



DERBY CITY COUNCIL

CORPORATE PARENTING SUB-COMMISSION

11 DECEMBER 2007

Report of the Corporate Director for Children & Young People

Issues of Concern Arising from Ofsted Inspections of Children's Homes

RECOMMENDATION

- 1.1 That members note the contents of the report.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 2.1 The Children's Homes Regulations 2001 require children's homes to be inspected by a regulatory inspector of the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted), which is 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, and a sixth category, organisation. Each of these areas receives an inspection judgement, and the overall service receives an inspection judgement, as follows:

Outstanding: this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality
Good: this aspect of the provision is strong
Satisfactory: this aspect of the provision is sound
Inadequate: this aspect of the provision is not good enough.

Inspections have been carried out at Moorfield on 21 June and 11 October 2007.
Bute Walk on 21 May and 3 October 2007, Cricklewood Road on 14 June 2007.
Coronation Avenue on 10 July 2007 and Queensferry Gardens on 4 July 2007.

2.2 Key inspection of Queensferry Gardens, 4 July 2007

The overall judgement was outstanding. The only issue raised was that the drive was uneven and had loose chippings.

2.3 Key inspection of Moorfield, 21 June 2007

The home was rated inadequate overall and notice was given to improve, although two areas were rated good and two satisfactory. The areas rated inadequate were 'Protecting Children from Harm and Neglect and Helping them Stay Safe' and 'Achieving Economic Well-being'. Issues raised under protecting children were:

- It was recorded in the daily log that a girl had said she wanted to make a

complaint but no one had acted on this. After the inspection her complaint was investigated and responded to. She accepted the response and no further action was necessary.

- A 12 year old boy was restrained to prevent him leaving the home when there was no record of evidence that he was at risk. The manager's response was that staff were right to prevent him leaving because of his age and the time of day (it was 11.00 PM) and because he had been admitted that same day on an Interim Care Order. He further explained that the boy had not been restrained but accepted that the record did not make this clear.
- Young people who had caused disruption during the night were prevented from sleeping the following day. The staff had dealt with challenging behaviour during the night until 6.30 AM when the group of young people involved decided to go to bed. Staff did not allow them into their rooms, fearing that they would barricade themselves in and sleep through the day. The manager accepted this was an error of judgement made by fatigued staff and the young people should have been allowed to sleep until 9.00 AM.
- The external door of one of the units was found to be locked during the day. Staff had explained that the door was locked to protect the residents and prevent young people from other units entering. The manager accepted that the door had remained locked after the immediate risk had passed but explained that staff would open the door on request to allow residents to leave if safe to do so.
- Fire doors with broken door closers were propped open.

Issues raised under economic well-being were:

- Hazards caused by defects were not repaired quickly enough.

The Centre Manager and Head of Service met the inspector and team leader to discuss their findings and respond to them. An action plan covering all the requirements and recommendations was put in place.

2.4 Random inspection of Moorfield, 11 October 2007

Overall the home was judged to have improved and responded well to the requirements and recommendations made in June, all of which had been complied with. Only minor issues were raised. Owing to Ofsted protocol, there can be no change made to Moorfield's overall judgement until the next key inspection.

2.5 Random Inspection of Bute Walk, 21 May 2007

The overall judgement was good, although this was not a full inspection. The main issues raised concerned the need for decoration and maintenance.

2.6 Key inspection of Bute Walk, 3 October 2007

The overall judgement was satisfactory. Within that, three areas were judged to be good and three satisfactory. Issues raised under protecting children were:

- A girl had alleged that a bruise on her arm had been caused when she was being escorted from a room by staff. She had said she wished to make a complaint to the Police but although the matter had been considered under safeguarding procedures, she had not spoken to the Police. The complaint was thoroughly investigated under child protection procedures. It was concluded that there was insufficient evidence that staff had acted inappropriately and a strategy meeting was not called. The young woman accepted this outcome. Nevertheless, the inspector was critical of behaviour management practice and recording as well as the handling of the girl's complaint.
- A staff member whose clothes had been damaged by a girl, deducted an amount from her pocket money by way of reparation.
- The above issues were not identified by the regulation 33 visitor
- The issues of repairs and decorating were raised again and the inspector found the arrangements for maintenance and repairs to be unsatisfactory. The living environment was said to be poor.

Under the heading 'Organisation' the inspector raised the high turnover of staff and use of agency staff. The actual turnover of staff was not as high as the inspector had thought and vacant posts are now being filled. The report also stated that there had been no regulation 33 visits in July or August. This was inaccurate as there had in fact been a visit on 31 July.

2.7 Key inspection of Cricklewood Road, 14 July 2007

The overall judgement was satisfactory. Issues raised were:

- Practice in relation to storage and recording of medicines
- Safekeeping of children's confidential records
- The need to regularly update child protection training
- Problems with self-closing fire doors
- The home was poorly maintained and needed decorating
- Carpets and furniture needed replacing
- Various parts of the home needed cleaning
- There were not enough staff on some shifts

The manager met the inspector to discuss and respond to these issues and an action plan was put in place. All of the requirements and recommendations have been acted on.

2.8 Key inspection of Coronation Avenue, 10 July 2007

The overall judgement was good and one area was judged to be outstanding. The only issue raised was that the kitchen needed refurbishing. This will be done shortly.

For more information contact:	Keith Woodthorpe, 01332 711240, keith.woodthorpe@derby.gov.uk
Background papers:	
List of appendices:	Appendix 1 - Implications

Appendix 1

IMPLICATIONS

Financial

- 1.1 Certain issues like maintenance and staffing levels directly affect and are affected by budget restrictions

Legal

- 2.1 Ofsted has the power to close down homes which do not meet minimum standards

Personnel

- 3.1 None

Equalities impact

- 4.1 This service responds to the needs of some of the most vulnerable young people for whom we have a responsibility. Inspections give due regard to the equalities issues and help to ensure that practice takes full account of young peoples' diverse needs.

Corporate objectives and priorities for change

- 5.1 Children's homes promote the five outcomes for children which form the basis of the objectives of the Children and Young Peoples' Plan

