

**REPORT FOR THE  
INDEPENDENT VISITING  
SERVICE**

**October 2022 – March 2023**

*Written by Regulation 44 visitors; Fiona Watters and Kim  
Murray*

## **Basis of report**

This report is being prepared to provide the Corporate Parenting Panel with an update of the work undertaken by the Independent Visitors. This report covers the period from 1.10.2022 to 31.03.2023.

## **Introduction**

The Children's Homes Regulations 2015 (Part 6, Regulation 43) 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. The visits continue to be a monthly requirement.

Within the regulations it is expected the Independent Visitor will report on the quality standards in specified areas. These can be summarised as follows:-

- (a) the quality and purpose of care standard (see regulation 6);
- (b) the children's views, wishes and feelings standard (see regulation 7);
- (c) the education standard (see regulation 8);
- (d) the enjoyment and achievement standard (see regulation 9);
- (e) the health and well-being standard (see regulation 10);
- (f) the positive relationships standard (see regulation 11);
- (g) the protection of children standard (see regulation 12);
- (h) the leadership and management standard (see regulation 13);
- (i) the care planning standard (see regulation 14).

The Independent Visitor continues to provide a report following each visit. Overall, the Regulation 44 report has maintained its format, providing a succinct summary in how the individual homes are meeting each of the care standards. There is also a section of recommendations to ensure there is clarity in prioritising areas for immediate action where these are identified during visits. The report format continues to include a section for the Home's Manager's to add their comments on the findings of the visits. This is to ensure the independent report is unchanged, but the Home's Managers can provide additional information, context, or details on how any changes are being implemented.

### **The Independent Visitor**

Since November 2022, Regulation 44 visits have continued to be undertaken by three Independent Visitors: Kim Murray, Fiona Watters and Rachael Powis (Rachael left the team in February 2023 and is being replaced by Amy Beacham). The visiting duties to Lincolnshire County Council's eight residential homes and two supported living provisions are shared between the Independent Visitors. Home inspections are rotated regularly throughout the period and are currently undertaken to: Albion Street, Eastgate, The Beacon, Haven Cottage, Northolme, Robin House, Strut House and Lincolnshire Secure Unit. The semi-independent homes are in Grantham (Denton) and Gainsborough (Rowston) and provide accommodation for young people aged 16 to 18 years old. Both homes are inspected under the Regulation 44 process every 4 months. This is currently not mandatory however the Local Authority commits to this as part of their quality assurance process.

The Independent Visitors have continued to maintain positive working relationships with residential home managers, staff, and young people. The team manager for the Independent Visitor periodically attend homes manager meetings to ensure that feedback on the service is shared and fed back.

As part of the visits, the Independent Visitor seeks feedback from a range of key stakeholders including the young people, parents, social workers, health, education partners and other relevant individuals to gain a holistic view of the homes. Unfortunately, at times feedback is not always forthcoming and therefore the Independent Visitors are currently reviewing how this could be gained differently.

There has been no need to implement the dispute resolution procedure since the last report was completed.

### **Home Manager Updates**

Since November 2022 the home management structure has in the main remained stable, with limited movement. These are as follows:

#### **Albion Street**

The Registered Home's Manager (Cheri Blackmore) and Assistant Manager (Samantha White) remain unchanged.

### **The Beacon**

The Registered Home's Manager (Gemma Hart) and Assistant Managers (Nicola Chambers and Peter Hesketh) remains the same.

### **Eastgate**

The Registered Home's Manager (Katie Sansom) and Assistant Manager (Kelsie Tyrrell) at Eastgate remains unchanged.

### **Haven Cottage**

The Interim Home's Manager of Haven Cottage remains unchanged (Vicky Cooke) A new Assistant Manager was successfully recruited commencing their employment in January 2023 (Kelly Hutson). The new Assistant Manager joined the team from Strut House. The Interim Home's Manager is not currently registered with Ofsted, however the registration process has commenced and registered manager interview has been booked.

### **Lincolnshire Secure Unit**

The Registered Home's Manager (Dave Clarke) and three Assistant Managers (James Guthrie, Debbie Norton, Jenny Marshall) remain unchanged.

### **Northolme**

The Registered Home's Manager (Gemma Benson) and Assistant Manager (Lauren Batty) have remained unchanged.

### **Strut House**

Strut House's Registered Manager (Maggie Nowland) and Assistant Manager (Heidi Harris) remain unchanged.

### **Robin House**

The Registered Home's Manager (Jeanette Mitchell-Fox) and Assistant Manager (Helen Wallis) remain unchanged.

## **Rowston and Denton**

There have been no changes to the management structure of Rowston or Denton. Dean Johnson remains the Assistant Manager for both homes, with Andy Morris (Corporate Parenting Manager) having overall management responsibility.

### **The Voice of the Child**

Across the homes there is continued evidence of the young people's voices being captured and listened to. During visits, young people are consistently seen to be confident and articulate in expressing their views and opinion regarding the care they are being given. For example, the young people at Albion Street have voiced their displeasure regarding the amount of external visitors to their home and have therefore drawn up a 'Charter' stipulating how they wish visitors to behave and interact with them whilst in their home. This 'Charter' is displayed above the signing in book. This has also been distributed to Managers within the Local Authority in order that it is shared with staff who may wish to visit. In the homes for children with disabilities, there is evidence of staff using different communication methods to gather the young people's views and wishes. Direct observations have been witnessed of staff engaging with young people using a variety of communication tools, including PECs, social stories, body language and facial expressions to help capture the young people's voices and how they are feeling.

Each home is visited by the advocacy service regularly. The Independent visitors have seen evidence of children being encouraged to access this service and speak freely to their advocate. Details of the nominated children's advocate are displayed within the homes, also providing their contact details.

Each home has the ability for the young people to provide their voice and feedback, using the comments and compliments process. It is recognised that this process is not utilised by all of the young people, however when discussed with the young people they have been able to tell the independent visitor how the process works and where the forms are located.

Within the homes the majority of the young people have been observed to be confident in raising requests or issues they wish to discuss with the Homes' Managers and care staff. When spoken to during visits they have confirmed that they feel able to speak to staff and management. There appears to be an open-door policy across the homes, where the children feel they can access

staff at any time. In addition, there has been evidence of staff advocating for young people and sharing young people's views with management where required.

The mainstream homes continue to hold regular residents' meetings; in some homes these are known as "Chill and Chat" or "Pizza Pow Wow" meetings. These are held weekly or monthly depending on the preference of the home. Young people are encouraged to participate in these meetings, and in some homes the young people are offered the opportunity to act as the chair of the meeting. The meetings enable the children to be involved in key decision making and to have a say on developments/changes within the home. The children share their views on a range of topics including meal planning, activities, routines, boundaries and the impact of one another's behaviour within the home. Within this arena the young people have the opportunity to pose questions to the management team, with a response being provided for the next meeting and this then being shared with the young people.

Evidence has been seen of staff supporting young people completing their consultation documents for their Child in Care reviews, this has been viewed within the young people's files. Staff members will regularly complete direct work with young people to ensure they are able to participate in their review and share their views. Young people are supported to attend their reviews and will often chose a member of staff they wish to attend with. Independent Visitors gather feedback from the Independent Reviewing Officers as part of their visits.

Within some homes there are display boards that celebrate the young people through 'Voice of the Child', 'You said we did' or creative displays. There is also continued use of photographs to evidence the young people's input and some of the homes are using monthly newsletters and summaries to share information, including any successes the young people may have had. These monthly summaries are sent out to parents/family members, social worker and other relevant professionals including Independent Reviewing Officers.

The homes continue to advocate of the behalf of the young people. Independent Visitors have seen the homes advocating and challenging decision making regarding a number of issues including challenging the delays in providing tutors for young people when they are refusing to attend school, challenging decision-making regarding family time (when the young people have requested that time is extended), as well as advocating the needs for the young people to have more independence and freedom.

### Quality of care

The homes continue to deliver a good, and in some cases excellent, quality of care. There has been widespread evidence of staff members showing genuine investment in the individual needs of young people. Staff advocate for the children and ensure they have positive experiences. The homes ensure that children's interests and hobbies are followed, and they facilitate the children accessing community groups and activities. There is also evidence of young people being provided with safe, consistent, predictable care and routine, which is emotionally warm.

The homes demonstrate that they understand the children's individual needs and care plans. Risk Assessments and Individual Crisis Support plans are regularly updated to reflect current risk, triggers and red flags as well as strategies to deescalate any challenging behaviour being displayed. On the whole the Independent Visitors have noted that in the majority of homes there has been a reduction in incidents involving any physical intervention. There have been many examples over the previous six months where the homes have been actively promoting independence in young people to support them in their next steps. This is specific to the child and has included examples such as a young person catching public transport to and from school, increased free time in the community, support with budgeting and managing their personal allowance, shopping and accessing activities in the community alone.

The dangers of the internet and social media are regularly risk assessed, with the young people being given appropriate age related access, following extensive 'staying safe' direct work being completed. This includes mobile phone agreements being put in place regarding usage and agreement for staff being able to monitor the devices.

Training remains a priority for the homes and staff report that they can access this regularly. All of the home have a training Matrix to ensure that staff are aware of the mandatory training that must be undertaken. In discussion with Managers, staff are afforded time in the shift rota to allow them time and opportunity to attend training events. Specialist training continues to be provided where required, for example Strut House, The Beacon and Haven Cottage all have in depth training on specific health needs of their young people.

The mainstream homes are also being supported via the Practice Advisors to support their understanding and development of key Practice Frameworks utilised by Children's Services.

All the homes have continued to participate in multi-agency partnership working, with health, police, schools, social care, and other agencies. Monthly risk management meetings continue to be held and evidence has been seen of staff attending and contributing to these. The homes have demonstrated their commitment to ensuring the children regularly attend their education provisions and in cases where young people are not, this is proactively being addressed. As well as the above evidence has been seen of staff attending S47 strategy discussion and relation to Haven Cottage and the Beacon the management team have been attending the Deprivation of Liberty working group.

A recent initiative that has been put in place is the creation of link CAMHS workers who are primarily attached to Robin House, however in a positive move have been utilised across the mainstream homes, whilst Robin House is waiting to come online. Examples have been seen at Northolme of how they have supported the young people and staff with consultations and formulation clinic's which has given staff more of an insight into the needs of the young people and the support that they can offer to them. At Albion evidence was seen of a three way consultation between the assistant home manager, key worker and the CAMHS worker, in relation to one of the young people's sleep routines. Feedback was very positive in terms of giving them tools and advice to support the young person.

One of the most important priorities for young people is maintaining their sense of identity and links with their families and significant people in their lives. The homes continue to work with agencies and families to ensure family time is promoted wherever possible. Homes ensure that family times plans are followed and often take responsibility for facilitating children's time with their families. There is also excellent communication between homes where there are siblings residing in different settings and responsibility for supervising family time is shared between the homes.

There is continued evidence of homes working with children's families and ensuring good communication. Homes show realism in terms of children's plans and their connections with their families, understanding the likelihood of children returning to their family networks as they reach independence. Risk assessments are completed to ensure children have as much family time as possible and to promote the regularity of this wherever safe and appropriate.

It is important to acknowledge the success that Northolme have had in supporting three young people transitioning back to parents/family or into a foster family in the last 6 months. This is a massive achievement not only for the young people involved but also for the staff members that



have supported them whilst they have been living at the home. Contact has been maintained with these young people, therefore allowing the relationship to be continued and subsequently end at an appropriate planned time which is positive.

There continues to be evidence of Albion Street working with two young people and their families, which has now enabled the young people to visit the family homes unsupervised and with one young person now being able to stay over-night. The home remains in contact with the young people during these stays to offer support where required.

At Eastgate, staff have built up a good relationship with one of the young people's mother enabling him to spend unsupervised time at her home. As well as this staff supported the young person's mother managing any challenging behaviour that might be displayed, alongside supporting the mother to attend parent's evening with staff from the home and the young person.

Transition planning for the young people leaving the Secure Unit is a key priority for the staff at the home. Not only are plans put in place regarding supporting the young person with their transition, either to a new placement or back into the community, staff ensure that support is put in place and that contact is attempted to be maintained.

Albion Street have been supporting a young person, who has been living with them for the last six years, with his next steps to transition to independence. There has been some creative positive direct work completed with him to enable him to understand why he is now ready to move to semi-independence. It is also evident that this work has reduced the young person's negative behaviours within the home, which was upsetting for the other young people living there.

Both Strut House and Haven Cottage have excellent family links and all feedback that has been received has been positive.

The opening of the new Strut House is to be celebrated, the home is a beautiful space welcoming and user friendly, with many facilities for the young people to enjoy. The management team and the care staff worked incredibly hard to ensure the transition was successful. Feedback from stake holder's including families is extremely positive.

## Social Pedagogy and Direct Work

Social pedagogy continues to be embedded across the homes, apart from the Secure Unit which applies a Trauma Informed approach as well as using Restorative Justice. Social Pedagogy assists the young people to engage in direct work/activities and conversations about the important things that have happened within their lives. It supports social and emotional learning, developing resilience, social skills and positive relationships. Young people have direct work files and there is consistent evidence of work being completed with them around current risks and incidents, or concern.

As well as social pedagogy, evidence has been seen of the home's embracing Restorative Practice, implementing restorative conversations with the young people following an incident.

Various examples of direct work have been seen throughout the homes, with work being completed looking at life skills including positive relationships, consent, control and what friendship looks like.

In relation to the secure unit as mentioned above direct work is completed in line with any orders from the Courts and using the Trauma Informed model, rather than Social Pedagogy.

The homes have Social Pedagogy champions to ensure that staff are confident in completing social pedagogy work and in using a variety of models. One of the champions will attend team meetings at various homes to discuss how Social Pedagogy continues to be implemented within the home and support with new ideas and approaches. It is recognised that the Social Pedagogy full training takes place over six days, which is a big commitment in relation to staff time. In Strat they are looking at the trainer attending the home and presenting a compressed training day.

## Challenges

Most significantly, since the last report, the Beacon was inspected by Ofsted in November 2022. Following this inspection, the home was rated inadequate and received a compliance notice. This was reported to be due to Ofsted having concerns around the safeguarding of young people during their visit. A subsequent monitoring inspection in December 22 found improvements had been made, with a full formal inspection later being carried out on 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> February with a final overall judgement now being good.

Further challenges faced across the home's include staffing, recruitment and retention. It is recognised that this is not specific to Lincolnshire with there being shortages of care staff nationally. The homes have recommenced promoting the role by visiting local universities and colleges, presenting to students on social care courses about the positions and the progression opportunities available. There has not been any evidence of shortfalls in staffing due to staff members being flexible in their shifts and management continuing to undertake shifts as required.

It has been noted that at times due to staff sickness and vacancies, short stay care breaks have been disrupted, on some occasions care having to be cancelled and then rearranged. However, it is worth pointing out that the care staff do attempt to be incredibly creative when faced with these challenges and will offer care in the community as an alternative to support the families.

Lincolnshire County Council are preparing to open a new 4 bed residential home, Robin House, staff have been recruited for this home for some time. Pending the home opening (May 2023), the identified staff have been able to support across the other homes. This has served to support staffing challenges within the homes. It is recognised that when these staff transition to Robin House it may have an impact on the existing homes. Independent Visitors have already started visiting the home and producing a Regulation 44 report.

It is recognised that the homes face various challenges when working with young people who have suffered significant trauma and adverse childhood experience and those young people who have been placed in the secure unit. Physical intervention is always used as a last resort and staff are all trained appropriate training Therapeutic Crisis Intervention (used by the mainstream homes) and Ethical Care Control and Restraint used by the Secure unit.

### **Conclusion**

The Independent Visitors continue to see positive evidence of high-quality care being provided to the young people. The relationships observed from the carers to the young people has been positive, caring and respectful. Staff have invested in the relationships with the young people in an attempt to ensure positive experiences and outcomes. Currently all the homes are rated by Ofsted as Good or Outstanding. It is recognised that the Beacon did have an inadequate rating, however following a positive action plan, this has been re rated as Good in a short period of time.

It should be celebrated that Strut House has had twelve outstanding inspections in a row.

A further celebration (mentioned elsewhere in this report) is that since the last report, three young people have been successfully rehabilitated to their families or into a foster family, from Northolme. 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 and facilitated.

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 and a robust recruitment strategy and succession programme.

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, which is positive. 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.

Management audits continue to take place regularly within the homes, therefore providing management oversight and guidance. Independent visits continue to dip sample key documents and reports and those that have been viewed have concluded that each of the homes continue to safeguard the young people in their care and promote their wellbeing as defined by Regulation 44.4 (a) & (b).

## APPENDIX A

### Ofsted inspections

All the children's homes are subject to Ofsted inspections. Each home has twice yearly inspections, ordinarily there will be a full inspection annually followed by an interim inspection approximately six months later.

#### Albion Street

**Inspection dates: 5 and 6 April 2022**

**Overall experiences and progress of the children and young people      Good**

*Taking into account:*

How well children and young people are helped and protected      **Good**

The effectiveness of leaders and managers      **Good**

#### The Beacon

**Inspection dates: 7 and 8 February 2023**

**Overall experiences and progress of the children and young people      Good**

*Taking into account:*

How well children and young people are helped and protected      **Good**

The effectiveness of leaders and managers      **Good**

Enforcement action since last inspection 8 November 2022:

A compliance notice was set under Regulation 12, The protection of children standard.

This was judged to have been met during a monitoring visit on 22 December 2022.

Eastgate

**Inspection dates: 17 and 18 January 2023**

**Overall experiences and progress of children and young people** **Outstanding**

*Taking into account:*

How well children and young people are helped and protected **Good**

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **Outstanding**

Haven Cottage

**Inspection dates: 9 and 10 May 2022**

**Overall experiences and progress of children and young people** **Good**

*Taking into account:*

How well children and young people are helped and protected **Good**

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **Good**

Lincolnshire Secure Unit

**Date of current Ofsted inspection: 9 January 2023**

**Overall experiences and progress of children and young people** **Good**

*Taking into account:*

Children's education and learning **Requires improvements to be good**

Children's health **Good**

How well children and young people are helped and protected **Good**

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **Good**

Northholme

**Last Ofsted inspection dates: 18 and 19 October 2022**

**Overall experiences and progress of the children and young people      **Good****

*Taking into account:*

How well children and young people are helped and protected      **Requires improvement to be good**

The effectiveness of leaders and managers      **Requires improvement to be good**

Strut House

**Inspection dates: 24 & 25 January 2023**

**Overall experiences and progress of children and young people      **Outstanding****

*Taking into account:*

How well children and young people are helped and protected      **Good**

The effectiveness of leaders and managers      **Outstanding**

## **Children Homes Regulations 2015 (Part 2)**

### **Quality standards for children's homes**

5. The following standards ("the quality standards") are prescribed for the purposes of section 22(1A) of the Care Standards Act 2000 in relation to children's homes—

- (a) the quality and purpose of care standard (see regulation 6);
- (b) the children's views, wishes and feelings standard (see regulation 7);
- (c) the education standard (see regulation 8);
- (d) the enjoyment and achievement standard (see regulation 9);
- (e) the health and well-being standard (see regulation 10);
- (f) the positive relationships standard (see regulation 11);
- (g) the protection of children standard (see regulation 12);
- (h) the leadership and management standard (see regulation 13);
- (i) the care planning standard (see regulation 14).

### **Engaging with the wider system to ensure children's needs are met**

6. In meeting the quality standards, the registered person must, and must ensure that staff—

- (a) seek to involve each child's placing authority effectively in the child's care, in accordance with the child's relevant plans;
- (b) seek to secure the input and services required to meet each child's needs;
- (c) if the registered person considers, or staff consider, a placing authority's or a relevant person's performance or response to be inadequate in relation to their role, challenge the placing authority or the relevant person to seek to ensure that each child's needs are met in accordance with the child's relevant plans; and
- (d) seek to develop and maintain effective professional relationships with such persons, bodies or organisations as the registered person considers appropriate having regard to the range of needs of children for whom it is intended that the children's home is to provide care and accommodation.

### **The quality and purpose of care standard**

6 .—(1) The quality and purpose of care standard is that children receive care from staff who—

- (a) understand the children's home's overall aims and the outcomes it seeks to achieve for children;
  - (b) use this understanding to deliver care that meets children's needs and supports them to fulfil their potential.
- (2) In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to—
- (a) understand and apply the home's statement of purpose;
  - (b) ensure that staff—
    - (i) understand and apply the home's statement of purpose;
    - (ii) protect and promote each child's welfare;
    - (iii) treat each child with dignity and respect;
  - (iv) provide personalised care that meets each child's needs, as recorded in the child's relevant plans, taking account of the child's background;
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- (v) help each child to understand and manage the impact of any experience of abuse or neglect;
- (vi) help each child to develop resilience and skills that prepare the child to return home, to live in a new placement or to live independently as an adult;
- (vii) provide to children living in the home the physical necessities they need in order to live there comfortably;
  - (viii) provide to children personal items that are appropriate for their age and understanding; and
- (ix) make decisions about the day-to-day arrangements for each child, in accordance with the child's relevant plans, which give the child an appropriate degree of freedom and choice;
- (c) ensure that the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed and furnished so as to—
  - (i) meet the needs of each child; and
  - (ii) enable each child to participate in the daily life of the home; and
- (d) ensure that any care that is arranged or provided for a child that—
  - (i) relates to the child's development (within the meaning of section 17(11) of the Children Act 1989) or health; and
  - (ii) is not arranged or provided as part of the health service continued under section 1(1) of the National Health Service Act 2006(a),
 satisfies the conditions in paragraph (3).
- (3) The conditions are—
  - (a) that the care is approved, and kept under review throughout its duration, by the placing authority;
  - (b) that the care meets the child's needs;
  - (c) that the care is delivered by a person who—
    - (i) has the experience, knowledge and skills to deliver that care; and
    - (ii) is under the supervision of a person who is appropriately skilled and qualified to supervise that care; and
  - (d) that the registered person keeps the child's general medical practitioner informed, as necessary, about the progress of the care throughout its duration.

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(a) 2006 c.41. Section 1 of the National Health Service Act 2006 was substituted by section 1 of the Health and Social Care Act 2012 (c.7).

### **The children's views, wishes and feelings standard**

7 .—(1) The children's views, wishes and feelings standard is that children receive care from staff who—

- (a) develop positive relationships with them;
  - (b) engage with them; and
  - (c) take their views, wishes and feelings into account in relation to matters affecting the children's care and welfare and their lives.
- (2) In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to—
- (a) ensure that staff—
    - (i) ascertain and consider each child's views, wishes and feelings, and balance these against what they judge to be in the child's best interests when making decisions about the child's care and welfare;
    - (ii) help each child to express views, wishes and feelings;
  - (iii) help each child to understand how the child's views, wishes and feelings have been taken into account and give the child reasons for decisions in relation to the child;
  - (iv) regularly consult children, and seek their feedback, about the quality of the home's care;
  - (v) help each child to understand how the child's privacy will be respected and the circumstances when it may have to be limited;
  - (vi) help each child to prepare for any review of the child's relevant plans and to make the child's views, wishes and feelings known for the purposes of that review; and
  - (vii) make each child aware of and, if necessary, remind them of each of the matters in sub-paragraph (d)(i) to (iii);
  - (b) ensure that each child—
    - (i) is enabled to provide feedback to, and raise issues with, a relevant person about the support and services that the child receives;
    - (ii) has access to the home's children's guide, and the home's complaints procedure, when the child's placement in the home is agreed and throughout the child's stay in the home; and
    - (iii) is given appropriate advocacy support;
  - (c) keep the children's guide and the home's complaints procedure under review and seek children's comments before revising either document;
  - (d) ensure that an explanation is given to each child as soon as reasonably practicable after the child's arrival about—
    - (i) the children's guide;
    - (ii) how to make a complaint or representations in relation to the home or the care the child receives and how any such complaint or representations will be dealt with; and
    - (iii) what advocacy support or services are available to the child, how the child may access that support or those services and any entitlement the child may have to independent advocacy provision; and
  - (e) ensure that the views of each relevant person are taken into account, so far as reasonably practicable, before making a decision about the care or welfare of a child.

### **The education standard**

8 .—(1) The education standard is that children make measurable progress towards achieving their educational potential and are helped to do so.

- (2) In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—
- (a) that staff—

- (i) help each child to achieve the child's education and training targets, as recorded in the child's relevant plans;
- (ii) support each child's learning and development, including helping the child to develop independent study skills and, where appropriate, helping the child to complete independent study;
- (iii) understand the barriers to learning that each child may face and take appropriate action to help the child to overcome any such barriers;
- (iv) help each child to understand the importance and value of education, learning, training and employment;
- (v) promote opportunities for each child to learn informally;
- (vi) maintain regular contact with each child's education and training provider, including engaging with the provider and the placing authority to support the child's education and training and to maximise the child's achievement;
- (vii) raise any need for further assessment or specialist provision in relation to a child with the child's education or training provider and the child's placing authority;
- (viii) help a child who is excluded from school, or who is of compulsory school age but not attending school, to access educational and training support throughout the period of exclusion or non-attendance and to return to school as soon as possible;
- (ix) help each child who is above compulsory school age to participate in further education, training or employment and to prepare for future care, education or employment;
- (x) help each child to attend education or training in accordance with the expectations in the child's relevant plans; and
- (b) that each child has access to appropriate equipment, facilities and resources to support the child's learning.

### **The enjoyment and achievement standard**

**9** .—(1) The enjoyment and achievement standard is that children take part in and benefit from a variety of activities that meet their needs and develop and reflect their creative, cultural, intellectual, physical and social interests and skills.

- (2) In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—
  - (a) that staff help each child to—
    - (i) develop the child's interests and hobbies;
    - (ii) participate in activities that the child enjoys and which meet and expand the child's interests and preferences; and
    - (iii) make a positive contribution to the home and the wider community; and
  - (b) that each child has access to a range of activities that enable the child to pursue the child's interests and hobbies.

### **The health and well-being standard**

**10**.—(1) The health and well-being standard is that—

- (a) the health and well-being needs of children are met;
- (b) children receive advice, services and support in relation to their health and well-being; and
- (c) children are helped to lead healthy lifestyles.
- (2) In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—
  - (a) that staff help each child to—

- (i) achieve the health and well-being outcomes that are recorded in the child’s relevant plans;
- (ii) understand the child’s health and well-being needs and the options that are available in relation to the child’s health and well-being, in a way that is appropriate to the child’s age and understanding;
- (iii) take part in activities, and attend any appointments, for the purpose of meeting the child’s health and well-being needs; and
  - (iv) understand and develop skills to promote the child’s well-being;
- (b) that each child is registered as a patient with a general medical practitioner and a registered dental practitioner; and
- (c) that each child has access to such dental, medical, nursing, psychiatric and psychological advice, treatment and other services as the child may require.

**The positive relationships standard**

**11** .—(1) The positive relationships standard is that children are helped to develop, and to benefit from, relationships based on—

- (a) mutual respect and trust;
- (b) an understanding about acceptable behaviour; and
- (c) positive responses to other children and adults.

(2) In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—

- (a) that staff—
  - (i) meet each child’s behavioural and emotional needs, as set out in the child’s relevant plans;
  - (ii) help each child to develop socially aware behaviour;
- (iii) encourage each child to take responsibility for the child’s behaviour, in accordance with the child’s age and understanding;
- (iv) help each child to develop and practise skills to resolve conflicts positively and without harm to anyone;
- (v) communicate to each child expectations about the child’s behaviour and ensure that the child understands those expectations in accordance with the child’s age and understanding;
- (vi) help each child to understand, in a way that is appropriate according to the child’s age and understanding, personal, sexual and social relationships, and how those relationships can be supportive or harmful;
- (vii) help each child to develop the understanding and skills to recognise or withdraw from a damaging, exploitative or harmful relationship;
  - (viii) strive to gain each child’s respect and trust;
- (ix) understand how children’s previous experiences and present emotions can be communicated through behaviour and have the competence and skills to interpret these and develop positive relationships with children;
- (x) are provided with supervision and support to enable them to understand and manage their own feelings and responses to the behaviour and emotions of children, and to help children to do the same;
- (xi) de-escalate confrontations with or between children, or potentially violent behaviour by children;
  - (xii) understand and communicate to children that bullying is unacceptable; and
  - (xiii) have the skills to recognise incidents or indications of bullying and how to deal with them; and

- (b) that each child is encouraged to build and maintain positive relationships with others.

### **The protection of children standard**

**12** .—(1) The protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe.

(2) In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—

- (a) that staff—
  - (i) assess whether each child is at risk of harm, taking into account information in the child’s relevant plans, and, if necessary, make arrangements to reduce the risk of any harm to the child;
  - (ii) help each child to understand how to keep safe;
  - (iii) have the skills to identify and act upon signs that a child is at risk of harm;
  - (iv) manage relationships between children to prevent them from harming each other;
  - (v) understand the roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children that are assigned to them by the registered person;
  - (vi) take effective action whenever there is a serious concern about a child’s welfare; and
  - (vii) are familiar with, and act in accordance with, the home’s child protection policies;
- (b) that the home’s day-to-day care is arranged and delivered so as to keep each child safe and to protect each child effectively from harm;
- (c) that the premises used for the purposes of the home are located so that children are effectively safeguarded;
- (d) that the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed, furnished and maintained so as to protect each child from avoidable hazards to the child’s health; and
- (e) that the effectiveness of the home’s child protection policies is monitored regularly.

### **The leadership and management standard**

**13** .—(1) The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children’s home that—

- (a) helps children aspire to fulfil their potential; and
  - (b) promotes their welfare.
- (2) In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to—
- (a) lead and manage the home in a way that is consistent with the approach and ethos, and delivers the outcomes, set out in the home’s statement of purpose;
  - (b) ensure that staff work as a team where appropriate;
  - (c) ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child;
  - (d) ensure that the home has sufficient staff to provide care for each child;
  - (e) ensure that the home’s workforce provides continuity of care to each child;
  - (f) understand the impact that the quality of care provided in the home is having on the progress and experiences of each child and use this understanding to inform the development of the quality of care provided in the home;
  - (g) demonstrate that practice in the home is informed and improved by taking into account and acting on—
    - (i) research and developments in relation to the ways in which the needs of children are best met; and
    - (ii) feedback on the experiences of children, including complaints received; and

- (h) use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home.

### **The care planning standard**

- 14.**—(1) The care planning standard is that children—
- (a) receive effectively planned care in or through the children’s home; and
  - (b) have a positive experience of arriving at or moving on from the home.
- (2) In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—
- (a) that children are admitted to the home only if their needs are within the range of needs of children for whom it is intended that the home is to provide care and accommodation, as set out in the home’s statement of purpose;
  - (b) that arrangements are in place to—
    - (i) ensure the effective induction of each child into the home;
    - (ii) manage and review the placement of each child in the home; and
    - (iii) plan for, and help, each child to prepare to leave the home or to move into adult care in a way that is consistent with arrangements agreed with the child’s placing authority;
  - (c) that each child’s relevant plans are followed;
  - (d) that, subject to regulation 22 (contact and access to communications), contact between each child and the child’s parents, relatives and friends, is promoted in accordance with the child’s relevant plans;
  - (e) that the child’s placing authority is contacted, and a review of that child’s relevant plans is requested, if—
    - (i) the registered person considers that the child is at risk of harm or has concerns that the care provided for the child is inadequate to meet the child’s needs;
    - (ii) the child is, or has been, persistently absent from the home without permission; or
    - (iii) the child requests a review of the child’s relevant plans; and
  - (f) that staff help each child to access and contribute to the records kept by the registered person in relation to the child.

## **Children's Homes Regulations 2015 (part 6)**

### **Independent person: visits and reports**

**42.**—(1) The registered person must ensure that an independent person visits the children's home at least once each month.

(2) When the independent person is carrying out a visit, the registered person must help the independent person—

- (a) if they consent, to interview in private such of the children, their parents, relatives and persons working at the home as the independent person requires; and
- (b) to inspect the premises of the home and such of the home's records (except for a child's case records, unless the child and the child's placing authority consent) as the independent person requires.

(3) A visit by the independent person to the home may be unannounced.

(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.

(5) The independent person's report may recommend actions that the registered person may take in relation to the home and timescales within which the registered person must consider whether or not to take those actions.

(6) If the independent person becomes aware of a potential conflict of interest (whether under regulation 43(3) or otherwise) after a visit to the home, the independent person must include in the independent person's report—

- (a) details of the conflict of interest; and
- (b) the reasons why the independent person did not notify the registered provider of the conflict of interest before the visit.

(7) The independent person must provide a copy of the independent person's report to—

- (a) HMCI;
- (b) upon request, the local authority for the area in which the home is located;
- (c) the placing authorities of children;
- (d) the registered provider and, if applicable, the registered manager; and
- (e) the responsible individual (if one is nominated).

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