

Corporate Parenting Panel report



8 December 2021

RESIDENTIAL CHILDREN'S HOMES SERVICE SUMMARY

Report sponsor	Dr Mac Heath Director - Children's Services
Report author	Nicola Davis Rosie Jefkins Residential Managers

Exempt / confidential / not for publication	No
Council Plan reference	Ref number / Not in Council Plan
Wards affected	All wards / list individual wards

Milton Keynes Residential Children's Services operates two Registered Children's Homes

Both Children's Homes have consistently been graded as 'Good' in annual Ofsted Inspections.

Furze House, which provides the following services for children with special needs aged between 5- 19 years:

- Residential short breaks.
- Day care.
- Long stay residential care.
- Emergency placements.

Service Users

Furze House currently offers a service to 19 children and families, 6 more families are in the process of being transitioned into the service. 2 of 19 children that are using the service are currently long term and are due to move onto their adult placements

in December. We will also have another young person in December move on therefore in January 2022 we will be able to offer services to a further 10 families which will total 32 children. However, there will remain a further 14 families who are currently receiving support from elsewhere but are identified as to be appropriate for support from Furze House. During the pandemic we did have two children that were placed with Furze House on a long-term basis who have since moved placements. Due to the impact of the pandemic, we were unable to support the same number of families as usual and therefore needed to consider our admissions approach. This resulted in a higher number of families having to be placed on a waiting list.

Since January 2021 we have supported four emergency placements, three of which resulted in long term stay for the young person whilst a more suitable placement was sourced.

Westminster House

- Long stay residential care for children and young people with special needs aged 10-19 years.

Service Users

There are currently five young people living at Westminster House

Key focus for Milton Keynes Council Residential Children's Homes:

- Keep Milton Keynes children with special needs living at home with their families.
- Work closely with families and key partners to ensure a consistent approach for the child/young person.
- Work with children and young people on targets to enable skill development and personal growth.
- Provide a safe, secure and homely environment which can be adapted to meet individual needs.
- Provide an experienced, skilled, friendly, child focused staff team.
- Build positive relationships with children and young people using the service.
- Provide three social events each year for children and their families.

Finances

The total budget of the children's homes is £1,949,038 (this includes central recharges and depreciation costs). The budget is joint between the two homes.

At present there has not been the focus on income opportunities at the Homes as we have prioritised them as a local resource for MKC children/young people and to help mitigate the costs on external placements/resources.

Staff Structure

There is an expectation that all the staff have the skills necessary to work in either of the Children's Homes to meet the service need. Some training has been curtailed due to the impact of Covid-19 but is under constant review as the situation changes.

Responsible Individual

This role has specific responsibilities identified within the Children's Homes Regulations 2015 and is undertaken by a manager with relevant experience in Children's Homes. It has a developmental and quality assurance role overseeing the work of the manager; the same person can fulfil this role for both homes.

Registered Manager - 2fte

The same regulations require each home to have a Registered Manager. Ofsted assess the skills and experience of the manager to ensure the right skill mix for registration. The Registered Manager has clear responsibilities for ensuring the Children's Home operates within Children's Homes Regulations 2015 and Quality Standards. The Registered Manager takes part in the duty and on call system for both homes.

Deputy Manager - 2fte

Each home has a Deputy Manager who supports the work of the manager and plays a part in the duty and on call system for both homes.

Shift Leader - 15 staff: 11.86fte

The shift leader is required to hold the Level 3 Diploma in Working with Children and Young People and to have a minimum of one years' experience working in a Children's Home. The shift leader takes responsibility for leading each shift direct work with the children. They will be the most senior person on duty when a manager is not around.

Seven of the shift leaders work at Furze house and eight at Westminster House.

Residential Worker - 11 staff: 7.67fte

The residential worker undertakes direct work with the children. Those working in this role are required to complete the Level 3 Diploma in Working with Children and Young People within 2 years of commencing employment.

Six of the residential workers work at Furze House and five at Westminster House.

Residential Support Worker - 5 Relief staff

This is the role undertaken by relief workers and can be used as a developmental role to enable inexperienced workers to gain skills. The residential support workers work across both Children's Homes.

Key Performance Indicators

- Children have individual plans and risk assessments.
- Children are supported to develop their independence according to their individual need.
- Children are supported to take calculated risks to aid the development of independence.
- Children attend school or other educational provision.
- Children know how to complain, their complaints are taken seriously and responded to clearly.
- Children are actively supported to take part in day to day and more complex decisions about their lives.
- There is evidence of sustained benefit to the lives of children using the service.

We also have several mechanisms in place to receive feedback on our approach and service and liaise with many of our partners to help with this. These partners include:

- Parents.
- Social workers.
- Education - joint working with the school's children attend.
- Health colleagues as relevant to individual children needs.

We also have in place:

Weekly Meetings

- Residential Managers Meeting.
- Team meeting in each children's home - term time only.

Monthly Meetings

- Corporate Parenting Managers meeting.
- Meeting with Children with Disability Team Manager.

- Regulation 44 visit.
- Children's Continuing (Health) Care.
- 121's with all staff.
- Budget monitoring and forecasting.

6 Monthly

- Children's Plan Reviews, including Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCP's), Personal Education Plans (PEP's) alongside supporting the range of Health appointments for our children and young people.

Conclusion

Despite the last 18 months being highly challenging for our service and for our families we are pleased that we have been able to maintain a good level of resilience and have continued to deliver a service to some of our most vulnerable children and young people and keep them safe. We recognise that we have not been able to give them the same levels of opportunity regarding trips out and learning opportunities if lockdown hadn't been in place but are proud that we remain on track for some of our young people to move onto a higher level of independence as they have managed to continue to grow in their skills and confidence in their time with us.

We will be continuing to work with the wider service to consider how we may be able to continue to reach as wide a group of children and young people as possible, as we know for the highly vulnerable cohort of children and young people we work with, their vulnerability in a time of a pandemic is higher than most and can be disproportionately impacted regarding the opportunities available to them.