



TOGETHER FOR CHILDREN	
REPORT AUTHOR:	Glynis Horner. Foster Carer Reviewing Officer/Regulation 44 Officer Gavin Taylor. Independent Reviewing Officer Manager
SUBJECT:	Regulation 44 report summarising visits from December 2017 to April 2018.
PURPOSE:	To provide the members of the Corporate Parenting Board with an update on the findings in relation to the Regulation.44 visits.

## Purpose

To provide the members of the Corporate Parenting Board with an update on the findings in relation to monthly unannounced visits undertaken between December 2017 and April 2018 to each of the Together For Children Sunderland Children's Homes in accordance with Regulation 44 of The Children's Homes Regulations 2015

The report provides an overview of service performance reflecting on key areas of strength and highlighting any emerging issues to the Management Team.

## Background

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.

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.

Independence is defined in the DfE Guidance as a person outside of the line management of the home, including the involvement in the care planning or financial arrangements of the home, visit and report. They may be an employee or be commissioned but must have, 'a clear separation between those with a direct interest in the home performing well'. (2.12DfE Guidance)

There are two full time Foster Carer Reviewing Officer /Regulation 44 Officer posts situated in the Children's Independent Review Team within the Performance and Quality Assurance Directorate. Since the last report one of the FCR/Reg.44 Officers has left the service. A replacement has been appointed who will join Together for Children Sunderland on 1<sup>st</sup> May 2018. Both officers are qualified social workers who have relevant skills, knowledge and experience.

## Role of the Independent Visitor

Regulation 44 states that the independent person, when carrying out a visit, must interview children and young people accommodated in the home, their parents or relatives, staff from the home and relevant professionals. They are also required to inspect the premises and records (including children's case records where the child and their placing authority consents) of the children's home. The independent visitor produces a report about each visit (referred to in the Regulations as "the independent person's report") which sets out in particular, the independent person's opinion as to whether—

- (a) children are effectively safeguarded; and
- (b) the conduct of the home promotes children's well-being.

The independent person's report may recommend actions that the registered person may take in relation to the home and timescales within which the registered person must consider whether or not to take those actions.

A copy of the report is sent each month to Ofsted, the Responsible Individual, the Strategic Service Manager for Accommodation and the Homes Manager.

## Performance Overview

The following table provides the dates within the reporting period that Regulation 44 visits have been undertaken and the date of most recent Ofsted visit:

Home	Recent Ofsted	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr
Colombo Road	7/2/18	13/12/17	9/1/18	8/2/18	14/3/18	10/4/18
Monument View	24/1/18	8/12/17	10/1/18	7/2/18	8/3/18	19/4/18
Sea View Road West	13/3/17	4/12/17	8/1/18	6/2/17	12/3/18	11/4/18
Grasswell House	15/1/18	11/12/17	12/1/18	15/2/18	9/3/18	20/4/18
Revelstoke Road	12/3/18	5/12/17	9/1/18	13/2/18	15/3/18	16/4/18

## Administration

On average, five hours each month are spent at each of the five homes to undertake the Regulation 44 visit. Evidence is gathered and triangulated to inform the report which is then written and distributed by the Regulation 44 visitor within the required timescale.

## Colombo Road

Colombo Road Children's Home is approved for up to six young people of either gender up to the age of eighteen years. It is situated on a large housing estate in the Hylton Castle area of Sunderland. Within this reporting period there have been no changes to the management structure.

The following table shows the Ofsted Judgements for the 2017 and 2018 Ofsted inspections of Colombo Road. The overall experiences and progress of children and young people and the effectiveness of leaders and managers were judged to be Outstanding at the Full Inspection undertaken in September 2017. This was an improvement from the previous year. How well children and young people are helped and protected sustained a rating of Good. At the interim inspection carried out on February 7th 2018 the home was judged to have Sustained Effectiveness.

Verbal feedback given by the Ofsted inspector was positive. Most notable was the homes' robust safeguarding culture and the quality of staff supervision. Positive comments were made regarding how knowledgeable the link worker interviewed was about the young person she is responsible for and her understanding of behaviours and the young person's underlying needs.

The inspector described the home as feeling like a family home and she was impressed with the standard of the outside space.

One recommendation was made with regard to evidence of the child's wishes and feelings being evidenced throughout one to one sessions. Action has been taken to address this issue.

Ofsted Rating	5&6/9/17 Judgement	7/2/18 Judgement
Overall experiences and progress of children and young people	Outstanding	Sustained Effectiveness
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Good	
The effectiveness of leaders and managers	Outstanding	

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

Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr
6	6	5	6	6

Unannounced Regulation 44 visits have been undertaken each month during this reporting period. A consistently good standard of practice is evident and it is clear young people are well cared for. Positive behaviour is rewarded and the use of sanctions is avoided. In this reporting period there have been no sanctions, restraint has been used on three occasions, there have been sixteen critical incidents and two notifications to Ofsted have been made.

Young people engage with education and every young person is at school, has an education provision or attends training with education placement. Attendance and attainment levels are consistently good.

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
1	1	11	0	1

Colombo Road is maintained to a particularly good standard and provides a safe, homely environment for young people. The communal areas are well furnished contemporary and comfortable. In this reporting period, new floorcovering has been laid and new sofas purchased. A capital bid to refurbish the kitchen and replace the boilers has been agreed and estimates for the work to be carried out are being progressed.

Young people living at Colombo Road know the Reg. 44 visitor and understand why she visits the home. At least one young person is consulted during each visit and topics discussed include experience of living here, how young people are enabled to have choice, how they are supported in education and training, support for hobbies and individual interests and food provision.

Young person S is making good progress here. He said *"I like living here and I am supported. I like my education and training placement in horticulture. I think it will lead to an apprenticeship when I leave school"*

Young Person E has lived in the home for ten months and has settled well here after the breakdown of her placement with foster carers. She said, *"Christmas was great here and we have lots of plans for things to do in the next few weeks"*.

Wherever possible the parent or primary carer of a different young person is consulted. When this is not achievable a young person's Independent Reviewing Officer or their social worker is contacted to elicit their views.

The parent of young person D was spoken to following the visit undertaken in March. She told the Regulation 44 Visitor she is happy with the standard of care provided for her son. She was pleased that staff from the home had helped him to buy a present and card to give her on Mother's Day and said she appreciated this.

Following the visit undertaken in April the mother of young person S was contacted. She told me she is very happy with the care provided for her son. The young person's mother talked about his good progress within his work and education placement. She is proud of his achievements and his excellent level of attendance.

The young person's mother told me her son always looks well cared for when she sees him. He wears good quality clothes and he is clean and healthy.

In conclusion the young person's mother described the staff as, 'brilliant' and said they keep her right up to date with information regarding her son.

The number of young people going missing has reduced significantly in this reporting period. Young people living here are settled. They engage with education/training and take full advantage of the activities and opportunities available to them.

Within this reporting period one recommendation has been made. This is an increase of one and was with regard to a young person's case file being updated following an incident of bullying.

## Monument View

Monument View provides residential care for up to six young people of either gender. It is geographically situated within Shinnery Row area of Sunderland. There have been no changes to the management structure in this reporting period.

The following table shows the judgements for the 2017 and 2018 Ofsted inspections of Monument View. The overall experiences and progress of children and young people, the effectiveness of leaders and managers and how children are helped and protected were judged to be Outstanding at the Full Inspection undertaken in September 2017. This was an improvement from the previous year. At the interim inspection carried out on January 24<sup>th</sup> 2018 the home was judged to have Sustained Effectiveness.

At the Full Inspection the Ofsted inspector found that strong relationship building is a key element in the home's success. She commented on the robust link worker system which gives the young people significant adults in their lives with whom they can form positive relationships.

Two requirements and three recommendations were made following the interim inspection. The requirements were with regard to when notifications should be made to Ofsted and the frequency of formal supervision for sessional staff. Immediate action was taken and the issues identified addressed.

The recommendations were with regard to the inclusion of young people's views and comments being recorded within key-worker sessions and safeguarding being a stand-alone agenda item in supervision and team meetings.

Ofsted Rating	12&13/9/17 Judgement	24/01/18 Judgement
Overall experiences and progress of children and young people	Outstanding	Sustained Effectiveness
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Outstanding	
The effectiveness of leaders and managers	Outstanding	

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

Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr
5	5	6	6	6

Monument View has had an unannounced Regulation 44 visit each month. In March 2018 Councillor Louise Farthing visited the home with the Reg. 44 Officer. Monument View provides a consistently good standard of care for the young people living there. Sanctions have not been issued and the use of restraint has not been required. Two critical incidents have been recorded neither of which needed to be notified to Ofsted.

Each young person has education and/or training provision. Where young people struggle to engage with education or training provision the manager and staff team work diligently in supporting them to re-engage. There is demonstrable evidence of how staff work in partnership with young people and education professionals to help young people to be the best that they can be.

Between December 2017 and April 2018 the following was recorded:

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	1	17	2	0

Monument View is maintained to a consistently high standard. The homes location, garden and outbuildings provide a therapeutic environment. The home, as a community have built a yurt in the garden and a sensory room is under construction. Young people are supported to grow their own produce and look after the hens and ducks.

The views of young people living at Monument View are sought during each Reg. 44 visit. They know the Reg.44 visitor and are happy to talk to her during visits. Young person K was consulted during the visit in March. She explained how she is moving to a semi independent living setting soon and said, *"I know staff will still support me and I will always be welcome here"*. It is good to report that K is settled in her new accommodation and is continuing her education and training. She is a regular visitor at the home.

Young people's parents or primary carers are contacted wherever possible. If this is not achieved then their social worker or Independent Reviewing Officer is consulted. In January the mother of young person N was spoken to. She is happy with the care provided for her daughter by staff at the home and believes she has made good progress since she went to live there. The young person's mother said how proud she is that her daughter has been chosen to take part in a Tall Ships Voyage this summer.

Following the visit in February the mother of young person K was contacted. Her son has recently moved to this home from one of the organisations other children's homes. She felt K had, 'calmed down' since moving to this home. K's mother was sure this was a good move for him. She said the staff team suit K's personality and temperament and he responds appropriately to the way they parent him. She acknowledged that there has been, 'hiccups' since he moved but on the whole his behaviour has improved and has been less challenging. The young person's mother said K looks well cared for when she sees him and added she has established a good relationship with staff and feels able to contact them if she has any concerns.

The number of young people reported missing has significantly decreased during this reporting period. When young people do go missing staff take immediate action to elicit their safe and quick return, working with partner agencies and where appropriate young people's family and friends to achieve this. The number of recommendations has reduced from three to none made in this reporting period.

## Grasswell House

Grasswell House provides residential care for up to six young people of either gender. There have been no changes to the management structure in this period.

The following table shows the Ofsted Judgements for the 2017 and 2018 Ofsted inspections. At the full inspection undertaken in November 2017 the overall judgement was Inadequate for the following reasons;

- The manager's monitoring of the home lacks rigour and thorough analysis.
- Risk assessments do not contain effective strategies to inform practice or mitigate risk. When strategies are set out they have not been followed by staff.
- Not all serious incidents are shared with the regulator or reported through internal systems.
- The care plans do not detail sufficiently the needs of young people.
- Records of restraint demonstrate disproportionate responses.
- The young people are not helped sufficiently in terms of skills for living independently.

Strengths with regard to how well the home works with other professionals were identified and it was acknowledged by the inspector that the home has introduced the services of a psychologist to



support learning and development. Eight requirements and four recommendations were made. Immediate action was taken to address them prior to a second full inspection being undertaken in January 2018. The overall experiences and progress of children and young people was judged to be good. How well children are helped and protected and the effectiveness of leaders and managers required improvement to be good. The inspector recognised the hard work of the management and staff to address the issues raised at the last inspection and commented positively with regard to the reduction in missing episodes and the impact of structured activities and outings for young people. Five requirements and four recommendations were made.

Ofsted Rating	22&23/11/17 Judgement	15/16/1/18 Judgement
Overall experiences and progress of children and young people	Inadequate	good
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Inadequate	requires improvement to be good
The effectiveness of leaders and managers	Inadequate	requires improvement to be good

Within the reporting period the home has been residence to the following number of young people:

Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr
6	6	6	5	4

Grasswell House has had an unannounced visit each month throughout the reporting period. In March Councillor Victoria O'Neil accompanied the Reg.44 visitor. Throughout the reporting period the manager of the home and her staff team have worked diligently to meet the requirements and recommendations resulting from the inspections. Episodes of young people being reported missing reduced significantly, sanctions were given on two occasions and a young person needed to be restrained for their safety on one occasion

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	7	1	8

Young people are consulted during all Reg. 44 visits to Grasswell House. At the visit carried out in February young person R was consulted. She was happy to show the Reg. 44 visitor her room and said how much she likes living here. R was aware of the outcome of the Ofsted inspection undertaken in November. She said she was cross about it because she believes this is a good children's home and the staff here really care about her.

Young person C was consulted during the visit undertaken January. C has lived at Grasswell for fourteen months and he feels settled here. He described his relationship with his link worker as good and is confident if he was worried about anything she would help him. C said, *"I can talk to her about anything without feeling I am being judged"*. C is on a work based training course. He told the Reg. 44 visitor, *"staff support me to get to and from work on time and I keep all of the allowance I earn. I get money to buy lunch and pocket money. I'm pleased and have enough money to buy whatever I need"*

During the reporting period, 9 recommendations were made following the Reg. 44 visits. The recommendations were with regard to the update of risk assessments, individual crisis management plans and case files, and consultation with young people.

## 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. There have been no changes to the management structure in this period.

The following table shows the judgements for the 2017 and 2018 Ofsted inspections. At the full inspection undertaken in November 2017 The overall experience and progress of children and young people was good. How children and young people are helped and protected and the effectiveness of leaders and managers required improvement to be good. Revelstoke was judged to be good because recording was improved in all records since the last inspection, members of staff demonstrated good knowledge of the young people and their individual needs, there was evidence and engagement of young people and of progress made and feedback from other professionals and family members highlighted the home communicates well with others. Four requirements and four recommendations were made. Immediate action was taken to address the issues raised and this resulted in Revelstoke Road achieving improved effectiveness at the interim inspection in March 2018. One requirement was made regarding staff supervision and one recommendation regarding young people who are not participating in education.

Ofsted Rating	8&9/11/2017 Judgement	12/03/2018 Judgement
Overall experiences and progress of children and young people	Good	Improved Effectiveness
How well children and young people are helped and protected	requires Improvement to be good	
The effectiveness of leaders and managers	requires Improvement to be good	

Within the reporting period the Revelstoke Road has been residence to the following number of young people:

Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr
6	6	5	5	5

Within the reporting period Revelstoke Road has had a Regulation 44 visits each month. A consistently good standard of care is demonstrated. Young people are well supported by a stable and cohesive staff team. Episodes of young people being reported missing has significantly reduced, six sanctions were issued and young people needed to be restrained on three occasions.

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
1	1	21	24	5

Revelstoke Road provides a warm, comfortable and contemporary environment for young people. The house is spacious and decorated and furnished to a high standard. The home is in consultation with the landlord to access a green area at the back of the home. This will provide a space where young people can socialise together.



Young people and their parents/carers are consulted during each visit. In March the grandmother of young person L was asked to share her views with regard to the care provided at the home. She said, *'I have seen a big difference in L since he moved to the home. I was scared for his life when he lived with me. His associates, drug misuse, not going to school and being missing were a huge worry. I cannot thank the staff enough for the support they have provided for L. I am delighted he isn't going missing anymore, he looks much better because he isn't using drugs and he has started to go to school again. The staff team are lovely people who are doing everything in their power to help L.'*

In March three young people were spoken to together in a group. They all get along together okay though acknowledge that it is hard living with others.

We chatted about bedroom space and one young person told the Reg. 44 visitor he would very much like to move into the vacant bigger bedroom. This request was taken forward with the manager and the young person moved. We talked about becoming independent and the young people explained about the things they are able to do for themselves and how staff support them and help them to learn.

One young person said he doesn't go to school very often. He said the manager and staff at the home work with him on his attendance

All of the young people confirmed that they are consulted about activities and they choose what they would like to do. One spoke about a trip last year to Keilder and hopes they can go again this summer.

## Sea View Road

Sea View Road is a short break residential care home; it is geographically situated within the Grangetown area of Sunderland. It offers short break care for up to 6 young people range with an age range from 8 to 18 years of age. The home accommodates young people of both genders, with a range of individual needs. There have been no changes to the management structure in this period.

A full Ofsted inspection was undertaken on 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> December 2017. The overall experiences and progress of children and young people was found to be good. How children and young people are helped and protected required improvement to be good and the effectiveness of leaders and managers also required improvement to be good. Three requirements were made and six recommendations. Action was taken to ensure the requirements and recommendations made were achieved.

An interim Ofsted inspection was undertaken on 13<sup>th</sup> March 2018. The outcome of the inspection was judged to be good with improved effectiveness. No requirements or recommendations were made and the inspector was satisfied that requirements and recommendations made at the last inspection were achieved.

Ofsted Rating	19/20/12/17 Judgement	13/3/18 Judgement
Overall experiences and progress of children and young people	Good	Good with improved effectiveness
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Requires improvement to be good	
The effectiveness of leaders and managers	Requires improvement to be good	

During the times of Reg 44 visit the occupancy level has been:-

Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr
3	4	4	4	4

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	1	0	0	9

Recommendations made pertain to keeping the environment a safe place, case file information and training. They have been acted upon.

The fabric of the home is good and repairs are reported timely to ensure that the home is maintained to good standard for all children and young people. There have been no reported missing episodes and sanctions are not used. There have been four critical incidents and one notification to Ofsted.

Young people and children are consulted at every Reg. 44 visit. Without exception it is clearly evident they enjoy having short breaks. A group of older young people were spoken to recently. They love having their short breaks together and shared their experience of the great time they had when they went seal watching together. This group of young people have become firm friends and there have been demonstrable benefits from this. One young person in particular was reluctant to spend time away from his mother and now looks forward to his short breaks.

The parent or primary carer of a child or young person is always contacted. In this reporting period and in the time this Reg. 44 visitor has undertaken the visits to the home all consulted have been highly satisfied with the standard of care provided at Sea View Road. It is clear this service is valued by children, young people and their primary carers.

In April the mother of BG was contacted following the visit undertaken in April. She described the care her son receives at the home as, 'brilliant' and she has no worries at all when he is having short breaks. BG's mother told the visitor her brother also accessed the service when he was young and he was really well looked after too. BG's mother is grateful for the additional support the home has provided since her second son was born last year. She told the visitor the manager and staff have arranged additional short breaks at short notice when the baby has needed to go into hospital. This is greatly appreciated by her and her husband.

The child's mother said BG is kept safe here. She said how he has recently started to try to climb out of bed and staff arranged an OT assessment straight away resulting in a new bed and safety equipment being installed for him ready for his next short break

BG's mother said she knows her son really enjoys his short break care and he gets very excited when he is going.

## Analysis

In this reporting period each children's home has had a visit undertaken in accordance with Regulation 44 of the Children's Homes Regulations 2015. The reports have been written and distributed to Ofsted, the Responsible Individual, Strategic Manager and Home Manager within the given timescale. On two occasions Elected Members have accompanied the Reg.44 visitor.

Recommendations made have mainly been achieved and it is evident that managers and their staff teams strive to provide a standard of care which supports children and young people to achieve their true potential.

Learning from recommendations is important, both within individual home and across all five homes.

It is important to acknowledge that there are a number of variables with regards to children's homes that can have an impact upon their Ofsted rating and Reg 44 visits. Since the last Reg 44

report to CPB work has started in seeking to make recommendations and the Reg 44 report smarter, it was anticipated that this work would be achieved by March 2018 however competing service priorities has impacted upon this being achieved. These priorities will be alleviated upon the appointment of a new Reg 44 Officer. It is important to highlight the achievements that are noted with regards to the individual homes whilst acknowledging that there are areas for development.

Consideration will also be given, as to how shared learning can be progressed across the residential management team.

### **Service development**

- To consolidate and use the skill and experiences of the new Foster Carer Review / Regulation 44 Officers.
- To undertake a schedule of themed audits in order to enhance the rigour of the independent visit.
- To launch the new Reg 44 report format and use SMART recommendations that evidences the impact of the Reg 44 visit by September 2018.
- To support all five homes to their journey to achieve a good to outstanding rating from Ofsted.
- To undertake joint learning with residential home managers in meeting and exceeding the implementation of Ofsted and Reg 44 recommendations.
- To develop a new corporate parenting / elective member visits to children's homes.
- To update and re-launch Reg 44 procedures in order to standardise practice by September 2018.

Glynis Horner  
Foster Carer Reviewing and Reg 44 Officer



Gavin Taylor  
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Date 18.06.18

