



**Open Report on behalf of Heather Sandy, Executive Director - Children's Services**

Report to:	<b>Corporate Parenting Panel</b>
Date:	<b>10 November 2022</b>
Subject:	<b>Regulation 44 Independent Visitors Report</b>

**Summary:**

This report is the 6 monthly report on the Regulation 44 Independent Visiting Service. It serves to update members of the Corporate Parenting Panel on the work undertaken between April 22 and September 2022.

**Actions Required:**

Members of the Corporate Parenting Panel are requested to consider the 6 monthly report on the Regulation 44 Independent Visiting Service and seek assurance that the Independent Visitors are fulfilling their obligations in visiting the Local Authority homes each month as required and inspecting against the 9 quality standards as outlined in Part 6, regulations 43 of the Children's Home Regulation 2015.

**1. Background**

This report is being prepared in order to provide the Corporate Parenting Panel with an update of the work of the Independent Visitor.

Part six, regulation 43 of the Children's Home Regulation 2015 makes provision for the appointment of an Independent Visitor. There remains an expectation that the appointment of an Independent Visitor will continue to be the responsibility of the Local Authority, with clear guidance being offered as to the criteria which must be met in terms of ensuring the visitor's independence is clearly demonstrable. The visits continue to be required to be made on a monthly basis.

The Independent Visitor continues to be expected to provide a report following each visit. Part six, regulation 44 of the Children's Homes Regulations provides for the reporting of the standards.

The Regulation 44 report maintained its format providing a succinct summary of the homes under the signs of safety headings and there remains the inclusion of the

recommendations section to ensure there is clarity in prioritising areas for immediate action where these are identified during visits.

The Regulation 44 Independent Visiting Officers are with the Quality and Standards Service and are Local Authority Designated Officers. During this period of reporting, the duties have been exercised by three Independent Visitors who have shared the duties across the seven Local Authority homes and two independent schemes.

The attached report therefore details the homes performance against the standards and provides an overview of how the standards are being met. A particular focus is given to the way in which the Local Authority have adapted their practice and safeguarded young people during the on-going COVID-19 pandemic.

## **2. Conclusion**

Across the homes the Regulation 44 visitors have seen evidence of excellent care being provided to the children. The relationships between the young people and their carers have been observed to be caring and respectful. All homes are currently Ofsted rated as *Good* or *Outstanding*. While this has not always been the case, it reflects the work that homes have undertaken to ensure that good standards of care, or better, are being afforded to the children residing in Lincolnshire County Council's residential homes. There continues to be issues with staffing across many of the homes, but these shortages are being managed by the flexibility and commitment of staff.

The staff teams have worked tirelessly with the young people and their families to maintain their links and attachments to their family networks, and this has been evidenced in the creative ways that family time has been promoted.

During this period there has been evidence of significant joint working between the homes. The management teams meet regularly and work to create consistency across the homes. Best practice and ideas are shared, and the team offer support to one another. Peer audits are being completed by the managers, providing an opportunity for critical reflection and constructive feedback.

All the regulation 44 visits have concluded that each home continues to safeguard the children in their care and promote their wellbeing as defined by Regulation 44.4 (a) & (b)<sup>1</sup>.

## **3. Consultation**

### **a) Risks and Impact Analysis**

N/A

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<sup>1</sup> 44.4 The independent person must produce a report about a visit ("the independent person's report") which sets out, in particular, the independent person's opinion as to whether—

(a) children are effectively safeguarded; and

(b) the conduct of the home promotes children's well-being.

#### 4. Appendices

These are listed below and attached at the back of the report	
Appendix A	Regulation 44 Independent Visitors Report 6 monthly report 2022

#### 5. Background Papers

No background papers within Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972 were used in the preparation of this report.

This report was written by Carolyn Knight, Quality and Standards Manager, who can be contacted on 07879603618 or [Carolyn.knight@lincolnshire.gov.uk](mailto:Carolyn.knight@lincolnshire.gov.uk).

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