

putting
the child first

Regulation 44 Visitor – Annual Overview April 22 – March 23



together for
children
SUNDERLAND



Report Author: Jackie Amos, Regulation 44 Officer

Table of Contents:

1. Purpose.....	3
2. Regulation 44 Visit and Structure within Together for Children.....	3
3. Performance Overview.....	3
4. Administration	4
5. Colombo Road	4
6. Grasswell House	8
7. Revelstoke Road.....	12
8. Nook Lodge.....	17
9. Monument View	21
10. Analysis.....	24
11. Service Review & Development.....	25

1. Purpose

To provide elective members of the Corporate Parenting Board with an update on the findings in relation to the Regulation 44 visits undertaken between April 2022 and March 2023.

2. Regulation 44 Visit and Structure within Together for Children

The current Children's Homes Regulations and Quality Standards were published in April 2015.

Regulation 44 of the Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015 states that the registered provider shall appoint, at the registered provider's expense, an independent person to visit and report on the children's home in accordance with this regulation. This is to ensure objective critical analysis with a view to improve safeguarding and service delivery for children.

The Regulation 44 visitor must be able to evidence demonstrable independence and have the skills necessary to relate to children and young people, assess all relevant information and form a rigorous and impartial assessment of the home's arrangements for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of the children in the home's care. This is achieved by scrutinising all relevant documentation, talking to at least one of the children and young people accommodated in the home, their parents or relatives, staff from the home and relevant professionals.

The Regulation 44 Visitor service sits within the Children's Independent Reviewing Service within Together for Children, Sunderland and has both a part-time, and PVH Regulation 44 Visitor. Together for children is the registered provider of five children's homes that require Regulation 44 visits.

3. Performance Overview

The following table provides the dates of the most recent Ofsted inspections for each home. During the reporting period every home received a monthly Regulation 44 visit, in compliance with the regulations.

Home	Date of most recent Ofsted Inspection
Colombo Road	14/03/23 – 15/03/23
Monument View	10/05/22 – 11/05/22
Grasswell House	24/01/23 – 25/01/23
Revelstoke Road	03/10/22 – 04/10/22
Nook Lodge	08/03/23 – 09/03/23

All Regulation 44 visits were undertaken face-to-face, and in accordance with Covid-19 risk assessments.

4. Administration

As part of the Regulation 44 Visit, the following tasks are undertaken by the Regulation 44 Visitor:

- Reading the Regulation 45 Report.
- A visit to the home.
- Speaking with young people who live there to gather their views regarding their standard of care.
- Speaking with young people’s carers, parents, social workers, Independent Reviewing Officer, and any other relevant persons such as independent advocate, to collect their views on the standard of care being provided.
- Reviewing and evaluating records such as young people’s files, critical incident logs, medical records, and any notifications to Ofsted

Upon the Visitor evaluating all the above, a report is produced and sent to the manager of the home and the responsible person for Together for Children for comment. The report is then sent to Ofsted at the end of each month.

The Visitor also completes a short letter for the young people at the home about their visit and findings. During this reporting period we also ensured that whereby any young person living in one of our homes whose first language is not English, the letter has been translated for them.

5. Colombo Road

Colombo Road Children’s Home is situated on a large housing estate in the Hylton Castle area of Sunderland and is approved for up to six young people, aged from 11- 17 years. Ofsted inspectors have given the home an overall judgement of “Outstanding” for the last five visits they have undertaken.

The home’s workforce is stable. Whilst the home is currently fully staffed in terms of Residential Childcare Workers (RCCW), a recruitment process is underway for a Relief Residential Childcare Worker (RRCCW). The stability of the workforce has enabled team members to engage in trusting and meaningful relationships with the young people and other professionals.

Since the last report to Corporate Parenting in March 2022, Ofsted visited Colombo Road in March 2023. The judgement remains “Outstanding”:

Ofsted Judgements	14th/15th December 2021	14th/15th March 2023
Overall experiences and progress of children and young people	Outstanding	Outstanding
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Good	Good
The effectiveness of leaders and managers	Outstanding	Outstanding
Overall Judgement	Outstanding	Outstanding

Whilst there were no statutory requirements made by Ofsted in March 2023, the following three recommendations were included in the report:

The home's location risk assessment needs more consultation with local Police and Counsellors.

Impact risk assessments require further work.

Supervision needs more reflective practice throughout the full process.

An action plan has been completed and the manager has complied with the recommendations. These will be monitored by the Visitor during the Regulation 44 visits.

In this reporting period Colombo Road has provided care for the following numbers of young people:

April 22	May 22	June 22	July 22	Aug 22	Sep 22
6	6	6	6	6	6
Oct 22	Nov 22	Dec 22	Jan 23	Feb 23	Mar 23
6	6	6	6	6	6

Two boys, both seeking asylum, and four girls, aged between 14 and 17 years, currently reside at Colombo Road. All have differing needs and interests which are respected and supported by the team.

No of admissions in reporting period	No of discharges in reporting period	No of missing incidents	No of missing incidents over 24hrs	Number of recommendations in the reporting period
3	3	15	4	6

The number of young people residing at Colombo Road, during this reporting period, remained at six throughout the year. Three young people moved out of the home in line with their care / pathway plans and three young people moved in.

The matching of young people who move into the home is carefully judged, with consideration given to the individual needs of the young people. This process considers the potential impact of any young person moving into the home and how they may affect the dynamics of the other young people already living there. Overall, this has been undertaken successfully and the Visitor has not seen indicators that would suggest any new young person, has led to an increase in critical incidents or team members needing to restrain young people.

The young people living at Colombo Road attend a range of mainstream and alternative education and training provisions. The young people each have friendship groups within their own communities or through their education provision. The young people have the chance to discuss their wishes and feelings independently from the home with their Social Workers, Independent Reviewing Officer's

(IRO) and the Regulation 44 Officers. In addition to this all-young people have access to share their views via the Mind of My Own application.

During Regulation 44 visits the Visitor always speaks to at least one young person at Colombo Road, to explore how they feel they are being cared for and if they want anything to change for them at the home. This can involve face-to-face discussions or the completion of a questionnaire. Some of the young people expressed the reason they didn't offer their views to the Visitor was because they struggle with the number of professionals visiting their home and asking them questions. Different ways of engaging young people and ascertaining their voice, in a way that works for them, continues to be a focus by the Visitor. The Visitor continues to work in partnership with the home's staff team to find creative ways in engaging the young people who live at the home.

Unannounced Regulation 44 visits have been undertaken, to allow the visitor to experience the day to day running of the home. Visits took place at different times which assisted the Visitor in having contact with the young people to collect their views. Given the ages of the young people they are often out with their friends or visiting families during visiting times therefore the Visitor aims to do later evening and weekend visits, going forward.

Fifteen missing episodes were reported during this twelve-month period, a significant reduction when compared to the previous year when twenty-eight missing episodes were recorded. Four of the missing episodes exceeded twenty-four hours which is an increase when compared to the last reporting period when no reported missing episodes were recorded for twenty-four hours or over. Team members undertake one-to-one sessions with the young people to disrupt the missing episodes. These open conversations ensure that the young people have the right information to help make safe and informed decisions. In addition, Police Prevention Interviews and Return Home Interviews are also offered to the young people, to support them to understand how to keep safe. This is a multi-agency approach in safeguarding the young people.

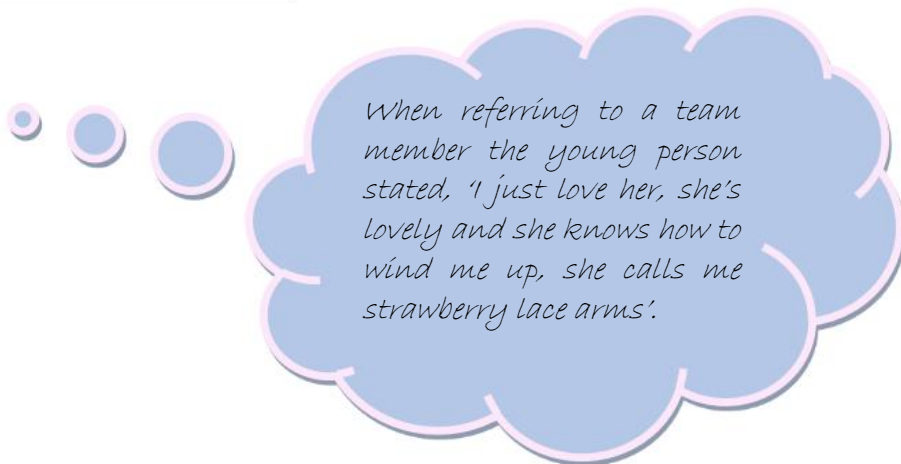
The Regulation 44 Visitor made six recommendations during this reporting year, a slight reduction when compared to the previous year when seven recommendations were made. Examples of recommendations included: Review section 8 of a young person's risk assessment, team members should consider updating a young person's Individual Crisis Support Plan and team members to consider arranging a meeting with a mother to discuss her worries about her daughter's care.

There were no restraints recorded during this reporting period, compared to one recorded restraint in the previous year. The main factor which has influenced the rare use of restraints is the trauma informed training team members have undertaken. Team members do not wish to re-traumatise young people in their care and therefore believe restraint should only be used if a young person is a serious threat to themselves or others.

Type of Notification	Reported Incidents 2021-2022	Reported Incidents 2022-2023	Variance
Critical incident	24	7	-15
Ofsted notification	25	7	-18

The significant decrease in critical incidents and Ofsted notifications were due to a young person moving out of the home to a more suitable, out of area accommodation.

Voices of the Young people



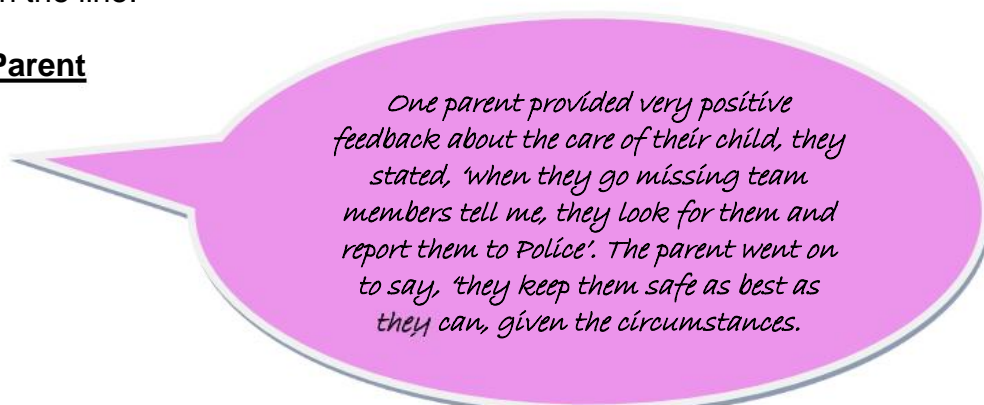
Engagement between the young people and the Visitor, during this reporting period, has varied somewhat, depending on the timing of the visit and the young people's personal circumstances. However, some of their views were captured throughout the year. The young people who talked to the Visitor were consistent in terms of their 'good relationships' with their Link Workers, they liked their bedrooms which they personalised, and that they felt their cultural needs were met to a high standard. We know that young people, living in a caring environment, can develop a sense of belonging/identity and learn how to manage their feelings better, this leads to good outcomes for them.

An example was:

A young person seeking asylum, who moved to live at Colombo Road in this reporting period, arrived in a very distressed state. The young person told the Visitor, via an app on their phone, that he felt very sad, that he would remain in his bedroom, he did not wish to eat, and wanted to return home to his country of origin. This young person shared that he felt traumatised by their journey to the UK and his situation, at that time. He felt he could not communicate with anyone, which added to his difficulties, he described feeling like he was 'in prison'.

Very quickly, the same young person presented as more settled, he looked physically well and had access to a full-time educational placement with additional English support provided. The young person was supported to engage with other young people from the same village he had come from, who were cared for by a neighbouring authority. They began to develop a meaningful relationship with each other, supported by their Link Workers and other professionals involved with them. Colombo Road has worked very hard to identify communities for young people seeking asylum. They go above and beyond what is expected, to ensure young people have access to all opportunities available for non-cared for young people. That same young man is now happy, he enjoys living at the home, he looks forward to his education and his future in the longer-term. The Visitor is delighted with the obvious progress and how happy this young person presents, some few months down the line.

Voice of a Parent



A parent of another young person explained they are of the view their child is 'happy and settled living at the home' and that they are 'well informed, via telephone and stated that they receive a monthly update about their child's progress'.

Summary

The manager accepted and implemented all recommendations from the Regulation 44 Visitors reports and implemented them within the timescales provided. The management and members of the team remain committed to supporting young people to the best of their abilities, helped by Dr Christie, Psychologist, to implement trauma informed residential childcare practice. Team members celebrate the young people's differences and celebrate their many achievements.

The care afforded to the young people is excellent and when scoring what service delivery is like the Visitor has consistently scored 9, 10 being the highest score.

No concerns or complaints have been raised by any professional about the care afforded to the young people, in fact, quite the contrary, many positive reports have been provided, complimenting the care provided.

6. Grasswell House

Grasswell House is located within Sunderland West and continues to provide residential care for up to six young people aged 12-17 years. The home's workforce is stable, they are currently fully staffed in terms of Residential Childcare Workers (RCCW) however, are in the process of recruiting one Relief Residential childcare Worker (RRCCW). The stability of the workforce has enabled team members to engage in trusting and meaningful relationships with the young people and other professionals. The manager and the leadership team work hard to achieve best outcomes for all cared for young people.

Since the last report to the Corporate Parenting Board in March 2022, Ofsted visited Grasswell House in January 2023, some eighteen months later, where they maintained their overall judgement of good.

Ofsted Judgements	8th/9th Jun 2021	24th/25th Jan 2023
Overall experiences and progress of children and young people	Good	Good
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Good	Good
The effectiveness of leaders and managers	Good	Good
Overall Judgement	Good	Good

Three statutory requirements were made by Ofsted in January 2023.

Regulation 8 – Education – inspectors wanted to see more evidence of planning for young people who do not have full time education or who refuse to attend education provided.

Regulation 12 – Impact Risk Assessments for young people moving into the home – inspectors wanted to see more in-depth analysis of the impact of identified risks.

Regulation 35 – Use of sanctions/consequences – inspectors did not agree with a financial consequence that had been used and noted some minor recording issue in the timing of the review of records.

Five recommendations were also made by Ofsted in January 2023.

The registered person should ensure that the staff meet the children’s basic day-to-day needs and physical necessities. Staff should seek to meet the child’s basic needs in the way that a good parent would, recognising that many children in residential care have experienced environments where these needs have not been consistently met. This is an important aspect of demonstrating that the staff care Inspection report for children’s home: 1254837 8 for the child and value them as an individual. (‘Guide to the Children’s Homes Regulations, including the quality standards’, page 15, paragraph 3.7)

The registered person should ensure that the children are consulted regularly on their views about the home’s care, to inform and support continued improvement in the quality of care provided. Children should be able to see the results of their views being listened to and acted on. (‘Guide to the Children’s Homes Regulations, including the quality standards’, page 22, paragraph 4.11).

The registered person should ensure that any child who has been restrained should be offered the opportunity to access an advocacy support to help them express their feelings about their experiences of the restraint. (‘Guide to the Children’s Homes Regulations, including the quality standards’, page 50, paragraph 9.60).

The registered person should ensure that there are systems in place so that all staff, including the manager, receive supervision of their practice from an appropriately qualified and experienced professional, which allows them not only to reflect on their practice and development, but also to focus on the needs of the children assigned to their care. (‘Guide to the Children’s Homes Regulations, including the quality standards’, page 61, paragraph 13.2).

The registered person should ensure that staff are familiar with the home’s policies on record-keeping and understand the importance of careful, objective, and clear recording. Records should be kept up to date, and staff should record information on individual children in a non-stigmatising way that distinguishes between fact, opinion, and third-party information. Information about the child must always be recorded in a way that will be helpful to the child. (‘Guide to the Children’s Homes Regulations, including the quality standards’, page 62, paragraph 14.4)

The manager has fulfilled the three requirements and five recommendations, made by the Ofsted Inspectors, and these will continue to be monitored by the Visitor during Regulation 44 visits.

In this reporting period Grasswell House have provided care for the following numbers of young people:

Apr 22	May 22	June 22	Jul 22	Aug 22	Sep 22
6	6	6	6	6	6
Oct 22	Nov 22	Dec 22	Jan 23	Feb 23	Mar 23
6	6	6	6	6	6

Four girls and two boys currently reside at Grasswell House, aged between 15 - 17 years, they all have differing needs and interests which are supported by the team.

No of admissions in reporting period	No of discharges in reporting period	No of missing incidents	No of missing incidents over 24hrs	Number of recommendations in the reporting period
2	2	77	2	4

Within this reporting period, two young people moved out of the home and two young people moved in, all in line with their care or pathway plans. The matching of young people who move into the home is carefully considered in respect of the individual needs of each young person and the potential impact the young person moving in may have on the dynamics of the other young people living at the home.

There have been 77 missing from care reports this reporting period, a notable increase when compared to the previous reporting period when 42 missing episodes were reported. The missing episodes increased due to three young people who were repeatedly reported as missing, which influenced at least one new resident. Two of the young people were moved to alternative provisions which appears to be having a more positive impact on the remaining young people.

One-to-one sessions were undertaken with the young people to discuss the teams worries about their safety. These open conversations helped to disrupt missing episodes and enabled the young people and team member to develop meaningful relationships, as the team member showed the young person how much they care. Information was added to the young person's risk assessments to strengthen the safety planning, should future episodes happen.

Two of the 77 missing episodes exceeded twenty-four-hour periods which were notified to Ofsted. Police Prevention Interviews and Return Home Interviews were offered to the young people following every missing episode. It is disappointing to note that the young people chose not to engage in many of the interviews.

Four recommendations were made during this reporting period a slight decrease when compared to the previous reporting period when seven recommendations were reported. One recommendation was in relation to Standard 6.2, The Positive Relationship Standard, in that one of the young people's Individual Crisis Support Plan needed updating. One was in relation to Standard 7, The Protection of Children Standard, in that a one-to-one session was recommended for a young person, regarding staying safe.

Six restraints were recorded during this reporting period, an increase when compared to the previous reporting period when one restraint was recorded. One of the restraints was a standing hold and two were restricting two young people access to certain parts of the room, to support their safety. There are two main factors which influence the rare use of restraints. These are the implementation of trauma informed residential childcare practice and because team members do not wish to risk re-

traumatising young people to experiences, they may have experienced within their birth families, prior to being cared for. Therefore, the team believe restraint should only be used if a young person is a serious threat to themselves or others.

The young people living at Grasswell House attend a range of mainstream and alternative education and training. The young people have friendship groups through their education provision or within their own communities. The young people can discuss their wishes and feelings, independently, with Residential Care Workers, Social Workers, Independent Reviewing Officer's the Regulation 44 Visitor and via the Mind of my Own application. During Regulation 44 visits the Visitor attempted to speak to at least one young person to discuss how they feel they are being cared for and if they wanted anything to change for them. However, due to the timing of some of the visits, the young people's commitments, and choices, it was not always possible to speak to a young person face-to-face. Some young people completed the Visitors questionnaire, and some chose not to. Given that the Visitor spoke to the young person's Link Worker, their Social Worker, Independent Reviewing Officer, and other relevant professionals such as Independent Visitors, an understanding of the young person's wishes, and feelings were still ascertained.

Unannounced Regulation 44 visits were undertaken, every month, during the reporting period. In future, the timing of the visits will be more varied including evenings and weekends for a better chance to engage with the young people.

Type of Notification	Reported Incidents 2021-22	Reported Incidents 2022-23	Variance
Critical incident	28	29	+1
Ofsted notification	25	20	-5

During this reporting period 29 critical incidents were recorded, and 20 notifications were made to Ofsted. This compares to 28 critical incidents and 25 notifications during the previous reporting period. Not all critical incidents require reporting to Ofsted as they may not meet the criteria.

Voice of the Child/Young Person

The young people engaged intermittently with the Visitor during this reporting period. The age of some young people, their wishes and feelings meant they chose when to engage with the Visitor. However, on occasions, when the young people chose to engage, they were very positive about the care they received. One young person wrote:



A young person shared that she wanted to live with her mam but was worried that her mam could not cope with her behaviour. The same young person told the Visitor that she has a good relationship with her Link Worker who she calls 'nana'.

The young people have enjoyed a wide variety of activities and opportunities throughout the year. Their achievements are acknowledged and celebrated with them, which they appear to enjoy.

Voice of a Parent



A young person’s grandparent was contacted by a translator as English is not their first language. He confirmed that whilst he wants to care for his granddaughter, he has no concerns about the care she receives. The grandparent confirmed that, ‘I received regular updates about my granddaughter’. This evidences that team members maintain regular contact with birth family and ensure their views are ascertained in their language.

Summary

The manager challenged some of the requirements/recommendations, however, intends to implement all, which will be overseen by the Regulation 44 Visitor. The management and members of the team remain committed to improving the standards of care they provide for young people, assisted by Dr Christie, Psychologist, to implement further trauma informed residential childcare practice. Team members celebrate the young people’s differences and praise all their achievements. The home has been judged to be Good by Ofsted in January 23.

7. Revelstoke Road

Revelstoke Road’s children’s home is situated on a housing estate within Sunderland North, it provides residential care for up to six young people of either gender. In terms of management structure there have been no changes in relation to the senior team, in this reporting period. The management team have continued to positively support and encourage team members to successfully achieve the best outcomes for the young people in a safe and nurturing environment, despite the difficult circumstances they have experienced due to the previous behaviour of one young person and the recent behaviour of a young person currently residing at the home.

Since the last report to Corporate Parenting in March 2022, Ofsted visited Revelstoke Road in October 2022, with the table below outlining the judgements:

Ofsted Judgement	11th / 12th January 2022	3rd/4th October 2022
Overall experiences and progress of children and young people	Outstanding	Good
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Good	Good
The effectiveness of leaders and managers	Good	Good
Overall Judgement	Good	Good

Two requirements were made following the Ofsted inspection October 2022.

The care planning standard is that children receive effectively planned care in or through the children's home, that children are admitted to the home only if their needs are within the range of needs of children for whom it is intended that the needs of children for whom it is intended that the home is to provide care and accommodation, as set out in the home's statement of purpose.

The registered person must recruit staff using recruitment procedures that are designed to ensure children's safety. The registered person may only employ an individual to work at the children's home; or if an individual is employed by a person other than the registered person to work at the home in a position in which the individual may have regular contact with children, allow that individual to work at the home, if the individual satisfies the requirements in paragraph (3). The requirements are that the individual has the appropriate experience, qualification, and skills for the work that the individual is to perform.

An action plan was developed and both requirements responded to.

Within the reporting period the home has cared for the following number of children and young people:

Apr 22	May 22	Jun 22	Jul 22	Aug 22	Sep 22
6	6	6	5	6	5
Oct 22	Nov 22	Dec 22	Jan 23	Feb 23	Mar 23
5	5	4	4	3	3

As highlighted in the grid above, three to six young people were cared for throughout this reporting period, at Revelstoke Road. The team and young people experienced a very difficult time in caring for one young person whose behaviour was concerning and impacted upon potential admissions, until it was agreed that the young person should move to live with family members. At the time of writing this report, another young person moved to live in the home whose complex presentation has also resulted in no further moves into the home, until a more settled period is experienced by all.

Currently three young people are being cared for at the home, with differing levels of complexity. Team members are experienced and are competently managing and supporting the young people, supported by Dr Christie, Psychologist who is providing support and advice to the team, to enable them to achieve the best outcomes for the three young people.

No of admissions in reporting period	No discharges in reporting period	No of missing incidents	No of missing incidents over 24hrs	No of rec's in the reporting period
6	9	114	10	6

The three young people currently residing at Revelstoke Road are experiencing difficulties due to their presenting behaviour which is impacting upon their learning and relationship with each other and team members. All three young people are challenging boundaries, rules, and expectations of them. Worries include the significant increase in missing episodes and assaults on team members. Dr Christie is supporting team members to understand why the young people exhibit complex behaviour and risk assessments are in place to ensure the safe care of everyone.

Young people's meetings are held regularly to ascertain the young people's views. All young people are visited every four weeks by their Social Worker to discuss their feelings and wishes, and they are invited to share their views with the Regulation 44 Visitor, monthly. The latter, however, often proves difficult due to the young people's commitments or simply they choose not to engage with the Visitor. When this happens, the young people are invited to share their views using a questionnaire.

Unannounced Regulation 44 visits were undertaken, every month, during the period of April 2022 to March 2023. The visits took place at tea-time/early evening, and daytime during school holidays. The times chosen were to support the Visitor in meeting the young people in their home and to seek their views. Weekend visits will be incorporated, moving forward.

One hundred and fourteen missing episodes were reported during this twelve-month period, a notable increase when compared to 24 missing episodes recorded during the previous year. Ten missing episodes were over 24 hours, a further increase when compared to the previous year when only one missing episode over 24 hours was reported. The significant increase in missing episodes primarily related to one young person who persistently refused to adhere to their care plan and return to the home every evening. The young person insisted on staying with her sister, hence this was reported as a missing episode. The young person's Social Worker re-assessed the care plan and changed it accordingly, to meet the needs of the young person supported by a safety plan. Team members worked hard to disrupt missing episodes and they re-assessed their approach to the young people to support a safer environment.

Five recommendations were made during this reporting period, a slight increase when compared to the previous reporting period when four recommendations were made. Given the significant difficulties the team has encountered this year, recommendations were low, evidencing that despite the difficulties, team members worked hard to support and care for the young people.

Two recommendations were in relation to Standard 9, The Care Planning Standard, one regarding a young person's independent living skills plan, another in relation to a young person's Pathway planning. One recommendation was in relation to standard 6, the Positive Relationship Standard, which referred to high-risk behaviours being recorded in her care plan. The last recommendations, made in January 2023, were both in relation to Standard 7, The Protection of Children Standard, and referred to the Visitor requiring an update in relation to an investigation involving a team member.

Eleven restraints were used during this reporting period, an increase when compared to last year when no restraints were recorded. The team at Revelstoke Road are of the view that restraints should only be used if young people are a threat to themselves or others. The Visitor read and acknowledged that all restraints were appropriately used to protect the young person, the audience and team members. For example, on one occasion a group of young people threatened to burn the home down, resulting in one young person leaving the home with a weight lifting bar to assault the group. After attempting to support the young person to return to the home team members had to restrain the young person for her own safety. The restraint involved a team member placing his arms around the upper part of the young person's body. A debrief was provided for both the young person and team member involved.

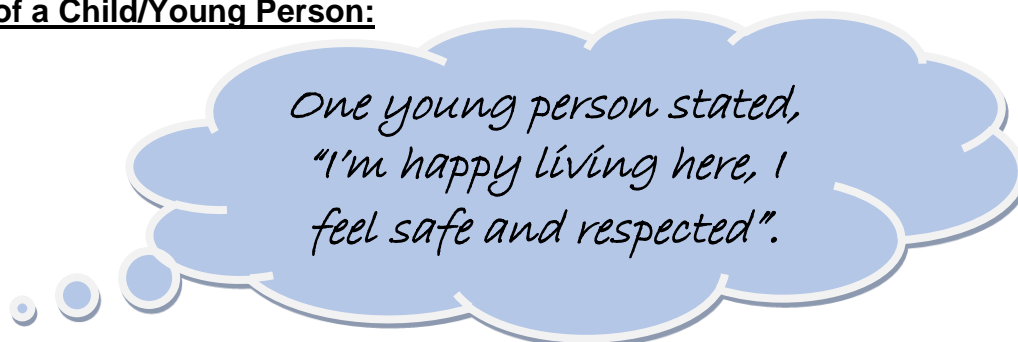
Type of Notification	Reported Incidents 2021-22	Reported Incidents 2022-23	Variance
Critical incident	18	43	+ 25
Ofsted notification	16	36	+ 20

During this reporting period 43 critical incidents recorded, and 36 notifications were made to Ofsted, a notable increase when compared to the previous year. The significant increases were primarily due to two young people, one who recently moved, the other is in relation to a young person currently residing at the home, whose chaotic history is impacting upon his current presentation.

The team, at Revelstoke Road, is welcoming, the home is comfortable and warm, with a beautifully refurbished kitchen. The current young people are experiencing difficulties due to the impact their past has had upon their emotional well-being. Despite their difficulties, during Regulation 44 visits, the Visitor has observed how happy and relaxed all three young people present. For example, the Visitor has observed positive interactions between the young people and team members, verbally and whilst enjoying shared activities within the home. The Visitor has, however, experienced difficulties in engaging some of the young people to share their views about what is working well and what concerns, they have. The Visitor provides a monthly letter describing the visit and leaves a work mobile number, should any of the young people wish to share their views via text or by phoning the Visitor.

Revelstoke Road is maintained externally and internally to a good standard and is decorated and furnished in a modern style. The whole house has been updated and decorated to include the kitchen, bathrooms, and the team's sleep-in rooms. The young people's views regarding how the home is maintained are accessed during monthly young people's meetings, they provide a varied response about meals, decoration, young people they would like to move to live with them and about their bedrooms. The outdoor areas of Revelstoke Road are also maintained to a very good standard and whilst the rear garden is equipped with modern outdoor furniture, it also has a large wooden outdoor summerhouse, for the young people to enjoy with their friends.

Voice of a Child/Young Person:



On the occasions that the young people agreed to speak to the Visitor, they spoke positively about their home, the team and how well they feel cared for. The young people are happy about the way their home is maintained and feel they have access to a varied activity planner.

During this reporting period the following comments have been made by the young people. One young person stated: 'I feel respected by the team', 'I feel safe', 'I like the food', 'there are lots of activities on offer, 'the team help me with family time'.

Whilst the young people have not always been willing to share their views with the Visitor, the Visitor also accesses the views of professionals known to the young people. There have been no significant concerns raised by any professional regarding the care the young people receive, quite the contrary,

as several positive comments have been recorded throughout this reporting period. For example, a young person's Social Worker shared that the young person she works with, 'settled into Revelstoke Road much quicker than I had anticipated and has made so much progress already'. A young person's Independent Reviewing Officer shared, 'the young person is making positive progress'.

Flexible approaches are used in terms of accessing information about the young people to ensure that the care and support they receive are reflected in the Regulation 44 Report.

Voice of a Parent:



Consistent positive feedback has been provided by family members. For example, a young person's mother was spoken to, she stated 'I have no concerns about my sons care'. Another young person's aunt was spoken to, and stated, 'the staff need a medal'.

Summary:

The number of missing episodes and missing episodes of over 24 hours, sanctions, use of restraint and recommendations increased, during this reporting period. The reasons, as stated above, predominantly related to two young people. Critical incidents and Ofsted notifications also increased, again mostly in relation to two young people. The team have experienced a very difficult year, at times, although have remained positive and professional throughout to ensure that the young people enjoyed positive experiences.

The team at Revelstoke Road provide support to the young people to access education, attend health appointments and learn new skills to develop their independence for moving on. The team listen to and respond to the needs of the young people to evidence that they genuinely care about them. Dr Christie remains involved and meets with the team monthly to explore their worries and progress about the young people. All team members feel this intervention is positive and does make a difference to the young people.

The recommendations from the Regulation 44 visits, documented above, were accepted by the manager, and implemented within timescales. The management team and all team members remain committed to the young people, they acknowledge and celebrate the young people's achievements and accept that they are individuals with differing skills/needs.

The young people living at the home are very different and tend to lead separate lives however, all are developing positive relationships with team members. The young people enjoy community activities, supported by team members.

As stated, the home is of a good standard internally and externally and is well maintained. The home is decorated and furnished to good standard in a modern style, with a homely family feel.

8. Nook Lodge

Nook Lodge children's home provides residential care for up to three young people of either gender, 10 to 17 years old. It is situated on the outskirts of a housing estate within Sunderland. Nook Lodge was registered by Ofsted on 23rd October 2020. The first three young people moved into Nook Lodge between October 2020 and March 2021, two of whom moved in August 2022; one into independent living and the other young person returned home to live with her mother.

In terms of the management structure there are two senior members: one team manager and one assistant team manager. Both commenced their positions in October 2020 and remain in their current posts. The two managers have developed a positive, professional working relationship with each other and have established a strong and committed team who are supported to achieve the best outcomes for the young people.

The table below shows the comparison from the monitoring visit held in September 2021 to March 23, and it is important to note the progress made during this time.

Ofsted Judgment	14 th /15 th September 2021	8 th /9 th March 2023
Overall experiences and progress of children and young people	Good	Good
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Good	Good
The effectiveness of leaders and managers	Requires improvement	Good
Overall Judgement	Good	Good

Nook Lodge's last Ofsted inspection took place in March 23, the outcome of which was Good in all three categories, although the team awaits the full outcome of the report.

Two statutory requirements were made:

Regulation 12 – relating to Impact Risk Assessments and young people's risk assessments.

Regulation 32– relating to staff training.

Two recommendations were made:

To ensure that advocacy is offered to every child following a restraint.

To ensure consistency of quality of supervision.

The two requirements and two recommendations have been acted upon in a timely manner as requested by Ofsted.

Within the reporting period the home has cared for the following number of children and young people:

Apr 22	May 22	Jun 22	Jul 22	Aug 22	Sep 22
3	3	3	3	1	3
Oct 22	Nov 22	Dec22	Jan 23	Feb 23	Mar 23
3	3	3	3	3	3

As highlighted in the grid above, three young people, two boys and one girl, aged between 12 and 17 years, have continued to reside at Nook Lodge since opening. All three young people are of differing ages and have different interests, however, are respectful of each other and continue to develop a positive relationship with each other and team members.

No of admissions in reporting period	No of discharges in reporting period	No of missing incidents	No of missing incidents over 24hrs	No of rec's in the reporting period
2	2	25	1	7

The above table highlights that Nook Lodge team members provided a stable level of care to the same three young people from October 2020 to August 2022 when two young people moved out and two young people moved in. Currently there are three young girls, one who has remained living at the home since October 2020 and two young people who have resided at the home for nine months. The three young people enjoy settled periods however, at times, due to the differing ages/ability/needs the young people sometimes choose not to positively engage with each other. However, with support and guidance by Dr Christie for team members, the young people are making progress and their needs are being addressed to a good standard.

Unannounced Regulation 44 visits were undertaken, every month, during the period of April 2022 to March 2023.

Type of Notification	Reported Incidents 2021-22	Reported Incidents 2022-23	Variance
Critical incident	15	11	-4
Ofsted notification	16	6	-10

Twenty-five missing episodes were recorded this reporting period, compared to no missing incidents in the previous year. One of the two young people who moved to live at the home in August 2022 has complex social and emotional needs, resulting in worries regarding behaviour, including missing episodes. One of the recorded twenty-five missing episodes was for a period of over 24 hours and was in relation to the same young person.

Three restraints were recorded this reporting period, all reports were read by the Visitor and noted to be appropriate. A debrief was offered to the young people and team members involved in the restraint.

Eleven critical incidents were recorded this reporting period, a decrease when compared to the last year when fifteen critical incidents were recorded. Six Ofsted notifications were recorded, a significant decrease when compared to last reporting period when sixteen notifications to Ofsted were made. Not all critical incidents meet the criteria for Ofsted notifications. The critical incidents were generally in relation to one young person who has additional needs to include requiring support around her behaviour.

The Regulation 44 Visitor made seven recommendations during this reporting period, compared to one in the previous year. The recommendations were accepted by the manager and shared with the team to enable them to reflect upon their practice and improve standards. The recommendations were progressed appropriately, within timescales. An example of a recommendation made during this reporting period: Standard 7, The protection of Children Standard, recommending that a risk assessment should be updated to reflect changes to a young person's plan.

The team and young people at Nook Lodge are welcoming, the home is comfortable and warm, and the young people, when at home during the visit, present as settled and happy, on most occasions. However, one young person is rarely seen as she is often enjoying family time or in the community with friends.

Nook Lodge is maintained internally and externally to a good standard and is decorated and furnished in a modern style. The house is frequently decorated, and a newly refurbished kitchen has been installed. The rear garden is a work in progress. The young people are proud of their home and have decorated their bedrooms according to their style/fashion.

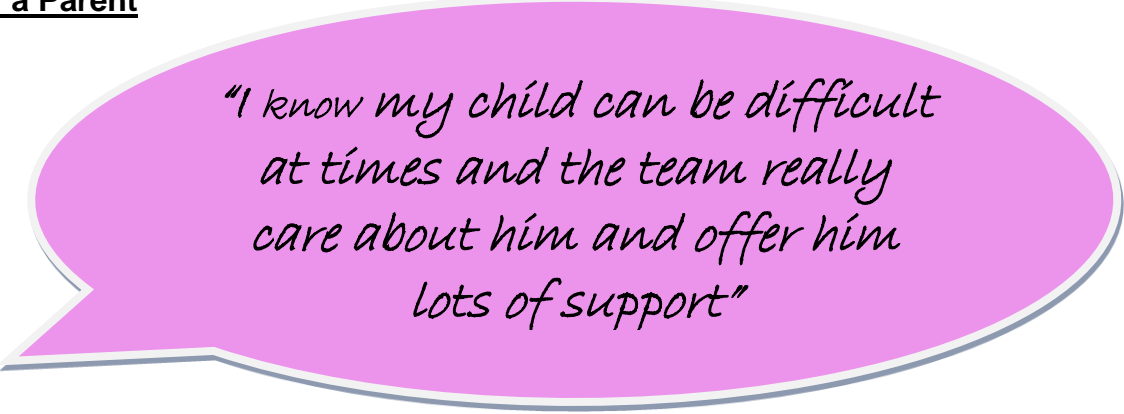
Voice of a Child/Young Person



All three young people have been spoken to, during this reporting period, by the Regulation 44 Visitor. The young people do not always wish to engage with the Visitor, however, are generally polite and welcoming when they have chosen to partake in discussion. Two young people are most willing to engage, one young person can present as less interested however, with encouragement she shared her views about team members, living with the other young people and the home in general and all comments were positive. The young people have raised no significant concerns about the care afforded to them.

One young person completed a questionnaire in February 2023 and answered all questions positively and reported that she enjoys living at the home, likes to cook and that team members are supportive of her. The young person who has resided at the home since opening is now looking forward to returning home to live with her mother. She has reservations about moving out as she has developed positive relationships with team members.

Voice of a Parent



"I know my child can be difficult at times and the team really care about him and offer him lots of support"

The feedback from parents, during this reporting period, remains positive. One mother stated that the team really cared about my child and offered him lots of support. The same mother felt that she had a positive relationship with team members.

The feedback from another parent was positive in that she feels her daughter is listened to and her needs are acted upon.

Summary:

Nook Lodge is a three-bedroom home on the outskirts of a residential estate, which opened in October 2020. Team members are established and making good progress in terms of their achievements. The outcome of the recent Ofsted report was good in all three sections which is an improvement on the previous one. However, missing incidents have increased, together with critical incidents and notifications to Ofsted, albeit this is due to the difficulties exhibited by a young person who moved out in August 2022 and a young person who moved in, in August 2022. Despite the difficulties, team members remain committed and supportive of the young people and thrive to build upon their progress to ensure cared for young people have similar opportunities to any other child.

The three young people, although of differing ages, interests, and views attempt to be respectful of each other however, like any other young people they sometimes struggle to always remain positive.

Positive feedback has been received from two of the three young people's family (there is a No Contact Order in place for the remaining young person), and all professionals involved with the young people, regarding the care they receive. No significant concerns have been raised.

The team at Nook Lodge support the young people to access education, attend health appointments and learn new skills to develop their independence for moving on. The team listen to and respond to the needs of the young people to evidence that they genuinely care about them.

The team approach issues, with the young people, sensitively and therapeutically, with support from external agencies.

The recommendations from the Regulation 44 visits, documented above, were accepted by the manager, and implemented within timescales. The management team and all team members remain committed to the young people, they acknowledge and celebrate the young people's achievements and accept that they are individuals with differing skills/needs.

The fabric of the home at Nook Lodge is of a very good standard internally and externally and is well maintained. The home is decorated and furnished to good standard in a modern style, with a homely family feel, to include the newly refurbished kitchen.

9. Monument View

Monument View Children's Home remains approved for up to six young people of either gender, aged from 11 to 17 years. It is situated on a large plot of land within the Shiney Row area of Sunderland. Monument View provides residential care for up to six young people of either gender. In terms of management structure there have been no changes in relation to the senior team, this reporting period. The management team have continued to positively support and encourage team members to successfully achieve the best outcomes for the young people in a safe and nurturing environment.

Ofsted Judgement	4 th / 5 th May 2021	6 th Jan 2022
Overall experiences and progress of children and young people	Requires improvement	Sustained effectiveness
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Requires improvement	Sustained effectiveness
The effectiveness of leaders and managers	Requires improvement	Sustained effectiveness
Overall Judgement	Requires improvement	Sustained effectiveness

Three requirements were made:

The quality and purpose of the care standard is that children receive care from staff who – understand the children's home's overall aims and outcomes it seeks to achieve for children; use this understanding to deliver care that meets children's needs and supports them to fulfil their potential. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to – ensure that staff – protect and promote each child's welfare; treat each child with dignity and respect; help each child to understand and manage the impact of any experience of abuse or neglect; help each child to develop resilience and skills that prepare the child to return home, to live in a new placement or to live independently as an adult; and provide to children living in the home the physical necessities they need in order to live there comfortably. (Regulation 6(1)(a)(b), (2)(b)(ii)(iii)(v)(vi)(vii)). This specifically relates to cleanliness of children's bedrooms

The registered person must complete a review of the quality of care provided for children ("a quality of care review") at least once every 6 months. The registered person must – supply to HMCI a copy of the quality of care review report within 28 days of the date on which the quality of care review is completed. (Regulation 45 (1) (4)(a)).

The protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure – that staff – 6 February 2022 Inspection report for children's home: 1254843 6 assess whether each child is at risk of harm, taking into account information in the child's relevant plans, and, if necessary, make arrangements to reduce the risk of any harm to the child; understand the roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children that are assigned to them by the registered person. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)(v)).

Two recommendations were made:

The registered person should ensure that there is a workforce plan which details the processes and the agreed timescales for the staff to achieve induction, probation and any core training (such as safeguarding, health and safety and mandatory qualifications). The plan should be updated to include any new training and qualifications completed by the staff while they are working at the home and should be used to record the ongoing training and continuing professional development needs of the staff, including the home's manager. (@Guide to the children's homes regulations, including the quality standards', page 53, paragraph 10.8)

The registered person should ensure that case records are kept up to date and are signed and dated by the author on each entry. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations, including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.3)

Within the reporting period Monument View has provided care for the following numbers of children and young people:

Apr 22	May 22	Jun 22	Jul 22	Aug 22	Sep 22
6	6	5	5	6	6
Oct 22	Nov 22	Dec 22	Jan 23	Feb 23	Mar 23
6	6	6	6	6	6

Six young people have been cared for by the team at Monument View for most of this reporting period. Three young people have moved out of the home in line with their care or pathway plans and three young people have moved in. The matching of young people who move into the home is carefully considered in respect of the individual needs of each young person and the potential impact the young person moving in may have on the dynamics of the other young people living at the home.

Six boys currently reside at Monument View, aged between 14 and 17 years. They all have differing needs and interests which are supported by the team.

No of admissions in reporting period	No of discharges in reporting period	No of missing incidents	No of missing incidents over 24hrs	Number of recommendations in the reporting period
3	3	11	1	13

Eleven missing episodes were recorded this reporting period, an increase of one when compared to the previous reporting period. One of the missing episodes was more than 24 hours.

Thirteen recommendations were made during this reporting period, a decrease of four when compared to the previous year. Examples of the recommendations include updating all documents to include risk assessment, individual crisis support plan and home plans. As good practice, plans should be updated monthly and, on these occasions, they were out-of-date by two months.

There were no records of restraints this reporting period a decrease of two when compared to the previous reporting period. The home has implemented a trauma informed approach, team members do not wish to risk re-traumatising young people to the experiences, they may have had within their birth families prior to being cared for. Team members believe restraint should only be used if a young person is serious threat to themselves or others.

The young people living at Monument View attend a range of mainstream and alternative education and training and all have friendship groups in their own communities. The young people can discuss their wishes and feelings independently via the Mind of My Own application but also with Residential Care Workers, Social Workers, Independent Reviewing Officer's, and the Regulation 44 Visitor. During Regulation 44 visits the Visitor spoke to at least one young person to discuss how they feel they are being cared for and if they wanted anything to change for them about how they are cared for at the home.

Unannounced Regulation 44 visits were undertaken, every month, during the period of April 2022 to March 2023. The visits took place at tea-time/early evening and daytime during school holidays. Unannounced visits are carried out to assist the Visitor in having the experience of the day to day running of the home and the times chosen are to support the Visitor to meet the young people in their home to seek their views.

Type of Notification	Reported Incidents 2021-22	Reported Incidents 2022-23	Variance
Critical incident	16	14	-2
Ofsted notification	14	13	-1

During this reporting period 14 critical incidents were recorded, and 13 notifications were made to Ofsted. This compares to 16 critical incidents and 14 notifications during the previous reporting period, therefore a noted reduction.

Voices of Children and Young people



One young person is particularly happy with how staff support his family time with his dad. He reported that team members collect his dad and return him to his home. The parent has limited funds so is supported to maintain family time with his son, and he is given his tea.

Three of the six young people at Monument View are seeking asylum, therefore have additional needs in terms of their culture, asylum status, maintaining family time and dietary needs. The team at Monument View have gone above and beyond to ensure that the young people have everything they need to support their cultural and religious beliefs.

Voice of a Parent



"I feel supported by the team here, they help me to visit my child and are very welcoming".

A young person's father told the visitor he finds the team members at the home very supportive and caring towards his son, also welcoming and kind to him, during family time.

Other parents have referred to how good communication is and that they are updated and informed of their young person's needs via telephone as well as the monthly summary which is posted to their home.

Summary

The home has enjoyed a very settled year both in terms of the team and young people. The team present as happy and devoted to the young people, resulting in positive outcomes for them. The young people appear happy and settled and continue to be cared for in a safe and nurturing manner. The voice of the young people is strong, they are supported to make themselves heard and some participate in various groups to share their views more widely. This continues to be work in progress and the visitor will continue to assist the home's manager in driving improvements to recognise excellent care and achieve a good judgement. It is hoped these figures and what underpins them is recognised in the homes next inspection by Ofsted. Staff at the home continue to work with Dr Christie to further improve the implementation of trauma informed practice

10. Analysis

All homes have been visited by Ofsted this reviewing period. Four (Grasswell House, Monument View, Nook Lodge and Revelstoke Road) were judged as Good. One (Colombo Road) remained Outstanding for the past five visits.

The Visitors have seen the homes go from strength to strength. The qualified, experienced teams care for the young people to a very high standard, they strive to safeguard them and have their best interest at heart. All homes work closely with Dr Christie, who advises team members about trauma informed approach. This approach supports the quality of care provided to the young people, with positive outcomes, to include their emotional well-being. The young people feel listened to, included, empowered and cared for. They are happy, settled and developing good relationships with team members.

All young people seeking asylum are being supported to an excellent standard. Team members are thoughtful, creative, keen to learn and progress the plans of young people with additional needs. In terms of vulnerabilities team members are supportive of those young people who identify with the LGBT+ community. Their skills are impressive and their willingness to learn more is remarkable.

Good and Outstanding homes understand the need for the young people to have meaningful relationships with their family members and this report identifies a real strength in team members. The views of the parents and professionals are positive, throughout this reviewing period there have been no negative comments about the teams care of the young people, quite the contrary comments

have been positive and have highlighted the good and quality care provided to the young people. Together for Children is proud of the approach of team members in the five homes.

11. Service Review & Development

The annual programme of themed audits continues to be in place, this is to support and encourage the homes to continuously consider the children's homes regulations (2015, updated 2018).

The Regulation 44 Visitor has continued to attend quarterly residential management meetings to share learning and to hear feedback with regards to the Regulation 44 visits.

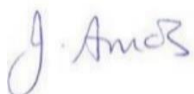
The Regulation 44 Visitor continues to liaise with the Mind of my Own team to support the young people to share what's working well, what's not so good and what can be done to help make their home better.

The Regulation 44 Visitor is of the opinion that the young people in all five homes are cared for to a good standard. Regulation 45 reports are received within timescales, are detailed, and assist the Visitor in completing the Regulation 44 report. Reports are now saved in the young people's Teams Folder and on the Liquid Logic system. The Visitor navigates both systems to access information needed for the Regulation 44 Report.

Currently there are five registered homes however, there are plans for a further three homes to open, to include Maple Cottage, Claremont and Manor Drive. Timescales vary however, it is anticipated that the three homes will open within the next reviewing period.

Jackie Amos

Regulation 44 Officer



Date: 06.07.23

