

CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD

17TH APRIL 2008

<p>FIVE RIVERS UPDATE REPORT OCTOBER 2007 - MARCH 2008</p>

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

**GILL ROLLINGS – EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR,
CHILDREN, FAMILIES & LEARNING**

PURPOSE OF REPORT

1. To provide the Corporate Parenting Board with an update report on the 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 Project.

REASONS

7. The Council is responsible in their role as Corporate Parents, for ensuring that 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

April 2008

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 6 months. 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.

The Current Situation

The three homes in Middlesbrough, Holly Lodge, Rosecroft and Fir Tree continue on full occupancy, apart from short interim periods awaiting referrals or during pre-placement planning and preparation (usually over a two week period).

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

With 100% occupancy, there are currently eleven young people living in the three homes. Of the young people who moved on during this period,

- Three young people returned home to live with their families

There were four admissions between September 07 to March 08 and in terms of placement stability,

- One young person has been in place for 2 years 10 months
- One young person has been in place for 2 years 7 months
- One young person has been in place 1 year 11 months
- One young person has been in place 1 year 6 months
- One young person has been in place 1 year 2 months
- One young person has been in place for 1 year
- Two young people have been in place for 8 months

- Two young people are due to be admitted 2nd April 08

In line with *Every Child Matters* and *Care Matters*, we try to ensure that any movement of a young person takes place in a planned way.

Education has improved but there are still young people for whom it is difficult to engage in any form of education. However, we continue to work in partnership, supporting young people's educational placements.

There has also been support and guidance given to young people and our staff teams via the Education of Children Looked After Team. However, placements within alternative education continue to be limited and waiting for young people being offered a placement can sometimes be a lengthy process.

One young person has received a special Achievement Award from Middlesbrough Council, which was presented to her by Cllr. Brenda Thompson at a celebration party held at the town hall.

Staffing

Five Rivers currently has 30 permanent staff in Middlesbrough.

We are in the process of registering two managers, Lynn Gunn at Fir Tree and Cheryl Lowe at Holly Lodge. This has left us with vacancies for deputies in these homes. We are interviewing for these posts internally at the beginning of April.

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. Senior Managers are currently in the middle of an evaluation of pay and conditions.

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 hope to have our own Verifiers and Assessors soon. Our main aim this year will be to support staff in completing NVQs at levels 3 and 4.

All staff have now completed training on Every Child Matters and Restorative Justice. In March, all staff either revisited or completed a Managing Challenging Behaviour course to ensure they have a valid certificate. We will also continue to ensure all staff are trained in Health and Safety and any legislative requirements.

Feedback from Inspections

All three homes have now had Ofsted Inspections and continue to come out scoring as a 'good' service. All managers have been set the task, with their teams, to look at improving their service and their target is to achieve a score of 'excellent' at their next inspection.

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 minor issues that have arisen have been dealt with within required timescales.

Community Relationships

We continue to have the occasional complaint from within the community in the Cambridge Road area. However, we are now looking at ways of addressing complaints by setting up a meeting with a liaison person from this community, the Council and Five Rivers. This reflects the approach successfully adopted in relation to the Marton Avenue area.

Summary

Five Rivers continues to work in partnership with Middlesbrough Council to deliver change for children and to provide an excellent service for the young people of Middlesbrough.

Carol Perkins
Regional Manager, North East
April 2008