



TOGETHER FOR CHILDREN	
REPORT AUTHOR:	Glynis Horner, Keith Munro & Agnieszka Indyka Foster Carer Reviewing Officer/Regulation 44 Officers.
SUBJECT:	Regulation 44 report summarising visits from November 2018 to April 2019.
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 (CPB) with an update on the findings in relation to monthly unannounced visits undertaken between November 2018 until April 2019 to each of the Together for Children Sunderland Children's Homes in accordance with Regulation 44 of The Children's Homes Regulations 2015

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

Background

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.

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 is one full time and two half time Foster Carer Reviewing /Regulation 44 Officer posts situated in the Children's Independent Review Team within the Performance and Quality Assurance Directorate. Since the last report Agnieska Indyka resigned from her post within Together for Children and will leave the organisation in May 2019 and a successful recruitment process has already been completed with the new member of team due to start in July 2019. The three officers will continue to be qualified social workers who have the relevant skills, knowledge and experience to undertake the Regulation 44 visits.

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, 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	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr
Colombo Road	19/09/18	15/11/19	06/12/18	08/01/19	07/02/19	07/03/19	04/04/19
Monument View	10/10/18	08/11/19	05/12/18	14/01/19	14/02/19	05/03/19	10/04/19
Grasswell House	08/05/19	06/11/19	11/12/19	14/01/19	11/02/19	18/03/19	09/04/19
Revelstoke Road	27/06/18	13/11/19	12/12/18	10/01/19	05/02/19	13/03/19	16/04/19

Administration

On average, seven hours each month are spent at each of the four homes to undertake the Regulation 44 visit. Evidence is gathered and evaluated 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. Since the last report to CPB there has been no recent Ofsted inspection during this period. The home remains rated as Outstanding.

Ofsted Rating	5&6/9/17 Judgement	7/2/18 Judgement	18&19/09/18 Judgement
Overall experiences and progress of children and young people	Outstanding	Sustained Effectiveness	Outstanding
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Good	Sustained Effectiveness	Outstanding
The effectiveness of leaders and managers	Outstanding	Sustained Effectiveness	Outstanding

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

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

Colombo Road has had unannounced Regulation 44 visits undertaken during each month of the reporting period. The management and staff team respond positively to the recommendations made in the monthly reports. They discuss the recommendations at team meetings and view the recommendations as helpful to their ongoing development of practice and running of the home. The care practice observed with young people throughout the reporting period has been of a high standard.

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	2	2	0	20

Young people have positive relationships with the staff at the home. Staff use a therapeutic parenting model (PACE) which is centred on understanding trauma and emphasises building relationships where staff focus on connecting with young people. It is positive to report that the episodes of young people reported missing, two for this period, remained extremely low. Sanctions have been issued on three occasions and the use of restraint has been required on three occasions. Thirteen critical incidents were recorded, seven of which became notifications to Ofsted. Critical incidents are responded to and reflected upon in a timely way. A post crisis response is completed for each incident and action identified and taken to prevent reoccurrence. This involves not only learning for staff within the home but also the opportunity for the young person to undertake some reflection to avoid the situation re-occurring.

The fabric of the building of Colombo Road both internally and externally is maintained to a very good standard. The environment within the home feels homely and young people report during visits that they feel safe. The home remains decorated and furnished to a high standard in a modern style. A capital bid to replace the boilers and refurbish the kitchen was agreed and this work is currently being undertaken at the home with a completion date of the 14/06/19.

During each Regulation 44 visit at least one young person is consulted with by the Regulation 44 visitor. The discussions include their relationships with staff and how they try to support them in relation to their education or training, hobbies and personal interests. The following is an example from the record of one such discussion with a young person during the regulation 44 visit:

E has a very positive relationships with the staff and particularly her link worker. E sought a hug from a member of staff appropriately during the visit. E felt she had been living here long enough to develop those relationships. E commented staff helped her to develop respect towards herself and others. She thought it was because they showed her she could have a “stable lifestyle” and could recognise she was “a nice person”. E feels she is more able to control her emotions when she gets upset. E commented she was doing fine at school and that she wanted to go to college afterwards. E aspires to become a midwife or a police investigator. E enjoys spending time with her friends and peers outside of the home as well as the young people who live in the home. At that time E did not have any hobbies of her own. Although E was adamant that if she wanted to find one, the staff would support her in doing whatever she wanted to. E sometimes gets involved in preparing tea within the home. For example, she made Yorkshire Puddings recently. E also talked about participating in Master Chef at school and making Spaghetti Bolognese. E is very happy living in this home.

Wherever possible the parent or carer of a different young person is consulted with during each visit. When this is not achieved the young person’s Social Worker or Independent Reviewing Officer are contacted to gain their views about the care offered to the young person by the home.

When speaking to the Mother of S the Regulation 44 Officer was told that she “*could not fault*” the staff in terms of their communication with her. Staff always give her positive information about what her son has achieved as well as where he needs to improve, she said that she feels comfortable speaking to all the staff and she has an excellent working relationship with S’s link worker. She is pleased with the progress S is making on his college training course and knows he has 100% attendance. In summary Mother said” S wouldn’t be where he is now without them (the staff)”.

The Young People living at the home are settled and have high levels of attendance in education/training. Young people take up a wide variety of activities and hobbies inside and out with the home and take part in trips out.

The number of recommendations increased significantly to twenty in this reporting period. Recommendations have included the requirement for detailed recording around the use of sanctions and updating the records when life skills work has been undertaken. All recommendations are responded to and achieved within given timescales.

Monument View

Monument View provides residential care for up to six young people of either gender. It is geographically situated within Sunderland West. There have been no changes to the management

structure in this reporting period. The staff team remains very stable, cohesive and committed to ensuring the best outcomes possible for young people living there

The following table shows the judgements for the 2017 and 2018 Ofsted inspections of Monument View. At the most recent Ofsted Inspection undertaken on the 9th and 10th October 2018 Monument View retained their overall Outstanding Judgement. There were no requirements resulting from this inspection and just one recommendation. The recommendation concerned the recording of dates on young people's risk assessments and the advice given by the inspector has been implemented.

The inspector spoke to all the young people living at Monument View and commented on how there was evidence that all the young people have made good progress in their care.

The inspector advised that the overall judgement was Outstanding.

Ofsted Rating	12&13/9/17 Judgement	24/01/18 Judgement	9 &10/10/18 Judgement
Overall experiences and progress of children and young people	Outstanding	Sustained Effectiveness	Outstanding
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Outstanding	Sustained Effectiveness	Good
The effectiveness of leaders and managers	Outstanding	Sustained Effectiveness	Outstanding

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

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

Monument View has had an unannounced Regulation 44 visit each month during the reporting period. The management and staff team respond well to the recommendations. Recommendations are discussed at team meetings and seen as assisting the home in maintaining standards and improving practice. The care practice observed with Young People continues to be of a very high standard during visits to the home. Sanctions were used on four occasions and the use of restraint has not been required. Eight critical incidents were recorded four of which became notifications to Ofsted.

Critical incidents are responded to and reflected upon in a timely way. A post crisis response is completed for each incident and action identified and taken to prevent reoccurrence.

Each young person has education and/or training provision and where young people struggle to engage with education or training 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, their parents and relevant professionals to help 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
2	2	41	3	5

Young people have good relationships with the staff at the home. Staff are implementing a therapeutic parenting model (PACE) which is centred on understanding trauma and focuses

building relationships where staff place an emphasis on connecting with young people. There was an increase of five episodes of missing compared to the previous reporting period. However, the number of missing incidents that lasted over twenty-four hours fell by three. When an episode of missing occurs a return interview is conducted, with the young person, by the Barnardo's return home interview worker. This is to try and reduce the risk and frequency of episodes re-occurring in the future.

Monument View is maintained to a consistently high standard. The homes location, garden and outbuildings provide a secure and nurturing environment. Young people are supported to grow their own produce and look after the hens and ducks. The home has a community-built yurt in the garden. The most recent project to be completed by staff and young people is the development of a sensory room. The room is equipped to create a therapeutic environment for young people.

The views of Young People living at Monument View are sought during each Regulation 44 visit. An example of these discussions was a conversation held with K.

K said staff at the home and a member of staff from YOS are supporting him to work on issues he has with anger. The example he gave was working on his "Triggers". K commented that his social worker has made a referral for him to CYPS to support him further with this work. K commented that he can talk to staff and they "*bond*" with him and because of this it "*Puts a smile on my face*". K said that he does make choices for himself which staff support him with. The example K gave was that he wanted to learn to drive and he is now having lessons which he really enjoys and looks forward to. K is using a phone application to revise and prepare for his theory test. The visitor saw K leave on a driving lesson during the visit and saw how happy and proud of himself he was when he returned from the lesson. K commented that staff have worked with him, so he knows how to use the oven, make a breakfast and snacks such as beans on toast. K said he can keep his room tidy which he usually does but sometimes he said he chooses not to. K reported that he has good personal self-care skills and enjoys having a shower room which is for his own use. K said he was supported by staff to attend the Pallion Trust to help him find employment in the construction industry. K commented although staff have supported him to attend it is his choice to attend and make the most of this. At the end of the discussion K wanted to say that "*Wish I had come here first before I went to a foster home*". This was because K felt how staff work with him and the "*Way of living is better at the home*", for him.

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. A telephone conversation was held with D mother of N. D. D said that she had a "*Fab*" relationship with staff. D commented that she felt comfortable talking with staff from the home and they keep her informed of D's progress. D is pleased N's attendance at school has improved and she has a focus to study art post 16 after her exams this summer. D also likes that N has the option "*To go places*" (trips out) with staff. Overall D is pleased with the standard of care her daughter is provided with at the home.

The number of recommendations has decreased slightly to five in this reporting period. Recommendations have included improving the recording of independent living skills work undertaken with Young People and undertaking more one to one sessions to help reduce or stop smoking by Young People. All recommendations are responded to and achieved within given timescales.

Grasswell House

Grasswell House provides residential care for up to six young people of either gender. It is situated within Sunderland West. The management structure has changed since reporting to members of the Corporate Parenting Board in October 2018 this followed the Ofsted inspection undertaken on

October 31st 2018. The Deputy Manager has been temporarily managing the home since this Ofsted inspection; this arrangement has been approved by Ofsted.

The temporary manager and the leadership team has worked diligently to lead and manage the workforce at Grasswell House. He has been supported by the staff team to ensure the home meets the needs of the Young People living there, whilst at the same time leading the home through its journey of improvement.

At the inspection undertaken in December 2018 the home was judged to require improvement to be good. Although not in this reporting period, it is important to record that at the recent full inspection in May the overall experiences and progress of Children and Young People, was judged to be good.

Since the current management team have led the workforce the home has made remarkable progress, this needs to be acknowledged and celebrated given the improved experience for children in their care. Some new staff have been appointed and good quality training provided. The management and staff demonstrate a commitment to continuous professional development and this is reflected in their competence in practice and motivation to provide the best possible care for Young People

Ofsted Rating	Judgement 31/10/18	Judgement 4&5/12/18	Judgement 7&8/05/19
Overall experiences and progress of children and young people	Declined Effectiveness	Requires improvement to be good	Good
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Declined Effectiveness	Requires improvement to be good	Good
The effectiveness of leaders and managers	Declined Effectiveness	Requires improvement to be good	Good

Within the reporting period the home has been residence to the following number of Young People:

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

Grasswell House has had an unannounced visit each month throughout the reporting period. Where recommendations are made they are responded to in a timely manner. The management team and staff respond positively to Regulation 44 visits and reports. Each one is discussed during staff meetings so that all are aware of the content and where action is needed to improve outcomes for Young People.

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	31	10	27

Episodes of young people going missing fluctuated throughout the reporting period. One young person has influenced the incidence of Young People being missing from care for over twenty-four hours. An alternative residential care setting, where the risk of him going missing can be more effectively disrupted, is currently being sought.

Young People have good relationships with the management team and staff built on an understanding of trauma and child centred care practice. A therapeutic parenting model (PACE) is used and it is evident the needs of young people are prioritised appropriately.

Wherever possible Young People are consulted during Regulation 44 visits to Grasswell House. In March D was interviewed, he has lived at Grasswell House for nine months and feels that after initial hesitation he has settled well and now considers this as his home. When D first moved to live at Grasswell House he was frequently missing from care for significant periods of time. It is great to report that this is no longer the case. D told me, *'I feel settled here. I'm comfortable with the staff. My link worker (JB) she is like my Ma, I am more comfortable with her than anyone'* He added, *'it feels like the staff know you really well and have your interests at heart, they wouldn't do all the things they do for you if they didn't'. 'I am one hundred percent happy here and not wishing I was somewhere else'.*

We talked about education and D said he is attending his education placement regularly. I asked what he thought had helped him to get back to school and learning after not attending for a long time. D thinks he has been helped by the home to return to learning and believes he has something to work towards. He has been offered an apprenticeship if he continues to work in the way he is doing now.

D was looking forward to going on holiday with staff and other young people. He enjoys the activities and confirmed Young People choose where they would like to go and what they would like to do. D said, *'staff enjoy the activities too - we all have a laugh together – it's class'.*

The parents or primary carers of Young People living in Grasswell House are consulted wherever possible. When a parent or primary care can not be contacted the young person's Social Worker or IRO is consulted. In January the Social Worker for young person J was spoken to.

Social Worker, DC had no concerns about the care provided for J. She said the staff at the home *'go over and above in providing care for J'*. She added, *'J is difficult to communicate with and they try their very best to understand how he is feeling'*. D explained that a therapeutic placement is currently being sought for J and said she feels he would like to stay where he is as he does get something from the care provided. We spoke about J's wellbeing and D said she is confident staff at the home do everything they can to promote it for J. She said staff work in partnership with other professionals and follow advice and guidance accordingly. She also believes J is kept as safe as he can be by the management and staff team.

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 during this reporting period.

The following table shows the Ofsted Judgements for the 2017 and 2018 Ofsted inspections of the home. At the last full Inspection undertaken in June 2018 the overall experiences and progress of Children and Young People were judged to be Good.

Ofsted Rating	8&9/11/2017 Judgement	12/03/2018 Judgement	26&27/6/18 Judgement
Overall experiences and progress of children and young people	Good	Improved Effectiveness	Good
How well children and young people are helped and protected	requires Improvement to be good		Good
The effectiveness of leaders and managers	requires Improvement to be good		Good

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

Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	March	April
6	6	6	6	6	5

Unannounced Regulation 44 visits were undertaken during each month of the reporting period. Care practice with young people was observed to be of a good standard. Young People are looked after well at the home and they are making progress. Sanctions were used twice, and restraint was used on one occasion. That was a significant drop from thirteen incidents of restraint which took place in the previous reporting period. There was also a significant decrease in critical incidents. There were 19 critical incidents of which ten were reported to Ofsted. Critical incidents were responded to efficiently and a post crisis response was completed. Appropriate actions were identified and taken to reduce the risk of reoccurrence.

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	16	0	16

The missing incidents decreased significantly since the previous reporting period. It was good to note there was no Young People reported missing for periods of over 24 hours.

Revelstoke Road is maintained, externally and internally, to a good standard and is decorated and furnished in a modern contemporary style. The environment within the home feels welcoming, comfortable and warm and the Young People present as been happy during the Regulation 44 visits.

At the beginning of the reported period four young people attended education, one young person attended an apprenticeship and one Young Person had disengaged from education regardless of consistent efforts from the members of staff to support him. By the end of the six months period another Young Person had left college and was supported into re-engaging into education via an appropriate course.

The attendance and attainment of the Young People at school or an alternative educational provision was varied. Most of the Young People struggled with attainment and their attendance fluctuated, but one Young Person kept consistently high attendance and made positive academic progress.

During each Regulation 44 visit at least one Young Person is consulted with by the Regulation 44 visitor. The discussions include their relationships with staff and how they try to support them with their education, training, hobbies and personal interests. The young people were polite and engaging. They were confident to express their wishes and feelings and raise any concerns they had. The Young People stated that they felt well looked after and that the staff care about them and support them, if they struggled. The Young People gave examples of support with education, developing independent life skills, relationships with other young people within the home and their own emotions. The Young People also had opportunity to participate in Young People's meetings organised to seek their views on aspects of their lives such as meals planning, holidays, or activities. The following is an example from the record of one such discussion with two young person during the regulation 44 visit:

They felt it was "a bit like home". They liked the staff and felt they were respected. One young person said she would be leaving soon and she asked her mother to buy her link worker a present because "she helped me a lot". The other young person also said he liked his key worker. He openly talked about his previous experiences of past foster homes and how he used to run away from them. We acknowledged together that he was not running away from here. He added "Yeah, I just left home with LM, and we were walking along the street, and we knew I was just going till the end of the street and I was going back anyway, but my key worker didn't know that and she ran after me", "cos she was worried about you!" – added the other young person. Both young people acknowledged that the staff cared about them.

Wherever possible the parent or carer of a Young Person is consulted with, if this cannot be achieved the view of a relevant professional would be gathered for consideration. The feedback from the parents of young people in this reporting period has been positive with regards to the quality of care that has been provided and there being clear lines of communication between residential staff and parents. One parent commented that her daughter has "*come on leaps and bounds*" since being placed in the home. The parents in their feedback have also advised that they feel that the home has clear boundaries/expectations and that staff have close relationships with the Young People.

The number of recommendations increased to 19 within this reporting period. Recommendations included, evidencing individual one to one work with the young people. The Manager addressed all of the recommendations that were made.

Analysis

In this reporting period each children's home has had visits 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.

Learning from recommendations is shared within individual homes and across all four homes. Managers and their staff teams have used the recommendations to assist them to provide standards of care which supports Young People to reach their true potential.

Colombo Road and Monument View are currently judged by Ofsted to be providing Outstanding standards of care. Revelstoke Road and Grasswell House have been graded as providing Good standards of care. Grasswell House continued to receive additional support from their Regulation 44 visitor to assist the Acting Manager and senior staff to raise the standards of care they provide for young people.

Service development

In this period the implement an annual programme of themed audits was agreed and introduced. This development means that at each Regulation 44 visit a set theme is examined, in greater depth, for example life skills/preparation for independent living it is envisaged that the themed audit will provide evidence, feedback for further consideration by the Registered Manager.

We have also considered and trailed improved feedback from Regulation 44 visits to the Young People, in June 2019 this will be rolled out to all of the children's homes.

The homes will continue to develop their work with Dr Liz McManus Consultant Child Psychologist for Looked After Children. Teams receive regular training and consultation and are focusing on developing their understanding and skills with regards to Dyadic Developmental Psychotherapy and the PACE model (Playfulness, Acceptance, Empathy and Curiously) which focuses on the whole child, not simply the behavior.

Training in each home is needs led and therefore directed by staff experiences of young people's behaviour and what they may therefore need from an adult response.

The Children's Homes work within models of practice that can broadly be described as person centred and strength based. Relationships with young people are key in understanding the impact of poor attachment and ensuring that they receive care from caregivers who are available and responsive to their needs allowing them to develop a sense of security. Staffs actions and responses should ensure that young people know and feel that we are dependable, which will create a secure base for them to then repair and grow.

The homes have been successful in being awarded a Capital bid from the Council with acquired funds being used to refurbish and reconfigure key areas identified within the buildings by the home's managers. It is hoped that all works will be completed by the end of the Summer.

Work is planned to embed the Signs of Safety Model. Staff teams are undertaking the training over the next few months and there is a plan to look more specifically at Signs of Success in line with promoting resilience and preparing young people for moving on.

