

Feedback – Queensley Uzomba (PM, Children’s Services) – Royal Borough of Greenwich Emergency Children’s Home (Covid-19 crisis response)

Feedback Date: 28.5.20 **Project delivery period:** 30.3.20 to 26.04.20

Important notes:

- **This feedback is based on The Royal Borough of Greenwich being the provider of this Children’s Home and the application and registration process that was applicable during the project delivery period. The process for opening a new Home will be different for non-Local Authority providers.**
- **Since 11.5.20 Ofsted have released a new fast track application process for registering an emergency Children’s Home as a direct result of Covid-19 – you must read this:** <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/registering-childrens-homes-in-an-emergency-as-a-direct-result-of-covid-19-pandemic-fast-track-applications#documents>

Useful links

Children’s Home Regulations Including Quality Standards – you must read this
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/childrens-homes-regulations-including-quality-standards-guide>

Children’s homes regulations amendments 2014 - Advice for children’s homes providers on new duties under amendments to regulations that came into effect in January and April 2014 - you must read this
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/339545/Children_s_homes_regulations_amendments_2014.pdf

All the information you need on how to register your new Home with Ofsted – you must read this
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guide-to-registration-for-childrens-social-care-services>

Checklist: Children’s social care application – quick guide on what you need to register your new Home – you must read this
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/767383/Childrens_social_care_application_checklist_Dec_2018.pdf

Government guidance on managing Covid – you must consider this in your premises design and incorporate guidance into your own policies and procedures

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-residential-care-supported-living-and-home-care-guidance> and
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-on-isolation-for-residential-educational-settings/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-on-isolation-for-residential-educational-settings>

Health and safety in care homes – this will help you understand the Health and Safety law and best practice for residential settings

<https://www.hse.gov.uk/pUbns/priced/hsg220.pdf>

Social care common inspection framework (SCCIF): children's homes – it is a good idea to look at this now when thinking about policies and guidance or later once you have opened. It is worth noting that newly registered children's homes that register between 1 April and 30 September in any given year receive at least one inspection between 1 October and 31 March. Those that register between 1 October and 31 March in any given year will receive their first inspection between 1 April and 30 September of the following inspection period

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5c9b837040f0b633fc95f7a9/SCCIF_children_s_homes.pdf

Premises, Health and Safety and ICT	<p>What helped:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ The building had a layout and facilities that could easily be adapted for use as a Children's Home. Although alterations have been made over the years, the building we chose has been used as a Children's Home in the past – this made conversion fairly straightforward ✓ Working with an officer from the Capital Programmes Department who joined the project team – the officer provided expert technical advice and support throughout the project ✓ Appointing a single building contractor to carry out or subcontract most of the major building work. The contractor also took on some additional work that emerged during the project period. As well as enabling completion of work in the shortest possible time, having one main building contractor helped to maintain social distancing measures as it minimised the number of different contractors / engineers on site at any one time ✓ Requesting an exemption from procurement rules in order to quickly appoint a building contractor ✓ Asking for support from staff across the council. Due to the priority given to this project at senior level and the potential pressure on placements, managers across other departments such as Housing Repairs and Parks released officers to paint, deep clean, clear the garden, install health and safety devices and other DIY tasks ✓ Asking for donations of furniture, furnishings and kitchen utensils from our local IKEA store. Due to lockdown restrictions many suppliers were unable / unwilling to fulfil large orders of these items. IKEA'S Corporate Social Responsibility efforts and activities include support for local communities – what better 	<p>Points to note / lessons learned:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Unexpected issues / additional work may create delay and result in unplanned expenditure – make sure you do the following before starting: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ identify all fabric, mechanical and electrical issues - any remedial works should be built into the schedule of works for your building contractor ○ find out which statutory / recommended maintenance inspections are required - due and overdue - and build completion of these into the overall project plan ○ visit an established Children's Home that has a similar structural layout - take note of health and safety modifications, accessibility adaptations, bedroom to bathroom ratio etc – these sorts of things will help you determine what to include in your schedule of works ○ prepare your schedule of works with an officer from your Capital Programmes Department - you will want to avoid any work that will require a condition survey – this will create delays - It is advisable to include all requirements in your schedule and try to identify 1 contractor who can manage / subcontract all major and minor work
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	<p>way to demonstrate this than to help furnish a new Children's Home?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Asking for donations from staff and teams across the council and partners - artwork, books, sports equipment, games etc ✓ Appointing an independent Fire Safety Consultant to carry out a Fire Risk Assessment based on the use of the building as a residential care facility (there are specific regulations related to this). The assessment took place alongside the building work so that some of the risks identified could be addressed quickly within the project timeline using the appointed building contractor / other engineers ✓ Commissioning the same Fire Safety Consultant to deliver Fire Marshall Training for all staff – due to lockdown restrictions options were very limited or not appropriate. Training took place at the Children's Home - this meant staff were trained within the environment they would be working in (rather than a generic venue / online) and by someone familiar with the building / its risks. Training also included a demonstration of the newly installed Fire Detection System ✓ Identifying staff who had been First Aid trained within the last 3 years and ensuring at least one of them was on shift at any time. Due to lockdown restrictions it was difficult to arrange First Aid Training prior to opening - gaps were managed through the rota arrangements for a short period until training for remaining staff could take place ✓ Establishing Covid-19 protocols for staff and residents based on published government guidance and advice from the council's Public Health team ✓ Reserving a bedroom for 'isolation' for those with covid-19 symptoms – this room is close to a toilet and shower which, as 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Install as many showers / washing facilities as possible – this will help manage the home better in the event that one or more residents need to isolate. Too few showers / washing facilities will affect the number of children you will be registered to accommodate - Ofsted did not support shared bedrooms for siblings in our application - The design of the building and its suitability for the children you would like to accommodate will be taken into consideration by Ofsted – consider whether your building would be suitable for a child with a severe ASD or a physical disability and make your application accordingly - Premises and facilities should be in line with the following guidance: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 'Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations including the quality Standards, April 2015' ○ 'Children's homes regulations amendments 2014'
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	<p>part of infection control, would have to be reserved for sole use of the isolating resident</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Appropriate CCTV to monitor egress to the building was already in place ✓ An intruder alarm system was already in place although this was re-programmed by the contractor to enable night-time activation of doors and windows from inside the building ✓ An access control system was already in place – access is with a fob for authorised individuals and for visitors there is an electronic door release system that is controlled from a ‘staff only’ room. Some adaptations have been made to this system to ensure the ‘doorbell’ can be heard from any room - additional ‘bell’ sounding devices were installed which can be moved around as required ✓ Council ICT (telephony, IT, printing) was already available so no further work was required with regards to this. Staff can work and access electronic systems as they would do in any other council building ✓ Wi-fi for young people is provided through 4G mobile routers / hotspots. Installation was quicker than using an internet service provider to install new cabling - lockdown restrictions would have prevented this from happen within the project timescale 	
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Staffing	What helped:	Points to note / lessons learned:
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Identifying a potential Registered Manager early – she is a former RBG SW Manager with experience of working in a Children’s Home and many years SW leadership experience. She was involved in some aspects of project delivery ✓ Setting a target to recruit to and maintain a pool of 25 to 40 staff / managers with experience of working with children, young people or vulnerable adults. Staff are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ former employees (SWs) who were available to start work immediately as locums ○ from across Children’s Services and the wider council – most are redeployed on a part time basis to the Children’s Home and spend the rest of their time carrying out the duties of their substantive posts ○ from RBGs commissioned youth service provider – these youth workers are redeployed on a part time basis so that they can spend the rest of their time on their substantive post duties ✓ Establishing a management structure that includes the Registered Manager and 2 Deputy Managers – these 3 posts require full time commitment and are responsible for the supervision of all other staff ✓ Identifying Team Leaders who were the most experienced / confident of the staffing pool - they are used as ‘leaders’ for every shift ✓ Working with HR and managers to put in place redeployment arrangements and appropriate shift allowances to compensate staff for working unsociable hours ✓ Establishing administrative roles who take the lead on premises and resource management (not staffing) as well as general admin support tasks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Agree your staffing structure at the start of the project and ensure there is sufficient management and supervision capacity within this - Agree a rota pattern as early as possible so that potential staff understand the expectations around this beforehand - Recruit as many staff as possible who can do nights, sleep-ins and weekends - Ensure you have enough sufficiently experienced staff for the number and needs of the children you are applying to accommodate - Create a staff team that is as stable as possible or ensure you develop a contingency plan at the start of the project. The stability of the staff team will be taken into consideration as part of registration - Staffing arrangements and the required experience of managers should be in line with the following guidance: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ ‘Guide to the Children’s Homes Regulations including the quality Standards, April 2015’ ○ ‘Children’s homes regulations amendments 2014’

Policies and Procedures	<p>Documents / policies / procedures that were required as part of our application:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Behaviour management policy (including restraint) ✓ Complaints Procedure ✓ Equalities policy ✓ Location assessment ✓ Missing child policy ✓ Prevention of bullying policy ✓ Residents guide ✓ Safeguarding policy ✓ Statement of Purpose <p>Some other documents / guidance produced to support the management of the Home:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Allegations against staff ✓ Allowances for young people ✓ Building management and maintenance ✓ Case recording templates and records management systems ✓ CCTV Policy ✓ Contact arrangements – should consider covid-19 ✓ Drugs and alcohol ✓ Education ✓ Emergencies and Critical Incidents ✓ Food Hygiene ✓ General LAC / Placement policies ✓ Grievance and Disciplinary Procedures ✓ Health (Young Person) ✓ Health and Safety including guidance for covid-19 ✓ Induction and Training Plan ✓ Quality Assurance ✓ Recruitment ✓ Smoking ✓ Staff Rota / shift arrangements include handover process ✓ Staff supervision ✓ Whistle blowing 	<p>Points to note / lessons learned:</p> <p>All of these policies are informed by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - existing RBG Children's Social Care guidance including those related to our other Children's Home - 'the Children's Homes Regulations including the quality Standards, April 2015' - 'the Children's homes regulations amendments 2014'
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Planning Permission	<p>If you do not have planning permission - don't worry. For our application I included a letter endorsed and signed off by our planning department – this letter explains that the use of the site as a Home is permitted under the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (Coronavirus) (England) (Amendment) Order 2020 which came into force at 10 am on 9 April 2020.</p> <p>This is a new permitted development right which enables local authorities to carry out development with a view to tackling the coronavirus emergency. The amendment will allow you to use the site as a Children's Home until at least 31 December 2020.</p>	<p>Points to note / lessons learned:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Any extension to planning permission will require a further Statutory Instrument or full planning application. - If you do decide to apply for planning permission, Children's Homes are classed as 'C2 – Residential Institutions' (accommodation and care to people in need of care)
Registration	<p>What helped?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Being assigned an Ofsted Inspector who kept in touch with us throughout the application process and once the application had been submitted was able to allocate an inspector to do site visit within that week ✓ Reading the registration guidance and instructions carefully especially those related to the registration of the Responsible Individual and Registered Manager ✓ Having one person responsible for co-ordinating and completing the end to end process for all 3 elements – Home, Responsible Individual and Registered Manager (PM) 	<p>Points to note / lessons learned:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - There were no shortcuts in process for us, just a quicker than normal turnaround time - Ensure your Responsible Individual and Registered Manager understand the part of the application process related to their own role especially the documentation requirements and interview process - Be prepared to respond to queries and issues quickly and ensure everyone involved in the registration process is available to turn things around at short notice - The conditions of your registration may not reflect what you originally requested. The following changes had to be made following our registration visit: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The Home offers care for up to 6 children and young people, not the initial 12 we had applied for.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ These children and young people can only be aged 11-17, not 0-17. ○ The original application was made with the intention of allowing flexibility to offer emergency placements for most children and young people following a thorough risk assessment, even if only for one or two nights. However, the conditions of registration are restricted to those with emotional or behavioural difficulties but not those with severe learning disabilities, those diagnosed with a severe autism spectrum disorder or those with disabilities which affect their mobility. <p>All of these changes are based on our own application – this is not a blanket position taken by Ofsted.</p>
General	<p>Other things that helped:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ We applied to use the same Responsible individual that we use for our other Children's Home – this is the Head of Service for Permanence and Care Leavers ✓ We appointed the same Regulation 44 Visitor that we use for our other Children's Home ✓ We varied the existing cleaning contract to accommodate the Children's Home's needs ✓ Support from our Finance Teams – we were able to access cash easily for our start-up store of food, toiletries etc. We also established a petty cash float to ensure the Children's Home team have quick and easy access to cash for emergency items and stocking up on perishable food items. 	<p>Point to note / lessons learned:</p> <p>You will not have thought of or covered everything before opening - new things will emerge so be prepared to respond quickly to issues so that the Home runs as smoothly as possible.</p>

	<p>✓ RBGs insurance arrangements already cover the activity that takes place within a Children's Home. You will need copies of all insurance certificates for registration</p>	
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Royal Borough of Greenwich