

ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO MEMBERS

1.	Meeting:	Corporate Parent Board
2.	Date:	10th April 2014
3.	Title:	Performance of children's homes as judged by Ofsted January to March 2014 and through the regulation 33 visits
4.	Directorate:	Children and Young people's services

5. Summary

This report informs the corporate parent board of the performance of children's homes as judged by Ofsted January to March 2014 and through the regulation 33 visits.

All of the homes were inspected by Ofsted during this period. These were interim inspections lasting a full day and focusing on the progress that the home has made in continuing to improve the care, planning and experiences of children and young people since the last inspection.

Three of the homes were judged to be making good progress with two found to be making inadequate progress. The judgements made at interim inspections do not affect the overall rating of the home. Therefore although Wood View was judged to be making inadequate progress it retains the current grade of Good.

The reports following regulation 33 visits to each home during the same period indicate that the homes are performing to a good standard.

6. Recommendations

That corporate parenting panel accept this report and note its content.

7. Proposals and Details

7.1 It is particularly pleasing that the two homes providing services for children with severe disabilities have been judged to be making good progress.

Cherry Tree House

Regulation 33 reports indicate that Cherry Tree House has consistently performed at a high standard. Until now Ofsted, have failed to acknowledge this choosing to focus on issues such as the delay in the repairs to the conservatory.

Thankfully the Conservatory is now complete and Ofsted were able to focus on other matters such as education, quality of care, safeguarding and welfare. The home was judged to be making good progress in all of these areas and provides a strong platform to go on and ensure a good outcome in the main inspection which should be spring time.

Ofsted rating		
Full inspection	31 st July 2013	adequate
Interim inspection	25 th February 2014	making good progress

Liberty House

In May 2012 the statement of purpose of Liberty House was altered to reflect that the home would provide a service for children with severe learning disabilities who may not have a physical disability.

The change of client group has been challenging for the home and it has taken time to adapt. Regulation 33 reports have regularly reflected that the home has struggled, however, towards the end of 2013 the signs were better. It is a testament to the manager and staff that Ofsted have now judged the home to be making good progress.

Ofsted rating		
Full inspection	1 st May 2013	adequate
Interim inspection	13 th February 2014	making good progress

7.2 Homes providing service for children with emotional and behavioural needs.

Silverwood

Silverwood has consistently performed to a high standard and this is reflected in regular positive reports from Ofsted including the recent judgement of good progress.

In earning this judgement the home has managed to overcome significant obstacles presented by the challenging behaviour of a number of children accommodated there. Regulation 33 reports over the past few months have highlighted concerns and in January 2014 the home was rated inadequate by the officer.

A visit under regulation 33 last year alerted members to some of the problems such as damage to the property, assaults on members of staff and increased police activity.

It is to their credit that the manager and staff have risen to the challenge and earned the recognition from Ofsted.

Ofsted rating		
Full inspection	12 th September 2013	good
Interim inspection	3 rd March 2014	making good progress

Wood View

This home has also consistently performed to a high standard; it is therefore particularly disappointing to be judged as making inadequate progress. Regulation 33 visits and reports have generally been very positive and did not alert managers to this outcome.

The judgement of 'inadequate progress' was based on the service not fully implementing the requirement made at the last inspection which was;

Ensure the reg 33 visits include a record of interviews with children, their parents and relatives.

The protocol and template used to report findings from regulation 33 visits was redrafted as a result of the inspection in September 2013. The new draft was implemented in December 2013 but it has taken time to ensure that the report properly evidences that interviews are undertaken. Section 7 of the February reg 33 report of the home provides good evidence. (appendix i)

In addition the inspector judged that there was a decline in aspects of the outcomes for children relating to the management of some young people's behaviour in the home.

This related to sanctions imposed at the home such as children paying back a portion of their pocket money for damage caused to a television at the home. The locking of the kitchen at night to prevent children having access to food and turning off the electricity supply to bedrooms to prevent children continuing to watch television throughout the night.

Children's Homes regulations allow for monetary sanctions to be imposed and there is a need to manage negative behaviour. Each of the issues raised by the inspector were isolated incidents, they are not reflective of the overall ethos of the home. Nonetheless instruction has been given that the power supply is not to be used as a means to control behaviour and locking of the kitchen should apply only when there is a known risk to health and safety and must be reviewed daily. The use of monetary sanctions has been suspended further to review.

Ofsted rating		
Full inspection	29 th August 2013	good
Interim inspection	11 th February 2014	making inadequate progress

St. Edmunds Avenue

The judgement of 'making inadequate progress' at the home is particularly frustrating as the inspector was so positive about so many areas. She stated for example that;

Children's safety is well promoted which provides stability and improves outcomes for children,

All children are settled and risk taking behaviour has reduced.

Staff work tirelessly to engage children in education and training with good success for some and limited improvement for others.

The reason for the judgement was due to the service not fully implementing the requirement made at the last inspection which was;

Ensure that the home does not employ a person to work at the home unless that person is fit to work at the home. Ensure that all staff files include confirmation that staff are physically and mentally fit for the purpose of the work to be performed.

Following the inspection in August 2013 it was agreed that the physical and mental fitness of all newly appointed staff would be assessed and recorded. It was perceived that this would satisfy the requirement. Further to the recent inspection, managers with the support of the Human Resources directorate have ensured that all staff working in children's homes have had this assessment and that the staff files have a record of this. (appendix ii)

Regulation 33 reports at this home have varied month to month. However, recently there has been more consistency with good progress being made.

Ofsted rating		
Full inspection	28 th August 2013	adequate
Interim inspection	24 th January 2014	making inadequate progress

8. Finance

As a result of the Ofsted judgements there has been an additional cost in terms of a requirement that all staff working in children's homes have to be assessed as being physically and mentally fit.

Following the inspection at St. Edmunds Avenue staff across all of the homes have completed a health questionnaire which has been submitted to the Occupational Health Service. This has incurred costs relating to administrative task undertaken by managers and officers from the Human Resources Team and Children's Services.

9. Risks and Uncertainties

All children's homes are inspected at least twice per year. They are unannounced. One inspection is a full inspection and the other inspection is an interim inspection.

From 1st April 2014, Ofsted will be working to a new framework of inspection of children's homes. A key change in the new framework is that a home can no longer be judged as adequate.

The new framework operates on the basis that only good is good enough for children and young people whether that is in respect of their care or education. The concept of a 'minimum' standard therefore is not applied in the evaluation criteria set for the care of children and young people.

Where a home is not yet good, Ofsted will judge it to require improvement and set out where it needs to improve.

It is expected that all homes will be Good; if not a judgement will be made of;

Requires improvement or, inadequate

10. Policy and Performance Agenda Implications

The regulation 33 visits are currently undertaken by officers from Rotherham's Safeguarding Children's Team. In January 2014 the department of Education published new guidance around this regulation. A key issue concerns the independence of the person undertaking the visit. The guidance states that:

The registered provider must appoint an independent person to visit and report on the children's home in accordance with regulation 33 as revised.

For local authority providers: The independent person cannot be employed in connection with the carrying on of social services functions relating to children.

Meeting with inspectors from Ofsted in January 2014 advice was given that the current arrangements in Rotherham were satisfactory, however, subsequent communication indicates that this is not the case and that new arrangements will have to be made as early as April 2014.

11. Background Papers and Consultation

Ofsted reports St. Edmunds Avenue and Wood View (Ofsted 2014)
IN HOUSE Special Edition on amendments to the Children's Homes Regulations from January 2014 (DFE 2014)
Children Act 1989 guidance and regulations - volume 5: children's homes
Statutory guidance for local authorities (DFE October 2013)

Contact Name:

Morri McDermott, Operations Manager - Telephone: ext. 23681
morri.mcdermott@rotherham.gov.uk
