

CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Children & Families Scrutiny Committee

Date of Meeting: 19 October 2010
Report of: Lorraine Butcher, Director of Children's Services
Subject/Title: Bi-Annual Report for Regulation 33 Visits- Cheshire East Children's Homes

1.0 Report Summary

1.1 Background

Regulation 33 (Children's Homes regulation 2001) 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.

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. 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.

1.2 Process

Visits take place every calendar month, unannounced, varying in time and date, 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 Lead Safeguarding Officer (Conference and Reviews) for quality assurance and to the Residential Senior Manager to provide responses to issues raised. A response within 24 hours is made to the Visitors and the Lead Safeguarding Officer (Conference and Reviews). If satisfactory both

reports are sent to Ofsted. It is critical that we carry out visits in a timely manner and send to Ofsted promptly. Visitors in the subsequent month are sent copies of the last visits report and the response to it, in order that on going issues can be monitored.

- 1.3** The Local Authority currently maintains three children's homes, namely Claremont, Broad Street and Priors Hill (Langley Unit). Ofsted have recently rated all three Children's Homes as good with outstanding features.

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 That Members note the content of this report.
- 2.2 That training goes ahead for Visitors in the new calendar year.

3.0 Reasons for Recommendations

- 3.1 To ensure the highest standards for our young people resident in our Children's Homes

4.0 Wards Affected

- 4.1 N/A

5.0 Local Ward Members

- 5.1 N/A

6.0 Policy Implications including - Climate change - Health

- 6.1 N/A

7.0 Financial Implications for Transition Costs (Authorised by the Borough Treasurer)

- 7.1 N/A

8.0 Financial Implications 2009/10 and beyond (Authorised by the Borough Treasurer)

- 8.1 N/A

9.0 Legal Implications (Authorised by the Borough Solicitor)

- 9.1 N/A

10.0 Risk Management

- 10.1 N/A

11.0 Background and Options

11.1 Rota

The following visitors are on the rota to undertake Reg 33 visits. There are 9 Members, 2 volunteers external to Cheshire East Council and 1 working for Cheshire East in Strategic Support and Partnerships.

- Councillor Darryl Beckford
- Councillor Andrew Kolker
- Councillor Rhoda Bailey
- Councillor David Neilson
- Councillor Diana Thompson
- Councillor John Goddard
- Councillor Dorothy Flude
- Councillor Lesley Smetham
- Councillor Ray Westwood
- Rick Howell- Cheshire East –Strategic Support and Partnerships
- John Hattersley – Volunteer
- Emma Dunkin - Volunteer

11.2 Issues raised between April 2010-September 2010

Priors Hill – Langley Unit

- **It would be desirable to have more outside play equipment suitable for disabled children whilst there is warm weather.**
Suitable equipment ordered (verification needed to see if now in place)
- **Door self closing very sharp on some doors - Need to adjust closing mechanisms.** *Health and Safety Checks carried out and door adjusted for safety reasons.*
- **Young Person (YP) move on plan is still fragile - Monitor outcome.** *The YP person has now made a successfully transition to semi -independent living.*
- **Need to enter all accidents in the accident book however minor.** *All staff reminded of procedures and reported to be running better as a consequence.*
- **Maintenance records of fire equipment need to be kept with fire records.** *This was resolved*

- **Need some means for reporting of concerns of parents as many of the YP in Langley are unable to use the complaints process - resolved, a range of options available to parents.**
- **Need for a list of all the documents and their location and who has the restricted records. *This was resolved***
- **All current fire safety records to be kept in the fire record book. *resolved***
- **Fire evacuation drill required, over 6 months since the last one *resolved-April 2010***
- **The indoor soft play room smelt of urine needs to be cleaned - *resolved***

Broad Street

- **Young person needs to be accepted by a school –resolved. *Started at appropriate School***
- **Improve the maintenance arrangements - staff seemed constrained by the support provided by Enterprise. This needs to give them a better service.**
- **Expect to see reduced requirement for restraints as YP settles in. *Progress is made with behavioral issues and this should result in de-escalation techniques and sanctions proving more effective than they are at present.***
- **Broad Street has been a considerable investment for the Council. We need to ensure we use it more fully. *Now has 3 beds occupied.***
- **Broadband and internet need to be available. *Exploring use of lap tops and access to internet in bedrooms. Currently being priced.***
- **Plans are needed for young people's meetings now that there is more than one resident. *Strategies being developed, proving challenging!!***
- **Updates needed for YP's master file - dentist and opticians. *Updated as requested***
- **Lone working review and fire risk assessment needs updating. *Resolved***
- **Menu planning to be reviewed since YP has joined Broad Street - this should improve consistency with meals as well as involvement of young people. *Resolved***

- **J's visits to the dentist and to the opticians for glasses need to be followed up.** *Resolved*
- **Arrangements to be made to look into the young people's access to independent visitors.** *Needs senior management resolution*

Claremont Road – (open since 17.8.10)

- **Significant incidents file to be set up.** *Resolved shown to visitor*
- **Laptop computer to be obtained for young person.** *Exploring use of lap tops and access to internet in bedrooms. Currently being priced*
- **Concerns raised why YP attending school in Macclesfield, whilst living in Crewe area.** *Resolved express wishes of YP, family and professionals.*

11.3 Positive comments noted over review period:

Priors Hill

- Good menu, dietary clean and tidy, medication systems improved happy with plans for young people, staff smart and spoke positive. Staff friendly and treated young people with dignity and respect.
- Artwork done in bathrooms by staff particularly pleasing.
- Children appeared comfortable.
- Good relationship between young people and staff.
- Recording appeared to be up to date.

Claremont Road - Only had one visit as did not open until 17 August.

- Young person well dressed and tidy and continues to attend school
- Young person seems comfortable with staff and has settled in well.
- Staff polite and helpful.
- Relationships between staff and resident appear good, firm but friendly.
- Atmosphere and facilities excellent

Broad Street

- Menus displayed – diet seemed low in fat and well balanced.
- Young people doing shopping lists.
- Building in excellent condition and felt 'homely', kitchen an excellent family space.
- Young people suitable dressed and looking well.
- Young people aware of complaints procedure.
- Staff appeared caring and capable. Appeared to have a good relationship with young people, some boundary setting and low level challenging and attention seeking behaviour managed well by staff

11.4 Conclusions

Overall, we have found the most challenging part of the visits is ensuring that the visits go ahead within the month allocated, and that a response goes to Ofsted promptly! Managers are finding the visits beneficial and welcome the observations of others. As you can see we are managing to resolve issues raised and this is to the credit of the residential services, which I believe is now a credit to our department. The next challenge will be as Claremont and Broad Street grow to capacity, ensuring high standards remain.

11.5 Training and Development

As a response to questions about the role, we have offered subsequent training following our awareness training first given in 2009. This training was sadly cancelled last minute due to poor take up and final cancellations. We plan to run the training again in the Spring.

One of the disappointing aspects about cancelling the training was the opportunity to bring the visitors together as a group to ensure consistency and develop the delivery of the service as a team. Re-scheduling the training in the new year should allow this opportunity.

All visitors have enhanced CRB's.

12.0 Overview of Year One and Term One Issues

12.1 N/A

13.0 Access to Information

The background papers relating to this report can be inspected by contacting the report writer:

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