

ELECTED MEMBER REGULATION 33 VISITS

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Division: Children and Families: Integrated Support and Social Care

Report Summary**Purpose:**

This report summarises the feedback and reports from the three elected member Regulation 33 (2) (b) visits to our three residential children's homes during April 2013.

- a. Councillor Small – Furze House
- b. Councillor Zealley – Westminster Drive and The Walnuts

Background:

Elected member visits are currently part of a wider programme of monthly Regulation 33 visits which are summarised and presented to Corporate Parenting Panel.

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 each month, usually by an Officer independent of the management of the home and may be unannounced.

Corporate Priorities:

Improving the quality of Milton Keynes residential services and their contribution to improved outcomes for Milton Keynes children. This is in line with the Council's Children and 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 children's residential homes are subject to regular Ofsted inspection and all have been found to be of 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 services that can meet the diverse needs of the children and young people in the Council's care.

Recommendations /Proposals:

Corporate Parenting Panel is asked to note and discuss the report.

Full Report:

a. *Furze House:*

Strengths:

- Overall impression of this visit was that Furze House was a well run home with 'plenty of dedicated staff'.
- All record and log books viewed were deemed to be up to date and in good order.
- All rooms were deemed to be safe, clean and secure from switches, windows and doors.
- The overall condition of the home was considered to be as expected to reflect the usage from the children and redecorating was underway and due to finish in a few weeks.
- Meal planning considers the children's needs and wishes and all meals are freshly prepared on premise and the appeared to be enjoyed by all.
- Children's care plans viewed appeared clear and reflected the monitoring of targets set.
- A wide varied programme of activities is available for the children providing opportunities for them to further develop and to help enrich their lives.
- The children and young people have planted a vegetable garden with the support of staff.
- Staff were deemed to be extremely well trained and meeting the children's welfare needs.
- Children and young people presented as relaxed and content in their environment and were observed watching TV, enjoying music and playing in the garden.
- Children and young people spoken to were happy with the care they received and the time they spent at Furze House.

Areas for further development or clarification:

- A couple of motors on the beds at the time of the visit were broken and needed replacing
- The manager has confirmed that redecoration will be completed by June 2013

b. *Westminster Drive:*

Strengths:

- The overall impression of the quality of service provided at Westminster Drive was deemed 'very good'
- All record and log books viewed were deemed to be up to date and in good order
- The physical environment was considered to be clean and tidy
- No concerns about the health and well being of the young people resident.

Areas for further development or clarification:

- No areas for further development other than a recommendation that if the move to the new home (Westminster House) didn't go ahead in the timeframes anticipated that redecoration of the home would be required

c. The Walnuts:

Strengths:

- The overall impression of the quality of service provided at Walnuts Drive was deemed 'very good'
- All record and log books viewed were deemed to be up to date and in good order
- The home environment was considered to be clean and tidy however the colour scheme for the corridor walls was in the view of the Member 'rather depressing'
- Good ratio of staff to young people evident
- All doors and gates were locked and secure
- The Member joined the young people for their 'evening meal' and observed the young people to be enjoying their meals and having appropriate levels of support from staff

Areas for further development or clarification:

- The member observed two separate incidents with the young people and the staff managing these in what she observed to be an appropriate manner by 'diffusing' the situation.
- The Head of Care of The Walnuts has confirmed that they have plans to refresh paintwork within the home and to make 'improvements'. She confirms that the young people will be involved in the colour choice and making suggestions for the 'improvements'.

Carolann James
May 21st 2013