

TOGETHER FOR CHILDREN	
REPORT AUTHORS:	Keith Munro, Jackie Amos and Danielle Rose Foster Carer Reviewing/Regulation 44 Officers
SUBJECT:	Regulation 44 report summarising visits from November 2020 to April 2021.
PURPOSE:	To provide elective members of the Corporate Parenting Board with an update on the findings in relation to the Regulation 44 visits.

Purpose of Regulation 44 Visit and Structure within TFC

The current Children's Homes Regulations and Quality Standards were released in their final form in April 2015.

Regulation 44 of the Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015 clearly 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 service comprises of 2.5 FTE Reviewing & Designated Officer posts situated in the Children's Independent Reviewing Team within the Corporate & Commercial Services Directorate. In March 2021, a service review merged the role of Foster Carer Review/Regulation 44 Officer with the Designated Officer to create a new post Reviewing and Designated Officer. The reasons for this change was to formalise operational cover in respect of Designated Officer work and strengthen business continuity arrangements.

Performance Overview

The following table provides the date of the most recent Ofsted inspection and the dates Regulation 44 visits were completed during this reporting period:

Home	Recent Ofsted Inspection	Nov 20	Dec20	Jan 21	Feb 21	Mar 21	Apr 21
Colombo Road	18-19/10/19	24/11/20	11/12/20	08/0/21	04/03/21	05/03/21	16/04/21
Monument View	12-13/11/19	19/11/20	08/12/20	26/01/21	17/02/21	22/03/21	15/04/21
Grasswell House	14-15/01/20	09/11/20	08/12/20	07/01/21	04/02/21	05/03/21	16/04/21
Revelstoke Road	02-03/07/19	17/11/20	17/12/20	14/01/21	18/02/21	19/03/21	23/04/21
Nook Lodge	23/10/20	N/A	31/12/20	14/11/21	24/02/21	19/03/21	26/04/21

From March 2020, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, Ofsted made the decision not to inspect children's homes other than those newly registered i.e. Nook Lodge. Ofsted recommenced their monitoring visits in April 2021.

During November 2020 to April 2021, we have undertaken Regulation 44 visits via a hybrid model with physical visits being determined via individual risk assessments and in line with government guidance. Visits have been completed via telephone calls, remote access to files and Microsoft Teams where physical visits have not been possible. Photographs of the homes have also been shared with the Regulation 44 visitor to evidence their upkeep in accordance with the regulations. During this time the voice of the children and young people, their carers and parents have remained a central part of the visit.

Administration

On average, it takes seven hours each month to undertake the Regulation 44 visits at each of the children's homes which includes gathering and evaluating information to inform the report. The report is then distributed by the Regulation 44 Visitor to the managers of the homes within 5-working days and then sent to Ofsted at the end of each month. The visitors also complete a short letter to the young people at the home about their visit. The number of children's homes increased from four to five from November 2020.

Colombo Road

Colombo Road Children's Home remains approved for up to six young people of either gender, aged from eleven up to the age of eighteen. It is situated on a large housing estate in the Hylton Castle area of Sunderland. The home is currently fully staffed.

Since the last report to CPB, Ofsted have not inspected the home, therefore Columbo Road has retained the judgement of Outstanding.

Ofsted Rating	21-22/10/19 Judgement
Overall experiences and progress of children and young people	Outstanding
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Outstanding
The effectiveness of leaders and managers	Outstanding

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

Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr
6	6	6	6	6	6

Colombo Road has received a Regulation 44 visit each month via the hybrid model to ensure safety. The number of recommendations made in this reporting period continued to be 4 which is the same as previous reporting period.

The recommendations were:

- Update a young person's risk assessment with information related to a recent missing episode
- Update a young person's risk assessment with information about a recent missing episode and complete a 1 to 1 session with the young person
- Amend the use of language in a young person's risk assessment and update the assessment with additional information

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
0	0	7	0	3

In the last report to CPB there was 1 missing incident reported to the Police compared with 7 missing episodes in this reporting period. The home has continued to demonstrate its effectiveness in working with children and young people they care for as this is the fifth consecutive report where 0 child/young person have been missing for over 24-hours. Staff have undertaken work with the children and young people around the COVID-19 restrictions who have responded positively to this work about their safety. The easing of lockdown restrictions for children and young people and their sense of seeking more freedom, is seen as a reason for more missing episodes as children and young people are eager to take advantage of increased opportunities to socialise with their friends outside of the home.

Sanctions were used on 2 occasions in response to inappropriate behaviour by the children and young people compared to 3 in the previous reporting period. The children and young people are always offered the opportunity of undertaking a restorative task as an alternative to having the sanction imposed. It is positive to note that 0 restraints were used by staff for the second reporting period running.

There were 2 critical incidents in this reporting period compared to 4 in the previous reporting period. All the incidents were appropriately documented and responded to in accordance with TfC policy. There were only 2 notifications made to Ofsted compared to 4 in the last reporting period.

The notifications to Ofsted were for the following reasons:

- An incident where threats to staff, racial abuse, and damage to the home by a young person
- A historic allegation was made by a young person about a member of their family

Voices of Children and Young People

The voices of children and young people and their lived experiences of living in their home is an essential part of the reg 44 visit. So during every visit effort is made to gather children and young people's views on the quality of care that they are receiving.

During one visit as the children and young people were finishing their tea, they advised that they had positive relationships with the staff and referred to them as the “Bro team”. This was evidenced by the warmth and humour in how they talked and listened to each other during the visit to the home.

The two young people informed the visitor that they had regular one to one-sessions with their link workers for example re smoking and the health risks. Although one young person commented that she does not want to give up at present time, staff have made her aware of the associated risks.

One young person said that she was enjoying her course at a local college which was being undertaken on-line.

There was a good discussion after tea which the visitor observed and joined in with. The issue raised by young people concerned the use of sensitive language in respect of people who are very small and those who are very tall. The discussion was well facilitated by the staff. Young people were encouraged to think critically and examine definitions via google and Wikipedia. This helped them to work out the most appropriate language to use when talking about or engaging with people who are very small or very tall.

Voice of a Parent/s

Parents in the 6 months covered within this report have consistently talked highly in relation to the care their children/young people have been receiving in the home.

An example of a young person’s father’s views on the home was that; He said the staff care for his son well “In fact 10 out of 10 for what they do”. He thinks his son has a good clothing allowance and buys nice clothes and is really enjoying his catering course at college. Staff communicate with him well “They even let me know about the little things in his life”. He went on to say his son has dropped hints to him that he is worried about where he will move to when he turns 18. The visitor said to parent that they would pass the information on to staff at the home so they could explore this further with them.

Summary

The number of sanctions, critical incidents and notifications to Ofsted reduced compared to the previous reporting period. This is a good achievement given the overall numbers from the last reporting period were very low. The use of restraints remained the same and the number of missing episodes increased which can be linked to the prolonged period of national lockdown. When missing episodes have occurred the home has followed its own safeguarding procedures to support the safe return of the child/young person.

The 3 recommendations from the Regulation 44 visits as stated above were accepted by the manager and implemented within the given timescales.

The management and staff team respond positively to the recommendations made in the monthly reports. They discuss the recommendations at team meetings, act upon them and view the recommendations as helpful to their ongoing development of practice and management of the home. The care practice detailed within the children and young people’s records throughout the reporting period has continued to be of a high standard. The home remains as judged by Ofsted to be outstanding for a fourth consecutive year.

The children and young people living at the home are settled and have high levels of attendance in education/training. The children and young people take up a wide variety of activities and personal hobbies inside and out with the home and take part in trips out with staff. These have taken place

within the context of the COVID-19 restrictions which have varied during the reporting period and activities are now taking place and being planned to take advantage of the easing of restrictions.

The fabric of the building of Colombo Road both internally and externally is maintained to a very good standard. The home feels relaxed, homely with a nice atmosphere that reflects the positive relationships that exists between young people and staff. Children and young people reported they felt safe during Regulation 44 visits. The home remains decorated and furnished to a high standard in a modern style. The kitchen refurbishment has continued to be successful with more children and young people engaging in activities such as baking and cake making during lockdown.

A COVID-19 risk assessment is in place to ensure the safety of the children and young people living in the building, staff working there and professionals who need access to Colombo Road. The assessment is reviewed regularly and updated by the manager. No children or young people have tested positive for COVID-19 during the reporting period.

Grasswell House

Grasswell House has continued to provide residential care for up to six young people of either gender aged 12-17. It is situated within Sunderland West. The manager and the leadership team have continued to work constructively to manage, motivate and support staff at the home on their journey of improvement ensuring the home meets the needs of the children and young people accommodated there.

Since the last report to CPB Ofsted have not made an inspection visit, therefore the home has retained the judged as being Good with improved effectiveness.

Ofsted Rating	Judgement 14/15 Jan 20
Overall experiences and progress of children and young people	Good with improved effectiveness
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Good with improved effectiveness
The effectiveness of leaders and managers	Good with improved effectiveness

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

Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr
5	6	6	6	6	6

A Regulation 44 visit has been completed every month via a hybrid model to ensure safety. The number of recommendations made in this reporting period has reduced from 6 to 3.

Recommendations have related to the following areas:

- Update a young person's risk assessment re the approach to be used when a young person does not attend education
- Place a copy of latest care plan in a young person's file
- Review and contextualise the information in one section of a young person's risk assessment

Staff support children and young people to engage in education and/or training and where they struggle to engage the manager and staff team work to support them to re-engage. When education resources are outside their control, the staff and senior managers have raised the issue and advocated for a young person to obtain an appropriate full-time education placement. There is

good evidence to show how staff work in partnership with children and young people, their parents, and relevant professionals to help the children and young people to achieve their true potential.

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
4	4	16	1	3

In the last report to CPB there were 16 missing episodes compared to 21 and 0 episodes of over 24 hours compared to 1 in this reporting period. There were 0 sanctions used compared to 1 in the last reporting period. It is positive that on 0 occasions staff needed to use restraint compared to 1 in the previous reporting period.

There were 11 critical incidents compared to 14 during the last period. The incidents were appropriately documented and responded to in accordance with TfC procedures. There were 4 notifications made to Ofsted compared to 9 in the previous reporting period.

The notifications related to:

- Young person had their nose pierced under-age
- Threats made to a young person at an organised activity in the community by other young people
- Young person assaulted in their home community by another young person
- Young person assaulted in the city centre by another young person

Voice of the Child/Young Person

An example of a young person speaking with the Regulation 44 visitor during the visit can be seen below. This details the discussion that the young person had with the Regulation 44 visitor regarding their moving out of Grasswell House.

The young person said she had visited several different options with her link worker and social worker and had chosen a supported lodgings placement rather than a semi-independent living project. The young person thought it was good that she had a choice of where she would move to.

The young person is still enjoying attending her Performing Arts course and plans to stay on at college for the next academic year to complete her level 3 and feels she has been supported well by staff to access a course she enjoys.

The young person commented she had “a good relationship” with her link worker and they got on “well” and he had gone with her to look at her move on options which she said she liked.

The young person reflected about the 19 months she has lived at the home and it was clear during her time at the home that she had felt safe, well cared for and valued by staff.

The young person could not identify any changes that she would like made at the home and at the end of the conversation the visitor wished her well for the future, in case he didn't see her again before she move on to supported lodgings.

Voice of a Parent

A young person's mother was spoken with by telephone. She said her son is spending a lot of time at home at present and his care plan was to return to her care soon. His mother said that staff communicate with her well and he has a good clothing allowance and he saves up and likes to buy expensive sportswear. She was not worried about the staff's concerns about her son's level of engagement in education and training and she thought this might improve when he returned to her

care. His mother was happy with the overall standards of care her son was provided with by staff at the home.

Summary

The number of missing episodes and missing episodes of over 24 hours, sanctions, use of restraint, number of critical incidents, notifications to Ofsted and recommendations reduced. This is a significant achievement by the staff team.

The information above needs to be seen within the context of 4 young people moving from the home as per their care plans. This included young people moving to semi independence or supported lodgings. Staff worked well with their new support providers to ensure the young people made smooth transitions to their new homes. The young people are now a younger group with different care needs that reflect their ages and stages of development. Considering these changes and looking at the figures overall, it is clear staff have supported the children and young people very well.

The recommendations from the Regulation 44 visits, documented above, were accepted by the manager, and implemented within the given timescales. The manager and staff remain committed to trying to improve the care they provide further with the hope this will be recognised during Ofsted's next inspection visit.

The young people living at the home are developing as a new group and staff are working with other professionals to ensure the young people have the most appropriate education placements which will improve their attendance in education/training. Young people take up a wide variety of activities and personal hobbies both inside and outside the home and take part in trips out with staff. These have taken place within the context of the COVID-19 restrictions which have varied during the reporting period. Young People and staff have begun to undertake and are planning more activities outside of the home as COVID-19 restrictions have been eased.

The fabric of 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 and the kitchen was replaced during the previous financial year. The visitor has seen young people enjoying the new kitchen facilities making themselves snacks. The home has a homely family feel due to the atmosphere generated by the young people and staff.

A COVID-19 risk assessment is in place to ensure the safety of the children and young people living in the building, staff working there and professionals who need access to Grasswell House. The assessment is reviewed regularly and updated by the manager. No children or young people have tested positive for COVID-19 during the reporting period.

Revelstoke Road

Revelstoke Road children's home provides residential care for up to six young people of either gender. It is situated on a housing estate within Sunderland North. 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, despite the difficult circumstances they have experienced due to the impact of COVID-19.

The following table shows the Ofsted Judgements for 2017 and 2018. The last Full Inspection was undertaken in July 2019, the overall experiences and progress of children and young people were judged to be Good. A recent Monitoring Visit was undertaken on 30.03.21, the overall outcome of which, was positive. One recommendation was made from this visit '*The registered person should*

ensure that staff can access appropriate facilities and resources to support their training needs and should understand the key role they play in the training and development of staff in the home. This should include all areas relating to the children's needs, specifically substance misuse and alcohol awareness'.

Ofsted Rating	Judgement 8 & 9/11/17	Judgement 26/06/18	Judgement 2 & 3/07/19
Overall experiences and progress of children and young people	Good	Good	Good
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Requires improvement to be good	Good	Good
The effectiveness of leaders and managers	Requires improvement to be good	Good	Good

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

Nov 20	Dec 20	Jan 21	Feb 21	Mar 21	Apr 21
6	6	6	5	5	4

As highlighted in the grid above, the number of children and young people residing at Revelstoke Road, during this reporting period, varied between 4 and 6. One young person who returned to live at Revelstoke Road in October 2020, following a period in a secure environment, was discharged in January 2021 due to concerns regarding how his behaviour impacted upon the other children and young people. In addition, another young person was discharged in April 2021, due to similar concerns. The team at Revelstoke Road maintain contact with both young people and are planning to meet with both, separately, to support their on-going needs. Team members have received several referrals however, their aim is to ensure an appropriate match between the current children and young people living at the home and any potential child moving in.

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
0	2	51	2	8

The above table highlights that there has been a settled period, in terms of admissions in this reporting period. However, there has been a significant increase in terms of missing episodes compared to the last reporting period. As stated earlier, two young people were discharged from Revelstoke Road due to concerns regarding their behaviour and the impact their behaviour was having on the other young people. As a consequence, the young people and team members at Revelstoke Road experienced a very difficult few months between January and March 2021. The home is currently more settled and fewer missing episodes have been recorded.

The four young people at Revelstoke Road have developed positive relationships with team members. The team continues to use a therapeutic parenting model (PACE), centred on understanding trauma and focusing upon building relationships. Team members place an emphasis on celebrating achievements (59 celebrations this reporting period) and connecting with young people rather than punitive punishments. This appears to work well for the young people residing at Revelstoke Road.

Announced and unannounced Regulation 44 visits were undertaken during the period of October 20 to May 21, eight recommendations were made, during this reporting period. The recommendations were accepted by the manager and progressed appropriately, within timescales. An example of a recommendation made during this reporting period was a young person's Pathway Plan needed to be commenced.

Recommendations continue to be discussed at team meetings which enables the team to reflect upon their practice and improve standards. Positive support/guidance and advice was observed to be of a very good standard. Young people are looked after well at the home and are making progress.

The number of times young people were reported missing from home increased significantly from 22 to 51 missing episodes. The significant increase was seen during the months of January, February and March 21, three difficult months for the team and young people. Although the team had proactive plans in place to prevent young people from going missing, it appears these plans were not working. The team sought the advice and support from other agencies and professionals involved with the young people. In addition, two young people were discharged from Revelstoke Road as their behaviour was impacting upon the safety of the other young people. The team continue to offer the young people the opportunity to explore any worries /concerns they may have. All four young people are aware of the complaints procedure and have access to Mind of My Own, whereby they can share their worries and concerns with their social worker.

The number of missing episodes, this reporting period, over a 24-hour timescale was two, compared to 0 during the last reporting period, a slight increase. On both occasions one to one direct work was undertaken with the young person alongside an offer of a return to home interview. Three sanctions were recorded this reporting period, a slight increase when compared to the previous report when two sanctions were recorded. Five restraints were also used during this reporting period compared to two used during the last reporting period, these restraints related to two young people who required support to maintain their safe care. The risk assessments were updated following each incident to ensure that all aspects of a young person's needs are considered.

During this reporting period there were 18 critical incidents, 16 of which were reported to Ofsted. An increase when compared to the previous reporting period, which highlights the difficulties the young people and team were exposed to during the first three months of this year.

Ofsted inspected Revelstoke Road in July 2019 and rated the home Good in all categories. A monitoring visit was undertaken in March 21 where the findings, were once again, positive. One recommendation was made relating to training which the Team Manager and Assistant Team Manager are addressing. The team at Revelstoke Road present as competent, confident professionals who provide a nurturing and positive environment to support the young people to achieve their potential. They seek advice/support/guidance from other agencies and professionals involved with the young people when difficulties arise, to ensure they are working together to safeguard the young people, as far as practicable.

Due to COVID-19 restrictions being reduced, the young people returned to school in March 21, therefore have restarted their educational/training placements during this reporting period. The four young people at Revelstoke Road are being supported to engage in education/training although continue to require some support and guidance to do so. Team members have demonstrated their attempts to engage the young people to achieve their potential. Currently two young people attend school and two an alternative training resource.

Revelstoke Road is maintained externally and internally to a good standard and is decorated and furnished in a modern style. The main lounge, the rear lounge, the Hogwart room and both sleep-in rooms have been decorated and newly furnished. The home is comfortable and warm and well decorated. The young people are proud of their home and look forward to inviting their friends in, when allowed.

The team and young people at Revelstoke Road are welcoming however, sometimes the young people choose not to engage with the visitor, depending on how they are occupied. Visits have

been undertaken at various times to engage the young people more positively however, on occasions, the young people are either in the community, their bedroom or engaging in an activity. The summer house in the rear garden is now complete and looks amazing. This is used by the young people and the team for a variety of reasons, to include quiet time and meetings/training. Despite COVID-19 restrictions the team have continued to provide a wide variety of activities (games, baking, quizzes, drives out), adhering to COVID-19 restrictions.

A risk assessment is in place to ensure the safety of young people living in the building, team members working there and professionals who need access to Revelstoke Road. The assessment is reviewed regularly and updated by the manager reflecting COVID-19 restrictions which have varied during the reporting period. No young person tested positive for COVID-19 during this reporting period.

In summary, despite the impact of COVID-19 and the difficult three months the team and the young people have experienced, the team report that all have remained positive. The young people appear to be happy and settled now and I am confident that the two vacancies at Revelstoke Road will be filled with young people whose needs match the needs of the current residents. The team and the young people have worked together to enjoy as many opportunities as possible, under the circumstances. The team have worked relentlessly to engage the young people in education and have ensured, their safe care as far as practicable.

Voice of a Child/Young Person

The Visitor has briefly spoken to all the children and young people residing at Revelstoke Road and noted how polite and friendly they all are, although don't always wish to engage with the Visitor.

However, during the past six months two young people have made themselves available to discuss their wishes and views during Regulation 44 visits. Both expressed no significant concerns and are positively engaging in education, knowing that they want to access further education. Both young people were polite, engaging and co-operative, sharing their views regarding the care afforded to them and expressing their wishes and feelings.

No concerns were raised by any of the young people, this reporting period. Each of the young people interviewed spoke positively about team members, they feel well looked after, listened to and safe. This evidences a team who are caring, respectful and nurturing towards the young people.

Voice of a Parent

The feedback from the parents of the child and young people, during this reporting period, has generally been positive. During December 20 visit, one young person's grandmother stated 'Revelstoke Road team supported my grandson well', however, wishes he had accessed support regarding his substance misuse. The grandmother reported that her grandson enjoyed living at Revelstoke Road and that he liked the staff and had a good relationship with him. The grandmother expressed concerns regarding her grandson's misuse of substances but felt there was very little that could be done about that as he refuses support, regarding this matter.

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 housing estate within Sunderland. Nook Lodge is a newly registered home, registered by Ofsted on 23rd October 20. The first resident

moved into Nook Lodge on 29th October 20, the second on 5th November 20 and the third on 11th March 21.

In terms of the management structure there are two senior members, one team manager and one assistant team manager. The management team have developed a positive, professional working relationship with each other, albeit their relationship is new. In addition, the newly appointed team are also developing their working relationships, to achieve the best outcomes for the young people.

Nook Lodge has not had an Ofsted inspection as the home is newly registered however, a positive Ofsted monitoring visit was undertaken on 29th March 21. The comments were:

The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's home that— (a) helps children aspire to fulfil their potential; and (b) promotes their welfare. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications, and skills to meet the needs of each child. (Regulation 13 (2)(c)) This specifically relates to the provider ensuring that all staff administering medication are suitably trained.

Ofsted Rating	Judgement	Judgement	Judgement
There have been no Ofsted ratings due to Nook Lodge being a newly registered home.			

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

Nov 20	Dec 20	Jan 21	Feb 21	Mar 21	Apr 21
2	2	2	2	3	3

As highlighted in the grid above, the number of children and young people residing at Nook Lodge, during this reporting period, varied between 2 and 3 young people. This is because of the home opening in October 2020, when one young person moved in. As stated previously the second young person moved in November 2020 and the third March 2021. All three young people present as settled and happy. They are developing a relationship with each other and staff continue to be sensitive to the individual children/young people's needs.

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
3	0	0	0	4

The above table highlights that Nook Lodge is a new provision for three young people. It highlights a settled period from October 20 to date. Given that the home is newly registered it is impressive that only four recommendations have been made, this is indicative of a well-managed home. Announced and unannounced Regulation 44 visits were undertaken during the period of October 20 to May 21. The October 20 visit was a trial one due to their only being one resident in occupancy and the fact that it was registered and opened late in the month.

There have been no missing episodes or restraints recorded this review period. Two sanctions were appropriately recorded in respect of one young person. During this reporting period there were 8 critical incidents, 6 of which were reported to Ofsted. There are no comparisons to make due to this being the first report to the Corporate Parenting Board in respect of Nook Lodge.

The Regulation 44 visitor made 4 recommendations during this reporting period. The recommendations were accepted by the manager, 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 was a young person's personal educational plan to be requested from the social worker and saved on file.

Due to the impact of COVID-19, during this reporting period, the young people were home-schooled from moving into Nook Lodge until 8th March 2021 when schools were re-opened to all young people. The team continue to support the young people to access education however, two of the young people's attendance is intermittent, for varying reasons however, they are being supported and encouraged to improve their attendance.

The team and young people at Nook Lodge are welcoming, the home is comfortable and warm, and the young people present as settled and happy during Regulation 44 visits.

Nook Lodge 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 except for the kitchen. However, the team have plans for the kitchen and the rear garden which is a work in progress. The young people are enjoying their new surroundings and are proud of their home, they are looking forward to the back garden progressing and have been instrumental in terms of undertaking garden tasks. The three young people are rearing baby chickens, all of whom have names.

A risk assessment is in place to ensure the safety of the young people living in the building, team members working there and professionals who need access to Nook Lodge. The assessment is reviewed regularly and updated by the manager reflecting COVID-19 restrictions which have varied during the reporting period. No young person has tested positive for COVID-19 during this reporting period.

In summary, despite the impact of COVID-19, to include imposed restrictions on the young people and the team, all have remained positive. The team and the young people have worked together to enjoy as many opportunities as possible, under the circumstances.

Voice of a Child/Young Person

The visitor has spoken to all three young people who made themselves available to discuss their wishes and views during Regulation 44 visits, this reporting period. All three young people were polite and engaging, willingly sharing their positive views regarding the care afforded to them. No significant concerns were raised by any of the young people. In addition, it has been a pleasure observing their relationship grow and welcoming a third person into their home in a considerate manner. During December 2020's visit, a young person briefly engaged with the Visitor reporting that he was looking forward to re-commencing education.

During February 2021's visit, two of the young people were keen to engage with the Visitor at the same time. Both talked about activities and explained that 'there are always lots of activities on offer'. However, both were keen for community-based activities to re-start. At that time, they were enjoying incubating chicks and look forward to their arrival.

No significant concerns have been raised, by the young people, this reporting period. The young people are developing relationships with each other and the team, although they have only been together for a short period of time.

Voice of a Parent

The feedback from the parents of the young people, during this reporting period, has generally been positive. Some concerns were raised by a birth mother and her partner regarding the lack of engagement between Nook Lodge team and themselves. However, on further exploration it appears the team were regularly in contact with the family. A second discussion with the same birth mother and her partner proved positive in respect of Nook Lodge however, her anxieties were more focused on the lack of engagement with the social worker and themselves. This was explored with the social worker and no further issues have been raised.

The feedback from another parent was positive, she is of the opinion that her son has settled well and the team are supporting his complex needs.

Monument View

Monument View Children's Home remains approved for up to six young people of either gender, aged from eleven up to the age of eighteen. It is situated on a large plot of land within the Shiney Row area of Sunderland. The home is currently fully staffed although the Registered Manager has announced his retirement as of May 2021 and recruitment is underway to fill this post.

During a time period that this report to CPB covers, Ofsted have not made an inspection visit, therefore the home has retained the judgement of Good.

Ofsted Rating	12-13/11/19 Judgement
Overall experiences and progress of children and young people	Good
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Good
The effectiveness of leaders and managers	Good

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

Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr
6	6	6	5	6	6

Monument View has had a Regulation 44 visit completed every month and as stated above this has involved a hybrid model to ensure safety. The number of recommendations made in this reporting period was 4 which is the same as in the previous reporting period.

The recommendations in this reporting period were:

- Complete a risk assessment for a young person who had recently moved into the home
- Share the outcome of a learning needs assessment with all staff in relation to a young person with a diagnosed learning disability
- Re-refer a young person to MSET due to the rise in missing episodes
- Files to be updated with the PEP and Health Assessment documentation for a young person

The management and staff team responded well to the recommendations made following visits, and they were all achieved by the next monthly visit. Management responses within the

Regulation 44 paperwork have been in depth and extensive, providing required context to the visitor.

Each child/young person within the home has an identified education and/or training provision and where the child/young person struggles to engage with education or training, the manager and staff team have explored alternative provisions which may be more suitable to the child/young persons level of need. Staff at Monument View have recently supported a young person who on admission to the home did not speak English to access mainstream education.

During visits the views of both the children and young people and their family have been gained, and these have all been positive, praising the staff for the standard of care provided. The children and young people have been able to identify specific members of staff they have built positive relationships with and all spoke warmly and highly of Monument View staff. Parents and carers have specifically identified communication as a strong point for the home and have praised staff for sharing information and making them feel included in the care of their children/young people.

Monument View's interior and exterior is maintained to a consistently high standard. Ongoing improvements to the home and grounds have been made during the lockdown period, and the children and young people have recently helped to build a large outdoor cinema area which the home uses to screen DVD's and televised sporting events. The homes location, garden and outbuildings provide a safe but stimulating environment and the children and young people have access to a large range of on-site facilities, such as a gym, 5 aside football cage, extensive gardens and animals alongside newly developed outdoor cinema.

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	14	2	4

In the last report to CPB there were 14 missing incidents reported to the Police. This has remained the same during this reporting period including two which were in excess of 24 hours. In all occasions children and young people were reported missing to both Police and EDT in line with procedure. A large majority of the missing episodes relate to one young person who has a significant learning difficulty and struggles to understand the safeguarding implications of not returning to the home at the agreed time. The home has shared information with all staff on how to ensure this young person receives clear boundaries and support in a format they are able to understand.

Sanctions were used on 2 occasions in response to inappropriate behaviour by the children and young people compared to 4 in the previous reporting period. Children and young people are always offered the opportunity of undertaking a restorative task as an alternative to having the sanction imposed and this often involves learning new skills such as plastering and painting. The home has a very low level of restraints and there has not been one recorded since 2016.

There were 10 critical incidents in this reporting period compared to 5 in the previous reporting period. Of the 10 critical incidents 8 involved one young person who has an identified learning difficulty and related specifically to incidents within the community which occurred outside of the home environment.

There were 5 notifications, this number has remained static despite the increase in critical incidents.

The notifications were for:

- A young person being assaulted within the community

- One allegation of harm against staff
- A young person making threats to harm themselves
- A young person arrested for violence towards staff and police officers
- A young person being involved in a racial assault within the community.

Voices of Children and Young People

This information was obtained from a visit to the home during the reporting period with a young person who has previously spoken to the visitor over the phone but had not met in person.

The young person was initially reluctant to speak to the visitor and was preoccupied by his phone, however warmed up to the discussion when he was asked what he enjoyed doing. He spoke about playing his PlayStation and going on days out with the home which he enjoyed. He stated, "this is much better than my last place" and when asked what made it better the young person replied "just... everything. The way they treat us is totally different, not like little kids." When asked if he could expand on that the young person stated, "they talk to you here, and listen, instead of just telling you what to do." The visitor asked if there were any staff in particular that the young person felt closer to or more able to talk about issues with and he replied that all of the staff were approachable and he felt comfortable in speaking to them all about any worries he has.

The young person stated the food was good and he likes everything they make to eat in the home. He also confirmed that he has everything he needs for his bedroom and this is a comfortable space. When asked about the other residents within the home the young person advised they were "alright" and he does not have any worries about anyone living within Monument View, although he did mention he did not spend a significant amount of time with the other young people and he is presently on a phased move back to his father's care.

Voice of a Parent

A young person's father was spoken with over the phone. He was very positive about the home and stated that the advice and support provided to both him and his son was "out of this world". He advised that the staff in the home keep him up to date and he feels entirely included in the decisions made regarding his son. The young person's father stated that Monument View appeared to have an excellent understanding of his child's needs and the work they had undertaken with him had "given me the son I recognise back." He stated he had no criticism of the home and would not recommend any changes.

Summary

Children and young people and parents continue to provide consistently positive feedback regarding Monument View and during the reporting period no issues have been identified by any resident of the home or their family.

The fabric of the building of Monument View both internally and externally is maintained to a very high standard and the en-suite bathrooms have all been recently refurbished. Additionally, the home benefits from a number of on-site facilities which have kept the children and young people stimulated and active during national lockdown. Children and young people within the home frequently praise the activities and leisure events the staff organise.

As with the last period both staff and management from Monument View have stressed to the independent visitor during visits that there have been difficulties managing the dynamics between the children and young people within the home, despite the discharge of some residents which were seen as central to these issues. Staff within the home may benefit from additional support to manage the challenging behaviour of some residents to ensure they are able to prioritise the safety and wellbeing of all children and young people within the home equally, and minimise the

possibility that these concerns will undermine the home's ability to provide good quality care for all young people. Staff may also benefit from ongoing support regarding caring for a child or a young person with a learning difficulty to ensure their needs are consistently met and direct work with the children or young person is delivered at an appropriate level to their understanding and ability.

The number of Ofsted notifications in this period has remained static despite the rise in critical incidents. This may reflect further work required within the home to gain a clearer understanding by staff of Ofsted requirements in terms of information sharing to ensure that Monument View are submitting notifications when appropriate.

The 4 recommendations from the Regulation 44 visits as stated above were accepted by the manager and implemented within the given timescales.

A COVID-19 risk assessment is in place to ensure the safety of the residents, staff and professionals who need access to Monument View. No children or young people have tested positive for COVID-19 during the reporting period.

Analysis

In this reporting period each children's home have had visits undertaken in accordance with Regulation 44 of the Children's Homes Regulations 2015 and in line with business continuity arrangements due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The reports have been written and distributed to Ofsted, the Responsible Individual, Service Manager responsible for the homes and the Managers of the home within a given timescale.

Learning from recommendations is shared within individual homes and across all four homes. Managers, and the staff teams have used the recommendations made to assist them to provide standards of care which support young people to reach their true potential. In total there were 22 recommendations made by the Regulation 44 visitors.

Together for Children Sunderland's homes are rated Good to Outstanding by Ofsted. Ofsted inspections have not been undertaken during this reporting period as a result of COVID-19 but Regulation 44 visits have continued and the information from these visits show staff are seeking to provide stability and safety for the children and young people living with them.

All homes continue to show their commitment to providing the best possible care for vulnerable children and young people. The managers of the homes accept and act upon the recommendations made in the Regulation 44 monthly reports and are committed along with their staff teams to improving the standards of care they provide for children and young people. The homes are scored by the Managers in their monthly Regulation 45 reports using the Signs of Success model and by the Regulation 44 visitors in their reports using the scale of 0-10, with 10 being the highest possible score and 0 the lowest. This is in terms of the standards of care delivered by the home. Over the reporting period the scoring of the Regulation 44 visitors has only varied by 1 from that of the managers scores for each home in their Regulation 45 report, indicating the managers of the homes self-assessment of the services they are providing are realistic. Children and young people receive a letter from the visitor after each Regulation 44 visit thanking them for participating and to let them know the visitor's views about the standards of care they receive.

Service Review & Development

The annual programme of themed audits continues to be in place. A representative from the Regulation 44 visitors has continued to attend quarterly residential management meetings to share learning and to hear feedback with regards to the Regulation 44 visits.

We have introduced a read receipt process following a notification from Ofsted to inform us that they had not received 4 months of Regulation 44 visitor reports from Sunderland. It was evidenced that the reports were sent to Ofsted however this highlighted an internal process for Ofsted which they are responding into.

In the coming months as part of our roadmap, we will aim to increase the length of the Regulation 44 visit whilst seeking to reintroduce rotating the Regulation 44 visitor every 6 months.

In the coming months managerial responsibility will also move to the newly appointed IRO manager who is due to take up their position on 1 July 2021.

Keith Munro

Reviewing & Designated Officer

Jackie Amos

Reviewing & Designated Officer

Danielle Rose

Reviewing & Designated Officer

26th May 2021

