

Date of Panel	12 JULY 2016	Agenda Item	6
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Regulation 44 and Members' Visits: March, April and May 2016

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Report Summary

Purpose:

This report summarises the feedback from the Regulation 44 visits to Milton Keynes Council's registered Children's Homes in the period March, April and May 2016. Regulation 44 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 44 of the Children's Homes Regulations 2015 are a statutory requirement for the Local Authority. Visits take place at least once a month, by an independently commissioned person with significant experience of residential provision and independent of the management of the home. These monthly visits are regularly unannounced but occasionally the visitor will indicate her intention to visit.

Corporate Priorities:

Improving the quality of the Residential Services and their contribution to good outcomes for Milton Keynes Children in Care.

Performance Information:

All three residential homes are subject to regular Ofsted inspection.

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:

That the report be noted.

Full Report

1. Legal & Policy Framework

- 1.1 Visits under Regulation 44 of the Children's Homes Regulations 2015, which came into effect on 1 April 2015, are a statutory requirement for the Local Authority. Visits are required for any children's home run by the LA and are undertaken on a monthly basis by a person not connected with the running and/or management of the home (Regulation 43).
- 1.2 The Regulations also set out standards ('the Quality Standards') that must be met by Children's Homes. These describe outcomes that each child must be supported to achieve whilst living in the children's home.
- 1.3 Following each visit, the Independent Visitor prepares a report which is sent to each Registered Manager, the Head of Safeguarding, the Head of Corporate Parenting and the Service Director Children and Families (Responsible Individual, Furze and Westminster) as well as the Responsible Individual for Walnuts School. At the same time the Independent Visitor sends the report to Ofsted.
- 1.4 There are three Council children's homes in Milton Keynes: Furze House (short break care for disabled children); Westminster House (long term care for disabled young people); The Walnuts (short break and long term care for children with autism who attend Walnuts school).
- 1.5 During this period all visits were conducted with the exception of the visit for the month of May to Walnuts, due to the inability of the visitor to attend after breaking her foot towards the end of the month. Ofsted have been notified of this event.

2 Ofsted Inspection of these Children's Homes

- 2.1 **Furze House** was subject to an interim inspection under the new inspection framework on 21/03/2016. The report was published on 07/04/2016. Furze was judged 'Good' at its previous full inspection and at this interim inspection Ofsted judge that it has ***sustained effectiveness***.
- 2.2 Ofsted require that in order to meet the standard in respect of the children's wishes and feelings, the registered person must ensure that staff help each child to express views, wishes and feelings as well as regularly consult children and seek their feedback about the quality of the home's care. In respect of policies for the protection of children standard, the registered person must prepare and implement a policy for the prevention of bullying in the home, which must in particular set out the procedure for dealing with an allegation of bullying. Additionally, in respect of the Independent Person visits and report standard, to inspect the premises of the home and such of the home's records (except for a child's

case records, unless the child and the child's placing authority consent) as the independent person requires.

- 2.3 Ofsted also made the following recommendations: registered persons must ensure that procedures for dealing with allegations of bullying are in place and staff have the skills required to intervene, protect and address bullying behaviours effectively; children must be consulted regularly on their views about the home's care, to inform and support continued improvement in the quality of care provided. Children should be able to see the results of their views being listened to and acted upon. Ofsted recommended the home's staff should recognise and celebrate the achievements of their children.
- 2.4 All requirements and recommendations were to be resolved by 10/05/2016 and the manager has ensured these have been fully addressed and Ofsted have been notified.
- 2.5 **Westminster House** was subject to a full Ofsted inspection on March 22nd 2016. The final report was published on 14th April 2016. The judgement overall was **Good**.
- 2.6 Ofsted indicated that in order to meet the leadership and management standard, the registered person is to ensure that: the home's workforce provides continuity of care to each young person, in particular that no more than half the staff on duty at any one time, by day or night at the home should be from an external agency; that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each young person; that agency staff receive formal supervision. In respect of medicines Ofsted require the registered person must make arrangements for the handling, recording, safekeeping, safe administration and disposal of medicines received into the children's home; in particular ensure that stock records are accurate.
- 2.7 Ofsted also indicated that to improve the quality and standards of care further, the home must compile a policy and procedure that takes account of young people aged over 16 who lack mental capacity who may require authorisation by the court of protection under the Mental Capacity Act 2005 to have their liberty deprived.
- 2.8 All requirements and recommendations were to be resolved by 19/05/2016; the manager has ensured the requirements and recommendations have been fully addressed and Ofsted has been notified.
- 2.9 **Walnuts** has not been inspected by Ofsted during this reporting period.

3. Observations from Regulation 44 Visits to the three children's homes over the reporting period include;
- In respect of the **leadership and management quality standard at Walnuts**, the Head of Care leads and manages the home in a way that delivers the approach, ethos and outcomes set out in the home's statement of purpose. Overall there is congruence between what is written in the Statement of Purpose and how the home functions. The Head of Care is able to discuss her vision for Walnuts residential and appears to be aware of the strengths and weaknesses within her service area/provision. She seeks ways to maintain good practice and make developmental improvements to the service. The Head of Care may want to work with staff members to ensure they are able to secure feedback on the experiences of children using Walnuts residential. By regular completion of regulation 45 reports, the Head of Care may have a useful tool to review and monitor systems on a wider level to achieve continuous improvement, and to robustly identify and respond appropriately to weaknesses or demands upon the quality of care children and young people experience. This would also enable the Head of Care to develop a robust business plan for the service, which she acknowledges is not complete yet.
 - In respect of **the leadership and management quality standard at Westminster House** evidence indicates that the manager of Westminster House leads and manages the home in a way that delivers the approach, ethos and outcomes set out in the home's statement of purpose and she is more than able to describe her vision for Westminster House going forward. There is evidence that the manager leads staff to work as a cohesive team and ensures that they have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child in the home, recognising that is still a work in progress.
 - The manager strives to ensure that each child receives care from a stable and sufficient workforce that is well supported and provides a consistent approach to care. She is able to offer her own knowledge and understanding of the impact that the home is having on the progress and experiences of each child and uses this to inform the development of the quality of care in the home.
 - There is much evidence that the manager can demonstrate that practice in the home is informed and improved by knowledge of developments in relation to the care of children within the range of needs for which it is intended that the home is to provide care, and uses monitoring and review systems to achieve improvement and identify and address any weaknesses in or demands upon, the quality of care provided by the home.

- The **leadership and management quality standard** requires that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture that helps children aspire to do their best and promotes their welfare.
- There is evidence that indicates the manager of **Furze House** leads and manages the home in a way that delivers the approach, ethos and outcomes set out in the home's statement of purpose and she is more than able to describe her vision for Furze going forward and there is evidence that indicates the manager leads staff to work as a cohesive team and ensures that they have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child in the home.
- The manager of Furze House strives to ensure that each child receives care from a stable and sufficient workforce that is well supported and provides a consistent approach to care. The manager and staff team have excellent relationships with schools and health providers such as the complex needs nursing team, which includes school nurses, enabling a holistic approach to the service provided.
- The manager is able to offer her own knowledge and understanding of the impact that the home is having on the progress and experiences of each child and uses this to inform the development of the quality of care in the home. The manager can demonstrate that practice in the home is informed and improved by knowledge of developments in relation to the care of children within the range of needs for which it is intended that the home is to provide care; and uses monitoring and review systems to achieve continuous improvement and identify and address any weaknesses in or demands upon, the quality of care provided by the home.
- No children have been reported missing and no significant incidents have occurred that require Ofsted to be notified from any of the children's homes.
- Levels of complaints about the service provision are very low. During this period Westminster House and Walnuts received NO complaints and Furze House received 4 complaints. The complaints logged within Furze have been resolved to the complainant's satisfaction and it is noted that any concern raised is dealt with effectively and efficiently by the manager of the home.
- Compliments made in respect of service provision during this reporting period include at Westminster House a communication from a parent who had gone away for the weekend and noted '*they were really happy to have gone away and known confidently that their son was being taken care of really well.*' At Walnuts, parents' feedback following a review of residential targets in respect of their child noted the parent was '*thanking staff for all the work undertaken to enable the child to develop his self-help skills, and providing opportunities for him*

to mix with other children and young people as well as other adults'. Other comments reflected a parent's happiness at the degree of communication between staff and herself and staff diligence.

4. Members' Visits during the Period

- 4.1 No member's visits have been conducted during this reporting period.
- 4.2 Joint open days for Furze house and Westminster House are being held in June 2016 (Furze) and August 2016 (Westminster), which all members of the Corporate Parenting Panel are cordially invited to attend, to meet parents/carers, children and young people, staff and managers and have a look around the facilities.

5 New arrangements for the Regulation 44 visits

- 5.1 New arrangements for the Regulation 44 visits were put out to formal tender during this reporting period and as a result, from June 1st 2016, NYAS will be undertaking the Regulation 44 visits for each home. NYAS is a UK charity providing socio-legal services, offering information, advice, advocacy and legal representation to children, young people and vulnerable adults through a network of dedicated paid workers and volunteers throughout England and Wales. NYAS provides independent high quality regulation 44 visits and has fully trained Independent Persons across England and Wales, currently delivering Regulation 44 visits to over 140 children's homes in England.

The NYAS manager and new visitor have been familiarising themselves with the Milton Keynes homes and meeting with key people in readiness for carrying out the visits from June onwards. NYAS will be providing the report to the Corporate Parenting Panel from now on. We look forward to their feedback and ideas.