

Cabinet

Supplementary Agenda

Date: Monday, 20th September, 2010
Time: 2.00 pm
Venue: Council Chamber, Municipal Buildings, Earle Street, Crewe
CW1 2BJ

13. **Review of Residential Provision** (Pages 1 - 132)

Attached are the appendices to the review report.

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Appendices

Appendix 1 - List of meeting dates and visits

Appendix 2 – Ofsted reports of residential provision in Cheshire East

Appendix 3 – Wilkinson House Statement of Purpose

Appendix 4 - J Thorburn's report

Appendix 5 - Guidance on undertaking Regulation 33 visits

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Appendix 1

Meetings and Visits

- 9 November – meeting of the Task/Finish Group
- During November – visit to two new homes in the Crewe area
- 18 December – meeting of the Task/Finish Group and visit to Priors Hill, Macclesfield
- 21 January – meeting of the Task/Finish Group
- 26 March – visit to Wilkinson House
- 15 April – meeting of the Task/Finish Group and meeting with Children in Care Council
- 28 May – visit to short break provision
- 5 July – meeting of the Task/Finish Group

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Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC033634
Inspection date	1 July 2009
Inspector	Sharon Lloyd
Type of Inspection	Key

Date of last inspection	30 March 2009
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Tel: 0870 600 5522. Online ordering: www.tso.co.uk/bookshop

About this inspection

The purpose of this inspection is to assure children and young people, parents, the public, local authorities and government of the quality and standard of the service provided. The inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000.

This report details the main strengths and any areas for improvement identified during the inspection. The judgements included in the report are made in relation to the outcome for children set out in the Children Act 2004 and relevant National Minimum Standards for the establishment.

The inspection judgements and what they mean

Outstanding:	this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality
Good:	this aspect of the provision is strong
Satisfactory:	this aspect of the provision is sound
Inadequate:	this aspect of the provision is not good enough

Service information

Brief description of the service

The home is a purpose built residential centre for children. This home is a large, detached, two storey building situated on a housing estate on the outskirts of town. Transport, education, health, leisure and employment facilities are available within the location of the home.

There are three separate living units on the premises. One unit is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to eight children and young people, aged from eight years old up to 17 years old, who have a learning or physical disability. This is situated on the ground floor at the rear of the building. There are two large lounges, one of which has a dining area. There is a separate kitchen and a playroom with access to a secure play area. Toilets and bathing facilities are sufficient in number to accommodate both sexes and to meet their individual needs. The home currently provides care and accommodation for one resident young person and approximately 20 children and young people who come to the centre for short breaks.

Two further units provide care and accommodation for children and young people with emotional or behavioural difficulties, including those who present volatile and challenging behaviour. One unit is based on the first floor and caters for up to six young people from eight years old up to 17 years old. The accommodation includes a lounge, kitchen, separate toilet and shower facilities and individual bedrooms as well as a staff office and sleep-in room. Another unit caters for four children and young people from the ages of eight years old up to 17 years old. Two of these may be emergency or short term placements lasting a maximum of 12 weeks. There are additional facilities for young people who are preparing for independent living to practice self care skills and to live semi-independently. These include two lounges and small kitchens on the ground floor. Two further units are no longer operating and are not included in the home's registration. However, at the time of this inspection, a young person was living independently, with limited support in one of these units.

Summary

A review of the local authority children's homes is being conducted during July and August 2009 and is due to report in September 2009. It is anticipated that by then the local authority will be in a position to decide how to best meet the needs of the young people who currently live at or have short stays at this home.

Eight young people currently live in the home. Approximately 20 more have regular short stays. Five young people contributed to the inspection, which took place unannounced over two days. The home was assessed against all key national minimum standards.

The standard of care throughout the home is variable. There are some good and satisfactory practices that promote young people's welfare but these are not consistently applied and there are shortfalls in meeting the national minimum standards and Children's Homes Regulations.

There have been some improvements since the last inspection but the home continues to provide an inadequate standard of care because shortfalls in practice means that the health, welfare and safety of children and young people are compromised. Some young people receive a very good level of support in preparing for independent living, but this is not consistent and some young people receive an inadequate level of support in this area. Placement planning for

young people moving into the home is inadequate so that young people's needs are not fully addressed in the early stages of their placement.

Support with enjoying and achieving is satisfactory with some very good features. Children and young people are provided with opportunities to make a positive contribution to their own lives and to the community. They report that they feel safe in the home and have good relationships with the staff team. Children and young people like living at the home and are anxious about the future.

The premises do not provide homely accommodation. Monitoring of the operation of the home and of children and young people's welfare is not good enough to ensure the delivery of the best possible care. A temporary manager is in post but is not yet registered with Ofsted. Whilst he is child focused and competent in many areas, he is not sufficiently trained and supported as a new manager, to ensure the home is organised in a way that provides high quality care and meets the diverse and complex needs of all the children and young people.

The overall quality rating is inadequate.

This is an overview of what the inspector found during the inspection.

Improvements since the last inspection

Nine actions were raised following the last inspection. Improvements have been made to the decoration of the home and much of the graffiti has been removed. However, the home does not provide domestic style accommodation and some parts are in need of renovation. The local authority appreciates that the home is no longer fit for purpose and has begun a review of the service with the intention of providing an improved and more homely environment for children and young people to live in. The action to ensure the home is fit for purpose is repeated.

Although staff have been trained in the administration of medication, minor shortfalls in recording remain. The quality of health plans is variable. This means that some young people do not have comprehensive, up to date health plans that address all their health needs. This action is repeated.

Staff know that they cannot use restraint to prevent young people from leaving the premises. However, the restraint records show that restraint has been used to enforce compliance and a further action regarding the use of restraint is made. The recording of complaints is improved but shortfalls remain and the home cannot demonstrate that the complaints procedure is sufficiently robust to protect children and young people. This action is repeated.

All health and safety checks on the premises have been carried out. However, recruitment procedures and fire safety procedures are not sufficiently robust to ensure children and young people are adequately safeguarded.

A temporary manager is in post and has submitted a Registered Manager application to Ofsted.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is inadequate.

There are good medication procedures and good health plans for some children and young people. However, shortfalls in medicine administration records and procedures means that the home cannot show that all children and young people are receiving the medication they need

as and when they need it. Some health plans do not contain information about children and young people's health history, including their vaccination history, so the home cannot ensure that their health needs are being fully met.

Young people preparing for independent living prepare their own meals without supervision. They have not attended training in food hygiene, so the home is not ensuring that young people know how to prepare and store food safely.

The provision of nutritious and well balanced meals is inconsistent across the home. Some children and young people receive a good standard of well prepared and varied meals, including meals from other cultures. Others receive a variable standard of meals. Some staff sit with children and young people so that mealtimes are enjoyable, social occasions. However, on one unit, there are insufficient dining chairs for children, young people and staff to sit together for meals and mealtimes are irregular. This means that some children and young people do not enjoy mealtimes that are social, well-managed occasions and do not receive a sufficiently nutritious diet.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is inadequate.

Staff follow good procedures for the safekeeping of confidential information. They respect the privacy and dignity of children and young people and follow good procedures in delivering personal care where necessary.

Allegations and disclosures of abuse are dealt with promptly, although they are not always resolved within 28 days. The home works effectively with the local authority safeguarding unit and the police to promote the welfare of children and young people. Parents, children and young people know how to make a complaint and most are confident that the home will address any issues raised. A complaints file is maintained within the home showing details of steps taken to address complaints, although planning and decision making is not always clearly evident. One complaint made has been misfiled and has not been addressed. A log of complaints is not kept. This impedes effective monitoring and puts children and young people at risk of poor quality care.

The home has an anti-bullying policy, known to staff. Children and young people report that incidents of bullying sometimes occur and they are not confident that staff can protect them appropriately. Despite this, children and young people report that they feel safe in the home and can approach staff with any matters of concern. The home has begun to use a restorative justice approach to incidents between young people with some limited success to date. This is because not all young people affected by an incident have been involved in the restorative justice conference. This means they are therefore not engaged in the process and are not convinced that matters have been dealt with fairly.

Although good procedures are in place to promote the safety and well-being of children and young people, these are not consistently applied and this compromises the home's ability to safeguard children and young people. For example, whilst effective measures are in place to promote the welfare of those who are missing from home, significant events are not always notified to the relevant authorities. This means that external monitoring of the home's response to incidents does not routinely take place. For example, Ofsted has not always been notified

when the police have been called to the home. This impedes Ofsted from effectively exercising its regulatory auditing and safeguarding function.

The employment of effective behaviour management strategies is sometimes good but is not consistently applied. Individual incentive schemes are implemented but not always closely followed, so that young people's progress is not always accurately measured and incentives promised are not always delivered. Staff have received extensive training in methods of control, including the use of restraint. However, monitoring of restraints is not sufficiently effective to ensure children and young people are being restrained appropriately. Following concerns about some of the methods of restraint, a 'no restraints' policy has been recently introduced to the home, to prevent the possibility of children and young people being injured during a restraint. All staff have received training in attachment and emotional development in preparation for forthcoming closer working with the multi-professional team in developing individualised behaviour management strategies.

Routine health and safety checks are carried out on the home to ensure that children and young people live in a safe environment. Fire drills are carried out regularly, but young people and staff who are new to the home do not routinely experience a fire drill within the first month of arrival. This means that some young people and staff may not have had the opportunity to practice the evacuation procedure in the event of a fire.

Although risk assessments are carried out on the premises and on children and young people's known and potential risk taking activities, these are not always sufficiently robust. For example, risk assessments relating to the placement of one young person in an independence training flat on the premises does not provide staff or the young person with sufficient guidance to ensure their safety. Where risk assessments do give good guidance to staff, these are not always followed. This places young people at unnecessary and avoidable risk.

A new door lock is in place to enable wheelchair users to exit the premises unaided. This involves a pushbutton mechanism and is a potential hazard to children and young people using the respite service. Good supervision ensures that no children or young people leave the premises without staff. However, individual risk assessments that are shared with social workers and parents do not address this potential danger.

Staff files are maintained in line with Schedule 2 of the Children's Homes Regulations 2001, with minor omissions. For example, photographic identity is not always held. This means that staff recruitment checks are not consistently implemented to a high standard and the home cannot demonstrate that all staff employed at the home are fully vetted as suitable individuals to work with children and young people. Where disciplinary investigations have taken place, staff files do not hold sufficient information to show the initial reason for disciplinary action, investigation methods and the outcome. This means the home cannot demonstrate that it safeguards children and young people through good disciplinary procedures and effective monitoring of staff member's practice on their return to work.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

The level of support provided to children and young people is varied and inconsistent. Some young people receive good support in line with their identified needs and wishes. They participate in group meetings and have the opportunity to meet with their key workers, but

this is not as often as they would like. A visitor from the National Youth Advocacy Service attends the home each month and assists children and young people to make their views known.

The home works with other professionals, such as the looked after children's nurse and the child and adolescent mental health service, to provide additional support to children who need it. The home recognises that more is needed to address the specific needs of individual children and young people. It is engaging with the multi-professional team to obtain advice and guidance, so that staff can improve the level of care and support they provide. Young people are supported to take controlled risks. However, the level of support provided is not always sufficient to ensure young people's welfare and safety is promoted.

The support children and young people receive with education is variable. Those young people who value education receive a high level of support including additional tuition. Other young people do not attend school and the arrangements put in place to ensure they continue to receive education are inadequate. The home works with schools, Connexions and the looked after children's education support services to assist young people in finding suitable college courses. Computers are available for young people, however, one has been out of use for seven weeks. This means that some young people are disadvantaged because they are unable to use a computer for homework, revision and communicating with friends and family.

Children and young people have the opportunity to engage in organised activities and outings with staff. Staff members share their interests with young people and encourage them to develop their talents and interests. For example, young people receive encouragement to participate in and enjoy music and are enabled to attend their school prom. Free passes are provided to the local leisure centre, but are used infrequently. Children who use the short break service have access to a wide range of play equipment and the enclosed, safe garden has been further developed to enable them to participate in gardening. The home does not provide children and young people with an annual holiday, even though this is their permanent home. This leaves young people feeling they are treated unfairly and are missing out because they live in a children's home.

Arrangements are in place to support young people to meet up with and visit friends and family. Children and young people enjoy spending their leisure time mixing with peers locally, however, these relationships can sometimes lead to inappropriate and dangerous behaviours.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Each young person has a placement plan that sets out their individual needs. The quality of these plans is varied. Placement planning does not always fully address the needs of each young person. Staff are sometimes unclear about their roles and do not provide sufficient levels of support to some young people. This does not adequately safeguard or promote young people's welfare. The home contributes to statutory reviews of care plans and produces a report on the young person's progress and development.

The home promotes contact with families and friends in accordance with each young person's individual needs and agreed plans. The staff team recognise the importance of families and their role in decision making for children and young people.

Children and young people are encouraged to attend and to contribute to planning and review meetings about themselves and some do so willingly and make effective contributions. Young person's meetings are held on some units although not regularly. Feedback to young people on queries raised within the meetings is not given formally, so young people are not aware of how issues raised are being addressed. This makes them feel that they are not being listened to.

A young person ably represents young people living in children's homes and those with disabilities on the local authority children in care council. Children and young people have the opportunity to participate in community events. For example, many children and young people enjoyed attending an event to celebrate the launch of the new council and several young people are preparing to participate in a forthcoming event by providing musical entertainment.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is inadequate.

The size and design of the home does not promote domestic style living for young people. The home consists of separate units on the same site with individual front doors and adjoining doors to the main building, which are kept locked. Security of the premises is an issue, young people from the local community have entered the premises without the knowledge of staff and this compromises the safety of children, young people and staff.

Since the last inspection, the home has been decorated throughout and young people have been consulted about the decoration of their own rooms, so that individual bedrooms are personalised and well furnished. Children and young people on the short break unit enjoy comfortable and pleasant accommodation. Improvements made provide a more comfortable home, but the layout of the home remains institutionalised. Dirty windows and external graffiti continues to detract from a homely environment.

The home is kept reasonably clean, but the fabric of the home is out of date and deteriorating. For example, the water tank that services the home is old and rusted; patio doors are in need of repair; toilets for the use of children and young people are in rooms without wash hand basins and this does not encourage good hygiene habits. The local authority is reluctant to provide funding for renovations because it recognises the shortfalls of the premises and plans to move the home to more suitable accommodation within the next 12 months. In the meantime, children and young people are living in below standard accommodation.

The lounge and kitchen doors are usually propped open during the day. They are fitted with locks so that these rooms can be made inaccessible to children and young people during education hours and after bedtime. Young people's bedrooms are kept locked and as children and young people do not have keys to their rooms, they need to ask staff to unlock their doors whenever they wish to enter their own rooms. This practice serves to safeguard property and privacy, however it does not promote domestic style living and does not encourage children and young people to feel 'at home'. Routine risk assessments have not been carried out on individual children and young people to determine whether some individuals can safely look after their own keys.

The home provides varying degrees of support to young people who are preparing for independent living. Whilst there is evidence of some very good work in assisting young people with disabilities to learn independent living skills, this is hindered by a lack of appropriate

facilities, such as a low level kitchen. Other young people are practising independent living skills in flats on the premises, some have not been adequately prepared for this. The home recognises these shortfalls and is taking action to address them.

Organisation

The organisation is inadequate.

The home has been without a Registered Manager since September 2008. A temporary manager was appointed in December 2008 and submitted a Registered Manager application to Ofsted in June 2009. This demonstrates that the local authority has not met the requirement to appoint a person to manage the home within a reasonable timescale.

There are shortfalls in the monitoring of the operation of the home and visits to the home on behalf of the local authority are sporadic, so that the welfare of the children and young people who live there is not being effectively monitored.

Although the home operates as a single home with one manager, there is a separate statement of purpose for each unit. Whilst most of the information listed in Schedule 1 of the Children's Homes Regulations is included, some pertinent information is missing or incorrect. This means that the statement of purpose does not accurately reflect the care provided at the home.

The home has established an additional unit, catering for young people preparing for independence. This is in breach of its conditions of registration and no variation application has been submitted to Ofsted. This means that the home is providing care and accommodation to young people that it is not registered to provide because Ofsted has not considered whether the home has the facilities and capability to provide this service. The home ceased using this unit immediately after the inspection.

The manager and most of the staff team are appropriately qualified and experienced in the care of children and young people. New staff are enrolled upon a suitable training programme within appropriate timescales, so that they learn good practice in working with children and young people. All staff have a supervision contract but the level of one-to-one supervision provided is not always in accordance with the guidance in the national minimum standards. This means that staff do not always receive the level of support they need to effectively look after the children and young people.

Children and young people like and trust the staff team and value their help and support. There is inconsistency across the home in the way that staff vacancies are covered. For example, in some units, shortfalls in the rota are addressed by employing regular agency staff to act as full time staff members on a temporary basis. This provides children and young people with good continuity of care. The staff team that looks after children and young people with disabilities is heavily supplemented with part time relief workers. This means that there can sometimes be 16 to 20 different staff members working in any one week. This does not provide good continuity of care for the permanent resident and means that those children having short stays are looked after by a selection of different staff, so that it is hard for them to form relationships with staff. The home has gone some way to addressing continuity of care for the permanent resident by allocating two members of staff to take responsibility for assisting the young person on outings and appointments.

The quality of the information held about individual children and young people is varied. Some files are well kept and comprehensive, whereas others do not contain all the information required. Young people confirmed they can see their files with the exception of third party confidential information. They know what is being written about them and are enabled to contribute to their records.

The promotion of equality and diversity is inadequate. There is inconsistency across the service in the level of care delivered. There is some good work with particular young people whose diverse needs are met. However, young people's rights are not always respected or promoted and their needs are not always recognised and addressed. The home is not adequately monitored to ensure that children and young people are treated equally and that diversity is valued and respected.

What must be done to secure future improvement?

Statutory requirements

This section sets out the actions, which must be taken so that the registered person meets the Care Standards Act 2000, The Children's Homes Regulations 2001 and the National Minimum Standards. The Registered Provider must comply with the given timescales.

Standard	Action	Due date
16	ensure records relating to complaints are appropriately maintained (Regulation 24(5))	31 July 2009
12	ensure that there is an up to date and comprehensive health plan for each young person accommodated at the home (Regulation 20)	31 July 2009
13	ensure that each child and young person has access to such medical treatment as they may require (Regulation 20)	31 July 2009
20	ensure that where any of the events listed in column 1 of the table in Schedule 5 of the Children's Homes Regulations 2001 takes place, the Registered Person notifies the persons listed in column 2 without delay (Regulation 30)	31 July 2009
22	ensure that no measure of control, restraint or discipline which is excessive or unreasonable is used and regularly monitor the records of restraints and additional measures of control (Regulation 17)	31 July 2009
26	ensure that unnecessary risks to the health or safety of children and young people accommodated in the home are identified and so far as possible, eliminated (Regulation 23)	31 July 2009
26	ensure that the premises are fit for the purpose of a children's home, and that they are suitable for the purpose of achieving the aims and objectives set out in the home's statement of purpose (Reg 31 (1))	12 September 2009

23	provide for the number and needs of the children accommodated so far as is reasonably practicable, adequate facilities for children to prepare their own food if they wish and are of an age to do so (Regulation 31 (5))	12 September 2009
27	ensure that staff records demonstrate that suitability checks have been carried in accordance with Schedule 2 (Regulation 26)	31 August 2009
1	revise the statement of purpose so that it accurately describes the operation and conduct of the home and ensure that the home is at all times conducted in a manner which is consistent with its statement of purpose (Regulation 4 and 5)	31 August 2009
32	ensure that the welfare of the children and young people is regularly monitored (Regulation 33)	31 July 2009
33	ensure that the operation of the home is effectively monitored (Regulation 34).	31 July 2009

Recommendations

To improve the quality and standards of care further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- ensure that physical restrictions on normal movements within the home are used only in relation to a child where the restriction has been agreed within their placement plan (and care plan if appropriate) and are used only where necessary to safeguard and promote the child's welfare (NMS 23)
- ensure that dining rooms and their furnishings are suitable for the number and needs of children and staff dining in them (NMS 10)
- ensure that meals are set up to be well-managed, orderly, social occasions and provide children with food that is properly prepared, wholesome and nutritious, having regard to their cultural, ethnic and religious backgrounds and dietary needs and choices (NMS 10)
- ensure that children and young people involved in preparing food for others have received appropriate training or are appropriately supervised in safe food handling and hygiene (NMS 10)
- carry out recorded risk assessments of the times, places and circumstances in which the risk of bullying is greatest and take action where feasible to reduce or counteract the risk of bullying (NMS 18)
- ensure that all children, young people and staff know the emergency evacuation procedures, including those for use at night (NMS 26)
- ensure that staff respond positively to acceptable behaviour and that measures of control are designed to help the child and are fair and consistently applied (NMS 22)
- ensure that all children are given individual support in line with their needs and wishes and children identified as having particular needs receive help, guidance and support when needed or requested (NMS 7)

-
- ensure that young people have access to a computer to assist them with studying (NMS 14)
 - provide an educational programme during normal school hours for children and young people who are not in school (NMS 14)
 - ensure that medicine administration records indicate when medication ceases and when and how it is disposed of (NMS 13)
 - ensure that all staff receive one-to-one supervision in line with the guidance in the National Minimum Standards (NMS 28)
 - provide the manager with such training as is necessary for managing the children's home (NMS 31)
 - ensure that each child's file contains all the necessary information as detailed in Schedule 3 of the Children's Homes Regulations (NMS 35).

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Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC059875
Inspection date	6 November 2009
Inspector	Michelle Moss
Type of Inspection	Random

Date of last inspection	8 June 2009
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The inspection judgements and what they mean

Outstanding:	this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality
Good:	this aspect of the provision is strong
Satisfactory:	this aspect of the provision is sound
Inadequate:	this aspect of the provision is not good enough

Service information

Brief description of the service

The home provides specialised care for up to six children, aged eight years old up to 12 years old on admission. The registration of the home allows children with emotional and behavioural difficulties and learning and physical disabilities to be cared for. However, the focus of attention is on providing care and support for children with emotional and behavioural difficulties.

The house is a detached property set in its own grounds. It is spacious and well equipped. There is a large family kitchen-diner, lounge, play room and separate computer room. Each of the children have a single bedroom and have access to an adequate number of bath and shower rooms. The location of the home provides good access to a range of community resources. The home has two family cars to facilitate community involvement.

At the time of the visit, four children were resident at the home of which one child was met.

Summary

This was interim inspection that has looked at the progress the home has made in regards to two recommendations raised at the last full inspection. Also, staying safe has been re-inspected to reassess outcomes for children. The home has addressed the previously identified shortfalls and in doing so, enhanced the health and welfare of children. However, there is one new shortfall in recording that requires further improvement. This relates to discipline and restraint records needing to be more transparent to show children's rights are not compromised.

The overall quality rating is good.

This is an overview of what the inspector found during the inspection.

Improvements since the last inspection

Improvements in the recording of training undertaken by staff is helping to validate their range of skills and qualifications in their care of children. This includes receiving training in safeguarding, first aid and care and control. Another area of improvement, has been the introduction of checks completed on hot water temperatures. This additional safety check is helping safeguard children, by reducing the risks associated with hot water including potential scalding.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is not judged.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children live in a home that provides them with good standards of physical safety and security. This extends to having a comprehensive health and safety auditing system, whereby aspects of fire, electrical and water safety are frequently checked. Areas of privacy are respected including staff being familiar with the safeguards required in confidential management of children's personal data. A strong emphasis is placed on children's welfare. This includes having strong links with clinical practitioners and having established procedures that are understood by staff.

The staff continue to receive behaviour management training that focuses on a therapeutic support model of care. Conflict resolution is applied to help achieve realistic outcomes for children. This includes working in partnership with specialist services to gain greater insight into understanding the behavioural traits displayed by children and how to avoid them escalating. Some of the necessary preventative measures involve the use of physical intervention and sanctions, of which records are made. However, the depth of recording is sometimes misleading. For example, when a restraint has been used, it is not always clear over the immediate risk of harm to the child or others to justify its use. Also, recordings are not always capturing the feelings and views of children, to enable them to have their views formally acknowledged and their rights enhanced.

Children continue to be protected through the home's monitoring of visitors and the careful selection and vetting of all staff. Also, children have access to an effective complaint's procedure that they can use to raise concerns or worries with the knowledge they will be addressed.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is not judged.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is not judged.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is not judged.

Organisation

The organisation is not judged.

What must be done to secure future improvement?

Statutory requirements

This section sets out the actions, which must be taken so that the registered person meets the Care Standards Act 2000, The Children's Homes Regulations 2001 and the National Minimum Standards. The Registered Provider must comply with the given timescales.

Standard	Action	Due date
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Recommendations

To improve the quality and standards of care further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- make sure all children are given an opportunity to express their feelings and views within a reasonable time frame following a sanction or restraint. These feelings should be recorded wherever possible in the records kept by the home (NMS 22.14)
- make sure the records made for both sanctions and restraints are sufficiently detailed to validate the measure used. This should include what the immediate risks were to justify the control measure used.(NMS 22.6,7,9)

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Service information

Brief description of the service

The home is a purpose built residential centre for children. This home is a large, detached, two storey building situated in large grounds on a housing estate on the outskirts of town. Transport, education, health, leisure and employment facilities are available within the local area.

There are three separate living units on the premises. One unit is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to eight children and young people, aged from eight years old up to 17 years old, who have a learning or physical disability. This is situated on the ground floor at the rear of the building. There are two large lounges, one of which has a dining area. One lounge opens onto a large playing field with swings and a slide. There is a separate kitchen and a playroom with access to a secure play area suitable for small bikes and scooters. Toilets and bathing facilities are sufficient in number to accommodate both sexes and to meet their individual needs. The home currently provides care and accommodation for one resident young person and approximately 20 children and young people who come to the centre for short breaks.

Two further units have, until December 2009, provided care and accommodation for children and young people with emotional or behavioural difficulties, including those who present volatile and challenging behaviour. Both of these units have closed down since the last inspection and the staff team has been redeployed with some staff joining the remaining unit. Children and young people have moved to alternative placements in accordance with their individual care plans. A large part of the premises is therefore now empty.

Summary

The inspection took place unannounced over two days. The home was assessed against the key national minimum standards and actions and recommendations raised following the last inspection were followed up. One young person and the staff on duty participated in the inspection. Two other young people were present during the inspection and observations were made of their care.

The home has made significant progress in meeting the regulatory requirements and national minimum standards. However, some breaches of regulations relating to the outcome area 'staying safe' remain. This means that the home does not safeguard children and young people effectively.

The home meets children's health needs well. There is one recommendation relating to recording of medicine administration. Children's education and leisure needs are promoted and they are well supported.

Carers encourage children and young people to make their views known and to participate in decisions about their care wherever possible. One young person participates in the Children in Care Council and contributes through this to the development of children's services. Shortfalls in the accommodation include institutionalised bathrooms for children and young people and no bath or shower rooms for staff.

Monitoring of the operation of the home and the services to children and young people has improved substantially. The staff team is well qualified but has not had sufficient training opportunities to develop the skills needed to deliver a consistently high quality service.

The overall quality rating is inadequate.

This is an overview of what the inspector found during the inspection.

Improvements since the last inspection

The home was judged inadequate at the last inspection and a notice to improve required twelve actions to be addressed where the home was in breach of the Children's Homes Regulations 2001. In addition, there were 14 failures to meet the national minimum standards.

The local authority has made extensive improvements to the service it provides to children in care and as a result a number of young people have been discharged to more suitable placements. Alderley and Mottram units have closed down so that only Langley unit remains operational. This provides respite care to children and young people with disabilities and accommodation to one young person.

Many of the previous actions and recommendations related to the quality of care provided to children living in Alderley and Mottram units. However, all have been followed up to ensure that the home is providing suitable care to all the children who use it.

Three actions relating to the outcome area 'being healthy' have been addressed. Comprehensive and detailed health plans guide staff in how to meet children's individual health needs. Children receive the medication they need and staff are proactive in recognising when children and young people with communication difficulties may be in pain and ensuring they receive the treatment they need. Young people who prepare their own food are provided with adapted facilities to enable them to do so safely.

Four recommendations for good practice were made under this outcome area but three are no longer applicable. One recommendation remains outstanding: the home was required to ensure that medicine administration records indicate when medication ceases and when and how it is disposed of. This information is not consistently recorded in medicine administration records and the recommendation has been repeated.

Five actions were raised under the outcome area 'staying safe'. All records relating to Alderley and Mottram units have been archived and were not available for inspection. Records of measures of control demonstrate that no restraints have been used on Langley unit since before the last inspection and sanctions are not used at all. Risk assessments are in place to safeguard children and young people from avoidable hazards.

Three actions have not been fully implemented. The log of complaints remains poorly kept so the home cannot demonstrate that all complaints are recorded and addressed within reasonable timescales. Similarly, the home cannot demonstrate that all allegations against staff have been appropriately dealt with and that referral to the safeguarding team has been considered or actioned. This impedes effective monitoring and puts children and young people at risk of poor quality care.

Notifiable events have not always been notified to the relevant authorities and in particular to Ofsted. This means that external monitoring of the home's response to incidents does not

routinely take place. For example, Ofsted has not always been notified when serious allegations have been made against staff. This impedes Ofsted from effectively exercising its regulatory auditing and safeguarding function.

The last inspection found that staff files were maintained in line with Schedule 2 of the Children's Homes Regulations 2001, with minor omissions. For example, photographic identity was not always held. This remains the case. This means that the home cannot demonstrate that all staff employed at the home are fully vetted as suitable individuals to work with children and young people.

Four recommendations for good practice were made under the outcome area 'staying safe' and all have been met. A new draft anti-bullying policy is available to guide staff in how to deal with episodes of bullying. However, bullying is no longer a feature of the home. Monthly fire drills take place at various times of the day so that everyone is familiar with fire evacuation procedures and the home could be safely and quickly vacated in the event of a fire. Effective, positive behaviour management techniques are employed so that children and young people learn what is expected of them at the home. There are no physical restrictions on normal movements within the home except to safeguard children's welfare. For example, a gate prevents children from entering the kitchen while the cook is preparing food but enables children to see in.

Three recommendations were made under the outcome area 'enjoying and achieving', two of which related to shortfalls in the care provided in the two units that have closed down. All are met. Children and young people receive individual support in line with their needs and wishes. They all attend school and have access to computers for education and leisure pursuits.

One action was raised under 'economic wellbeing'. The home was required to ensure that the home is fit for purpose. This has, for the most part, been addressed by the closure of the two other units. The remaining unit is well appointed and provides comfortable accommodation. There are some shortfalls in the accommodation that the home is aware of and addressing.

Three actions raised relate to organisation and management. The systems for monitoring the home have been substantially improved so that any shortfalls in the operation of the home and the quality of care can be identified and addressed. The Statement of Purpose has been updated so that it accurately describes the services provided by the home and provides valuable information for parents and social workers.

Three recommendations were made in relation to the organisation of the home and one has been met. The manager of the home has received additional support and training to develop the skills to manage the home. However, he plans to move on shortly and a new manager has been identified. A recommendation to provide staff with one to one supervision once a month is almost met so that staff are better guided and supported in their work. Children's files are well kept and contain all relevant information.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

The home employs two part time cooks who provide a range of nutritious and varied meals including foods from other cultures. Children's individual dietary needs are taken into account and records are kept of what they actually eat. Good food hygiene standards are maintained.

Young people who prepare their own meals do so under staff supervision and learn about food safety and hygiene in the kitchen.

Children's health needs are promoted through well documented and detailed health plans that guide staff in how to meet the individual health needs of each child. Carers communicate well with parents and keep up to date in changes in children's health status and medication requirements. Good routines ensure that careful attention is paid to health needs.

Medicines are safely stored and carefully administered. Records show that children receive the medicines they need; however they do not always show when a medicine has been returned to the parent so that it is not completely clear that each child has had all required doses during their stay without cross-checking the record with other records.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is inadequate.

Carers respect children and young people's privacy and provide them with opportunities to have time alone in their bedrooms should they want it. Bedroom doors are fitted with alarms so that night staff are alert to children who need assistance during the night. Parents and social workers are aware of this. Only one child or young person uses the bathroom at any one time. This child is supported by carers in accordance with individual needs for assistance with personal hygiene. There are no screens around baths and specialist showers so the home does not adequately respect children and young people's modesty. The home has identified this as an area for improvement.

Parents and some young people know how to make a complaint. Long-standing plans to introduce more user-friendly complaints forms for children with communication difficulties have not yet been fulfilled. However, carers do consider each month whether children and young people have been upset during their short stay and try to elicit this information from them and act on it.

There is no log of complaints so the home cannot demonstrate that it takes all complaints seriously and addresses them within a reasonable timescale. Records of some complaints and allegations are held in a file for that purpose but these records are not consistently well kept and in some cases it is not clear what action has been taken to investigate the complaint. Outcomes are not routinely recorded. This means the home cannot demonstrate that it acts to address complaints and improve practice.

Allegations against staff members are investigated but the records kept do not always demonstrate good safeguarding procedures and some records have missing information. A number of carers have not had refresher training in safeguarding children and are not sufficiently knowledgeable about safeguarding practices. The home has identified this as an area for development.

Notifications of serious incidents are not routinely forwarded to the relevant authorities. For example, Ofsted has not been informed of some serious allegations against staff. This means that external monitoring of the home's response to incidents does not routinely take place. This impedes Ofsted from effectively exercising its regulatory auditing and safeguarding function.

The anti-bullying policy has been updated and shared with carers. Bullying is not a feature of the home and no children are considered to be at risk of bullying in the home. No children or young people have been missing from home. External doors to the home are kept locked and can only be opened with a fob. The accommodated young person has a fob and can enter and leave the premises at will. However, children and young people on short stays cannot leave the premises unless a member of staff unlocks the front door. This action is taken to safeguard the vulnerable children who use the service. However, the home cannot evidence that it is discussed with parents and carers and agreed in placement plans as a necessary precaution.

Records relating to the behaviour management of children and young people on the two units that closed down in December 2009 have been archived and were not available for inspection. There have been no restraints used in the remaining unit since before the last inspection. Sanctions are never used and restraint is rare. Effective behaviour management strategies are used by the staff team to support children and young people to learn socially acceptable behaviour patterns as far as possible.

Good health and safety routines are followed and routine checks on appliances and services ensure that the premises are maintained in a reasonable condition. Fire drills are practiced once a month so that everyone at the home knows how to evacuate the premises quickly in the event of a fire. There are no staff bath or shower rooms for the use of staff who sleep in overnight. As staff do not use children's bathrooms, they are at risk of body odour through no fault of their own.

Although new recruitment procedures have been introduced to ensure robust checks are carried out on prospective staff members, employment records of those already in post do not demonstrate vigorous vetting procedures. This means that some staff members in post may have been employed without full and intensive checks and this does not adequately safeguard children and young people from coming into contact with potential abusers.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

The home provides children and young people with a good level of support to meet their individual needs. Carers work closely with schools so that they use the same communication strategies with individual children who don't use speech. All carers are trained in the use of the Picture Exchange Communication System and use this effectively to communicate with those children who use it.

Children and young people have the opportunity to meet with key workers on a regular basis and to express their views about the care they are receiving. Carers are familiar with the non-verbal behaviours and cues of children with communication difficulties and recognise the importance of paying careful attention to these so that they can respond as well as possible to children's needs, wishes and feelings.

Communication with schools is good and a young person who is accommodated at the home has received extra tuition in preparation for GCSE examinations. The young person reports that carers provide a good level of support to all children. Computers are available to children and young people for use in homework and leisure. Some use email to communicate with friends and social workers.

The home has a variety of toys and play materials to meet the needs of a range of children. Children enjoy listening to and playing music, arts and craft and using the sensory toys and soft play room. Outdoor play equipment is available for the more mobile children. Outings include trips to the park and to a youth club for children with special needs. The home has a new 16-seater adapted vehicle but few carers are licensed to drive it and this limits the number of outings children have. The home also has a car so that individual children and young people can go out without the stigma of arriving in a minibus. Parents report that children enjoy their short stays. The young person who is accommodated reports that staff encourage outings and activities with friends and these can be arranged as long as they are well planned in advance.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Placement planning is good and the home is flexible in meeting the individual needs of children and families. For example, it provides day care to children where this is more suitable than overnight stays. Placement plans provide carers with good guidance in how to meet the individual needs of each child. However, they do not demonstrate that parents and social workers have been made aware of the home's policy on keeping external doors locked. Those children and young people who can, participate in placement reviews and contribute to decisions made about their lives.

The home works with young people, their parents and social workers from both children's services and adults' services to make appropriate plans for young people coming up to transition. Young people are fully involved in this planning.

Since the closure of a large section of the home in December 2009, there have been problems with the home's telephone system that has resulted in difficulty for families in contacting the home and their children out of office hours. The home is aware of this but has not been successful in attempts to fix it. Accommodated young people have ready access to a phone and are encouraged to use it to maintain contact with family and friends.

Young people develop self-esteem and confidence through participation in local activities and groups. For example, one young person is an active member of the Children in Care Council and contributes to policy development and planning. He has acted as a consultant on the development of a new children's home where able bodied children will be accommodated alongside wheelchair users.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is satisfactory.

Carers support children and young people to develop self care skills and to be as independent as possible. Young people approaching adulthood learn to budget, shop for and prepare their own meals, in accordance with their level of ability and understanding. They learn to manage money and use bank accounts. They are encouraged to make their own appointments and to mix with peers socially. There is a lack of clarity about the funding available for clothing for young people who are accommodated so the home cannot demonstrate that young people receive sufficient funding for clothes.

The home provides comfortable, well-appointed accommodation with easy access for wheelchair users. Each bedroom is individually styled and decorated so that children and young people

have some choice of room and wherever possible stay in a room they like. Carers are currently updating bedrooms to make them more comfortable and attractive for children and young people. Some specialist beds are available and carers use hoists to help non-mobile children and young people get into bed easily.

Bathrooms are large and institutional in style. The home is aware of this and plans are in place to make them more aesthetically pleasing.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

The new Statement of Purpose has been reviewed and updated so that it accurately reflects the services provided at the home and is available to parents and social workers. The home is led by a registered manager who is a qualified social worker. He is assisted by two senior residential workers, both of whom are qualified to National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) at Level 4. The manager was registered with Ofsted in September 2009 but plans to move on shortly. The local authority has arranged for a suitably experienced and qualified manager to take his place as manager of the home.

Children and young people are supported by a well qualified and experienced staff team who know them well. More than 80% of the team are qualified to NVQ at level 3 and the remaining staff are engaged in this training. All carers have completed induction and foundation training but some need refresher training in a number of areas. Two members of staff have joined the team from the units that have closed down and are supported by the senior staff and colleagues to learn the practices of the home.

Carers participate in team meetings and receive one to one supervision to support them to deliver a good service to children and young people. Supervision is usually given once a month but there have been some gaps where staff have not received the support they need to ensure they consistently deliver good quality care to children and young people. Despite this, the home has successfully continued to provide a good service to children and young people during a time of change and uncertainty within the local authority. The newly established team has identified improvements it wishes to make to the service so that children and young people will have more comfortable and pleasant short stays. This work has already begun.

The home is effectively monitored on behalf of the provider and the operation of the home is routinely monitored by the manager and in most cases action is taken to address shortfalls identified.

The promotion of equality and diversity is satisfactory. The home promotes the wellbeing of all the children and young people who use the service and carers are sensitive to their individual needs and abilities. This means they tailor the routines, activities and leisure pursuits offered to suit each individual during their short stay. However, staffing levels sometimes restrict the young person who is accommodated from participating in events outside the home unless this is planned in advance. Staff are not trained in equality and diversity and this means there are gaps in the knowledge and understanding of some staff members. For example, a complaint was made against a member of staff who had inadvertently used inappropriate, racist terminology when dealing with a visitor.

What must be done to secure future improvement?

Statutory requirements

This section sets out the actions, which must be taken so that the registered person meets the Care Standards Act 2000, The Children's Homes Regulations 2001 and the National Minimum Standards. The Registered Provider must comply with the given timescales.

Standard	Action	Due date
27	ensure that staff records demonstrate that suitability checks have been carried in accordance with Schedule 2 (Regulation 26)	30 April 2010
17	ensure that written records are kept of any allegation of abuse or neglect and any action taken in response (Regulation 16)	9 April 2010
16	ensure that a written record is made of any complaint, the action taken in response and the outcome of the investigation (Regulation 24)	9 April 2010
20	ensure that where any of the events listed in column 1 of the table in Schedule 5 of the Children's Homes Regulations 2001 take place, the Registered Person notifies the persons listed in column 2 without delay. (Regulation 30)	9 April 2010

Recommendations

To improve the quality and standards of care further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- ensure that medicine administration records indicate when medication ceases and when and how it is disposed of (NMS 13)
- improve the arrangements for phone contact between parents and children out of hours (NMS 4.2)
- ensure the policy relating to clothing allowances is implemented in practice and known to young people and staff (NMS 11.2)
- provide separate bathing or shower facilities for staff (NMS 25.7)
- ensure that all staff receive one-to-one supervision from a senior member of staff each month in line with the guidance in the national minimum standards (NMS 28.2)
- ensure that physical restrictions on normal movements within the home are used only in relation to a child where the restriction has been agreed within their placement plan (and care plan if appropriate) and are used only where necessary to safeguard and promote the child's welfare (NMS 23.5)
- ensure that personal assistance with bathing is provided in a way that maximises dignity and to this end install screens around baths and showers (NMS 25.5)
- provide staff with training and development opportunities that equip them with the skills to meet the needs of the children and the purpose of the home (NMS 31.1)

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Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC394229
Inspection date	19 April 2010
Inspector	Elizabeth Taylor
Type of Inspection	Key

Date of last inspection	23 October 2009
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About this inspection

The purpose of this inspection is to assure children and young people, parents, the public, local authorities and government of the quality and standard of the service provided. The inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000.

This report details the main strengths and any areas for improvement identified during the inspection. The judgements included in the report are made in relation to the outcome for children set out in the Children Act 2004 and relevant National Minimum Standards for the establishment.

The inspection judgements and what they mean

Outstanding:	this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality
Good:	this aspect of the provision is strong
Satisfactory:	this aspect of the provision is sound
Inadequate:	this aspect of the provision is not good enough

Service information

Brief description of the service

The home is a detached property situated in a residential area. The location of the house means young people can easily access community facilities such as public transport, schools, colleges and shops. The home can accommodate a total of four young people from 11 to 17 years of age, of either gender. The home aims to support young people with emotional or behavioural difficulties.

Summary

This was an unannounced full inspection to assess the home's performance against all of the key national minimum standards.

The home is effectively managed and young people receive a good standard of care. Although staff continue to be appointed to form a full complement, young people have formed positive relationships with members who have worked in the home since it opened in December 2009. The staff are experienced and qualified. They have already developed a child-centred environment and demonstrate a commitment to reflective practice and to implementing improvements to benefit young people. The home has established links with a range of professionals and local agencies to support them in meeting young people's diverse needs.

The overall quality rating is good.

This is an overview of what the inspector found during the inspection.

Improvements since the last inspection

No previous actions or recommendations were made as this is the first inspection following registration of the home.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Young people benefit from effective assessment of their health needs and clear plans which ensure these are met in full. Young people are involved in meal planning and shopping and, somewhat reluctantly, in cooking meals. Meals are healthy, nutritious, well balanced and meet individual tastes. Fresh fruit is available and fresh vegetables are incorporated into the daily menu. Young people are encouraged to try different foods such as Italian, Mexican, Chinese and Indian. Mealtimes are social occasions and dining facilities are appropriate. Takeaways are restricted to once a week. Young people are aware of the benefits of healthy eating but say they do not always like options such as 'low fat' items.

Young people's health care needs are assessed in a timely manner on admission. Individual health plans are developed by the nurse for looked after children. These targets are incorporated into young people's individual care plans. Staff ensure appointments are made for young people to receive routine health care checks though some young people do not always choose to attend them. Nevertheless, staff continue to persevere and explain to young people the benefit derived from regular check-ups. Staff particularly promote and nurture the emotional well-being of young people. Specialist services are gained to support their individual needs and staff work closely with a range of health professionals to ensure young people are well informed about matters such as alcohol and drug misuse and sexual health matters. This helps young people

to make more informed decisions and choices. Young people are also encouraged to use a local gym to support a healthy lifestyle. All but one newly appointed staff member has completed emergency first aid training. Young people have also completed first aid training with staff. This means young people know what action to take if they or someone else has an accident or injury and supports their preparation for adulthood.

The home has clear policies and procedures in place for administering medication and staff receive appropriate training. This safeguards young people's welfare. Written consent is gained from appropriate persons for the administration of medication, including homely remedies and emergency treatment. All medication is securely stored within the home. Medication records are well maintained and are appropriately completed.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Young people's privacy is respected. They have their own bedrooms and keys so that they can keep their belongings safe. Staff try to maintain a balance between adequate supervision of young people and promoting their privacy. However, the appointment of several new staff over the last month or so has resulted in a high number of staff being on duty at times. This has proved to be a little unsettling for young people currently resident. The manager is conscious of the impact of this and has arranged for additional staff to work off site at times. Staff uphold confidentiality at all times. Personal information on young people is securely stored and no personal details are displayed anywhere in the home. Young people have a mobile phone provided by the home to receive or make private calls and can use the house phone to call family members and their social worker.

Young people know about the formal complaints process and complaints forms and envelopes are put in their bedroom on arrival and reissued when requested. Young people say they prefer to tell staff about any problems but that they 'do not have any'. The home strives to promote good relationships with neighbours and the wider community and takes action to quickly resolve any matters. Young people's social workers are complimentary about the home's ability to revise its practice to ensure young people's individual needs are met.

Young people are supported to keep themselves safe. Measures such as young people informing staff of their whereabouts and expected time of return in the evening help to promote their safety in the community. Staff receive child protection training and this is updated on a regular basis. This ensures they are knowledgeable about safeguarding issues and know the procedure for reporting child protection concerns or suspicions. The manager has established good links with the local safeguarding board. Young people say they feel safe in the home.

Young people are aware of the home's anti-bullying policy and say there is no bullying in the home. Staff promote diversity and tolerance by constructively challenging negative attitudes and encouraging young people to learn and accept other people's differences. In this way staff help young people to develop clear expectations of how they should treat, and be treated, by other people.

The home has an individual plan for each young person that details action to be taken when they are absent without authority. The plan is developed in conjunction with the local police liaison officer and takes account of young people's age and level of vulnerability. Staff monitor young people's whereabouts and respond quickly to any changes in behaviour.

Staff view young people in a positive light and work hard at building supportive relationships with them. Young people are helped to develop socially acceptable behaviour by the use of incentive schemes, praise and the implementation of firm and consistently applied boundaries. Young people know what standards of behaviour are expected of them as these are clearly specified in individual contracts. The contracts are developed by social workers in conjunction with the young person and care staff. The contracts are regularly reviewed and revised as young people demonstrate their sustained compliance.

The home's own behaviour management plan for young people lacks sufficient detail about how some behaviours are managed and the contents do not cross-reference with other documents such as risk assessments and contracts. Staff are trained in an approved behaviour management approach which promotes de-escalation techniques with physical intervention identified as a measure to be used as a last resort only. The approach is successfully implemented by staff as no restraints have been necessary to date. The range of sanctions imposed on the young people for the first three months of the year were somewhat unimaginative. However, the lack of effectiveness in assisting young people to take responsibility for their actions was recognised by the staff team. More meaningful measures are now imposed such as reparation. Young people say they can talk to staff and that staff 'listen and help'.

The home ensures young people live in a safe environment, free from hazards. Risk assessments for the premises are in place. Fire safety matters receive good attention; tests on fire safety systems are generally recorded weekly and fire fighting equipment is regularly serviced. Young people receive fire safety instruction and are involved in fire drills at appropriate intervals. The fire risk assessment for the premises is up to date. There is clear evidence to show the electrical system is well maintained and all electrical appliances are regularly serviced.

The system for holding information about staff is not yet firmly established. Some required information is kept securely within the home while other information is located in the human resources department. All required information was produced during the inspection and showed that a robust recruitment and selection process is in operation. This ensures all persons working in the home are deemed suitable to work with young people. Visitors to the home are robustly checked by staff who are vigilant. This protects young people.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Young people's individual needs are quickly identified and action is taken to ensure they receive appropriate support from a range of professionals and agencies. Young people are allocated a key worker on admission, although all staff are expected to work directly with young people to ensure their needs are addressed. Records of direct work with young people show the focus of discussion is clearly linked to targets in young people's plans, to help them develop and progress. However, the diversity of matters discussed mean that some areas are not followed through to demonstrate young people's greater understanding or development.

Young people are able to contact their social worker and an independent advocate provides further individual support. Parents and other family members are also encouraged to be actively involved in plans for young people's care. Staff welcome young people's friends to the home which supports their social integration. The collaborative approach with all interested persons means young people's individual needs are effectively promoted.

Staff appreciate the importance of education for the young people. An incentive scheme is used to encourage young people to benefit from education and training opportunities. This is successful in that young people are engaging in some form of education or training, suited to their individual needs. Young people have access to a computer in the home and a selection of reference and reading books to assist studying.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Each young person has a detailed action plan identifying their needs and showing how staff will promote and address them. Measurable objectives are specified with named persons to implement them. Good use is made of local agencies and a range of professionals to support young people's diverse needs. The action plans support the overall objective of young people's placements and contribute to helping prepare them for adulthood. Staff ensure young people know what objectives they are working towards and how they will be supported to attain them.

The home has established a system for regularly reviewing and updating young people's placement plans. The system includes a monthly, internal review of the plans although elements are updated as and when events or developments occur. Young people are invited to record their views about their care and future plans prior to their statutory reviews and to attend and participate in the meetings, which take place every six months or so. This ensures young people feel involved in decision making about their lives.

Young people are supported to maintain very close links with important people in their lives. Staff regularly communicate with family members and young people's social workers to ensure contact is facilitated. Staff readily give practical support to young people to make contact possible. Family members and friends are welcomed into the home. This ensures young people develop a social network which will support them when they leave the home.

Young people are fully consulted about their day-to-day care, future plans and general decision making in the home. They have very positive relationships with staff and freely talk to them about lots of different issues. Visits from social workers and an independent advocate provide young people with further opportunities to voice their opinions.

Staff clearly value young people and strive to offer them good quality care. The newly appointed staff team initially struggled to establish firm boundaries for young people. However, these have now been successfully negotiated and implemented. This offers young people a sense of security. Staff are respectful to young people and listen and act on what they have to say.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

Young people are supported to develop independence skills to prepare them for adulthood. Their action plans reflect the varying degree of assistance they require to prepare them practically and emotionally for leaving care. Pathway plans are in place for young people and initial objectives are incorporated into their overall action plan. Leaving care workers liaise with care staff to support young people. Young people are encouraged to develop skills in a range of areas. Currently, these include buying food on a budget, meal preparation and household chores. The tasks are linked to an incentive scheme and are revised as young people demonstrate their competency.

Young people live in a comfortable and homely environment that meets their needs. Good quality decoration, furniture and furnishings are provided and the home is well equipped. Young people say the house is 'too posh'. However, they also say they enjoy living there. Young people are encouraged to personalise their rooms and make good use of the personal and communal space available to them. The home is not conspicuous as a children's home and is close to social and community facilities.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The promotion of equality and diversity is good. Young people's individual needs are effectively addressed and they are supported to learn about other cultures. Staff ensure young people maintain contact with their family and other important people in their lives. They support young people to establish and maintain peer relationships and to make effective use of community facilities. Young people's views are taken into account and are acted upon. Their rights are respected and they are helped to understand that they have to take responsibility for their actions.

The home has a comprehensive booklet which explains its purpose and function. This is made available to all interested persons. A young person's leaflet is also available in small and large print. However, the latter is being revised with the assistance of young people, to improve the format and make it more child-friendly. Both documents provide details explaining how the home operates. This helps young people to know how they will be cared for and advises interested persons about what services they can expect from the home.

The culture of the home is open, friendly and child-centred. Staff are clear about the lines of responsibility in the home. Communication between staff is effective; there is a daily handover session and staff meetings take place on a fortnightly basis. This provides opportunities for staff to review young people's care and revise their practice to ensure they are consistent and effective in meeting young people's needs.

The appointment of additional staff in recent weeks to bring the team up to full capacity mean staffing levels are over required levels on some shifts. This can feel a little oppressive at times for the young people but is being managed as sensitively as possible. A balance is being achieved between males and females in the team.

All but one member of care staff holds a professional qualification in caring for children. Staff are committed to continuing professional development and attend on going training relevant to their tasks and the needs of the young people.

Monthly monitoring visits to the home are carried out by representatives of the department and county councillors. Matters requiring action are followed up in a timely manner by the manager.

Young people's records are well organised and contain up-to-date information about them, including relevant documents from their placing authority. Young people are encouraged to read and sign documents which describe how they will be cared for and helped to develop.

What must be done to secure future improvement?

Statutory requirements

This section sets out the actions, which must be taken so that the registered person meets the Care Standards Act 2000, The Childrens Homes Regulations 2001 and the National Minimum Standards. The Registered Provider must comply with the given timescales.

Standard	Action	Due date
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Recommendations

To improve the quality and standards of care further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- ensure behaviour management plans are comprehensive in covering all areas of concerns (NMS 22)
- ensure sufficient information is consistently held in staff files (NMS 27)
- ensure keyworking sessions are coordinated to follow through topics and issues. (NMS 7)

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Wilkinson House

Statement of Purpose

Wilkinson House

London Road, Sandbach, Cheshire, CW11 3BF

Tel: 01270 750 910

wilkinson@togethertrust.org

www.togethertrust.org.uk

Manager:

Louise Whitby

Responsible Person:

Pat Walton

The Together Trust Centre

Schools Hill, Cheadle SK8 1JE



Registration Number: SC059875

Introduction to the Together Trust

The Trust is a registered charity, which has been in existence for more than one hundred and thirty five years, offering a range of services to children/young people, vulnerable adults and their families. The services are provided primarily around residential care, fostering, adoption and education whilst also giving community support to young people and their families.

The Trust's residential services sector works in partnership with young people, families and commissioners, in the North of England and Wales to provide care in small group homes, single placement homes, short-break services and specifically designed resources.

The homes provide a range of services including; emergency, short, medium and long-term placements to those who are experiencing;

Emotional, behavioural and social difficulties
Physical disabilities
Learning disabilities
Autistic Spectrum Conditions

The Trust employs around 800 staff, providing care, education and social work services, including fostering and adoption, to over 1,000 children, young people and vulnerable adults each year.

The Together Trust believes that the staff they employ are their most valuable asset and make a major contribution to the organisations success. We ensure that staff are fully vetted and receive ongoing training and qualifications to complete a vital role in promoting the best outcomes for young people and vulnerable adults.

Equality and Diversity Practice

The Together Trust is committed to treating all individuals equally in all aspects of its work and will endeavour to promote Equal Opportunities with all organisations and individuals with whom it works.

It is the Together Trust's policy to ensure that all its employees celebrate and value the diversity of individuals and seeks to promote equality of opportunity for all, to eliminate discrimination particularly on the grounds of colour, gender, sexual orientation, ethnic origin, age, disability, religion and socio-economic background fostering a culture of mutual respect and understanding for people from different racial, cultural and religious groups.

The Together Trust treats all service users, visitors and employees with respect and dignity, and seeks to provide a positive working and learning environment free from discrimination, harassment and promoting equality of opportunity for all, to assist people to fulfil their potential.

The Together Trust believes that children, young people, young adults and staff alike will benefit from the employment of a diverse and representative workforce, of both women and men at all levels of responsibility and across all areas of work thus hoping to provide positive role models for the young people and adults in our care.

We will constantly challenge individuals or groups who discriminate against any of our service users in any way.

Pat Walton
Director of Social Care

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Current Staffing Details

1. Purpose and philosophy of the home.

Wilkinson House is owned by Cheshire County Council and managed by The Together Trust in partnership with Cheshire Children's services. The home offers specialised care for children aged 10 to under 17 on admission who are being looked after by the local authority.

Wilkinson House's philosophy of care is based upon the belief that, for children/young people, the ideal placement is within an appropriate family setting, however it is recognised that for some children/young people such a setting may prove difficult. We also believe that wherever possible sibling groups should remain together both during their time at Wilkinson House and afterwards.

The purpose of Wilkinson House is to prepare children to live within a family environment. The skills required for this are very similar, if not the same, whether that family is their own family or a foster family. Placement within a family will have a greater chance of long-term success if the children clearly understand the expectations that will be placed upon them within a family environment.

For some children/young people a family placement will not be possible and in these circumstances the children/young people will either be prepared for an alternative residential provision that has been identified to meet their needs or can continue to live at Wilkinson House where they will be prepared for semi independent living.

During their stay within Wilkinson House, children/young people will, by right, be afforded the opportunities to develop and enhance their practical, social, emotional, and educational skills in order for them to reach their full potential.

Many looked after children/young people feel that they are isolated and different; we believe that we should actively breakdown these barriers whenever the opportunity arises. Being in the residential home should not be a discriminatory factor for them and all children/young people should be afforded the same opportunities.

Primary Purpose

According to the needs of each child and young person, the aim of this residential facility is to:

- Resettle the child/young person with his or her family of birth.
- Secure a permanent substitute family placement.
- Identify and prepare for a transfer to an alternate residential setting.

Our primary purpose is to provide safe, positive daily living experiences where children and young people can come to terms with the traumas of separation, and begin to work towards their long-term placement.

Wilkinson House works closely with other agencies within Cheshire including the Multi-Professional Support Team, the Children in Cheshire's Care team and an Educational Psychologist. There is an Educational Liaison Worker linked to the home, whose role is to

work with the children living at Wilkinson House to promote them to engage, maintain and develop in their educational placements in an attempt to make the learning process an enjoyable experience. We also have direct access to a Play Therapist employed by the Trust.

2. Management and Administration

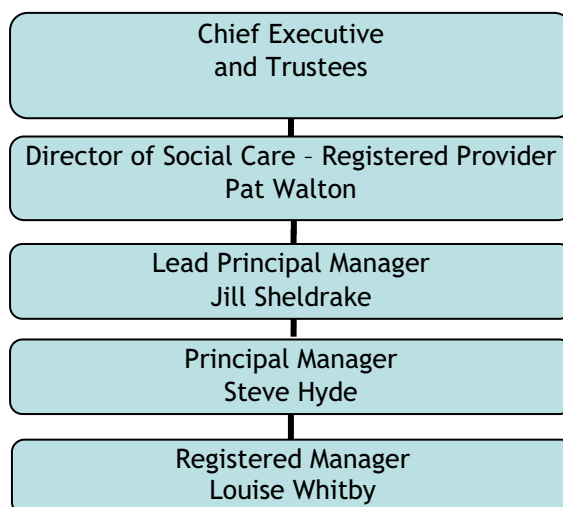
The Responsible Body

Together Trust
The Together Trust Centre
Schools Hill
Cheadle
SK8 1JE

Responsible Person

Pat Walton

The Together Trust Organisational Chart



Registration Details

OFSTED
Ofsted National Business Unit
Royal Exchange Buildings
St Ann's Square
Manchester
M2 7LA

Telephone number: 08456 40 40 40
Email: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

Inspection reports are available from Ofsted or Wilkinson House on request. Social Workers are actively encouraged to contact Ofsted prior to placing a child/young person at Wilkinson House.

Management

The relevant qualifications and work experience of the Registered Manager:

Louise Whitby joined the Trust in July of 1998, for the past nine years Louise has worked at various levels within a number of homes up to Registered Manager level. She has a wealth of knowledge and experience within the care of adolescents, as well as skills learnt of working in the area of young people with autism and learning difficulties.

Louise has an NVQ4 in Caring for Children and Young People and a Level 4 in Management. She also holds her D32/33 Assessors award.

Louise has completed all relevant and mandatory internal/external training and continues to seek out and complete all other training to enhance and develop her skills further. Louise is also responsible for delivering the Child Development training to other staff within the Trust.

The Manager is responsible for ensuring that there are systems in place to ensure the monitoring of performance against the homes Statement of Purpose. This includes ensuring that the home is financially viable on a monthly basis through the year. Bound books are also monitored regularly in order to highlight patterns which can be used to ensure safeguarding and to improve outcomes for young people.

The home has an up to date development plan which highlights areas to be monitored, developed and improved over a twelve month period. This is informed by the organisations Strategic Statement.

The Manager partakes in an On-call rota which provides 24 hour support to a cluster of homes within the Together Trust. There is an On-call protocol which provides consistency of approach across the homes and makes specific reference to the appropriate use of external emergency services e.g. police and EDT. To support the on-call Managers there is also a Principal Manager On-call.

Staffing

At Wilkinson House we celebrate and value the diversity of individuals, and believe that young people and staff alike will benefit from the employment of both women and men at all levels of responsibility, and across all areas of work, thus hoping to provide positive role models for the young people in our care. At Wilkinson House we treat all children/young people, visitors and employees with respect and dignity, and seek to provide a positive working and learning environment free from discrimination, harassment and promote equality of opportunity for all. Please see Appendix 1 for current staffing details.

The arrangements for the supervision, training and development of employees

All staff receive a thorough and comprehensive induction to the work of Wilkinson House using the GSCC induction standards.

Together Trust has a comprehensive staff development and supervision strategy which, together with the Annual Appraisal process, is intended to be positive, continuous and systematic. It is individually designed, organisational and is intended to extend each employee's knowledge, skills and experience for the benefit of the young people in our care. It also enables job satisfaction.

All staff are entitled to formal, planned, professional, individual supervision on at least a monthly basis, or more frequently if required. Training needs for individual staff will be identified through supervision and annual appraisal. The individual needs will inform the detailed overall training strategy for the home, which forms part of the Homes development plan. Training will be delivered both in-house and through the Together Trust Training Team, following the Together Trust's 'Training Framework'

The Training Team based at the Together Trust Centre provides a comprehensive Training and Conference Programme for Together Trust staff and external candidates. The programme for residential social care workers meets the criteria set by the CWDC and meets the GSCC standards and is designed to ensure that staff at all levels have the necessary skills and knowledge.

BUPA Employee Assistance Programme

The Together Trust offers all staff the BUPA Employee Assistance Programme. This is free of charge and provides on-line help/advice/counselling, depending on the employee's need. This service is useful for employees seeking additional information whilst absent due to sickness in relation to benefits and entitlements, and, indeed, in relation to stress related absences.

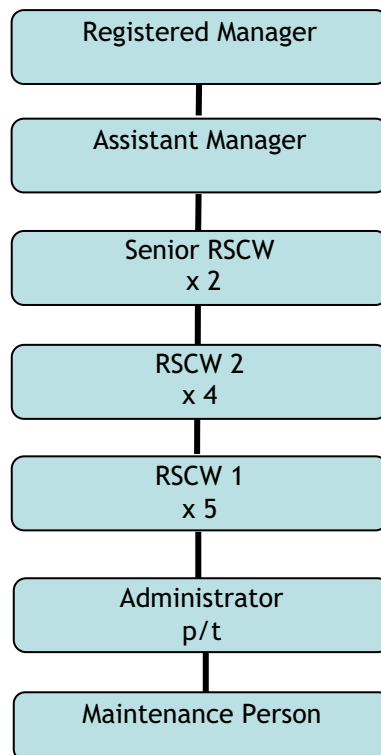
The Organisational structure of the Children's home

The service is externally overseen on behalf of the Trust by a Principal Manager

Steve Hyde
The Together Trust Centre
Principal Managers Office
Schools Hill
Cheadle
SK8 1JE

Tel: 0161 283 4871
Fax: 0161 283 4854

The Principal Manager has direct line management responsibility for the unit Manager.
Within the home itself the staffing structure is as follows:



Staff Qualifications / Experience and Vetting criteria

The aim is to create a balanced staff team taking into consideration such things as gender, age, experience and qualifications in order to create the maximum opportunities, for the support and guidance for the children/young people.

All staff are subject to vetting via Police and reference checks, before they commence employment and are appraised on a twice-yearly basis, with monthly supervisory sessions.

New, unqualified staff to the Trust undertake the Common Core Induction Programme, in line with the Children's Workforce Development Council or Learning Disability Award Framework, and progress to the Health and Social Care Award NVQ3. (Central training is an accredited centre for the Open College Network and City and Guilds) New, qualified staff undertake the specified mandatory courses following the 'Training Framework'. Staff at all levels are expected to evidence and demonstrate continuous professional development, using the GSCC guidelines of 15 days over a 3 year period as a minimum.

The team is based upon a Manager, Assistant Manager, 2 senior workers and 7 permanent staff with support from a number of 'relief staff', who will cover during holidays, training courses, and offer flexibility to meet an individual child/young person's needs.

The intention is to maximise the number of staff 'on duty' at times when the children/young people are within the unit. There will be a minimum of one member of staff on duty when the children/young people are at home. One member of staff will 'sleep in' the building each evening, with staff support until bedtime where necessary and management On-call in case of emergency. When there are two children/young people in residence the second staff member will support the shift until bedtime.

To cover for holidays, sickness and any other unknown eventuality, the Trust employs our own bank of relief workers who undergo all the regulatory checks of full time employees and undertake the mandatory training required by the organisation. To offer consistency to both the young people and the unit we try to keep this number to a minimum. Under normal circumstances relief staff will be on duty with a more senior worker and are not expected to key-work individual children/young people.

The staff at Wilkinson House meet regularly with the staff of the other homes, both in house and externally for workforce training and development. Advice and support is available from other Managers and staff within the Trust with specific specialist knowledge and experience.

Quality Assurance

The Trust employs a Quality Assurance Regulatory Inspector who visits all residential services monthly. These inspections look into varying aspects of practice and record keeping including talking to the residents/vulnerable adults wherever possible. The reports of the findings are used to inform and improve practice within the individual homes as well as highlighting areas of improvement needed across the organisation. This role has ensured that good practice is shared across services enabling staff to share ideas and knowledge, benefiting all those we look after.

3. Placement Facilities, Registration Details, Admission Criteria and Referral Procedure

Placement facilities

Wilkinson House is a partnership project with Cheshire County Council and is situated in Sandbach. It is a large detached house with extensive grounds. The house has two large sitting rooms and a computer room for the use of the young people. It also has a large well-equipped kitchen/dining room and a separate laundry.

There are six bedrooms and two for staff which are all single and decorated taking into account each young person's choice and preferences. Each bedroom has a sink unit and there are 3 bathrooms, 1 with a shower, a separate toilet and downstairs a further shower room and separate toilet.

Wilkinson House is situated close to road and rail networks and is easily accessible to local amenities. There are numerous local groups which offer a variety of activities for the young people including youth clubs, sports clubs, scouts, guides etc.

Current Ofsted Registration Details

The following conditions apply to the registration

The registered person:

- Must display the certificate
- May provide care and accommodation for 6 children with emotional or behavioural difficulties, 6 children with learning difficulties and 6 children with disabilities.
- May provide care and accommodation for no more than 6 children of either sex from 8 years to under 17 years at any one time.
- May provide care for children outside the specified age range in an emergency situation when notified to and agreed by Ofsted.

Admission Criteria

The current admission criteria age is between 10 and 14 years, although this is flexible for a sibling group situation and for children who may be chronologically younger than their actual age. The aim for Wilkinson House is to provide medium to long-term care to children and young people, working intensively to support them through all transition processes which can include re-integration into a family setting or into semi-independent/independent living.

The service provides 3 beds for East Cheshire Local Authority, this includes an assessment bed. The assessment bed will be utilised to complete a thorough residential assessment. This assessment will take a maximum of 6 months to complete. The assessment is to ascertain the most appropriate placement required and where this can be met. The assessment will also identify the most effective transition plan for the young person.

There are a further 3 beds identified for Cheshire West and Chester Local Authority.

The suitability of children and young people for admission to Wilkinson House will be identified through the following process:-

Admission Criteria - Criteria for Referral

- Young Person will be from East Cheshire/Cheshire West and Chester Local Authority
- The child/young person is aged between 10 and under 14 years, or is part of a sibling group containing children/young people within that age range.
- The child/young person's needs can be met, either directly by Wilkinson House or in conjunction with outside agencies and networks. (If the latter applies then we must be specific at this point, and not admit the child or young person in the hope that such arrangements will be made at a later stage).
- The physical layout and daily structure is appropriate to the child or young person's abilities and level of understanding.
- The extent to which the wishes and views of the child/young person and their parents (or those with parental responsibility) have been obtained and acted upon, i.e. if the child or young person or parents are unsure or unhappy about the proposed placement, have alternatives been actively sought.

The following criteria will be considered: -

- Do we have the physical room and resources to accommodate the child/young person appropriately?
- Is the child/young person's age appropriate for accommodation at Wilkinson House?
- Is there an agreed and viable plan for the child/young person's medium to long-term placement?
- Has a provision been agreed for education?
- Has funding for the placement and where appropriate, for education, been agreed?
- Admissions will normally be planned and involve a minimum of two or three introductory/pre-placement visits.

Contributory Factors

In addition to the admissions criteria, before progressing the referrals, we must also consider the dynamics of the impact of introducing a new child/young person on the existing resident.

Consideration must be given both to the impact of the child/young person on the resident, and vice-versa. This has to be a value judgement, and can only be made at a high level

with the benefit of in-depth knowledge and understanding of the resident young people and the proposed referral.

No matter how detailed or stringent the referral process, there will be occasions when the placement proves not to be appropriate after a child/young person is admitted. It is necessary, therefore, to insist on a contingency plan at the point of referral.

Admission Process

If, after the previous criteria and factors have been considered, it is agreed that Wilkinson House may be a suitable placement for a child/young person, an induction and admission plan will be drawn up. This plan will usually consist of the following stages: -

- Social Worker to discuss the referral they have made with the child/young person.
- Social Worker to discuss the referral with the child/young person's parents or anyone else, with sufficient interests in the child/young person.

A meeting at Wilkinson House between the Social Worker and the Manager. This meeting is designed, both to assess the suitability of the placement and ensure the transfer of all relevant information, namely:

- Detailed background information with particular emphasis on behaviours
- Written Local Authority chronology of the child/young person which identifies significant events and moves
- A copy of the Care Order or Accommodation Contract
- Consent to medical treatment and a full medical history
- Previous assessments of the child/young person's needs, either educational, social, or emotional.
- A copy of any statement of special educational need.
- A copy of the referring Authority's complaints procedure.
- A copy of the referring Authority's Safeguarding Procedure.
- All appropriate L.A.C documents.

Where possible staff will endeavour to visit a child/young person in his/her current placement and then invite and encourage the child/young person to visit Wilkinson House.

Initial visits to Wilkinson House by the child/young person are designed in order that they may view Wilkinson House during its working day. This will include, time with the current resident, care-staff and management. We request that the child/young person be accompanied by their Social Worker, a close member of their family or a significant adult.

To complete this process and before a child/young person 'moves in' they will be invited for at least two visits, unaccompanied by Social Worker/family.

Wilkinson House fully accepts and understands that any move for a child/young person is a traumatic experience, and that every effort must be made to welcome and reassure the young people on their arrival. As such we will try to ensure the following: -

- That the child/young person's key worker is there to welcome them
- That the child/young person is introduced and welcomed by the Manager or Senior worker
- That the other children/young people are around where possible to welcome the child/young person
- That the child/young person's bedroom has been prepared for their arrival, although they will subsequently be able to choose their own decoration
- That their immediate physical needs will be met
- That they are shown around the building
- That time is taken to explain to the child/young person what will happen next
- That the child/young person has received a copy of the children/young person's induction booklet
- That the child/young person has received a copy of the complaints' procedure of their own Local Authority as well as that of the Together Trust, and understands their rights.

Care is taken that this process is both informal and child-centred. It is designed to reassure the child/young person, not to confuse or pressurise them.

The formal admission/statutory meeting will usually take place within one week after the child/young person arrives.

Both parties can assess the suitability of the placement in more detail, prior to the formal admission. During this period, the child/young person will be encouraged to maintain contact with their family and their Social Worker, and to discuss their needs and concerns with their key worker.

The admissions meeting will be attended by the child/young person, their parents, members of the family, the child/young person's key worker, the Manager of Wilkinson House, the child/young person's Social Worker, a senior representative of the placing authority, a representative from education and any other significant party.

The aim of the meeting will be to establish a Placement Plan, and to outline clear objectives, expectations and responsibilities for the placement at Wilkinson House. To ensure that all parties, understand their part within this plan and agree both on the

objectives and implementation. The meeting should be chaired by a senior representative of the placing authority.

Fast track admissions

Wilkinson House can offer admission to young people who meet the above criteria via a fast track admission. This process follows the same admission criteria as detailed above however it is acknowledge that this process will be within a much shorter time frame.

Wilkinson House will ensure that extra care and attention is given to the process to ensure that all the criteria is met.

Wilkinson House will always endeavour to admit a child or young person in a planned way however we accept that this is not always attainable. Following the initial referral the person referring will speak with the manager or delegated person in the home where as much information as possible regarding the child or young person will be provided.

Children and young people will only be admitted via the fast track procedure after consideration is given to the following:

- Does the home meet the needs of the young person?
- Is the young person's admission detrimental to the existing group of young people?
- Has the young person a risk of fire setting or arson?
- Is the young person's present placement deteriorating to such an extent that it is detrimental to their needs?

If it is possible to offer an appropriate placement at Wilkinson House then the child or young person will be offered an opportunity to visit the home and meet the staff team and other young people.

With all fast track admission there is a requirement that all relevant paperwork is received prior to admission.

A formal admission meeting will be held within one week where the criteria will be the same as for a planned admission but will also include the formulating of the person centred plan and appropriate risk assessments.

Emergency Admissions

The Together Trust cannot admit on an emergency basis any child/young person who has a risk or history of fire setting, arson or conviction of arson. It is only possible to admit a young person with a history of this in a planned way so that the appropriate level of consultation can take place with our insurance company.

Children will only be taken in emergency situations in the following circumstances:

- No other alternative appropriate placement can be found.

- To maintain a sibling group together.
- The present placement is deteriorating to such an extent that it is detrimental to the child's needs.

An emergency admission could be required because:

- the child or young person has become the subject of a police or social services emergency protection orders
- the child or young person has had a sudden breakdown of a placement which is late in the day or out of hours.
- This is requested by the court.
- The young person is in crisis.

In these circumstances, the following procedure will apply:

Contact is normally made by phone. At this stage, as much information as possible regarding the child is required and the completion of the Together Trust Placement Form.

A formal admission meeting will be held within 72 hours where the criteria will be the same as for a planned admission but will also include the formulating of the care plan.

4. Principles

The home's Statement of Purpose is built upon and around the Children Act 1989, Care Standards Act 2000, National Minimum Standards 2001, and the Every Child Matters Agenda for Change under the Children Act 2004, Disability Discrimination Act.

We aim to achieve a standard of excellence in our services and therefore welcome comments from any person having access to this document, or contact with the home.

5. Being Healthy

Health Needs and Promotion

The Trust strongly promotes the healthy lifestyle of children and young people and is committed to delivering a quality led service based on the belief that children and young people should be able to lead a healthy lifestyle and take control of their lives and contribute to promoting their individual health needs that affect their day to day care.

The designated person who is able to focus on the health needs within the Trust is Wendy Taylor who is based in the Training Department at The Together Trust Centre. She is a Registered Nurse with additional responsibility for aspects of Health and Safety. She has over 25 years experience of working in Health, Education and Social Care environments.

Advice and guidance to staff and young people is available through the use of resources, workshops and training, in order to promote health and wellbeing. These topics include:-

Introduction to Health and Safety, Promoting Healthy Lifestyles, Administration of Medication, Movement Management of Loads/Loads and People, Emergency First Aid, Food Safety Level 2, Promoting Equality and Valuing Diversity, Adolescent Wellbeing (sexual health) and Infectious Diseases.

All children and young people within the home have their individual health needs assessed and identified at an early stage. This is then recorded in a Placement Plan which includes a detailed health plan, which is a working document that clearly outlines their health needs and health promotion including a detailed medical history, specific needs, all dental hearing and optical checks and on-going medical support required.

In addition to this systems are in place to effectively record all administered medication, medical appointments, accidents, illnesses and injuries within the home.

Particular health needs which may impact on future outcomes for the child/young person are identified at the earliest opportunity and staff actively seek out the services needed to address these e.g. involvement of specialist health workers, CAMHS etc.

The plan takes a clear structure that sets out to show how these needs will be met, who will be responsible for supporting/actioning each area and an indicator of timescales involved. Children and young people are fully supported within the home to promote the development of these plans and how they are implemented and progressed.

Children and young people review their plans regularly through discussions with their key worker/management team, via planning meetings, where they are encouraged to attend or make a verbal or written contribution and through the reviewing process. All children and young people are encouraged to take an active role in their statutory review, from the initial decisions in respect to who should be invited, reviewing the recommendations from the last review, to setting the scene for the current review by completing 'consultation/feedback forms'. Following the review the children and young people spend time with their key worker to ensure that they understand and are happy with the decisions that are made.

There are aged appropriate booklets within the home to support the young peoples understanding of the purpose of the home 'Children's Information Booklets' and other resources that support the participation of the children/young people around health 'Health Care Booklets' and transitions, 'Moving on and Developing Life Skills'. In addition to this the staff ensure that children and young people have access to, and information about health and social issues and support them in using such advice.

All children/young people will be encouraged to undergo a full appropriate medical on an annual basis, which will aim to establish that the physical health of the child/young person is satisfactory. This information will also be an important basis for the future placement of the child/young person in a family situation, so that there is a continuum of health care for each individual.

Health issues that relate to ethnicity; race; sexuality, faith, belief are fully assessed in respect of each child and young person and these issues are explicitly addressed in her or his plan with actions as to how these are to be addressed.

Medication

Wilkinson House operates an effective medication policy, procedure and practice guidance which specifically addresses the use of non-prescribed and prescribed medication. Staff have been given copies of this policy to read and have signed to say they have read it. Staff show that they understand their role and responsibilities and have undertaken the required medication training with induction and this is updated annually and their competence to administer medication assessed.

The Regulation 33 visits confirm that policy is put into practice.

The home undertakes a rigorous risk assessment process before children and young people are given responsibility for their own medication (at an appropriate age and understanding) and makes sure that safe storage for such medication is available when required. Accurate medication records are seen as key to the effective management of health care matters, staff are aware of the importance and necessity of them always being up to date and fully comprehensive.

The home has a sustained record of full compliance with the administration, safekeeping and disposal of Controlled Drugs.

Meals and Dietary needs

At Wilkinson House we provide a balanced menu, which promotes general development and the food provided for the children and young people shows that the staff have a very good understanding of what makes up a good balanced diet, have had training about nutrition and put this in to practice. Menu planning is adventurous, integrates culturally appropriate food and encourages children and young people to try new dishes.

Subsequently, children/young people will assist in the formulation of menus and will be encouraged to give thought to healthy eating. Under the supervision of staff, children/young people will be encouraged to be actively involved in the purchase of provisions for Wilkinson House as well as having the opportunity to prepare and cook some meals. Special diets will be catered for and we will also facilitate children/young people trying foods from different cultures.

Through training and development the staff have a sound knowledge about eating disorders and difficulties with eating and work very closely with any professional who is helping a child or young person with such difficulties.

The food provided for the children and young people shows that the staff have a very good understanding of what makes up a good balanced diet, have had training about nutrition and put this in to practice.

Sexual Health

It is generally accepted that children/young people will receive sex education and information in school. At Wilkinson House we aim to create an open atmosphere where sexual matters can be discussed, so that children/young people feel free to ask questions either individually or in a group situation. We try to ensure that children/young people are able to develop a healthy and responsible attitude to sexual behaviour. Where appropriate we will engage the assistance of other health professionals.

Mental health and emotional wellbeing

Children and young people who are looked after away from their family of origin have usually experienced loss and disruption in their lives; others have had to cope with trauma and abuse. Many of these children/young people show remarkable resilience given the experiences they have had, others go through periods when they may struggle with the challenges of home life, school, relationships with peers and developing their independence and sense of who they are. There is a high prevalence of mental health difficulties amongst this group of children and young people and concerns about their access to appropriate, effective and timely support. At Wilkinson House we will work to promote the children/young peoples mental health and emotional wellbeing; support those who experience emotional distress or develop mental health problems. We will ensure that where there is an identified need, children/young people who require the input of CAMHS or any other, mental health or therapeutic support services, referrals will be made in consultation with the placing social worker. Access to CAMHS, psychiatric services or any other specialist provision would be via the protocol of each individual service. Any specialist service required would be agreed with the placing authority as there might be an extra fee required by the agency concerned.

Smoking, Drug and Solvent misuse

Leaflets and posters will be available, but care is taken to ensure that these are not evident in the living areas of the home. Information about smoking and related illnesses and preventing drug or solvent misuse is available. Opportunities to discuss these issues with the children/young people are catered for within group meetings, taking a proactive approach rather than waiting until there is a problem. Wilkinson House will promote positive links with agencies in the community and voluntary support networks.

6. Staying Safe

Safeguarding

Under the terms of the Children Act 2004 all children and young people have a right to be safeguarded from a wider range of potential risks than previously understood. This involves the need for staff to be vigilant about dangers outside the home e.g. hotspots of busy traffic, unlit areas in the community. Staff also need to be vigilant against bullying within the home and externally. This includes the use of ICT.

Children/Young people at Wilkinson House have the right to a high level and standard of protection from harm. This includes the vetting of visitors to Wilkinson House.

The selection and recruitment of staff is consistent with National Minimum Standards and the Safeguarding Vulnerable groups Act 2006. All staff receive Safeguarding training within their Induction period.

There is mandatory specialist training for residential staff through individual safeguarding workbooks and in-house training by Principal Managers who have a wealth of knowledge and skills in safeguarding issues. This includes the safeguarding issues for children and young people with disabilities including autism.

The handling of actual or suspected child abuse within any of the Together Trust establishments will accord with the safeguarding procedures implemented by the Local Safeguarding Board.

The Responsible Person monitors all safeguarding and children and young people's complaints.

All staff involved with the provision of care for young people in residential settings and schools are trained to be alert to the possibility of abuse by other children/young people, visitors and staff. Together Trust policies and managerial procedures recognise this possibility and try to prevent circumstances arising, which could encourage abuse.

The day to day monitoring of children/young people's actions and behaviour is part of the normal supervisory/managerial process. There is an expectation within the Trust that wherever there are concerns about a child/young person; the staff will record them accurately and in a detailed fashion.

Safeguarding issues can be addressed at an individual level through Placement Plans, conflict resolution, risk assessments, behaviour support plans, and individual work through house meetings with the young people.

Wilkinson House also has a support network for children/young people if they are being bullied or if they are bullying, by listening to both protagonist and the person being bullied, through Conflict Resolution. All staff are trained in anti-bullying and conflict resolution. Young people to be involved in resolving bullying incidents through the following:

- Being able to talk/sign freely through any difficulties with both the person being bullied and the protagonist with the help if necessary of another person.
- Being able to talk/sign freely with key worker or other members of staff.
- Being able to talk/sign to the person in charge of the home.
- Being able to talk/sign to an independent person such as teacher, friend, relative or their Social Worker.
- Being given knowledge of their Children's Rights Service and how to contact this person.
- Being given knowledge and understanding of independent advocacy services.

- This information is also outlined in the child/young person's induction which is explained to them during the admission process.

Individual Support

Together Trust promotes all young people having regular contact with the Local Authority children's rights service and where it is felt applicable independent visitors are sought. This provides an opportunity for children/young people to talk about their situation, express any concerns about the home and have the freedom to discuss issues in private.

Control and Self Discipline

Wilkinson House creates an ethos where structure and routines are promoted to enable and empower children/young people to manage their feelings and behaviours appropriately. The rules that exist are in recognition of our respect for others, both individually and in terms of group living.

All children/young people are given a copy of the 'Child/Young person's Information Booklet', which is explained to them, taking into account their age and understanding. This outlines the quality of care and safeguarding that they will receive and what is expected of them in terms of appropriate and socially acceptable behaviour.

Children/Young people are enabled to gain appropriate levels of self control and personal responsibility, and to observe social boundaries not only in terms of group living, but more importantly on an individual level, therefore enabling them to function in a multitude of settings, such as a family, school and local community. On some occasions some children/young people struggle in managing their behaviour appropriately. Staff will try to work with the children/young people to talk through the issues, however, where a child/young person is presenting physical behaviour which is deemed as dangerous to themselves or others it may necessitate a need to perform safe holds or in extreme cases restrain. All staff are trained, with annual updates in line with BILD (British Institute of Learning Disability). All restraints are recorded and appropriate people notified.

Behaviour Support / Management

The Together Trust made the decisions that it would adopt PROACT SCIPr UK® as its approved method of behaviour support for the children/young people in its service.

The rationale behind PROACT SCIPr UK® is to emphasise positive behaviour support and person-centred planning rather physical interventions or restraint. All children/young people who live at Wilkinson House should have a detailed behaviour support plan which identifies the following areas: strengths, need, behaviour exhibited and coping strategies. Staff are encouraged through team meetings to complete STAR charts regularly for children/young people relating to a particular behaviour and what has contributed to it. The STAR acronym stands for: S - setting conditions, T - triggers, A - actions and R - results.

PROACT SCIPr UK® promotes minimal use of intervention and feels it is vital that when interventions are used, they must be thoroughly taught and revised, and a limited number

of interventions used. This means that interventions are more likely to be remembered and used correctly in times of crisis. The physical intervention must be effective within the normal staff ratio, must not cause pain or panic, must not put pressure on joints and must not inhibit breathing or circulation.

Escort holds assists an individual to be taken to a calmer setting and ensure good body alignment and safe handling practice for the staff as well as comfort and stress reduction for the individual. Staff are taught to avoid holding where ever possible, to protect themselves and others and to deflect blows.

On the occasions it may be necessary for a member of staff to restrain a child/young person who is presenting violent behaviour it is our policy to use the taught techniques provided by PROACT SCIPr UK® and only to restrain a child/young person to prevent that child/young person harming them self or others or from significant damage to property.

Additional Measures of Control

Policies on the use of permitted sanctions and those consequences and controls, which are prohibited, form part of the Together Trust Manual of Policies and Procedures and have been adopted from the 1989 Children Act.

At Wilkinson House we believe that it is more important to create an atmosphere in which positive behaviour is encouraged through praise and rewards and PROACT SCIPr UK® behaviour plans, than to concentrate on dealing with negative behaviour through the imposition of sanctions. Clearly however there is a place for consequences in addressing and changing unacceptable and inappropriate behaviour and those used are listed as follows: -

- Restriction or withdrawal of outings and leisure activities.
- The imposition of extra tasks that should always be positive and as productive as possible.
- A child/young person may be sent to bed half an hour earlier than usual.
- In the event of children/young people stealing or committing deliberate damage it should be expected that they contribute to repair or replacement through a reduction in their pocket money each week of a maximum of two thirds of the full amount.
- Confiscation of a potentially dangerous or seriously undesirable article or substance. To be returned when it is deemed to be neither dangerous nor undesirable.
- Apologise to anyone who has been verbally abused or physically hurt.

Unauthorised Absence / Missing from Home

Wilkinson House recognises that running away is one of the most common methods that children/young people employ to cope with anxiety or demonstrate their confusion and

distress. The staff will work with children/young people to ensure that they feel safe and find other means of expressing their distress. Every incident of a child/young person being absent without permission will be dealt with seriously as follows:

All children/young people who abscond will be reported to the police immediately. We will then ensure that the following persons are contacted as soon as possible:

- Social Worker (this may be via E.D.T during non-office hours).
- Appropriate parents.
- Other significant adults.

On return from an unauthorised absence the child/young person will be offered support in terms of their physical and emotional needs and be given the opportunity to contact family, friends or social worker immediately. The school to which the child/young person attends will also be contacted the following day, so that support and understanding for the child/young person can be offered at all venues.

The likelihood of a child/young person going missing from the home will be assessed and detailed in their individual residential Placement Plan. This will be reviewed and monitored on at least a monthly basis.

As recommended in the response to the 'Lost in Care' report, all children/young people will be seen on their return by either their social worker or a representative of their Local Authority or if this cannot be arranged by a Together Trust Principal Manager.

Significant Events

All significant events are reported to Ofsted without delay. This is done by the Manager in the first instance but otherwise by a senior member of staff in the absence of the Manager. Where there has been a telephone conversation to Ofsted this must be confirmed in writing with a copy securely retained in the home. All relevant parties must also be notified. This includes local authority case holding social workers and the parents of the child/young person unless to do so would present a risk to the child/young person.

Fire Regulations / Insurance and Fire Cover

The Wilkinson House building has an accredited fire system, which includes heat and smoke detection throughout the building. There are also appropriate fire extinguishers at recommended designated points, and the staff team undergo training in their usage.

These fire systems are checked and maintained in line with the Together Trust's Policies and Procedures, and are recorded and monitored through Management checks.

All children/young people are regularly informed of the procedures and non-compliance is treated as a serious incident. There is a statutory requirement that a minimum of four fire drills are carried out each year. It is important that all children/young people are aware of

the procedures prior to admission and any child/young person not adhering to fire procedures will undertake direct work with their key worker to address this issue.

A designated officer has the responsibility of ensuring that a co-ordinated approach is adopted between all relevant parties with relating to safety checks and maintenance equipment.

There is a risk assessment file in the home which details risk assessments relating to fire, buildings and the environment. All risk assessments are updated regularly.

Due to the condition of insurance cover the Together Trust cannot accept any child/young person who has had an arson conviction. However, we are still able to consider a child/young person with a history of fire setting but no actual or pending arson conviction provided there is a full history and a clear health and safety risk assessment in place to deal with the behaviour. Each case will be independently assessed.

To ensure the protection of residents and staff, Together Trust has overall insurance cover to protect the agency's assets and liabilities, which includes Together Trust legal liabilities to any employee and third party person's to a limit of indemnity commensurate with the level and extent of activities undertaken.

7. Enjoying and Achieving

Education

The Together Trust is committed to enabling children and young people in accessing education, which meets their assessed needs. We believe that this is an important area of a child/young person's life and often the only stable and consistent factor in the movement between residential care and family life. The Together Trust recognises that educational opportunities do not just take place within school and college settings. Residential staff demonstrate their effectiveness as role models for learning opportunities.

Each child/young person's personal education plan will be reflected within the residential Placement Plan. All children/young people are encouraged to become members of the local library and there is an internet linked computer in the home primarily for educational purposes. In addition to this the home buys weekly newspapers and magazines for the children/young people. Equally trips out will often have opportunities for learning, e.g. developing social skills. Friendships are important for all children/young people and they are encouraged to make and sustain relationships.

Children and young people are supported in progressing their individual educational plans with the support of either their placing authority, or if they are to access the Trust's educational provision, to ensure that it meets their needs.

The staff group are fully expected to understand the needs of each child/young person they are caring for and utilise their skills and knowledge to ensure that they young people in their care are accessing education which meets their needs in respect of their ability, sexuality, gender, race and culture.

The staff are positive about promoting the education of children/young people in its care. Staff liaise with all the relevant agencies in supporting the children/young people in meeting their educational needs consistently. Robust and positive relationships are encouraged with the schools and colleges the children/young people attend and if a problem is identified it is addressed with the school and the child/young person to avoid any gaps in school attendance. The staff and family were appropriate attend all open days, special events and parents' evenings with the children/young people if the parents or the child/young person would want the support of staff. It is the responsibility of Wilkinson House to identify and liaise with designated educational staff for looked after children in each school the children/young people attend.

If a child/young person is not able to attend school for what ever reason, the Trust expects all staff to liaise with appropriate colleagues in education and placing authority to ensure that something is put in place on a temporary basis so as to avoid the child/young person missing out on their education. Should a child/young person not be able to attend school, then education can be support in the home for a limited period of time.

Staff advocate on behalf of the children/young people in their care to attend the school of their choice, as far as is practicably possible to ensure continuity.

The Trust supports educational trips for the children/young people it cares for to ensure that they do not feel left out, because of their status of being in care, and are assisted in every way to enable them to integrate in their educational settings.

Leisure

The Together Trust has a commitment in ensuring that children/young people are actively encouraged and supported in taking part in leisure activities within the homes that they live in and within the community at large.

In order to facilitate the process of individual personal development, Wilkinson House also offers a variety of indoor and outdoor play. Children/Young People have their own private individual bedrooms where they can retire in private; to listen to music, read a book, play a game or simply get away from it all. All children/young people are encouraged to develop and pursue hobbies, interests and outside activities, including sport, clubs, music etc.

Children/young people are also encouraged to take part in extra-curricular school activities, to visit the homes of friends from school and to invite friends to the home. Where it is clear that a child/young person has a particular gift or talent we will actively encourage the continuation and development of this skill.

Staff actively share with the children/young people the interests they have in various sports and hobbies to provide the children/young people positive role models. The children/young people are encouraged to be involved in the planning of their holidays and short breaks. The Together Trust is very aware of the fact that a lot of children/young people who come to reside in its homes, may not have had the opportunity to travel within this country or abroad or be exposed to different cultures and communities, therefore a concerted effort is made to ensure that children/young people do have the opportunity to experience a wide variety of activities, festivals, events and holidays.

Religious Instruction / Observance

In line with Together Trust policy and procedures relating to Equal Opportunities and Diversity, the home will ensure that children and young people are encouraged to explore, celebrate and take pride in their religious/cultural identity.

From referral the individual's religion, beliefs and culture are taken into consideration and every effort is made to ensure an appropriate staffing structure that takes into account, gender, culture and ethnicity, and this is promoted through our robust selection and recruitment process.

Staff positively promote and value difference. Children and young people will be provided with practical, educational and social activities that promote diversity, ethnicity and religious needs such as personal care items, food/dietary needs and play items. Children and young people will be supported to maintain religious, cultural and social activities both through practical and financial help but also through the valuing and promotion by staff of these activities. All staff will be trained in equal opportunities to ensure they have a basic understanding of the issues and value diversity.

8. Achieve Economic Wellbeing

There is ample evidence to support the fact that children and young people who are in care are disadvantaged when it comes to economic wellbeing as adults. It is the duty of residential staff to promote economic independence and wellbeing as part of a positive caring experience from the Together Trust. Staff understand that they have to act as responsible role models, for example by involving children/young people in weekly shopping, budgeting, payment of bills and simple DIY tasks. Preparation for independence is part of the childhood journey. The plan for each child/young person addresses this so that each subsequent pathway plan is a consistent continuation of building upon economic wellbeing and adheres to the skills and knowledge base stated in the Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000. All relevant staff will be expected to receive training in transition, and to understand their role in establishing links with follow-on agencies appropriate to each child/young person. Each plan reflects fully the ethnicity, culture, disability, gender and family issues for the child/young person and progress is mapped accordingly.

It is an expectation that all children and young people have their own bank accounts. If not already acquired, passports will be applied for on admission. Children/Young People choose their own toiletries and personal items. They are entitled to have clothes which do not distinguish them from their peers and their cultures, and are of a good quality. Records of expenditure are maintained within the unit. Pocket monies are based upon the age of the young people and details of these can be found in the children's guide.

Children/Young People play an active part in the décor of the home. They are consulted about the choice of colours for communal rooms and are encouraged and supported to individualise their own rooms. Particular attention is paid to the individual needs of each child/young person in terms of their preferences/needs/disability. The home reflects domestic living arrangements which do not distinguish it from any other domestic dwelling in the locality. It is furnished and maintained to a high standard. To this end, the location

of the home is important. It is accessible to a range of community services e.g. G.P. dentist, school, shops, leisure centre, green areas, local transport.

Personal Allowances

All children and young people looked after by the Together Trust receive personal allowances which encompass's clothing, birthdays, Christmas, and any other personal needs identified. These allowances are based upon the age of the children and young people residing at the home and are individual to the home. The set allowances are highlighted in the Children's Guide and agreed with the Local Authorities.

9. Making a Positive Contribution

Moving in and leaving the home

Change is very difficult for children and young people. The home staff all recognise that moving in and leaving the home will have lasting emotional effects on the individuals. Therefore both transitions are managed in a sensitive, planned and timely manner. No transition takes place without full consultation and where appropriate agreement of the child/young person. Wherever possible these changes must be as positive an experience as possible.

Consultation

The Together Trust strongly promotes the rights of children and young people and is committed to delivering a quality led service based on the belief that children and young people should be able to take control of their lives and participate in the decision making processes that affect their day to day care.

All children and young people within the home have a Placement Plan, which is a working document that clearly outlines their needs, areas of skills to be encouraged and developed, future goals and aspirations. The plan takes a clear structure that sets out to show how these needs and goals will be met, who will be responsible for supporting/actioning each area and an indicator of timescales involved. Children and young people are fully supported within the home to participate in the drawing up of these plans and how they are implemented and progressed.

This process is achieved in an age appropriate manner, through innovative methods such as individual/direct work focusing on goals and aspirations, person centred planning involving families and a multi-agency approach and I.T. related questionnaires focusing around satisfaction of the care they are receiving.

The 'Placement Plans' include an up to date assessment of possible risks for each child/young person, but takes into account the rights of young people to take control of their lives, ensuring that there is a clear balance between protecting/safeguarding the child/young person and giving them the opportunity to take responsible risks.

Children and young people review their plans regularly through discussions with their key worker/management team, via planning meetings, where they are encouraged to attend or make a verbal or written contribution and through the reviewing process. All children and young people are encouraged to take an active role in their statutory review, from the initial decisions in respect to who should be invited; reviewing the recommendations from the last review, to setting the scene for the current review by completing specific consultation forms. Following the review the children and young people spend time with their key worker to ensure that they understand the decisions that are made.

Family Contact

The Together Trust where appropriate encourages family, relatives and friends of the young people to visit the home (unless this is contrary to the individual Placement Plan and or places risk to any of the young people and staff from the home). Residential staff ensure that these visitors are made welcome and are at ease. The children and young people are encouraged to keep in contact with their family and friends in line with their Local Authority Care Plan and staff are available to give practical support to make this contact possible. Arrangements for maintaining contact between the child or young person and their family and friends are explicitly addressed in their Placement Plan.

Participation

All staff are required to complete training on the implementation and progression of the Placement Plan as part of their Induction/Foundation Programme.

In order that a culture of participation is encouraged within the home, there is a named 'Participation Champion', who is responsible for encouraging the children and young people to be involved in participation at all levels. There is an expectation that the 'Participation Champion' undertakes regular training and meetings to progress this role. The 'Participation Champion' will have the skills to communicate with children and work through various mediums to encourage and empower young people to express their views and feelings, for example through the use of I.T. programmes, individual and groupwork sessions, children and young people forums etc.

There are aged appropriate booklets within the home to support the young peoples understanding of the purpose of the home 'Children's Information Booklets' and other resources that support the participation of the children/young people around health 'Health Care Booklets' and transitions, 'Moving on and Developing Life Skills'.

Children's Rights are promoted and each child/young person has individual details of their own local authority 'Children's Rights Service' alongside contact numbers for advocacy and advice lines. The children/young people are given clear guidance and support to understand the Trusts and Local Authority Complaints Procedures and this is reinforced on a three monthly basis through individual sessions with key workers.

As part of the daily running of the home the children and young people are consulted on areas such as choice of menus, environment, staff appointments, holidays, activities, incentives etc. The children and young people host their own meetings and have control of agenda items, these meetings take place at a frequency decided by them, but at least monthly.

10. Complaints and Representation

Each young person will have a copy of their own Local Authorities Complaints Procedure and this will be explained to him or her. On admission all young people will give a copy of the Wilkinson House 'information booklet', which contains guidance on how to raise a complaint and the procedure used in the home. Significant family members and placing Social Workers are also given these documents. During each new young person's induction the complaints procedure is one of the issues which is discussed. This is completed via the admissions meeting with parents and social workers as well as in induction with the young person and key worker. The latter is regularly reviewed throughout the young person's period of accommodation.

In addition to this the Trust employs a 'Complaints and Inclusion Worker'. The role of the Complaints and Inclusion Worker is focused on working independent of the residential home. It is their role to promote, educate and encourage children and young people receiving a service from the Together Trust to exercise their right to express their views, wishes, concerns or complaints about the service they receive. It is the role of the Complaints and Inclusion Worker to promote Participation in order that children and young people are able to make a positive contribution. Consultation with children and young people by the Complaints and Inclusion Worker takes place during visits to the residential homes.

Together Trust also has an organisation wide policy, which covers all client groups within the organisation. This document is available in each unit, but the Local Authority complaint procedure will take precedence.

If a parent or young person feels there is reason for making a complaint, they may do so using the Local Authority's own procedures or those of Together Trust. These are the three stages involved in the Together Trust complaint process.

Stage One

Any complaint made by a child/young person will be treated seriously even if it appears, at first sight to be trivial or frivolous. Simple explanation and discussion will resolve many complaints, provided that they are received with respect and given serious consideration. Examples of this would include complaints about bedtimes or choice of food. However, this should always be recorded on the child's file and the local authority social worker and/or parents advised if necessary.

If the child/young person is not satisfied with the explanation given or action taken, or the complaint is of a more serious nature, the child/young person's social worker and /or parents will be informed and the complaint recorded in the Complaints Book. The child/young person will be advised that they can have someone of their choice with them during any discussions, such as a parent, social worker or independent advocate. The aim at this stage is to attempt problem solving, conciliation and negotiation. All informally resolved complaints will be reported to the social worker, either immediately or at the next review.

If no resolution can be found between the staff and social worker, the complaint then becomes formal.

Stage Two

If the complaint is not resolved, the child/young person can make a formal complaint, which has to be in writing, although the child/young person or parent can ask someone else to write it down for them. At this stage the child/young person will be informed of their right to have their complaint dealt with through their own local authority complaints procedure.

If the complaint is to be dealt with through Together Trust procedures, it will be investigated, replied to and recorded, by the designated officer, Together Trust, Schools Hill, Cheadle, Cheshire, SK8 1JE. A written response has to be made within 28 days.

A written response will be given to all formal complaints, including the decision and why that decision was reached. Copies will be sent to everyone involved.

The response will be made in a way that everyone involved understands. Everything will be recorded.

Stage Three

If the child/young person is still not happy with the decision they have the right to have the complaint looked at again by a review panel.

If it is decided that the complaint was dealt with appropriately, that will be the end of the matter.

If it is decided that more can be done, Together Trust will reconsider the original decision. Everyone involved will receive a written response including the reasons for the decision. If this procedure has not reached a satisfactory outcome, and parties are still not happy with the decision Ofsted can be contacted directly:

Ofsted
Compliance Team
Royal Exchange Buildings
St Ann's Square
Manchester
M2 7LA

Telephone number: 08456 40 40 40
Email: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

or

Office of the Children's Rights Director
Ofsted
Aviation House
125 Kingsway
London
WC2B 6SE

Telephone number: 0800 528 0731

Website: www.rights4me.org (contact form available)

Any person wishing to make a complaint against the home may go directly to Ofsted without consultation with any other party.

Who May Complain?

The child/young person

The parent of child/young person

Any person who has parental responsibility

Foster parents

Any person who has interests in the child/young person's welfare

Any user of Together Trust services

This procedure will be explained to each child or young person by their key worker upon admission and regular checks will be made to ascertain that they have retained the appropriate knowledge.

While care is taken throughout this process to take an objective and impartial view of complaints this does not mean that young people may not wish to discuss their grievance or seek representation or advocacy from a person outside of Wilkinson House or Social Services in general. Parents, other significant family members or visiting advocates may act as representatives or advocates on behalf of the resident concerned.

In any case it is essential that those with caring responsibilities (i.e. Social Workers, those with parental responsibility) be kept informed throughout the complaints procedure. Indeed it should be stressed that the purpose of the procedure is to resolve problems, and the partnership and co-operation of important other parties may be instrumental in achieving this.

Together Trust and The Chief Executive have the responsibility to monitor all complaints.

Wilkinson House also undertakes its own monitoring and evaluation of complaints and its complaints procedure in the belief that genuine complaints may identify aspects of the service we provide, which require improvement. This is one of the methods that the establishment adopts in its strategy for quality assurance.

The responsibility for monitoring complaints is that of the Manager. This task involves the compilation of statistics on complaints; recommendations on potential improvements to service provisions highlighted in this evaluation and the ongoing evaluation of the effectiveness of the complaint procedure itself.

Wilkinson House also has a designated member of staff with a specific role designed to ensure that the children/young people are kept informed about children's rights in general and the specifics of the complaints procedure at Wilkinson House. At regular children/young persons meetings these issues are discussed.

11. Conclusion

Records of Achievement

Wilkinson House holds the belief that each child/young person is capable of achieving. Through achievement they will develop confidence, self-worth/esteem and a positive image of themselves.

- Key-workers will agree areas of achievement with the child/young person on a weekly basis.
- All achievements will be recorded in the child/young person's individual record of achievement.
- Recognition will be given to the child/young person's situation and their individual ability and achievement.
- Reward system and certificates will be put in place.
- Record of Achievement will form an integral part of the memory file when the child/young person moves to their next placement.
- Children/Young people will be encouraged to share their achievements with their families, social workers and others where applicable.
- The management team will co-ordinate and support key workers and children/young people in this area.

Appendix 1

Current Staffing Details

Name	Title	Experience	Qualifications	Gender
Susan Stevenson	Assistant Manager	Joined the Trust in April 2000, Initially working as part of the project team in North Wales on a 1:1 project and then working at Tan-y-Dre, a 4 bedded unit working in partnership with Wrexham Local Authority.	BA (Hons) Sociology Diploma - Welfare Officers and NVQ4 in Management. Completed RMA.	Female
Ricki Bridle	Senior RSCW	Joined the Trust in December 1999 as a Relief Worker within the special projects; working with young people termed as difficult to place. Appointed full-time in 2000 as a Service Practitioner and achieved the post of Senior Practitioner in 2002 whilst working on a project promoting independence for care leavers. Experience of working with young people who are terminally ill. Over the last 4 years working in residential care in children's homes with under 12's and adolescents.	NVQ3 in Health & Social Care.	Male
Andy Dale	Senior RSCW	Voluntary work with young people and has worked for the Trust since June 2005.	NVQ3 in Health & Social Care.	Male
Melissa Shimwell	RSCW2	Prior to working for the together trust Mel worked with people with specialised needs and disabilities. She has been working with young people within the Trust since 2004.	NVQ3 in Caring for Children & Young People. Completed OU course in Understanding Social Care and Level 2 OU course in Working with Children & Young People, NVQ2 in Direct Care and Levels 1 and 2 in Counselling.	Female
Faye Mellor	RSCW2	Has worked as a full time residential social care worker for the Trust since 2005 and has also gained experience working in a secure unit at Redsands Children's Home.	NVQ3 in Health & Social Care and completed a Makaton course. Attended courses in Psychology, Sociology and Cultural Studies.	Female
Mark Lancaster	RSCW2	Has worked for the Trust since May 2007. Spent 18 months	Completed NVQ3 in Caring for Children	Male

		working in an adolescent unit and joined Wilkinson House in November 2008.	and Young People.	
Kay Frost	RSCW1	Returned to the Trust in March 2010 after an absence of 4 years when she moved to Cornwall.	At present completing all mandatory training prior to commencement of NVQ3 in Caring for children and young people.	Female
Adele Fowles	RSCW1	Started working at Wilkinson House in August 2007.	Completed NVQ3 in Caring for Children and Young People.	Female
Joel Bilotta	RSCW1	Joel joined the Together Trust in May 2009 working at Wilkinson House. He has previous experience of youth work with adolescents.	Has completed his induction and has just started working towards his NVQ3 in Caring for Children and Young People.	Male
Ben Johnson	RSCW1	Commenced at the Trust in 2009 as a Relief Worker before accepting a permanent position in March 2010.	Has completed his Together Trust induction and is due to embark on his NVQ3 in Caring for Children and Young People. Has gained Qualifications in Counselling.	Male
Emily Robins	RSCW1	Commenced at the Trust in May 2010. Has previous experience of working with adolescents with autism.	At present completing all mandatory training. NVQ3 Health and Social Care working with young people and adults.	Female
Jane Bailey	Administrator	Has previous experience in Community Palliative Care.	NVQ3 Health and Social Care and Completing an OU Degree in Health & Social Care.	Female
Bill Decker	Maintenance Person	Joined the Trust in October 2009 as Part Time maintenance person primarily based at Wilkinson house.	Has completed all mandatory training with the Trust. Has various certificates in General building work.	Male

Residential Childcare Review Cheshire East

October 2009

Jill Thorburn

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1 Introduction

1.1 Legal Definition

The legal definition of a Children's Home is defined under Section 1 of the Care Standards Act 2000 is:

An establishment which provides care and accommodation wholly, or mainly for children. The definition applies to private, voluntary and local council children's homes, and both mainstream and special boarding schools accommodating or arranging accommodation for any child over 259 days a year. Hospitals of any description are excluded.

All Children's Homes now have to be registered by Ofsted. Ofsted combines the work of Social Services Inspectorate, the Audit Commission Joint Review Team and National Care Standards Commission.

All Children's Homes are Regulated and inspected by Ofsted against 36 National Minimum Standards (NMS). These NMS are based on Children's Homes Regulations 2001.

Ofsted has a wide range of registration and inspection functions within all sectors, local authority, private and voluntary children's homes and deals with complaints about registered services such as children's homes.

All Homes have announced inspections once a year and several which are unannounced. A report is issued by Ofsted following each inspection which has to be responded within 14 days with a comprehensive Action Plan by those responsible for the Home. The Commission has the power to de-register a Home or a Provider and the power to enforce NMS via criminal prosecution.

The Children Act 1989 provides a comprehensive framework for the care and protection of all children and young people in need, including those living away from home. Local authorities have a specific duty under section 22 of that Act to safeguard and promote the wellbeing of each child they look after.

The Children and Young Persons Act 2008 amends the Children Act 1989; strengthening the legislative framework underpinning the care system and putting in place the structures to enable children and young people to receive high quality care and support. Amongst other provisions the Act requires local authorities to take steps to secure sufficient suitable accommodation within their area and improves care planning by strengthening the role of the Independent Reviewing Officer.

1.2 The Purpose of Residential Children's Homes

To provide safe and stable accommodation for children and young people who have experienced emotional trauma.

To provide continuity of care for the young person as they move towards independence with a focus on both their emotional and practical needs.







To assist in personal development of young people focusing on self-esteem, building trusting relationships and learning social skills to semi-independent skills.

To actively promote the value of education and secure full-time education for young people who need it.

The residential home should provide a therapeutic environment, in its widest sense, where young people are encouraged to explore and express their feelings in a way that will enable them to resolve conflict both internally and externally in a positive way.

The main objective is that young people will be given the necessary support to enable them to either return to their own or substitute families or to remain until they reach adulthood.

Children's homes should be able to:

-  Demonstrate an improvement in the child's physical and emotional wellbeing.
-  Identify the risks to the child and put in place measures to reduce those risks.
-  Demonstrate how the child's cultural and religious needs are met.
-  Demonstrate how the child lives safely in the home.
-  Identify and show how the child's educational needs are met and how the home promotes a learning environment.
-  Demonstrate how the child's views are actively sought and heard.

2.0 Care Population Information

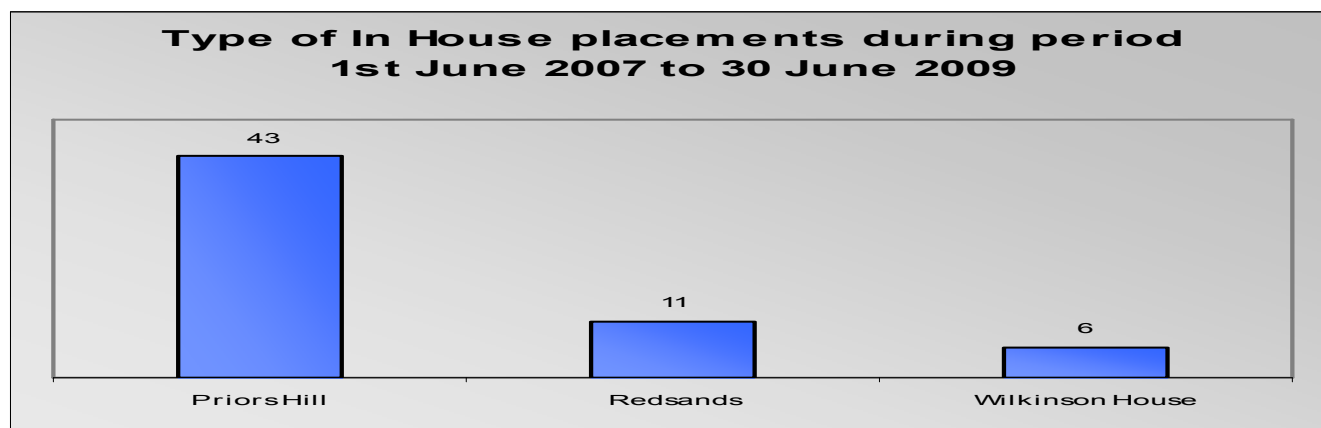
As of April 2009 Cheshire East had a care population of approximately 400 children who were looked after. Of these 26 were residing in residential care homes. This percentage of 6.5% of children placed in residential provision is considerably lower than the national average of 13% of looked after children.

2.1 Demographic Information

Of those children 20 were placed in residential units which were in the local authority and 6 were in care homes outside of the local authority. 60% of those children were placed in residential schools or in residential homes with on-site schooling. 25% were placed in privately run residential care homes. 15% were living in Cheshire West and Chester residential care homes.

In March 2009 there were three residential care homes in Cheshire East. These were Redsands, Priors Hill and Wilkinson House, which is a commissioned service provided by Together Trust. Redsands ceased to be a care home when it was closed in April 2009.

In the two year period leading up to this review there were 60 placements of children within these residential homes. The following chart details the numbers of children placed in each for the period of June 07 – June 09.

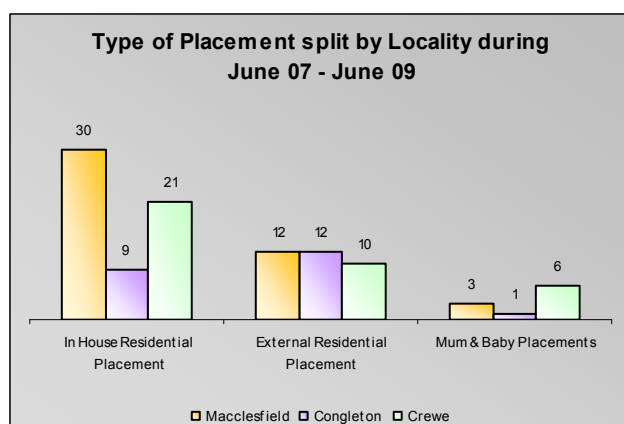
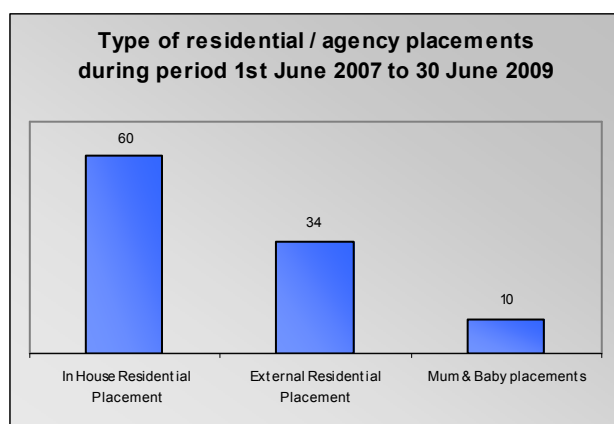


For information available for the two year period leading up to this residential review data has been gathered which is helpful in determining levels of need for residential placements over a longer period of time. During the period June 07 – June 09 there have been 104 residential placements made in Cheshire East, the following

diagrams show the type of residential placement and the type of placement split by locality during this period

2.2 Placements

The following tables demonstrate the nature of the placements made in the two year period leading up to this residential review as well as the locality of the home area of the children placed.



Over this period 58% of placements made were to in-house residential provision. 33% of children were placed in out of borough residential placements and 9% were placed in mother and baby care placements. There are currently no mother and baby foster placements available and therefore only private external provision was available.

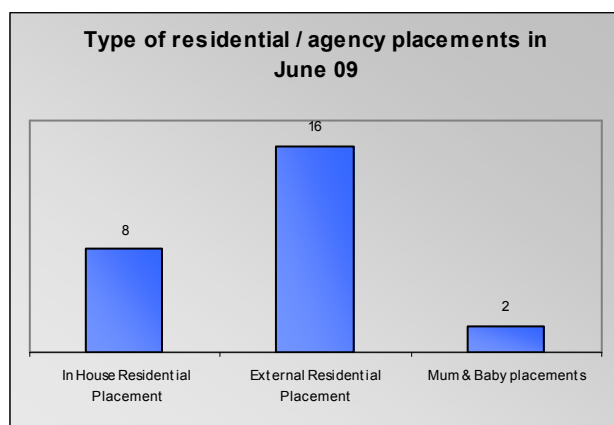
When exploring the local areas the children come from it appears that the majority are from the Macclesfield area. For those placed in in-house residential care 50% are from Macclesfield, 15% from Congleton and 35% from Crewe. It is quite possible that the numbers of children is much higher than would be expected in the Macclesfield area because the emergency bed was in that locality and therefore more children entered in-house care through that route.

Again in external care home provision 35% are Macclesfield children, 35% are from Congleton and 29% from Crewe. This shows that there is consistently a high level of referrals for residential care from the Macclesfield area.

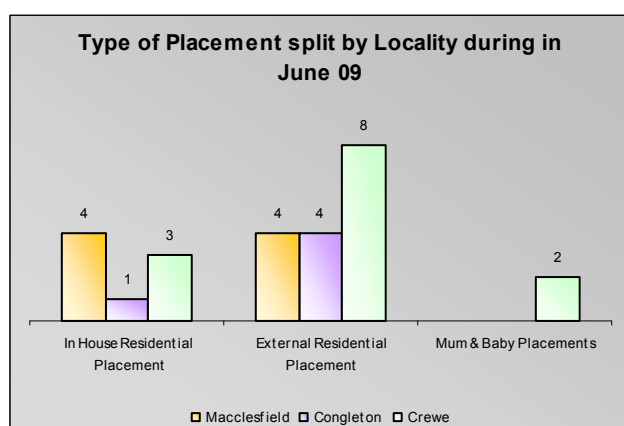
The figures are a little different for Mother and Baby placements whereby the majority of these children 60% are from the Crewe area, 10% from Congleton and 30% from the Macclesfield area.

Given that the figures for in-house residential care may slightly skew the figures approximately between 30-40% of all children looked after in residential care in Cheshire East are from the Macclesfield area.

As of the end of June 2009 there were only 26 residential placements and the following diagrams show the type of residential placement that the current 26 young people are placed in.



There were 3 children at that time placed in Cheshire West and Chester Council's homes following the changes brought in by the local government review.



When looking at a snap shot of the placements in June 2009 again 50% of those children placed in-house were from the Macclesfield area. 13% were from Congleton and 38% from Crewe.

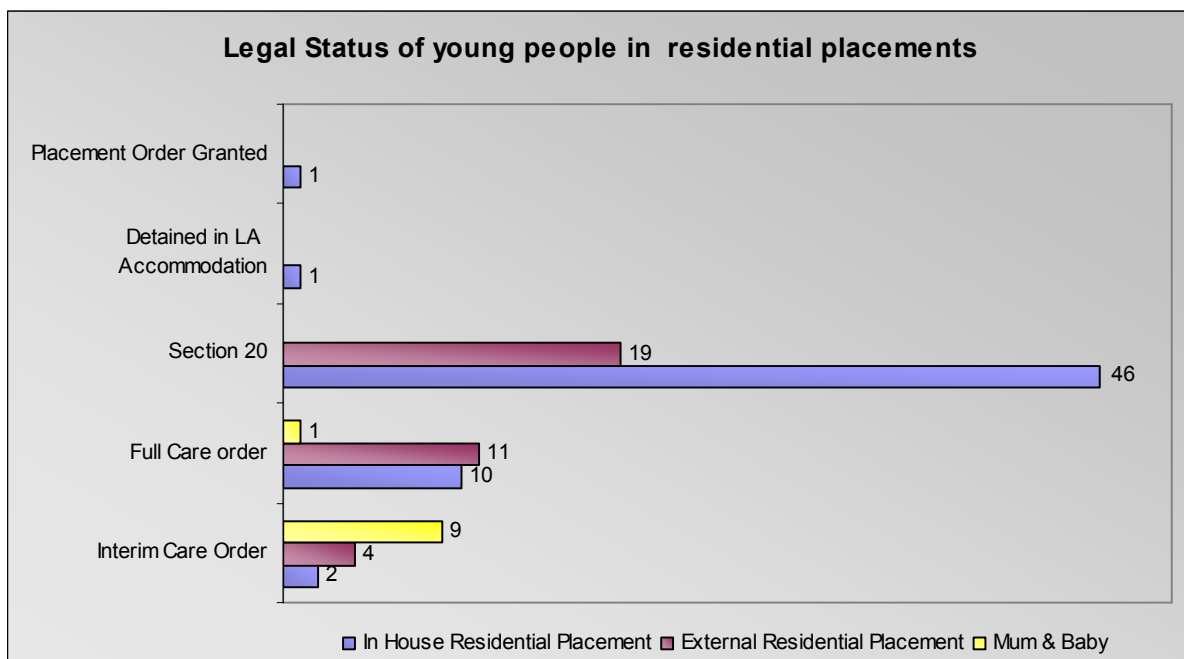
50% of children placed in external residential placements were from Crewe with 25% from both Macclesfield and Congleton.

In June 2009 there were two children placed in mother and baby homes and they were both from Crewe.

When considering the total numbers of children placed in residential homes in June 2009 36% were from Macclesfield, 14% from Congleton and 50% from the Crewe area. This is likely to be the correct proportion of looked after children requiring residential care in Cheshire East which is very important in considering future need and location of resources.

2.3 Legal status of the residential care population

When looking at the general care population figures, excluding those in mother and baby placements and those compulsorily accommodated, it appears that there is a disproportionate number of looked after children placed in homes who are section 20 accommodated. This figure accounts for 71% of all children placed and is probably linked to the fact they have been taken into care in their teenage years. 23% are subject to full care orders and 7% subject to interim care orders.



3.0 Budgetary Information

The figures were taken from PSS EX1 (March 2008) so will not have included inflationary increase for this year.

Gross cost for children in care homes in Cheshire East was £4,318,000 with the average weekly cost for a looked after child in an in-house care home placement being £3,412 / week. The average cost of a looked after child placed in a children's home which is outside of the local authority provision is £3,562 / week. For comparison purposes the average cost of a child placed in foster care is £438 / week.

Cost of Residential Care Provision 2009-2010

The table below shows a breakdown of each of the residential care homes giving their current budget and projected expenditure figure at the time of the review.

Residential Home	Current Budget	Projected Expenditure
Alderley House	£305,965	£643,800
Mottram House	£109,421	£330,589
Langley House	£270,768	£637,868
Home A	£500,000	
Home B	£500,000	
Wilkinson House	£201,928	£301,054

4.0 Current Provision

In June 2009 there were four types of children's homes placements available for children in Cheshire East. The places were in Priors Hill and Wilkinson House.

Priors Hill has a number of different units performing different functions. Alderley House is the main residential care provision designed to provide long term placements for children. Langley House which is a short term short breaks unit for children with disabilities and Mottram House a separate unit containing two emergency beds. Priors Hill is a large centre on the outskirts of Macclesfield. The premises is a detached two storey building situated in a housing estate. The building has been separated into five separate sections providing different types of care. At the time of the review only three of these were being used and the others were empty.

4.1 Alderley House

Alderley house is a home which caters for up to six young people and provides long term care placements. Since June 2007 there have been 13 young people placed in Alderley House.



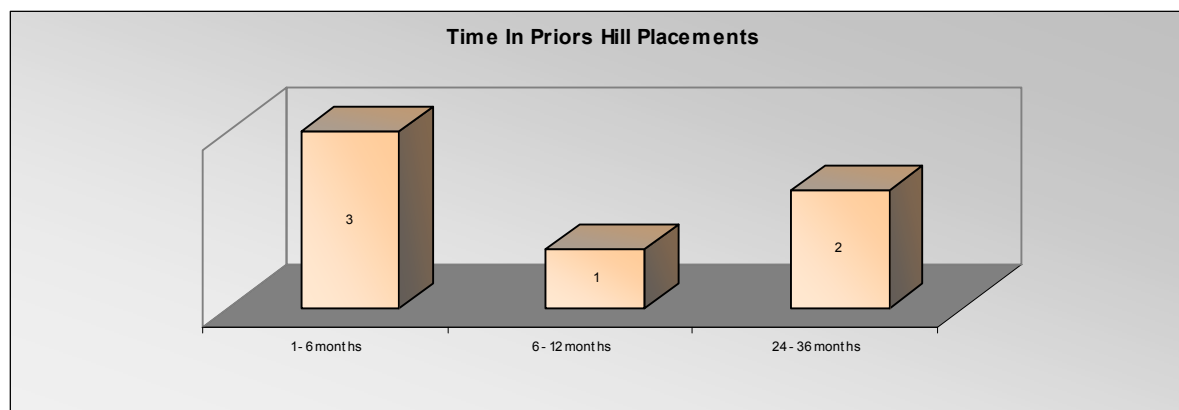
Of those 7 were young women and 6 young men. Their age at the point of their admission was as follows:

Age on admission	Number of young people
12	1
13	4
14	2
15	6

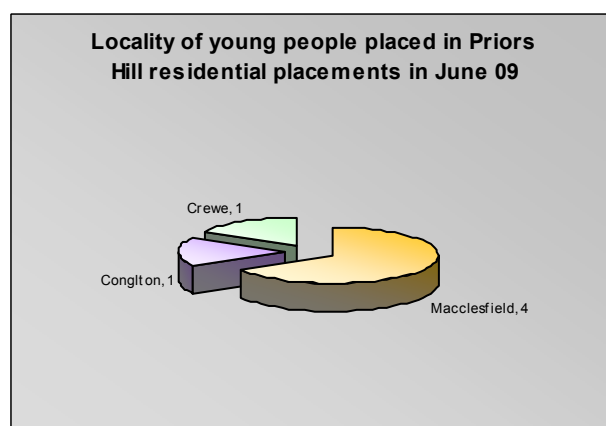
As a number of young people have remained for some time in Alderley House the average age of the residents is now 16 years old, with 33% of residents being aged 15, 33% aged 16 and 33% aged 17.



Of the young people who lived in Alderley during this time the length of time they stayed in the home varied considerably from one young person staying only for one month to another who was there for over two years. The vast majority of children remained there for between one and two years so the home is meeting its statement of purpose and function as a long term provision.



The vast majority of children placed in Alderley House originated from the Macclesfield area. At the time of this review 67% were from the Macclesfield area. This proportion remained largely the same for the two year period preceding this review.



In exploring where the young people went to once they left Alderley House there was a variety of designations but the majority left residential care.

Placement / destination	Number of young people
Living independently	3
Homeless	1
Supported Lodgings	1
Returned home	2
SWITCH (treatment foster care)	1
Keys (therapeutic placement)	1

Private care home	1
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Quality of Care & Physical Environment

Priors Hill was inspected by Ofsted on two occasions recently. These inspections took place in March and July 2009. The outcome of both these inspections is that the home was rated inadequate on both occasions. A notice to improve was issued in March and July. Redands children's home also received very poor inspection reports which also stated the level of care being provided was inadequate.

Although the last inspection report recognised that there was some good and satisfactory practices that promote children's welfare these were not consistently applied. Ofsted were of the view 'that shortfalls in practice mean that the health, welfare and safety of children are compromised'.

The quality of care being offered to the children in in-house residential services is very poor. The material standards are not acceptable. One young person's bedroom was very shabby, with curtains hanging off, a bed which was very old and tatty, dirty and stained carpet as well as a broken set of drawers. The level of acceptance of these poor conditions was worrying in both the staff team as well as by the young person himself. His room at best was sparse and impersonal and at worse could be described as extremely poor. Worryingly this young person had lived in the home for 3 years and expressed views that made me believe he thought he was worth no more than what he was experiencing.

The rest of the houses in the residential home were dirty, tired and messy looking. There was graffiti which had been left present and there were no home comforts which would be expected in a children's home. There had been an attempt to make the living room in Alderley look a little like a 'normal' living room but there was also holes in the walls which had been left unfilled. There were again no home comforts like lamps and pictures.

The building is simply unsuitable for a children's home. It is a series of corridors and many rooms which are unused. It must be difficult to staff effectively to ensure appropriate vigilance. The building is an old 60s type building in its own grounds in a fairly run down part of Macclesfield, which appears to have its own social problems. Ofsted agreed in their inspection report from April 2009 that the 'location and standard of the premises is not meeting the young people's needs'.

The grounds are not appropriately maintained. The grass was overgrown and the flower beds need attention. There was also litter all around the door which is routinely used by the young people. On my first visit there was a condom lying by that door and on both occasions cigarette butts thrown on the ground.

The care planning for the children seemed disorganised and I was informed by the manager there was a lot of drift in children's care plans. He felt this was because

social workers, once the children were placed, appeared to back off. When asked about the residential staff's role in ensuring plans were progressed I got a response which was a bit passive and defeatist. At the time when I visited three of the eight young people had plans which involved them leaving residential care but the plans had not been progressed.

Overall I felt that leadership in the residential home was extremely poor. The senior manager with overall responsibility had only visited the home once between two inadequate Ofsted inspections. The home had been without a registered manager since September 2008 and it has taken twelve months for a temporary registered manager to be put in place.

Ofsted also picked up on the fact that there 'had been shortfalls in the monitoring of the operation of the home on behalf of the local authority'.

The home manager had not received adequate supervision or support for the previous 8 months and was 'floundering'. The manager was in an acting up position into his first management post. The manager had also not received an appraisal of his performance and professional development planning.

This is a large organisation to control and the management of such a big site would require some experience or good quality leadership and management. The regulation 33 report indicates that staff have regular supervision but that appraisals have not been completed. I viewed the quality of the manager's supervision and it was inadequate. There was no focus on feedback or professional development and the content was simply a list of tasks which needed to be done. Ofsted agreed that 'whilst he is child focussed and competent in many areas, he is not sufficiently trained or supported as a new manager'.

The prevailing culture in the home is that of an institution. There was no flavour of 'normal' family life and both staff and the children were very institutionalised. The staff appeared to be largely unaware of their professional caring role. There has been a much higher than expected level of restraint of children; complaints from children; allegations against staff members from children and staff subject to disciplinary procedures. Overall the staff appear to be poorly trained and I detected undercurrents of resistance and suspicion of change. Particularly the senior residential workers demonstrated this during my visits.

I picked up a feeling of defeat, apathy and cynicism from the staff I spoke to. I only witnessed one positive interaction between a staff member and a child during two lengthy visits to Priors Hill. Appropriate boundaries were not enforced such as children swearing and making threats of violence towards staff members which went unchallenged by the staff who heard them.

The quality of care was very poor. This very poor quality provision is costing the local authority a projected **£968,457 per annum** and represents extremely poor value for money.

It was reported in a recent regulation 33 report it that all the policies are out of date and that the statement of purpose and function appears to have replaced the use of the policies and procedures folder. Of particular concern was the absence of the child protection procedures and the equality and diversity policy. The control and restraint policy was also reported to be out of date and the care planning document contained no information regarding education or health planning.

The lack of policies and procedures was impacting on the staff team's ability to provide a safe environment for the children. Staff had reported to the manager conducting the regulation 33 visit that they were concerned over the changes brought in whereby they were not to report minor criminal activity within the home to the police as they felt they had no alternative strategies available to them. Ofsted picked up on the point that the employment of behaviour management strategies is 'sometimes good but not consistently applied'.

In analysing the practices within Priors Hill it is apparent that some staff do not have the skills to work effectively in that environment. Although there is a strong message from Ofsted which is that there are some parts of the practice which are of a good standard, the prevailing message is that there is a distinct lack of consistency which is leaving children a risk.

4.2 Emergency Beds

Priors Hill also has a section called Mottram House which has provided an emergency bed function and consists of 2 emergency beds. Mottram house is physically joined onto Alderley House but staffed separately. This facility was available to both Cheshire West and Cheshire East to place children in an emergency up until July 2009 when admissions ceased following two adverse Ofsted inspection reports for Priors Hill.

Since March 2007 there were 64 times when children were placed in the emergency bed in Mottram. On some occasions some children were placed more than once. Of these children 30 were young women and 34 young men. The age range was between aged 9 and 17 years but with the vast majority of admissions being children in their mid teens as shown below.

Age at point of admission	Number of children
9	1
10	1
11	1
12	3
13	14
14	15
15	18
16	4
17	1
DOB not available	6

Many of the children stayed for very short periods of time and because of that some information was not available when exploring where they went to following their stay in Mottram House. However, the following table shows where the children went once they left the provision.

Next destination / Placement	Number of children	% of all residents of Mottram
Home	18	28%
Alderley House	8	13%
Custody	3	5%
Foster care	14	22%
Redsands	5	8%
Armthorpe Drive	2	3%
Together Trust	1	2%
Meadows	1	2%
Wilkinson House	1	2%
Independence	1	1%
Details unavailable*	10	16%

*Note: the 10 young people for whom the details of their next placement was unavailable it would be reasonable to assume that they did not remain in care as this information would exist if they had and therefore likely to have also returned home to parents or the information would be available. If this is the case then 44% of all young people (28) who used the emergency beds were able to be placed back home without the risk of them being subject to significant harm. Therefore it could be argued that they did not require admission into care in the first place but rather some skilled intervention to enable difficulties at home to be resolved.

Good Practice Recommendations for Priors Hill

- Staff should be interacting with young people to provide them with stimulating activities which take into account their race, culture, language, religion, interests, abilities and disabilities. All young people should be encouraged, with support and guidance, to undertake individual activities and become members of local community groups. All activities should have a written risk assessment completed before being undertaken.
- Young people should be given individual support and guidance and encouraged to enter into the decision making process around unit routines and procedures through weekly “Young People’s Meetings” and should be

regularly consulted on changes that affect them especially the closure of the home. Older young people should be undergoing Independent Living Skills work which will include budgeting, Health and Safety, D.I.Y. and a variety of domestic skills, to enable them to move on successfully to independent living.

- An incident and intervention and monitoring process should be implemented to ensure that any patterns or trigger points can be easily identified between young people and residential staff and measures should be put in place to counteract repetition, and evidence any reductions or increase in incidents.
- Young people and staff should be taking part in all aspects of group living together and staff should ensure that young people are cared for in a way that respects their individual dignity and maintains a safe and welcoming environment.
- The manager should be providing staffing levels to meet individual need based on risk assessments.
- There should be a far greater focus on improving educational outcomes of the children living in Priors Hill. All children need to have a personal education plan in place which is reviewed through key worker sessions.
- Staff need to enable the young people have more opportunities to enjoy themselves, more involvement in decision-making, and a "cosier", more "home-like" environment
- Staff should be more proactive in ensuring that they help to make the setting a place where the young people can see that they were helped to turn their lives around and where they were able to have good experiences and new opportunities.
- Residential care staff need to work in partnership with their corporate colleagues and various other organisations in order to provide young people with support guidance and build on self esteem and confidence in order to ensure all young people's needs are met and that they receive an excellent service to enable their development and ensure that each young person reaches their potential.

4.3 Langley

The material standards and cleanliness were better on Langley house. This resource is predominately a short breaks unit for children with disabilities and additional needs. This is the information contained within the homes statement of purpose and function, however, there is a young man who has been living there as his home for a number of years. He describes his care as being very good and attributes his development and positive life choices to the quality of his key workers. There are problems with him living in this way in what is an institution.

He is required by staff to go to his room at 10pm even though he is seventeen years old. He was required to stop using the computer at that time as the night staff required the room it is kept in. This is not meeting his needs. Even though he has lived there for a number of years his room is labelled 'Red Room' rather than it having been made into his room. He needed additional help to tidy up his room and was advised that there was nowhere in the building where he belongings could be stored and therefore all of his possessions were in boxes around his room. This again did not give a homely feel to this young man's home.

Many of the doors were locked and the young man had to ask for staff to come and open them as he showed me around his home. A recent regulation 33 report states that the manager conducting the inspection was concerned that this young man was effectively 'locked onto' Langley unit as parts of the site are locked. This inspection visit took place in April and this situation remained unchanged two months later.

The set up in the kitchen did not allow the young man to be able to assist in food preparation as the only part he was able to reach was a very small area of work surface which had been lowered so as he could use it as he is a wheelchair user. As this young man is rapidly approaching adulthood he should have been receiving support to develop independence skills for the time he comes to leave care. He also seemed to be completely cut off from the young people his own age who live in Alderley House.

The material standards in Langley appear slightly better than the other houses however it is very old fashioned looking. The front room, I was advised, was rarely used by the children and the couches were made from a plastic covered material which if you sat on them shot onto the floor as they were very slippy. I was advised that they used to have material covers but these got taken off as they got soiled.

The bedrooms for the children who came as part of a respite provision were appropriate and nicely decorated. The staff team largely seemed well engaged with the children. It has been reported though that there is an over reliance on putting children in front of the television rather than engaging them in meaningful activity.

The care provided in Langley is of an acceptable standard, however, this could be improved by it being provided in a more suitable building with appropriate resources such as enough shower rooms. There also needs to be a review of the activities provided to the children and arguably the TV should be removed to improve the opportunity for meaningful play and activities.

The cost of providing staff for Langley unit is projected to be £606,420 this financial year. With all other associated costs this unit has a projected expenditure of £606,420 although the budget set was £270,768.

The unit has six beds providing short breaks to disabled children although only five have been used for this purpose for a number of years.

4.4 Wilkinson House

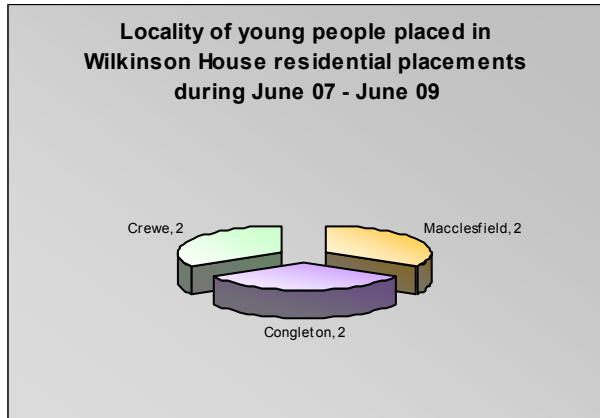
The contract price for Wilkinson House is £593,905 per annum and as this contract was in place before the local government review it is split between Cheshire West and East on a 50:50 basis, meaning that three beds are available to Cheshire East. In addition to the cost of this home there has been additional resources put in to support educational activity. This is a six bedded home currently registered to provide for children aged 8-12 with a remit to work in a therapeutic way through the use of a play therapist to assist the child in reaching a stage where they are able to be fostered.

If fully occupied the unit costs for Wilkinson House are £1904 / week / child. At the time of this review Wilkinson House had three young people in residence with no referrals pending meaning that the current unit cost per child is £3808 / week.

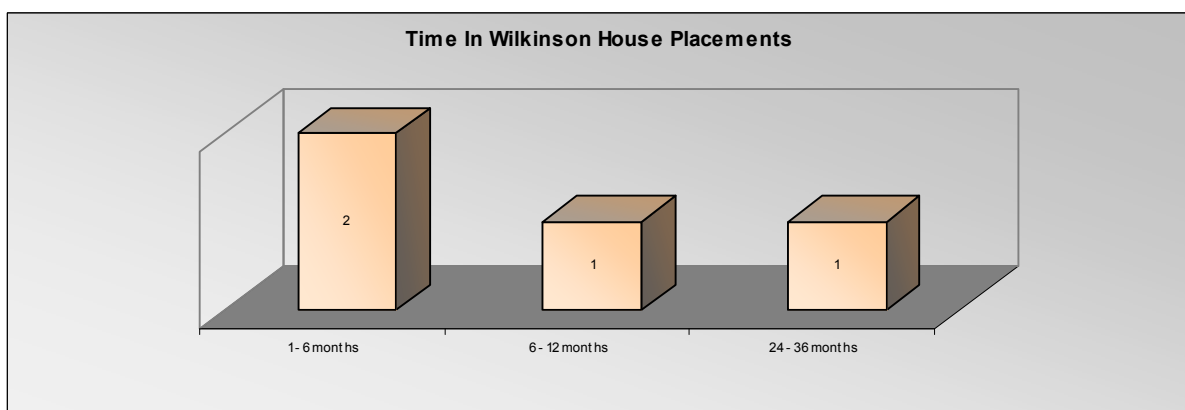
The age of the children placed in Wilkinson House over the last two years have ranged from 10 to 14 years old, with the majority being aged 11 years.



The referrals to Wilkinson House have been received evenly from each of the Cheshire East localities. However, during the time of the review there were only two children placed both of whom were from the Crewe area.



The children placed in June 09 were both boys one of whom age 10 and the other 11. Both boys had experienced a number of foster care breakdowns prior to their admission into Wilkinson House. One of the young people placed had been there for over two years the other for more than 12 months. The statement of purpose and function is clear this is a resource which is meant to be a 'short term' intervention to enable children to return to family based care.



Approximately half of the children leaving Wilkinson House have been placed with foster carers after their stay.

Quality of Care

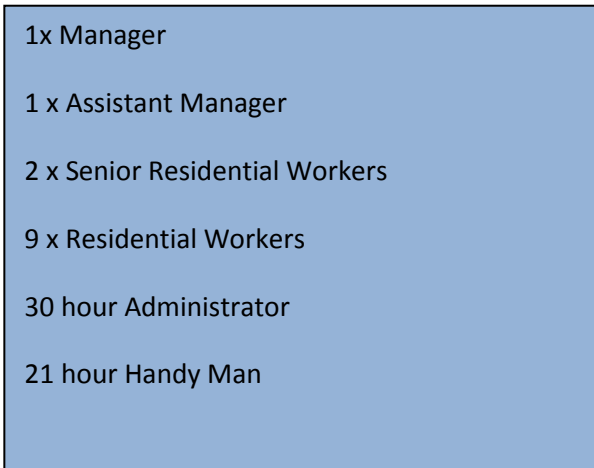
The quality of care is of a good standard. The children appear to be happy and settled. The care planning and key work arrangements are very good and good account is taken of the children's needs.

An Ofsted inspection took place on the 18 June 2009 and the overall standard of care was deemed to be of a 'good' standard. Ofsted deemed that in areas of enjoying and achieving, making a positive contribution and being healthy Wilkinson House is exceeding minimum standards. In terms of making sure the children are healthy this was deemed by Ofsted to be 'outstanding'. There are excellent health care plans in place for each child. There were only two recommendations made by Ofsted in their inspection which were around water safety and keeping records of staff training.

The house is a large detached property set in its own grounds in Sandbach. Each of the children has their own bedroom and there are plenty bathrooms and living rooms. Although it is on a busy road there is a large garden and play area to the rear of the property. The building is owned by Cheshire East but maintained by the Together Trust. The property is warm and welcoming, well equipped, spacious and in a good state of repair.

The home provides specialist care for children aged between the age of eight and twelve on their admission. The home provides care to children who have emotional and behaviour difficulties.

The staffing complement is:



- 1x Manager
- 1 x Assistant Manager
- 2 x Senior Residential Workers
- 9 x Residential Workers
- 30 hour Administrator
- 21 hour Handy Man

There is no use of agency staff as the Together Trust operate a 'pool' of peripatetic staff.

There is a strong education ethos in the home and all children in placement were reported to be doing well in their education. One of the requirements of being placed in Wilkinson House is that the child must have a school placement.

One of the strengths of the home was the fact it ensures there is a high level of activities available for the children. There is evidence of a programme of summer activities to ensure the children make the most of their summer holiday. The type of activities included a summer holiday caravanning, camping trips and a two night break for each of the children with their key worker. During the term times children are encouraged to take part in activities such as horse riding, canoeing, football and cadets.

The leadership in the home was of a very good standard. The registered manager had very good knowledge of her area of work and was an experienced and capable people manager. There was also a good infrastructure and support available to her through her through Together Trust.

The quality of care being provided to Cheshire East's children in Wilkinson House is of a good standard.

Issues

Given the level of occupancy it is questionable whether there is a need for such a large resource in Cheshire East for this age group. For the current unit cost good quality treatment foster care beds could be commissioned which would allow children to remain in a family setting while addressing their needs for therapeutic intervention.

Children were unable to remain in their home area as both children in placement were from the Crewe area.

The age of the children being admitted to Wilkinson house is of a concern. It can be argued that children who are aged 8-12 should be placed within a family setting wherever possible. It is concerning that only 50% of the children who have been in Wilkinson House were able to move on to a foster care placement as this should have been higher. For children who stay in residential placement for a considerable period such as those in Wilkinson House it is very difficult for them not to become institutionalised and be unable to make the transition into family based living.

Although the work being carried out with the children is of a very good standard I would advise that the children need to be of an older age range at the point of admission.

Cheshire West commissions 50% of the home and currently their occupancy levels are only 33% and there are no children on a waiting list. This does not present good value for money as their unit costs are currently standing at £3883/ child per week I am concerned that should Cheshire West choose to decommission this service it would have great financial implications on Cheshire East as the service would become unviable. The current contract is in place until March 2011. Cheshire West and Chester are of the view that they do not require residential beds for children as young as the age group for Wilkinson house and believe that the age on admission needs to be raised to meet their requirements.

The current contract is in place to the 31 March 2011. However, there has recently been a contract meeting to look at the viability of extending the age group of children at the time of their admission. The level of occupancy is increasingly threatening the contract. If children between the age of 12 and fourteen were admitted to Wilkinson House this would change this situation.

4.5 Outcomes for Children in Cheshire East's Residential Care

In considering the suitability of placements for children in Cheshire East's care it is essential to look at the outcomes once the children come to leave.

This review has taken account of information relating to performance measures detailing the numbers of those who have left residential care and have entered into education, employment and training, whether or not they are living in suitable accommodation and also the proportion of children who have come into contact with the youth justice system.

Although it is recognised that these are relatively crude in terms of measuring outcomes they link closely to the five Every Child Matters outcomes – be healthy, stay safe, enjoy and achieve, make a positive contribution and achieve economic well being.

Of the children and young people who have recently left residential placements 30% are living independently, 10% are reported to be homeless, 10% are in a supported lodgings placement, 20% have returned to live with their parents, 20% have gone to live in a different residential placement s and 10% have gone to live in foster care.

It is interesting to note that 40% of all of those who left care have gone to live within a family based setting. It is concerning that 10% of those young people are described as being homeless as this will impact adversely on their ability to be safe and healthy.

Of the same cohort of young people who have left residential care only 40% are reported to be in employment, education and training. The remaining 60% are

classed as NEET at the time of this review. This obviously has implications in terms of the young people's ability to enjoy and achieve as well as achieving economic well being.

Of the last 22 children to leave residential care only two were not known to the Youth Offending Service(YOS). 68% were known to YOS prior to them being placed in residential care.

It is interesting to note that 23% were convicted of a crime only after their admission into residential care. Of that group 80% of the recorded criminal activity was violence against a person or property. The remaining 20% were convicted of theft. It is quite possible that all of these offences were as a direct link to them living in residential care.

This is an incredibly high proportion of children looked after in residential care in Cheshire East. This would lead me to believe that there is a culture of criminalisation of children in residential care in Cheshire East. In terms of making a positive contribution and enjoying and achieving this will have a massive impact into adulthood as so many will be leaving with a criminal conviction.

5.0 New Provision

In Crewe there are 2 new 4 bedded children's homes are fully furnished and registered. They are currently at the point of being able to be opened as soon as the staff are selected to work in them.

Home 'A' is a 4 bedded home in an established community to the north of Crewe Town Centre. It is a large detached house located on a main through road. It is within a nice area of other family type houses. It is an extended home with gardens to front, rear and each side of the property. There are open play areas nearby and it is within walking distance of the town centre and is well served with local schools.

The bedrooms have been designed as 'blank canvasses' each with a different colour scheme. It is anticipated that Home A will be adapted to become more accessible to all children, young people and their families. Work is currently underway to assess how best to do this. The home has been renovated and furnished to a high standard and provides a warm and appropriate setting for children to be placed.

Home B is a modern home, situated within a cul-de-sac, with gardens to front, rear and each side of the property. Home B is within walking distance of the town centre and is well served with local schools on the South Cheshire campus.

Close by there is a new college being built. This is a large 'family' home in its own grounds. The houses in the surrounding area are also detached family homes. Work is currently underway to replace the kitchen and make the home fully accessible for children or their family members who are wheelchair users.

The next stage in the development of the new homes is for the staff to be recruited. The job descriptions have been through the job evaluation process and advertising has taken place internally. The jobs advertised are for registered managers, who will hold a social work professional qualification and deputy residential managers. There are also two levels of residential care officers.

A consultant has been brought in to help the Cheshire East to conduct Warner compliant interviews to identify staff suitable to work in the new units. These interviews will take place during November 2009. It is the intention that one of the homes will be up and running and able to have children placed by December 2009.

5.1 Feedback from Care Council Visit

Two members of Cheshire East's Children in Care Council made a visit to both new homes to give feedback about the views of young people about the new homes.

When asked about material standards the following feedback was given.

Both homes were very good...very homely and I think had obviously had input from young people as to what they would want them to look like.

They both feel like a home. Not a big 'I'm in care' building! They looked fresh and nice and 'normal'.

They both blended in perfectly with the surrounding houses in the neighbourhood.

I loved the look of the bedrooms. They are blank canvasses waiting for young people to come and live in them and put their own stamp on them.

When asked about whether there was anything which should be developed differently the following feedback was received.

The only thing I can suggest is around accessibility for wheel chair users. The bathroom in Home A could be made accessible. They also need a fixed ramp. Home B could have a downstairs bedroom.

In Home A you could make the current office into an accessible bedroom but widening the door frame.

Other general views offered were:

I think these houses would definitely suit the needs of teenagers in care.

They are so much better than what we have now.

If I was a bit younger I would move in tomorrow!

I would definitely recommend the new homes to other young people.

Interestingly one of the concerns held by a member of the care council was that she was worried that young people coming from an 'institution' such as Priors Hill would not be able to adapt to living in a homely setting like the new homes.

The view represented in this visit will be communicated to the whole of the children in care council at the next meeting.

5.2 Good Practice Guidance for New Homes

As noted by the young person from the care council any children transferring from Priors Hill will need a great deal of support to adjust from the way they have been used to living to being able to enjoy living in a new small home setting. It shouldn't be taken for granted that just because the young people would be moving into much nicer living conditions that this would be an easy transition to make.

There needs to be a great deal of work conducted with the staff who have been successfully appointed to the posts within the new homes too as many of the staff also display symptoms of being institutionalised. This is evident in the over reliance of restraint and use of the police. In high quality children's homes there are many other ways in which behaviour is managed.

Staffing recommendations

Although at times of crisis agency staff are crucial to ensure that staffing levels are sustained, this is often a costly option which does not provide consistency or effective continuity for children.

Consideration should be given to employing sessional workers from the local work force (teachers, teaching assistants and social work support staff) under dual engagement. This would provide a cost effective solution, and build in planned flexibility to the rota, whilst allowing young people to build relationships with these workers.

Rotas should be planned over a minimum of a 12 week period, this allows the manager to plan for annual leave and other times when staffing shortages arise. Any deficits should be covered immediately with the use of sessional workers, the use of agency workers should only be sanctioned by a senior manager once evidence of this need has been investigated and verified. When there is a plan for a child to enter the placement staffing ratios should be reviewed to meet with the young person's plan and risk assessment.

Every Child Matters Outcome	Practice Recommendations for the New Homes
Be Healthy	<p>The key priority, for the home should be to make mealtimes a central focus. Emphasis on meal times should be given a high priority, and all young people and staff on shift should eat together at all times, (whilst on shift should no staff member should consume a meal in the home that is not part of the agreed mealtimes without a child present at the dinner table). Mealtimes need to be normalised for the young people, and staff should utilise this opportunity to discuss the young person's day at school or college in a relaxed environment. Residential staff should also see their role at mealtimes although not explicitly to support children in eating, the introduction of new foods and if applicable table manners. Furthermore no child should be excluded from meal times.</p>
	<p>A cook should be employed at each home with the skills and expertise to create nutritional healthy meals using healthy ingredients. The cook should be able to subtly incorporate ingredients into meals to ensure that they have a healthy balanced diet. For example if a child is reluctant to eat vegetables, a soup or sauce should be prepared using vegetables in manner that is not obvious to the young person and added to the meal, and guarantees that the young person will be consuming their healthy "five a day" quota.</p>
	<p>Taster sessions should be included in the home's weekly programme to educate children on healthy eating and introduce them to foods and food groups they may not have tried. To further enhance this process the young people should be consulted on a weekly basis in relation to the planning of meals, and foods from different cultures should be incorporated into the meal plans on a weekly basis.</p>
	<p>To monitor and improve emotional wellbeing of all young people placed in the home, policies and procedures must be adhered to ensure that every child and young person has someone to talk to they can trust. On placement the role of advocacy services must be explained fully to the young person, including, the positive outcomes that these professionals may bring to the young person. The key worker will enable to young person to engage with these services and be present for all introductory meetings or sessions.</p>
	<p>Healthy lifestyle choices will be fully promoted with the residential setting and participation in sport and physical activity should be encouraged at all times, this includes staff and key workers transporting young people to any agreed activities. Furthermore activities should be organised within the home to ensure that all young people participate in a least one 'healthy session' per week either individually or as part of a group.</p> <p>Sessions should be organised and arranged in an age appropriate manner to explain the consequences of taking drugs alcohol and tobacco. Sexual health should be openly discussed and promoted. Consideration should be given to utilising the looked after children's nurse or other suitably qualified professional to deliver these sessions</p>

Stay Safe	<p>All young people who are placed in residential homes should have accurate risk assessments in place; This should be undertaken between the social worker, the key worker and in consultation with the young person. Their 'timeout' factors and exhibited behaviours must be discussed and plans put in place to allow staff to quickly recognise trigger behaviours and implement strategies to de-escalate the situation quickly and effectively. Therefore speaking and consulting with the young person will allow the young person time to reflect on their triggers and provide staff with the best solution to deal with that situation. All risk assessments should have clear plans and contingencies, and should be transparent in approach and should prove an effective support mechanism for all staff working with the young person to understand the risks and associated 'trigger points'.</p>
	<p>For children with additional needs there should be clear policies and procedures to ensure that there is an adequate package of facilities and activities to improve and support the transition to adult services, for example, 'improve transition arrangements from children's social care to adult social care services', this should always be undertaken with the Leaving Care Worker and should form the basis of the Transition or Pathway Plan.</p>
	<p>A baseline monitoring, evaluation process should be put in place to monitor and record incidents and of bullying, harassment and behaviour management incidents and the Registered Manager should monitor closely the levels of these. If there is evidence to suggest that individual staff are routinely being involved in any incidents of this nature it must be addressed as part of the supervision process. Furthermore the registered manager will seek solutions to actively decrease the number of incidence of bullying, harassment and sanctions.</p>
	<p>Ensure that registered managers and their deputies are able to implement and are fully conversant with safe recruitment practices. The registered manager must ensure that all staff employed in the residential home are skilled to care for children who have been abused and neglected, and have sufficient experience and knowledge to recognise the signs of abuse (including its recognition in non-verbal children) dealing with disclosures or suspicions of abuse, safe care skills, skills to support positive behaviour and ways of boosting and maintaining the child's self-esteem.</p>
	<p>Ensure that systems are in place to enable young people to report to appropriate staff concerns about potential risk to themselves, with appropriate response and without reprisals. Young people should be made aware of these procedures when first placed in the home.</p>

Enjoy and Achieve	The key worker should, as part of their role, establish a direct link with designated looked after children's teacher. They must ensure that they are informed of any new developments or concerns and attend any school meetings as a good parent would.
	Key-workers must attend all looked after children's reviews and actively be involved in the planning process for the young person. The key worker must be equipped with skills to appropriately challenge decision making that may disadvantage the young person and seek to identify alternative solutions to such issues.
	Consideration should be given to providing "outreach" support for children who have moved from residential care into foster care. Positive relationships should be encouraged between key workers and young people, and this continued support should be offered to them while they are in a new placement and should be part of the young person's plan. This allows for extended support for new carers and provides the young person with a level of continuity and stability in their new placement.
	<p>Although not always feasible placements for children should always be planned where possible. This allows time to undertake a 'matching' process, and allows the young person time to adjust both physically and emotionally to the move. The young person should be allowed time to say their goodbyes and this is particularly important if the child may have to move schools as this will be another major adjustment in the young person's life.</p> <p>The social worker should liaise with the placement to ensure that as key worker is identified at an early stage in this process, it is vital that the child should meet their planned key worker and that they are provided with an age appropriate understanding of the environment they will be moving to.</p> <p>It is crucial that the young person's room is prepared in readiness for them to move in. This should involve simple steps like allowing the young person to select colour schemes and soft furnishings for their room to help to instil a feeling of belonging.</p>
	The achievements of children and young people with disabilities and their schools is celebrated through a range of activities including head teacher meetings, sharing of good practice. Key workers should be trained to deliver to deliver sports activities for children with disabilities and swimming clubs should established to target young people to learn to swim.

Make a Positive Contribution	A welcome pack should be created by young people which will act as a guide for all young people entering residential care in Cheshire East. It should be appropriate to the young people's age and understanding. The cost for such a project should be relatively small as the children themselves will be the main source of information, and all ideas presented by the young people should be given through consideration any young people should be provided with a full explanation for any ideas or suggestions that cannot be approved.
	Policies and procedures should be implemented to develop or extend volunteering opportunities or activities for young people, they should be undertaken in partnership with the youth service to ensure that young people are engaged in positive behaviours, for example Princes Trust or Millennium Volunteer scheme .
	<p>All professionals employed within Cheshire East will ensure that the young person acquires and understands how an informed and responsible citizen should behave.</p> <p>Cheshire East should implement policies and procedures to ensure that as a corporate parent it does not act to criminalise it's looked after young people.</p>
	Processes need to be implemented to aid early identification of possible or evident offending or negative behaviour. This should always be discussed with the young person, their social worker and if applicable their YOT worker and a planning meeting held to ensure that all professionals formulate a plan on working with the young person to reduce this behaviour whilst educating the young person of the consequences and positive aspects on not being embroiled in this behaviour.
	Young people who have offended or are at risk of offending should be provided with a range of activities and support to assist them in leading law-abiding and constructive lives and to raise their self-esteem. The local authority must ensure that arrangements are in place to address specific educational and training needs of young offenders and to co-ordinate the education of young people who are taken into custody

Achieve Economic Wellbeing	<p>The role of the key worker is vital if a young person is to achieve economic wellbeing they must view their role as crucial and identify and minimise any factors that will prevent the young person from achieving their full potential. The key worker must understand that educational achievement remains the most effective route out of poverty, and that young people need to leave school and be able to earn a living and make the most of their lives. From an employment perspective this means learning how businesses work and developing the skills and qualities that employers need, such as literacy, numeracy, creativity, leadership, problem solving, teamwork, the ability to work independently and an enterprising spirit. The key worker must work with the allocated social worker and Connexions worker to ensure that all these key skills are met and appropriate action plans implemented in instances of unmet needs.</p>
	<p>All young people will have an up to date PEP and the key worker will liaise regularly school and allocated worker on any issues in relation to school, behaviour attendance or achievement, if any are identified to allow for early intervention. Realistic goals and targets must be set and monitored for the young person in accordance with their ability. Goals achieved should be rewarded as any good parent would do and the residential home should have monies set aside to “<i>treat</i>” the young person if they have done well in a particular aspect. Furthermore all young people at the age of 14 will have a Learner Entitlement and Action Plan which sets out what they can expect from their education provision in Cheshire East.</p>
	<p>The key worker as corporate parent will ensure all professionals involved with young people directly, must emphasise the importance of positive futures after leaving school. The young person must be encouraged to embrace life long learning, employment opportunities and enjoying a positive standard of living. The key worker as part of their role will identify and make the young person aware of their Connexions worker and their joint role in ensuring that the young person is engaged in further education, employment or training when leaving school, as they would aspire for their own children.</p>
	<p>A baseline measurement should be undertaken to measure the achievement of children with a disability and policies and procedures should be implemented to measure this achievement with realistic and aspirational goals set. New initiatives should be introduced as a joint venture with Connexions to prioritise EET for children with a disability.</p>
	<p>All staff employed in the residential home will actively encourage and plan with the young people for the time they come to leave care and provide independence training. Sessions for the young people should be planned from a personal and individual perspective, and should explore themes such as learning how to manage their own money, the roles of banks and financial services. Practical training should be conducted within the home to allow young people to learn how to cook wholesome meals on a budget and young people should be encouraged to attend the supermarket with their key worker to understand budgeting and getting the most from their money.</p>

	<p>Key workers will jointly work with the allocated social worker to ensure that a young person has a personal bank account as part of “general citizenship standard”. Furthermore procedures should be in place to ensure that the young person has their national insurance number in their possession as near to their 16th birthday as possible. As part of this process the key worker should ensure that HMRC are aware of the young person’s current address to prevent delay in the process of issuing the national insurance card. Timely responses could prevent a delay in the young person entering education, training or employment.</p>
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6.0 Future Provision

6.1 Short Breaks Placements for Children with Disabilities

Provision of short breaks for disabled children is currently going through a major review in line with the process around Aiming High for Disabled Children (AHDC). Cheshire East has asked for expressions of interest from organisations for views on how alternative respite provision might be delivered. It is likely that many of the expressions received will be for non-residential services. As AHDC provides financial support to develop additional services it would not be able to fund the short break residential service as this would not represent additionality.

Therefore a new short breaks residential home is going to be required. This should have five places and should be based in a community which is accessible as possible to the whole of Cheshire East. Many local authorities and voluntary sector providers operate such a resource from accessible bungalows. There needs to be five beds available on a rota basis for children who need over night short break care.

From researching other local authorities and voluntary organisations a suggested staffing structure would be:

1 x Registered Manager
2 x Deputy Manager
16 x Residential Workers
2 x Domestic / Cook
1 x Administrator

The staff teams should work in teams of fours making up four teams to cover 24 / 7 rotas. On a rotational basis one of the teams would cover nights.

Children would be divided into groups of five according to their age, needs, friendships or those attending schools together. There can be thirteen of these groups of children who attend on a rolling rota basis. This allows 65 children to receive short breaks from this home. Currently 24 children use this service each year.

The rolling rota should run from Monday through to Friday and then Friday through to Monday on a cycle and then start again. This ensures that children and young

people get an equal share of the weekends. A standard package for each child would be 28 nights respite each year. However, there would need to be a level of flexibility which would enable some children sharing a 'standard package' and so getting 14 nights each. If the needs assessment required it a child may need a 'double space' and receive 56 nights respite per year.

6.2 Future requirements for Residential Care in Cheshire East

Residential care placements will be required in Cheshire East. In accordance with current thinking and practice every young person who can be placed within a 'family setting' should be placed within one. This allows children to see what 'regular' family functioning should look like and give them the best chance of overcoming earlier difficult experiences. It is well documented that children who fair best according to Every Child Matters outcomes are those placed with stable, long term foster placements. Cheshire East's Children in Care Council have very firm views around the need for stability and for most children the best way to achieve stability is within a foster care setting.

Having said which, there are young people whose needs can best be met within a residential setting. Excellent quality residential care can also assist young people to achieve good outcomes. The current residential care provision is not able to provide this type of care.

Based on the current figures available there needs to be fifteen residential care beds available for children in Cheshire East. There are approximately 175 young people aged 11+ who are looked after in Cheshire East. Fifteen beds would mean that 8.5% of those looked after over the age of 11 would be placed in residential care homes. It may be that if there is a rise in the care population this may need to be reviewed. This would allow for some additional 'specialist' beds to be purchased from out of area placements if required to meet the specific needs of the children. There will be the eight beds in the two new Crewe homes and 3 beds in Wilkinson House.

As between 30% and 50% of children looked after by Cheshire East are from the Macclesfield area there needs to be a children's home in that locality in order to allow children to remain in their home area and maintain their school placements.

Due to the evidence that the quality of care would be higher and the unit cost lower it is more beneficial to tender this provision out to the private and voluntary sector.

The council needs to decide whether it would rather own the property or include that as part of the commissioning process. I would suggest that by owning the building this would be more cost effective in the long term. The property should be made fully accessible and DDA compliant.

If the service was to be commissioned out issues of TUPE would need to be resolved and would influence the costs of the tender as all the remaining staff would TUPE with their existing terms and conditions.

I would advise that if a suitable property could be found that a four bedded home could be developed within the next twelve months.

Having looked into a number of council run and voluntary sector care homes the average staffing for a four bedded children's homes will be as follows:

1 x Registered Manager
1 x Deputy manager
10 x Residential Workers
18.5 hour Administrator
20 Hour Domestic

6.3 Emergency placements

Given that 44% of all children who have recently been placed in the emergency provision returned to the care of their parents it could be argued that they should never have come into care at all and rather if an emergency response team of social care staff could be deployed during the crisis this would potentially stop almost 30 children being admitted into residential care.

The staffing of Mottram House is projected to cost approximately £313,555 this year. The staffing complement for that part of Priors Hill is 12 hours of manager's time a week plus; 1FTE Group Leader, 2FTE senior residential workers and 3 FTE residential care workers. This equates to 197 hours of residential staff time each week, which is 10,244 staff hours per annum.

22% of all children placed on the emergency house went to live in foster care. To replace Mottram House emergency foster care beds should be developed.

A service which is currently missing in the residential service in Cheshire East is an assessment function. It is worth considering where Wilkinson House would be able to carry out this function. It would assist in the identification of a child's needs and also to determine the type of placement where those needs would be best met.

7.0 Recommendations

- Residential care in Cheshire East needs to be urgently brought up to date. Its institutionalised practices and provision are about 20 years behind where they should be. It is achieving very poor outcomes for the children who reside in this type of 'care'.
- Given the recent history of in-house provision with both Redsands and Priors Hill units being deemed 'inadequate' I would advise that residential provision should be outsourced in Cheshire East. Initially this should be the two homes in Crewe and also the home which will be in Macclesfield. It should be remembered that Ofsted are inspecting against minimum standards and it has been demonstrated that in-house is unable to achieve these. The unit costs would be similar or less than the current cost of in-house provision and the quality would be much greater representing better value for money and better quality of care for the children. One organisation providing all of the residential care provision would bring economies of scale in relation to management costs. Any outsourcing arrangement should be contractually linked to levels of occupancy to ensure good value for money. The tender specification should be strongly linked to outcomes and any organisation making a bid would need to be able to demonstrate that it already provides 'excellence' in children's residential care.
- Priors Hill is not fit for purpose. The emergency bed facility should be closed by the end of November and Alderley should be closed by the end of December. Children currently in this provision need to have their care plans progressed appropriately and if they are to remain in residential care should be moved to the new Crewe homes as an interim measure. The closure of Priors Hill and its replacement was endorsed in principle by the Scrutiny review Panel in 2005. If this timescale was adhered to then a £240k saving could be made before April 2010 although this would be dependent upon staff costs of redeployment or redundancy.
- A new house should be purchased in a residential area of Macclesfield. This should be a four bedded home in order to accommodate the level of need

within the Macclesfield area. I would advise that it would be financially prudent for the house to be purchased by Cheshire East Council and for the provision to be put out to tender for the delivery of the service. This should be an 'ordinary house' in an ordinary area as requested by the children. The cost per annum of such an outsourced provision would be in the region of £560k if the building was owned by Cheshire East. This home needs to be fully accessible.

- As an interim measure in the period between Priors Hill closing and a new home being available children from the Macclesfield area would need to be placed in Crewe and transport to school or college provided. Another solution might be to spot purchase beds from Cheshire West and Chester in Wilkinson House if they remain unused.
- Placements into the new Crewe homes should commence by the end of November.
- One of the new homes in Crewe needs to be made fully accessible and suitable for children who use a wheel chair or whose mobility is compromised.
- A review of the contract with Together Trust needs to take place to adjust the age group for Wilkinson House to children 12-14 years at the point of admission. Children under the age of 12 years need to be placed in a family environment. This may necessitate the development or commissioning of treatment foster care provision or additional resources added in to skill up existing foster carers. Further needs analysis should take place once the contract with Together Trust reaches its conclusion. If such a resource is required in the Sandbach area then this service could also go out to competitive tender.
- Wilkinson House should also be asked to take on an assessment function so as children's needs can be determined to effectively match them in suitable care provision.
- Emergency foster care provision should be developed. There needs to be an option of two beds available. This could be simply a foster carer who is paid a retainer to be available to take emergency admissions should they arise.
- The 'front door' needs to be more effectively managed to avoid large numbers of teenagers entering residential care and then returning to the care of their parents. A small team is needed to work out of hours providing emergency crisis intervention based on a solution focussed intervention model. This should be developed to help address the issue of teenagers entering the care system in emergency situations. Current EDT arrangements are not appropriate to meet the need and stop children needlessly entering the care

system. It may be that some space in the Wilkenson House campus could be made available to house such a team.

- Mother and baby foster placements are needed. There needs to be places for two young people and their babies. Ideally there should be a foster placement in each of the localities to enable the family to remain in their local area.
- A pool of peripatetic residential staff could be developed and trained to improve quality standards and reduce the unnecessary use of agency staff within the residential homes.
- Work needs to take place with the staff teams to reduce the levels of criminalisation of children in the care homes. Perhaps a greater level of understanding of basic principles surrounding attachment issues may help staff find new ways of managing difficulties. A policy change is also required to support this change.
- Langely House needs to be moved out of Priors Hill. This will take some time as a new bungalow would need to be purchased to house the new short breaks home. It would be necessary to continue to operate out of the current building until a new one was fully operational. As the other parts of Priors Hill will close there will be a need to employ security staff in the short term to ensure the safety of the children and staff in Langley House.
- There needs to be an investment in improving the leadership skills in the residential service. There has not been suitable leadership or quality management and in the short term there will need to have a level of improvement in that area.
- Following the appointment to posts for the new homes all staff should be audited against the new residential induction standards. Any shortfall in their training needs should be addressed.
- There needs also to be an investment of time and energy in turning around what appears to be an adverse culture within the residential service.
- Managers within the residential sector need to receive training on budget management and controls and regular reviews put in place to ensure services operate within budget.



Guidance and Procedures

Children and Families

DRAFT

Children's Homes Regulations 2001 - Regulation 33 Visits

Glossary of terms

Legislation “the Law”

Issued by central government following a process of wider consultation with targeted stakeholders about the proposals (green paper), followed by a white paper detailing proposed legislation for further consultation, and then a bill which is progressed through Parliament to become law (an Act of Parliament).

Regulations

Issued by central government, setting out the arrangements to expand on, implement and enact the legislation.

Standards

National standards issued by government against which the local authority will be inspected and measured. These should be reflected in the departmental procedures. Standards should be measurable.

Strategy

The aim which informs the policy of an organisation. May include service development.

Policy “What we have to do”

Principles developed by members of an organisation; should be linked back to legislation/regulation and set out how the local authority will implement legislation and regulation.

Procedures “How we do it”

Developed by an organisation to operationalise policy. This should reflect internal recording procedures and relationships between different sections of the department.

Guidance “Why we have to do it”

This can be issued by Government or can be a local directive on good practice. Guidance can be very specific or a more general statement of principles.

Protocol

This is developed to manage an interface between two areas of policy which may or may not be within the same department or local authority.

Statement of Purpose

A document required by the Regulations, which defines the objectives of the fostering service, and covers those issues set out in the Regulations and national minimum standards.

Delegated authority

Name of person who is authorised to make key decisions.

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1. Requirements of Regulation 33

1.1 Children's Homes Regulations 2001, Regulation 33 Visit by registered provider:

(See Appendices for excerpts from the Regulations)

Regulation 33 requires for a monthly visit to children's homes and units run by the local authority by a person not employed at the home nor directly responsible for it, and the presentation of a written report to the responsible authority – referred to below as the Visitor. The person undertaking the visit should be properly informed of its purpose and have access to the reports provided for the previous 6 months.

1.2 The purpose of Regulation 33 Visits

The focus of the visits is to ensure that the day-to-day care provided is of a satisfactory standard. This is achieved through a combination of the Visitor's own direct observations, conversations with young people and staff and reading of key records and reports which together provide important insights into the ways in which the home/unit operates on a daily basis and how appropriate care and control is provided.

The visits will also assist in service development by providing a regular independent perspective on the functioning of children's residential provision.

1.3 The inspection visit and report

The inspection visit requires the Visitor to read the daily log and check appropriate records; to check the physical condition of the home/unit; to talk to young people, staff on duty and any visitor who may be present; to report directly to the manager where immediate issues should be dealt with on the visit. (See below for details)

The written report on observations and findings will be provided to the manager of the home/unit, to senior managers of the local authority, to the relevant Member from the Corporate Parenting Group and to CSCI.

2. Procedures for visits

2.1 Planning: Visits will take place in each calendar month. Visits will normally be unannounced and times of day will vary, taking into account when young people will be there. Each visit will require a minimum of 3 hours.

2.2 Undertaking the visit: On arrival at the home/unit, the Visitor should show his or her identification card and state the nature of the visit. They should also:

- Ascertain how many young people are present at the home/unit and ask that they be informed of the visit
- Explain how they intend to carry out the visit
- Find out if there is anything happening of which they need to be aware

The Visitor should not look around bedroom areas alone if young people are around and should not enter individual young people's bedrooms without their permission. A young person might be asked to show the Visitor round the building as this can provide both an opportunity for talking privately with the young person and gaining their views about the accommodation.

2.3 Visits by Members of the Authority: visits will be made jointly with Members and an independent person to a specific home or unit as part of their corporate parenting responsibilities.

3. Records to be checked

The records provide important information and insight into what has occurred since the last visit and can usefully inform discussions with young people and staff.

3.1 At each visit: The records to read are: (Details of the report content is in the Appendices to these Procedures.)

- a) The admissions and discharges record
- b) The Daily Log
- c) Record of child protection concerns
- d) Record of Sanctions
- e) Record of Restraints
- f) Record of Complaints
- g) Significant incidents
- h) Record of Young People's Meetings
- i) Record of Staff Meetings
- j) Log of staff supervision

3.2 Records to be checked periodically (likely quarterly but at Visitor's discretion)

- a) Children/young people's file records
- b) Health and Safety records
- c) Fire Regulations
- d) Risk Assessments
- e) Medication administration and stock
- f) Staff training

4. Premises/Furniture and fittings

The Visitor should look around the building and the garden/grounds on each visit. The report should identify:

- Any damage or outstanding repairs
- Any unsafe equipment that needs replacing or repairing
- Any delays in receiving a response from the relevant services department (the Visitor should ensure that staff have properly reported any outstanding defect before making reference to it in the report)

The report should comment on the general standards of accommodation, the furniture and fittings and the level of homeliness provided. A distinction needs to be drawn between issues that need to be addressed over a longer period or have implications for the capital programme and those that should be resolved more speedily.

5. The Education of Young People Cared for

The Visitor should discuss with the member of staff on duty the arrangements for the education of each young person of school age and school/education problems encountered.

The report should identify: (using child's initials only)

- Any young person who is not attending school
- The reasons for this
- Any alternative arrangements that have been made.

6. Arrangements for Health Care

The Visitor should ascertain what the arrangements are for young people to access health and medical care, including G.P. services, dental care, hearing and sight tests as well as advice relating, as appropriate, to sexual health and substance use.

The report should provide an overview of the level of health care provided and identify any unmet needs that exist.

7. Community Relations

The Visitor should discuss with staff the relationship between the home/unit and the local community including immediate neighbours; links with local community groups (including participation on local committees); and use of local facilities. There should be discussion too of links with local schools and the local police, including contact made with the Police Liaison Officer.

The quarterly report should identify:

- Any incidents that have occurred or complaints that have been received and action taken
- Any activities undertaken in the local community, for example fundraising or voluntary work.

This may overlap with information recorded elsewhere in the report.

8. Comments by Young People, Staff Members, Parents and Visitors

The Visitor should always ensure that there is opportunity for discussion with young people and staff as well as any parents and visitors who may be present; there should also be the opportunity for individuals to raise matters in private.

The report should record comments in such a way that does not identify the individuals concerned and respects their confidentiality.

9. General Comments on satisfaction with the visit

The Visitor must reach a conclusion as to whether or not they were generally satisfied with the visit and findings. These views should be briefly reported to the registered manager (where possible) prior to leaving the home/unit, including any action that is to be taken. The report provides the space for any overall comments or observations that are not covered under the above headings.

10. The Reports

a) Monthly reports (see template provided)

- The Visitor should attempt to convey a flavour of life in the home/unit by all the means above. There is a need to give basic data in most sections of the report, but details of incidents etc. are not usually necessary, unless used illustratively. The **significance** of findings on such matters is important to address. The emphasis should be on an assessment of the findings in each section with positive points as well as those less so. The Visitor will need to bear in mind the need to explore issues raised from records or comments by staff/residents rather than just record them. The emphasis should be on the **impact** on the care of young people.
- Providing evidence of good practice is important e.g how young people treat each other and adults; how they treat their surroundings; evidence of involvement in how home/unit is run; how staff relate to the young people. Much of this will inform the quarterly reports (see below).

- It is acceptable to use information from one visit in a subsequent visit to explore impact on young people e.g. a comment from a young person may lead to a later visit exploring a particular aspect of practice in the home/unit. In such a way a more in-depth perspective can be built up.
- The report should relate what the Visitor thinks of the home's performance.
- Reports will be sent to Managers for comments and checks for accuracy. It is important that any significant concerns should be checked with the Manager for clarification. Where facts are in dispute these should be resolved before the report is finalised. Differences of interpretation may still be reflected in the final Document.

b) Quarterly Reports (draft)

In addition to the monthly visit reports, a quarterly report is required. This should contribute to the completions of the annual Head of Service reports under Regulation 34. This gives the opportunity for the Visitor to periodically aggregate findings and follow up emerging themes. In this way individual visits can be used to concentrate on a particular aspect of functioning in more depth (e.g. leisure programmes, health issues) in the knowledge that the quarterly report will serve to pull together findings and comment.

The quarterly report is intended to be a supplement to the more factual monthly reports by drawing impressions and conclusions from them. It gives the opportunity to expand on good practice and areas for improvement and point out trends. This report should have more of an analytical flavour than the monthly reports, which represent more a snapshot, and enable the Visitor to express professional views on the quality of care given within the home. The evidence for such views should be succinctly included.

Feedback:

We welcome feedback about our policies and procedures so if you have any comments about this procedure please email to glynis.williams@cheshireeast.gov.uk

Glynis Williams
Operation Manager – Cared for Children Service
September 2009

Appendices:

A. Children's Homes Regulations 2001:

1. Regulation 33

PART V

MANAGEMENT OF HOMES

Visits by registered provider

33. - (1) Where the registered provider is an individual, but is not in day to day charge of the children's home, he shall visit the home in accordance with this regulation.

- (2) **Where the registered provider is an organisation or a partnership, the home shall be visited in accordance with this regulation by –**
- (a) the responsible individual or one of the partners, as the case may be;
 - (b) another of the directors or other persons responsible for the management of the organisation or partnership; or
 - (c) an employee of the organisation or partnership who is not directly concerned with the conduct of the home.
- (3) Visits under paragraph (1) or (2) shall take place at least once a month and may be unannounced.
- (4) 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 appears 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, its daily log of events and records of any complaints; and
 - (c) prepare a written report on the conduct of the home.
- (5) The registered provider shall supply a copy of the report required to be made under paragraph (4)(c) to –
- (a) the Commission;
 - (b) the registered manager of the children's home; and
 - (c) in the case of a visit under paragraph (2) -
 - (i) where the registered provider is an organisation, to each of the directors or other persons responsible for the management of the organisation; and
 - (ii) where the registered provider is a partnership, to each of the partners.

2. Regulation 34

Review of quality of care

34. - (1) The registered person shall establish and maintain a system for -

(a) monitoring the matters set out in Schedule 6 at appropriate intervals; and

(b) improving the quality of care provided in the children's home.

(2) The registered person shall supply to the Commission a report in respect of any review conducted by him for the purposes of paragraph (1), and make a copy of the report available on request to children accommodated in the home, their parents and placing authorities.

(3) The system referred to in paragraph (1) shall provide for consultation with children accommodated in the home, their parents and placing authorities.

B Details of Records to be checked and the content of Reports

a) The Admissions and Discharges Record

To identify admissions and discharges since the last visit.

b) The Daily Log

The Visitor should check that this record contains entries for the whole of each day and provides an overview of daily life and events in accordance with the requirements of the Recording Standards document. It may be necessary to cross reference with other records, for example a significant incident report, to gain a complete picture.

The report should comment on both the content of the entries, the standard of recording and identify any gaps.

c) Record of child protection concerns:

The report should include:

- Date concern was noted
- Nature of the concern
- Action taken by the home/unit – including referral on (eg other local authority)
- Outcome

d) Record of Sanctions

The Visitor should ensure that the record conforms to the requirements of regulations, Department of Health guidance on permissible forms of control and the DCC policy guidance on positive care and control. It may be necessary to cross reference with serious incident reports or speak with individual young people.

The report should identify:

- The number of entries in the record
- The number of young people concerned
- The types of sanctions used and the reason for their use
- Any occasion upon which a young person has been reported to the police in response to any alleged criminal act perpetrated at the home/unit
- Any apparent excessive or unduly low use of formal sanctions (which may suggest that the requirements are not being followed) or repeated use of sanctions in respect of individual young people or by individual staff members

The report should also state whether or not the use of formal sanctions by staff appears to be both lawful and appropriate.

Any apparent unlawful use of sanctions must be immediately brought to the attention of the external line manager

e) Record of Restraints

The Visitor should ensure that the record conforms to the requirements of regulations and guidance on positive care and control. Any use of restraint must also be recorded in detail on a serious incident report form.

The report should identify:

- The number of entries in the record
- Any matter that has been referred for investigation under the complaints or child protection procedures or to the police and the outcome of any such investigation (if known)
- Any apparent excessive use of restraint or repeated use in respect of individual young people or by individual staff members.

It should also state whether or not the use of restraint by staff appears to be both lawful and appropriate.

Any apparent unlawful use of restraint must be immediately brought to the attention of the external line manager.

f) Record of Complaints

The Visitor should ensure that the record conforms to the requirements of the Recording Standards document and contains an entry for any complaint made regarding the conduct of staff or young people. It may be necessary to cross reference with serious incident reports or other records or speak with individual young people.

The report should identify:

- the number of entries in the record
- the nature of the complaints
- the number of young people identified
- the appropriateness of action taken in response and whether or not they have been satisfactorily resolved (where known)

The report should also comment as to whether young people appear to be aware of the complaints procedure and are able to exercise their rights to use the procedure.

g) Significant incidents

The Visitor should read all the serious incident reports to satisfy him or herself that they have been handled in accordance with the requirements of any procedures and that full information has been recorded to inform any investigation that might be required.

The report should identify:

- The number of reports
- The nature of the incidents (comment is required on incidents **not** covered in any of the proceeding sections)
- The appropriateness of action taken in response and whether or not they have been satisfactorily resolved (where known)

h) Record of Young People's Meetings

The Visitor should read the minutes of meetings, held with the young people, which are intended to promote their active participation in day to day life at the home/unit. The frequency of meetings may vary between homes/units but should be a regular feature and an important forum for dialogue between staff and young people.

The report should comment on the effectiveness of this forum and identify:

- How frequently meetings are held
- The level of attendance
- The range of issues covered

i) Record of Staff Meetings

The Visitor should read the minutes of staff meetings which are intended to promote communication, home/unit policy formulation and planning of activities etc. The frequency of meetings may vary between homes/units but should be held not less than monthly. The report should comment on the effectiveness of this forum and identify:

- How frequently meetings are held
- The level of attendance
- The range of issues covered

j) Log of staff supervision

The Visitor should check that all staff receive supervision regularly and that an explanation is provided if supervision has not been given on a regular basis. (It is not part of the Visitor's role to read the supervision notes.)