

CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Corporate Parent Board

Date of Meeting:	20 th May 2013
Report of:	Glynis Williams, Safeguarding Manager (Conference and Review)
Subject/Title:	Report for Regulation 33 Visits- Cheshire East Children's Homes Previous Reports submitted October 2010, June 2011

1.0 Background

There is a requirement under Regulation 33 (Children's Homes regulation 2001) that requires a monthly visit to children's homes run by the Local Authority by a person (Visitor) not employed at the home nor directly responsible for it, and the presentation of a written report to the responsible authority –from the Visitor, setting out their impressions and findings. The person undertaking the visit should be properly informed of its purpose and have access to the reports provided for the previous 6 months, so they have a context for their own visit.

The focus of the visit 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 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. In Cheshire East we use these reports 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 to March 2013.

2 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. If satisfactory 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 visits 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
Claremount Road: Open since August 2010
Ivy lane

Throughout this period we have 100% visits and required responses. There has been evidence of staff and young people being consulted with regularly, but recording needs to be clearer about whether young people and staff are spoken to every visit.

The following visitors are on the rota. We have 10 members, and 3 volunteers external to Cheshire East Council.

- 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
- John Hattersley – Volunteer (currently not on rota)

3 Training and Development

It is important that Visitors are appropriately trained and supported. For the period covered by this report, we have delivered training twice during 2012 and we are delivering a further session in April 2013. All visitors have ID badges and are subject to enhanced CRB checks. The training provides an opportunity for visitors to discuss the role and meet managers of the Units to discuss service planning and raise awareness about the needs of cared for children. The new Children's Home guidance issued in March 2013 will be

discussed in the next training. Each new member of the rota is given an induction and an opportunity to shadow a visit.

The form developed to record the findings during the visit was reviewed in January 2012 in order to add scrutiny specifically about residents who are 'missing' from care. The form has been revised again this month to reflect the revised Childrens Homes regulations issued.

Overall the rota works well, and in order to enhance this it may be useful to add members of the Corporate Parenting Board and the Independent Safeguarding Chairs, from the Safeguarding Unit, this would allow for visits to be undertaken in pairs.

4 The Childrens Homes Guidance

New guidance has been issued re-enforcing the importance of children and young people enjoying and achieving. The guidance states the Visitor should be able to see evidence of stable, safe and secure care for children and young people. Visitors should feel there is an effective approach to behaviour management and be facilitated to undertake private interviews with staff and children.

5 Issues raised between November 2011 and March 2013 within the Visitors Reports (see Appendix1 for all actions noted over period)

As with all homes where there are active children, a certain degree of repair and maintenance is required to ensure good standards in the fabric of the children's home. There have been no indications across the reporting period that the homes failed to meet expected standards. There are good arrangements for repairs to be carried out in a timely way and for the general upkeep to ensure we are able to provide a welcoming and comfortable environment for our young people to live and thrive in.

Repairs

Repairs will always feature in reports, as the questions lay heavily to report on this area. Overall they do not present a significant concern during the period, there is evidence that they are dealt with satisfactorily in a timely way.

Occupancy Levels

Concerns were raised about occupancy levels within the Homes in the early part of the review period. Claremont took some months to be fully operational. It is now at full capacity but in 2012 the Visitor had referenced this 25% at the time of the visit. It is important that Homes are used to their capacity to ensure resources are used effectively, including financial and this avoids children being placed out of the Authority in some cases distances from their families and local communities.

Recommendation: it may be prudent to provide an overall occupancy figure for the last 2 years to Visitors regularly with analysis of the reasons behind vacancies.

Educational progress

The area that provides the Visitors with the most concern is around educational progress of residents. Visitors have raised issues of school reports not coming to the homes on more than one occasion. Concerns have also been raised about residents attending schools not near their care home, resulting in a long journey. It was also noted that computers for all young people to access were not always available to support learning and social media use. A reference was made to no PEP being available for resident a young person or limited information on a PEP was noted. Pathway plans for post 16's also needed to be good quality with the educational targets clear and the young person fully engaged in its creation.

Recommendation: A review is required of current educational support and monitoring within the Homes to ensure all children and young people achieve. The Virtual School would be instrumental in this.

Young Peoples residential meetings:

The wishes and feelings of children and young people are vital to influence service design and delivery. Their views being heard on a daily level within the home where they are living is also as important. The Visitors reports show evidence of struggling to get the residents together for young people's meetings, but we know that organisations achieve this and more creative ways have to be adopted within CEC Homes. Even if formal meetings aren't achieved, views could be collected and published on a board for others young people to see and comment on.

Recommendation: Further action needs to be taken to demonstrate young people's views are listened too and understood daily by the Homes.

Staff team working and development:

Overall Visitors have been really impressed with the staff's commitment and recognition of the challenges they face. When Visitors arrive staff have overall been very helpful and assisted greatly. However concerns have been raised by Visitors about the turnover of the staff group at Broad Street,(raised in Autumn 2011), It was also raised that a dis-proportionate amount of women were employed. Recruitment adverts had noted under representation of men and has been encouraging men to apply as a response. It would be useful to understand the current staffing profile. The training manual wasn't always presented as up to date during visits, and specific training was noted as not completed in one of the homes. Support for staff was raised in early 2013 following a difficult period supporting a resident with complex needs. Regular support had been offered by the Education Psychologist, but it was unclear what the arrangements were and whether staff was being supported enough when dealing with challenging children and young people. The visitors were

concerned about the emotional needs and how CAMHS services were supporting the young people.

Recommendation: An updated training needs analysis is required and staffing profile. Visitors should be able to carry out private interviews with staff when they visit.

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 about their discussions with the young people:

Broad Street

- *Knows how to use the complaints system*
- *Aware of complaint procedure but felt not needed*
- *When asked if things could be improved, young person couldn't think of anything*
- *H would prefer to stay at the home and not move on to a hostel*

Claremont Road

- *Good food, good drink, good life*
- *Would prefer it if no more young people moved in*
- *Young person seemed happy with the way things were*
- *Some negative comments about life in the home but nothing specified*

Positive Comments made within Reports from Visitors

A very professional staff group who work well together and have the best interests of young residents at heart, despite the many challenges. (Claremont Road Nov12)

I was very impressed with the relationships that clearly exist between YP and staff and the overall impression of a happy and effective team. This is clearly having a positive effect on the YP (Broad Street June12)

6 Conclusions and Recommendations

A further report should be requested on education progress of the residents within the Childrens homes and on the team development and training of staff. The educational progress of young people needs to show clearer evidence of improvement and a

'corporate parent' approach. Educational planning needs to be swift and responsive, with a higher emphasis within the Homes.

A further recommendation to enhance these visits and reports is that the visits are co-undertaken with Corporate Parenting Board Members and Independent Safeguarding Chairs, and young people. This will ensure members are supported in their role as they undertake visits. This additional knowledge and expertise will drive through raising standards. Visitors would also like a fixed rota so they are building up links with certain homes which will allow relationships to be established with children and staff.

Lastly the current form needs to be adapted to show evidence of clearer outcomes where issues are raised, and views directly for children and young people living within the Homes.

7 Access to Information

The previous reports and regulation 33 policy can be inspected by contacting the report writer:

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Appendix 1 Overall recommendations made at Reg 33 visits

Broad Street

- Could increased incentives be used to encourage suitable behavior? *The incentives in place are reviewed with the young person, their keyworker and case manager on a regular basis and incorporate support issues that the young person aims to work on whilst in Broad Street. The aim is to focus on incentives which give belongings as opposed to monetary gain so the young people can see daily what their hard work can achieve.*
- Is there a high turnover of staff? *The majority of staff had been at Broad Street since it opened in December 2009, however there are occasions when staff are moved between the homes for a variety of operational reasons.*
- Security of premises at the rear to be considered when work is being undertaken. *When builders are working in the house staff are always conscious of security and do make use of the CCTV camera on the back door, whilst seeking to maintain a balance between an environment that is protective without appearing institutionalised.*

- Staff training needs to be entered in manual. *The staff training is currently being updated and will be placed in the training file when completed.*
- Repairs still outstanding. *A complaint has been raised due to the poor workmanship and long delays incurred when requesting work from Integral.*
- JW's complaint to be entered in complaints log. *JW's complaint has been entered in the log book and staff have explained to him why there are fewer male members of staff, and that it is important that candidates meet the necessary requirements in the recruitment process in order to safeguard the young people in our care and he said he understood.*

2012

- Need to look at recruitment process as only one male member of staff. *We understand the concerns about the low numbers of male staff, however the stringent recruitment process is in place to safeguard young people, and to ensure we have the right skills to help them achieve the best outcome. We do state on the advertisement, "men are under-represented in this area and are welcome to apply".*
- No access to supervision files, system needed to enable visitors to check that supervisions are up to date. *Due to the confidential nature of supervision it would not be appropriate for the staff team to have access. However, on the front of the cabinet there should be a monitoring sheet which is updated with each person's supervision sessions and the date they take place.*
- No leaving date on training sheet. *The Registered Manager will arrange for a note to be made on the training record when a member of staff has left the service.*
- Action section not filled in on JW's accident record. *Staff to be reminded to fully complete the paper record in future. A note of action taken would have been completed on the electronic record.*
- Fencing needs repair and previous repairs of poor quality. *Fencing has been repaired. Unfortunately there have been some issues regarding the standard of repairs carried out by Integral.*
- Old alarm in living room needs removing. *Resolved.*
- Fire equipment testing not completed. *An oversight on behalf of staff – resolved.*
- Need to access Emergency First Aid Training Provider. *Training arranged.*
- Need to follow up a CAMHS appointment for a young person. *Appointment arranged.*
- Issue of one young person bullying another resident. *Staff addressed the subject of bullying with all residents and established a zero tolerance supported by mediation between the young people.*
- Young people meeting did not take place as they refused to attend. *In this situation staff talk to them on an individual basis to discuss their concerns and to encourage them to participate.*

- Actions and outcome need to be evidenced from H & S checks. *Checks are taking place but it may be useful to add another sheet to record when jobs have been completed.*
- Some gaps in 'required training' particularly PACE. *Once the current recruitment programme is completed we will arrange a training session to ensure all staff are PACE trained.*
- Is there a record to show if young people are not making healthy choices from the menu? *Information about children's eating habits are recorded in the weekly updates and each young person has a daily*
- Check on Police incident with SH in September 2012. *At the time SH left our care the incident was under investigation. As she is no longer care for in the residential home all information would be updated to the Social Worker.*
- Health and Safety checks. *These are normally undertaken at the beginning of the month and the Registered Manager will ensure that this happens in future.*
- Staff supervision – *Arrangements have been made to ensure that staff supervision takes place during the Assistant Registered Manager's absence.*
- Check if staff have received a copy of BW's PEP. *BW moved back to the parental home in December so staff would not have any further involvement in his educational progress.*
- Is there a system for staff to receive educational targets for residents? *Phil Mellen, Head of Virtual School, was spoken to and he agreed to arrange for staff to receive more information regarding the progress of residents.*
- Check if there is a re-decoration programme in place to ensure the building remains in good order. *Due to the high level of wear and tear in the house the Registered Manager and staff are continually on the lookout for repairs that are needed.*
- Check access to PRIME to avoid duplication of work. *Currently the system only allows managers to input on PRIME and staff keep a file of the information.*
- Check that repair to the car has been completed. *I am pleased to report that the car has been repaired.*
- See what progress has been made to develop the home's involvement in the education of the young residents. *The Head of the Virtual School will ensure that the staff are kept fully informed of the educational progress of the young people.*

2013

- Some school reports still not coming to the home. *School reports for DH are shared with his mother who has parental responsibility. The home does receive school reports for JR.*
- Premises. *Decoration had been completed to a high standard but unfortunately further damage has occurred. Damage is reported regularly but sometimes Integral had to order replacements which does cause some delay in completing.*

- General atmosphere, staff and young people seem stressed. *The team have been under considerable stress recently due to the behaviour of one young person, sadly this has also affected the other residents. Support is provided by the Educational Psychologist and managers via de-briefing, and a full day de-brief will be arranged shortly with the whole staff team.*

Claremont Road

2011

- Doorbell to be mended. *Resolved.*
- Complaints/compliment book to have an index system. *Book divided into subsections with index.*
- Training for staff on Oracle system to be up-to-date. *Planned to update training in 2012.*
- Medication stock list to be checked. *The home does not have a medication stock list as all medicine is prescribed and if unused is returned to the pharmacy for disposal.*
- Continued work on alcohol and drug abuse. *Work is continuing with outside agencies, and young people are positively engaging with YOS and youth workers.*
- Continue efforts to try to achieve full school attendance. *School liaison is working well and staff work closely with the Virtual School to address any issues.*

2012

- Request for young person to be assessed for autism/aspergers. *The Social Worker arranged for him to be seen by the CAMHS team who were unable to give any diagnosis for autism or aspergers.*
- Suggested that copies of the school reports for each child are sent to the home. *The Registered Manager will discuss this further with the Head of Virtual School.*
- Availability of archive records to track discharges. *Records are routinely sent to the Social Worker and staff can request information from them when required.*
- The home is at 25% capacity. Although great care is taken to ensure that future residents are socially compatible, it must be questioned as to whether the home can continue to operate at this level. *The service has reviewed the way in which potential referrals are considered. There has been a further two admissions since the visit.*
- Consider the possibility of a holiday abroad for the residents. *As there is currently a new group of young people resident a trip abroad may be too disruptive at this time, however once the group has settled this will be reviewed.*
- The schools should be asked for the reason when young people are not making any measurable progress. *Keyworkers work closely with the Virtual School when there are concerns about individuals.*

- Need full length unbreakable mirrors in the bedrooms. *The Registered Manager is in the process of obtaining an estimate.*
- Need support and advice for young person regarding the importance of breakfast. *Staff will continue to offer guidance about the importance of eating breakfast in key work sessions, and cereal bars will be offered as another option.*
- Review of young person's medication with GP. *His medication is monitored by CAMHS and the Looked After Children's Nurse.*
- Installation of window alarms to alert staff of absconding. *The windows are fitted with restrictors, and there are locks on the downstairs windows. Staff are ensuring the door alarms are activated at night.*
- Risk assessment for K needs to be monitored in view of her local boyfriend age 21. Check diet in view of her weight and stress importance of breakfast. *This young person is the subject of a Child Sexual Exploitation Plan therefore a multi-agency group monitor every four weeks. Staff continue to stress the importance of breakfast.*
- Check how many nights J spends at the parental home and what issues arise as a result. *Originally he was on a Care Order and his parents struggle to manage his behaviour. It has been agreed that the care plan will be changed to shared care.*
- Important that supervisions are up to date. *The manager had completed the supervisions but had omitted to record this on the supervision sheet.*
- Issue about J and his uniform, how has this been sorted? *The keyworker will attend a meeting at school at the beginning of the new term to discuss this.*
- Supervision files – not sure what we are really allowed to see due to confidentiality etc. *Visitors would not be given access to the supervision files, however they should be shown the chart listing when supervisions have taken place with each member of staff in order to check that they are happening regularly.*
- Ensure the 'welcome back' process is shared across the settings and that the young person's de-brief is evaluated. *The effectiveness of the 'welcome back' process will be discussed at the next senior meeting and the Registered Manager will ensure that the young person's de-brief is evaluated.*
- What flexibility is there to review the range of sanctions when withdrawing money doesn't seem to have an impact? *If sanctions appear to be ineffectual they will be reviewed to try to find an alternative, however staff must ensure that they adhere to regulations around Looked After Children in Children's Homes.*
- Resolve the next step for J. *A care review was held where plans for J were discussed and the plan is to reintegrate him back to the family home.*
- Ensure Pathway Plan and leaving care arrangements are in place for K. *K is already allocated a 16+ worker and a Pathway Plan will be drawn up for him in line with their protocols.*
- Young people's meeting outstanding. *A meeting was arranged but had to be cancelled as all the young people were out on activities, however*

they were spoken to individually and no issues were raised. A meeting has been arranged for next month.

- No supervision files checked – this needs following up to ensure that management are happy for these to be seen at future visits. *Visitors would not be given access to the supervision files due confidentiality, however they should be shown the chart listing when supervisions have taken place with each member of staff in order to check that they are happening regularly.*
- There are significant gaps in the recording of unauthorised absences which need resolving asap. *We do not have an 'unauthorised absence' status for the younger children who are resident at Claremont Road so this may have been confused with the young man who had returned home late. If a young person is deemed to be 'missing' then this would be reported to the police.*
- Personal education plan for A seen, but is very light on information and needs full completion. *Keyworker will follow this up.*
- Independent visitors for the young people needs following up. *This is the responsibility of the Social Worker and would be arranged on an individual basis.*
- How long are beds held once a young person has left, and why? *As a service we like to have a phased plan in order to avoid a placement breakdown and as J was returning home, and due to his family circumstance it was felt necessary to hold his bed for a time.*
- Sanctions book – can managers satisfy themselves that the transition to a new recording book has worked effectively and old records are appropriately secure and retained for future reference? *Restraints are recorded in a bound book to prevent removal of pages and the old ones have been safely looked away. The new sanctions and restraints books have been designed to be more user friendly for both staff and young people to read and sign.*
- Has the planned meeting about J's PEP taken place? *Resolved.*
- Has the fire drill planned for the day of the visit taken place? *Fire alarm testing was completed on 23 October and a fire drill subsequently took place on 5 December.*
- Stair carpet to be cleaned or replaced. *Arrangements have been made for this to be replaced within the next few days – resolved.*

2013

- The accident forms have a section for action taken which is not filled in. *The hard copy of the form that is available to the visitor is only really for reference within the home. It is the responsibility of the manager to record the accident on the PRIME system and the incident can't be closed until all the data has been completed. As this is a management responsibility the staff may not be aware of the action taken, ie, referral to H & S, where an alert on the system would prompt the Manager to make a referral.*

