

CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Scrutiny Committee

Date of Meeting:	3 rd December 2013
Report of:	Kate Rose, Head of Safeguarding Children, Families and Adults
Subject/Title:	Jane Ash, Safeguarding Manager (Conference and Review) Report for Regulation 33 Visits - Cheshire East Children's Homes Previous Report submitted May 2013

1.0 Background

Regulation 33 (Children's Homes regulation 2001) requires a monthly visit by a person (Visitor) to all Children's Home run by Cheshire East Council (CEC)

For the purpose of this report the term 'children' relates to children and young people aged up to 18 years of age.

The Visitor should:

- not be employed at the Home nor have any direct responsibility for it
- be properly informed of visit's purpose
- have access to the previous 6 months Reg 33 reports
- examine records for clarity and confirmation of details about day-to-day care and living in the Home. This includes checks about:
 - arrangements for health care
 - arrangements for education/training
 - community relationships
- The Home's building, furniture and fittings should also be checked for quality and safety
- have private conversations with children and staff
- submit a written report at the end of the visit to CEC.

The report should:

- include evidence relating to the provision of stable, safe and secure care for children who live in the Home
- relate to evidence of children enjoying and achieving in their life
- confirm there is an effective approach to behaviour management
- relate to the Home's performance

The Registered Manager should:

- respond to comments made by the Visitor
- send the completed report to CEC's Safeguarding Unit to quality assure

If issues are raised:

The Residential Group Manager should:

- provide a response within 24 hours

CEC should:

- Analyse information from the report to continuously improve the care and service it provides to the children living in the Home Provide a copy of the Reg 33 report to Ofsted

The focus of the visit therefore 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 operates on a daily basis.

The visits will also assist in service development by providing a regular independent perspective on the functioning of children's residential provision. The report written should relate what the Visitor thinks of the home's performance. Ofsted require these monthly reports along with the response from the Registered Manager. In Cheshire East these reports are used to provide an independent reflection on the quality of care we are providing for some of our most vulnerable children and young people to inform improvements and service development. This report is an analysis of the Visits that have been undertaken across our Children's Homes from April to September 2013.

2.0 Process

Visits take place every calendar month, unannounced, varying in time and date, usually requiring a minimum of 3 hours. Records are checked and the premises and furniture and fittings, young people and staff spoken to. The arrangements for health care and education are checked and community relations. A report is completed and sent to the Safeguarding Unit to quality assure. The findings are sent directly to the Residential Group Manager to provide responses usually within 24 hours, to issues raised. This comes to both the safeguarding Unit and the appropriate Visitor.

Both reports are provided to Ofsted. It is critical that visits are carried out in a timely manner and sent to Ofsted promptly. Visitors in the subsequent month are sent copies of the last visit report and the response to it, in order that ongoing issues can be monitored. All visits are currently carried out by Members and volunteers who receive support and training in fulfilling these responsibilities.

The following Homes have been subject to monthly visits:

- Broad Street: open since December 2009
- Claremont Road: open since August 2010

Cheshire East also has a commissioning arrangement with two other Homes provided by the Together Trust, Ivy Lane and Victoria Lodge (which is fairly newly opened). At this present time the Visitors to these Homes are arranged by the Provider agency. The Visitors are required to meet the same criteria and respond in the same way, and Members do accompany the Visitor on a bi-monthly basis, the Cared for Children team receive copies of those reports. Monitoring visits are also carried out to these Homes as part of the contract over-sight.

3.0 Reg 33 Visits undertaken Q1 and Q2 2013

During Q1 and Q2, Visitors maintained 100% compliance with monthly visits and production of reports.

There are currently 12 trained Visitors in Cheshire East on the rota to undertake Reg 33 visits

- Councillor Bill Livesley
- Councillor Janet Clowes
- Councillor Dorothy Flude
- Councillor Lesley Smetham
- Councillor Phil Hoyland
- Councillor Louise Brown
- Councillor David Neilson
- Councillor Rhoda Bailey
- Councillor Andrew Kolker
- Councillor Gillian Merry
- Maggie Swindells – Volunteer
- Emma Meekin – Volunteer

Visits undertaken Q1 and Q2 2013 were as follows:

Broad Street

Q1
Councillor Leslie Smetham
Councillor Phil Hoyland
Emma Meekin

Q2
Councillor Louise Brown
Councillor David Neilson
Councillor Rhoda Bailey

Claremont Road

Q1
Councillor Andrew Kolker
Councillor Dorothy Flude
Councillor Bill Livesley

Q2
Maggie Swindells
Councillor Janet Clowes
Councillor Dorothy Flude

4.0 Occupancy Levels in Q1 and Q2 2013

Concerns were previously raised in respect of occupancy levels, with concerns that occupancy levels were too low. The current level is:

Broad Street

Q1
69% - 5 children

Q2
96% - 6 children

Claremont Road

Q1
90% - 4 children

Q2
100% - 4 children

5.0 Main issues raised in Regulation 33 reports for Q1 and Q2:

The detailed issues and responses from the Homes are within Appendix 1 at the end of this report.

Broad Street:

In general terms there are some themes in respect of the management over-sight and in ensuring that supervision takes place at the frequency required. Alongside there has been a review with the Workforce development lead to ensure all staff have the appropriate knowledge and skills to care for some of our most vulnerable children and young people. The links to the schools is rightly highlighted as a critical area for our children who become Cared for and the links with the new Virtual Head have been made. This will be key in ensuring that the educational opportunities and support for our children and young people are in place.

Claremont Road:

The themes for the first 6 months for Claremont include comments about repairs which are done, better linking with health colleagues in respect of specific health and care issues, education links to deliver the best support and opportunities for the young people placed there and the need to provide assurance in respect of the staffing levels .

In general terms ensuring educational progress is clearly an issue that causes concern and the educational support provided by the Virtual school is instrumental in improving the chances and opportunities for our cared for children.

The training for Visitors is also important to ensure they are equipped to carry out their role and function effectively. A discussion with workforce development has led to a review of the training and a new programme will be developed that also concentrates on how we capture the views of children and young people, better. This will also be facilitated by the new participation contract provided by the Children's Society which will provide an enhance service.

There is also a need to ensure that staff are suitably skilled and confident to deal with the challenges that caring for our young people can sometimes present and this is an action that has been taken up following the comments form the Visit.

6.0 Views expressed by children and young people

There is recognition that the views of children and young people need to be clearly gained within these visits and recorded. Therefore a recommendation is that the form will be adapted to allow fuller information gathered about the young person's experiences within the Home. The involvement of young people (older) in these visits will further enhance the understanding of their experience and responses. Below are Visitors comments from their discussions with the young people:

Claremont Road

- Young person agreed she was comfortable living in the home.
- Young people happy with the complaints process.
- Three residents were enthusiastic about the holiday they had had in Flamingo Land and liked having additional money to buy holiday clothes.

Broad Street

- Young person is happy with the way the home is run.
- Young person said they 'like it here'.
- Aware of the complaints process.

- Young person said, 'It's lovely being here', and he wanted to go paintballing.
- Didn't like the 10.00 pm bedtime for over 16s.
- Young person seen but did not wish to engage in conversation.

7.0 Conclusion

This is an interim report to assure Scrutiny that the Visits are taking place and what the themes that may be emerging from those visits are, and the response from the service.

There is currently a consultation out from the inspection body, Ofsted, that challenge the way that Regulation 33 visits are currently conducted and suggesting changes to this, which will require a review of how we will meet the expectations in the most robust way. This includes re-examining the model for visits, who is on the visit and how we make sure that the children and young people's experience remains central to the process. Options for change and any impact of that will be discussed and set out over the next few months.

8.0 Access to Information

The previous reports and Regulation 33 policy can be inspected by contacting:

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 Designation: Safeguarding Manager (Conference and Reviews)
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 Email:jane.ash@cheshireeast.gov.uk

Appendix 1

Broad Street

- 1 Staff Meeting Minutes not always recorded.

Response: All staff realise the importance of having completed paperwork in place for next shift. At the time of the Reg 33 visit staff were finishing off their recording of an incident that had occurred with several children.

- 2 Staff supervision cancelled at times.

Response: Supervisions are difficult to manage during the summer months due to staff taking annual leave; out of necessity - some have to be fitted in late. Plans are now in place to ensure supervision takes place regularly. It is acknowledge that if formal sessions do not take place there will be either ad hoc supervision, or team meetings held when issues can be raised. All staff have access to the

Registered Manager and ARMs on a daily basis to discuss any concerns they may have about practice or children.

3 Challenging Behaviour Training should be reviewed.

Response: The Registered Manager is liaising with CEC Workforce Development Team to ensure that staff receive up-to-date/refresher training in Behaviour Management.

4 All written care plans should be in place and provide management oversight to ensure they are up to date.

Response: These are now in place on the children's files. The manager will ensure that she oversees all files on a more regular basis.

5 Consider strengthening management oversight of children currently going missing / absconding.

Response: The report related to 2 children A and B. Staff's management of A and B, and how the 2 were not a 'good mix', was regularly reviewed by multi-agency teams at Risk Management Meetings. Following numerous concerns raised about A going missing, A is no longer living at Broad Street.

6 Ensure that supervision sessions still take place whilst there is only 1 Assistant Manager.

Response: Supervisions are now up-to-date as indicated on the monitoring list which is available to Visitors. Due to the confidential nature of supervision, Visitors are not permitted to see the files.

7 Recruitment of Assistant Manager needed as soon as possible.

Response: Recruitment strategy is now in place

8 Staff to follow up outstanding actions from a Young Persons' Meeting

Response: Staff have followed up actions from the last Young Person's Meeting: although they were no longer applicable as the group had since changed.

9 Urgent action needed with school to address non-attendance.

Response: Where necessary, the Virtual School, Social Worker and Keyworkers will try to seek alternative education for children.

10 Pathway Plan for independence needs following up.

Response: Care Plans and Pathway Plans are now on files.

11 A weekly activity planner should be evident. This would encourage staff to engage children in a structured way. If children engage in more positive activity it may reduce challenging behaviour.

Activity Planners were to be introduced after the summer holidays and would clearly set out the children's daily routines.

12 Query was made about the robustness of staff training programmes.

Response: A meeting has taken place with the Workforce Development Team.

13 Need to regularly request school reports – recommendation that the Head of the Virtual School ensures the procedures for Care Homes are followed.

Response: Staff are very proactive in attending parent/carer meetings and requesting school reports. Unfortunately, 2 of the children arrived at the Home in their final school year. Their school reports had been sent to their previous foster carer's home or the child's parental address. The Virtual School is already involved in procedures to access school reports.

14 Repairs to damaged wall in kitchen and downstairs shower need to be completed.

Response: Staff continue to report damages to the building and its fittings to the relevant services.

15 Continue to work with all children to secure their education or training.

Response: The Registered Manager has held a meeting with the Virtual School to share and discuss concerns that some children are finding it difficult to access their learning. On 24 September 2013 all the children attended their educational provision.

16 Very little training, other than the mandatory requirements, appear to be undertaken by staff.

Response: Staff have been receiving mandatory training which is a requirement of the National Minimum Standards. Other vocational training will also run alongside this programme. The Registered Manager is working with the Workforce Development Team to develop a training matrix.

17 Duty staff did not have access to Accident Forms. Paper records need to be up-to-date.

Response: All staff have access to paper copies of Accident and Injury Forms which should be completed on a day-to-day basis and available for the Visitor to see. This information is then transferred electronically to the PRIME system by the Management Team.

Claremont Road

- 1 Carpet needs replacing in office/bedroom.

Response: Carpet in the sleeping-in room was expected to be fitted whilst the children were away on holiday. Carpet in upstairs office has been replaced.

- 2 Concerned that the issues over parking and dropped kerb have not been resolved.

Response: Dropped kerb – a request has been passed on to the Assets Team who have agreed to look into it.

- 3 A young person (C) needed their education/ training needs to be agreed.

Response: C will be attending college in September and funding was being sought by the Virtual School to help with support.

- 4 Concern that it was not clear if staff could do more to support 1 young person (D), with an eating disorder.

Response: The Cared For Support Nurse worked closely with D and staff to address the eating habit. D was being weighed on a weekly basis by the nurse and arrangements made for blood tests.

- 5 Assurance wanted that a young person's (E's) foster placement would still enable E to stay in the final year at their current school.

Response: The Family-Finding exercise will be a difficult search. The manager acknowledges that it would be in E's best interests to remain at the School where E was settled. To this end the initial search will seek to find a family in that area.

- 6 A review as suggested to check if all staff can have access to PRIME to reduce workload for the manager and avoid duplication of accident recording.

Response: The PRIME system is only available to Managers. However all staff should complete a paper copy reporting any accidents or injuries.

- 7 There was a query if staffing levels were sufficient. This was at a time of year when there were 2 members of staff for 4 children, and there was an additional complexity in the daily programme.

8

Response: The staffing structure provides a minimum of 2 staff. However, depending on who is living in the Home, and their behaviour, this can rise to 3 or 4 workers being on duty. When there is a fairly settled group of children living in the Home, 2 staff are sufficient.

- 9 Each young person should have an End of Year School Progress Report on file.

Response: Children have received End of Term reports, unfortunately the staff member omitted to show them to the Visitor.

- 10 It was suggested that visiting conditions for 1 young person and their mother should be reviewed and the findings upheld.

Response: Visiting arrangements are recorded in a young person's Placement Plan as prescribed by the Care Order.