

CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD

29th MARCH 2007

FIVE RIVERS ANNUAL REPORT

**COUNCILLOR JAN BRUNTON
EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES**

**COUNCILLOR PAUL THOMPSON
EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR EDUCATION AND SKILLS**

**TERRY REDMAYNE
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN, FAMILIES & LEARNING**

PURPOSE OF REPORT

1. To provide the Corporate Parenting Board with the Annual Report of Five Rivers (Project) who manage and operate children's residential provision within Middlesbrough.

BACKGROUND

2. Five Rivers and Middlesbrough Council have an established Partnership that provides 11 residential places for young people, in three houses.
3. A Partnership Board meets quarterly to oversee the operational activity, service quality and financial aspects of that Partnership.
4. The attached report provides a summary of activity and provision.

FINANCIAL, LEGAL AND WARD IMPLICATIONS

5. There are no immediate legal or financial implications arising from this report. As corporate parents, this report will be of interest to all Members.

RECOMMENDATION

6. That Corporate Parenting Board is asked to advise the Executive to note the information relating to the Five Rivers Annual Report.

REASONS

7. The Council is responsible in their role as Corporate Parents, for ensuring children and young people in their care, receive a high quality service. The Five Rivers residential provision is a significant component of this service.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

No background papers were used in the preparation of this report.

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Five Rivers Project
Middlesbrough

Report for
Corporate Parenting
Board

March 2007

Report Compiled by:
Carol Perkins, Regional Manager

Introduction

This report has been produced to give the Corporate Parenting Board an overview of the progress of the last year. This is in addition to the regular Partnership Board meetings that take place quarterly throughout the year.

The report will firstly give an up date on the current situation, and I will then go on to talk about Every Child Matters and how Five Rivers has used this as a tool to improve outcomes for young people under the five specific requirements.

This will then form the basis of our presentation. The presentation will also include comments made by the young people we care for.

The Current situation

The Children Family and Learning Department continues to work together in Partnership with Five Rivers to provide a residential service for the young people of Middlesbrough.

We have three homes in Middlesbrough which consist of:

Holly Lodge (Cambridge Road)

Offers placements to four young people aged between 11-16yrs on admission.

Rosecroft (Croft Avenue)

Offers placements to four young people aged between 11-16 on admission.

Fir Tree (Marton Avenue)

Offers placements to three young people aged between 9-14 yrs on admission.

All of these placements are medium to long term.

The homes continue on full occupancy apart from when a young person moves on for whatever reason and we await further referrals. We also allow for future placements to be planned over a two week period.

We continue to be monitored and evaluated by CSCI (Commission for Social Care Inspectorate). We continue to challenge some of their decisions if we feel they impact on the care of our young people.

The homes continue to be maintained at a high standard. The living environments that have been created are warm, friendly, caring and provide structured boundaries for the young people, ensuring they are made to feel safe.

Young People

The homes are currently on 100% occupancy, and at present we have eleven young people living in the three homes.

Movement of young people over this period has been as follows:

- One young person moved on to supported living.
- One young person moved back home to live with her Dad.
- One young person moved on to live in Sunningdale due to his complex needs. He was 18 yrs and had been placed with us since he was 10years old.
- We kept one placement vacant due to the complex need of the above young person.
- We had four admissions during January 2006 to March 2007
- One young person has been in place for 4½ years
- One young person has been in place for 2yrs and 8 months
- One young person has been in place 1 year 8months
- One young person has been in place for 10 months
- One young person has been in place for 4 months
- Two young people have been in place for 3 months
- Two young people have been in place since February 2007

In line with Every Child Matters, we try to ensure that any movement of a young person is in a planned way.

Education has improved over the last year and we have given support to young people's educational placements.

There has also been support and guidance given to young people and our teams via the Education of Children Looked After Team. However, placements within alternative education can still be limited and the waiting time for young people being offered a placement can sometimes be a lengthy process. One young person this year was able to obtain his GCSE in Maths and Science.

Staffing

We currently have 30 permanent staff following the resignation of two of our managers, one from Fir Tree and one from Rosecroft, which left us with vacancies

for these posts. We have currently filled the post at Rosecroft and are awaiting a decision from CSCI in relation to the one at Fir Tree.

Our staffing consists of management, administration and staffing in the homes. We are currently working with the recommendations made by Every Child Matters to improve our workforce and its skills, by making working with children a more attractive and valuable experience.

We have been developing our recruitment process and training. We continue to evaluate our pay scales for permanent staff and our sessional staff to try and attract people into a career in child care

Training

We continue to have our own NVQ Assessment Centre and all our staff have either completed their NVQ or are working towards it. We offer workshops to our staff to facilitate learning and offer support. We have recently ceased working with the Co-ordinators we had in place and are now working with a Five Rivers NVQ Co-ordinator from our Salisbury office.

Our main aim this year is to ensure we have as many staff as possible who have completed their NVQ levels 3 and 4. We are looking at implementing Every Child Matters training, and will continue to ensure all staff are trained in Health and Safety and any Legislative requirements. This training will build on existing skills and develop new ones to enable staff to work with the many complex issues our young people display.

Feedback from Inspections

Inspections from CSCI and the Regulation 33 visits continue to be positive with no significant issues being raised. Overall standards of care are felt to be very good. Any issues that do arise are dealt with within required time scales.

Some changes have taken place in the way CSCI inspections take place. We have undergone CSCI inspections for all three houses and the main outcomes were good apart from Rosecroft, which was in the process of being refurbished at the time of the inspection. I am informed that CSCI will come under the Ofsted umbrella in April 2007.

Community Relationships

We have had one major issue with the community which led to a court appearance by the neighbour and a resident at Fir Tree House (34 Marton Avenue). Both appearances resulted in no further action being taken.

We now have regular meetings with the Children, Families & Learning Department, the Council and the Marton Avenue Residents Association. We also have meetings between Five Rivers and the Chair of the Marton Avenue Association - these meetings have proved invaluable in taking things forward positively.

Partnership Board

This continues to be a useful tool to raise any issues, and provides an opportunity to discuss ideas and suggestions, ensuring that both the Council and Five Rivers determine what they want to achieve for the young people of Middlesbrough.

Every Child Matters

As you will be aware, 'Every Child Matters: Change for Children' is a tool used to measure the outcomes for young people. Improving outcomes for all the young people we care for underpins the development and the work of Five Rivers.

The identified five outcomes are

- Be Healthy
- Stay Safe
- Enjoy and Achieve
- Make a Positive Contribution
- Achieve economic Well Being

The presentation you will be shown will cover these five areas, setting out how Five Rivers feel they have achieved these outcomes, and how the young people we work with feel we have achieved them.

Summary

The national framework for children's services clarifies that the Children Act 2004, together with 'Every Child Matters: Change for Children', sets out the government's direction for local programmes of change to be led by local authorities and their key partners.

This brings together Local Authority, Health, Education, Criminal Justice Services, Voluntary and Community Organisations along with other local partners to deliver improved services for children.

We at Five Rivers believe we have made positive steps in aiming to achieve within our current Partnership, and more importantly how we continue to provide an excellent service for the young people of Middlesbrough.

Carol Perkins
Regional Manager , North East
March 2007