

387 July



City of

NOTTINGHAM

My Ref:
Your Ref: MM/HD/letters/rotavisits/higgins.1
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Councillor Betty Higgins
The Council House
Nottingham

www.nottinghamcity.gov.uk

15 May 2002

Dear Councillor Higgins

Re: Rota Visit to 387 Woodborough Road

Thank you for your report on your recent rota visit to 387 Woodborough Road.

The unit is going through an unsettled period for a number of reasons which include:

- the imminence of the disciplinary hearing of the unit manager which has had a very unsettling effect on staff and has affected their morale
- the acting temporary manager we put in place left (her husband got a job in another part of the country) and the replacement temporary manager went off sick
- there was one child who was particularly troubled and troublesome, and who caused a lot of damage to the building.

We have been unable to put permanent arrangements for the management of the unit in place until the disciplinary hearing has concluded but will do so as soon as we are aware of the outcome.

Research shows that to achieve placement choice, children's homes have to operate at about 85% occupancy so that when there is a child to place, there are options and the needs of that child and the other children in a children's home can be taken into account when choosing the best placement. You are aware that the number of children Looked After has gone up and recent information tells us that the profile of the children has changed, i.e. we have more older children. This has put pressure on the placement system, particularly children's homes, which have been operating at full capacity and they have on occasions been over-occupied.

There are several strands of work in the department aimed at tackling this issue which are being overseen by the Director. In the meantime we have reduced the number of places at the home from 10 to 8 with the aim of reducing the pressure on the unit.



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We now have the outcome of the disciplinary hearing and the manager has been given a written warning with a recommendation that he does not return as manager to 387 Woodborough Road. The implications of this are being considered and actions agreed to achieve this.

I am sure that once we can put in permanent arrangements for the management of the unit, matters will improve. This will include working with the staff to improve the environment and the standard of child care practice.

Yours sincerely

DPA

Margaret Mackechnie
Assistant Director
Children & Families (Resources)

c.c. Councillor David Trimble

Paul Snell
Ted Townsend
Joanne Walker
Paul Darbyshire

DPA

17/5/10