

LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN SCRUTINY SUB-PANEL

Venue: Town Hall, Moorgate
Street, Rotherham.

Date: Wednesday, 28 March 2007

Time: 2.00 p.m.

A G E N D A

1. Apologies.
2. To determine if the following matters are to be considered under the categories suggested, in accordance with the Local Government Act 1972.
3. To determine any item which the Chairman is of the opinion should be considered later in the agenda as a matter of urgency.
4. Declarations of Interest.
5. Questions from Press and Public

FOR DISCUSSION

6. Offending by Looked After Children (report herewith) (Pages 1 - 4)

Paul Grimwood, YOS

7. Work Placements for Looked After Children (report herewith) (Pages 5 - 8)

Simon Cooper, HR

8. Access to Benefits for Care Leavers - Update (report herewith) (Pages 9 - 15)

Caroline Webb

FOR MONITORING

9. Profile of Looked After Children in Rotherham (report herewith) (Pages 16 - 21)

Katy Hawkins

10. Regulation 33 Visits (report herewith) (Pages 22 - 25)

Katy Kawkins

11. Draft Work Programme 2007 / 08 (herewith) (Pages 26 - 28)

Caroline Webb

12. Minutes of the Previous Meeting held on 13th December 2006 (herewith).
(Pages 29 - 35)

Membership:-

Chairman – Councillor G. A. Russell.

Vice-Chairman Councillor McNeely.

Councillors Burke, Dodson, Jackson, P. A. Russell, Sangster, St. John, Thirlwall and Whelbourn.

ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO MEMBERS
--

1.	Meeting:	Looked After Children Scrutiny Sub Panel
2.	Date:	28 March 2007
3.	Title:	Offending by Looked After Children
4.	Programme Area:	Children and Young People's Services – Youth Offending Services (YOS)

5. Summary:

Children and young people who are 'looked after' are at greater risk of offending than the general population, with those individuals cared for within residential children's homes representing the higher percentage of children who are involved in offending behaviour.

In 2006 a report was presented to Members on the rates and patterns of offending amongst looked after children who were placed within residential units. This was in response to National and Local concerns by Magistrates that this group were being prosecuted for offences that could be dealt with by disciplinary measures within the residential unit. That report which was also the subject of a presentation to local Youth Magistrates found that L.A.C. were over represented in the criminal justice population locally.

Since this presentation a number of steps have been taken by Youth Offending Services and Children and Young People's Services. In addition national guidance has been issued by the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) on the prosecution of young people resident in children's homes.

This report compares figures for April to December 2005 with those for April to December 2006 and reveals an overall decline in frequency of offending by L.A.C., particularly in residential care. However other placements do not benefit from this trend.

The report also takes the opportunity to inform members of the more general work of the YOS to reduce re-offending.

6. Recommendations:

That the contents of this report be noted and support given for the actions outlined to further reduce offending by L.A.C.

7. Proposals and Details:

In 2005 looked after children (in residential units) committed 129 offences, by 2006 this figure had fallen to 50. Looking more specifically at the offences which were most common in 2005, (Violence Against the Person, Criminal Damage and Public Order), the figures had dropped from 53 (2005) to 30 (2006). Closer examination reveals that in 2006 only 9 of the 30 offences (30%) had been committed in or against the residential unit. This compares with 21 (40%) in or against residential units in 2005

NUMBER OF OFFENCES BY YOUNG PEOPLE IN RESIDENTIAL UNITS

	2005			2006		
	Internal (within unit)	External	Total	Internal (within unit)	External	Total
Violence against the person	11	18	29	7	13	20
Criminal damage	8	7	15	2	4	6
Public Order	2	7	9	0	4	4
	21	32	53	9	21	30

It is worth noting that the figure for 2006 is slightly distorted by the case of one young woman who was responsible for 3 of the 7 violent offences in residential units. These offences all occurred within one month of admission. The young woman was later placed in an out of authority therapeutic unit.

In 2005 59% of those placed in residential units had some statutory contact with YOS. In 2006 this had reduced to 44%.

The report to Members and Magistrates indicated that in 2005, amongst the general population, 3% of 10 – 17 years olds had committed offences. This compared to 19% of the 10 – 17 L.A.C. population. For 2006 offending amongst the general population was 4%, and the L.A.C. population 10%.

These reductions are likely to have been caused by a number of factors.

- The production of national guidance by the Crown Prosecution Service in respect of the prosecution of young people in children's homes. Which requires prosecution to be considered by a youth specialist, recognises that these children are more likely to be at risk of offending behaviour, and considers the behaviour management policy for individual homes.
- Closer liaison between YOS and Children and Young People's Services in relation to the issue. In particular informing residential services of changes in prosecution guidance, discussions with C&YPS about offending behaviour, and ensuring YOS attendance at L.A.C. reviews.
- Consultation by C&YPS on a strategy for the positive management of behaviour in children's homes and guidance for informing the Police of incidents in Children's Homes.

Looking more generally at offending by L.A.C. for the same time period, the pattern of offending between those in residential care and those in other types of placement appears to have changed. In 2005 there were 23 individuals in residential care committing offences and

26 individuals in other placements also committing offences. In 2006 the figures are 11 in residential care and 18 in other placements. This appears to indicate the L.A.C. offending population outside of residential care whilst declining, has not benefited to a similar extent as those in residential care. Thus raising the question of whether similar initiatives to those undertaken with residential care could be applied to fostering.

L.A.C. OFFENDING (INDIVIDUALS)

	2005	2006
	Individuals	Individuals
Residential Units	26	11
Other	23	18
Total	49	29

Overall the picture remains a positive one, showing a trend in the right direction. Fewer individuals within the LAC population are offending and when they do it is with less frequency. This is particularly encouraging in the context of national targets for the Police to increase the number of offenders brought to justice, which has generally resulted in a significant increase in people coming into the criminal justice system.

In terms of the role that YOS plays generally in preventing L.A.C. offending our systems are quite robust. There is a presumption in the service that joint planning will take place and YOS officers attend LAC reviews and other meetings. The Joint Inspection of the YOS in 2006 confirmed that case managers engage with their C&YPS colleagues. However more could be done particularly in respect of YOS internal reviews and planning and linkages at an operational level. To that end and to ensure continued improvement, the following actions are being initiated:

- Further improve liaison with residential services;
 - Named YOS contact for each unit
 - Quarterly attendance of YOS Operations Manger at Residential Managers Meetings
- Further improve planning for L.A.C.
 - Attendance of residential workers at YOS planning meetings
- Promote L.A.C. involvement in diversionary activities and preventative projects.
- Further analysis of L.A.C. offending outside of residential care.

8. Finance:

There are currently no specific financial implications, although related criminal justice system costings are a key driver for all criminal justice organisations.

9. Risks and Uncertainties:

The figures cited above are from the YOS database. Whilst they are accurate the actual numbers involved are relatively small. Caution should therefore be exercised in their interpretation. This is particularly true for the apparent findings of the static nature of the non residential offending L.A.C. population, and further analysis is required to ensure they are not subject to organisational responses to poor behaviour that make it more likely they will come to the attention of the police.

The LAC population generally by virtue of their status will have many of the predisposing and situational factors associated with offending. They are more likely to, amongst other difficulties, leave school without qualifications, experience unemployment, and suffer both emotional and physical problems than the rest of the population. Therefore attempts to address their offending must be part of a series of measures to improve their life chances.

10. Policy and Performance Agenda Implications:

Looked after children represent a very small proportion of the overall offending profile within Rotherham, Performance can therefore shift quite markedly on the basis of very small changes within the L.A.C. population, but will only shift marginally when there are changes in the general population.

11. Background Papers and Consultation:

Draft - Positive Management of Behaviour in Children's Homes. (C&YPS)
Draft - Informing the Police of an incident within Residential Homes. (C&YPS)
CPS Guidance – Offending Behaviour in Children's Homes..(Crown Prosecution Service).
Inspection of Rotherham Youth Offending Services

**Contact Name: Paul Grimwood, Senior Operations Manager, 01709 516999,
paul.grimwood@rotherham.gov.uk**

ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT MEMBERS

1.	Meeting:	Looked After Children Scrutiny Sub-Panel
2.	Date:	28th March 2007
3.	Title:	Work Placements for Looked After Children
4.	Programme Area:	Children & Young Peoples Services/Corporate Services

5. Summary

This report outlines a framework to encourage the provision of work placements for looked after children within the Council.

6. Recommendations

6.1 That the Scrutiny Sub-Panel note the proposed framework for work placements

6.2 That the proposals be submitted to Corporate Management Team for endorsement

7. Proposals and Details

Officers of Children & Young Peoples Services and Strategic Human Resources have joined together to discuss how to offer meaningful work placements for looked after children within the Council. Recognising its corporate parenting role and the fact that we are the largest employer in the Borough the Council should be well positioned to champion effective work placements for looked after children through demonstrating its willingness to offer opportunities to gain experience of the working environment within its Directorates. The aim of offering work placements would be to prepare looked after children leaving care for the world of work and to develop skills, knowledge and experience which will place them in a better position to apply for and gain mainstream employment either within or external to the Council. However it must also be recognised that the Council already offers a range of opportunities for work placements across the Council including short term school student placements (Trident), young apprentice placements and responses to requests from MENCAP and Remploy for placements for disabled people. It is therefore recognised that finding work placements for looked after children will present challenges if services are already committed to supporting other groups in need of work experience. In particular it may be prudent for managers to factor in provision of placements for looked after children before committing to 'Trident' placements.

It is proposed that Strategic Human Resources perform a link role between the Bridges Leaving Care team and managers across the Council who may be able to offer work placements. This will utilise the contacts developed in Strategic Human Resources as part of the Investors in Education project and the Investors in Education Co-ordinator within Strategic Human Resources will be the initial point of contact for the Bridges team. The Bridges team will then be able to deal directly with service managers to make necessary arrangements prior to the commencement of placements and to resolve any issues which subsequently arise.

7.1 Placement Model

As a model, managers will be asked to support 30 day work placements within their Service. These 30 days could be operated as a block of 6 working weeks or worked over a longer period on a part time basis for instance 2 days per week over 15 weeks. The precise arrangement in each case will be determined following discussions between the young person, the Bridges advisor and the service manager involved in order to best meet the needs of the young person whilst balancing this against the requirements of the service involved. At the end of the 30 days the placement will be reviewed and if both the young person and the service manager are happy with the arrangements the placement can be extended for an appropriate period (to be agreed between the manager, the young person and the young persons Support Worker).

Prior to the commencement of a work placement, the staff in Children and Young People's Services and Bridges who provide direct support to the young person involved will develop a support plan for the placement.

Strategic Human Resources could also provide, via the Investors in Education Co-ordinator, a half day 'Introduction to the Council' session to provide the young person with an overview of what the entire Council does and the range of jobs undertaken. This could also involve use of the U-xplore interactive jobs and careers DVD.

A risk assessment will be necessary before a placement commences. For current work placements for young people from Rotherham Schools this is being undertaken by Business and Education South Yorkshire (BESY) or Trident who have tried and tested expertise in this area. It is suggested that these organisations be approached with a view to taking on risk assessments in relation to work placements for looked after children though funding will need to be identified from within Children and Young People's Services/Bridges for this activity.

During the placement the young person and the manager will receive visits to the workplace from the Support Worker assigned to the young person to ensure that the placement is progressing well (in accordance with the support plan) and to deal with any issues that may arise.

7.2 Scale of Activity

It is estimated from experience that around 10 care leavers per year would benefit from and be suitable for work placements. In addition around a further 2 young parents per year could also benefit from this approach.

7.3 Manager Awareness

Children and Young Peoples Services will be able to provide briefing sessions for managers offering work placements to raise awareness of the needs and issues faced by young care leavers entering the workplace. There is also the potential to offer specific training and support for young care leavers prior to commencement of work placements to ensure that they understand the requirements of the working environment.

7.4 Potential Work Placement Areas

From previous experience with care leavers it is thought the following represent some work areas that are likely to interest young people:

Business Administration
Country Parks
Elderly Residential Care
School Kitchens/ Care Establishment Kitchens

However the interests and aspirations of young care leavers will be discussed with them via their support workers and attempts will be made to accommodate these where feasible. Where young people are not able to make pre-determined preferences it may be possible to offer smaller 'bite-size' work tasters to enable them to make informed choices about potential job areas.

7.5 Support to Enter Mainstream Employment

Advice and guidance can also be offered to young people on completing application forms and how to perform well at interview should they wish to apply for advertised vacancies. Such advice can be provided by Connexions. Managers in services hosting work placements will be asked to make young people and their support workers aware of potential vacancies as and when they arise if they feel that the young person has demonstrated sufficient capacity to be able to enter mainstream employment.

7.6 Management Commitment

In order to ensure that work placements will be offered across the Council it is vital that Senior Management are fully supportive of this approach and recognise the corporate parenting duties held by the Council. It is therefore proposed that this framework for work placements for looked after children be referred to Corporate Management Team and then discussed at each Directorate Senior Management Team meeting to identify those areas where work placements can be offered.

8. Finance

Funding is available to provide expenses for young care leavers under the age of 18 who engage in work placements. However there is no funding to compensate for the time of officers involved in the process of securing and managing work placements. Such costs would have to be bourn within existing Department Budgets.

9. Risks and Uncertainties

A failure to adequately champion provision of work placements at a senior management level could lead to reluctance within Departments to provide work placement opportunities. Work placements provide a potential avenue for some looked after children to secure mainstream employment and thereby avoid social and economic disadvantage, a failure to provide work placements will deny opportunities to overcome this disadvantage.

10. Policy and Performance Agenda Implications

In its role as a Corporate Parent there is an expectation that the Council will use its best endeavours to improve the life chances of looked after children and work placements provide one means of doing this.

11. Background Papers and Consultation

None.

Contact Names:

**Katy Hawkins, Service Manager Looked after Children Resources, x4017,
Children & Young Peoples Services katy.hawkins@rotherham.gov.uk**

**Simon Cooper, Human Resource Manager, Strategic Human Resources, x3745,
simon.cooper@rotherham.gov.uk**

ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO MEMBERS
--

1.	Meeting:	Looked After Children Scrutiny Sub-Panel
2.	Date:	28 March 2007
3.	Title:	Update – access to benefits for Care leavers
4.	Programme Area:	Chief Executive's All Wards

5. Summary

Looked After Children Scrutiny Sub-Panel discussed the issue of access to benefits for care leaver at their meeting on September 20, 2006. This report updates Members of developments.

6. Recommendations**That Members**

- 1. Welcome the progress made to date;**
- 2. Note the response from the Department of Work and Pensions;**
- 3. Review progress at a future meeting of this sub-panel.**

7. Proposals and Details

7.1 At its meeting on July 12, 2006, the sub Panel received a presentation on from the NCH Bridges Project on services to care leavers. It emerged that that a significant number of care leavers who claimed Job Seekers Allowance (JSA) were experiencing delays in their claims being processed. The delays also had a negative impact on the subsequent processing of other benefits, for example, housing benefits. On occasions, these delays had led to considerable distress and hardship for the young people affected. The sub-Panel requested that a meeting with relevant agencies be arranged to discuss possible solutions.

7.2 On September 20, 2006, representatives from Jobcentre Plus, Revenue and Benefits Section (RBT), and the NCH Bridges Project attended the Panel. A paper was submitted outlining difficulties experienced in accessing JSA payments for young people who have been in Local Authority Care.

Particular reference was made to the 'tele-claim' system, which involved young people having to telephone a centralised number to make a claim for JSA. The case studies cited the difficulties faced by a number of young people who had been in local authority care, particularly those which have more complex needs.

7.3 Proposals were made at the meeting by Jobcentre Plus and NCH Bridges staff to improve links between the local agencies to facilitate better communication. They agreed to share their local contact details, in order to exchange concerns or emerging issues on a timely basis. It was acknowledge that local Jobcentre Plus staff did not have the flexibility to interpret the strict national guidance issued by the Department of Work and Pensions, however, the proposed steps would go some way to improving communications locally. A previous meeting between officers from Revenues and Benefits and the NCH Bridges Project, (instigated as a result of this sub-Panel's concerns), had established a similar system.

7.4 In addition to facilitating the discussions between the relevant agencies, the sub-Panel resolved to write to local MPs to ask them to lobby the Secretary of State for a change in guidance. A copy of the letter to MPs is attached as Appendix 1.

7.5 The response from the national office of Jobcentre Plus, on behalf of the Secretary of State, did not accede to the sub-Panel's request for changes to be made to the guidance (attached as Appendix 2). However, they did cite the improvements made in waiting times for appointments (quoted as aiming to offer appointments within "four days of a new or repeat claim being made") and reductions in the time taken to process claims. Their performance at the time of writing, January 2007, was seventeen days to process claims and they aim to further reduce this to twelve days. The letter also refers to the improvements in communications and liaison between the bodies.

7.6 Anecdotal reports from the Bridges Project since the sub-panel meeting in September, suggests that notable improvements have been made in processing claims and the delays in accessing JSA for care leavers is much

reduced. This has also led to a corresponding improvement in accessing housing related benefits on a timely basis.

The sub-panel requested that progress in this area be monitored and it is suggested that this is scheduled into the 2007/08 work programme.

8. Finance

It is difficult to quantify the direct financial implications of this report. Efficiency gains may be achieved as a result of timely processing and payment of local authority administered benefits by the Revenues and Benefits Section.

Furthermore, prompt payment of benefits will lead to a reduction in the number of emergency payments to care leavers from the NCH Bridges Project or Children and Young People's Directorate.

9. Risks and Uncertainties

Many care leavers are vulnerable and at considerable risk of social and financial exclusion. Failure of agencies to work together to provide timely access to benefits may compound this further.

10. Policy and Performance Agenda Implications

- Theme of Rotherham Safe
- Every Child Matters Agenda
- Green Paper: Care Matters: Transforming the lives of Children in Care

11. Background Papers and Consultation

Looked After Children Scrutiny Sub-Panel, Minute 3, 12 July, 2006

Looked After Children Scrutiny Sub-Panel, Minute 12, 20 September, 2006

Contact: *Caroline Webb, Senior Scrutiny Adviser, direct line: (01709) 822765*
email: caroline.webb@rotherham.gov.uk



Metropolitan Borough of Rotherham

***Rotherham Town Hall,
The Crofts, Moorgate Street, Rotherham, South Yorkshire. S60 2TH***

To: John Healey MP,

27 October 2006

Dear John

I am writing to you as Chair of Rotherham Council's Looked After Children Scrutiny Sub-Panel. As part of its remit, the Panel oversees the extent to which the Council is meeting its responsibilities as Corporate Parents to Looked After Children and Care Leavers. As you will know, children and young people who have been in the care system are disproportionately at risk from social exclusion and poor educational attainment.

The Panel recently received a presentation from Care Leavers who are supported by the NCH Bridges Project in Rotherham. The Project provides practical assistance and advice to Rotherham Care Leavers aged between 16 and 21. Some Care Leavers are in full-time employment, education or training but a number, for a variety of reasons, are reliant on benefits. A significant proportion of these reported great difficulties in accessing Job Seekers Allowance (JSA) and other benefits. The delays had lead on occasions, to considerable hardship for the young people.

At present, to claim any benefit payment, people have to telephone a contact centre. This is usually referred to as 'tele-claims'. Support staff from NCH Bridges Project have provided case studies outlining difficulties since the 'tele-claim' system was introduced approximately 9 months ago (attached as Appendix A).

Many of the Care Leavers who need benefit most are those who are likely to encounter greatest difficulty with access to or use of a telephone to make their claim. Many have some degree of learning disability or cognitive problem (such as ADHD) and most have poor self-esteem and lack confidence which makes it difficult for them to manage a telephone interview. Call holding, telephone queues and technical problems at the call centres add to the general confusion and degree of frustration.

Because of the delays, the young people have to seek emergency payments or other support packages (such as food parcels) from NCH Bridges Project or the Council's Children and Young People's Services. If these were not forthcoming, the young people would be destitute as they have no other financial resources or support. There is little scope for these agencies to practically re-coup this additional expenditure from the young people once payment is made. Ironically, public bodies

Page 2/

are paying twice; firstly with the emergency support and secondly with the actual benefits. If the claim could be dealt with promptly, the inefficiencies, distress and inconvenience caused by the delay would be minimised, therefore reducing the further risk of social exclusion that this small yet extremely vulnerable group of young people already face.

At a local level, we have had a productive meeting with colleagues from the regional Jobcentre Plus to improve communication and links. However, they have advised us that the majority of benefit claims will continue to be made through the 'tele-claim' system, in line with the guidance issued by the Department for Work and Pensions. It is our view that the lack of flexibility will have a detrimental effect on the welfare of claimants who are Care Leavers.

We would ask you to lobby the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, Rt Hon John Hutton MP on our behalf, to vary the guidance to allow for Care Leavers to be exempt from using the 'tele-claims' system. Exemptions are already in place for people who are aged over 60. We would also welcome a review of the 'tele-claim' system by other stakeholders groups representing vulnerable people, to highlight where improvements can be made.

The Government's Green Paper **Care Matters: Transforming the lives of Children in Care** demonstrates great commitment to improving outcomes for vulnerable children and young people. However, we believe the evidence presented to us demonstrates that the 'tele-claims' process significantly disadvantages Care Leavers. If we are serious in our roles as Corporate Parents, it is important that all agencies of the state, whether Local or Central Government, work together to improve the quality of experience that Care Leavers actually receive.

I would be grateful if you could inform me of any action resulting from this correspondence. For information, I have also written to your Parliamentary colleagues, Dr Denis MacShane MP and Kevin Barron MP. If you have any queries regarding this letter, please contact Caroline Webb, Senior Scrutiny Adviser on (01709) 822765.

Thank you for your assistance and I look forward to hearing from you.

With kind regards

Councillor Ann Russell
Chair of Looked After Children Scrutiny Sub-Panel

cc Cllr Roger Stone, Leader, Rotherham Borough Council
Shaun Wright, Cabinet Member for Children and Young People's Services, Rotherham Borough Council
Peter Clayton, JSA Manager, Jobcentre Plus, Regional Office,
Andy Pickering, Deputy Manager, NCH Bridges Project, Rotherham

Lesley Strathie
Chief Executive
lesley.strathie@jobcentreplus.gsi.gov.uk
www.jobcentreplus.gov.uk

Kevin Barron MP
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

Our ref: CE010820

December 2006

Dear Mr Barron

The Secretary of State has asked Lesley Strathie to reply direct to your letter of 7 November, enclosing one from Councillor Ann Russell concerning care leavers between the ages of 16 and 21. This is something that falls within her responsibilities as Chief Executive of Jobcentre Plus. I am replying on behalf of Ms Strathie as a member of the Jobcentre Plus Board.

I was concerned to hear about the difficulties encountered by some young people when accessing our services and asked Denise Horsfall, South Yorkshire Jobcentre Plus District Manager to look into the matter.

It may help if I clarify the process for this group of customers, as there are differences for those under 18. Customers under 18 are referred to Jobcentre Plus via the Connexions service and provided with a face-to-face interview within 24 hours. Their claim is then referred to the appropriate benefit delivery centre. For Rotherham customers this is John Rideal House in Barnsley. These claims are given priority as they only qualify for hardship payments and not statutory benefits.

Customers under 18 claiming Income Support or Incapacity Benefit do so by a clerical process, which does not involve the contact centre. The details are referred to the relevant benefit processing team, as these customers do not require an interview unless they are estranged from their parents or legal guardian.

For customers over 18 the process is different and they would normally be expected to make a claim for benefit through our contact centre. This is our preferred method as it ensures we have all the necessary information to complete the claim, minimising any potential delays. However, we are aware that some of our customers do have difficulty using the telephone and have put provision in place for this. These arrangements are either:

- customers can arrange for a third party or nominated advocate to ring the contact centre on their behalf or the customer can have a face-to-face interview at the Jobcentre. Home visits can also be arranged if appropriate; or

- customers can choose to make a claim by the clerical process rather than through the contact centre. These customers will have access to a face-to-face interview in the Jobcentre but I am informed that take up of this provision in Rotherham is low.

You also mentioned delays in customers being awarded benefit. Following the introduction of the new Jobcentre Plus service in Rotherham we experienced some problems introducing the new process whilst managing to deal with the volume of claims. We aim to offer an appointment at the Jobcentre within four days of a new or repeat claim being made and there were times earlier this year when this was not being met. We immediately put plans in place to improve the situation and customers in Rotherham are now being seen within four days and have been consistently for the last five months

Delays have also occurred at the benefit delivery centre but this situation is improving with the average clearance time for a Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA) claim currently at seventeen days. We aim to process claims within 12 days so we do have further work to do to meet this target.

Jobcentre Plus staff in Rotherham met with social workers and advocacy team members in June to explain the customer process and more recently staff met with NCH Bridges Project staff. At these meetings Peter Clayton, JSA Manager, provided comprehensive information relating to the range of services offered to care leavers in South Yorkshire. I also understand that the case studies included in Councillor Russell's letter were discussed.

Peter provided the project with contact numbers for the JSA New Claims team leader and also the Change of Circumstances team leader. Mary Taylor, the New Claims team leader is providing the project with regular updates on the progress of claims.

I am committed to providing a high standard of customer service and I apologise for any difficulties this vulnerable group of customers have experienced as a result of delays in offering appointments or processing claims.

I hope this is helpful. If you have any queries please contact Lesley Wills, Business Manager at Chantry House, Rotherham on 01709 343054.

Yours sincerely

Mel Groves

MEL GROVES
CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER
ON BEHALF OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council

Children and Young People's Services

Report for Looked After Scrutiny Panel

Profile of Numbers of Looked After Children, Current Placements and School Attendance

As of 15.04.2007 Rotherham currently has 343 children in our Care, of these children and young people 24 are allocated to the Children's Disability Team.

Types of Care

Type of Care	Age 0-5	Age 6-10	Age 11-15	Age 16+	Total	Comparison (15.11.2007)
Placed for adoption		1	2		3	6
Foster Care	59	68	93	32	252	241
Independent Living				3	3	3
Residential inside Rotherham			10	3	13	14
Residential outside Rotherham		1	2	4	7	7
Residential School			2	1	3	4
Other Residential	1		2	5	8	8
Secure Unit outside Rotherham			1		1	1
Placed with Parents	9	8	15	10	42	38
Other Placement	7	4			11	9
TOTALS	76	82	127	58	343	331

Gender Breakdown

Type of Care	Female	Male	Total
Placed for adoption	2	1	3
Foster Care	124	128	252
Independent Living	1	2	3
Residential In Rotherham	8	5	13
Residential outside Rotherham	5	2	7
Residential School		3	3
Other Residential	2	6	8
Secure Unit outside Rotherham		1	1
Placed with Parents	8	34	42
Other Placement	5	6	11
TOTALS	155	188	343

Ethnicity Breakdown

Type of Care	White British	White Irish	White Other	Asian - Pakistani	Black - African	Other Any	Dual Heritage White & Black Caribbean	Dual Heritage White & Asian	Dual Heritage Other	Other - Yemini	Total
Placed for adoption	2						1				3
Foster Care	232	2	2	1	2	3	3	5	1	1	252
Independent Living	3										3
Residential In Rotherham	13										13
Residential outside Rotherham	7										7
Residential School	3										3
Other Residential	7					1					8
Secure Unit outside Rotherham	1										1
Placed with Parents	41							1			42
Other Placement	9	1						1			11
TOTALS	318	3	2	1	2	4	4	7	1		343

LAC with 25 days or more absence as at end of Term 3 (09/02/07)

Absences are recorded in half-days Current out turn 10.5%

Young Person	Year Group	Excluded	Auth	Unauth	Total	Placement	Comments	Date Entered Care
Child A	Y9	0	11	40	51	With Parents	EWS and Get Real Involved incentive schemes in place.	03/02/00
Child B	Y11	9	31	12	52	Private Residential Unit - Brookfields (out of authority)	Attends an out of authority school Recent absences have been due to illness teaching support from Get Real Team after school 2 evenings per week. Currently refusing to go to school.	28/04/05
Child C	Y10	2	11	40	53	Residential	Get Real Team providing teaching support. 27 half day absences are due to wart removal and recovery from ensuing blister on hand.Issues have arisen with competition of work experience placement Get Real are negotiating these.	12/09/00
Child D	Y11	0	53	0	53	Residential (out of authority)	Attends an out of authority school. Get Real monitoring	05/03/04
Child E	Y6	57	0	0	57	Foster Carer	Part time time table at St Anns PU following exculsion from primary school.Get Real Team directly involved.	09/03/05
Child F	Y8	13	25	25	63	With Parents	Get Real Team providing Learning Mentor support.	05/07/00
Child G	Y9	16	21	27	64	Foster Carer	Recent absence is due to internal truancy. Is on school premises but is not registering for class. Review To take place	18/01/06

Child H	Y9	12	26	29	67	With extended family	Get Real Team providing Learning Mentor support.	28/01/04
Child I	Y9	6	26	41	73	With Parents	Get Real Team providing Social Work Support.incentives in place.Through EWO	29/06/99
Child J	Y9	38	2	38	78	Residential	Teaching support & Learning Mentor Support from Get Real Team attends Get Sorted. Attendance has improved since January 07. Plans to go back to Fenton Wood 1/2 day per week from 14/03/07. Application to be made to Swinton Comprehensive.	23/12/04
Child K	Y8	70	8	0	78	Foster Carer	Get Real Team providing Learning Mentor support. Attendance has improved in Term 3 (Jan-Feb 07), only 1 day's absence (authorised)	16/07/97
Child L	Y10	0	64	15	79	With Parents	Get Real Team providing Social Worker Support. Young Person refuses to attend or truants internally. EWO aware.	15/10/02
Child M	Y9	18	20	54	92	Residential	Part time time table but school refuser, Titans programme in place which has been refused Get Real continuing to engage.	02/10/06
Child N	Y8	31	72	4	107	Foster Carer	Recently moved from Residential Care following long term breakdown of Foster placement. Was on roll at School in Sheffield admissions meeting to take place 21/03/07	28/01/03
Child O	Y9	2	25	87	114	With Parents	Placed at home since 13/11/06, EWO involved.	10/05/02

Child P	Y9	0	31	84	115	Residential (out of authority)	As of 01/02/07, attends an out of authority school.	07/11/05
Child Q	Y10	0	9	110	119	With Parents	Get Real providing intensive Social Work support. Persistently refuses to attend school. Attending Titans Programme one day per week.	18/03/97
Child R	Y10	0	0	140	140	Secure Unit	In secure unit, at risk of sexual exploitation.	03/06/06
Child S	Y11	0	77	68	145	Foster Carer	Started at Rowan Centre 26/02/07. Get Real will support in English and Maths.	06/01/05
Child T	Y8	50	96	0	146	With Parents	Left out of authority school 24/11/06 (excluded), returned home to parent. Not on roll of a school until admitted to The Willows on 05/03/07. Get Real is providing teaching support.	18/12/02
Child U	Y11	44	0	105	149	With Grandmother	Excluded from school. Get Real providing teaching support and Y11 monitoring. Educational package currently under discussion.	05/04/06
Child V	Y10	0	171	2	173	Secure Unit	01/02/07 received a six month custodial sentence to be served at Aycliffe Centre.	07/12/99
Child W	Y11	0	194	0	194	Foster Carer	Placed in Hull. On role at David Lister School in Hull. Currently attending school each morning, also attends Junction Project and one session with Get Real per week.	18/07/06

ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO MEMBERS
--

1.	Meeting:	Looked After Children Scrutiny Sub-Panel
2.	Date:	Wednesday, 28th March, 2007
3.	Title:	Regulation 33 Inspections in Residential Children’s Homes
4.	Programme Area:	Children & Young People’s Services

5. Summary

The Care Standards Act, 2000, sets minimum standards of care to be provided for children and young people, and provides a set of standards which form the basis for judgements made by the Commission for Social Care Inspection (C.S.C.i.), an independent non-departmental public body.

]

This report summarises the main findings from the Regulation 33 Visits to the children’s homes in Rotherham during the period September 2006 to November 2006.

6. Recommendations

- (a) That Members receive this report.**
- (b) That further reports are provided on key themes emerging from future Regulation 33 Visits.**

7. Proposals and Details

Regulation 33 Visits are carried out predominantly by the Operations Manager for Residential Services, although as from November 2006, one per month is completed by the Service Manager for Looked After Children's resources as a quality assurance exercise.

Findings are as follows:-

Creswick Road

Creswick Road is a 5 bedded short stay unit (up to 6 months) for mixed gender children, aged 12 to 16 years, young people in this unit are predominantly there following the breakdown of foster placements or family placements. During their stay, assessments are carried out in order to advise on long term planning. Themes emerging are:-

- **A service review has taken place within Creswick Road following a speight of incidents between the young people and the responses from staff. Currently we have a support Manager in the unit working alongside the current Manager and a very clear action plan in place around developing the service.**
- **A review of the statement of purpose is also underway and Members will be made aware if there is a proposal to change this.**
- **There has been significant damage to the building by the current client group. This is being addressed through the Management Review and work between the staff and young people.**

St. Edmund's Avenue

This unit is a 5 bedded unit for girls only, aged between 12 to 18 years, who need long term residential care. Themes emerging are:-

- **The statement of function needs to be revised to take account of the comments raised by CSCI in their last visit; this however will not mean a significant change to the client group and service provided within the unit.**
- **New young people's guides will need to be produced alongside the development of the statement.**
- **Minutes from Young people's meetings within the unit were well evidenced demonstrating meetings that were structured and minuted, demonstrating staff and young people working together to resolve issues.**

Goodwin Crescent

This unit is a 5 bedded unit for mixed gender, aged between 12 to 18 years who need long term residential care. Themes emerging are:-

- **As with St. Edmund's Avenue the statement of function needs to be revised to take account of the comments raised in the C.S.C.i. report.**
- **Residential care plans are not always signed and dated and need to show evidence of being reviewed on a minimum of a monthly basis.**
- **Discussion has arisen from the young people who wish to go on a foreign holiday this year and are requesting Managers look into the feasibility of this.**
- **Education is constantly on the agenda for the young people at Goodwin Crescent. One young man has recently started accessing a virtual academy education package which is an exciting new development.**

Studmoor Road

This unit is a 5 bedded unit which offers respite care for children, aged between 10 to 17 years mixed gender. The unit also has an emergency bed which can be accessed for up to 5 days in the event of an emergency admission into care. The unit currently has 9 children who receive respite care to prevent the breakdown of family placements. Support packages are offered for up to a period of 8 weeks and can be extended if the provision is still required following a review. Themes emerging are:-

- **All admissions comply with the statement of function although the timescale for the emergency bed has gone beyond agreed times on 2 occasions this year whilst appropriate planning took place for alternative accommodation. This will be picked up in the C.S.C.i. inspection later this year, but they have been informed of these situations.**
- **Agreed that the Manager would look to creating 'exit' interviews for young people, their parents and Social Workers once the respite period was completed to give formal feedback from the young people's points of view to develop the service.**
- **Staff members are now linked into individual Locality Teams to improve communication and relations between residential and fieldwork teams, this should have a positive impact for all residential units.**

Hollowgate

This unit comprises of 6 flatlets with 24 hour staff support. It is often the first stages of independent living for young people who have been looked after; there is also a mother and baby flat within the house to give that extra support to young mums who have been looked after.

As the residents in Hollowgate are all over 16 years of age the unit is not covered by the same legislation in respect of inspections, therefore there is not a need to undertake Reg 33 Inspections here in the same way.

However, it has been agreed with the staff team that Regulation 33 Visits will be undertaken at the unit in order to ensure National Minimum Standards are adhered to as good practice.

As from next Scrutiny Meeting I will include feedback from the Regulation 33 Visits undertaken at Hollowgate as this process has only just begun.

8. Finance

Finance is met within the existing budgets from Children and Young People's Services to undertake Regulation 33 Visits.

The major financial challenge during 2007/2008 to the children and young people's request to have a foreign holiday. A number of options are being explored including a long weekend.

9. Risks and Uncertainties

There are no risks and uncertainties in the production of this information on a regular basis.

10. Policy and Performance Agenda Implications

National Minimum Standards S23 (1) of the Care Standards Act, 2000.

11. Background Papers and Consultation

- National Minimum Standards (Children's Homes Regulations)
- Children Act, 1989
- Care Standards Act, 2000

Contact Name: Katy Hawkins, Service Manager
(Looked After Children's Resources)
katy.hawkins@rotherham.gov.uk

ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO MEMBERS
--

1.	Meeting:	Looked After Children Scrutiny Sub-Panel
2.	Date:	28th March, 2006
3.	Title:	Draft Work Programme
4.	Programme Area:	Chief Executive's All wards

5. Summary

The report outlines a draft work programme for the Looked After Children Scrutiny Sub Panel for the 2007/08 municipal year.

6. Recommendations**That members:**

- a. **discuss the draft work programme and agree the priorities for the 2007/08 municipal year;**
- b. **consider whether additional items should be added.**

7. Proposals and Details

Each scrutiny panel must plan its forward work programme. Members of the Looked After Children scrutiny sub-panel have recently agreed its Terms of Reference. It is suggested that its work programme is structured around its key points. These include:

- To review reports on Councillor visits to children and young people's residential establishments;
- In liaison with Cabinet Member for Children and Young People's Services, to meet with looked after children and young people;
- To consider and monitor reports on the extent to which the Council is meeting its statutory responsibilities to looked after children and care leavers;
- To consider progress on meeting targets in Fostering and Adoption;
- To receive regular progress reports on the preventative measures being taken to reduce the overall number of children in the care of the Council;
- To keep under review the Council's arrangements for ensuring that it fulfils its role as corporate parent;
- To monitor the effectiveness of the Council's Corporate Parenting Strategy.

8. Finance

There are no financial implications arising directly from this report. However, recommendations arising from the sub-panel may have financial implications should they be implemented.

9. Risks and Uncertainties

The work programme is flexible and issues may be referred to the Sub-Panel which are not known about at this stage. The work programme therefore, must be realistic in terms of the Sub-Panel's capacity to properly examine issues that come before it. If additional items are added, the panel may have to re-prioritise which issues it wishes to scrutinise.

10. Policy and Performance Agenda Implications

Scrutiny panels have a key role in scrutinising the effectiveness of services. The areas identified for future scrutiny should complement the priorities identified in the Community Strategy and Corporate Plan and the Every Child Matters agenda.

11. Background Papers and Consultation

This report has been brought at the request of Cllr Ann Russell

Contact Name: Caroline Webb, Senior Scrutiny Adviser Tel: (82)2765
caroline.webb@rotherham.gov.uk

Outline Work Programme 2007/08

Looked-After Children scrutiny sub-panel

Month	Theme	Other Reports	Quarterly reports
June 2007 27 th	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health services to LAC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outcome from the fostering and adoption inspection • Corporate Parenting activities (strategy and update on Corporate Parenting Scrutiny Review) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LAC Profiles • Issues emerging from Regulation 33 reports
September 19 th 2007	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Widening Access to Higher Educations to young people who have been in Local Authority Care <p><i>Suggest that is a detailed review meeting with witnesses</i></p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LAC Profiles • Issues emerging from Regulation 33 reports
December 12 th 2007	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Services for Care Leavers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educational achievement LAC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LAC Profiles • Issues emerging from Regulation 33 reports
March 2008 26 th	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fostering and adoption activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Youth Offending 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LAC Profiles • Issues emerging from Regulation 33 reports
<i>Items to be scheduled</i>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Issues emerging from the 'Care Matters' Green Paper • Integration of services to Children and Young People – impact on LACYP • Complaints 	

LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN SCRUTINY SUB-PANEL
Wednesday, 13th December, 2006

Present:- Councillor McNeely (in the Chair); Councillors Barron and Jackson.

Officers present were Katy Hawkins and Caroline Webb.

19. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Cath Wright and Councillors G. A. Russell and J. Hamilton.

20. COUNCILLOR DAVID DAVIES

The meeting stood in silence for one minute as respect for Councillor Davies who had recently died.

21. CARE MATTERS: TRANSFORMING THE LIVES OF CHILDREN IN CARE - CONSULTATION ON THE GOVERNMENT GREEN PAPER

Members received a presentation from the Head of Children's Social Care on the content of the above Green Paper which sets out a radical package of proposals for change. 'Care Matters: Transforming the Lives of Children and Young People in Care'; sets out a number of key proposals in improving the care offered and after-care for Looked After Children. There are ambitious aspirations within the proposal which are welcome but challenging. There are major implications for the way Children and Young People's Services organise its Looked After Children and Care Leaver Services and the resources available (or lack of them).

The presentation informed members of :-

- the background resulting in the Green Paper
- Government proposals, focusing on seven themes/pledges
- issues in respect of children on the edge of care
- better and more stable placements for children
- provisions for life outside school
- entering adult life
- making the system work
- how to respond to the Green Paper
- what happens next, consultation etc.

As part of the presentation, members were provided with questions as part of the consultation response, and comments were suggested to form part of the response. These were :-

1. The need for reform.

The members expressed broad support for the 'pledge' however, they

wanted there to be a greater emphasis on the specific role of elected members as corporate parents. It was noted that Rotherham had gone some way to developing its own pledge to Looked After Children and Young People that reflected many of the points raised in the proposals.

2. Children on the Edge of Care

Measures to minimise the numbers of children entering care were supported. Interventions such as family conferencing and shared care arrangements were highlighted. It was felt that the local authority was well placed to deliver many of the proposals outlined in the consultation.

3. Role of corporate parents

The Members shared the commitment to corporate parenting outlined in the chapter. However, they were resistance to the notion of 'social care practices' independent of local authority control as they were unclear how Local Authorities could maintain their safeguarding responsibilities under these proposals. They had concerns about how these proposals would lead to better outcomes for looked after children, and sought clarification about how the associated additional costs would be met.

The role and responsibilities of elected members as corporate parents should be strengthened and further guidance on this would be welcomed.

There was support for the independent visitor role and that of advocates.

4. Ensuring Children are in right placements.

The proposals outlined in this chapter were broadly supported as it was recognised that it is vital that children are in the appropriate placement to meet his or her needs. However, it was noted that the proposals may have significant budget implications.

Developments to improve fostering placements were already in hand to enable better and more stable placements.

5. A first class education

There was agreement that the Designated Teacher for children in care should be a designated Head Teacher or a teacher on the senior management team.

To further support looked after children in schools, it was also recommended that there was a need for a member of the governing body to have a designated function for children in care. Further guidance and training on the role of designated governors would be welcomed.

Reference was made to the proposal to provide local authorities with the power to direct schools to admit children in care even when the school is

fully subscribed. This was broadly supported however, it was acknowledged that this should be done sensitively to ensure that the child's needs are met, recognising that additional resources may be required if the school is full, particularly in primary settings.

It was noted that the Section 52, Children Act 2004 duty to promote the educational achievements of looked after children, only applied to local authorities. It was suggested that it would be helpful if this duty was extended to school bodies.

The measures proposed in relation to Further Education were supported.

6. Life Outside School

The key proposals in this chapter were supported. In relation to accessing health care for looked after children, there was a strong view that school based nurses or health advisers are best placed to provide the required health checks.

7. Transition to Adult Life

There was agreement that outcomes for young people would be improved by extending access to foster care until 21. However this would have significant impact on future budget arrangements.

Strategies to improve the employment and training opportunities are supported. In addition, measures to support young people into further or higher education are backed.

8. Making the system work

It was accepted that children in care should be given a greater say in decisions which affect them, and that the role of Independent Reviewing Officers should be strengthened. Similarly, the proposals to introduce a 'Children in Care Council' were supported, with members welcoming the greater involvement of Looked After Children in the policy and decision making functions of the Council. The Members would support the formalising of such arrangements.

Greater consideration should be given to measuring the success of young people in care for example measuring wider vocational attainment or participation in positive activities rather than their performance being solely measured by GCSE results.

Agreed:- (i) That the report and presentation be received.

(ii) That the comments arising from the presentation be endorsed

(iii) That the comments be fed into the Local Authority's response to the Green Paper.

22. DUTY OF THE LOCAL AUTHORITY TO PROMOTE THE EDUCATION OF LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN

The Service Manager, Looked After Children, reported that Looked After Children have the right to expect the outcomes we want for every child, that they should be healthy, stay safe, enjoy and achieve, make a positive contribution to society and achieve economic well being. To achieve these five outcomes for Looked After Children, local authorities as their corporate parents' should demonstrate the strongest commitment to helping every child they look after to achieve the highest educational standards he or she possibly can.

Under Section 22(3)(a) of the Children Act 1989, as amended by Section 52 of the Children Act 2004, the duty of the Local Authority to safeguard and promote the welfare of a child looked after by them includes in particular a duty to promote the child's educational achievement. The authority must therefore give particular attention to the educational implications of any decision about the welfare of those children.

This duty came into force in July 2005 and applies to all children looked after by an Authority wherever they are placed.

The report submitted outlined the major issues associated with this duty and set out areas for discussion :-

- (a) Strategic Planning and Accountability
- (b) Effective Implementation of the duty.

In connection with (a) and (b) above, the report made reference to :-

- the Children and Young People's Plan and what it should include
- the role of the Directors of Children's Services and lead members
- the role of Independent Reviewing Officers
- the inspection framework
- a summary of points in respect of supporting educational achievements and aspirations

Particular reference was made in discussion to :-

- the training of designated school governors on aspects of children in care
- the needs of looked after children in custody and the involvement of the Youth Offending Service and the Bridges project
- the possibility of officers involved with the managing of looked after children attending meetings of the Children and Young People's

Services Scrutiny Panel

Agreed:- (a) That the report be received and the contents noted.

(b) That as part of the response to the Government Green Paper on Care Matters, the point be made that the direct duty should also apply to schools in order to carry out the work required.

23. EDUCATION OUTCOMES FOR LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN 2005 / 06

The Service Manager, Looked After Children, submitted a report which outlined the academic achievements of Children Looked After by Rotherham MBC for the academic year 2005/06.

The report set out information in respect of :-

- Key Stage 2 SATS results
- GCSE results
- Post 16 awards
- absence from school figures

Overall it was a positive year with targets being met,

Particular discussion took place on the absence from school figures, how the Performance Indicator was measured and action being taken with schools to improve the reporting of absences.

Agreed:- (a) That the report be received.

(b) That the congratulations of this Panel be conveyed to the pupils concerned for their achievements.

24. MONITORING PROCEDURE OF POST 16 QUALIFICATIONS

The Service Manager, Looked After Children, submitted a report which outlined the processes in place to monitor the results and progress of all Looked After Young People and Care Leavers in respect of Post 16 education and provided information on achievements in 2005/06.

Discussion took place on possible steps which could be taken to encourage more students to move into higher.

Agreed:- (a) That the report be received.

(b) a scrutiny review be undertaken to examine how access to higher education for young people who have been looked after can be widened.

25. FOSTERING SERVICES

Consideration was given to the content of a report which informed members that the fourth annual C.S.C.I. inspection of Fostering Services in Rotherham under the Care Standards Act 2000 will take place on the week beginning 7th January 2007.

The outcome of the previous fostering services inspection in March 2005 was generally positive. The recommendations were incorporated into an action plan, which was monitored closely.

The most significant recommendation in respect of fostering services contained within the JAR Inspection report and the previous fostering service inspection was to improve choice in foster placements through recruitment of foster carers.

The report submitted set out details on the following areas which were subject to ongoing review:-

- recruitment and selection
- provision of foster carers from the BME community
- improve flexibility of training provision to foster carers
- response to comments and suggestions by foster carers

The report also detailed the Recruitment Action Plan and the support available to foster carers.

Significant improvements have been made in the recruitment process. Local research into recruitment amongst the BME community has been undertaken, together with a review of national research into best practice in recruitment. A full audit of needs is underway. A recruitment plan is in development based on research and the audit of need. Prioritisation will be given to recruitment for permanence placements, for adolescents and for children with complex needs.

Agreed:- (a) That the report be received and the proposals for foster care recruitment as detailed in the report be endorsed.

(b) That the outcome of the C.S.C.I. Inspection of Fostering Services be reported to this Scrutiny Sub Panel.

26. PROFILE OF LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN IN ROTHERHAM

The Service Manager, Looked After Children, reported that as at 25th November, 2006, Rotherham had 331 children in care.

The details submitted set out :-

- the number of looked after children in the various types of care available, with comparative figures for 2006
- the gender and ethnicity breakdown of children in care

- the school attendance record of children in care along with commentary on reasons for them missing school

Agreed:- That the report be received.

27. REGULATION 33 INSPECTIONS OF RESIDENTIAL CHILDRENS HOMES

Further to Minute No. 15 of the meeting held on the 20th September, 2006, the Service Manager, Looked After Children, submitted a report which summarised the main themes arising from the Regulation 33 visits of the following children's homes held during the period September 2006 to November 2006 :-

Creswick Road
Goodwin Crescent
St. Edmunds Avenue
Studmoor Road

Agreed:- (a) That the report be received and progress reports be submitted on each.

(b) That further reports are submitted to this Panel on key themes emerging from future Regulation 33 Inspections.

28. ACCESS TO BENEFITS FOR CARE LEAVERS

The Principal Scrutiny Adviser reported that, further to Minute No. 12 of the meeting of this Sub-Panel held on the 20th September, 2006, the local M.Ps had written to the Secretary of State as suggested and a further report on the outcome would be given at the next meeting.

It was also reported that feedback from NCH Bridges project was that the links with the Job Centre were more positive.

29. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

Agreed:- That the minutes of this Scrutiny Sub-Panel held on 20th September, 2006 be received.

30. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

It was noted that the next meeting of the Looked After Children Scrutiny Sub-Panel would take place on Wednesday 28th March, 2007 at 2.00 p.m.