

**REPORT FOR THE**  
**INDEPENDENT VISITING SERVICE**  
**March 2020 – April 2021**  
**Dawn Oldroyd, Cheryl Govier and**  
**Richard Stone**  
**Regulation 44 Visitors**

## **Basis of report**

This report is being prepared in order to provide the Corporate Parenting Panel with an update of the work of the Independent Visitor. The scope of this report covers the period from October 2020 (when the last report was submitted) to April 2021.

## **Introduction**

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.

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 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.

### **Covid 19 Pandemic**

Visits between October 2020 and April 2021 inclusive were undertaken in person where this was possible. There have been some instances where in person visits have not been possible due to self-isolation and COVID contact within some homes, where an in person visit would potentially compromise the safety and wellbeing of the young people and staff members. This is evidenced within individual reports. In these instances Regulation 44 Officers have been able to use technology such as video to view the homes, meet with children and staff, attending handovers etc. However virtual visits have been avoided wherever possible with the Independent Visitors being flexible and re scheduling visits after isolation periods only where this has been possible within the calendar month to ensure compliance against the monthly visiting schedule. Since the last report there have not been any visits undertake outside of the due timescales.

The homes continue to operate robust and stringent guidelines to ensure that all visits are safe. COVID booking forms are completed by the Independent Visitor and sent to the home prior to any visits which ask a set of questions about the Independent Visitors COVID status, their contact with others and personal details to aid the Governments Test and Trace service. The booking forms are retained by the homes for a period of time to aid any potential Contact and Trace Service contact, after which time they are destroyed on the basis that these contain personal and not business contact details for visitors. Upon arrival at the home the questions are asked again and the Independent Visitors temperature is taken safely at distance and recorded prior to them being physically allowed on the premises.

Independent Visitors frequently sanitise their hands throughout their visits and face masks are mandatory when moving around the buildings. Masks are allowed to be removed when stationary within the buildings and only at times when safe social distance can be maintained. In the homes that provide care for young people with additional needs and underlying health conditions, masks are mandatory at all times and staff members also wear these for additional protection.

The homes have closely followed the Governments lock down restrictions and road map to ease these and there has been evidence within the homes that young people have been fully supported to understand these, through regular young peoples' meetings, group and key working sessions and safety plans for those young people who are able to exercise their independence and spend time in the community on their own.

As the restrictions have eased the homes have been able to further open up to visitors that are significant to the young people, always following the same level of safety precautions. In person visits between the young people and their families has developed further, and for example the Secure unit started to allow safe family visits from April 2021.

Sadly, despite all of the protective measures in place, some homes across the county have experienced outbreaks of COVID cases. As examples the Beacon had 20 plus cases in October 2020 / November 2020 and further outbreak in March 2021. The secure Unit had a COVID outbreak in February 2021 and Strut House has also experienced an outbreak. Other homes have experienced individual cases in staff and young people.

Positively, these have been managed effectively and in a timely manner. Managers have worked closely with Public Health and senior managers. This has involved timely risk assessments, strategic planning and mass testing within the homes. Mandatory face mask wearing has been introduced at these times alongside PPE and intense fog cleaning has been established to further reduce the risk of infection. Where young people have been isolating in their individual rooms, staff members have fully supported them through this period. Many of the regulation 44 reports highlight that the young people said that they felt well supported and cared for during this difficult time for them.

The staff teams continue to be flexible and creative towards caring for the young people with some staff self-electing to 'move in' to reduce the footfall within the buildings and provide continuity of care through these periods. Where this has taken place, managers have been fully supportive, staff members have been given regular breaks and a number of days off afterwards in order to rest and recuperate.

Whilst this has impacted on the young people's education at these times, the homes have been creative in supporting their education with laptops being acquired to support virtual learning and the promotion of their regular routines (wherever possible). As an example the Beacon turned their activity room into an 'education room'.

In line with the Governments current plans, those young people who attend secondary school have been supported to access twice weekly lateral flow tests.

The Local Authority have positively engaged with all front line staff and offered COVID vaccinations to children's homes staff as part of this strategy. This commenced in January 2021 and by the end of April most staff had been offered their second vaccination.

Staff within the children's homes have been 'awarded' a one off payment of £500.00 by the Local Authority in recognition of their hard work and commitment towards caring for the young people during what has been an uncertain and challenging time.

### **The Independent Visitor**

From October 2020, Regulation 44 visits continued to be undertaken by three Independent Visitors Dawn Oldroyd , Cheryl Govier and Richard Stone who shared the visiting duties to the 7 homes and the two supported living schemes in Grantham and Gainsborough which provide accommodation for young people aged 16-18 for a period of up to six months. Both accommodations are inspected under the Regulation 44 process however this is 'a lighter touch' exercise every 4 months. Whilst this is not mandatory, the Local Authority have taken the positive step to commit to this as part of their quality assurance process.

The Independent Visitors have continued to maintain positive working relationships with care home managers, staff and young people. The Independent Visitors continue to develop relationships with the new homes managers that have been appointed since the report was completed.

Since October 2020 there have been a number of changes to the management of the homes. The Beacon has a new Homes Manager. The Registered Manager from Eastgate was appointed as the Interim Manager at Albion Street prior to the new Interim Manager coming into post in January 2021. During her absence the Assistant Manager at Eastgate acted as the Interim Manager. An RCO 3 was also successful in gaining the Assistant Manager position at Rowston and Denton.

The Independent Visitors speak with key stakeholders including the young people, parents, social workers, health and education partners and other relevant individuals to gain a holistic appraisal of the homes.

There has been no need to implement the dispute resolution procedure since the last report was completed, however there has been positive communication between the Regulation 44 team and regulated services to resolve arrangements for delivering the inspections during the Covid pandemic. There has been regular communication between senior management and this has enabled a revised approach to be agreed to resume safe visits.

### **The voice of the child**

All of the homes have had to adapt their processes and practice to ensure that young people's voices have been heard throughout the Covid lockdown and to promote contact between children and their families and professional support network. This has resulted in an increased use of alternative electronic resources to facilitate visits and telephone contact and the implementation of risk assessments.

Due to the lockdown, the Independent Advocate visits became virtual and these were generally conducted by phone each month. Whilst this posed some challenges in engaging the young people, visits are back in person now in person from April 2021. COVID has been a challenge with some of the disability homes finding engagement with the Independent Advocate more problematic due to their additional needs. During these times updates have generally been given. Other homes and the Secure Unit have offered the young people opportunities to speak with Independent Advocates in private.

The homes continue to offer the young people a regular young people's meeting each month or 'Chill and Chat'. These meetings are used as an opportunity for the young people to become involved and have a say in how the home is run and for discussions around the important things that affect them. This has been used effectively to involve them in matters such as arranging activities; safety issues in the home such COVID and encouraging them to become involved in the redecoration of their home, often choosing colour schemes and furnishings as examples. The meetings have also at times taken a restorative approach and the young people have been engaged in discussing peer relationships and resolving some of the challenges that surround a number of young people living together.

During the Independent visits, the young people are always offered an opportunity to speak with their visitor on their own, with a peer or just in naturally occurring situations. As the restrictions have changed the Independent Visitors have been able to stay for the evening meals (where a safe social distance can be maintained) and this has promoted a more

natural way of engaging with the young people. Independent Visitors have been flexible and visited on some Saturdays in order to observe the home outside of weekdays and in the absence of the day to day management. Overall, the young people across the homes say that they feel supported and feel heard.

For those young people who have had a Child in Care review, Independent Visitors have found strong evidence that they have been supported to complete their consultation documents prior to their review and on many occasions individual direct work has been completed to help them consider their views prior to their review. Feedback from Independent Reviewing Officers is often sought and this has been positive with them stating that their young people are fully supported to attend their review by their key worker and helped to ensure their voice is heard

Most of the homes continue to promote display boards that celebrate the voice of the child through 'Voice of the child' and 'You said we did' creative displays. There is also an increased use of photographs to evidence the young people's input and some of the homes are using newsletters and monthly Junior Journals to share information. As examples the Beacon have devised a weekly newsletter from a child to their parent to share their updates and Northolme have a Covid lockdown diary as a keepsake of their pandemic experience.

It has been particularly evident within the disability homes that the myriad of photographic displays really help to portray the young people's voices through their facial expressions and engagement with their peers and staff members. This is especially important given that their use of the verbal word is often limited due to their communication and additional needs. Within the disability homes the young people have communication sheets within their files. This evidences their preferences, likes and dislikes and is often accompanied with pictorial symbols that they can point to for ease of expression.

The young people are encouraged to become involved in meal planning and within the homes the menus each week are set by the young people themselves (within the parameters of promoting a healthy and balanced diet). For those with communication needs, again, pictures are used to help them identify and point to their preferences.

Other examples of how the young people's voices have been captured and heard such as the Secure Unit where exit questionnaires are regularly used to gain their feedback on the care they reviewed and the Health Team now review the young people's views as standard

in their meetings ensuring that their voices are considered in the various aspects of their lives. A young person also in the Secure Unit expressed a wish to wear a cross to a court hearing and this was met due to his cultural needs.

At Albion Street the home has undergone a significant scheme of refurbishment and there is strong evidence through visits that the young people were all encouraged to become involved in picking the furniture, furnishing and colours.

Despite the impact of the Governments lock down, there has been overwhelming evidence within the homes that all of the staff have worked hard to encourage them to participate in activities of their preferences during the school holidays and at weekends.

### **Quality of care**

The children within the homes generally continue to receive a good, and in some homes excellent, quality of care. However, It has been a challenging time for Albion Street and despite the progress made since the last Ofsted Assurance visit in September 2020 (as presented within the last Corporate Regulation 44 Report), a further Inspection visit on 21<sup>st</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> April 2021 found the home to be inadequate in some areas. At the time of the visit the Ofsted inspectors were concerned over the lack of progress being made and a restrictive accommodation notice was made which outlined that the Local Authority could not accept any further young people for the duration of the notice and until such improvements were made. The inspectors found concerns over the homes leadership and management and its ability to safeguard the young people. At the time of writing this report the Local Authority have taken action to address these concerns and have an action plan in place to address the concerns.

There have been some significant challenges for some care homes regarding the on-going recruitment of staff at a variety of levels, from RCO1 to Homes Manager. However, the homes have embraced these challenges and recruitment has been on going where necessary. The Independent Visitors have found good evidence in homes of new staff being supported and inducted into their new roles.

Albion Street has been managed by the substantive Eastgate Manager and now has an interim appointed manager. Whilst there are concerns over the quality of care raised by Ofsted, the young people within the home had commented that since the Ofsted visit in

September things had improved. However, the home has experienced some significant challenges within the group of young people and this has impacted on the overall quality of care at times. Two of the young people have moved on and one young person has presented as severely disruptive. The staff team have found this a challenge and this has also resulted in a number of allegations being made against the staff team along with a deterioration in relationships within the home that has contributed to the overall way the home has functioned.

The Beacon now has a new Homes Manager who started in October 2020. She was mentored by another experienced homes manager and has adjusted into her new role. Staff feel supported and she has been well received. She is robust in managing the team and practice issues. Staff have fed back that she is supportive and she is already starting to implement some positive changes. Ofsted came 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> December 2020 for an assurance visit. They found that medications and administration errors were a significant issue. However, there was a plan in place to focus on this at the time of the visit and inspectors considered this. No other serious or widespread concerns were identified.

Across the homes, staff and managers have been flexible in covering staffing vacancies, going the extra mile to ensure that young people's daily activities and routines aren't compromised.

At Haven Cottage the team remains stable. They have not used a single agency worker throughout the pandemic. Members of the team have been trained to deliver night-time care to one YP rather than have an agency worker in post which has resulted in further continuity.

There have been some vacancies in the Secure Unit during October to December. However, these are now filled and there is a stable management team in place. A new model of restraint is also being implemented in the Secure Unit this is being 'rolled out' with in house training being delivered to support this. A recent Ofsted Assurance visit on 2<sup>nd</sup> – 4<sup>th</sup> November raised no concerns and no issues or recommendations were highlighted.

As outlined within this report the Assistant Manager at Eastgate acted as the Interim Manager while the registered manager was supporting Albion Street. During this time there was no change in the quality of care provided and the Independent Visits consistently highlighted this.

Training remains a priority within the homes, and whilst there was some initial disruption caused by the impact of COVID, this has started to lessen and staff are now able to complete their training as this is required. Of significance is the TCI and Social Pedagogy training that is now partially in person, which from feedback by staff members has highlighted is more effective this way.

All the homes have continued to participate in multi-agency partnership working, albeit remotely, with Health, Police, Schools, Social Care and other agencies, with continued monthly meetings and ad hoc communications. This is now moving to some in person meetings, with some being hybrid. The homes have adapted extremely well to the new ways of working throughout the pandemic.

Across the homes staff continue to attend EHCP and Epep meetings and have responded well to supporting the children and young people who have had to remain at home during the lockdown period. As outlined within this report, the homes have been flexible in their approach in order to minimise the impact on the young people's routines and stability. The homes continue to provide a range of learning opportunities for the young people according to their individual needs.

The homes continue to follow their scheme of decoration to ensure that they maintain the current quality of the fabric of the building. The autism colours are being used throughout, which is intended to bring a sense of calmness and ease to the environment. They continue to engage the young people in this with examples of meetings being held to discuss this, mood boards being created and the young people being offered trips out to help purchase furnishings of their choice wherever safe and possible due to the restrictions.

Whilst there are concerns raised over Albion Street, the overall quality of the décor and fabric of the building has improved and been maintained to a good standard.

At Eastgate, Northolme and Albion Street the fire doors are now fully completed and replaced leading to a more secure and safe environment for the young people.

Each of the homes has ensured the young people have had access to a range of activities regardless of the limitation of lockdown. There has been a varied approach to in-house craft activities, and outside trips dependant on the COVID restrictions.

Sadly, many of the individual pursuits the young people follow have not been available such as after school clubs, youth clubs, army cadets and riding. However, these are now being offered again due to the change in COVID restrictions and it is positive that the young people will now have a change to return to these.

Positive examples of activities offered include the Secure Unit creating an activity games pack for use during periods of isolation to encourage physical and mental stimulation. They have also created a sensory garden and the young people have been included in picking out the flowers that are to be grown.

Haven Cottage have themed months and have engaged the young people in 'Under the Sea', Easter and Spring time activities. During these months the outer reception areas is decorated by the young people's creative artwork and crafts and a recent themed dinner evening focussed around the 'Hungry Caterpillar'

At Strut House an RCO2 is taking the lead in coordinating activities with the young people and they have recently developed book bags that contain a number of sensory items for the young people to touch alongside the story in order to bring the experience alive for them. The young people have also painted bird houses in bright colours for the developing garden area and painted stones in the shapes of their favourite characters.

At the Beacon, the activity room is now refurbished with lots of storage, games and more structured activities with the young people. Each Young person has a personal activity plan. One young person has the milk man coming during his stays at his own request and his delight is noticeable.

Eastgate continue to offer the forest school on Sundays and the young people have learned to build fires under supervision, camp out the night and carve wood objects themselves. During the period of lock down after Christmas the garage was turned into a 'police station' and a 'shop' with the young people all engaging in creative play.

Albion street have purchased a range of play equipment and the young people there have had an opportunity to engage with staff building sand models, playing shops and engaging in creative play that, sadly many have missed out on in their formative years.

At Northolme, there have been number of themed nights arranged such as American night where the young people all ate American food and learned about their culture. Discos and

fancy dress nights have been held significant dates such as Christmas and Easter and the young people have had opportunities to spend time at the caravan in Butlins and try their hand as outward bound skills such as orienteering and tracking in the outdoors.

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 ever changing restrictions have meant that staff have had to be flexible and responsive to their approach to this. Where face to face visits have not been permitted in private homes staff have supported young people to meet their families outside and in gardens. The use of the Family Time centres has been explored and used to promote a safe and managed environment and as the restrictions changed, young people have been supported to meet for meals in safe organised spaces, parks and the community. The use of video and telephone calls has been widely promoted as has sending cards and letters.

### **Social Pedagogy and Restorative Practice**

Social Pedagogy (SP) and Restorative Practice (RP) continues to develop across the homes and is delivered and recorded to different extents with some homes practice being more embedded than others. However, feedback from the Independent Visitors has been heard and acted upon and it has been noticeable that the range of alternative models used is developing. SP is important as it essentially assists the young people to engage in activities and conversations about the important things that happen within their lives. It aims to make the connections between their 'hands', 'hearts' and 'head', supports social and emotional learning, develops reliance and social skills. This way of working also promotes the young people to consider their own views and how to express these in pro social ways.

New staff that join the teams continue to access the training at hand and also engage with support within the teams through the home champions to ensure the practice is embedded and they grow in confidence and skill. SP continues alongside RP to reflect on daily activities and providing a structure for focussed work with the young person following an incident.

This is still developing in each home and it is fair to say that the homes are at different stages of development in terms of implementing restorative practice. Its use is being aligned with the young person's targets and care plans in order to embed this into the day to day interactions with staff and activities. Staff are reporting that this is complimenting their

practice rather than being seen as a standalone piece of work and they are seeing the benefits of linking behaviours to feelings and reflecting on their contribution to dynamics and relationships.

There is now a much clearer link between SP and responses to incidents and a more restorative approach in resolving and managing these incidents.

Independent Visitors have noted that the homes are responding to their feedback and creatively using strategies to utilise the different models or SP such as setting staff targets to 'try a different model'. There has been a shift from using the 'Common Third' model which focusses on 'doing something' alongside a young person as a social learning activity to other models such as 'positive communication' that lends itself to conflict resolution and the 4 F's which focusses the young person differentiating between the facts and the feelings, helping them to further develop problem solving strategies. As mentioned, whilst SP and RP are widely used after an incident, their uses is now seen more commonly in naturally occurring situations, which further evidences how the staff teams are starting to understand and integrate this into their day to day practice.

### **Challenges**

Covid has clearly been the biggest challenge in terms of requiring a more flexible approach of staff; minimising children's' access to family time, education, face to face contact with significant individuals, managing Covid outbreaks and implementing new health and safety procedures.

The Homes Managers have done an exceptional job in responding to the ever-changing advice and approaches and in supporting both staff and young people through this process. The management team and staff have responded swiftly and robustly to this challenge and it is a credit to them that they have been able to minimise the disruption and anxieties amongst some of our most traumatised children and young people.

The impact of Covid has also coincided with a change in the management teams in some homes which will also have been a challenge for staff and managers alike. However, the feedback from staff and young people has on the whole been very positive and there are signs of real development within these homes.

There have been some anxieties from some staff members within the teams coming out of the lock down and readjusting to the way they care for the young people. The support for staff and their emotional wellbeing has been noticeable.

### **Conclusion**

Overall, the homes continue to provide good, if not in some instances exceptional, levels of care for the young people in their homes. There have been further concerns raised over the quality of care and leadership at Albion Street and the Local Authority are working proactively to manage this and make the necessary improvements. The Registered Managers have responded robustly to COVID in very exceptional and unprecedented circumstances to ensure the physical and emotional safety of welfare of the children in their care with positive feedback of their experiences.

Some of the homes continue to face challenges in respect of staffing however the good will and flexibility of staff has positively supported the care of the young people particularly during times of isolation and COVID outbreaks which, despite the health and safety concerns, have overall been managed well and robustly.

There remain on-going developments across the residential estate in respect of social pedagogy and restorative practice and there is evidence of sharing of skills across practitioners who are coaching less able and developing colleagues. Staff members have been responsive to these opportunities and have embraced these. Independent Visitors have seen first-hand the motivation and commitment across the homes by staff members that have worked in challenging conditions, but nevertheless have continued to go above and beyond to provide the best care and stability they can to the young people.

Despite the impact of the COVID pandemic, the staff teams have worked tirelessly with the young people and their families to maintain their links and attachments and this has been evidenced in the creative way that family time has been promoted through range of safe opportunities.

### Ofsted inspections

All of the children's homes are subject to Ofsted inspection. Each home is subject to twice yearly inspections, ordinarily there will be a full inspection annually followed by an interim inspection approximately six months later. However, due to the COVID pandemic Ofsted have been completing Assurance Visits. These have been shorted visits focused on specific areas. At the current time Ofsted are returning to inspection visits in person.

### Secure Unit

#### **Assurance Visit**

**Visit dates:** 2 to 4 November 2020

**Previous inspection date:** 4 February 2020

**Previous inspection judgement:** Good

#### **Information about this visit**

Due to COVID-19 (coronavirus), Ofsted suspended all routine inspections in March 2020. As part of a phased return to routine inspection, we are undertaking assurance visits to children's social care services that are inspected under the social care common inspection framework (SCCIF).

At these visits, inspectors evaluate the extent to which:

- children are well cared for
- children are safe
- leaders and managers are exercising strong leadership.

Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills is leading Ofsted's work into how England's social care system has delivered child-centred practice and care within the context of the restrictions placed on society during the COVID-19 pandemic.

## **Findings from the visit**

We did not identify any serious or widespread concerns in relation to the care or protection of children at this assurance visit.

### **Albion Street**

**Date of Last Inspection: 20<sup>th</sup> & 21<sup>st</sup> April 2021**

**Judgement: Inadequate**

**Compliance Notice and Action Plan:**

#### **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

(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)(ii) demonstrate that practice in the home is informed and improved by taking into account and acting on- 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.

Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b)(2)(f)(g)(ii)(h)

**The following steps to rectify the breach of regulation listed must be completed by the date shown**

1. Revisit the management monitoring systems at the home and ensure that there are effective systems in place to monitor and review the care provided in the home.
2. Ensure that leaders and managers use systems effectively, to be able to identify any concerns about children's safety or well-being and then act promptly on those concerns. This includes having effective strategies to manage children's self-injurious behaviour, and responding to children's complaints.
3. Take steps to put in place an effective system for managing and tracking allegations made against staff and to review staff lone-working risk assessments.
4. Take steps to implement a robust system for management oversight, analysis and evaluation of all physical interventions in the home.
5. Take steps to ensure that consideration of new placements is robust, detailed and includes full consideration of the impact of a new placement on existing children.

**Visit dates:** 8 to 9 December 2020

**Previous inspection date:** 27 August 2019

**Previous inspection judgement:** Good

#### **Information about this visit**

Due to COVID-19 (coronavirus), Ofsted suspended all routine inspections in March 2020. As part of a phased return to routine inspection, we are undertaking assurance visits to children's social care services that are inspected under the social care common inspection framework (SCCIF).

At these visits, inspectors evaluate the extent to which:

- children are well cared for
- children are safe
- leaders and managers are exercising strong leadership.

This visit was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000, following the published guidance

for assurance visits.

Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills is leading Ofsted's work into how England's social care system has delivered child-centred practice and care within the context of the restrictions placed on society during the COVID-19 pandemic.

### **Findings from the visit**

We did not identify any serious or widespread concerns in relation to the care or protection of children at this assurance visit.

### **What does the children's home need to do to improve?**

#### **Statutory requirements**

This section sets out the actions that the registered person(s) must take to meet the Care Standards Act 2000, Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015 and the 'Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards. The registered person(s) must comply within the given timescales.

The protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe.

In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that the effectiveness of the home's child protection policies is monitored regularly. (Regulation 12 (1)(2)(e))

This particularly relates to ensuring that outcomes from any recorded concern are monitored and recorded when concluded.

1 February 2021

The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's home that— helps children aspire to fulfil their potential; and promotes their welfare.

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

ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child.

(Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b)(2)(c))

In particular, this refers to staff completing mandatory training, such as safeguarding. It also relates to staff having a robust assessment of their skills and knowledge in the administration of medication.

1 February 2021

#### Medicines

The registered person must make arrangements for the handling, recording, safekeeping, safe administration and disposal of medicines received into the children's home. (Regulation 23 (1))

This relates to errors in the administration of medication to children in the home.

1 February 2021

#### Fitness of workers

The registered person must recruit staff using recruitment procedures that are designed to ensure children's safety.

The registered person may only—

employ an individual to work at the children's home; or

if an individual is employed by a person other than the registered person to work at the home in a position in which the individual may have regular contact with children, allow that individual to work at the home, if the individual satisfies the requirements in paragraph (3).

The requirements are that—

the individual is of integrity and good character;

the individual has the appropriate experience, qualification and skills for the work that the individual is to perform;

the individual is mentally and physically fit for the purposes of the work that the individual is to perform; and

full and satisfactory information is available in relation to the individual in respect of each of the matters in Schedule 2.

For the purposes of paragraph (3)(b), an individual who works in the home in a care role has the appropriate qualification if, by the relevant date, the individual has attained—

the Level 3 Diploma for Residential Childcare (England) ("the Level 3 Diploma");  
or,

a qualification which the registered person considers to be equivalent to the Level 3 Diploma.

(Regulation 32 (1)(2)(a)(b)(3)(a)(b)(c)(d)(4)(a)(b))

1 April 2021

#### Employment of staff

The registered person must ensure that all employees—

receive practice-related supervision by a person with appropriate experience.

(Regulation 33 (4)(b))

This relates to staff receiving regular formal supervision.

1 April 2021

## **Northholme**

**Last Assurance visit 2 February 2021 – No concerns raised. Safeguarding judged to be good.**

**Inspection dates:** 12 and 13 February 2020

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people	good
How well children and young people are helped and protected	requires improvement to be good
The effectiveness of leaders and managers	good
The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.	
Date of last inspection	5 December 2018
Overall judgement at last inspection	outstanding
Enforcement action since last inspection	none

## **Haven Cottage**

Heaven Cottage offers short term care to children with special needs, was last subject to a full inspection.

**Inspection dates:** 6 to 7<sup>th</sup> January 2020

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people	outstanding
How well children and young people are helped and protected	outstanding
The effectiveness of leaders and managers	outstanding

The children's home provides highly effective services that consistently exceed the standards of good. The actions of the children's home contribute to significantly improved outcomes and positive experiences for children and young people who need help protection and care.

## **Strut House**

Strut House is a short-term unit for children with special needs had an inspection on the 6 & 7<sup>th</sup> January 2020 and continue to be awarded an Outstanding grading.

## Eastgate

Eastgate was subject to an OFSTED Rating of the Home from the last inspection  
Outstanding: Inspection dates: 27 to 28<sup>th</sup> January 2020

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people	outstanding
How well children and young people are helped and protected	outstanding
The effectiveness of leaders and managers	outstanding

The children's home provides highly effective services that consistently exceed the standards of good. The actions of the children's home contribute to significantly improved outcomes and positive experiences for children and young people who need help, protection, and care.