



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

Report to:	Corporate Parenting Panel
Date:	11 May 2023
Subject:	Regulation 44 Independent Visitors Report

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 October 22 and March 2023.

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 44 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

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.

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).

3. Consultation

a) Risks and Impact Analysis

N/A

4. Appendices

These are listed below and attached at the back of the report	
Appendix A	Report For The Independent Visiting Service - October 2022 – March 2023

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, Head of Services – Quality and Standards and Principle Social Worker, who can be contacted on 07879603618 or Carolyn.knight@lincolnshire.gov.uk

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