

Report sponsor: Suanne Lim, Director of Early Help and Children's Social Care
Report author: Sharon Green, Head of Service Children in Residential Care

Inspection and Monitoring of Children's Homes

Purpose

- 1.1 To provide the Corporate Parenting Committee with an overview of Derby City Council's Children Residential Homes internal and external inspections.
- 1.2 Children's Homes are regulated and inspected by **Ofsted** as required by the Care Standards Act 2000. Inspections are based on the Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015 and Quality Standards. Every Children's Home is inspected at least twice a year, receiving one full and one interim inspection.
- 1.3 *Under the framework, judgements are made on:*
 - Overall progress and experiences of children and young people
 - How well children and young people are helped and protected
 - Impact and effectiveness of leaders and Managers
- 1.4 They judge the home according to a four point scale:
 - **Outstanding**
 - **Good**
 - **Requires improvement**
 - **Inadequate**
- 1.5 **Regulation 44** of the Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015 requires each Home to be visited by an employee of the organisation not directly concerned with the conduct of the home and a report to be written. Visits are carried out by an independent visitor who has been employed by the Service. Reports of the visits are sent to Homes Managers who respond to any recommendations. The reports are circulated to Ofsted, the Responsible Individual, Senior Managers and Democratic Services.
- 1.6 **Elected Members** carry out periodic visits to children's homes to monitor the quality of care and the welfare of children and young people. Visits fall within members' corporate parenting responsibilities.

After each visit members report on their observations and recommendations and members are informed of actions taken as a result.

Recommendation(s)

- 2.1 To note the content of the report, as inspections are a key element of the regulatory function in relation to Children's Homes. Management visits are a statutory requirement.
- 2.2 To note the content of the report as a Corporate Parent.

Reason(s)

- 3.1 Children Residential Homes are inspected at regular intervals by independent Regulation 44 Inspectors, Ofsted and Members. The inspection report provides the Service and the Homes Managers with information to support appropriate changes to be made that will enhance a young person experience whilst in our care.
- 3.2 Ofsted judgements are made with regard to what measurable progress has been evidenced towards children achieving their potential and are how they are helped to do so.

Supporting information:

- 4.1 Overview of the Ofsted inspections and Monitoring Visits that have taken place since February 2021 – 2022.
- 4.2 The Children Residential Homes are inspected usually at least twice a year, receiving one full and one interim inspection. Where a Home is judged to be 'inadequate', notification is issued to the Home with a timescale given to undertake the actions

Ofsted Inspection Outcomes:

Home	Inspection Type	Date	Judgement
Home A	Full Inspection	19 October 2021	Requires improvement to be good
	Interim Inspection	21 March 2022	Sustained effectiveness
Home B	Full Inspection	9 November 2021	Good
Home C	Full	14 September 2021	Requires Improvement to be Good
	Interim Inspection	1 December 2021	Sustained Effectiveness
Home D*	Temp closed		No Judgement
Home E	Full	19 May 2021	Good

*No inspections have taken place at this Home, as the Home is temporarily closed

- 4.3 Ofsted Inspections had previously identified that placement matching of young people needed to improve across the Service, whilst this has vastly improved, it should be noted that there has been a need to place one young person in a Home under direction since the last reporting period. This was an emergency referral following external placement breakdown and no other option being available nationally.

Ordinarily, placement matching is supported and results following a young person's presenting needs are matched into a vacancy within a Residential alongside the needs of the other young people and children who are already placed within the Home. Where there are Homes located on one site, there is an expectation that placement matching will take into consideration the presenting needs of all young people resident across the whole site. The Manager of the Home is expected to undertake all considerations when making a decision as whether to accept a placement or not.

- 4.4 **Staff resources** – recruitment and retention of staff has continued to be a challenge over the last two years', initially due to the pandemic and then a national sufficiency crisis relating to reduced Residential Childcare Workers (RCCW) and managers.

Those who had left their chosen careers due to being furloughed or made redundant, applied for roles working within the social care sectors. However, once sectors

returned during recovery, for example hospitality, those staff that had come into the childcare sector, made decisions to return to their previous careers leaving shortfalls in staffing levels. The Service has experienced staffing churn at all levels resultant from retirement, seeking alternative opportunities, change in lifestyle brought about from the pandemic.

Management recruitment and retention has been particularly affected with two Homes having seen management changes both at Deputy and Manager level during the last year. A proportion of Managers were recruited via Agency, but retention has not been sustained.

In response, the Service has undertaken a market rate comparison of pay across the sector and secured comparable salaries for critical posts. The Service has been working strategically on recruitment and retention, looking at multiple platforms to recruit residential childcare workers and managers including Radio Derby, Facebook, LinkedIn, Derby Hub, Leaflets, Banners, Local Magazines, Council Jobs page and various social media sites.

A further change was made to the recruitment process to allow potential candidates to put forward a curriculum vitae. This has had a positive impact and allowed greater exploration at the interview stage of potential candidate's experience, values and attitudes

The quality of care and support has not been affected by the staff shortfalls. Close liaison is maintained with Ofsted and senior management to ensure alternative arrangements and baseline staffing was in place as per the Homes' Statement of Purpose. Where wider Early Help and Children's Social Care or Agency staff are used, risk assessments are in place to mitigate.

- 4.5 **Training** - The Service has received training virtually over the last year due to the pandemic. Staff were able to attend training and receive online support. The Training Team have supported the Service to ensure all required mandatory training was delivered. Physical intervention training has been identified that will be delivered in person.

The staff and manager induction programme and training has been tailored to ensure that those entering into the profession, feel supported throughout their learning and working in the Home over a longer period of time. Staff then progress onto Apprenticeships Level 4. This allows greater numbers to complete their learning at differing points, thus supporting them within their roles at an earlier opportunity

- 4.6 **Education** - The Homes Managers and Head of Service holds regular meetings with the Virtual School leads and Headteacher each month. Where a young person or child chooses not to engage in education, support is put into place by the staff and the Virtual School leads of that Home to work with the young person on alternative vocational activities.

There has been success with 2 of our young people being supported to:

- Secure an Apprenticeship with a large organization
- Being supported to construct a Go Kart

The majority of our children and young people are participating in education

The Service will once again be rolling out education support during the Summer led by the Virtual School, for all staff and Managers. This is a change from having an individual 'Education Champion' across each Home and will mean that support can be provided by any member of staff to any young person or child within the Home at any point rather than just the Keyworker for that young person.

- 4.7 **Health** - Young people are actively encouraged and supported to attend health appointments when due with most attending.

The areas of Health and Education are audited by Ofsted during inspections.

Elected Members Visits:

- 5.1 There were two Elected Member visits undertaken in February 2022. Some visits were difficult to effect due to outbreaks of Covid within particular Homes. Training was provided to support Members to undertake their visits.

Home A:

The Cabinet Members for both Adult and Children Services, Cllr Williams and Cllr Webb attended at this Home in February 2022.

Their report highlighted that Covid had been challenging for the staff as well as the young people.

One young person identified that they were interested in an Apprenticeship, which the Cllrs gave the Home details of how to contact Derby Homes to arrange.

Overall the report was very positive about this Home.

Home C:

Cllr Lind and Cllr Care visited this Home.

Priorities for the Home to consider highlighted the Home's vehicle as a potential barrier to young people attending education due to the make and size (People Carrier). The Service has been exploring the purchasing of a new vehicle. The Home has used taxis in to ensure that the young people could attend their education facilities.

The front and back garden was identified as an area for development. The Home has invested in hanging baskets and planters for the front area, with plans being developed with the young people and staff to transform the back garden into a more appealing space.

Regulation 44 Visits:

- 6.1 Regulation 44 Visits have fully resumed to on site monthly visits.
- 6.2 **Home A:** No major issues were identified. The Home recruited an interim Manager in 2022 after a previous interim Manager left. Staff development, mainly Supervisions were cited as an area for improvement. Given staffing shortages with interim Managers covering shifts has meant that supervisions were delayed for some staff. This has improved with a new Deputy and interim Manager in place.

- 6.4 **Home B:** No major issues were identified. This Home saw a change in management with the Manager leaving and the Deputy covering the interim vacancy. Staffing levels have been a challenge and the interim manager has when needed, been required to cover shifts. Supervisions have experienced delay and was a feature throughout Regulation 44 inspections. Ofsted have recognised during their inspection that staff communication was acceptable in that everyone worked cohesively to deliver the best care and support in the circumstances.
- 6.5 **Home C:** This Home saw a change in the management during the last year, with two Managers and two Deputy changes as well as reduced staffing. Supervisions, recordings and staff development have been areas for improvement. The Home now has a new Manager in place and a Deputy due to start. Senior managers are confident that with support, the Home will be in a position to progress these areas and have put plans into place to address.
- 6.6 **Home D:** This Home has been temporarily closed since January 2020. Regulation 44 reports are submitted in relation to the décor and grounds. Work is ongoing with regards to the recruitment of staff and management to ensure that the Home can be reopened as soon as practical.
- 6.7 **Home E:** No major issues were identified. This Home also experienced management changes and reduced staffing numbers. The Manager had an absence of Deputies for a period of time which is now resolved. Key areas of improvement resolved has been to address medication errors with compliant practice now embedded, over seen by establishment of shift leaders that are accountable for specific actions.
- 6.8 Managers are expected to identify remedial actions via an Action Plan where issues are picked up on a regulation 44 Visit.
- 6.9 The actions taken in response to Regulation 44 visits are complimented by monthly Regulation 45 monitoring by the Manager, and are overseen by the Deputy Head of Service.

- 7.1 Young people and Children are consulted, with a view to ascertaining their wishes and feelings. This is recorded in their Care Plans, Liquid Logic (LCS) recording and young people's log of meetings. All concerns are recorded and responded to.
- 7.2 Young people and Children are also encouraged to attend the Children in Care Council meetings, with some of the young people and children attending online due to restrictions that were in place. There are plans to reintroduce the meetings in person for all young people and children. Attending these meetings allows young people to make their views known about their Home and care.
- 7.3 Young people and children have the opportunity to complete a Point in Time (PIT) survey which is distributed by Ofsted. Staff encourage young people and children to complete these by offering incentives. Where any concerns are raised, these are reported back to the Service to investigate/respond to.
- 7.4 Young people and Children also have independent advocacy support who act on their behalf, enabling them to raise concerns from someone who is not associated with the Home they live in.

Other options

- 8.1 None

Financial and value for money issues

- 9.1 The average cost of a placement within a Derby's Children's Residential Home, has increased due to the lack of staff, 'holding' placements to avoid placement breakdown and use of Agency/internal Children Service support costs where required for cover both vacancies/where risks identified under safeguarding.

Legal implications

- 10.1 Children's residential Homes are regulated by Ofsted and are required to comply with National Minimum Standards.

Other significant implications

- 11.1 None

This report has been approved by the following people:

Role	Name	Date of sign-off
Legal	Olu Idowu, Head of Legal	11 July 2022
Finance	Janice Hadfield, Head of Finance	11 July 2022
Service Director(s)	Suanne Lim, Director Early Help and Children's Social Care	06 July 2022
Report sponsor		
Other(s)		

Background papers:
List of appendices: