

APPENDIX C

Placing children in childrens homes / risk assessments.

The Act 1989 Guidance and Regulation (Volume 2 Care Planning, Placement and Case Review) states that “all placements decisions are subject to the duty set out in Section 22(3) that the placement is the most appropriate way to safeguard and promote the child’s welfare.”

Placements out of the area of the responsibility of the local authority have to be approved by the “nominated person “and the Independent Reviewing Officer for that child consulted. In the case of the London Borough of Hillingdon the Nominated Person is the Deputy Director, Children and Families, Social Care and Health. This decision is normally made at the weekly Access to Resources panel.

The placement of children in children’s homes is managed by the Access to Resources Team (ART) in consultation with the Team Manager for children’s residential services.

The London Borough of Hillingdon has three children’s homes which are managed within Children’s Resources. Merrifield House, an eight bedded resource centre for children with disabilities and their families, Charville Lane, a 13 bedded home for Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children and local young people, and Hillingdon Children’s Resource Centre, a six bedded unit for local young people.

The registered Managers for these units are responsible for ensuring risk assessments are conducted regarding all new referrals. This takes into account the presenting behaviours, individual needs of the young person and the needs of the group.

For all Private and Voluntary (P&V) placements a checklist is completed on the proposed provision which informs the assessment of risk. This covers a range of areas including Ofsted reports, references from 2 other LAs who have used the provision, details of what the unit provides (Statement of Purpose), details of current resident group, staffing levels, and details of any complaints or allegations. The unit also provides ART with a risk assessment based on the child’s profile and takes into account the other residents and any other relevant issues. If it is a unit which has not previously been used by the London Borough of Hillingdon one of the Access to Resources officers will undertake a visit to assess the resource. Residential provision is not used for emergency placements, unless absolutely necessary. In this instance a monitoring visit will be undertaken as soon as possible.

ART additionally have access to London Care Placements website which provides up to date inspection and monitoring reports on P & V residential units. The West London Alliance residential group meets monthly and has a representative from Hillingdon on it. This allows for professional discussion regarding providers and outcomes for young people.

Every child placed in a P & V Children's home has an allocated ART Officer who is responsible for monitoring the conduct of the home and the progress of the young person placed there. They are required to maintain contact and undertake monitoring visits to the resource. This information is fed into an update to ART panel, a minimum of three monthly.

When the decision to place children in a residential home that is not one of the borough's own provisions, the placement will be, wherever practicable, in one of the borough's preferred providers so that the provision and their ability to meet the needs of children is known. Part of the assessment will take account of geographical risk elements. Hillingdon have made no new residential placements in the Thanet ward of Kent, which is know to carry geographical risks, and as a result of ongoing review of all placements, the overall number of external residential placements has fallen dramatically from 23 in April 2011 to 15 in October 2012. Hillingdon now has no children placed in residential homes in Kent, including Thanet. All placements are in foster care except one young person who has lived in Kent for a long term who is in semi independence accommodation near to his apprenticeship and supports. The 6 children & young people placed in the Thanet ward of Kent are all in settled fostering placements and are attending school.

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