

HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Report

Committee/Panel:	Children and Families Advisory Panel
Date:	9 June 2015
Title:	Children's Homes Strategy, Regulation and Inspection
Reference:	6695
Report From:	Director of Children's Services

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1. Summary

1.1. The purpose of this paper is to provide an overview of The Children's Homes Regulations 2015, The Ofsted Children's Home Inspection Framework 2015 and an update on Hampshire's Residential Strategy.

2. Contextual information

2.1. Changes to the regulation of children's homes are partly informed by the recent concerns about the quality of care provided by some homes and are linked to enquiries into child sexual exploitation. In some instances, it was felt that the location of the home made it difficult to meet children's needs, that children were leaving the homes and putting themselves at risk because the homes were not welcoming and the staff lacked the skills to engage in positive relationships with very challenging children. Whilst Hampshire's vision for their residential service is not based on such negative experience and pre-dates the Children's Homes Regulation 2015, the strategy will place Hampshire in a strong position to meet the new Regulatory Requirements.

2.2. The Children's Homes Regulations 2015 came into force on 1 April 2015. The regulations are designed to ensure that each child has the right placement at the right time and for residential care to be a positive and beneficial choice. These regulations replace earlier regulation and include Quality Standards that replace National Minimum Standards. A Guide that provides further explanation and information accompanies the Regulations. The Guide sets out the key principles of residential child care and acknowledges that the diversity of children's homes settings requires each home to take an approach which reflects the purpose of the home and needs of the children in the home.

2.3. The Regulation sets out nine Quality Standards which are:

- Quality and purpose of care
- Children's wishes and feelings
- Education
- Enjoyment and achievement
- Health and wellbeing
- Positive relationships
- Protection of children
- Leadership and management
- Care planning

2.4. Each standard contains an overarching, aspirational, child focussed statement followed by a non-exhaustive set of underpinning measurable requirements that homes must achieve in meeting each standards. In relation to each standard, the guidance sets out an explanation of the terms used in the regulation, identifies the role of partnership working and provides supplementary guidance on the regulation.

2.5. Ofsted have published a new inspection framework for children's homes which commenced April 2015. Ofsted have stated that this is the biggest change ever made to the inspection regime. Rather than focussing on pre-determined outcomes, the inspection will now consider the starting point of each child, the progress they have made in relation to their capacity to change and the quality of the experience. The Statement of Purpose is considered to be central to practice, it must state what the home aims to achieve and how they will do this. This requires homes to work to their strengths, structuring practice around this and recruiting and training staff accordingly. The home must have confident and competent staff and must deliver what they say they will.

2.6. With the exception of Glendalyn (currently closed) which is rated as Adequate, all homes are currently rated by Ofsted as Good or Outstanding. Comments contained within the inspection reports provide further evidence to support confidence in the services ability to provide individualised care for children and enable them to make progress and or have a positive experience in the home.

2.7. Considerable work has already been undertaken to ensure that children's homes staff are well prepared for the changes. Existing Registered Managers are skilled and are embracing the changes with enthusiasm. Registered Managers from all of the homes meet on a monthly basis and this meeting is used to share good practice and problem solve. Any learning from future inspections will be shared widely. A document has been developed

which identifies the behaviours required of all staff working in children's homes. This is being used within the Valuing People Performance process.

- 2.8. The Residential Strategy aims to ensure that children in Hampshire's homes benefit from being cared about in a homely environment by staff that are able to provide emotionally warm authoritative parenting. The strategy has two strands: the building of six new four bedded homes and the training of staff in The Emotional Warmth Model of Professional Child Care. The Residential Strategy for excludes the respite units and Swanwick Lodge which have separate development plans.
- 2.9. One of the key principles within the regulatory guidance is that "residential child care should provide a safe and stimulating environment in high quality buildings". The design of our homes has included workshops with staff and children and the locations have been chosen to ensure that they offer opportunities to support the progress of the children.
- 2.10. Building of the new homes will commence in June 2015 and it is envisaged that homes will be completed in spring 2016 onwards.
- 2.11. Residential staff have been training in the emotional Warmth Model of Child Care. The model sets out to empower those working with children with the knowledge and skills to understand the complexity of the task. The model supports clear and strong leadership for those responsible for organising services for children in public care and demands a high level of purposeful kindness and commitment from the carers who look after them every day. It is a child centred approach informed by the best child psychology that society has to offer. Ofsted and professionals associated with the children's homes are very complimentary about the work that staff are now able to undertake with very complex children. At the end of April 2015, 46 staff had qualified and a further 13 were studying. Of those qualifying, the majority completed at Level 4 Distinction. The current funding for the programme ends in March 2016 and additional funding will be required in order to continue with this model.
- 2.12. The residential strategy will result in a change to the structure of teams and working locations of staff. Staff and the Trade Unions have been involved in a Consultation process. Staff will be asked to express a preference for which home they would like to work in and it is anticipated that all existing staff will know the outcome by the end of July. Once this process is completed, external recruitment will commence for the remaining vacancies.
- 2.13. It is anticipated that it will be necessary to recruit in the region of 20-25 new staff. Work has commenced on updating the existing role profiles and Task lists so as to ensure that they facilitate the recruitment of staff who are able to meet out expectations around delivery of high quality residential child care. A member of the Resourcing Team will provide dedicated support to the recruitment process. It is proposed that each home will have a Registered Manager, a deputy manager, two team supervisors, eight residential care workers and a part time admin assistant. With the exception of the manager

and the admin assistant, all staff will work on a rota covering evenings, weekends and sleep-ins.

3. Finance

- 3.1. Finance for the new builds is supported by member agreement and capital funding
- 3.2. The new buildings will be more cost effective to maintain
- 3.3. Further funding is required for delivery of the Pillars of Parenting programme beyond March 2016

4. Performance

- 4.1. The Residential strategy will improve the experience for children looked after in Hampshire County Council's children's homes
- 4.2. The strategy and associated work supports Registered Managers to aspire to Ofsted ratings of Good and Outstanding

5. Consultation and Equalities

- 5.1. Consultation concluded on 23 May 2015 therefore the outcome was not available at the time of writing the report.

6. Conclusion

- 6.1. The Residential Strategy and associated work demonstrates commitment of the provision of quality in-house residential child care.

7. Recommendations

- 7.1. That the Children and Families Advisory Panel note the report.

CORPORATE OR LEGAL INFORMATION:**Links to the Corporate Strategy**

Hampshire safer and more secure for all:	yes
Corporate Improvement plan link number (if appropriate):	
Maximising well-being:	yes
Corporate Improvement plan link number (if appropriate):	
Enhancing our quality of place:	yes
Corporate Improvement plan link number (if appropriate):	

Other Significant Links**Section 100 D - Local Government Act 1972 - background documents**

The following documents discuss facts or matters on which this report, or an important part of it, is based and have been relied upon to a material extent in the preparation of this report. (NB: the list excludes published works and any documents which disclose exempt or confidential information as defined in the Act.)

<u>Document</u>	<u>Location</u>
The children's home regulations including the guide to the quality standards	https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/childrens-homes-regulations-including-quality-standards-guide
Inspecting children's home framework	https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/inspecting-childrens-homes-framework

IMPACT ASSESSMENTS:

1. Equality Duty

1.1. The County Council has a duty under Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 ('the Act') to have due regard in the exercise of its functions to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct prohibited under the Act;
- Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic (age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, gender and sexual orientation) and those who do not share it;
- Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

Due regard in this context involves having due regard in particular to:

- a) The need to remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons sharing a relevant characteristic connected to that characteristic;
- b) Take steps to meet the needs of persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic different from the needs of persons who do not share it;
- c) Encourage persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity which participation by such persons is disproportionately low.

1.2. Equalities Impact Assessment:

The Residential Strategy and changes to Children's homes Regulation are intended to improve outcomes for a specific group of vulnerable children. There is no identifiable negative impact on any group.

2. Impact on Crime and Disorder:

2.1. The Residential Strategy and changes to Children's homes Regulation are intended to improve outcomes for a specific group of vulnerable children.

3. Climate Change:

- a) The new homes will be more energy efficient than the current homes