Virtual School, Business Support, Children's Strategy and our Internal Commissioning Team are included on the rota managed by the Service Manager.
 - 2.6 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 who to contact and liaise with should they come across a serious safeguarding concern during the course of their inspection.

In April 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 homes. In November 2017, some minor refurbishment to the 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 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.

- 2.7 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.
- 2.8 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 44 visitors describing the Homes as generally small and cosy, well maintained, and nicely decorated with a very homely feel.

In the last three months, Regulation 44 Visitors have identified issues such as:

- Update the Residential Action Plan;
- Young People's meetings to be booked;
- Update Staff appraisals;
- Update the home's Children's guide.

Visitors also commented as follows:

- "All of the young people that we encountered at the unit had a support worker with them, and all appeared to be comfortable with these relationships."
- "All staff support young people to be ambitious and staff are very positive in their discussions about the young people placed."
- "Staff are very proactive in engaging the young people and they provide positive role modelling and encourage the young people to discuss their wishes and feelings."
- "The management team have developed a strong learning culture within the Unit and seek to encourage staff development in different ways."
- "The home is clean, tidy and nicely decorated."
- "Where appropriate, there is evidence of the home supporting young people to transition to adulthood and identify options for his ongoing education, employment or training."

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 overall 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:

- “Social Worker was on site at the time of the visit and agreed to speak with me. She is the social worker for ... and ... She stated that she felt the home offers brilliant care to all of the young people she supports and they are very approachable. The home is very homely and gives young people a sense of belonging – like members of a big family... They are very persistent in getting things right for their young people. They have children’s best interests at heart.”
- “Social Worker said, “I have worked with several young people who have lived at the home and each time it has been positive experience for them. The staff build great relationships with the young people and try hard to ensure a positive outcome.”
- “I spoke with ... older sister who has had regular contact with him. She was happy to speak with me even though she was full of a cold and had a poorly child to look after. She stated she thought the staff at Chippenham were brilliant – as ... could be a handful and they managed him very well. She believes the home is doing the best by him.”
- “I spoke to Janine Taylor-Blake (Trainee Social Worker) – she said that she works well with all of the staff at the home, they are all very proactive, excellent communicators and keep her very well informed, work collaboratively and are very child-centred.”

2.9 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 (young people’s initials are anonymised):

- “... joined AA and I in the office. It was not appropriate for me to meet with him in private but we took the opportunity to gain his views about his transition plan. ... was able to show me his file and was very proud of some of the photos in the file that showed him on holiday, etc. ... was able to talk to me about the days he had planned with Prince’s Trust and his work experience at the local Co-op. He was excited about moving into semi-independence. There was a clear rapport and relationship between ... and the staff at the home.”
- “... likes living at the home. He believes it is a good place and he gets on well with staff. He thinks the staff are supportive and listen to him. ... thinks the house is nice, clean and looks good.”
- “I chatted to ... very briefly during the visit both in the kitchen, the Lounge and again when he came to the office he seemed happy and comfortable; he acknowledged that he knew what Reg. 44 visitors do and why we were there and he knew that he could speak to us whenever he needed to.”

- “BB had lots of ideas about what she wanted to do – hairdressing was not one of them. She liked the idea of working with victims of assault – she had seen great programmes on TV about it. She asked what ‘forensic’ meant and how it was used. She said she was interested in biology and mental health – she thought this could help her look towards those sort of jobs. I asked her about volunteering and she said she had not thought about it yet. She looked forward to horse riding and to the 6 weeks summer holidays and going out with her friends – she said she had been on a day trip to Birmingham and enjoyed that the best.”
- “Spoke with CC. Whilst there were difficulties with the language, CC was able to confirm he felt safe in the home and that the food was good. He spoke of the good relationships he had made in the home with both staff and residents – particularly Imran Akhter. He was excited to be going out for the day (planned visit to Matlock) although he stated he was going ‘into town’. He stated he had no issues with his care.”
- I spoke to DD outside the home, playing basketball. He had been playing with Rachel and then I spoke to him alone. He said that he was getting on ‘OK’ and that he was still enjoying his college course. The college had been doing an ‘industry week’ where different businesses/experts come into college to talk about career options. He said that he wasn’t yet sure which career path to take but definitely wanted to do something related to his course and was looking at his options. DD said that he didn’t have any complaints about how things were at the home.
- “... was in the dining room with her support worker getting ready to go out into town. She was quite shy, but told me that she was staying at the unit for two nights, and she did like it there. Four other young people were excitedly on their way out to go to participate at ‘Bamboozle’.”

2.10 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.

2.11 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 School 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 with achievements celebrated as a matter of high

priority. Nottingham City Council hold a 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 Internal beds remain cost-effective in general with our more complex children and young people, and we have placed several young people in our homes whom private providers decline to take due to their complex and challenging behaviours. 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 (EIA)

7.1 An EIA is not required because 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.