

dialogue

From: Jen Bean
Sent: 03 March 2022 12:48
To: dialogue
Subject: Independent person network email correspondence March 2022
Attachments: Correspondence from R44 Network members in relation to Annual Ofsted Report (002).pdf

From: Helen Humphreys <Helen.Humphreys@ofsted.gov.uk>
Sent: 03 March 2022 10:02
To: John Woodhouse <john@dialogueltd.co.uk>
Subject: RE: Independent person network

Hello John,

Thank you for the reminder to respond to your email.

Regarding comments in the annual report- this is HMCI's report and I suggest that should you wish to raise your members' concerns about the report, you should write to HMCI HMCI@ofsted.gov.uk and you will receive a reply.

Although I understand that your members believe that they carried out their visits impeccably throughout the pandemic, that was not our experience for all independent persons. At the time that the report was published, some persons had not carried out any visits face to face or returned to face to face visits although the regulations demanded this. The regulations were amended in April 2020 by the Department of Education, (DfE) to allow for virtual visits, but that amendment (along with quite a few other amendments) were later withdrawn by the DfE.

When I spoke to the independent person's meeting facilitated via Action to Children, I reiterated that the regulations state that the provider appoints the independent person, (not Ofsted) and therefore that is the key relationship. We are sent a report, subsequent to that visit, but that we are only one recipient and not the only recipient. We do review the reports and value them and they provide (when done well) an insight into how the home is operating. Where we make a requirement or a recommendation that they should be improved, or changed it is for the provider to deal with as it is for them to ensure that the visits are carried out in accordance with the regulations. We do not regulate independent persons.

I am happy for the slides to be circulated and attend one of your meetings on an annual basis, as I have agreed to join the Action for Children network also on an annual basis,

Kind regards,

Helen Humphrey SC HMI
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From: John Woodhouse <john@dialogueltd.co.uk>
Sent: 02 March 2022 22:26

To: Helen Humphreys <Helen.Humphreys@ofsted.gov.uk>

Subject: FW: Independent person network



Helen,

I hope you received my email a week or two ago and wondered if you might have a chance to let me know your thinking. We have a Regulation 44 network meeting on Monday and it would be good to feed into this, particularly if you are perhaps able to attend a future session.

Warm regards,

John Woodhouse
managing director

dialogue, chimmels, dartington hall, totnes, TQ9 6EQ
07921 015176



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From: John Woodhouse <john@dialogueltd.co.uk>

Sent: 22 February 2022 12:52

To: helen.humphreys@ofsted.gov.uk

Subject: FW: Independent person network

Dear Helen,

It was good to see you recently at the recruitment round table.

I'm writing on behalf of the Independent Person Network, a group that supports individuals and organisations undertaking the Regulation 44 role for Children's Homes and Standard 20 role for residential schools.

Through the pandemic we've been providing lots of support and advice about how to continue to safely discharge the role and, during the period where Ofsted were prevented from undertaking a full inspection role, the visitors have continued to be the "eyes and ears" of the state to examine the safeguarding and welfare of young people at this very vulnerable time. We know from the support we have provided that visitors have taken action through the pandemic to reduce risk and to flag issues to local authorities and your own organisation for the small number of situations where children needed external intervention to keep them safe.

Our members believe the vast majority of visits have taken place in person, prioritising the experience of young people, and it was with some disappointment we read the only comment in the annual review on Regulation 44 was 'In some homes, regulation 44 independent visits have not been carried out effectively during the pandemic. With 'visits' taking place off site, some independent visitors were not doing all they should to assure themselves of children's welfare. This means that homes did not always get the same level of independent feedback about how they were functioning'. I've attached some of the specific feedback we've received.

Visitors generally feel undervalued by Ofsted. They hold a crucial role and, where the system works effectively, provide a valuable evidence base for managers (and where necessary the regulator) to take action to improve their homes. We would be keen to engage with Ofsted to provide feedback and work together to continue to improve the quality of care afforded to young people in care.

I wondered whether you'd be happy to share the feedback with Amanda Spielman and for the visitors to have some response about the wider experience of Ofsted of their visits. You would also be welcome to a regular slot in our termly forums to offer insight into your inspectors' experience of Reg44 reports and visits, together with key areas you'd be keen for visitors to be aware of through the year.



Finally, I recently received a copy of a presentation to give to some Regulation 44 visitors and with your permission will circulate this for our next online meeting. I'd be keen to support you in promoting future events for visitors more widely.

I look forward to hearing from you,

John Woodhouse
managing director

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