

CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD

8th November 2007

FIVE RIVERS ANNUAL REPORT

**BRENDA THOMPSON - EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR CHILDREN,
FAMILIES AND LEARNING SERVICES**

**JAN DOUGLAS – INTERIM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR,
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

September 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 and a half. This is in addition to the regular Partnership Board meetings that take place quarterly throughout the year.

The report provides an update on the current situation and includes information on the young people, staffing, training, inspections and community relations. It also covers the way that Five Rivers has used Every Child Matters as a tool to improve outcomes for young people, which also forms the basis for the presentation. The presentation will also include comments made by the young people we care for.

The Current situation

The Children Families & Learning Department continues to work 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 what ever reason, and we await further referrals. We also allow for future placements to be planned over a two week period.

We are now monitored and evaluated by Ofsted who took over from CSCI in April 2007. 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, and 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. Of the young people who moved on during this period,

- One moved on to supported living.
- One moved back home to live with family.
- One moved on to specialist accommodation due to his complex needs. One placement was kept vacant due to the complex need of this young person.

There were four admissions during January 2006 to September 2007 and in terms of placement stability,

- One young person has been in place for 5½ years
- Two young people have been in place for 2yrs and 3 months
- One young person has been in place 1 year 8months
- One young person has been in place 1 year
- One young person has been in place for 10 months
- One young person has been in place for 3 months
- Two young people have been in place for 8 months
- Two young people have been in place 2 months

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.

Two young people obtained their GCSEs in Maths and Science.

Staffing

We currently have 30 permanent staff.

The resignation of two managers, one from Fir Tree and one from Rosecroft left us with vacancies for these posts. The post at Rosecroft has been filled and a temporary manager has been appointed at Fir Tree, with a senior manager providing oversight during the induction period.

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 are now working with an alternative Co-ordinator and are hopeful to have our own Verifiers and Assessors soon.

Our main aim this year is to ensure we have as many staff as possible to have completed their NVQ 3 and 4.

All staff have now completed Every Child Matters training and we have training planned on Restorative Justice in November 2007. We will also 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

All three homes have now had Ofsted Inspections since they took over from CSCI in April 2007. However, we submitted a letter of complaint to them following the first inspection, due to inconsistencies in the report, and the low scores given by the Ofsted Inspector. As a result of this complaint, the scores were changed to a higher level, which is more in keeping with the outcome of previous inspections.

The Regulation 33 visits continue to be positive with no significant issues being raised, and the reports now cover Every Child Matters. Overall standards of care are felt to be very good. Any issues that do arise are dealt with within required timescales.

Community Relationships

We have had two major issues with the community. One incident led to court appearances by both a neighbour and a resident, which resulted in no further action being taken.

The second incident resulted in two formal complaints being made to Middlesbrough Council. These were investigated and were upheld, however, concerns were raised about the management of the process, which led to a meeting with between Children, Families & Learning and Five Rivers.

In one area, there are now regular meetings between the Children, Families & Learning Department, the Local Councillors, and the local Residents' Association. Separate meetings between Five Rivers and the Chair of the Residents' Association have proved invaluable in taking things forward positively. We are hoping to set up similar meetings in the other areas.

Partnership Board

This continues to be a useful tool to raise any issues and provides a forum to discuss ideas and suggestions, ensuring that both the Council and Five Rivers are clear about 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 with 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, the Children Act 2004 and *Every Child Matters: Change for Children* set 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.

As the Councils key partner in delivering change for children, we at Five Rivers believe we have continued to achieve an effective Partnership. More importantly, we continue to provide an excellent service for the young people of Middlesbrough.

Carol Perkins
Regional Manager, North East
September 2007