



DERBY CITY COUNCIL

CORPORATE PARENTING JOINT SUB-COMMISSION 6 SEPTEMBER 2005

Report of the Director of Social Services

Inspection and Management Visits to Children's Homes

RECOMMENDATION

- 1.1 To note the contents of this report.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Inspections

- 2.1 The Children's Homes Regulations 2001 required children's homes to be inspected by a Regulatory Inspector of the Commission for Social Care Inspection, which is the regulatory body responsible for registering homes. Inspectors carry out at least one inspection a year and make additional visits from time to time if necessary. They write a report of their visit which contains requirements and recommendations for the Registered Provider (the Council) to act on. The Registered Provider responds to the findings and produces an Action Plan. Inspections are based on National Minimum Standards for Children's Homes which are grouped to reflect the five outcomes for children defined in Every Child Matters.
- 2.2 Inspections have been carried out at Moorfield on the 4 January 2005, Vicarage Road on the 19-21 January, Coronation Avenue on the 31 January, Bute Walk on the 4 March and 15 June and Queensferry Gardens on the 6 June. There has been no inspection at Cricklewood Road since the last report to members.
- 2.3 The most recent inspection of each home found that, out of thirty five standards, Coronation Avenue failed to meet five, Cricklewood Road two, Vicarage Road one and Moorfield and Queensferry Gardens none. When inspected in March Bute Walk failed to meet 16 standards. The written report of the June inspection had not been received at the time of writing.
- 2.4 The inspection at Coronation Avenue found that standards had improved and progress had been made since the last inspection. The inspection at Bute Walk in January also noted positive developments to address staffing issues and progress made towards meeting all the requirements. Verbal feedback from the June inspection at Bute Walk is that the new management and staff team have made very good progress and standards have improved significantly.

- 2.5 Some of the shortfalls applied across the service and have been addressed by the department. A new policy on the administration of medicines has been written and staff have received the necessary training. A children's guide has been published which will give children information they need when they move into a home, including guidance on the complaints and representations procedure. The complaints and representations procedure itself is being updated and staff guidance and training is also being revised. CRB checks have now been carried out on all staff and we have improved the vetting and induction of temporary staff. Changes have been made to the training programme to include all the subjects specified in the standards. Finally, there has been close co-operation between Social Services and Property Services to ensure that buildings are maintained to the required standard.

Management Visits

- 2.6 Regulation 33 of the Children's Homes Regulations 2001 requires Homes to be visited once a month by a representative of the Registered Provider who is not involved in the day to day management of the home and a report of the visit to be written. These visits are carried out by Service Managers, Heads of Service or their equivalents from all sections of Children's Services.
- 2.7 Issues covered by management visitors include:
- The physical condition of the building inside and out
 - The daily life of the home as portrayed in the daily log
 - The use of formal sanctions and their appropriateness
 - Comments of the children and staff
 - Interaction between the children and staff
 - Arrangements for health care and education
 - How children are cared for and how behaviour is dealt with
 - Complaints, compliments or comments
 - Care plans
 - How staff are trained, supported and consulted
- 2.8 All but three of the 56 visits required between January and July 2005 have been completed.
- 2.9 The overwhelming majority of visitors provided very positive reports of their visits and no serious concerns were raised. Minor issues have been addressed by the homes managers and service managers. The most common criticism concerns the institutional style of the buildings and the time taken to carry out repairs and maintenance and replace furniture

IMPLICATIONS

Financial

- 1.1 Each Children's Home is subject to an annual fee for registration with the Commission for Social Care inspection.

Legal

- 2.1 National Minimum Standards are based on the legal requirements of the Children's Homes Regulations 2001. The Commission for Social Care Inspection has power to withdraw registration from Registered Providers or Homes which fail to satisfy legal requirements.

Personnel

- 3.1 Homes Managers are required to be registered by the Commission and are assessed before they are registered. Other staff are required to hold a minimum qualification.

Equalities impact

- 4.1 Standards require services to be provided which meet the needs of individuals arising from their gender, disability, religious, racial, cultural or linguistic background or sexual orientation. The Home is required to have appropriate policies and procedures and to provide training for staff on these issues.

Corporate objectives and priorities for change

- 5.1 Children's Homes support the Council's and Derby City Partnership's objectives:
- A stimulating and high quality learning environment
 - Healthy, safe and independent communities
 - A prosperous, vibrant and successful economy
 - A shared commitment to regenerating communities.