

Report of the Deputy Director (Children's Social Care) to the meeting of the Corporate Parenting Panel to be held on 26th April 2017

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Subject:

Update of Elected Member Independent Monitoring and Quality Assurance of Children's Homes, Regulation 44 and Inspection Outcomes.

Summary statement:

The report aims to update on the number of Independent Monitoring visits of Children's Local Authority Residential Children's Homes completed with the additional support and scrutiny of Elected Member.

The report also aims to update with regards the overall outcomes of inspection judgements following completion of all statutory Interim Inspections by Ofsted.

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Portfolio:

Children's Services

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Overview & Scrutiny Area:

Children's Services



1. SUMMARY

The report aims to update on the number of Independent Monitoring visits of Children's Local Authority Residential Children's Homes completed with the additional support and scrutiny of Elected Member.

The report also aims to update with regards the overall outcomes of inspection judgements following completion of all statutory Interim Inspections by Ofsted.

2. BACKGROUND

2.1 The report reflects on the number of Elected Member Monitoring visits completed between April 2016 – March 2017 and the efforts to promote participation by Elected Members in completing Independent Monitoring Visits (Regulation 44), in line with the Children's Homes Regulations, Quality Standards Guide and the inspection framework for Ofsted, which came into force on the 1st April 2015.

3. REPORT ISSUES

3.1 Independent monitoring of children's homes is a regulatory requirement which requires the Independent Person to visit each of the LA 11 children's home at least once a month. The Children's Homes Regulations (CHR) 2015 set specific requirements for the independent monitoring and quality assurance of children's homes which includes;

- To interview in private; the children, their parents, relatives and persons working at the home as the independent person requires;
- Inspect the premises of the home;
- Inspect the home's records (except for a child's case records, unless the child and the child's placing authority consent) as the independent person requires.

3.2 The purpose of the independent monitoring is to offer oversight, scrutiny within the home and for the Independent Person to form and opinion as to whether:

- Children are effectively safeguarded
- The conduct of the home promotes children's wellbeing

3.3 The process of independent monitoring is to ensure there is a rigorous and robust approach which provides an overview of the running of the home. The report captures areas of good practice which demonstrates compliance with Children's Homes Regulations and Guide to Quality Standards. The independent person's report may identify areas for improvements and make recommendation or requirements with timescales within which the registered person must consider whether or not to take those actions.

3.4 The Independent Persons Regulation 44 Reports follow internal processes which ensure the following individuals have oversight of information and identified recommendations / requirements to ensure action is completed:

- Service Managers
- Group Service Manager / Responsible Individual

The role of Elected Members within Regulation 44

- 3.5 The LA aims to comply with legislation which sets out the statutory requirements for the roles of responsibilities for the Director of Children’s Services and the Lead Member for Looked after Children covering both social care and education. Legislation notes that the Leader Members and Corporate Parents have a particular responsibility for vulnerable children who are looked after. Internal processes are in place, which invite Corporate Parents to participate in Regulation 44 visits to children’s home on three occasions within any one year.
- 3.6 The aim being for Corporate Parenting Councillor to demonstrate that they are interested in and listen to their views and wishes of Looked After Children and Care Leavers. Through participation in Regulation 44 visits of residential children’s home’s Corporate Parents are able to establish good working relationships with staff within the homes and feel confident that the staff will provide an honest view of the service recognising the strengths of the service / home / staff team whilst being confident enough to recognise the areas of development to improve the home / service.
- 3.7 The process of independent monitoring remains consistent and provides Corporate Parents with the opportunity to form a judgement in relation to the “Quality of Care” delivered to children based on a range of evidence sources including the views of children in the home. For members undertaking visits to children’s homes (Independent Monitoring Regulation 44 Visits) the role is more extensive and as previously noted requires members to be informed of the following:
- Are the right structures and systems in place in order for BMDC to be an effective Corporate Parent and are all the right partners involved?
 - Current (and proposed) government expectations regarding the service to looked after children and care leavers
 - Know how well BMDC is doing in comparison with other councils and our own past performance
 - Know if there sound mechanisms within BMDC for hearing and responding to the views of:
 - looked after children and care leavers / parents / carers
 - Have a good picture of which needs we are meeting and which we are failing to meet?
 - Know if there is an action plan across the council and involving partner agencies the service and to ensure it responds to changing needs?
 - Know what our looked after children and care leavers think about the service we are providing.
- 3.8 Overview of participation for the last three year period reflects a picture, which demonstrates there has been some participation in the review of the quality of care by Corporate Parents.

Three Year Overview of Elected Member Visits		
Apr 2014 – Mar 2015	Apr 2015 – Mar 2016	Apr 2016 – Mar 2017
6 visits completed By Elected Members	13 visits completed by Elected Members	15 visits completed by Elected Members

3.9 Following implementation of recommendations noted at the previous Corporate Parent Panel (January 2017) in relation to the process for planning and inviting Elected Member to participate in independent monitoring Regulation 44 visits, it is noted that there has been a significant increase in participation levels.

2016 – 2017 - One Year Breakdown of Elected Member Visits		
Apr 2016 – Dec 2016	Jan 2017 – Mar 2017	Apr 2016 – Mar 2017
5 visits completed by Elected Members	10 visits completed by Elected Members	15 visits completed by Elected Members

Ofsted Inspection Outcome

3.10 Bradford offers a diverse and varied range of service provision for looked after children and young people, delivered across the eleven residential and respite homes in the area including; emergency, short / medium and long term residential care as well as specialist provisions for children with complex health and disabilities.

3.11 All homes have completed their **Full Inspections** and **Interim Inspections** for the 2016 – 2017 inspection year. The overall picture reflects in the main a positive outcome with homes demonstrating progression in their quality of care and service delivery. At this time we have; one home being judged as Outstanding, eight homes being judged as Good and two homes being judged to Require Improvement following the full inspection.

Overview of Outcome from Full Inspection For The Last Three Years		
2014 – 2015	2015 – 2016	2016 – 2017
Inadequate = 0% Requires Improvement = 0% Good = 73% Outstanding = 27%	Inadequate = 0 Requires Improvement = 9% Good = 82% Outstanding = 9%	Inadequate = 0% Requires Improvement = 18% Good = 73% Outstanding = 9%

3.12 Following completion of Interim Inspections we have six homes judged as sustained effectiveness and four homes improving effectiveness. This is a positive picture of the quality of care and provision of service to the children accessing the service within the residential and respite home.

Overview Of Outcome From Interim Inspection For The Last Three Years		
2014 – 2015	2015 – 2016	2016 – 2017
Declined effectiveness=18.2% Sustained Effectiveness=63.6% Improved Effectiveness=18.2%	Declined Effectiveness=30% Sustained Effectiveness=50% Improved Effectiveness=20% Willows were not scheduled to receive an interim inspection	Declined Effectiveness = 0% Sustained Effectiveness = 60% Improved Effectiveness = 40% First Avenue were not scheduled to receive an interim inspection

3.13 The homes are preparing for the change in Ofsted’s Inspection framework following the introduction of the “Social Care Common Inspection Framework in April 2017”.

4. OPTIONS

None.

5. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

None.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Quality Standards Manager (Regulation 44) identify and circulate dates to better support the planning and scheduling of Elected Member visits to the residential and respite homes.

7. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

None.

8. NOT FOR PUBLICATION DOCUMENTS

None.

9. APPENDICES

Appendix 1

- Overview of Outcomes Following **Full Inspection** of Bradford Residential & Respite Children’s Homes
- Overview of Outcomes Following **Interim Inspection** of Bradford Residential & Respite Children’s Homes