



Date of Meeting: 14<sup>th</sup> November 2019

Lead Member: Cllr Andrew Parry Lead Member for Children, Education and Early Help

Lead Officer: Sarah Parker – Executive Director for People - Children

**Executive Summary:**

This report updates members of the CPB on looked after children placed in unregistered and unregulated arrangements. Members are asked to consider the content of the report and the impact of the use of an unregistered placement for a child or young person and the measures in place to ensure the child's safety and wellbeing whilst in such a placement. Members are asked to note and consider the intention to progress actions to ensure registration of the current arrangements.

**Equalities Impact Assessment:**

There are no equalities implications arising from this report

**Budget:**

N/A

**Risk Assessment:**

Having considered the risks associated with this decision, the level of risk has been identified as:

Current Risk: MEDIUM

Residual Risk MEDIUM

**Climate implications:**

N/A

**Other Implications:**

N/A

**Recommendation:**

This report is for information

**Reason for Recommendation:**

This report is for information.

**Appendices:**

Appendix A – Flowchart – application process for full application.

**Background Papers:**

None

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## 1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 We continue to have a small number of children who require unregistered Placements whilst a more appropriate resource is identified for their care. A weekly report is maintained on any such placements including monitoring of professional's visits and statutory reviews.
- 1.2 An unregistered placement is a placement which is legally required to be registered under the Children's Home Regulations (2015).
- 1.3 An unregulated placement is one which is not required to be registered with a regulatory body; e.g. a home offering accommodation but not care for those over sixteen, a language school or activity holiday base. The arrangements referenced in this report do not fall into the category of unregulated placements.
- 1.4 Ofsted have very recently published a helpful blog article regarding the differences between Unregulated and Unregistered settings.  
<https://socialcareinspection.blog.gov.uk/2019/07/08/unregistered-and-unregulated-provision-whats-the-difference/>

## 2.0 Progress since last meeting

- 2.1 Since the last meeting two children have been moved to registered placements and two additional children have required unregistered placements. As reported to the last meeting we have identified
- 2.2 Three foster placements to be retained for emergency placements however each currently has a child in placement and will take some time for them to be freed up to take on this new responsibility.

## 3.0 Current position

- 3.1 At the time of writing we have 4 children in unregistered placements. 29/10/2019)

Child	Age	Period in placement as at 07/10/2019	Accommodation	Date of last SW visit	Date of last statutory review	Case review
A	15	455 days	Agency property	23/10/2019	16/10/2019	29/10/2019
B	17	59 days	DC Property	29/10/2019	02/10/2019	10/10/2019
C	15	104 days	DC Property	29/10/2019	26/09/2019	09/10/2019
D	14	27 days	Holiday Lodge	28/10/2019	17/10/2019	Tbc early Nov

- 3.2 Child A is placed in a long-standing arrangement which is very much liked by the child and who has stated their preference for remaining where they are. They have experienced a sustained settled period that previous arrangements could not achieve. We are currently working with the provider to take over responsibility for this placement and commence the registration process.

- 3.3 Child B has very specific care needs, and we will be maintaining his current placement pending agreed Adult Services provision being made available in January 2020. It is intended that the registration of this premises be completed as soon as possible. This being to secure and sustain the placement for the young person currently accommodated and for the future use as a children's home beyond the existing arrangements.
- 3.4 We are currently in discussion with a private residential provider for Child C. This if successful will provide a registered care and education setting. Outcome of these discussions likely to be known by mid-November. It is intended that registration of this premises be completed to secure the future use of the bungalow as a children's home beyond the existing arrangements.
- 3.5 Child D has become looked after recently and placement searches commenced immediately. There been two potential offers of a registered care and education setting for this child. One provider has subsequently withdrawn during their assessment due to matching issues. The second provider who has come forward more recently is due to visit Child D and begin an assessment on the 1st of November. At the time of writing children's services have approached two further providers and are awaiting their response. This is a temporary arrangement not expected to be registered given the time scale and nature of the property.
- 3.6 All children being accommodated in unregistered placements are visited at least weekly by their SW and reviewed monthly by LAC Review and by a Senior Manager convened case review. Where indicated in a child's care plan, placement commissioning and searching will continue.

#### **4. Progress Regarding the Registration of Dorset Council owned Properties as Children's Homes**

- 4.1 Children's Services have secured the use of two Dorset Council owned properties which have been designated to be used as short-term accommodation for young people.
- 4.2 Both properties are currently in use providing accommodation, care and support whilst more suitable longer-term care options are found. The Care and support to the young people accommodated is provided by care agency staff and are unregistered placements. These arrangements are referenced earlier in this report. Child B and Child C.
- 4.3 It is Children's Services intention that there should be no young person placed in an unregistered setting. Therefore, Children's Services are embarking upon a strategy to register the Bungalow premises as Children's Homes and manage these within the parameters of the Children's Homes Regulations 2015 (and amendments 2018). This would provide a) regulated settings for the two young people currently using the accommodation b) the future use of the premises as children's homes to provide accommodation for any other young person.

### **5.0 Wimborne (DC Property):**

- 5.1 The home comprises of three bedrooms (one doubling as an office), a wet-room with WC and a further separate WC. There is a fully fitted kitchen, a spacious living/dining room and a large enclosed garden laid to lawn, there is hardstanding for parking of up to 3 cars outside the home. The home is in an affluent residential area close to shops and leisure facilities.
- 5.2 Remedial building works, garden and surrounds have all been completed. The building has been completely redecorated and furnished to provide a suitable and homely living environment.
- 5.3 Fire system installed tested and operational. Health and Safety Assessment has been undertaken and completed and all recommendations met. The building would meet the regulatory requirements for safety and environment.

### **6.0 Weymouth (DC Property):**

- 6.1 The Weymouth property comprises of four bedrooms (one doubling as an office), a wet-room with WC, a large living room and fully fitted kitchen with a small dining area in the kitchen. The home is surrounded by garden laid to lawn with a raised area and two sections of decking and a patio area. There is parking for two cars outside the home and an application has been made to put in a drop kerb for off road parking making the section of garden at the front of the home hard standing for two vehicles. It is at the end of a residential road and has good access to local facilities.
- 6.2 A complete redecoration has been undertaken and the property suitably and comfortably furnished. A fire system has been installed, tested and is operational. The required Health and Safety Assessment has been completed, and all recommendations met. The building would meet the regulatory requirements for safety and environment.
- 6.3 Further remedial work was required due to significant damage to the property caused by the young person living there. This has now been resolved and the environment made more suitable for the young person's specific needs.

## **7 7.0 Further Work required to register both properties**

- 7.1 Planning permission for change use is being sought. Non-contested planning permission can take around 3 months to be achieved.
- 7.2 To meet the requirements for legal operation as a children's home both premises will need an individual appointment of a Registered Manager. To achieve this children's services will need to recruit to these positions (Enhanced DBS Check will be required) and undergo a "fit person" interview with Ofsted. This process is likely to take up to 12 weeks.

- 7.3 As these posts do not currently exist new Job Descriptions and Context Statements will need to be formulated and agreed through usual council recruitment policy.
- 7.4 When a Registered Manager has been appointed and designated a suitably fit person to carry on a children's home the application to register the premises can be submitted to Ofsted. This process will usually take between 12 to 16 weeks
- 7.5 During the 12 to 16-week registration process Ofsted are likely to visit several times in order to track progress of the recruitment of suitable staff, the formulation of policies and procedures relevant to the home and the council as employers.
- 7.6 In parallel to the registration process a staff will be recruited and trained to the standards required in the Children's Homes Regulations 2015. To fully cover the hours needed to provide care and supervision to a young person in a children's home environment up to ten (full time equivalent) care staff would be required.
- 7.7 Good progress has already been made in completing the statutory paperwork, policy and procedure required for Registration. This schedule of documents will be inspected prior to completion of registration.
- 7.8 A Responsible Individual (RI) will also need to be appointed to oversee the activity of the homes. The RI is a statutory designation and who acts on behalf of the organisation to ensure the legal responsibilities are effectively discharged. The RI is ultimately accountable for ensuring the effectiveness of the Registered Manager's practice. An RI is usually a manager within the LA (or organisation if independent) and the role part of their other duties.

### **8.0 Bridgewater Home (Agency Leased Property):**

- 8.1 The house in Bridgewater is currently home to a young person who has lived there for some time and who has made very clear their wish to remain there (Child A). The house is leased to a care agency who provide the care and support to the young person. This is a three bedroomed terraced house in a residential area close to the town centre and amenities. It is in good repair and decorative order
- 8.2 To regulate the arrangement, it is intended that Dorset Council register the premises as a children's home. To start this process Children's Services have already requested that the tenancy for the building be transferred to Dorset Council. The landlord for the property has agreed to this and the lease agreement is currently with Dorset Council Property Services who are seeking legal advice to ensure that transfer satisfies regulatory requirements.
- 8.3 Proposals to retain the current support team working with the young person by Dorset Council employing them as agency staff are underway. Dorset Council will assume line management responsibility and ensure registration standards are met. Paula Bates (Dorset Council Residential Services Manager) is currently working with the agency director in planning for this to be completed.

#### 8.4 Issues currently being followed up:

Planning permission for the building needs to be sought for approval as a children's home from the relevant body in Somerset. Further Health and Safety Risk Assessments will be undertaken by Dorset Council. Staff will require additional training to be compliant with Children's Homes Regulations.

8.5 Thought will need to be given to the role of Registered Manager who will need to be permanently engaged in the running of the home. Ofsted are likely to challenge any appointment of a Registered manager who has other roles outside of the home. This will be clarified at point of application.

8.6 As above (section 7.0) the consideration of registration of the home will take approximately 16 weeks following application by the Registered Manager. A Responsible Individual will also need to be appointed to oversee the activity of the home. (see section 7.8 above).

#### 9.0 Timescales for Registration:

9.1 While it is difficult, given the key dependencies to give exact dates for completion of Registration and the stages to achieve this, the following is an estimated timescale;

- Planning Permission status and activity agreed by end November
- Tenancy and staffing arrangements for Bridgewater Home agreed end November
- Agree Registered Manager Status for all homes end November
- Agree parameters of any recruitment matters end November
- Registered Manager Applications submitted to Ofsted by December 13<sup>th</sup>
- All policies and procedures in place for all homes (inc. Bridgewater) end November
- Agree visiting schedule for Registration purposes with Ofsted end November.

9.2 It is expected that close liaison with Ofsted will be maintained to ensure pace of progress, clarity of expectations and avoid any delay.

**Appendix A** The attached is a flowchart of the application process for full application: