

Inspection and Management Visits to Children's Homes

RECOMMENDATION

1. To note the contents of this report.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Inspections

- 2.1 The Children's Homes Regulations 2001 require children's homes to be inspected by a regulatory inspector of Ofsted, 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 The purpose of inspection is to assure children, young people, parents, the public, local authorities and government of the quality and standard of the service provided. Inspections are carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000. Reports detail the main strengths and any areas for improvement identified during the inspection. The judgements included in the report are made in relation to the outcomes for children set out in the Children Act 2004 and the relevant National Minimum Standards for the service.

- 2.3 Inspection judgements are given 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

- 2.4 Inspections have been carried out at Cricklewood Road on 28 April 2009, Bute Walk on 6 May 2009, Moorfield on 4 June 2009 and Queensferry Gardens on 24 June 2009. The judgement of each home inspected was as follows:

- 2.5 Cricklewood Road was judged to be satisfactory, the recommendation from the previous inspection had been carried out, there were no new requirements and one new recommendation, which was to keep a complainant informed of the progress and outcome of their complaint.
- 2.6 Moorfield was again judged to be satisfactory, previous recommendations had been carried out and progress had been made. There were four new requirements concerning the premises and the impact of the environment on the quality of care provided. In addition there were 17 recommendations covering care practice. The issues to do with the building will be dealt with when Moorfield is refurbished. This work will be put out to tender in the next two weeks. All other recommendations have been addressed with the staff teams.
- 2.7 Bute Walk was again judged to be satisfactory and had no requirements. The home was said to have had a difficult time with staff shortages but the team were said to be well motivated and committed. There were two recommendations which were to update the complaints booklet and provide better support to newly appointed staff, both of which have been addressed.
- 2.8 Queensferry Gardens was again judged to be good and the home was said to have sustained its progress and continued to achieve positive outcomes for the young people. There were no requirements and four recommendations to do with updating the complaints booklet and children's guide, more detailed placement plans and better support for new staff, all of which have been addressed.

Management Visits

- 3.1 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 managers from all sections of children's social care.
- 3.2 41 of the 42 visits required between February and July 2009 have been completed. Any practice issues arising from the visits are addressed with the registered manager and monitored through supervision. The Head of Service monitors all reports and follows up any serious or outstanding issues. Any issues relating to the safety or welfare of children are referred to the appropriate person and addressed as necessary. No serious concerns about children's safety or welfare have arisen from management visits during this period.
- 3.3 As a result of management reports during this period, action was taken on maintenance issues and the quality of the physical environment, furniture and fittings, recording standards, staffing levels, practice issues such as formal sanctions and police involvement, children's complaints, individual placement and care plans, and admissions policy.

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Background papers:	None
List of appendices:	Appendix 1: Implications

IMPLICATIONS

Financial

1. Each Children's Home is subject to an annual fee for registration with Ofsted.

Legal

2. National Minimum Standards are based on the legal requirements of the Children's Homes Regulations 2001. Ofsted has power to withdraw registration from Registered Providers or Homes which fail to satisfy legal requirements.

Personnel

3. Homes Managers are required to be registered by Ofsted and are assessed before they are registered. Other staff are required to hold a minimum qualification.

Equalities impact

4. 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 Five Outcomes for Children identified in Every Child Matters, which form the basis of the objectives of the Children and Young People's Plan.
- 5.2 Supporting everyone in learning and achieving.