



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

Report to:	Corporate Parenting Panel
Date:	12 May 2022
Subject:	Regulation 44 Independent Visitors Report

Summary:

This is the annual report on the Regulation 44 Independent Visiting Service. The report serves to update members of the Corporate Parenting Panel on the work undertaken between March 2021 and April 2022.

Actions Required:

Members of the Corporate Parenting Panel are requested to consider the annual 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 nine (9) quality standards as outlined in Part six (6), regulations 43 of the Children's Home Regulation 2015.

1. Background

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

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

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

The Regulation 44 report maintained its format providing a succinct summary of the homes under the signs of safety headings and there remains the inclusion of the recommendations section to ensure there is clarity in prioritising areas for immediate action where these are identified during visits.

The Regulation 44 Independent Visiting Officers are Independent Reviewing 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

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 changes in guidance and post lockdown working practices.

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.

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.

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.

All of the reg 44 inspections have identified for each home that they continue to safeguard the children in their care and promote their wellbeing as defined by Regulation 44.4 (a) & (b).

3. Consultation

a) Risks and Impact Analysis

NA

4. Appendices

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

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, who can be contacted on 07879603618 or Carolyn.knight@lincolnshire.gov.uk

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