

CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD

3 JULY 2017

REGULATION 44 VISITS

Report of the Foster Carer Reviewing and Reg.44 Officer

1. Purpose of the report

- 1.1 To provide the members of the Corporate Parenting Board with an update on the findings in relation to the Regulation.44 visits to the Sunderland Children's Homes conducted from June 2016 - February 2017.

2. Background

- 2.1 The role of the independent visitor is to carry out the Regulation 44 monthly monitoring visits to all five of Sunderland's children's homes. There are currently two fulltime Foster Carer Reviewing and Reg.44 Officers, who carry out these statutory functions in accordance with current Legislation and Statutory Guidance.
- 2.2 The purpose of the visit is to ensure that all children within the home are being appropriately cared for and that their individual needs are being met, with particular reference to needs arising from their ethnicity, heritage or known disability. This is achieved through a combination of the examination of all appropriate written records and reports with particular reference to the relevant electronic log and any complaints that have been raised. Interviews will also take place with children, parents, relatives and staff as necessary to establish the standard of care being provided. As part of the report, the visitor must set out their opinion as to whether:
- Children are effectively safeguarded and
 - That the conduct of the home promotes children's wellbeing
- 2.3 Visits also assist in service development, providing a regular independent perspective on the functioning of children's residential homes. Consideration of the Regulation 44 reports is included in the Quality of Care and Leadership and Management aspects of Ofsted inspections. The visit should not be viewed as a singular event but rather contribute to building a chronology of the development of the unit to ensure that issues/ recommendations previously identified have been addressed .The checklist that is used to record the findings of the visits is compliant with the nine Quality Standards and Children's Homes Regulations and Guidance (see Appendix 1):

3. Findings Overview from Reg.44 Visits

3.1 Colombo Road

In this reporting period, the home has undergone a number of changes to the staff team. There has been an Acting Deputy Manager in post from March 2016. One member of staff has retired and three members of staff have moved on to work in other areas of the directorate. In December 2016 interviews took place and four new members of staff were appointed. The young people were consulted around their opinions and views in what they would like to see in the qualities of new staff coming to work in their home. The homes manager and members of the senior team have devised an induction process for the new members of staff who are currently being integrated into the staffing group.

The home is well maintained and now has a very smart garden shed called The “Spur” which acts as a video diary space for the young people. It also provides the young people with a relaxing and safe space where they able to hold Council meetings, in line with the therapeutic practice of “Holding the Space”. The young people and staff have undertaken a number of interesting events to raise money for charity, these have included a fancy dress event for Red Nose Day as part of the “Keep Calm and Say No to Bullying” and a coffee morning for MacMillan cancer. Both were very enjoyable events, and all of the young people participated in making cakes and other sweet treats which included a selection of Vegan goodies as one young person who lives at the home, follows a Vegan lifestyle.

Following all of the Reg.44 visits the home was judged to “effectively safeguard “young people and “promote the children’s well-being”

During the reporting period, three young people were admitted to the home and two young people were discharged.

The home has received seven recommendations following the Regulation44 visits. These are outlined in table one section four of the report.

The home had a full inspection from Ofsted on the 15th November 2016 it was judged to be Good in all three Key areas:

The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are.	Good The children’s home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.
How well children and young people are helped and protected.	Good
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers.	Good.

No Statutory Requirements were made, four recommendations were made, the homes manager has completed an action plan in respect of the recommendations that was submitted to Ofsted and the all recommendations have been actioned.

Councillors James Blackburn and Louise Farthing participated in the Regulation 44 visit to the home on the 5th October 2016.

3.2 Monument View

In this reviewing period the staff team has remained stable, with one member of staff having a period of maternity leave, this leave was covered by a relief member of staff known to the young people. The home has also recruited two relief staff to ensure consistency and continuity for the young people in the event of any staffing issues. The home is well maintained and there is a large area at the back of the home which contains a small holding, with an allotment, rabbits, Guinea pigs, geese, ducks, and chickens, there is also a large ornamental pond with fish and a number of Dovecotes. There have been a number of problems with regards to the doves causing mess to the roof and the back of the home, which has been cleaned with a power hose.

Currently the construction of a yurt is taking place to create a relaxing and safe area to hold a Council meeting, in line with the therapeutic practice of "Holding the Space". The young people have raised the funds and also designed the yurt. Two successful bids to the Council's Community Chest Fund, have been made, which entailed the young people having to complete an application and present in to a panel of 8 Councillors. This has had a positive impact and enabled among other things a path to be laid in the smallholding creating wheelchair access.

The young people have also raised £500 to help purchase materials for us to build a bigger fish tank for the home's giant Gourami "Bilbo", the aim is to involve young people in the building of the new fish tank.

Young people and staff have completed a charity cycle ride for the charity 'George's Journey' raising money for a young person who suffers from Muscular Dystrophy, over the time that the young people and staff have been supporting this charity they have raised a fantastic amount, amounting to over £18,000, this is on-going with another cycle ride planned for summer 2017. One young person who lives at the home is a very active member of the "Change Council" and has helped to organise the first ever Christmas Party for Children Looked After (CLA). Recently the home has been awarded a platinum anti-bullying award in recognition of its work in this area.

Following all of the Reg.44 visits the home was judged to "effectively safeguard young people and promote the children's well-being."

During the reporting two young people were admitted to the home and two young people discharged.

The home has received three recommendations following Reg.44 visits as outlined in the table section four of the report.

The home had a full inspection from Ofsted on the 27th June 2016 it was judged to be Outstanding in one and Good in the three Key areas:

The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are.	Outstanding The children's home provides highly effective services that consistently exceed the standard of good. The actions of the home contribute to significantly improved outcomes for children and young people who need help and care.
How well children and young people are helped and protected.	Good
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers.	Good.

No Statutory Requirements were made, 3 recommendations were made, the home's manager has completed an action plan in respect of the recommendations that was submitted to Ofsted and the all recommendations have been actioned.

The Portfolio Holder for Children's Services Cllr. Louise Farthing participated in the Reg. 44 visit to the home on the 10th October 2016.

3.3 Grasswell House

Prior to this reporting period, a member of the Senior team transferred to another home in the City and this vacancy was successfully filled by an internal candidate. In October a member of staff who had a 28hr per week post at the home retired, interviews took place in December and the successful candidate took up her post in January 2017. The young people were consulted around their opinions and views in what they would like to see in the qualities of new staff coming to work in their home. The participation and engagement officer worked with the young people to establish two questions that were asked during the interviewing process.

The home is well maintained throughout and it now has a large log cabin in the spacious back garden. This is used for a number of activities, there is a table tennis table and other games/activity equipment, the space is also used as a safe place in which to hold the therapeutic "Holding the Space" "Council" meetings. The home has recently had a new boiler installed which was much needed due reliability issues with the old one. The home is set in the ground, where a large Council building was also once stood, with access via a shared drive. Since this building was pulled down the surrounding grounds have not been well maintained. In particular the lighting has been an area of concern as this has caused difficulty for young people as they leave and return to the home as they use a shared driveway.

The staff members at the home have tried their best to keep this area of grass and concrete neat and tidy however it is a large area and it has proven impossible to maintain to a reasonable standard, which has led to the surrounding area looking dilapidated. During Cllr. Farthing's visit to the home, the homes manager raised these issues and Cllr. Farthing was able to put the manager in touch with the relevant contact to sort out these issues. The home made a successful bid to the Community Chest fund and the award is going toward helping to landscape the large gardens to the side and back of the home. Young people supported by staff

prepared the plans for the proposed landscaping and are looking forward to seeing them put into place.

A young person who lives at the home took part in the Tall Ships Race and stated that it was “fantastic and a life changing experience”. Other young people visited London to attend the Youth Parliament and one young person as part of his a member of stage and film school, gained a place as an extra in the film I, Daniel Blake, which also meant that he was invited to a special opening night showing at the Tyneside Cinema. Young people and staff took part in a charity fund raising event for the BBC Children in Need Appeal, they undertook a sponsored row challenge attempting to row the length of the Chanel on a rowing machine, much fun was had and a substantial donation was made to the charity.

Following all of the Reg.44 visits the home was judged to “effectively safeguard “young people and “promote the children’s well-being.

During the reporting four young people were admitted to the home and three young people discharged.

The home has received six recommendations following Reg.44 visits as outlined in the table section four of the report.

The home had a full inspection from Ofsted on the 2nd August 2016 it was judged to be Good in the three Key areas:

The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are.	Good The children’s home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.
How well children and young people are helped and protected.	Good
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers.	Good.

Two Statutory Requirements and four recommendations were made, the homes manger has completed an action plan in respect of the Statutory Requirements and recommendations, that was submitted to Ofsted and the all recommendations have been actioned.

Councillors Juliana Heron and Christine Marshall participated in the Reg. 44 visit to the home on the 3th October 2016.

The Portfolio Holder for Children’s Services Councillor Louise Farthing participated in the Reg. 44 visit to the home on the 7th December 2016.

3.4 Revelstoke Road

In this reporting period a senior member of staff has moved to another service within the Directorate, this post was filled by an existing member of the staff team, another member of staff has had his contract terminated in a mutual agreement. Two workers from the relief pool have been appointed to permanent part time posts and a

new full-time member of staff took up post in February 2017. By appointing the two relief workers and the internal promotion, continuity and constancy with regards to the care provided for the young people has been achieved.

The home is well maintained throughout and there has been a big push to ensure that young people have a choice of decoration, furnishings and fittings that they wish to have in their rooms. When a bedroom becomes vacant it is redecorated in neutral shades, with new furniture, which means that when a new young person moves into the room they have time to get used to their room and can begin to personalise it with help and support from their Link Worker. There has been some delay in refurbishing a large room to the back of the home on the ground floor, which is to provide a place for the young people and staff to spend quiet "chill out" time together and also to be used as a quiet space in which to hold the therapeutic "Holding the Space" "Council" meetings. The manager has been requested to complete this work via a recommendation following a recent Reg.44 visit and is to ensure that this work is completed as soon as possible.

Three young people have been very active in the Change Council and have been involved in a number of initiatives/activities, these have included attending the Youth Parliament in London, helping to make a DVD around post 18 provisions in the City and the organization of a Christmas Party for children looked after, at the Stadium of Light. Young people have also contributed very successfully to "in your shoes" training and the training for Elected Members. One young person who has now moved on from the home is currently employed as an apprentice with the Council, in the post of Participation and Engagement Officer. A young person took part in the Tall Ships Race sailing to Scandinavia; he stated it was "great, I would do it again anytime".

The young people were also instrumental in arranging and organizing a short break to Amsterdam, booking transport, accommodation and drawing up the holiday itinerary.

Following the Ofsted Full Inspection in August 2016 when the "Impact and Effectiveness of Home Managers" was judged to Require Improvement, work has been undertaken within the home by the manager to ensure that there is a robust and effective quality assurance structure in place, which includes members of the senior team to undertake their role within the quality systems within the home. The Strategic Service Manager has also been supporting the homes manager with this task. The Ofsted Full Inspection in August 2016 when the "Impact and Effectiveness of Home Managers" was judged to Require Improvement. The inspection report highlighted a number of areas that were found to be in need of improvement; in the main these were issues around having a robust and effective quality assurance structure in place, which includes members of the senior team undertaking their role within the quality systems. With regards to the manager the inspector has highlighted that he is now aware of the strengths and areas for development within the home, but continues to struggle to have an impact on the culture of the team. Work has been undertaken within the home, by the manager to ensure that improvements have been made to the quality assurance structure, which includes members of the senior team to undertake their role within the quality systems within the home, the appointment of a new senior member of staff has also strengthened this process and

has also created a more robust senior team, that will hopefully be able to have a positive impact on the culture within the team. The Strategic Service Manager has also been supporting the homes manager with these tasks via supervision and support of the homes manager.

Also highlighted was that staff needed to be more familiar with the Quality Standards and as a whole staff team it was found that a way to gain a better understanding of the Standards was for each week in the team meeting, a staff member to “adopt” a Standard, summarizing what was already being done in the home to meet the Standard and then the whole team were able to work together to ensure a more robust approach to improve on practice in the home. Alongside this work on an action plan, was put into place. Work on improvement in these areas is ongoing.

On-going monitoring, discussion and support is taking place with the manager and senior team in Reg.44 visits, updates are sought on progress, with feedback, advice and support being provided.

Following all of the Reg.44 visits the home was judged to “effectively safeguard “young people and “promote the children’s well-being.

During the reporting period four young people have been admitted to the home and four young people discharged.

The home has received 12 recommendations following Reg.44 visits as outlined in the table section four of the report.

The home had a full inspection from Ofsted on the 8 August 2016 it was judged as Requires Improvement in two Key areas and Inadequate in one Key area.

The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are.	Requires Improvement The children’s home is not yet delivering good help and care for children and young people. However, there are no serious or widespread failures that result in their welfare not being safeguarded or promoted.
How well children and young people are helped and protected.	Requires Improvement
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers.	Inadequate.

Five Statutory Requirements and no recommendations were made, the homes manger has completed an action plan in respect of the Statutory Requirements, that was submitted to Ofsted and the all recommendations have been actioned. (Some of these actions have been outlined above)

Councillor Victoria O’Neil participated in the Reg. 44 visit to the home on the 14th October 2016.

The Portfolio Holder for Children’s Services Councillor Louise Farthing participated in

the Reg. 44 visit to the home on the 9th November 2016.

3.5 Sea View Road West

In this reporting period, the staff team at the Short Breaks Unit for children with disabilities has remained stable with only one staffing change with a member of staff being granted a sabbatical period. Staff have completed the following training; Level 3 training and residential care for a relief member of staff, Level 5 diploma in leadership and Management is being progressed by 3 staff members.

The home is well maintained throughout; there have been some signs of wear and tear, notably in the homes bathrooms; the large bathroom, walk-in shower room and the carpet in the hallway. These areas have now been actioned; the large bathroom is to have new flooring fitted, a new carpet has been fitted throughout the hallway, a total refurbishment has been ordered for the walk-in shower room, these refurbishments when completed will greatly improve the appearance of the home. The home now has a number of "safe space" beds/pods, these are specialist pod type beds that offer a safe and calming area for children with special needs, they are especially effective in calming young people who are on the Autistic Spectrum, they have proven to be highly successful and it is reported that a number of parents have installed them in their children's bedrooms at home. ("Safe space" beds are endorsed by the British Institute of Learning Disability: BILD) The home also has a very well equipped sensory room and a large cinema room.

There is an extensive garden to the side of the home which is well maintained with an outdoor play area with wheelchair and bucket swings, at the rear of the home there is a greenhouse and the young people have cultivate a number of crops including strawberries and other soft fruits

The homes Ofsted Full inspection in November 2016; "the overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home" and "how well children and young people are helped and protected" were judged to "Require Improvement" and "the impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers" was judged to be "Inadequate"

The areas requiring improvement included leadership and management shortfalls. These related to the monitoring of records, auditing, the evaluation of young people's placement plans, risk assessments and support plans not being followed and managers not providing staff with practice guidance that supports young people's development. Following the issuing of the inspection report in January 2017, the manager has put in place a number of measures to ensure that the practice within the home is moving towards improvement.

The Manager has implemented measures to improve work around the Quality and Purpose of Care Standard; within staff supervision in, weekly staff meetings and there are now regular practice guidance sessions on an on-going. Alongside this staff have received training and professional guidance in the areas of understanding of the overall aims and objectives they seek to achieve for the children and young people in their care and understanding of how the homes statement and purpose needs are mirrored in the child's individual plans, and how best to identify and meet the area of need to guarantee, protect and promote each child's welfare.

Staff have been provided with guidance in how to complete a more robust risk assessment for each child, an audit system on each of the children's risk assessments has now been put in place by the manager, to ensure that the assessments are robust and identify ways to manage risks and ensure the children's safety and wellbeing are paramount. The staff team have been provided with practice guidance sessions to ensure that they fully understand the Care Planning Standard so that are able to carry out their role as Key Workers to ensure the best possible outcome for children and young people. Alongside this work an action plan, was put into place, work on improvement in these areas on-going

On-going monitoring, discussion and support is taking place with the manager and senior team in Reg.44 visits, updates are sought on progress, with feedback, advice and support being provided.

Following all of the Reg.44 visits the home was judged to "effectively safeguard "young people and "promote the children's well-being.

As this is a Short Breaks Unit young people are admitted to the home and discharged, on a regular basis.

The home has received 5 recommendations following Reg.44 visits as outlined in the section four of the report.

The home had a full inspection from Ofsted on the 23rd November 2016 it was judged as Requires Improvement in two Key areas and Inadequate in one Key area.

The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are.	Requires Improvement The children's home is not yet delivering good help and care for children and young people. However, there are no serious or widespread failures that result in their welfare not being safeguarded or promoted.
How well children and young people are helped and protected.	Requires Improvement
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers.	Inadequate.

5 Statutory Requirements and no recommendations were made, the homes manger has completed an action plan in respect of the Statutory Requirements, that was submitted to Ofsted and the all recommendations have been actioned. (Some of these actions have been outlined above)

Cllr. Graeme Miller participated in the Reg. 44 visit to the home on the 14th October 2016.

4 Recommendations:

Quality Standard	Grasswell House	Monument View	Revelstoke	Colombo	Sea View Road West
Quality and Purpose of Care	2	2	3	2	2
Children's Wishes and Views					
Enjoyment and Achievement					
Health and Wellbeing	1				
Positive Relationships			1	2	
Protection of Children	1		6*	1	2
Leadership and Management			2	2	
Care Planning	1	1			1

*These recommendations in the main related to recording within documents relating to the Protection of Children, not being completed correctly and robustly quality assured by the manager and senior team.

5 Key Messages:

- 5.1** All of our homes have had a Full Ofsted inspection in this reporting period, with one home gaining the judgment of outstanding in the key area of the overall progress and experience of children and young people living at the home. All of the homes are well maintained, are homely and provide safe and secure environments, for children and young people. The work with young people using the "Holding the Space" therapeutic "Council" meetings continues to grow and develop and is proving a valuable tool for promoting resilience and self-esteem in many young people.
- 5.2** Young people are encouraged and supported to lead active lifestyles and a number have taken part in very interesting activities such as; attending the Youth Parliament, taking part in the Tall Ships race, organizing a Christmas party for CLA across the city, a number of homes have helped and supported young people to help others, by organizing charity fund raising events. Quality assurance systems on the whole are in place across the homes, however leaders and managers need to ensure that this is robust, effective and sustainable. Managers and senior staff need to ensure that recommendations

that are made during the visits are fully acted upon, in a consistent manner, thus helping towards the imbedding of quality assurance systems across all of the homes the support and scrutiny of Elected Members, continues to add value and oversight to the visits.

6. Conclusion

- 6.1** The report has covered all five homes giving an update on Ofsted findings, and actions taken in respect of Statutory Requirements and Recommendations and a brief outline of achievements and activities within the homes.

Appendix 1 - 9 Quality Standards and Children's Homes Regulations and Guidance

- Quality and Purpose of Care
- Children's Wishes and Views
- Education
- Enjoyment and Achievement
- Health and Wellbeing
- Positive Relationships
- Protection of Children
- Leadership and Management
- Care Planning

Areas for Scrutiny:

- Are children effectively safeguarded in this home?
- Staff Actions are child centred
- Risks known, assessed, understood and responded to
- Plans are kept under regular review
- Issues anticipated

Also to be monitored the Impact and Effectiveness of Leaders and Managers:

- Does this Children's Home promote Well-being?
- Leadership is child centred
- Staff sufficiently trained, stable and competent, supervised and supported.
- Leaders and managers actively and regularly monitor the quality of care provided
- Know systems, strengths and weaknesses and take action if needed
- Work in partnership.

Independent Visitors must be able to:

- Relate to children in the home
- Assess all relevant information
- Form an impartial judgment about the quality of the homes care.

