

CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

Report to: Children and Families Scrutiny Committee

Date of meeting: 28 June 2011
Report of: Glynis Williams, Safeguarding Manager (C&R)
Subject/title: Bi Annual Report for Regulation 33 Visits
Cheshire East Children's Homes
Last report submitted: October 2010 (for period April 2010-September 2010)

1 Report Summary

- 1.1 Regulation 33 (Children's Homes Regulations 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.
- 1.2 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.
- 1.3 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.
- 1.4 Visits take place every calendar month, unannounced, varying in time and date, taking a minimum of 3 hours. Records are checked and the premises, furniture and fittings, and young people and staff are spoken to. The arrangements for health care and education are looked at. The Visitor will also ensure that any community issues that may have arisen have been dealt with.
- 1.5 A report is completed and sent to me to quality assure and to the Residential Manager who will provide responses to issues raised. A response is made to the Visitor and me in 24 hours. If satisfactory both reports are sent 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 previous report and response in order that on-going issues can be monitored.
- 1.6 3 Claremont Road and 113 Broad Street are currently receiving Regulation 33 visits and both have recently been rated a 'good' in

Ofsted inspections with a note that if progress continues we could in the future receive 'outstanding' for some areas.

- 1.7 Langley Unit, Priors Hill received its final Regulation 33 visit in December prior to it ceasing to operate as a children's home on 31 December 2010.
- 1.8 Wilkinson House is a 6 bed Unit ran on behalf of Cheshire East by Together Trust. They have historically carried out Reg 33 inspections themselves but we have recently agreed a joint visit and shared template. This will allow the Council to have a greater understanding of the service Together Trust provide following some concerns by members of Corporate Parenting Board who visited Wilkinson House late 2010. It was agreed that The Safeguarding Manager (C&R), who oversees the Reg 33 function would carry out a 'Reg. 33 style' visit to provide the Board with an overview of this current provision. This report was shared with the Board and the following actions were identified:

- Monitoring meetings quarterly are needed with contract manager and other stake holders urgently.
- Annual report / business plan from Together Trust is needed to be submitted to CEC.
- Reg 33 visits need to be completed by CEC staff to ensure they know this setting and can provide consistency with other CEC residential provision.
- Urgent review of IT equipment for young people to access further learning.
- Review of budget allocated to equipment and furniture to ensure physical 'look' of unit is improved regularly.
- Linking all staff into e-mail accounts and liaison with SW's electronically.
- Review of use of everything 'going in' for typing either staff type directly or handwritten documents go straight on files – to avoid files with blank sections awaiting typing.

- 1.9 A meeting took place with Together Trust and this action plan was responded to and all tasks completed. Joint Visits between Together Trust and CEC Reg 33 visitor will start from June 2011.

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 That this report is shared with Scrutiny Panel Members, Senior managers (Children's Services) and with Regulation 33 visitors.

3 Reasons for recommendations

- 3.1 To ensure the highest standards for our young people resident in Cheshire East Children's homes.

4 Background and options

- 4.1 Rota

The rota is covered by 9 Members, and 2 volunteers external to Cheshire East Council:

- Councillor Darryl Beckford
- Councillor Rhoda Bailey
- Councillor Dorothy Flude
- Councillor John Goddard
- Councillor Andrew Kolker
- Councillor David Neilson
- Councillor Lesley Smetham
- Councillor Diana Thompson
- John Hattersley, volunteer
- Emma Dunkin, volunteer

5 **Issues raised in reports between October 2010 and March 2011, and actions taken**

Priors Hill – Langley Unit

- Covers for door hinges – steps were initiated to ensure that all doors in the home were safe; however subsequent events resulted in the closure of Langley before this was completed.
- Personalising of a room for a young person who was residing almost full time – as this was a short break service the Disability Social Work Team were contacted questioning if this was the most appropriate placement for the young person concerned. The young person subsequently moved on to receive more suitable support.
- Outside lighting did not seem to be working – this was checked and necessary adjustment made to ensure the lights were focussed on the right area.

Claremont Road

- Personal computers for young people – these have now been set up with all the necessary systems in place to ensure that the young people are using them appropriately and safely.
- Dropped kerb – enquiries were made about getting a dropped kerb for the second driveway installed, however, it was agreed that this will be put on hold and staff will refrain from using the second drive.
- Joint staff training programme needed – details of how training is identified and recorded identified.
- Questioned appropriateness of resident attending school in Macclesfield – it was felt that for a variety of reasons it was advisable not to subject her to a change of schools at that time.
- Accident forms should be completed when the accident is reported and referred to in the log book – staff were reminded about the system for recording accidents and this was followed through in individual supervision sessions.
- Visitors' book – a more suitable book was provided.

- Front door in need of repair – a new front door is on order.

Broad Street

- Personal computers for young people – these have now been set up with all the necessary systems in place to ensure that the young people are using them appropriately and safely.
- Home seemed to be very hot, necessitating some of the windows being opened. In the interests of economy requested that the thermostat be checked – thermostat was checked and working correctly.
- Young person had been waiting some time to be able to decorate his room – young person subsequently chose his own paint and decorated his room to his liking.

6 **Positive comments noted over the review period**

Priors Hill – Langley Unit

“The staff were open and friendly; they appeared willing to discuss any issue raised.”

“Staff were clearly engaged with the children and were very caring.”

“Sense of calm and relaxed atmosphere, young people and staff looked settled and positive.”

Claremont Road

“General atmosphere feels great and positive”.

“Feels like a real home”.

“The young person I saw was very comfortable with the facility”.

“Very positive and a happy atmosphere throughout. Files and records in good order”.

“Home is well run and young people are well”.

“Files and records in good order. I was pleased to know that Barnardos are involved at the house providing advocacy for the young people”.

Broad Street

“The home is a pleasant environment for the young people. It is as much like a family home as possible”.

“It felt that both the house and residents had matured since my last visit”.

7 **Training and Development**

Half day training events were held on 10 and 17 January 2011 to provide clarity to visitors about the role and their responsibilities as corporate parents and to answer any questions they had. Everyone who attended agreed that had been a helpful exercise.

8 Conclusions

During the past six months 100% of expected visits have taken place, however there are still some issues with ensuring that the visits take place early enough in the month for the reports to be sent in and responded to in time for them to be available for the next visitor. The Visitors are very engaged with what is required of them and I believe we have made significant progress overall in the development of the residential service.

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

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