

AGENDA ITEM

**CORPORATE
PARENTINGBOARD**

9 AUGUST 2019

**REPORT OF DIRECTOR OF
CHILDREN'S SERVICES**

**Activity and Monitoring Arrangements in relation to Accommodation for Children in,
and Leaving, our Care**

1. SUMMARY

1.1 The purpose of the attached reports is to provide an overview to the Cooperate Parenting Board of the use of external provision that is available to young people in and leaving our care. The reports describe the monitoring arrangements to ensure continued suitability and the safe care and support provided to our children and young people.

2. Post 16 Supported Accommodation - Appendix 1.

2.1 Children's Services have 3 commissioned supported provisions –

- Parkfield Hall – 10 flats/units plus one emergency Crash Pad
- 155 Norton Road – 6 flats/units plus one emergency Crash Pad
- St James House – 6 flats/units

2.2 The specification of the physical buildings are of a high standard and each service provides, as a minimum 1 bedroom self-contained flats within a building that has staff 24/7. The staff provide support to our young people in managing a tenancy, build skills and prepare for independence.

2.3 Between Nov 2018 and May 2019 these provisions have been running at full capacity and provided a service to a total of 34 young people.

- 11 young people were Care Leavers
- 13 were Children in Our Care
- 10 were homeless 16/17 years accommodation. (Some of these have subsequently become CIOC following assessment and use of Southwark Judgement.)

2.4 The provisions are monitored through the usual commissioned contract arrangements the council has in place. Additionally a member of the Resource Team:

- Completes an annual monitoring visit and reports on the standard of the building, staff training, recruitment, relationship with LA and audits case files to ensure continued quality.

- Visits 6 weekly focusing on the progress of individual young people in placement and will pick up on any issues that have been raised to the Resource Team through the care management process.
- Facilitates Providers Meetings on an 8 weekly basis to provide additional awareness raising particularly in relation to safeguarding, county lines for instance and will invite as appropriate external agencies such as police.

2.5 On occasions it is necessary to 'spot purchase' supported accommodation for those young people who cannot live in a group type environment. The monitoring arrangements from the Resource Team are as described above.

3. Unregulated Children's Homes - Appendix 2.

- 3.1 The term unregulated describes any placement that is providing care and accommodation for children, generally under the age of 16. Ofsted classify such establishments as those that meets the definition of a children's home but is not registered with them.
- 3.2 Between May 2018 and April 2019, 15 young people were placed in an unregulated provision. All these placements were made in an emergency. 75% of these placements were sourced and staffed from the in house residential service from Stockton.
- 3.3 There several factors which can contribute to the need to use an unregulated placement, in general it is noted that these have been the result of external providers giving immediate notice to the Local Authority to end children's placements and no other provision being readily available.
- 3.4 In all circumstances the Resources Team places an high priority in monitoring and supporting any unregulated placement regardless if this is an internal or external provision. Monitoring visits are made at frequent intervals to provide first hand assurance of the quality of the placement.
- 3.5 It is wholly accepted that the use of unregulated provision would only be considered as an option when regulated provision has been exhausted.

4. Regulated external children's homes –Appendix 3

- 4.1 Children's Services spot commission a number of external children's homes to meet its duty to provide sufficient accommodation to children and young people within the care of the Authority.
- 4.2 The rationale for the use of external regulated children's homes is varied, generally it is as a result of no capacity internally or the it has been identified in the child's plan that require to be placed outside of the area for the purpose of safeguarding.
- 4.3 The Local Authority have in place robust monitoring arrangements to ensure that the care and accommodation provided for the Children in Our Care placed in external provision are receiving good or excellent care.

- 4.4 The manager undertaking the visit will ensure that they speak directly to the homes manager either during the visit or soon after in order feedback can be given if there any concerns that need to be addressed. Should there be any safeguarding concerns these will be shared immediately with the child's Social Worker and the Resource Team Manager.
- 4.5 During the period of April 2018 to May 2019 there were a total of 20 monitoring visits undertaken. The attached report provides detail of some of the key themes from these visits. It is noted with confidence that the majority of the children placed in external provision during this period where placed in Ofsted judged Good or Outstanding provision. The small number when inspections had resulted in requires improvement received swift monitoring visits and the managers where assured that the children were safe, and the home had in place appropriate actioning planning to redeem the judgement.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 5.1 The Cooperate Parenting Board are asked to note the report and accompanying appendices and be assured that processes are in place that are effective in monitoring the quality of external provision.

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APPENDIX 1

Post 16 Supported Accommodation Report Nov 18 – May 19

Report prepared by - Jonathon Fawcett Accommodation Officer

Purpose

To give the Corporate Parenting Board an overview of, the use of and the monitoring of Supported Accommodation for our Care Leavers and young people 16 and over who may be looked after or children in need and are at risk of becoming homeless.

Stockton-On-Tees Borough Council is committed to ensuring appropriate accommodation and support is available for this vulnerable group of young people. As a result, annual monitoring visits are conducted by the Resource Team and from this, as a Local Authority we are able to identify needs of service users, monitor trends in providers and ensure that providers are working towards supporting our young people in achieving their goals and aspirations, moving towards independence.

Introduction and Background

Stockton-On-Tees Borough Council has access to 3 commissioned supported accommodation provisions. These providers are:

- Parkfield Hall – 10 flats/units plus one emergency Crash Pad
- 155 Norton Road – 6 flats/units plus one emergency Crash Pad
- St James House – 6 flats/units

All of the LA's commissioned services provide self-contained one bedroom flats/bedsits with their own facilities (such as bathroom/kitchen/living area etc.) in a building in which there is 24 hour staffing on site. Staff on site are there to appropriately assist our young people in managing a tenancy, build skills and prepare for independent living. In addition, they will in consultation with the young person and their lead worker, sign post/refer to other agencies to support with other needs (i.e. substance misuse, mental health services).

Aside from these commissioned services, the LA may spot purchase supported accommodation arrangements from other providers. This is dependent on numerous issues including needs of the young person, risks and capacity issues regarding the commissioned service. Any provider that is spot purchased is monitored in the same way as our commissioned services.

Access

Young people can only be referred into these services (commissioned or spot purchased) via the Resource Team and must have involvement with either a Social Worker or Personal Advisor. An assessment of need must be carried out by the lead worker and presented to the Accommodation Panel (a multi-agency meeting) to ratify

a plan for supported accommodation and confirm such an arrangement is appropriate for the young person's needs. This ensures that referrals are appropriate and gives additional scrutiny in an effort to ensure providers can meet the need of young people. From this, a further meeting will be held with lead worker, Resources, provider and young person to ensure that young person fully understands expectations from provider and provider's expectations of them prior to admission.

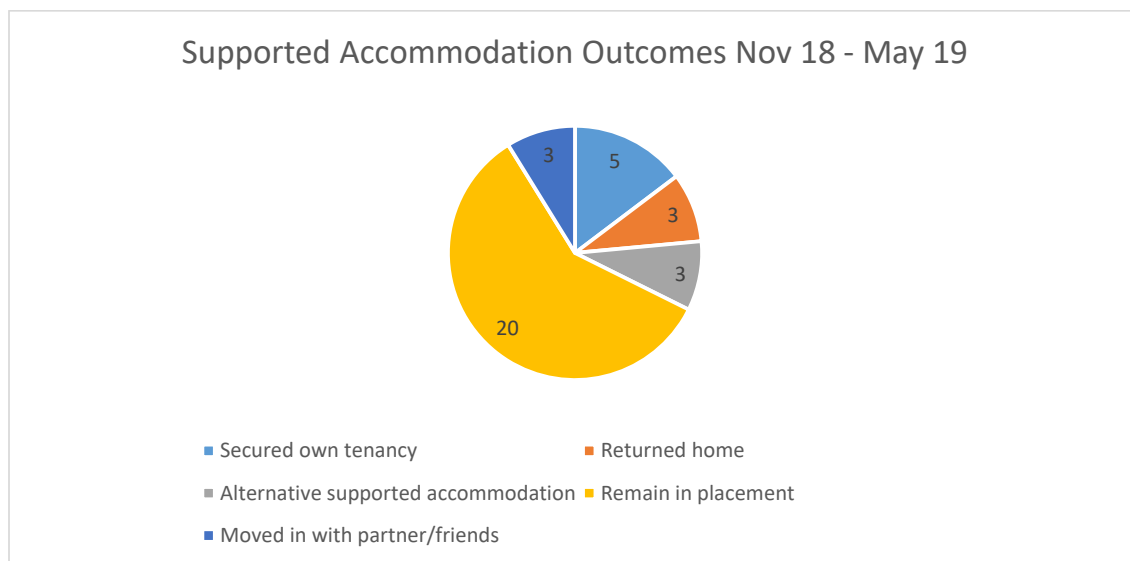
Capacity Data

Between Nov 2018 and May 2019, the commissioned supported accommodation providers have been running at full capacity. 34 Young people have accessed the service during this time.

From the 34 young people who have accessed the service during this time:

- 11 young people are Care Leavers
- 13 were Children in Our Care
- 10 were homeless 16/17 years accommodation. Some of these have subsequently become CIOC following assessment and use of Southwark Judgement.

Outcomes are overall positive, see chart below:



Although 3 young people were transitioned to alternative supported accommodation arrangements, this was due to the high levels of risk, damage and disengagement they presented with. Despite attempts to sustain these placements, it was agreed that alternative provision was more suitable for needs of the young people.

In cases where young people returned home, this plan was fully supported by all agencies as was a high percentage of those who moved in with friends or partners.

Crash Pads

The Crash Pads have been used by 12 young people during this time, providing emergency accommodation for 6 homeless 16/17 year olds 2 temporary placements for CIOC (following urgent placement breakdowns) and 4 Care Leavers. These young people were subsequently supported to return home or were provided longer term accommodation (either within supported accommodation or into their own tenancies).

Monitoring

Post 16 supported accommodation monitoring visits take place annually. At the visit, a member of the Resource Team will consider how well the provider is supporting young people whilst also ensuring staff training is appropriate, the building is safe/sound and the young people understand the nature of the provision. This is done during the visit by viewing the building, auditing a young person's support file, talking with staff, reviewing provider's documentation and recording and speaking with the young people in placement (where possible). In addition, the monitoring visitor will also discuss working relationships between the LA and provider, identify any issues, share good practice and consider any emerging trends. Since October 2018, all providers have received a monitoring visit.

In addition, all commissioned services are invited to attend a Provider's Meeting facilitated by the Local Authority and chaired by the Accommodation Officer from the Resource Team. These are held every 6-8 weeks. This allows services to discuss trends with each other, share ideas, identify training issues and is also a forum for training to be provided. Recent briefing and awareness rising sessions have included 'County Lines' and young people's services such as Enterprise Education for Young people.

Finally, the Accommodation Officer from the Resource Team holds regular 6 weekly catch ups with providers on an individual basis to discuss young people in placement. This helps to identify any issues, concerns with placements and ensures appropriate actions are put in place and also identify additional support needs or possible move on candidates. This discussion in these meetings is shared with lead workers.

From the monitoring visits, provider's meetings and 6 weekly catch ups, we have been able to implement several recommendations which include continuation of the 6 weekly catch ups, re-developing of the referral form and further training around relevant issues such as County Lines, Criminal Exploitation, etc. We have also identified a need to ensure that appropriate ongoing support is provided once our young people move on into their own accommodation.

Measuring success

Per info above, a successful outcome for our young people can be measured by a positive move on which is then sustained. Between Nov 18 and May 19, 12 young

people successfully moved to an alternative arrangements and only one young person represented to the service in need of support and accommodation. By ensuring providers are heavily involved in the planning process, keep regular contact with lead workers and have a robust relationship with Resources, the LA is able to ensure that a high percentage of young people are able to remain in placement until they are ready to move on which in turn ensures that they remain in their move on accommodation.

However, positive move on is not always into their own tenancy, and (per above) can be measured by a successful return home or a planned move in with friends or partner. The number of re-presentations to the service is also a measure of success and between Nov 18 and to date there has been only one young person who has re-requested support and accommodation. This was due to a relationship breakdown with partner.

Ongoing support

As part of the move on support package offered, all young people going into their own accommodation are offered Floating Support by the Gateway Service at SBC's Housing Solutions Team to help our young people 'set up' their new property (i.e. ensure addresses are changed, relevant benefit claims made, utilities set up, etc). In addition, Resources has a weekend support worker who works Saturday and Sunday daytime and will visit young people in both supported accommodation arrangements and those living independently. The worker can befriend, provide food parcels and just generally check on their wellbeing at a time when other services are not available.

Recommendations

That the report is noted by the Corporate Parenting Board and that future reports are presented annually

APPENDIX 2

STOCKTON-ON-TEES BOROUGH COUNCIL

The use and monitoring of unregulated provision for young people aged under 16 years by Stockton Borough Council.

Reporting period – 01 May 18 to 30 April 19

Date of Report – 01.05.19

By – Louise Carling, Resource Team Manager

1. Aim and background to Report

- 1.1 The aim of this report is to provide the Corporate Parenting Board with specific details on the use of unregulated placements for children and young people under the age of 16 years by Stockton Borough Council.
- 1.2 The report will detail the numbers of young people placed, the reason to place the child, type of placement, length of placement and the subsequent exit plan of each child.
- 1.3 The report will detail the monitoring and support arrangements of unregulated placements.
- 1.4 The report will offer opportunities that the Local Authority may want to consider in reducing the reliance on unregulated provision moving forward. Such considerations will be captured in the overarching Local Authority Sufficiency Strategy.

2. Definition of Unregulated Provision

- 2.1 The term 'unregulated placement' referred to in this report specifically relates to any placement providing care and accommodation for children and young people under the age of 16 years.
- 2.2 Ofsted classify such establishments as those that meets the definition of a children's home but is not registered with them.
- 2.3 Specific reference to legislation and guidance provided by Ofsted include:
 - Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015, Specifically Regulation 3 – Excepted establishments 3.1 (c) (ii) and (d) (ii).
 - Introduction to children's homes – A children's social care guide to registration; April 2018, updated July 18
 - Ofsted Letter of Guidance to Directors of Children's Services – Unregulated and unregistered Provisions, dated 04 May 2017

3. Data Analysis

3.1 The following table provides the specific data in relation to the placements of children and young people in unregulated provision during the reporting period.

RAISE ID	Reason for Placement	Type of unregulated placement	Date of Placement	Length of placement (days)	Exit plan
1015948	External Placement breakdown – immediate notice served	Internally sourced – bridging placement	11.05.18	3	Moved to Supporting Futures activity placement - unregulated
1015948	Emergency Placement	Externally sourced	14.05.18	on-going	Home in the process of registration with Ofsted
1015327	Family breakdown	Internally sourced	18.06.18	10	Moved to in-house provision - registered placement
1016471	Family breakdown	Internally sourced	28.06.18	8	Moved to Old Vicarage - registered placement
1068801	Foster breakdown	Internally sourced	02.07.18	23	Moved to in-house registered provision
1064294	External residential breakdown - immediate notice served	Internally sourced	02.07.18	6 weeks, 4 days	Moved to in-house registered provision
1025998	External residential breakdown - immediate notice served	Internally sourced	17.09.18	14	Moved to BDT Care - registered placement
1109482	Unable to return home	Internally sourced	17.09.18	4	Moved to Old Vicarage - registered placement
1016153	Family breakdown	Internally sourced	14.11.18	29	Moved to Artemis - registered placement
1018527	Family breakdown	Internally sourced	06.11.18	16	Moved to Nursery View - registered placement
1016733	External residential breakdown - immediate notice served	Externally sourced	13.12.18	on-going	Placement to be registered with Ofsted. On-going searches
1103751	Family breakdown	Internally sourced	07.12.18	39	Moved to in-house registered provision
1016746	Foster breakdown	Internally sourced	19.12.18	31	Moved to East Farm House - registered placement
1060523	Foster breakdown	Internally sourced	27.03.19	11	Moved to Baydale House - registered placement
1078155	External residential breakdown - immediate notice served	Externally sourced	18.04.19	On-going	Plan to return to Paddock House on the 16.05.19

3.2 All placements made into unregulated provision were made in an emergency and out of the control of the Local Authority.

- 3.3 75% of unregulated placements were sourced and staffed from the in house residential service from Stockton.
- 3.4 31% of those placements were a result of external providers giving immediate notice to terminate the child's placement and most stating that the risk were to high due to 'safeguarding' concerns.
- 3.5 Efforts to save the placements in all situations were made, this has been in the form of challenge to the provider and the offer of support, advice and guidance were appropriate.
- 3.6 In those circumstances where the emergency was as a result of a family breakdown, in house procedures in regards to 'Bringing a Child into our Care' or moving a child were applied and consideration to alternative type support was given but not felt appropriate.

4. Placement Monitoring and Support Arrangements.

- 4.1 The majority of unregulated placements were sourced and staffed by Stockton residential staff members. Oversight, supervision and support was provided to the staff from experience registered managers and Resource Management Team.
- 4.2 Social Workers were able to maintain regular contact with the child, family and staff during the placement due to the proximity to Stockton.
- 4.3 Support services such as health, education, CAMHS, YOS were made readily accessible where needed.
- 4.4 These measures ensured that these placements were adequately supported and monitored throughout their duration.
- 4.5 In all instances where external providers were commissioned to provide a placement, these had established relationships with the Local Authority, where previous successful placements had been made.
- 4.6 Indigo Support provide placements close to or in the Borough so points 4.2 and 4.3 were applicable.
- 4.7 The Resources Team maintain regular contact with providers via email and telephone offering support and guidance as needed.
- 4.8 Monitoring visits are made at frequent intervals to provide first hand assurance of the quality of the placement.
- 4.9 It is noted that two of the three young people who are currently in unregistered provision reported they feel the most settled they have since becoming Child in Our Care.
- 4.10 The providers of two young people's placements are currently, with the support of the Resources Team in the process of applying for their registration to operate as a regulated children's home.

5.0 Conclusion

- 5.1 It is wholly accepted that the use of unregulated provision would only be considered as an option when regulated provision has been exhausted.
- 5.2 Assurances are given to members that the placements outlined above met this criterion.
- 5.3 Guidance from Ofsted on the use of unregulated provision has and continues to be consulted when decision are made around the use of unregulated provision. It is noted that Ofsted position/guidance on the use of this type of provision has over the past 12 to 18 months been more detailed in expectations in setting out it position. This response is likely to be the result in increased use of unregulated placements made by Local Authorities.
- 5.4 Placements for more complex children and young people are becoming increasingly difficult to source and places the pressure on the Local Authority to use unregulated. Providers are able and will give immediate notice leaving children arguably in a more risky position than they would had they remained in the regulated placement despite the concerns. This is challenged, however success in maintaining the placement is variable.

6.0 Recommendations

- 6.1 It is recommended that members familiarise themselves with “The review of residential services report” dated Jan 19 written by Jo Lee, to provide the current position in terms of the Local Authorities duty to provide a range of sufficient accommodation capable of meeting the different needs of looked after children.
- 6.2 Stockton has refreshed its Sufficiency Strategy to set out service development priorities.
- 6.3 The Local Authority will continue to work in closely with providers and Ofsted in sourcing and meeting emergency placement needs of young people.

APPENDIX 3

STOCKTON-ON-TEES BOROUGH COUNCIL

Monitoring arrangements of external registered children's homes.

Date of Report – 01.05.19

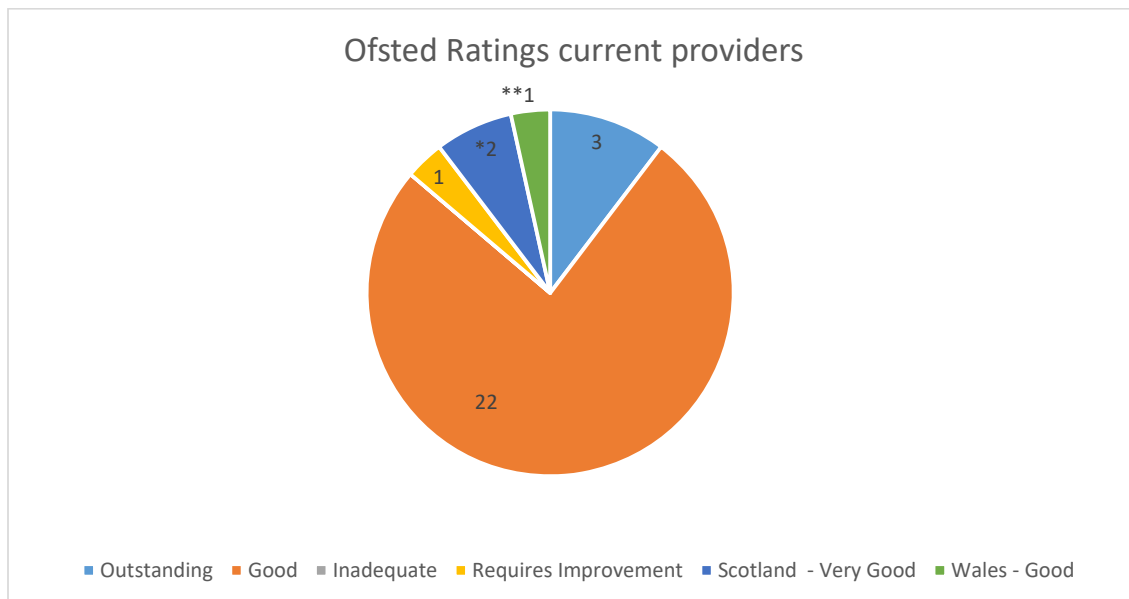
By – Angela Askins, Deputy Resource Team Manager

1. Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide the Corporate Parenting Board with assurances that the Local Authority have in place arrangements to ensure that the care and accommodation provided for the Children in Our Care placed in external provision are receiving good or excellent care.
- 1.2 The arrangements for monitoring of external placements is contained within the Monitoring External Residential Provision and Unregulated Provision Policy and Procedure.
- 1.3 The process of monitoring a placement is referred to as a monitoring visit or audit.
- 1.4 The report will consider the number of provisions monitored in the last 12 months and report general themes or concerns raised as part of those visits, how these concerns have been addressed as well as receiving feedback from providers. We will also look at addressing any issues the providers have with the local authority.

2. Data Summary

- 2.1 The table below shows the number of current residential placements Stockton has children residing in and their Ofsted grading.



- 2.2 At the time of report, Stockton have 3 Children placed in Ofsted rated Outstanding Children’s homes externally.
- 2.3 22 children are placed in Ofsted rated Good Children’s external homes.
- 2.4 Stockton have no children placed with Inadequate providers.
- 2.5 One external home is graded as Requires Improvement.
- 2.6 Although we have one young person in requires improvement placement, a monitoring visit was completed prior to placing this young person. The monitoring person was satisfied that the provision could demonstrate they were equipped to meet the young person needs and maintain him in this placement.

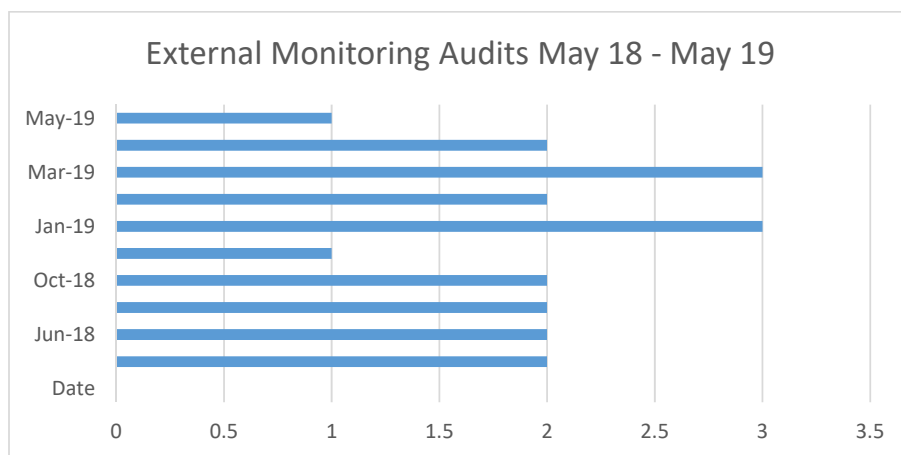
*There are two providers in Scotland which is are rated as Very Good

**There is one provider in provider in Wales which is graded as Good, not added in the chart.

3. Approach to the monitoring and auditing of external provisions

- 3.1 Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council believes that all our children and young people should live in safe, stable, caring environments and have a sense of belonging in order that they can flourish and reach their full potential.
- 3.2 Stockton Local Authority will in addition to the Looked After framework, seek further assurances and monitor all provision is of a good standard.
- 3.3 Monitoring of residential placements will be undertaken by the Resource Team and Residential Managers using an audit approach. Audits visits will be completed at least annually.

- 3.4 The monitoring person will speak with the homes manager either during the visit or soon after in order feedback can be given if there any concerns that need to be addressed. Should there be any safeguarding concerns these will be shared immediately with the child's Social Worker and the Resource Team Manager.
- 3.5 Consideration will be given to notifying the LADO in the local area, Ofsted and the homes Independent Visitor should safeguarding concerns be highlighted.
- 3.6 The graph below shows the number of Monitoring Audits that have taken place over the past 12 months.



4. Themes from Providers:

- 4.1 The general themes from providers are that they feel they have an excellent working relationship with Stockton. Social workers respond in a timely manner when information is requested and that they make visits to the young people over and above the required legal requirement.
- 4.2 There has been some concerns raised in the frequency of changes to nominated Social workers. Following further discussions with providers they have been assured that they can always contact the Resource Team should they need any assistance or support with our young people.
- 4.3 As a direct result of Ofsted inspections two providers received monitoring audits from Stockton. One provider was supported by the Resource Team with guidance and support in practice issues resulting in a good grading.
- 4.4 One provision was given notice by Stockton following the audit, this was a direct result of the lack of confidence the Local Authority had in relation to this provider being able to keep this young person safe and meet his needs. The child returned to the Stockton area into a Local Authority registered children's home.

5. Conclusion

- 5.1 Stockton Resource Team members have excellent relationships with providers offering not only guidance but practical support.
- 5.2 The monitoring process and procedure continues to be monitored and reviewed in line with good practice.
- 5.3 The Cooperate Parenting Board are asked to note the report and be assured that processes are in place that are effective in monitoring the quality of external provision.