

LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN SCRUTINY SUB-PANEL

**Venue: Town Hall, Moorgate
Street, Rotherham.**

Date: Wednesday, 25 March 2009

Time: 2.00 p.m.

A G E N D A

1. To determine if the following matters are to be considered under the categories suggested, in accordance with the Local Government Act 1972.
2. To determine any item which the Chairman is of the opinion should be considered later in the agenda as a matter of urgency.
3. Apologies for Absence
4. Declarations of Interest.
5. Minutes of the Previous Meeting held on 10th December 2008 (copy attached) (Pages 1 - 8)
6. The Health Needs of Looked After Children and Young People in Rotherham (report attached) (Pages 9 - 11)
7. Access to Mental Health Services for Looked After Children and Adopted Children through the Looked After Children and Adopted Children Support Team (report attached) (Pages 12 - 17)
8. Progress against Fostering Inspection Action Plan and Outcome of Ofsted Monitoring Visit to Fostering Services - January 2009 (report attached) (Pages 18 - 36)
9. Recruitment of New Foster Carers (report attached) (Pages 37 - 40)
10. Children's Homes - Summary of Main Issues and Events - March 2008 to March 2009 (report attached) (Pages 41 - 54)
11. Percentage of Looked After Children who have been looked after continuously for twelve months and who have missed 25 days or more of schooling for any reason (update report attached) (Pages 55 - 56)

12. Looked After Children Profile (report attached) (Pages 57 - 59)
13. Looked After Children Scrutiny Sub-Panel - Work Programme 2009/2010
14. Date of Next Meeting - July or 23rd September 2009

**Date of Next Meeting:-
Date Not Specified**

Membership:-

Chairman – Councillor The Mayor (Councillor G. A. Russell).
Councillors Austen, Dodson, Doyle, J. Hamilton, Jack, McNeely, P. A. Russell and Swift.
Together with Co-optees:- Mr. P. Howe, Mr. D. Trickett, Mrs. A. Lidster and Mrs. A. Wild

LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN SCRUTINY SUB-PANEL
Wednesday, 10th December, 2008

Present:- The Mayor (Councillor G. A. Russell) (in the Chair); Councillors Austen, Doyle, J. Hamilton, Jack, McNeely, P. A. Russell and Swift.

Also in attendance were:- Terry Crookall, Phil Owen and Ann Roche.

Apologies for absence:- Apologies were received from Anna Lidster and David Trickett.

8. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no Declarations of Interest made.

9. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 24TH SEPTEMBER 2008

Agreed:- That the minutes of the previous meeting of the Looked After Children Scrutiny Sub-Panel, held on 24th September, 2008, be approved as a correct record.

With regard to Minute No. 3.3 the Chairman confirmed that a meeting was to be arranged shortly.

It was also confirmed that with regard to Minute No. 6 the Fostering Inspectorate was to revisit Rotherham on the 8th and 9th January, 2009. An update report on the inspection was to be presented to the next meeting in March, 2009.

10. PERCENTAGE OF LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN WHO HAVE BEEN LOOKED AFTER CONTINUOUSLY FOR TWELVE MONTHS AND WHO HAVE MISSED 25 DAYS OR MORE OF SCHOOLING IN 2007/2008

Consideration was given to a report presented by Martin Smith, Manager of the Get Real Team, which detailed the focus of the Get Real Team in raising the attainment, achievement and aspirations of young people in care in Rotherham, mainly via short term intervention work, in addition to monitoring and supporting attendance at school across all key stages.

One of the performance indicators for the Get Real Team was to support the raising of attainment of looked after children.

The report set out in detail:-

- The percentage numbers of children who had been looked after continuing for twelve months who had missed twenty-five days or more school for any reason during 2007/08.

- Current procedure for school attendance monitoring of looked after children by the Get Real Team.
- What additional short, mid and long term action and improvements have and would be taken and their expected outcome.
- Recent performance clinic outcomes for September, 2008

Discussion ensued and the following issues were raised and subsequently clarified for the Looked After Children Scrutiny Sub-Group Members:-

- Whether the current procedures for recording children's absence was adequate in school.
- Predominant numbers of children in secondary school missing education.
- Implications of a part-time timetable for young people and the recording of absence.
- Sharing of information between designated teachers and governors and ensuring that they were aware of the role of the Get Real Team.
- Personal Education Plans for every looked after child and the importance of ensuring this was carried out.
- Explanation on the impact on absence figures with the new legislation on exclusions.
- Offsite timetables and their purpose.
- Recording of absence in schools and the need for this to be consistent across the borough.
- Links with family support.

Agreed:- (1) That the contents of the report be noted.

(2) That further training be provided for the designated teachers and governors with responsibility for looked after children be arranged.

(3) That an update on progress be provided for the next meeting in March, 2009.

(4) That action be taken on measures to improve absence figure reporting throughout schools in the borough.

(5) That steps be taken to ensure all looked after children are issued with a Personal Education Plan and any changes in circumstances recorded.

11. EDUCATIONAL ACHIEVEMENT OF LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN 2007/2008

Consideration was given to a report presented by Martin Smith, Manager of the Get Real Team, which detailed the focus of the Get Real Team in raising the attainment, achievement and aspirations of young people in

care in Rotherham, mainly via short term intervention work.

The report set out in detail the support by the Get Real Team and the interventions to raise the attainment of looked after children across all key stages, what action was being taken, the links with Sheffield and Hallam Universities, RBT and BT and the celebration events that had taken place. In addition, the Get Real Team also provided a variety of specialist training for stakeholders involved in raising attainment.

Further information was provided on the results for looked after children at the different stages 2007/08, GCSE results 2007/08 and case studies of success for some looked after children

Discussion ensued and the following issues were raised and subsequently clarified:-

- Impact on care services with the school leaving age being raised for Year 7's for this academic school year.
- Attendance versus results and the need for targeted action for achievement.
- Support by Elected Members and Designated Governors in their role as Corporate Parents.
- The value of additional support.

Agreed:- (1) That the contents of the report be noted.

(2) That an all Members' Seminar be arranged on the educational achievement of looked after children.

12. CARE MATTERS UPDATE

Consideration was given to a report presented by Simon Perry, Director of Targeted Support Services, which provided details on the Care Matters agenda.

This report followed a full review of the Care Matters agenda and gap analysis of service provision within Rotherham. This agenda had implications for Directorates across Children and Young People's Services.

On the whole service provision was good and many aspects of the proposed legislation were incorporated within existing practice. Where gaps have been identified, action plans were being developed to ensure compliance.

An all Member Seminar on Care Matters "Time for Change" (Looked After Children) was scheduled for Tuesday, 21st April, 2009.

The Department for Children, Schools and Families action log had been used as a basis for a full scale review of service provision and gap

analysis against the Government agenda involving input from across all Directorates within Children and Young People's Services. Much of the planning concerns detailed aspects of service provision and work would continue to ensure that we responded appropriately to all aspects of the agenda.

A brief summary of key aspects of the changed agenda and our response to date was set out in detail as part of the report.

A discussion and a question and answer session ensued and the following issues were raised and subsequently clarified:-

- Attendance and achievement priorities for children placed at home and the status in the gap analysis.
- Need for careful monitoring of the gap analysis action plan.
- Resource implications for meeting the action plan.
- Involvement of the independent and voluntary sector and implications from the credit crunch.
- Colour coding of the action plan to show status of actions.
- Family and parenting support.
- Physical education provision for all students.

Agreed:- (1) That the contents of the report be noted and the proposals contained within this report endorsed.

(2) That a cross directorate task and finish group be established to undertake preparation work to ensure the service met expectations within this agenda.

(3) That a report be submitted on progress in June, 2009.

13. WORK PLACEMENT AND WORK OPPORTUNITIES

Consideration was given to a report presented by Simon Cooper, Human Resources Manager, which detailed how the Officers of the Get Real Team, the Bridges Team and Strategic Human Resources had continued to work together to offer meaningful work placements for looked after children within the Council. The work placements have helped to prepare the young people for the world of work and to develop skills, knowledge and experience which may place them in a better position to apply for and gain mainstream employment either within or external to the Council.

Further developments included the possibility of placements within NHS Rotherham and British Telecommunications.

From those who applied for work placements, two had been placed in construction with 2010 Rotherham, one in Streetpride, one caring placement at the Millenium Centre, which continued after the initial thirty days, for one day per week whilst she attended college on an Access to Nursing course and one placement in childcare at Rawmarsh Childrens

Centre – the young person was now at college studying a Childcare course. In addition, one placement was offered at the International Centre, but was awaiting a satisfactory CRB check.

The greatest success this year had been the placement of a young woman in Business Administration within Environment and Development Services over the summer holidays. She had intended to register at college, but found that she enjoyed this type of work so much that she applied for and was successful in gaining a Business Administration Apprenticeship in the same Directorate.

Success within this scheme was welcomed and would positively impact on those leaving care. All Directorates of the Council were on board with this scheme and it was important to ensure that work placements remained high on the agenda.

Discussion ensued on the work placement opportunities in other organisations and whether partner agencies could sign up to this scheme.

Feedback from the young people involved with the scheme was very positive and the support and opportunities provided were welcomed.

Agreed:- (1) That the contents of the report be noted.

(2) That an update on progress of this scheme be presented to this Sub-Group in twelve months time.

(3) That work placement for looked after children be discussed with the Local Strategic Partnership and other partner agencies on how the scheme could be taken forward.

14. LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN'S COUNCIL - UPDATE AND MINUTES

Consideration was given to a report presented by Simon Perry, Director of Targeted Support Services, which detailed how the Looked after Children's Council was developed in response to the Care Matters agenda.

The Looked After Children's Council comprised a group of twelve young people aged between eleven and seventeen years who have been working together to represent the voice of the Looked after Child in Rotherham. They had their first meeting with Elected Members and Children and Young People's Service Directors on 31st October, 2008.

The meeting was chaired by a member of the Looked After Children Council and commenced with introductions. A brief presentation was provided on their work to date including initial work on their proposals to the Directors and Elected Members on the contents of the Corporate Parenting promise to them as Looked after Children.

The Council represented the views of Looked after Children. They voiced their wishes and actions they wanted to see change and these were set out in detail as part of the report.

All comments and actions suggested would be considered and a response made to the Looked After Children Council in due course.

Discussion ensued on the selection process for the Looked After Children Council and the allowances provided for children who were looked after by the Local Authority.

Agreed:- That the contents of the report be noted and the work of the Looked After Children Council be endorsed.

(2) That consideration be given to the incorporation of the Looked After Children Council details and their comments in the Rights to Rights Newsletter.

15. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

Resolved:- That, under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 2 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972, as amended (information likely to reveal the identity of an individual).

16. OFFENDING BY LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN

Consideration was given to a report presented by Paul Grimwood, Senior Operations Manager, which provided information on the concerns that children and young people who were looked after were 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 were involved in offending behaviour.

Previous reports have shown a decline in offences by young people in residential care and the report continued to follow that trend. However, offending by young people subject to Care Orders and those placed at home remained static.

The current figures related to those young people aged ten or over who had, on 30th September, 2008 been looked after children for at least twelve months. Similarly any reference to offending also related to the period from 1st October, 2007 to 30th September, 2008. This brought reporting in line with reporting to the Department of Children Schools and Families. It was acknowledged that previous reports have included offences committed by the entire looked after children population and not just those who had been looked after children for in excess of twelve

months.

Previous reports have provided figures for calendar years and although there was nothing to suggest that there would be any significantly different pattern it was obviously pertinent that different periods were being compared.

Discussion ensued and the following issues were raised and clarified:-

- Support packages for children placed at home.
- Work of the Early Intervention Team.
- Correlation of offending patterns and children placed at home.
- Issue of new guidelines regarding prosecution of young offenders.

Agreed:- (1) That the contents of this report be noted and support given for the actions outlined to further reduce offending by looked after children.

(2) That a further report be submitted, as part of the Care Matters Agenda, detailing what support packages were currently available for looked after children placed at home.

(3) That an update on the offending by looked after children be submitted in six months.

17. LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN PROFILES AND UPDATE ON REGULATION 33 VISITS

Consideration was given to a report presented by Simon Perry, Director of Targeted Support Services, which detailed the quarterly report for looked after children and the profile of numbers of looked after children.

The report confirmed that there were currently 387 looked after children, 27 of whom were open to the Children's Disability Team and the numbers increased from 353 in June, 2008.

Particular reference was made to:-

- Care Type.
- Age Band by Care Type.
- Young people with 25 or above days absence- Term 1 08/09 Academic year.

The report also provided information on issues arising from Regulation 33 reports on Children's Homes, with particular reference to the statements that had been agreed in three of the four children's homes and the level of access through the SWIFT system.

A discussion and a question and answer session ensued and the following issues were raised and clarified:-

- Children in foster care placed outside of Rotherham.
- Retention and recruitment of foster carers in Rotherham.
- Status of independent fostering agencies.
- Allowances payable to foster carers.
- Recruitment campaign and numbers of interested parties.
- Adoption procedure and delays in the process.

Agreed:- (1) That the information be noted.

(2) That further information be provided on the foster carer recruitment drive and a report submitted to the next meeting in March, 2009.

18. DATE AND TIME OF THE NEXT MEETING

Agreed:- That the next meeting take place on Wednesday, 25th March, 2009 at 2.00 p.m.

ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO MEMBERS

1	Meeting:	Looked After Children Scrutiny sub-panel
2	Date:	Wednesday 25th March 2009
3	Title:	Health needs of looked after children and young people in Rotherham
4	Directorate:	Children and Young People's Services

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

This report considers the progress made in developing health systems to meet the health needs of looked after children and young people in Rotherham. It provides information about health services and outcomes for the period from October 2007 to October 2008.

SUMMARY

The report outlines:

- Information about statutory health assessments, dental checks and immunisations;
- Teenage pregnancy in relation to looked after children.

STATUTORY HEALTH ASSESSMENTS

Each child or young person is entitled to a comprehensive health assessment on admission to care and review health assessments, which occur 6 monthly for those under 5 years and annually for those over 5 years. The aim of the assessment is to ensure that health needs are assessed holistically and that a plan is developed to meet those needs. The health plan should clearly set out the objectives, actions, time-scales and responsibilities arising from the assessment. The health plan should be reviewed as part of the child's statutory review. The first health assessment should be undertaken by a suitably qualified medical practitioner and review health assessments by a registered nurse. (Department of Health 2002).

Rotherham Health Assessments 2006/07	Rotherham Health Assessments 2007/08	England 2006/07
79.53%	70.72%	84.4%

DENTAL CARE

Up to the age of 16 years looked after children and young people can now register directly with the Community Dental Service in Rotherham. Young people aged post 16 years are able to register with dental practices in Rotherham. Difficulties can occur in obtaining dental care for children placed outside of Rotherham. In some areas, such as Grimsby, there are no NHS dental places available. Additionally, it can be difficult to get young

people who do not have a history of accessing dental services to attend appointments for check ups or treatment.

Rotherham Dental Checks 2006/07	Rotherham Dental Checks 2007/08	England 2006/07
84.65%	81.37%	85.8%

IMMUNISATIONS

There is a robust HPV vaccine programme in Rotherham. In recognition that looked after young people are harder to reach for vaccinations, the programme targets these young people by providing extra sessions aimed at those that have missed the vaccination in school or have left school. In some cases the vaccine is given at home.

Rotherham Immunisations 2006/07	Rotherham Immunisations 2007/08	England 2006/07
81.10%	80.23%	79.9%

MENTAL HEALTH

The SDQ (Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire) is a new performance indicator regarding the emotional and behavioural health of children in care (see report from Looked After and Adopted Children Support Team).

TEENAGE PREGNANCY

Research in England has shown that by the age of 20, one quarter of all young people who had been in care were parents, and 40% of young women who had been looked after were mothers. The prevalence of teenage motherhood among looked after girls younger than 18 is around three times higher than the prevalence among all girls younger than 18 in England (Department for Education and Skills 2006).

Part of the problem is that young people do not access the services that are currently available. A nurse has been employed to provide long acting reversible contraception (LARC). Part of this role will include targeting looked after young people and improving their ability to access services.

Teenage pregnancy amongst looked after young people is not recorded or collected routinely at national, regional or local levels. This makes it impossible to compare and assess the scale of teenage pregnancies amongst the population and make comparisons with other authorities. Rotherham's Teenage Pregnancy Coordinator is examining ways in which data can be collected on the number of looked after young people that become pregnant in Rotherham.

WAY FORWARD

An audit has been started, examining the quality of the statutory health assessments and access to basic services, such as GP and dental services. It has been recognised that a

health team needs to be developed, similar to teams in other areas. The audit is intended to provide data for the development of this team.

In order to establish a clear baseline and monitor the impact of any intervention with looked after young people, there is need to improve recording of data on pregnancies amongst looked after young people. Some authorities offer additional support to girls from when they suspect that they are pregnant through their LAC Health Teams. This would be possible with the development of a team.

REFERENCES

Department for Education and Skills (2006). Teenage Pregnancy Next Steps: Guidance for Local Authorities and Primary Care Trusts on Effective Delivery of Local Strategies. Produced by the Department for Education and Skills

Department of Health (2002). Promoting the Health of Looked After Children. DoH Publishing.

ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO MEMBERS
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1.	Meeting:	Looked After Children Scrutiny Sub Panel
2.	Date:	Wednesday 25th March 2009
3.	Title:	Access to mental health services for Looked After and Adopted Children through the LAAC Support Team
4.	Directorate:	Children and Young People's Services

5. Summary

Nationally the research indicates that being a looked after child on a long term basis is an important predictor of social exclusion in adulthood. There is a higher than average rate of poor mental health, drug use, anti social behaviour and poor educational attainment reduces the prospects of employment, (Social Exclusion Unit 2003).

45% of Looked After Children aged 5 – 17 years old in England have mental health difficulties, which is four times the rate of other children. It is higher amongst boys, older children and children in residential homes.

The Looked After and Adopted Support Team provide a short term (Tier 1 – 2) service of support to Looked After children, their carers, their workers, and adoptive families in Rotherham. The aim of this work is to enhance understanding of early life trauma, abuse and neglect upon children's physical and emotional wellbeing, and to support and develop skills in assisting the parenting of children who have experienced such early life difficulties

The Looked After and Adopted Children's Support Team will continue to develop their skills and knowledge to provide a quality service to support the physical and emotional needs of Looked After Children.

The Team will continue to develop tools to support workers, in particular in respect of work around transitions and change, life story, understanding the association between feelings and behaviours, the impact of early life trauma upon children, and managing behaviour. The team will continue to develop further the group work around providing therapeutic foster care provision. It is aimed to provide tools and resources that will be available to other professionals to use.

6. Recommendations

That the contents of the report are noted and the work of the Looked After and Adopted Support Team is endorsed.

7. Proposals and Details

Background

The Looked After and Adopted Children's Support Team (LAAC) was established in August 2007, with funding from CAMHS. The team comprises of:

- Anne-Marie Banks (Manager) recruited to the team in September 2008
- Sara Whittaker (Clinical Psychologist) recruited to the team in August 2008
- Three Therapeutic Intervention Worker's, namely:
 - Jo French (Recruited in April 2008)
 - John Anderson (Recruited in April 2008)
 - Philippa Ridley (Recruited in September 2008)
- Brian Sampson (Looked After Children's Activity Co-ordinator)
- Louise Bishop (Designated Nurse for Looked After Children)
- Janice Louis (Specialist Practitioner Care Leavers & Young Homeless)
- Emma Chadbourne (Admin worker)
- Janice and Louise have joined the team but continue to be managed within the PCT.

Aims and goals

The aim of the team is to provide a wrap around service to Looked After and Adopted Children, being mindful of their social and recreational needs, along with their physical and emotional health and wellbeing. The work undertaken by Louise Bishop, designated nurse for Looked After children, will be dealt with separately from this report. This report will specifically focus upon the work undertaken by Clinical Psychologist, Sara Whittaker, and the three therapeutic workers.

The Looked After and Adopted Children's Support Team's primary aims are to work towards:-

- A greater understanding by foster carers, adopters, social workers and residential staff of the needs of Looked After and adopted children in the areas of emotional health and attachment
- To assist in the planning process for placements of Looked After and adopted children, with a particular emphasis upon:
 - Planning and preparation for transitions
 - The impact of moves upon children's wellbeing
 - Life story and narratives in supporting and enabling children in making sense of identify and self.

Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ)

From April 2008, all Local Authorities in England were required to provide information about the emotional and behavioural health of children and young people between the ages of 4 – 16 years old, who are Looked After. The screening tool used to collate this information is the SDQ, which should be completed by the child's main care-giver, typically a foster carer, or residential worker, if the child is in a residential placement. The Looked After and Adopted Children's Support has provided:

- Training information around the use of the SDQ
- Information to workers and carers around completing the SDQ
- Collating information
- Working with foster carers/ children in respect of understanding the children's difficulties and providing strategies to enhance mental health and wellbeing. This might include, for example, life story work, practical advice to foster carer's around

reducing the level and extent of anxiety that children may encounter with a view to promoting more positive behaviour.

No of children in care between 4 – 16 years of age	No of SDQ's returned	No of children scoring average (0 – 13)	No of children scoring borderline (14 – 16)	No of children scoring high (16 – 40)
251	194 (57 outstanding)	97	18	87

The Looked After and Adopted Children Support Team currently work with 31 of the children who scored high in the total difficulties range

6 children receive support from other avenues

The LAAC Support Team will offer consultations to the other 50 foster carers & CYPS workers where children have scored a high in the total difficulties range, in an aim to support young people. If necessary, they will advise workers to either make a referral for more in-depth support if required from the team, or sign post to other services where appropriate.

Consultations

The Looked After and Adopted Children's Support Team offer a one to one consultation to any professional working with children in foster care, who are worried or concerned regarding a child's emotional wellbeing or behaviour. These consultations take the form of brief intervention, typically lasting between 1 – 4 sessions. They may include

- Telephone conversations or face to face appointments
- Therapeutic Intervention Worker/ Clinical Psychologist attending at meetings, (Statutory Reviews, Strategy Meetings, Case Planning Meetings, etc)
- Liaising with other professionals to arrange and facilitate Network Meetings, where a child's mental health and wellbeing can be discussed in a wider forum with the insight of a qualified clinical psychologist
- Planning and preparation of brief intervention, such as work in connection to life story work, anger management, helping a child move on, work around transitions and change, loss and bereavement, etc.
- Sign posting to longer term intervention, such as that provided by CAMHS, (STEPS, Chatham House, NSPCC), where necessary

Longer term therapeutic intervention

Can be accessed through the resource panel, and typically can include:

- Individual work with children around identity and sense of sense
- Work with foster carers around helping and supporting children's emotional and behavioural needs
- Assessing sibling relationships
- Exploring and containing feelings, emotions and behaviours
- Advice around children's needs in current placement and in terms of the longer term plans for the child
- Understanding the impact of trauma, neglect and abuse on children's emotions and behaviours
- Advising and supporting foster carers to promote therapeutic parenting

Since the team opened, they have undertaken 94 consultations with foster cares, and other professional workers. This work has included network meetings, and planning strategies of support. The team have also, coincidentally, undertaken 94 extended interventions with children and their care givers. This has included narrative work, therapy informed intervention, understanding feelings and emotions, and life story work.

Group Work for foster carers

The LAAC Support team have recently set up a group-work, working with foster carers, the aim of which is to provide skills and techniques around building children's sense of safety, security, consistency and belonging. The programme is run over 6 weeks and the topics covered include attachment theory, behaviours associated with insecure and secure patterns of attachment, what a child might bring to foster placement, the task of the foster carer, being available, helping the child build trust, responding sensitively, helping the child manage feelings and behaviours, and accepting the child, helping the child to build self esteem.

There are 10 foster carers who attend the training. It is hoped that a rolling programme can be facilitated by the team, where all foster cares can attend to develop their skills around therapeutic foster care.

Training around attachment

The team also offers a one day programme around understanding attachment theory and issues associated to parenting a child who has experienced trauma and abuse.

218 people have attended the 11 one day attachment training events facilitated by the LAAC Support Team

The team have also provided short training blocks around stress, anger management, and advice and input into the foster care and adoption training events, and support groups.

Residential Units

The Looked After and Adopted Children's Support team provide a link with each of the children's homes in Rotherham. One worker from the team takes lead responsibility of linking with units, and will provide support and assistance to workers and children within each of the units

Supporting the needs of adopted children

The Looked After and Adopted Children's Support Team, in conjunction with the Adoption Team, undertake post adoption assessments with families when requested. The team works with the family, the child and other professionals to support and understand the needs of the family.

The team provides post adoption support, with a particular emphasis upon the impact of early life trauma upon emotions and behaviour. This is delivered by providing:

- Direct work with children
- Family work with adoptive parents and their children
- Advice and teaching around the close associations between feelings, emotions and behaviours, in order to support parents in their understanding of, and ability to contain children's behaviour and actions
- Training for adoptive parents around understanding attachment and early life trauma, its impact on personality into adulthood
- Training for teachers around attachment. In particular, the associations between emotions and behaviours, and strategies for supporting and enabling a more positive experience for children within the school environment.
- A telephone help line, which include brief consultations support and advice, (typically, which will cover a telephone conversation, and 1 – 4 further additional sessions if necessary)
- Therapeutic support (based upon a sound understanding of attachment, using the DDP and Theraplay informed techniques). This has also included joint working with STEPs in delivering intervention.
- Monitoring the emotional health and wellbeing of Looked After and adopted children, using various screening tools, such as the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaires (SDQ), the RAD Questionnaire, and the cares questionnaire.

- Liaising with other CAAMHS services in supporting the needs Looked After and Adopted children
- Signposting to other CAAMHS services

8. Finance

The work of the LAAC Team is funded through LAC CAMHS Grants and mainstream funding. This is subject to review through the CAMHS Commissioning group.

Development of the LAAC Team has enabled some financial savings through an enhanced ability to provide in house therapeutic support to Looked After Children. Some Looked after Children will require specialist and long term therapeutic provision which will continue to require additional funding.

9. Risks and Uncertainties

The work of the team is dependent on ongoing funding through the CAMHS Grant. The team is now established and is developing positive working relationships with professionals within Children's services and CAMHS Services.

10. Policy and Performance Agenda Implications

The Local Authority has a statutory requirement to provide CAMHS Support for Looked After Children and Adopted Children. This is also the baseline year for a new P.I. to ensure all Looked After Children have an SDQ. Care Matters will take the agenda forward, with a clear emphasis on ensuring the emotional health of Looked After Children.

Contact Name :

Anne-Marie Banks (Manager Looked After and Adopted Children's Support Team)

Sue May (Service Manager, Provider Service)

Appendix

Events facilitated by the Looked After and Adopted Children's Support Team in 2009

Attachment training for social workers, foster carers, adoptive parents, and others involved in working with LAAC children.

Three x training sessions (5th March, 6th March full day training; 12 & 13th May (one half day training)

Additional dates to be arranged

Attachment and Education Training

Joint venture with the Get Real Team

4 x training sessions from those involved within education working with LAAC children. (5th February, 6 February, 24th March and 25th March 2009)

Fostering security programme fostering group

6 x weeks for foster carers caring for LAAC children (February – April 2009)

It is aimed to provide this course on a rolling programme to encourage a more therapeutic approach to fostering

Rotherham Happy Mondays Adoptive family support group

LAAC workers to continue show a representation at this group

Foster carer and Adoption recruitment training

LAAC Support Team to continue to input 1 x session at each of these events

Design for Life Project (in conjunction with the Get Real, Risky business,)

To be rolled out to all residential units in Rotherham commencing March 2009

Residential Units

To provide a named representative from the LAAC Team to each residential unit in Rotherham, and to provide in house consultation on a fortnightly basis

Dan Hughes (DDP) training event (April 2009)

ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO MEMBERS
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1.	Meeting:	Children and Young People’s Cabinet Member and Advisers
2.	Date:	25th March, 2009
3.	Title:	Progress Against Fostering Inspection Action Plan and Outcome of Ofsted Monitoring Visit to Fostering Services in January 2009
4.	Directorate:	Children and Young People’s Services

5. Summary

Rotherham’s fostering services were inspected in May 2008 and an inadequate rating was given overall. A detailed and substantive action plan, based upon the statutory requirements and the recommendations made by the Inspectors, has been in place since and this report gives up to date information on the progress against that action plan, with a particular focus on the issue of the previous inappropriate use of exemptions and the consequent placement of children out of category with some carers. Additionally, the Ofsted inspection team re-visited Rotherham in January, 2009 on a monitoring visit to give feed back and advice on progress made since the full inspection in May 2008. Details from the finding of that monitoring visit are also included within this report.

6. Recommendations

- (i) That the contents of this report be noted**

7. Proposals and Details

The outcomes of the fostering inspection have previously been reported to Cabinet Member, and the up to date action plan is attached as appendix 1. The action plan is established around the list of recommendations made in the original report (the statutory requirements have been completed) and advice and notes taken during feedback with the inspectors. The framework for the action plan has been devised in such a way as to identify any relevant or specific Fostering Regulation or National Minimum Standard for Fostering. Some additions have been added to the inspection plan as a result of the monitoring visit in January.

When the fostering inspection in May 2008 resulted in an overall rating of 'inadequate' the Ofsted Inspector offered to return for a monitoring visit to comment upon our progress. This offer was readily accepted and two inspectors were in Rotherham on the 8th and 9th January. It is worth noting that when the original offer was made we explicitly enquired as to whether there was a possibility of varying the inspection rating should evidence warrant it, and it was made clear in response that this was not a re-inspection, simply a monitoring visit to see how well we are doing and that therefore the rating as determined in May 2008 stayed in place until the next full inspection. In the event a report arising from the 'monitoring' visit in January was entitled *Inspection Report*, confirmed the quality rating as inadequate as in the previous full inspection report, and issued a *notice of action to improve* as a result of not meeting a particular regulation.

It was the areas of *Staying Safe* and *Organisation* which were deemed inadequate in the May 2008 inspection report and these were the only two areas which the monitoring visit concentrated on. As explained by the Inspector there is a direct link between the ratings of these two elements; first and foremost the large number of children placed with some foster carers makes *Staying Safe*, in the Inspectors view by very definition, not possible. Reducing this large number was the number one priority arising from the original inspection. It is also the case, in the Inspector's view, that any Organisation that allows such practice is also therefore 'inadequate'.

It was fully acknowledged that the moving on of children who were over number would not be a quick fix, the welfare and best interest of the child needing to be considered in every instance. Indeed this very specific issue was fully discussed with the Inspectors at the time of the original report who accepted that moving our looked after children on from the foster homes which were above numbers would take a considerable of time. There has been a great deal of planning and action since the summer, and when here for the monitoring visit the Inspectors noted (about the over numbers issue):

"..the number has reduced significantly and some work has been done on exemptions although some clarity is still require. Plans are in hand for young people to move on to more appropriate placements where there should be sufficient space."

The other significant areas of requirement or recommendation arising from the May 2008 inspection were issues around staff capacity, quality of risk assessment and level of training for foster carers, and the January 2009 Monitoring Report noted in summary:

“..the service has undertaken a considerable change in a relatively short period of time and plans are progressing well in a number of areas. The service has the capacity to achieve the outstanding plans, actions, and recommendations.”

Although the general thrust of the January report, and in particular the feedback from the Inspectors at the time, was positive there are still some areas which require attention / have not yet been completed as per the original inspection report, and consequently these were subject to *notices of requirement to improve*;

- Ensure that all exemptions to go over the fostering limit comply with legislation
- Ensure that all adults living in fostering households have an up to date criminal record disclosure
- Ensure that all children (except those placed under Regulation 38) are placed with carers with an up to date CRB disclosure and are visited as stated in the regulation

These were also part of the requirements in May 2008 and the two which refer to Criminal Record disclosure relate to the identification of two family members of foster carers who were staying in the same household and who were not CRB'd. This is not acceptable, immediate actions were taken to rectify this situation and processes were put in place to ensure that, wherever possible, there is no repeat. The inspectors also added a new requirement when they returned in January which is to;

- Ensure that any holiday accommodation used for prolonged use is suitable.

This refers to a number of our foster carers being the owners of caravans and having extended break periods during the school summer holidays with foster children. Inspectors were concerned that risk assessments had not been undertaken of the caravans themselves and there was no consistent recording of monitoring visits to them whilst the children were in placement by either the fostering social worker or the children's social workers. This new requirement has been added to the action plan and foster carers have been informed that they will not be able to use their caravans with foster children until the appropriate risk assessments have been undertaken (which we aim to complete between now and Easter).

The Challenge of Exemptions

As stated above it is the large numbers of children 'over numbers' which was always going to be the most serious issue and the most difficult to shift. Since the original Inspection 35 such children have moved to new/appropriate placements; at the time of writing 18 remain in placements over number. These children are the ones that present the greatest challenge.

The placements essentially fall into two types.

- Firstly there are those children, in the main very young, who are awaiting adoptive placements for the completion of the adoption process. The consideration for such children is whether moving them to another [hopefully short term] foster placement before then moving again to adoption would [significantly?] affect their welfare. Minimising the number of moves of children is clearly good practice and is, for that reason, a Performance Indicator.
- The second group of children are those, mainly older, who have been in placement for a long period of time [albeit out of regulation and very possibly in some cases inappropriately], but who are settled and regard where they live as their home and the foster carers as their 'parents'.

As per regulation we have taken the cases of the children over numbers to the Fostering Panel, in most cases to seek further exemption which has been approved. However in a number of cases the Foster Panel has made it clear that no further exemptions would be recommended against some of the children. The final decision remains with the Agency Decision Maker, and full exploration, including legal advice, is being determined regarding the status of such placements. A summary list is attached of the 18 children still in place, with their care plan and the dates of the expiry of their exemption periods. In all of the relevant children's case alternative resolutions are being fully explored.

8. Finance

As reported elsewhere, the local authority has made significant investment as a result of the fostering inspection and its commitment to ensuring the very best for our looked after children. This was acknowledged in the January report when the Inspectors noted:

"..the last inspection raised a specific number of actions and recommendations. Since then the fostering service has been under the scrutiny of the elected members and managers at all levels. This has also included a significant increase in the resources available to the service".

9. Risks and Uncertainties

As noted above, what happens at the time of the next full Fostering Service Inspection is vitally important in the context of the CAA. The majority of the Action Plan to improve services from those deemed inadequate in 2008 is entirely in our hands, and as can be seen appropriate progress is being made.

10. Policy and Performance Agenda Implications:

Covered in Report.

11. Background Papers and Consultation:

- Ofsted Inspection of Rotherham Fostering Services – May 2008
- Ofsted Inspection Report of Rotherham Fostering Services – January 2009
- Foster Panel Minutes
- Fostering Services Regulations 2002 and Fostering National Minimum Standards.

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ROTHERHAM METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SERVICES

Fostering Inspection Action Plan – Update 2nd March 2009

Regulation or Standard	Action Required	Plan	Who	When	Progress
All	Further research into best practice in risk assessments and safeguarding	<p>Visit to one or two Local Authorities with a high Ofsted rating</p> <p>Seek further advice from BAAF</p>	<p>AS</p> <p>MC/SM</p>	By 30.1.09	<p>E mail communication and further internet research (A.S. on bereavement leave)</p> <p>Further advice sought re Risk Assessments, CRB's and Caravan Risk Assessments B.A.A.F. advice indicates this inspection is more stringent re regulations than most</p>
Reg 27(5)	Ensure all foster carers and adult household members have a CRB	<p>Individual file audits</p> <p>Audit, review and enhancement of monitoring system</p> <p>CRB Checks on all family members monitored through carers review</p>	<p>MC and Team</p> <p>DH and HR</p> <p>MC and JC</p>	<p>30.1.09</p> <p>Commence Immediately</p>	<p>Initial Audit completed, a number of gaps in records identified (eg. Records in H.R. indicate completed CRB check but not on file) a number of family members CRB checks also out of date, remedial action being taken and monitored on spreadsheet</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Commenced, will act as a further safeguard</p>

Regulation or Standard	Action Required	Plan	Who	When	Progress
NMS 9.7	Improve quality of risk assessment	Develop new guidance and launch at Team Development day	MC/SM/R B	4.2.09	New guidance developed and workers completing to new format
		Training for all workers	DF	20.2.09	Training undertaken within development day, further training booked for 05-03-09
		All risk assessments to be reviewed and amended by worker with foster carer and loc SW. Prioritisation of cases with identified risk	MC and Team	Priority Cases 27.2.09 All Cases 13.3.09	Work commenced and M.C. agreeing prioritisation with workers individually. Agreement to ensure quality of assessment is paramount means that timescales will not be met for all risk assessments revised timescale, to have all first drafts completed by end March and all audits and final drafts by Mid April
		Audit all risk assessments	MC	20.3.09	M.C. S.M. and other members of LAAC Management team audit jointly every Friday P.M. to share the workload and ensure consistency of audit
		Audit 10% risk assessments	SM	20.3.09	Quality of risk assessments much improved

Regulation or Standard	Action Required	Plan	Who	When	Progress
NMS 9.3	Improve quality of safer care agreement	<p>Develop new guidance and format and launch at Team Development Day</p> <p>All agreements to be reviewed and amended by worker with foster carer and Loc SW. Prioritisation of cases with identified risk</p> <p>Audit all agreements</p> <p>Audit 10% agreements</p>	<p>MC/SM/R B</p> <p>MC and Team</p> <p>MC</p> <p>SM</p>	<p>4.2.09</p> <p>Priority Cases 27.2.09 All Cases 13 .3.09</p> <p>20.3.09</p> <p>20.3.09</p>	<p>Safer Care agreement redrafted and much improved, has been launched</p> <p>Reviews commenced. As with risk assessments, all need to be re-done and done well. All to be completed by end March audit and final drafts by Mid April</p> <p>To be undertaken in Friday P.M. audit sessions.</p>
NMS 6.5	Improve quality of bedroom sharing risk assessment	<p>Develop new guidance and launch at Team Development Day</p> <p>All assessments to be reviewed and amended by worker with foster carer and Loc SW. Prioritisation of cases with identified risk</p> <p>Audit all assessments</p> <p>Audit 10% assessments</p>	<p>MC/SM/R B</p> <p>MC and Team</p> <p>MC</p> <p>SM</p>	<p>4.2.09</p> <p>Priority Cases 27.2.09 All Cases 13 .3.09</p> <p>20.3.09</p> <p>20.3.09</p>	<p>Risk assessment format re-drafted and improved,</p> <p>Work commenced, amended timescales as risk assessments and safer care agreements</p> <p>Friday P.M. audit sessions as above</p>
NMS 9.7	Caravan risk assessments	Format to be developed to include bedroom sharing arrangements notes re local emergency contacts and general H+S caravan and site	MC/SM/R B	27.2.09	R.B. has completed first draft of procedure and format. Amended where necessary and agreed on 27-02-09

Regulation or Standard	Action Required	Plan	Who	When	Progress
NMS6.5		Risk assessments to be completed prior to carers' caravan holiday		Timescales will vary according to availability of caravan site and carers' holiday schedule to commence before Easter break	Information on all carers with caravans being collated and action plans drawn up. Some risk assessments will identify unacceptable risks and carers may have to be told they cannot continue to use their caravans. This may result in some resignations. Some carers have second homes including 2 in Spain. Further advice being sought from Ofsted by SP
NMS 8 NMS 9.7	Matching	Audit quality of matching information on file Ensure all children matched have a resource panel referral form even where placed in an emergency	MC/SM PA/ LSSMT/ Resource Panel	20.2.09 Commence Immediately	Initial audit indicates improved information though further improvements could be made. Prioritisation on Risk Assessments to review Matching in April Practical issues mean that not always possible to get in a real emergency, to review within LSSMT and with Team Managers (05-03-09)
Best Practice Guidance	Health Reviews	Letter to be sent to all carers	MC/ Admin		Letter sent. No medical reports received as yet. Some carers concerned about medical issues and some carers may have to resign for medical reasons.

Regulation or Standard	Action Required	Plan	Who	When	Progress
		Letter to Dr. Trend re increase in workload and need for urgent response	SP	30.2.09	Due to workload for Dr. Trend, medical information will be delayed probably beyond the timescale of the next inspection. URGENT ACTION NEEDED to consider the possibility of paying for some time from a further Medical advisor to meet the shortfall
		Follow up by all workers in supervision	Fostering Team	27.2.09	Commenced
		Collation of responses by admin	MC/ Admin	Ongoing and Complete By 27.2.09	No responses as yet, on spreadsheet to ensure monitoring
		Audit and progress review	MC/SM	27.2.09	
NMS 21.5 NMS 22.6	Quality of supervision visits and visiting frequencies	Further guidance given on Team Development Day	MC/SM	04.2.09	Supervision forms amended to reflect the 5 Outcomes.
		Audit of supervision and frequency through 1 complete file audit at each supervision and statistical spreadsheet. Sue audit 2 per month	MC/SM	Commence Immediately	Quality audit Commenced. Identified the need for further training.
Director Recommendation	E-mails to be converted to casenotes	Team informed Re-enforced on Development Day and monitoring	MC MC/SM	4.2.09	Informed Re-enforced will be monitored by file audit

Regulation or Standard	Action Required	Plan	Who	When	Progress
Working Together	SCR Training and learning the lessons	For whole team on development session	PA/SM	27.2.09	Date set for 2 hour workshop 11-03-09
NMS 7	Improve valuing diversity	Completion and launch of Policy and procedure.	RB/SM	27.2.09	Further draft Procedure by R.B. Discussed amended and finalised on 27-02-09
		All LAC reviews of non WB children to have clear consideration of needs	JC	Commence Immediately	To be monitored
		Action plan to ensure all Carers complete diversity training	AS/DC/S H	16.2.09	Audit of training undertaken indicated very few carers have current diversity training.
		Carers complete diversity training	AS/DS/S H	27.2.09 Ringfenced Courses Commenced	Work commenced and CWDC Work book will re-enforce the requirement for Diversity Training, though give options for evidencing study elsewhere. Action plan agreed on 27-02-09 to commence carers on distance learning and commission 2 workshops one by end March
		All cross cultural placements to have specific guidance and support evidenced in plans and supervision	MC/Team	Commence Immediately	To be monitored through file audit
		File Audits to monitor for this dimension	MC/SM	Commence Immediately	

Regulation or Standard	Action Required	Plan	Who	When	Progress
NMS 9.2	<p>Ensure all carers have had safeguarding training</p> <p>AND First aid</p>	<p>Ongoing monitoring and chasing of Carers</p> <p>Where carers reluctant to attend individual workers to ensure they understand the requirement</p>	<p>DS/SH/M C</p> <p>MC/Team</p>	<p>Commence Immediately</p>	<p>Commenced. Further training courses still required, most households have at least 1 carer trained further training workshops will ensure all carers have opportunity to train. None attendance at training is high (some about the nature of the role and some an indicator of reluctance)</p> <p>Workers challenging through supervision and ensuring compliance</p> <p>Where carers cannot attend accredited learning may be possible for diversity and safeguarding training but not first aid.</p>
NMS 12.5		<p>Refusal to attend to be taken to Foster Panel for consideration of de-registration (careful consideration where Reg 38)</p>	<p>MC/SM</p>	<p>Review 27.2.09</p>	<p>The review timescale needs to be amended to reflect the amount of information to collate, Early April review of all carers refusing to attend training (or failing to attend)</p>
NMS 5.3 16.2 and 4	<p>Improve management audit and accountability</p>	<p>Schedule of accountability written down in one doc. (possibly in statement)</p> <p>Ongoing audit</p>	<p>SM/RB SP Review All</p>	<p>27.2.09</p>	<p>Draft Schedule written by R.B. Discussed on 27-02-09 further work necessary to consolidate</p>

Regulation or Standard	Action Required	Plan	Who	When	Progress
All Regs and Standards	Review all	Review day	SP/MC/R B	ASAP by 27.2.09	Audit of regulations completed and some actions arising (see below) Further audit session to scrutinise NMS to be arranged by mid March
Children Act, 1989 Schedule 6	Exemptions	<p>Work closely with Panel and Locality Services collate and provide progress checks</p> <p>Feed information into LSSMT and ensure monitoring of progress Liaise with Jenny regarding IRO role</p>	<p>MC</p> <p>SM</p> <p>MC/SM</p>	<p>Ongoing for each Panel</p> <p>6.2.09</p>	<p>Exemptions being presented to panel, likely to result in unregulated placements after the March panel. To be discussed in LSSMT on 24-02-09 S.P. to collate all decisions into a report to Chief Exec. To enable shared understanding and decision making by 24-02-09. RISK for good practice reasons we will not have removed all children requiring an exemption prior to the next inspection</p> <p>A regular item on LSSMT agenda Attendance at LAAC Team Managers meeting. Initial discussion. To review role now A.D. has returned</p>
NMS 6.2	Ensure all carer accommodation can comfortably accommodate	Review of all carer accommodation and decision re capital spend	MC Information Gather SP Decision	Review Decisions by 27.2.09	Draft information completed

Regulation or Standard	Action Required	Plan	Who	When	Progress
NMS 7	Further improvements to Panel	Identify new venue - Large room, 2 smaller waiting rooms, car parking Stringent QA on Panel papers, reports to evidence against individual standards Action plan and monitoring to be agreed at LSSMT	SP MC/SM/SP PA/LSSMT/MC	27.2.09 For each Panel 10.2.09	Ongoing Action plan monitoring to be undertaken by separate planning group meeting every fortnight
NMS9.5	Improve Safeguarding processes including timescales	Monthly meeting with Annie - Close monitoring of timescales Ensure allocation of investigatory officer	MC/SM/AR AR/SM/LSLSSMT		Commenced First meeting - 14.1.09 Allocation timescales improved markedly, to be monitored. Some delays due to strategy meeting minutes being delayed, to be monitored closely through monthly meetings
NMS 32.3	Reg 38 Processes	Improve quality of the initial agreement form Reg 38s to panel within 6 weeks, review of all Reg 38's outstanding Develop admin systems to Monitor Form F Part 1 goes to panel within 6 weeks of initial agreement	SM/RB AR/SM/LSLSSMT DH	13.3.09 10.2.09 13.2.09	M.C. liaised with panel chair and devised tighter monitoring/booking system. To be presented to Team Managers Meeting 26-02-09

Regulation or Standard	Action Required	Plan	Who	When	Progress
		Development of a protocol to promote RO and SG as permanence options	SM/RB/P B	20.2.09	Agreed S.M. to undertake, Draft Cabinet Member report completed 02-03-09
NMS 23.2		Ensure all Reg 38 carers receive initial training	AS/DS	Ongoing	4 couples booked on next 2 training sessions
NMS 4.1	Improvements to Statutory Visits	Ensure on time recorded and meet requirements Consider means of ensuring visits when carers on extended holidays (caravans)	PA/LSSM T	Ongoing review 10.2.09	Discussed in LSSMT and Team Managers meeting Discussed in LSSMT and Team Managers meeting
NMS 11.1 11.4 11.5	Improvement to quality of LAC Review reports	Ensure all LAC seen by IRO ensure IRO undertakes file audit reads care plan and meets PEP review requirements review recommendations to be time-scaled and followed up	JC	Immediately and Ongoing	Improved reviewing system commenced Presentation to Team Managers meeting
NMS 24.1	Improve Case Records and Care Planning	Audit Quality of reports and relevance (are they current) Tackle drift - monitor closely	LSSMT/ JC		LSSMT aware of the need for ongoing quality audit Monitor through LSSMT. Drift is being monitored closely but care plans are subject to changing needs, shortage of appropriate placements and court processes as well as a host of other factors. It is difficult therefore to keep to pre set time-scales even when plans are tight.

Regulation or Standard	Action Required	Plan	Who	When	Progress	
Reg 29	Improve Foster Carer Reviews	Ensure QA and comments by independent manager resolve issues re oversight	MS/JC/S M/CB	30.2.09	Initial meeting identified issues of capacity, to discuss further	
		Update paperwork and improve quality - To include space for TM comments	MC	13.2.09		
		Ensure reviews brought forward following allegation - Monitor through meetings with Safeguarding	MC/SM/A R	Monthly Meetings		Meetings commenced monthly. First meeting - 14.2.09
		Monitor review timescales through supervision spreadsheet	MC	Ongoing		commenced
		Monthly meetings (for 3 months then review) to monitor progress	MC/SM/J C	First Meeting by 30.2.09		Meeting not been held will be a priority as A.D. has now returned
NMS 13.3	Improve PEP's	Ensure all children have current good quality PEP	PA/LSSM T MS	Review 10.2.09	Discussed in LSSMT, to be reviewed within current audit	
		Ensure PEP's are fully reviewed through the reviewing system in line with requirements	JC		Contained within the improved review system	

Responsible Individuals

Initial	Name and Title
SP	Simon Perry, Director of Targeted Services
PA	Pam Allen, Director of Locality Services
SM	Sue May, Looked After Children's Service Manager

MC	Mike Carter, Team Manager, Fostering
AS	Andy Symcox, Team Manager, Fostering Recruitment, Assessment and Training Team
AR	Annie Redmond, Operational Safeguarding Manager
JC	Jenny Cooper, IRO Team Manager
DH	Diane Hyner, Support Services Manager
RB	Ruth Bastin, Performance Team Manager
DF	Health and Safety Manager
MS	Martin Sadler, Get Real Team Manager (Looked After Children's Education)
LSSMT	Locality Management Team
DS	Darren Stone, Fostering Social Worker (Training)
SH	Sarah Harpham, Training Co-ordinator
AD	Anne Deeney, Service Manager – Performance and Quality

Child	Age	Length of time in current placement	Care Plan ie adoption, long term fostering, including any pertinent special needs etc.	Current Position including date that any exemption expires, whether placement identified, young persons wishes etc.
Male	10 yrs old	10 months	LT Fostering	Expires March 16 th (3 rd exemption). Promising prospective carers. Awaiting update as to will definitely move this week.
Female	8 yrs old	19 months	LT Fostering (Downs Syndrome)	Expires March 16 th (3 rd exemption). Awaiting outcome of visit to prospective carers. Possible internal placement available in short term if necessary (subject to ADM).
Male	1 yr old	14 months	Adoption	Expires March 16 th (1 st exemption). Planned move to take place after the 19 th . Linked at Adoption Panel.
Female	2 yrs old	15 months	Adoption	Expires March 16 th (1 st exemption). Link made but Panel not until August.
Male	2 yrs old	12 months	Adoption	Expires March 16 th (1 st exemption). Linking Panel in April.
Male	4 yrs old	18 months	Adoption	Expires March 16 th (1 st exemption). No match yet identified. Locality to attend next Panel.
Female	2 yrs old	17 months	As above	As above.
Male	1 yr old	11 months	Adoption (to be placed with sibling)	Expires March 16 th (1 st exemption). Locality have Form Fs but prospective carers not yet visited. Locality asked to attend next Panel.
Female	2 yrs old	12 months	Adoption/ rehab home	Expires March 16 th (1 st exemption). Case to be put to Panel that exemption should be dropped in view of numbers in placement and the more likely move of another child.
Female	2 yrs old	2 months	Adoption	Expires March 16 th (1 st exemption). Carers identified, awaiting Linking Panel date.

Child	Age	Length of time in current placement	Care Plan ie adoption, long term fostering, including any pertinent special needs etc.	Current Position including date that any exemption expires, whether placement identified, young persons wishes etc.
Female	7 yrs old	2 yrs 7 months	Adoption	Expires March 16 th (1 st exemption). Carers not yet identified.
Female	8 yrs old	2 yrs 7 months	Adoption	As above.
Female	2 yrs old	9 months	Adoption	Expires Mid April (1 st exemption). Awaiting update re prospective carers.
Female	3 yrs 7 months	1 yr 8 months	Adoption	Expires Mid April (1 st exemption). Awaiting update re prospective carers.
Male	1 yr 7 months	1 yr 7 months	Adoption (complex proceedings)	Expires Mid April. Seeking update
Male	10 yrs	1 yr 8 months	Adoption/ LT Fostering	Expires Mid April. Seeking update
Male	5 yrs	14 months	Adoption	Expires Mid June. Seeking update.
Female	17 yrs	2 yrs 1 month	Independent Living	Expires Mid August. Will seek update.

ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO MEMBERS
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1.	Meeting:	Looked After Children Scrutiny Sub Panel
2.	Date:	Wednesday 25th March, 2009
3.	Title:	Recruitment of new Fosters Carers
4.	Directorate:	Children and Young People's Services

5. Summary:

This is an update report on the progress against the foster carer's recruitment campaign, previously considered by cabinet member.

The report gives an up to date position in terms of new and potential foster carers and analyses the resource implications arising from initial success within the campaign.

6. Recommendations:

- 1. Report being received**
- 2. That the progress made in recruiting additional foster carers to Rotherham be welcomed**
- 3. That support be given to the plan to increase the resources within the fostering recruitment team in order to meet the new and additional demand.**

7. Proposals and Details:

A shortage of foster carers has been the single biggest challenge to Rotherham meeting its corporate parenting responsibilities in respect of our looked after children. One of the consequences of the shortage of the foster carers was the practice of placing greater numbers of children with foster carers than those carers were registered for – practice carried out under the authority within the Fostering Regulations which allow ‘exemptions’ in certain exceptional cases. This practice of going ‘over numbers’ resulted in a Fostering Inspection finding of inadequate in the summer of 2008. Since that inspection the practice immediately ceased and the local authority has made significant additional investment in order to place looked after children within the Regulation, the majority of these places being out of Authority.

Whilst this dealt with the immediate issue, it was clear that continued practice of placing our children out of authority was not appropriate or sustainable from both a cost point of view or more importantly ‘welfare of the child’. Consequently the Local Authority invested in a professional recruitment campaign in order to increase our provision and numbers of Rotherham foster carers. This campaign was finalised in November 2008, with a planned major launch in spring 2009. In order to commence momentum around the campaign, it was agreed that there would be a limited amount of publicity and action taken in the ensuing period. This activity, such as an article in the Rotherham news, direct mailing to key and influential community figures such as school governors, and a limited amount of publicity material in the form of posters and banners has had very significant success.

The second part of our plan to improve and increase foster carer recruitment was to review and make more efficient the process. At the time of the fostering inspection last summer, the Fostering Service consisted of one team who were responsible for the whole range of fostering duties, from initial enquiries of interest, through recruitment, selection and assessment to the placement of children and the ongoing support and review of carers. The recruitment of a second Fostering Team Manager and the establishment of two quite distinct teams to break down the process has resulted in considerable efficiencies. The scrutiny of enquiries and initial visits means that the ‘weeding out’ process of inappropriate applicants is much greater (previously considerably more effort and time would have been expended before such conclusions were arrived at), the speed of the assessment and training programmes are now tighter and the capacity of the workers has been increased. In the calendar year up to December 2008 there were three training course for prospective foster carers (an average of 8 on each course), and this number per year has been the average norm in recent times. As a result of the limited publicity referred to above, and the numbers of people coming forward expressing an interest in fostering, it is very pleasing to note that we currently have training courses that have commenced in February, March and another for April. The total number of applicants on these three training courses exceeds the total for the whole of last year. It should be noted that the numbers of interested individuals and couples commencing training for foster caring does not translate into the equivalent number approved as foster carers. The British Association for Adoption and Fostering (BAAF) research shows that there will be up to a 50% fall out rate during the training. It is very pleasing to note that the indications from the training that has run so far are that our fall out rate is likely to be considerably less than this, and the reason would appear to be greater attention being given at the enquiry and the initial visit stage.

The process for the recruitment of foster carers falls into four stages.

1. Registration of interest – this is the enquiry stage and is vitally important in terms of the professionalism of the response given. A dedicated phone line and the advertising campaign means that such enquiries are dealt with by a professional fostering social worker and are immediately sent out information packs. The

importance of this first direct contact cannot be emphasised enough and it is right and appropriate that it has been given particular attention by the Fostering Recruitment Team Manager. At the time of writing there are currently **twenty** people who are at the stage of initial enquiry (seven of these have been on-line enquiries as a result of the new web site).

2. Initial visits – after the initial enquiry and conversation with a recruitment foster social worker, prospective carers are given time to receive and consider the information sent out to potential applicants and a follow up visit is arranged. In fact ‘initial visit’ does not convey the importance or the amount of work involved at this stage. It will often be more than one visit, it is the time at which those initial enquiries of interest are nurtured and detailed information given, and it is the point at which any potential checks and so on start to be made. Again BAAF statistics indicate that the attrition rate at the initial visit stage can be as high as 75%; in Rotherham our current practice reverses that because around 75% of individuals and couples who receive initial visits are engaged and enthused and go onto the next stage. There are currently **twenty seven** applicants at the initial visit stage.
3. Preparation training – it is difficult to think of a more important role in our communities than that of being a foster carer, and therefore it is entirely appropriate that the training for such a role is substantive, challenging and rewarding. As reported above there are currently three training programmes commenced or planned and the training is undertaken by the fostering social workers. It is also during this training period that the very full assessment commences which will ultimately (hopefully) lead to approval as foster carers. These are major pieces of work for fostering social workers and each worker is able to undertake four at any one time. There are currently **twenty six** sets of potential carers who have commenced or who are booked on to preparation training, four of these are friends and families (Regulation 38) carers and two are Families Together Carers. Another training course is being scheduled for May to meet the demand.
4. Final Assessment and Foster Panel for approval as carers. **Three** new sets of carers are due to be considered at the March panel.

All of the above numbers are very encouraging but also have significant resource implications: The fostering recruitment team currently consists of 3.1 full time equivalent foster social workers and a team manager. As reported above each worker can be completing four assessments at any one time, but they also have to deliver the training which is a substantial time commitment. The greater number of applicants to be foster carers means a greater need for assessments and training, and urgent temporary action has had to be taken to increase the capacity of the fostering recruitment team to meet this on going level of demand. It is proposed that these temporary arrangements are substantiated by the creation of two additional full time equivalent posts within the recruitment team.

As is clear from above the recruitment and provision of fostering is a process driven exercise. Therefore the greater the number of applicants, the greater the number that complete training and receive satisfactory assessments, the greater the need for Foster Panels. Currently Rotherham runs a Foster Panel once a month and increasingly these are becoming all day events. There is the potential for us to consider the need for a greater number of panels in the future because not doing so could result in the unsatisfactory position of people applying to be foster carers, undertaking training and in depth assessment and therefore being very keen to be looking after children, then finding their progress delayed by the need for formal recommendation of approval from a panel.

In addition to the pressure on the recruitment team it also follows that an increase in foster carers will have a knock on effect for the second fostering team whose responsibilities are around the ongoing support and review of foster carers. BAAF recommendations for good practices is that fostering social workers should manage 10 foster carers per worker, our enquiries indicate that in fact the average amongst local authorities is between 12 and 15 carers per worker. In Rotherham the current number is 20 per carers per worker.

8. Finance:

The Council has recognised the importance of the additional investment of this vitally important area of provision for our looked after children's services. The bulk of this investment has been identified to pay for the increased need and demand for out of authority placements, however it is proposed that an amount of the additional investment for fostering services be utilised to increase the resources - in particular fostering social workers – to meet the demand as laid out above. Such use of resources is to all intents and purposes 'invest to save', because the greater the number of in-house foster carers, the less the need for going out of authority. It is also the case that the cost of in-house foster care is significantly less than the alternatives.

9. Risks and Uncertainties:

The Corporate Parenting role of a Local Authority is probably, alongside its duties of safeguarding the welfare of children, its single most important task and responsibility. Without increasing the numbers and quality of foster carers we will continue to incur considerable expense by going out of authority and to put at risk the positive outcomes for our looked after children by placing them away from their own communities.

10. Policy and Performance Agenda Implications:

Fostering services are due to be re inspected in May, 2009, and a monitoring visit in January by Ofsted expressed strong support for the progress that Rotherham has undertaken in tackling the issue of shortage of foster carers. The outcome of the fostering inspection is a vitally important component of the Local Authority's CAA performance.

11. Background Papers and Consultation:

- Ofsted Inspection of Rotherham Fostering Services – May 2008
- Ofsted Inspection Report of Rotherham Fostering Services – January 2009
- BAAF Good Practice Guidelines

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ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO MEMBERS

1. **Meeting** **Children and Young People’s Services Cabinet Member and Advisers & Looked After Children Scrutiny Panel**
2. **Date** **Wednesday 25th March 2009**
3. **Title** **Summary of main issues and events Children’s Homes March 2008 to March 2009**
4. **Directorate** **Children and Young People’s Services**
5. **Summary**

This report provides a Summary of the main issues and events occurring in Rotherham’s mainstream Children’s Homes between March 2008 to March 2009.

- Goodwin Crescent Children’s Home, Swinton,
- Hollowgate Young Person’s Centre, Town Centre,
- St. Edmunds Avenue Children’s Home Thurcroft,
- Silverwood Children’s Home, East Herringthorpe
- Studmoor Road Children’s Home, Kimberworth Park.

The report draws heavily on the visits and reports made under Regulation 33 of The Children’s Home’s Regulations 2001 [**attached as appendix 1**] including the outcomes for LAC, feedback from Member visits and Ofsted Inspection Reports. It also clarifies statutory requirements and guidance, particularly in relation to the registration of the Local Authority as a provider of residential accommodation.

6. **Recommendations**

1. **That Members receive the report.**
2. **That the Operations Manager, Looked After Children Resources continues to undertake the visits and reports under Regulation 33 Children’s Homes Regulations 2001**
3. **That Cabinet Member for Children and Young People’s Services formally approves the Statement of Purpose of each of the home’s registered with Ofsted.**
4. **That relevant matters are reported on a quarterly basis commencing with the next report**
5. **That the budget figures illustrated in section 8 of the report are confirmed for 2009/2010**
6. **Operations manager to continue to consult with CWDC and with internal HR to ensure Rotherham are prepared for future changes in staff qualification standards**

7. Proposals and Details

In 'Time for Change', a summary of the Care Matters Agenda, the Government recognise that; "wherever possible we should support children within their own families". However, there is equal recognition that there are some children and young people who need to be cared for outside their immediate family.

In Rotherham there are a number of children, currently in excess of 360, for whom living with their own family is not possible. For some this may be a temporary situation whilst for others the situation may be for much longer and indeed it may be that some never return home. For the majority of the young people the best practice is to look to place with their extended family or in a substitute family situation, e.g. foster care. However, there are some children for whom foster care is not the answer.

For some children and young people the Children's Home setting is more appropriate. The level of attachment, of having to fit in and perhaps conform to another family's values and norms can be unnerving and whilst there are values and norms within children's homes, the nature is quite different and for some children can provide structure and security and an opportunity to develop in a setting different to the family situation of which they may have had negative experience.

Registration of homes and Regulatory body

Of the five homes considered here, 4 are registered with Ofsted who act as *the regulatory body*. The exception is Hollowgate which is not subject to registration as it is seen not as a children's home but as a service supporting young people toward independence rather than providing care.

Certificates of registration are prominently displayed in each of the homes and provide specific detail of the *conditions of registration*.

The certificate for Studmoor Road for example indicates that the home:

- Was registered on 3rd June 2008
- May provide care and accommodation for no more than 6 children of either sex from 12 years to under 18 years at any one time
- May provide care and accommodation for children outside the specified age range in an emergency situation when notified and agreed in advance by Ofsted

Statement of Purpose and Children's Homes Regulations 2001

Each home also has a *Statement of Purpose and Function*. This Statement is designed to accurately describe what the home sets out to do for the children it accommodates, and the manner in which care is provided. The Statement of Purpose provides all the information required in Schedule 1 of the Children's Homes Regulations 2001 and it must be produced in a form that can be understood by placing social workers, staff, and any parent or person with parental responsibility for a child. Furthermore, The *Children's Homes Regulations [appendix 2]* indicate that the registered person [in the case of a local authority, the elected members] formally approves the Statement of Purpose of the home, and reviews, updates and modifies it where necessary, at least annually. Any proposed significant changes or modifications are notified to the Commission before implementation.

Statements for all of the homes have been reviewed within the past 12 months with amendments made in three cases.

At **St. Edmund's Avenue** the major change has been an increase in the numbers of young people accommodated from 5 to 6.

At **Studmoor Road** a similar amendment has been made with regard to numbers accommodated, however, the major change here has been the nature of service provided. The home now providing for the long term care needs of children rather than the respite and emergency provision that was previously provided.

At **Silverwood** the reverse to that at Studmoor has occurred, with this home re-named (previously Creswick Road) and now providing for respite and emergency placements.

There are major changes happening at **Hollowgate**, these changes will be reflected in a new statement specified by Action for Children currently under development.

Capital Investment

Three of the homes have been subject to significant capital investment in 2008.

- The investment at Silverwood is perhaps the most noticeable in that as well as the main building benefiting from new windows, new fitted kitchen, new bathroom and toilet, the garage has been converted to a games room and the garden landscaped to include a new patio area.

Most significantly, the house next door has been acquired on a ten year lease to become part of the provision and allow the development of the service, extending from 5 beds to 7 and enabling those children requiring emergency placements to be kept separate from those coming in for respite.

The quality of the refurbishment programme is good and was overseen at a strategic level by the Director of Resources and Access and at an operational level by the premises manager for children's homes. The home was officially re-opened on 14th November by the Mayor of Rotherham.

- Investment at St. Edmunds Avenue Children's Homes has allowed for a new conservatory to be installed. This has extended the living space at the home and has proved very successful. The home has also had a new kitchen fitted and the bathroom and toilet upstairs are in the process of being upgraded.

- Studmoor Road has benefited from new windows, a conservatory, landscaped garden, improved security via new fencing and gates. The manager, staff and children have all commented on how much better the home looks.

- Goodwin Crescent was not subject to the improvement programme. This is because the projected cost is beyond the minor capital bid threshold. A separate bid has been submitted and it is hoped that work will commence in 2009 on this building.

The situation at Hollowgate has previously been brought to the Cabinet Member and Advisors. An update to the situation is that the service has moved to temporary new premises at Nelson Street pending the new Hollowgate being built. The premises at Nelson Street had been office accommodation but a conversion of the premises has allowed for the placement of up to six young people in bed-sit type accommodation. Despite misgivings about the move to Nelson Street from many quarters, the staff team and young people are actually very pleased with the new premises.

Placements of young people

St. Edmunds Avenue is one of our long term homes and at March 1st 2008 5 young people were living there. A year later four of the five remain and the fifth gave birth to a baby in September and is now living in supported accommodation; an extension of Hollowgate. Two other young people have now joined the group with plans to remain at St. Edmunds until they are 18 years old.

At March 1st 2008 5 young people were living at **Studmoor Road** and two are still there. One moved on to an independent placement and is doing reasonably well, whilst the other two have returned home to their families and are doing ok. Three other children have since moved and are likely to remain there until they are 18 years old.

At March 1st 2008 5 young people were living at **Goodwin Crescent** and currently 4 remain there. One young person returned home to his family and his place has been filled.

At March 2008 the service at **Silverwood** was running as an outreach service whilst the home was being re-furnished and awaiting registration. The home re-opened in August with both the emergency facility and short stay facility open. The emergency facility has operated at 97% occupancy (one young person has been in place since 4th September 2008). The take-up of beds on the short-term side has been much less operating at around 15% occupancy.

At March 2008 5 young people were living at **Hollowgate/Nelson Street** but only 1 of these remains with the service, the others have all moved on to accommodation via the housing department.

There are currently five young people living at Nelson Street with a sixth due to move in April.

In summary the homes are generally providing the services that they set out to provide in respect of the placement of young people. The one concern would be the occupancy figures for Silverwood short term service. A review of this service has commenced with consultation events planned with the manager and staff at the home, area teams and other stakeholders. A report about usage will be considered in due course by JLT.

Serious incidents

In this context, a *serious incident* is as defined in the Children's Homes Regulations 2001.

In the period March 2008 to March 2009 there have been 21 incidents reported to Ofsted:

- 8 notifications of placement of young people outside of registration (eg. over numbers, over age)
- 3 notifications of concerns regarding members of staff (allegations against members of staff by young person or other, all reported to Safeguard Unit and all investigated)
- 1 notification of attempted arson by young person living at the home
- 1 notification of young person temporarily discharged to secure accommodation
- 1 notification of young person missing from home for more than 72 hours
- 3 notifications of young person at risk from sexual exploitation
- 2 notifications of police and/or ambulance service called to the home following significant incident
- 2 notifications of young people admitted to hospital (asthma related)

Ofsted requested further information on only two of these notifications, each relating to the placement of a young person.

One was the placement of a sixth person at St. Edmunds Avenue which at the time was registered for only 5. The other related to emergency placements made at Silverwood before the registration of the home was fully completed.

The most serious incident in any of our homes was not reported to Ofsted as it occurred at Hollowgate. This involved a young person hanging herself in her bedroom. She was cut down by a member of staff, given resuscitation and then admitted to RDG Hospital. After spending 12 weeks in hospital she was discharged to a specialist placement and is doing relatively well.

Complaints

In the period March 2008 to March 2009 a total of 9 complaints were received.

- Neighbour complained of anti-social behaviour of young people at Goodwin Crescent.
- Two young people complained (separately) about the way a member of staff has behaved toward them. One of the young people has made a further complaint against the same member of staff which is currently being investigated with the member of staff temporarily removed from the home.
- 4 complaints investigated at Studmoor relating to young people complaining of the behaviour of other young people at the home.
- A further complaint has been made at Studmoor by a young person unhappy that the manager is to leave.

All of the above complaints, with the exception of the one under current investigation and the one relating to the potential change of management at Studmoor, were resolved at first stage.

Health

Most of the young people for most of the period of this report have enjoyed good physical health and there have been few issues.

As might be expected, in terms of emotional and mental health/wellbeing the situation is quite different with many of the young people exhibiting difficulties and challenging behaviour. It was particularly evident at Studmoor for a period by self harm incidents occurring. Although most of these incidents were superficial (small wounds on arms and legs) some were more concerning involving deeper wounds and consumption of medication (eg paracetamol). Alcohol and substance misuse was another problem with young people at Studmoor. Staff and young people at the homes have received excellent support from the new LAAC team and other professionals such as Youth Offending Services, Barnardo's and Know the Score in managing these issues.

Health assessments are in place for almost all of the young people; to date it appears that only one young person has refused to have the assessment.

Two young people (both from St. Edmunds) became pregnant during the period. Neither were planned pregnancies. In the first case the young person is in a long term relationship and had been using contraception. She has since given birth to a baby boy and is living semi-independently with the father supporting her. In the other case, the young person is only a few weeks pregnant and has chosen to keep the baby. In both cases the LAC Nurse and general health services are supporting the young person and staff teams.

Education/employment

We know that Looked after Children perform considerably poorer in education than their contemporaries living at home with families. Only 11% of children in care attained 5 good GCSEs in 2005 compared with 56% of all children.

All of the young people (of school age) living in the children's homes have current PEPs in place. Many of the young people are on part-time timetables and are supported by Get Real.

In relative terms the young people have actually performed very well in the past year. One young person at St. Edmunds Avenue passed 7 GCSEs at grade C+, and others from St. Edmunds and Studmoor also performed well in exams achieving at least what was expected of them.

The attendance of one young person at Silverwood has improved to such a level that the expectations in terms of exam results has risen dramatically, he along with another young person at Studmoor is expected to achieve 8 GCSEs at level C+.

Two young people are currently in apprenticeships (one with the council) the other with a well known Building firm in Sheffield. Others are in college course at RCAT and Dearne valley.

Missing from Home

This is an area that will come under much greater scrutiny this year with the introduction of a new national Indicator in terms of performance management. Interestingly in the early part of 2009 there is already a significant reduction in missing from home figures compared with the same period last year. A separate report on this issue was recently presented to the Local Children's Safeguarding Board and is available.

A summary of the issues in the homes this past year would indicate that:

- Goodwin: 2 of the 5 young people are regular and repeat "mispers", in each case it is known that in 99% of the incidents they are going home to their families.
- Silverwood: in cases reported at this home it has been noted that some young people have been subject to sexual exploitation (involved prior to admission and the pattern has continued)
- Studmoor : similar issues as Silverwood but also instances where young people have simply stayed out at a friends house and not returned.
- St.Edmunds: one young person is a repeat "misper."

Ongoing preventative work with young people regarding running away activity is taking place with Safe@Last and South Yorkshire Police supporting.

Staffing and workforce development

All of the homes have benefited from a high level of consistency in terms of staffing. The management team in each home (manager and Deputy) has remained constant and retention of care staff has been excellent with only three members of staff leaving during the past 12 months (all retiring)

The service is currently carrying three vacancies; expression of interest notices were circulated in February and the posts should be recruited to before the beginning of the new financial year subject to CRB checks.

The *National Minimum Standards for Children's Homes* indicate that Managers of children's homes must be qualified to level 4 in both management and social care. At the present time 4 of the five managers are at this level with the fifth booked on to the required element of study. The standards also state that all staff working in children's homes must be qualified to NVQ level 3 in child care. Across the service the figure for this stands at 96%, and the remaining 4% are registered to undertake the qualification.

Ofsted

All of the homes (with the exception of Hollowgate) have been inspected by Ofsted over the past 12 months on at least one occasion, and in the main the outcomes have been positive. Regulations state that all children's homes will receive a minimum of one announced and one unannounced visit per year.

The most recent inspection was at **Silverwood** and at the time of writing the formal report has not yet been received, however verbal feed back from the inspector was extremely positive and we are hopeful that this home to be rated as good with prospects of developing to an "excellent" rating.

The report of the **St.Edmunds** inspection in November 2008 initially indicated an overall rating of "inadequate", principally because of concerns and a finding of 'inadequate' in the *safe* element of the inspection. This conclusion was felt to be wholly incorrect and was successfully appealed. The home has subsequently been re-inspected in February 2009 and the overall result is 'satisfactory'. Safe was rated as 'good'.

Studmoor was inspected in February 2009 and has received a very encouraging report with an overall rating of "satisfactory".

Goodwin Crescent was inspected in December 2008 and received an overall rating of "inadequate". The manager is bitterly disappointed by this rating particularly given that in five of the six outcomes inspected the rating was satisfactory or good.

If any standards are not met when Inspected, the homes are required to provide an action plan indicating how they will address this and in what timescale. Progress against these Action Plans is the first consideration in any subsequent Inspection [**example of action plan at appendix 3**].

With the exception of Silverwood, managers and staff have generally been disappointed with the ratings supplied by Ofsted. They are convinced that the homes are operating to a higher standard than ever before and that progress in many areas is evident. In terms of premises issues, significant improvement is evident in three homes and in terms of progress made with staff development and education of young people this is a matter of record. However, the reports and ratings are there and managers and staff teams will be working harder than ever this year to ensure that there is progress made in terms of meeting standards.

8. Finance

The individual Home Managers are responsible for their establishment's budget, overseen by the Operational Manager.

The Budget set for 2008/09 in each of the homes is:

Name of home	Current budget	Projected figure to year end	variance
Goodwin Crescent:	£435,302	441,730	6,428
Hollowgate	£285,510	290,837	5,327
St. Edmunds Avenue	£456,246	450,042	-6,174
Silverwood	£434,918	441,078	6,190
Studmoor Road	£468,287	471,653	3,396

This table indicates that 4 of the 5 homes have overspent, albeit at relatively low levels. The reasons for this are the impact of an increase in salaries resulting from the implementation of Job evaluation/single status exercise. Additionally, two homes have increased the number of placements they provide for (Studmoor and St.Edmunds rising from 5 to 6), which has necessitated a need for some small increase in staffing at specific times.

9. Risk and Uncertainties

The admission of a young person to a Children's Home is a significant action and one that involves careful consideration and assessment of risk. Each young person is an individual with his/her own characteristic and personality and despite careful planning and minimisation of risk, the admission of a young person will, on occasion, lead to disruption to the daily activity of the Home.

The homes have come under considerable scrutiny from Ofsted during the past 12 months, some more than others. Goodwin for example has been inspected only once, Studmoor and St. Edmunds 3 or 4 times each. There are also indications that the nature of inspections will change.

Indications are that Standards in children's homes are to be reviewed and a new set issued 2009 or 2010. It will be a challenge to address new and presumably higher standards and minimise the risks to the current satisfactory and good ratings. Without investment, particularly in Goodwin Crescent, that challenge will be greater.

The Care Matters agenda reinforces the good practice of maintaining children within their own families and where this is not possible, within their own communities. Whilst Rotherham continues to recruit and build on its foster placement provision, the vital role played by the residential sector in the Authority's care provision remains and in terms of the quality of life chances for the young people for whom these are their homes, continues to flourish.

10. Policy and Performance Agenda Implications

The Children's Workforce Development Council (CWDC) commenced a series of national consultation events with regard to Foster and children's residential services, part of which is to look at raising the qualifications of people working in Children's Homes. The current entry level qualification for staff working in homes is NVQ level 3 or equivalent. Early indications are that this will remain the case.

At Management level the qualification is currently level 4, and the CWDC are looking to increase the management qualification whilst at the same time ensuring that there is a clear career pathway for all staff working in children's homes. A proposal is that all staff are able to access training and development opportunities up to level 6 (Post Graduation level).

11. Background and Consultation

- Care Standards Act, 2000 - The Care Standards Act, 2000, provides guidance on the standards that are to be assessed relating to the management and operation of Children's Homes.
- Children's Homes National Minimum Standards - All of the National Minimum Standards are assessed over the period of a year commencing April to March.
- Children's Homes Regulations, 2001.
- Inspection Reports of Silverwood, Goodwin Crescent, St. Edmund's Avenue and Studmoor Road Children's Homes.
- Care matters 2006

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APPENDIX 1

Regulation 33 of The Children's Home's Regulations 2001:

(1) Where the registered provider is an individual, but is not in day to day charge of the children's home, he shall visit the home in accordance with this regulation.

(2) Where the registered provider is an organisation or a partnership, the home shall be visited in accordance with this regulation by;

- (a) the responsible individual or one of the partners, as the case may be;
- (b) another of the directors or other persons responsible for the management of the organisation or partnership; or
- (c) an employee of the organisation or partnership who is not directly concerned with the conduct of the home.

(3) Visits under paragraph (1) or (2) shall take place at least once a month and may be unannounced.

(4) The person carrying out the visit shall;

- (a) interview, with their consent and in private, such of the children accommodated there, their parents, relatives and persons working at the home as appears necessary in order to form an opinion of the standard of care provided in the home;
- (b) inspect the premises of the children's home, its daily log of events and records of any complaints; and
- (c) prepare a written report on the conduct of the home.

(5) The registered provider shall supply a copy of the report required to be made under paragraph (4)(c) to—

- (a) the Commission;
- (b) the registered manager of the children's home; and
- (c) in the case of a visit under paragraph (2)—
 - (i) where the registered provider is an organisation, to each of the directors or other persons responsible for the management of the organisation; and
 - (ii) where the registered provider is a partnership, to each of the partners.

APPENDIX 2

National Minimum Standards for Children's Homes

SCHEDULE 5

Regulation 30(1)

EVENTS AND NOTIFICATIONS

Column 1 <i>Event</i>	Column 2 <i>To be notified to:</i>					
	Commission	Placing authority	Secretary of State	Local authority	Police	Health authority
Death of a child accommodated in the home	yes	yes	yes	yes		yes
Referral to the Secretary of State pursuant to section 2(1)(a) of Protection of Children Act 1999(a) of an individual working at the home	yes	yes				
Serious illness of serious accident sustained by a child accommodated in the home	yes	yes				
Outbreak of any infectious disease which in the opinion of a registered medical practitioner attending children at the home is sufficiently serious to be so notified	yes	yes				yes
Allegation that a child accommodated at the home has committed a serious offence		yes			yes	
Involvement or suspected involvement of a child accommodated at the home in prostitution	yes	yes		yes	yes	
Serious incident necessitating calling the police to the home	yes	yes				
Absconding by a child accommodated at the home		yes				
Any serious complaint about the home or persons working there	yes	yes				
Instigation and outcome of any child protection enquiry involving a child accommodated at the home	yes	yes				

APPENDIX 3

**Action plan to the statutory requirements and recommendations identified in the inspection of
Goodwin Cres. Children's Home 18th December 2008**

Standard	Comments made by inspector	Action being taken to address statutory requirements	Completion date
NMS 10	Ensure an accurate record of the menu served is kept to demonstrate provision of a suitable and varied diet (regulation 29 schedule 4)	<p>The manager and staff team in consultation with young people were piloting a programme</p> <p>In terms to maintain the programme but also keep it within the standard an accurate record of the menu served has be re-introduced to demonstrate provision of a suitable and varied diet and complies with schedule 4.</p> <p>The member of staff responsible for food and nutrition is reviewing all meals served weekly and recommending alternative menus for young people who refuse the health option.</p>	30 th January 2009
NMS 20	Ensure significant events relating to the safety and welfare of young people are notified to Ofsted without delay (regulation 30)	<p>The reporting of incidents by the manager and staff at Goodwin Crescent is taken seriously. Every effort is made to ensure that notifiable events are reported to Ofsted "without delay" However, a corporate response is employed by RMBC whereby all official communication going out is 'Quality Assured' this plus the current system (advised by Ofsted) of posting 'hard copy' reports, immediately creates a delay and renders virtually impossible the standard indicating that a system must be in place to ensure such reports are made within 24 hours.</p> <p>If permission could be agreed to e-mail all reports this would ensure a much speedier response.</p> <p>Reminder issued to all staff of importance of completing notification report as soon as possible after event and to forward to appropriate manager asap for QA purposes. Further advice and guidance given to all staff re criteria for Notification report.</p>	30 th January 2009

NMS 22	Review the sanction and restraint records to ensure they are fully compliant with the regulations (regulation 17)	<p>The sanctions log used at Goodwin Crescent was introduced in 2008 in response to previous comments from inspectors from Ofsted. The log was designed using regulation 17 as the template.</p> <p>Regulation 17 makes clear reference to Behaviour management, discipline and restraint</p> <p>Regulation 17 (4) states that The registered person shall ensure that within 24 hours of the use of any measure of control, restraint or discipline in a children's home, a written record is made in a volume kept for the purpose which shall include—</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) the name of the child concerned (b) details of the child's behaviour leading to the use of the measure; (c) a description of the measure used; (d) the date, time and location of, the use of the measure, and in the case of any form of restraint, the duration of the restraint; (e) the name of the person using the measure, and of any other person present; (f) the effectiveness and any consequences of the use of the measure; and (g) the signature of a person authorised by the registered provider to make the record. <p>In this event I would indicate that the log meets regulation 17.</p> <p>In terms of the standard it is true that standard 22(9) and 22(10) indicate that there should be separate logs (one for sanctions the other for restraint) therefore, a new log for both will be introduced not only at Goodwin but across the service.</p>	Due date was 30 th January. However, as the action required will need to be introduced throughout the service it will not be possible to manage this until end of February when the new logs will be delivered.
NMS 26	Monitor the effectiveness of behaviour management strategies and address any shortfalls. (regulation 34)	<p>Regulation 34 (1) states that The registered person shall establish and maintain a system for—</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) monitoring the matters set out in Schedule 6 at appropriate intervals; and (b) improving the quality of care provided in the children's home. <p>The manager has a matrix based on schedule 6 which is used to monitor all matters on a daily, weekly and monthly basis as appropriate.</p> <p>In terms of the specific point made regarding behaviour management strategies.</p> <p>Staff have been reminded of the importance of updating risk assessment and care plans including behaviour management strategies following any</p>	30 th January 2009

		<p>related incident. In addition to this all risk assessments are to be reviewed regularly to ensure that they remain current.</p> <p>There are systems in place to monitor these matters:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Care plan monthly summary Schedule 6 matrix Staff supervision Team meetings Placement reviews <p>The manager will ensure that the matrix re schedule 6 is completed on a monthly basis and forms part of the monthly report to the Operations manager. This in turn will be incorporated in the reg 33 report</p>	
NMS 26	<p>Ensure that all young people's risk assessments are implemented, monitored and reviewed (regulation 11 and 34)</p>	<p>Generic risk assessments are in place for all young people living at Goodwin Crescent. Additional and individually tailored assessments to address specific need are to be clearly identified, implemented, monitored and reviewed.</p> <p>Key workers review these assessments on a regular basis to ensure they remain current.</p> <p>The manager additionally monitors and reviews as per schedule 6</p> <p>The manager would like to draw the inspector's attention to the fact that comments made re. the risk assessment not having been reviewed are a little harsh as the document was only two days old.</p>	30 th January 2009
NMS 2	<p>Ensure young people know the content of their placement plan, according to their level of understanding (regulation 12)</p>	<p>The manager is confident that young people are fully aware of the reason for their placement at Goodwin Crescent and of the current care plans. He accepts, however, that there may be some plans that are not signed by the young person and this is to be addressed without delay.</p> <p>There is also the provision for young people to contribute to their monthly report/summary of their care plan. However, it should be acknowledged that some young people exercise the choice not to sign these documents.</p>	20 th Feb 2009

NMS 34	Ensure that the registered manager is qualified to NVQ level 4 in child care equivalent (regulation 8)	Manager will be registered on appropriate programme without delay.	26 th June 09
NMS 33	Ensure robust monitoring of care practices within the home (regulation 34)	Appropriate and robust systems are in place, however, the manager recognises the need to ensure that these are always given priority.	30 th January 09
NMS	Ensure robust monitoring of care practices within the home (regulation 33)	Appropriate and robust systems are in place, however, the manager recognises the need to ensure that these are always given priority.	30 th January 09

Ian Oliver Manager Goodwin Crescent

ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO MEMBERS

1	Meeting:	Looked After Children Scrutiny Sub Panel
2	Date:	Wednesday 25th March 2009
3	Title:	Percentage of Looked After Children who have been looked after continuously for 12 months who have missed 25 days or more of schooling for any reason - update
4	Directorate:	Children and Young People's Services

5 Summary

The Get Real Team (GRT) was set up to raise the attainment, achievement and aspirations of Young People in care in Rotherham, mainly via short term intervention work. It monitors and supports attendance at school across all key stages.

6 Recommendations

That the contents of the report are noted

7 Proposals and Details

By 25-02-2009, out of 216 young people of school age looked after by Rotherham 8.79% have reached 25 days or more missing from school. (19 students in total) compared to 12.06% (24 students) at the same time in 2008.

Breaking this down by placement type:

- Six young people are placed with parents,
- Two are with relatives/friends,
- Five are placed within a Rotherham children's home,
- Three placed in an out of authority residential home,
- One is presently placed in a secure placement, having been in a Rotherham residential home.
- One is placed in an out of authority foster placement.
- One is placed out of authority for adoption.

- Six of this group have a statement of special educational needs. Eight are on school action plus and one is on school action.

In terms of schooling seven are year 11, six are year 10, four are year 9, two are in year 8 and one in reception.

Out of this cohort of 19 young people the Get Real Team are working with fifteen individuals. providing teaching, mentoring support or Connexions support or a mixture of these.

The attendance of three young people has been affected by part-time timetabling. Time without provision is marked as authorised absence.

Three of the cohort have had a period of exclusion ranging from 2 days to 22 days. This level of exclusion is a significant improvement on previous years.

Multi agency training on PEPS is being provided to Social Workers, Designated Teachers, Carers and other relevant parties.

Training for Designated Governors is being offered.

Improvement in the number of in date PEPS

8 Finance

The budget is secure

9 Risks and Uncertainties

The Get Real Team is unable to provide intervention for LAC placed out of authority. The completion of Personal Education Plans is the responsibility of the child's social worker and is overseen by locality managers.

Refusal to attend school of persistent non attendees is an ongoing issue.

The effectiveness of schools in recording attendance varies.

Designated teachers lack the authority to implement effective interventions for LAC.

Timetables for LAC are not flexible enough to meet needs.

Young people on part-time timetables have insufficient provision.

10 Policy and Performance Agenda Implications

This report has been compiled with reference to Every Child Matters and Section 52 of the Children's Act 2004

11 Background Papers and Consultation

Reports form Get Real Team members.

Get Real Team attendance database.

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ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO MEMBERS

- 1. Meeting:** Looked After Children's Scrutiny Panel
- 2. Date** Wednesday 25th March 2009
- 3. Title:** Rotherham Looked After Children Profile
- 4. Programme Area:** Children and Young People's Services

The Quarterly Report for Looked After Children's Scrutiny Panel, Profile of Numbers of Children, Looked After.

There are currently 391 Looked after Children, 28 of whom are open to the children's disability team. This is an increase from 353 in June 08 and 387 in December 08.

Care Type

Type of Care	Sum	Percentage
Foster Care Inside Rotherham	223.00	56.85 %
Foster Care Outside Rotherham	69.00	17.57 %
Placed with Parents	34.00	8.79 %
Placed for adoption	17.00	4.65 %
Residential inside Rotherham	19.00	4.91 %
Residential outside Rotherham	11.00	2.84 %
Residential School	4.00	1.03 %
Secure Unit outside Rotherham	1.00	0.26 %
Other Residential	7.00	1.81 %
Other Placement	2.00	0.26 %
Independent Living	4.00	1.03 %
Sum:	391.00	
Percent:		100.00 %

Age Band by Care Type

26/11/2008

LAC as at 387

Total
Children

	0 - 5	06 - 10	11 - 15	16 +	Sum:
Foster Care Inside Rotherham	80	51	32	29	223
Foster Care Outside Rotherham	26	15	20	8	69
Placed with Parents	10	6	10	8	34
Placed for adoption	13	2	2		17
Residential inside Rotherham			12	7	19
Residential outside Rotherham			11		11
Residential School		1	1	2	4
Secure Unit outside Rotherham				1	1
Other Residential	1		2	4	7
Other Placement				2	2
Independent Living				4	4
Sum:	130	74	121	62	391

Age Band by Type of Order

	0 - 5	06 - 10	11 - 15	16 +	Sum:
C1 - Interim care order	69	18	3		89
C2 - Full care order	19	31	86	44	179
D1 - Freed for adopt. (freeing order granted)		9	3	1	13
E1 - Placement Order	33	8	2		43
L2 - Subject to emergency protection order	1				1
V2 - Accommodated under section 20	11	10	27	17	65
Sum:	130	76	121	62	391

LAC as at

Total Children 388

	White - British	White - Irish	White - Other	Asian - Other	Asian - Pakistani	Black - African	Other - Any	Dual Heritage - White And Black Caribbean	Dual Heritage - White And Asian	Dual Heritage - Other	Dual Heritage - White And Black African	Sum:
Foster Care Inside Rotherham	201	1	4	1	1	3	5	2	5		1	225
Foster Care Outside Rotherham	56		7		3		6					65
Placed with Parents	31		1				1		1			34
Placed for adoption	17											17
Residential inside Rotherham	19											19
Residential outside Rotherham	11											11
Residential School	4											4
Secure Unit outside Rotherham	1											1
Other Residential	7											7
Other Placement	1											1
Independent Living	4											4
Sum:	352	1	12	1	4	3	12	2	6		1	391