

Corporate Parenting Panel Report

ITEM 4

REGULATION 33 VISITS SEPTEMBER-NOVEMBER 2012

Author: Jo Hooper

Title: Head of Productivity: Safeguarding

Division: Children & Families Integrated Support & Social Care

Report Summary

Purpose:

This report summarises the regulation 33 visits and reports to Milton Keynes Council's registered children's homes during September to November 2012 with a view to monitoring compliance with regulation and quality standards. The report seeks to identify themes and trends in relation to the quality of the service that may not be evident in individual reports. Overall, the visits have been positive, with some progress noted in areas of ongoing concern (e.g. the physical environment of Walnuts). A query about the appropriate point to involve the LADO in discussions about a particular issue was highlighted by the regulation 33 visitor and followed up.

Background:

Visits under Regulation 33 of the Children's Homes Regulations 2001 and as amended in the Children's Homes (Amendment) Regulations 2011 are a statutory requirement for the Local Authority. Visits take place at least once a month, usually by an officer independent of the management of the home, and may be unannounced.

Corporate Priorities:

Improving the quality of the Residential Services and their contribution to good outcomes for Milton Keynes' Looked After Children. This is in line with the council's Children & Families 2012/13 priority 4: To develop and maintain effective intervention that prevent the most vulnerable children and young people in our communities from experiencing additional difficulty and prevents them from suffering significant harm.

Performance Information:

All three residential homes are subject to regular Ofsted inspection and have been found to be of a good standard.

Equality and Diversity Impact:

The residential service is provided for disabled children from across the Milton Keynes community. It therefore needs to provide placements that can meet the diverse needs of the children and young people in the Council's care.

Recommendations /Proposals:

Corporate Parenting Panel are asked to note and discuss/challenge the report.

Full Report

1. Legal & Policy Framework

Visits under Regulation 33 of the Children's Homes Regulations 2001 and as amended in the Children's Homes (Amendment) Regulations 2011 are a statutory requirement for the Local Authority. Visits are to any children's home run by the Local Authority, but not to independent provision. Visits take place at least once a month, usually by an officer independent of the management of the home, and may be unannounced. Regulation 33(4) states that – 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 appear necessary in order to form an opinion of the standard of care provided in the home;
- (b) Inspect the premises of the children's home, and records of any complaints and
- (c) Prepare a written report on the conduct of the home.

Regulation 33(2) (b) visits are undertaken by the elected Council Members who sit on the Corporate Parenting Panel (CPP). Quarterly visits are undertaken by Members of CPP. A guide for Members undertaking Regulation 33 Visits has been completed by Cllr Brock and is available for all new CPP Members. In addition to this guide, support and training is available to all new CPP members. CRB checks are completed for all CPP members.

Copies of the individual monthly reports are presented to Children and Families, Integrated Support and Social Care senior managers, Chair of Governors for The Walnuts, registered managers of the children's homes, regulation 33 visitors and Corporate Parenting Panel.

There are three Council children's homes in Milton Keynes: Furze House (respite care for disabled children); Westminster Drive (long term care for 6 disabled young people); The Walnuts (respite and long term care for children with autism who attend Walnuts school).

2. Ofsted Inspection of these Children's Homes

2.1 Completed Regulation 33 reports are sent as required to Ofsted on a monthly basis.

2.2 At the last inspection for:

- The Walnuts in June 2012 the overall rating was **good** maintaining the grading in February 2012 interim inspection where they were considered to be 'making good progress'.
- Westminster Drive in April 2012 the overall rating was **good** an improvement having previously been graded in September 2011 as **satisfactory**.
- Furze House had a full inspection in September 2012 and was judged as good and making good progress'

Copies of all latest Ofsted reports have been provided to members

3. General Issues from Regulation 33 Visits to the three children's homes

All visits to all three units for the period September to November 2012 were deemed good or very good, with the exception of one visit to Walnuts, which was rated 'fair'

(see below).

All visitors reported positive observations of the children and young people based on their direct interaction with those children and/or their observations of children and their interactions with staff. Visitors noted appropriate interventions to manage behaviours and respond to children's needs. They were impressed with the planning taking place to promote children's best interests and meet their day-to-day and longer term needs.

Health & Safety is generally good. Fire checks are up to date and have been completed in all units, although one had not been recorded. The topic of health was discussed in October and visitors noted overall that homes provided good healthy diets and promoted appropriate physical activities.

Visits are undertaken in statutory timescales and reports provided for processing in a timely manner. Three member visits took place during October and November, one to each home.

Copies of individual reports are distributed monthly to Corporate Parenting Panel Members; key senior managers, visitors and all registered managers.

4. Specific issues from Regulation 33 visits to Children's Homes

4.1 Furze House

Visitors all made very positive observations about staff interactions with and care of the children. In October the officer and member visits both commented on the positive targeted daily care planning that has been introduced.

The November visit was also good. However, the visitor identified an issue and questioned whether it should have been referred straight to the LADO. A young person had made a comment which could have been perceived as an allegation. However there had been joint work in progress over a period of weeks previously communicating and monitoring this young person's behaviour. The incident in question had happened earlier in the day and had been passed through to the social work team and investigation was in process. The LADO was consulted when clear information was available and it was decided that no further action was required. The LADO is discussing awareness of the LADO role with the manager.

4.2 Westminster Drive

Visitors again noted evidence of excellent working relationships between staff and young people and their parents. Time spent with the children and young people provided assurance that they felt safe and happy. A member visit in November particularly noted the impressive way that staff managed and defused a behaviour issue.

4.3 The Walnuts

Visitors continue to remark on the somewhat 'tired' and institutional feel of the physical environment but note that work is now being done to refresh the décor and undertake maintenance. This includes plans for a sensory room. It is noted that staff work hard to make the environment feel homely and comfortable. There is evidence of good relationships between staff and young people and staff are responsive and child-focused. Visitors commented on the high levels of commitment from staff,

particularly during recent periods of high levels of sickness. The sickness levels have resulted in some backlog of routine recording and sign-off, which is now being addressed.

The September rating was 'fair' because of lack of recording relating to a child going missing on two occasions. Walnuts was otherwise compliant with the relevant policy and procedure, although this needs to be fully aligned with MKC procedures to ensure an external visit to follow up when children go missing. The October member visit was presented and discussed at the 31st October Corporate Parenting Panel.

Author Signature	Jo Hooper	Date	12/12/12
-------------------------	-----------	-------------	----------