

Report sponsor: Suanne Lim, Service Director  
Early Help and Children's Social Care  
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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. Some visits are carried out by an independent visitor from outside of the Council. The rest are done by Managers in the Children and Young People's Directorate, who are completely independent of the Homes and have no involvement with young people placed in them. Reports of the visits are sent to Homes Managers who respond to any recommendations. The reports are circulated to Ofsted, Responsible 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.

- 1.7 **Assurance Visits** have been undertaken in line with new guidance issued from September 2020 in relation to the Covid-19 situation. These have replaced the full and interim inspections during the pandemic. The visits are undertaken over a 2 day period, with information requested within a specified time period on day 1, with a follow up inspection undertaken on day 2.

The visits provide Ofsted assurance that vulnerable children are getting help, care and protection that they need. It also focuses on leadership and managers, the quality of professional practice and the impact on children and young people's lives. **No graded judgement is made** however, Ofsted sets out what is going well and what needs to improve.

### **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 reports 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 The Children Residential Homes are inspected usually at least twice a year, receiving one full and one interim inspection. However due to COVID-19 Ofsted have revised their visiting in line with safety. There have been 4 visits undertaken by Ofsted over the past 12 months, 2 virtually/physically and 2 physical.

Home	Inspection Type	Date	Judgement
Home A	Assurance Visit	16 September 2020	No Judgement Given (Previous Inspection – Requires Improvement to be good)
Home B	Assurance Visit	30 September 2020	No Judgement Given (Previous Inspection – Good)
Home C	Full Inspection	16 July 2019	Good
Home D	N/A closed		
Home E*	Full	14 May 2019	Good

### Ofsted Inspection Outcomes:

\* No inspections have taken place since this date

**Ofsted Inspections** identified that placement matching of young people needed to improve across the Service. **Placement matching** is where a young person is matched into a vacancy within a Residential Home by taking into consideration the presenting 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.

It should be noted that as a Corporate Parent, placement matching may be a challenge due to the need to accommodate a young person or child where there is a placement breakdown resulting in an emergency referral being made to internal residential due to no other option being available at the point of the referral being made.

Placement matching is now being undertaken to ensure where possible, that all referrals are effectively matched against the needs of other young people and children. This will support our children and young people's needs to be identified and responded to appropriately.

**Staff resources** – recruitment of staff has also proved to be a challenge over the last year due to the pandemic. The Service has been on a rolling recruitment programme, with virtual interviews taking place where required to comply with Government guidelines and risk assessments in place.

**Covid-19** has also clearly impacted on **education** for our young people due to the Schools closures initially, lack of motivation to engage differently, shielding/self-isolating and lack of laptops to enable some young people within the Homes to access learning via Skype. Virtual meetings were held with Virtual School leads and with all the Homes Managers, to ensure that regular updates and advice were received to enable young people and children to access remote learning/support. IT was an initial issue, due to insufficient laptops and IT connectivity within some of the Homes, however new laptops were sourced and IT issues addressed, enabling those young people to engage where they could/would. There has been better engagement over the past few months with education for most of the young people.

### **Elected Members Visits:**

- 5.1 There were no Member visits undertaken during the past 12 months due to COVID-19. However, a cohort of Members have been specially trained and will resume visits as soon as it is safe to do so.

### **Regulation 44 Visits:**

- 6.1 In relation to Regulation 44 Visits, temporary measures were taken in line with Government guidelines and Ofsted in respect of the amending of regulations with regards to Regulation 44 visits. In June 2020, a decision was taken to restrict non-essential visits to all Children's Homes, and to undertake the visits virtually. This was to ensure that the Regulation 44 visits were maintained, albeit in a virtual format, and an oversight maintained throughout during the pandemic.
- 6.2 Regulation 44 visits were usually undertaken by Managers from across Children and Young People's Directorate, however given the workload of those Managers and the pressures within those Service areas, a decision was taken to utilise the Children's Residential Care Service's Regulation 44 Visitor to undertake the visits.
- 6.3 **Home A:** No major issues were identified. The recording of information has been highlighted as an issue, which is ongoing. The Home has had new staff, and training has had to be reviewed and delivered differently, which was an issue due to lack of IT initially. IT is still being rolled out to staff. Young people's meetings have not always taken place, which was impacted by Covid over the past few months and the lack of engagement by some to attend a meeting. The Manager is aware of the need to be creative in capturing young people's views.
- 6.4 **Home B:** No major issues were identified. Record keeping was however identified as an issue. The Manager is aware of the need to keep accurate records and to fully complete where necessary, detailing all relevant information. Young people's consultations were identified as needing to improve in relation to getting their feedback and views on risk assessments for example. Additional staff training for substance misuse was highlighted, with discussions having taken place with the Training and Development Team.
- 6.5 **Home C:** This Home was reopened in September 2020 with a new Management Team in place and a mixture of experienced and new staff. No major issues have been identified.

6.6 **Home D:** This Home is scheduled to re-open in April 2021

6.7 **Home E:** No major issues were identified. Record keeping has been identified as needing to be regularly audited in relation to signing and dating. Placement Plans were also identified in respect of identifying key areas of work. Ensuring a consistent approach with behaviour management was another area that required action to be taken by the Home. The Home is developing an Action Plan to ensure that all areas that have been identified as a concern on a Reg 44 visit, is fully addressed.

6.8 The actions taken in response to Regulation 44 visits are complimented by monthly in depth Regulation 45 monitoring by the Manager, and are overseen by the Deputy Head of Service.

### **Public/stakeholder engagement**

- 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, however given Covid-19, the format was changed to reflect the new Government guidelines. Attending these meetings allows young people to make their views known about their Home and care.
- 7.3 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, compares favourably with similar placements in other local authorities and the independent sector.

### **Legal implications**

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

### **Climate implications**

- 11.1 None

### **Other significant implications**

12.1 None

This report has been approved by the following people:

Role	Name	Date of sign-off
Legal Finance Service Director(s) Report sponsor	Suanne Lim, Service Director Early Help & Children's Social Care	05.02.21
Other(s)		

Background papers: List of appendices:
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