

Corporate Parenting Panel Report

| | | | |
|----------------------|-------------------------|--------------------|----------|
| Date of Panel | 2 September 2013 | Item Number | 8 |
|----------------------|-------------------------|--------------------|----------|

REGULATION 33 VISITS – MARCH TO JUNE 2013

Author: Jo Hooper
Title: Head of Productivity: Safeguarding
Division: Children and Families Integrated Support and Social Care

Report Summary

Purpose:

This report summarises the feedback and reports from the Regulation 33 visits to Milton Keynes Council's registered children's homes in the period March to June 2013 inclusive. Regulation 33 visits monitor compliance with regulation and quality standards as set out in legislation. This report seeks to identify themes and trends in relation to the quality of the service provided within these three children's homes.

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 Children in Care. This is in line with the council's Integrated Support and Social Care Service Group Plan 2013/14.

Performance Information:

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

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 and 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. DBS (formerly CRB) 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 six disabled young people); The Walnuts (respite and long term care for children with autism who attend Walnuts school).

2. Ofsted Inspections

Copies of all completed Regulation 33 reports are sent as required under legislation to Ofsted on a monthly basis. At their last inspection;

- Furze House was judged as good overall (full inspection in September 2012) and was making good progress.
- The Walnuts was judged as adequate at their full inspection in June 2013.
- Westminster Drive was judged as good overall (full inspection in April 2012), an improvement on the previous inspection. At their interim inspection (January 2013) they were judged as making satisfactory progress. The Home moved to new premises in May 2013 and is now Ofsted registered as Westminster House

Copies of all inspection reports are provided to CPP members.

3. General Issues

In the reporting period, 6 Regulation 33 visits were judged very good, 3 were judged good and 3 were judged fair.

When speaking to children and young people during their visits, visitors reported that they appeared relaxed, comfortable and happy. They positively engaged with their workers and with the visitors themselves and showed considerable pride in their home environment. Medical matters and procedures were dealt with or undertaken with utmost sensitivity, ensuring minimal discomfort to the children. Evidence of the availability of healthy meals and snacks was reported at every visit.

Health and Safety issues are generally satisfactory, however several visitors reported unsatisfactory fire checks. A number of visitors also noted that certain areas were in need of decoration or repair. One visitor noted a trip hazard. In most cases the homes were clean and tidy, but on a few occasions visitors did note that some rooms required cleaning.

Three member visits took place in the reporting period, one to each Children's Home. The new approach to member visits will, as agreed at the June Corporate Parenting panel, be implemented in Autumn 2013.

4. Specific issues

4.1 Furze House

Visitors in March and June gave an overall rating of very good. Visitors in April and May gave an overall rating of good.

All factors relating to physical environment (i.e. staffing levels and safety and physical condition of the home) were deemed satisfactory by all visitors. All factors relating to records were also deemed satisfactory in all visits. Fire checks were carried out in accordance with schedules and incidents of physical intervention were examined in detail and appropriately recorded.

Children in the home presented as happy, content and settled in their surroundings. In March it was reported that staff were knowledgeable about each child's routine. The report for April highlighted the positive interactions between staff and young people and the fact that young people were responded to sensitively and promptly. The visitor in June reported a warm 'family' atmosphere in the home and praised the staff for their child-focussed approach. The visitor also noted that the young people were very proud of their home; particularly of their new vegetable garden.

4.2 The Walnuts

Visitors in March, May and June rated The Walnuts as fair and the visitor for April gave a rating of good.

During the reporting period, some issues regarding health and safety were highlighted by visitors and in March the visitor was unsatisfied with the safety and physical condition of the home. Visitors reported that the home required cleaning and that despite the addition of new furniture in the lounge area, the room remained sparse with few signs of comfort or homeliness. It was also reported that damage noted on a previous visit was still not fixed. However despite the corridors and communal areas having plain decoration, most of the bedrooms seen did have personal touches.

In April the visitor explained that a new handyman had been appointed and due to changes made, had reported safety and physical conditions of the home as satisfactory. Conditions remained satisfactory throughout the remainder of the

reporting period. Reports for April, May and June highlighted that the children seen appeared to be content, relaxed and happy. It was also noted that staff were knowledgeable about the interests of the children and planned activities accordingly.

In May, the visitor reported her concerns of whether an occurrence of physical intervention had been carried out appropriately. She noted that a Plan is in place to address the issues surrounding this case and particularly the personal care of the young man in question. Recording incidents in detail appeared to be an issue, as the same visitor reported that the 'nature of physical intervention technique used' and 'risk assessment' fields were not always being recorded on individual records. However, the related significant Incident reports were clear on the holds used.

Access to the home was reported as being an issue during visits in March and June, in that when visitors arrived they were unable to gain a response from staff when pressing the buzzer.

4.3 Westminster Drive/Westminster House

All visitor ratings recorded during the reporting period were very good.

All visitors reported that physical environment factors, in terms of staffing levels and health and safety, were satisfactory across the board. The home moved premises in May 2013 and due to the brand new building and facilities, visitors reported that the children were clearly very happy with their surroundings. Prior to the move, children were consulted with regarding furnishings and decorations for their new home.

Largely, visitors were satisfied with the home's recording procedures. The visitor in June identified that positive comments from two parents were recorded in log books. Fire checks were carried out within specified timescales on the whole.

It was observed by visitors that healthy meals and snacks were provided for the children and young people and that individual dietary needs were catered for. June's visitor reported that children were encouraged to be active as they can be. It was observed that medical matters were dealt with very well; staff kept parents informed of all developments throughout and provided an excellent level of care for the children. They showed a high level of understanding and sensitivity, while ensuring that minimal stress was caused to the children.

Visitors reported that children and young people appeared settled, relaxed and happy. They noted that staff considered the children's views and choices when making decisions and treated them with respect, while showing interest. The visitor for April noted that the children she saw appeared to be fully enjoying the activities they were involved with. She says that they were observed to be very happy playing and relaxing with each other and heard them laughing.

Despite the upheaval of moving premises, it is clear that staff managed processes extremely well by involving the children where possible. The children were clearly very excited about the move and did not show signs of being stressed or worried. The children were clearly very proud of their home and were keen to show visitors round themselves.

5. Corporate Parenting Panel Members' Visits

In this reporting period, members visited in line with the timetable and format of visits agreed, prior to the panel's June 2013 agreement to change these from Autumn

2013.

During the reporting period, all three Children's Homes were visited by a council member. Members gave an overall rating of very good for all three homes.

All members rated factors relating to physical environment (i.e. staffing and safety/physical conditions) and records (i.e. of sanctions and rewards, physical interventions and fire checks etc) as satisfactory.

The member who visited Furze House noted that the children were very well behaved. They enjoyed their meals and the activities that they took part in. He also noted that the staff were well trained and fully aware of their statutory obligations regarding the welfare of the children.

Despite giving a satisfactory rating for the home's physical condition, the member who visited The Walnuts reported that she was unimpressed with some of the colours on the corridor walls, which she considered 'depressing'. However she did report that all rooms were clean and tidy. The member reported that the children appeared to enjoy their meals and were encouraged by their carers to be accountable for any mess they made while eating.

The member who visited Westminster Drive did so prior to their move. She notes that the physical environment of the home was clean and tidy under the circumstances of the pending relocation.