

JERSEY CHILDREN'S RESIDENTIAL SERVICES

BOARD OF VISITORS

ANNUAL REPORT

OCTOBER 2013

Please note, this document is a redacted version of the annual report. This has been done to ensure the anonymity of those documented within the report.

Introduction:

With the addition of the new Board Members who joined us in May 2013 and the subsequent resignations of three of the previous Members, the Board numbers remain at thirteen.

Members:

Sheila Warren (Chairperson)

Alice Chanter (Deputy Chairperson)

Rosie Baker

Louise Clark

Helen Duncan

Catherine Kelleher

Lisa Le Maistre

Annette Le Moeligou

Richard le Quelenec

Deborah Morris- Munro

Paul Pinel

Suzanne Rentsch

Louise Warran

Purpose:

To visit open and secure residential units in Jersey; to meet with the children and young people; to help monitor aspects of their life in care, and the preparations made for their progress into independent living.

The Board Members endeavour to: monitor that standards are maintained; identify concerns and issues; discuss these at Board meetings and make recommendations to Children's Services.

Terms of Reference: (T.O.R.)

Our T.O.R. state that the Board of Visitors (B.O.V.) has been set up under the auspices of the Children's Policy Group (CPG) to monitor the services and care provided to vulnerable young people (Y.P.) in the care of the States of Jersey.

The annual review of the full T.O.R. was carried out by the Board and ratified by the CPG in June 2013.

Overall Review.

The twelve months that have elapsed since the 2012 report have seen the B.O.V. bond into a cohesive group, united in their endeavours to provide an independent voluntary service of professional standards, for the vulnerable young people in the care of the Children's Service (C.S.) and ultimately the States of Jersey.

There have been four resignations from the Board during the year. One through pressure of work, another deciding the role was not as she had expected, whilst a third left the Island to attend University.

Anne Southern, one of the founding members of the Board took a six month sabbatical in April, and has since decided to resign due to pressure of work in her new role as President of the Teachers Union. We wish Anne every success in this

demanding post and thank her for her hard work and support on the Board, particularly in the area of educational standards for the Y.P.

The training for the second tranche of prospective Board Members (B.M.) planned for January was delayed due to staff changes at the Jersey Child Protection Committee (J.C.P.C.) offices. This eventually took place in March with four candidates, three of the original seven having withdrawn due to new commitments since applying to join the Board a year ago. Following further interviews, all four were accepted onto the board. We are grateful to the trainers at J.C.P.C. for their valuable input.

One of the highlights of 2012 was the closing of La Preferance and the opening of Field View. In November (see F.V. Report) the chairperson (SW) and relevant visitors were invited to attend the official opening performed by the Lieutenant-Governor General Sir John and Lady McColl. This was a very happy event, both for the Y.P. who had initially been very anxious about the move, and for the staff who had worked so hard to make it possible. We wish them all well in their new home.

In December the Board were advised that there were more changes planned to the Children's Service Management structure. Three new posts were to be implemented as Service Leads within: (1). Residential Services, (2.) Secure and Community Support, (3) Special Needs Respite Services.

Whilst these changes were being implemented there was a hiatus in Management which played a part in delaying the Board's introduction to the respite homes. (See Eden House and Oakwell reports). In April the Chair (SW) met with Lisa Perkins, Head of Service, Specialist Support and Joanne Cowen (JC) the Acting Service Leader, Short Break Services, to discuss the planned introduction of visitors to the Respite Homes.

Despite this event having been discussed by Senior Management as long ago as the open meeting at the General Hospital in May 2012, it was apparent that no preparation or thought had been given to this at middle management level. Consequently an invitation was extended for JC to attend a meeting to explain her new role and meet the Board. Due to a breakdown in communication, this did not occur.

To move the project forward, a second meeting with JC, Mike Bowyer (C.S. representative on the Board) and SW took place in July, at which MB agreed to attend staff meetings at both Eden House and Oakwell to reassure the management

of the value of the service. Following further contact and meetings in July and September with the four designated Board Members (B.M.), all of whom have experience in the field of Special Needs, we are now hopeful that visiting can commence in October. The Board are very grateful to the four Visitors who have been so patient in waiting for this planned area of the service to materialise.

The Children's Policy Group (CPG) - Senator Ian le Marquand, Minister for Home Affairs; Deputy Anne Pryke, Minister for Health and Social Services and Deputy Patrick Ryan, Minister for Education attended our January Board Meeting to discuss the concerns raised in our 2012 annual report. They were accompanied by Mr Richard Jouault, Managing Director, Community and Social Services.

One of the main items covered was the Board's concerns re: education, apparent under achievement and school exclusions experienced by some of the Y.P. we visited. In response, Deputy Ryan stated that work was on going with a mentoring service being offered to Looked after Children (L.A.C.), which was due to be reviewed after a year. He asked the Board to keep this item on their agenda and to request a follow up from the Education Department. SW and Anne Southern were invited to a meeting with Mr Cliff Chipperfield, Head of Inclusion, to discuss our concerns and to obtain a greater understanding of the service. Taking the discussion back to the Board, it was evident that our T.O.R. at present do not extend to this area and we await the report on the review of the mentoring service, before making recommendations to the CPG on this matter.

Further areas for discussion included:

The financial concerns facing the Leaving Care age group. (See visiting speakers).

The Lone Worker policy (see St Marks report).

The Board were delighted to welcome the CPG to a Board Meeting to discuss the 2012 report and hope they will be available to attend a meeting in the coming months to review the 2013 Report.

Meanwhile, in February, Mrs Glenys Johnston (GJ) O.B.E. was appointed Independent Chair of the Safeguarding Partnership Board – Adults and Children. In April SW and Deputy Chair Alice Chanter (AC) were invited to meet with GJ to discuss our respective roles, and how her new appointment, as head of a joint advisory board for adults and children, could impact on the J.C.P.C. and ultimately the Y.P. in L.A.C.

The Board brought forward their July meeting to coincide with GJ's next visit to the Island and invited her to attend to meet the Board. Unfortunately this did not prove possible and a further invitation has been extended for December.

The Board were informed in April that the White House (WH), the small two bed roomed house accommodating two L.A.C. in a therapeutic environment was to be closed, due to relocation of residents - The Members were surprised and disappointed at the closure as it was felt that the WH has a special part to play in the overall facilities available to the C.S. (see Brig-y-don and Casa-Mia reports.)

At the request of Ruth Johnson (RJ), Assistant Director, Social policy, SW was asked to attend a meeting with Jurat Kerley (JK), Chair of the B.O.V. for Her Majesty's Prison La Moye, Prison Governor Bill Millar (BM) and RJ to discuss the possibility of the Children's Service B.O.V. commencing visiting the Young Offenders (Y.O.) at H.M.P. At the conclusion of the meeting no formal decision was made to implement this move, as it was felt by JK and BM that the numbers involved were negligible and they felt the present system was appropriate. However, contact with the C.S. B.O.V. would be made on an individual basis if it was felt to be necessary in the future.

Following H.M.P. Annual Report (2013) the inspectorate made note of the lack of a formalised service for the Y.O. and RJ is, at the time of writing, arranging a further meeting with those concerned to discuss how this might be achieved.

The Chair, Deputy Chair and two further Board Members were invited to meet with a representative of the Care Inspectorate when the team returned to the island to review progress made since their initial report in 2011. This was a very productive meeting and the Board were delighted to be included in this review. We look forward to its findings, which we are sure will show many changes and improvements within the Children's Service.

Two Board Members were invited to attend an Advocacy training day provided by the Joint Board (J.B.) training Department. This was a very thought provoking day and created much discussion at our next B.M. Further comment on this prospective N.S.P.C.C. project is provided under the heading 'Reflections and recommendations' at the conclusion of this report.

The Board has continued to invite guest speakers to our alternate meetings, to increase our knowledge of the agencies involved in supporting L.A.C. and are grateful to...

Mr Steve Le Long, team Leader for Advance to Work Scheme, Social Security

Mr Peter Duncan, Senior Determining Officer, Social Security Department

Ms Linda Heins, Senior practitioner Leaving Care and 16+ Team

for giving up their valuable time to advise us of the benefits and help available, both practically and financially, to the Y.P.

The Board requested that Social Security look towards providing a dedicated member of staff who could assist young residents (Y.R.) Leaving Care to relieve them of the need to visit several different departments. This was taken back to their Managers but, unfortunately, refused due to lack of resources. Social Security have promised to review this decision next year, and the Board will continue to press for this small concession as they feel that this would help to alleviate the confusion felt by many Y.P. when facing big decisions about their future.

The annual review of our T.O.R. took place at our June meeting and was ratified by the CPG in September; the main change being the inclusion of the Respite Homes into our remit.

We have achieved two of the four action plans set out in our six monthly report (April 2013) namely- to obtain a minutes secretary, and to meet with GJ the new head of the Joint Safeguarding Board (J.S.B.). The third, to consider a new name for the Board of Visitors has been abandoned, as we could not find a satisfactory replacement, but we are still open to suggestions. The fourth was to achieve a satisfactory introduction to the Respite Homes and is about to be accomplished.

At our A.G.M. in March, SW and AC were unanimously re-elected as Chair and Deputy Chair. Both thanked the board for their on-going support.

Findings:

Brig-y-don

During the year we have met many key workers who demonstrate great commitment and understanding and who really know the Y.P. in their care. The facilities, cleanliness, and catering at the home have always appeared to be of a high standard.

Brig-y-don does, however, have the character of a turbulent Children's Home despite the staff's efforts to create an environment that attempts to model family life in structure and discipline. The dynamic of the home changes with each new admission, and this year has seen several changes of residents. The changing personal circumstances of the Y.P. have also impacted strongly on staff and other residents in the house. The challenge of creating and maintaining a safe and happy Home is an ongoing one.

We were disappointed to be told that there was no budget for summer holidays this year, and pursued this through the Board (see recommendations).

Several of the Y.P. are waiting for suitable foster placements to be found for them. It is often hard to remain positive when you feel that a stable foster home could make so much difference. (See recommendations).

The latter part of this year has seen some of the younger Y.P. residing alone in one of the B-Y-D flats following the breakdown of a placement. Whilst being in the flat is clearly in the Y.P.'s best interests, to avoid influence from the older residents in the main house; this is an example of how unfortunate a placement it can be for a Y.P. caught in the gap between childhood and teenage years.

At present the main house is full, all residents are challenging in their individual ways, and whilst there is no apparent discord between them, there seems to be little sense of community. There were plans earlier in the year to involve the Y.P. in choosing a new colour scheme and theme for re decorating the lounge but these seem to have stalled. Giving the youngsters a sense of ownership and responsibility for the house could well be a positive way forward in creating a greater sense of home. Ensuring consistency of staff that share and agree a consistent approach towards the Y.P. would further enhance this.

Visitors Rosie Baker Louise Warran

Brig-y-don Flat

The report on this property has been withheld for reasons of confidentiality.

Casa Mia

The transition from Ulvik to Casa Mia in August went smoothly. It is another comfortable family home with plenty of space. The Y.P. have a bedroom each and the fourth bedroom was to be used as a study and sleep over room for staff. The house is well situated with direct access to the beach and the cycle track. The house was especially set up to be a small unit, to function as much like a family home as possible.

The residents there, whilst they have their ups and downs, live together with a small team who try to foster a feeling of home. In the last year, they have matured and settled into the pattern of a 'sibling' relationship. They are all coming to the end of their compulsory education and are starting to embark on applying for courses at Highlands which involve apprenticeships in work such as landscape gardening and construction. They are aware that they can remain in the home until they are 18, but have been unsettled by the changes involved in choosing career paths and this has occasionally resulted in some poor behaviour patterns. Generally, however, the staff have been able to reassure the boys of their continuing support.

Using the fourth bedroom of the home for emergency placements during the year meant staff were unable to prepare residents for such changes. The whole dynamic of the house has now changed. The 4th bedroom, which was used for office space and for staff to sleep over, is now a bedroom. The conservatory is now used as an office and staff that sleep over have to use a folding bed in the lounge.

One of the residents in particular was extremely disturbed by this change and explained to us very clearly and calmly that this move goes against everything they were told the house would be. The Y.P. feel that it is now not viewed as a home, a tight unit, but as a care house where everyone is now expected to make room for another person, and where the trappings of the administrative aspect are now on view for all to see.

The staff were concerned that this has triggered a bout of poor behaviour in one resident while a second has been busy trying to impress the new arrival and has exhibited a change in behaviour. The third does not seem to be affected.

The staff have told management the move has been very disruptive and has set the residents back from all the progress they have made. Having an extra person in the

house completely alters the aims and objectives under which Casa Mia was set up; namely, to be a small family type unit with a consistent staff fostering a feeling that it is a home, not an administrative residential house for any child to be put in with no thought to the personal dynamics already established.

There is a concern that, now that a precedent has been set, that the 4th bedroom will now be a permanently open placement in which to put Y.P., regardless of whether they will fit into the group dynamic, and so the ideals behind the home will be discarded.

In conclusion, whilst it is important to accommodate vulnerable children, the tenets on which each home was founded should not be disregarded in the way they appear to have been in this instance. It remains to be seen how this situation will follow through and whether any temporary disruption to the lives of the Residents in Casa Mia will continue to be a negative aspect of this home.

Visitors Richard Le Quelenec Cathy Kelleher

Field View

During the last week of October 2012 residents from La Preference moved into the newly refurbished Field View building on the Greenfields site, following an official opening attended by the Lieutenant Governor. They settled in very well and invited friends and relatives to their welcome party the following weekend.

The staff from La Preference also moved to the new home and the allocation of staff numbers has been maintained in Field View. However, as most of the residents are over 18 years old, or nearing that age, and are following the independent living plan, there is suggestion that the number of staff will be reduced in the near future.

The residents have been provided with their own fridge, lockable cupboard and set of cutlery and crockery to encourage independent living. The kitchen is well equipped and there is a comfortable dining room. Staff explained that they were encouraging the Y.P. to cook meals for themselves and were teaching them basic recipes. One early complaint from the Y.P. has been that they are not allowed to entertain visitors in the downstairs communal areas or eat with them there. If they do have a guest to the home, they have to take them to their own room. This matter has been raised several times and BOV have investigated the reasons behind this

decision, and have been advised that it is to avoid disruption for those that did not want visitors and to prevent overcrowding.

The BOV offered to cook dinner for the Y.P. as a welcome to their new home from the board. This event took place in early January and the evening was very well received. The residents were appreciative and very sociable and it was a good opportunity to speak about the role of the BOV and interact more with the Y.P. It is rare to see all of the residents on unannounced visits, and this proved an effective way of gathering everyone together. This visit coincided with the announcement that one of the long standing care workers was being moved to a different residential home. The Y.P. were extremely unhappy about this and complained vehemently. Following this up, the BOV were told that the move was to be delayed but it would take place eventually as the care workers skills were needed elsewhere.

The Y.P. are now living increasingly independent lives. They all have their own means of transport and are very often away from the home. The staff have often commented to us that the Y.P. are never in and when the BOV do occasionally see any of the residents and ask after the others, they often say that they have no idea how they are as they never see them. Perhaps this is testament to the fact that they are adapting well to living independently.

Visitors Louise Clark Lisa Le Maistre

Greenfields Secure Unit

Since our 2012 report there have been few visits to Greenfields by the BOV - due to closure. However during a visit in December, we witnessed highly organized staff who dealt with transitory moves and showed compassion for the young residents. It was notable that parents were full of praise for the way in which UK placements were being handled- overall.

As Greenfields is a secure unit and is currently used for cases such as special needs, the BOV did question (with the manager) as to how such residents would be accommodated if Greenfields had an emergency admission – for example on remand. We were reassured by the manager that the facilities were large enough to be adapted in such circumstances, and that the residents would be accommodated in separate units.

Other visits to date have led to questioning how young people's long-term needs were being met, given that Greenfields secure unit has been the only option for young people on Secure Accommodation Orders (SAO) -on numerous occasions. Overall, the feedback was that the staff work attentively when any vulnerable young person is placed on SAO at Greenfields, to ensure their safety and aim towards addressing the young person's individual issues before placing them back into their community setting. It is fair to say, that the BOV have witnessed some excellent work in this area during visits, whereby vulnerable young residents felt empowered by staff into taking more responsibility during daily care planning and weekly targets set, in this safe, supportive and well structured environment. However, we feel that the challenge for the Greenfields team and the professionals involved in such cases, has been to work out a strategy that will carry this vital work through into a community setting once the SAO has lapsed and the secure environment of Greenfields has been withdrawn (see recommendations).

The Greenfields staff continue to welcome the BOV and keep us informed about residents in a highly professional manner.

Visitors: Alice Chanter Deborah Morris-Monro

St Mark's Adolescent Centre

During the past twelve months BOV have observed some positive changes at St Marks - despite the layout of this outdated building. For example, the residents in general, appeared to be thriving as a result of a new management regime which was initiated last year. Consequently, a new *open door policy* was introduced and notably it was working effectively; this appears to have provided a more collaborative network to emerge between the staff and the young residents. Notably, the residents were currently allowed friends to visit their rooms and lounge area during arranged times, which has encouraged them to socialize 'at home' so to speak. As visitors, we felt that these minor changes have produced a calmer atmosphere in the hostel overall, whilst increasing opportunities for the staff to observe and support the residents daily needs.

With regards to the BOV visits, the residents have been engaging well this year with us and openly welcomed our new recruits. During the past six months, we decided to re - position our visits from the staff office level to the basement room which consists of a

TV, lounge, kitchen and dining area, with a view to see any residents who were at home. This proved a key move and the young people were happy to chat with us usually over coffee and cakes! This informal approach enabled a good rapport to emerge as the residents were able to discuss their challenging lives with the visitors. As a result, a few in-house issues came to our attention. The BOV were asked to follow through the following concerns with the management:

- Access to moped parking outside the hostel.
- Testing Relations between two female residents and a male staff member.
- Extending visiting times for friends.
- Request for more female staff.

We are pleased to report that the above issues were followed up immediately by the area manager- in a professional manner. During our follow-up visit, the duty manager informed us that he welcomed the BOV input in such matters, and the residents thanked us for taking their views forward.

Since our last report, we have had an opportunity to follow up the Lone Worker Policy at St. Marks with the Child Policy Group (CPG), and visiting Ministers at a Board meeting. It was decided that the capability of duty staff working alone was not an issue, however, the Ministers agreed that the ratio of male /female staff needed further discussion. Since then, we were informed that an additional worker had been allocated to St. Marks if and when required. Meanwhile, Deputy Anne Pryke confirmed to us that the St. Marks building was no longer fit for purpose and the plan was to relocate the residents to a more modern building (Strathmore) in the autumn. It was stated that the BOV will continue to have a role as visitors.

The intended move to Strathmore did produce an uncertain time for the residents and indeed the staff during the past six months. This was reported to us and discussed further with the management. It transpired that some residents had personal plans for this transition; however, a few residents had genuine concerns which they asked the BOV to take forward as follows:

- Conflicting messages over the moving date.
- Concern from the residents about the age range of residents at Strathmore (16-25yrs).

Residents wished to know if the BOV would visit at Strathmore and J.A.Y.F.

While the above issues were addressed before St. Marks closed, we were approached by residents, who were finding the whole move quite challenging and upsetting. However, given their personal circumstances it was totally understandable. The BOV put forward their concerns which were, once again rapidly followed up by the area manager. Unfortunately, the residents concerned turned down any ongoing advice and support offered before moving out. As visitors, we contend that in this type of situation, the residential team can only offer additional time and support to advise these vulnerable young people – who are 18yrs and moving on. The BOV were reassured that there is a specialized After-Care Team who are available to assist such residents, particularly into making positive choices which obviously will be crucial towards their independent living and future wellbeing – we wish them well.

At the time of writing this report, we are pleased to confirm that all the St. Marks residents have now moved out to their new accommodation successfully. Residents have settled in very well into either the Strathmore regime or into independent living. Other residents preferred to go for the third option of placements at a Jersey Association for Youth & Friendship (J.A.Y.F.) accommodation.

Finally: two of our new recruits had an opportunity to visit St. Marks and meet with the residents before the hostel closed. Consequently, in the ensuing months ahead we will explore the possibility of expanding our visits to Strathmore and J.A.Y.F. accommodation - at the residents' request. Meanwhile we would like to wish the St. Mark's staff and residents our very best wishes for the future.

Visitors: Alice Chanter Deborah Morris-Monro Paul Pinel

The White House

The White House was a therapeutic unit set up to house 2 vulnerable young people. The house itself provided a home environment that was comfortable, spacious, clean and well maintained. The young people were encouraged to invite friends round after school, for meals and birthday parties, and the staff were always most supportive and keen to create a real home for the children.

Relationships with the permanent staff at the White House had deteriorated in the early part of 2013, going beyond the norm for acceptable teenage behaviour. The Y.P. were being verbally abusive and seemed unable to understand that their consistent positive treatment came from their genuine desire for progress and for success to be achieved. The team were working hard together to re-establish the relationship they used to have.

The Board were always made welcome at the White House and the staff were very willing to be open and honest about the events there. The young people in their care benefited from their heartfelt efforts to do their very best for them and a true need to help them achieve their potential.

In April of this year, the White House was closed. The staff were disappointed at the decision as they felt that the family atmosphere they had worked so hard to provide and which they felt was still needed by one Y.P. and perhaps for other vulnerable young people in the future, was being discarded as a result of financial dictates. There are no current plans to reinstate the White House as a residential home.

Visitor Catherine Kelleher

Eden House

An initial visit took place in September. Staff responded positively and are supportive of future contact.

At present Eden House have permanent residents and Y.P. who access the respite services. First impressions of the house can be bleak; no pictures or ornaments and the television are locked away, however, it is accepted that this is appropriate for the needs of the service users.

It is noted that the process of familiarisation with the Y.P. would be long and slow given their particular needs. Therefore it could take some months before the BOV are able to assess the home. It was agreed that initially we would focus our visits with the live-in Residents. Given that the residents have very limited verbal communication, the BOV will focus on non-verbal communication and note any changes to their behaviour profile.

It was agreed that the BOV would follow an introduction plan as devised by the staff, as residents receive 2-1 care, it was agreed that each visitor would focus on one resident.

Visitors Helen Duncan Suzanne Rentsch

Oakwell

An initial visit took place in July. The staff were unaware of our planned visit but had been briefed on the service and made the BOV welcome. They were supportive of future contact. The service provides respite only and it is due to move to Maison des Landes in November while a major refurbishment takes place.

Visitors Deborah Morris-Monro Annette Le Moeligou

The following comments and recommendations are made in the knowledge that as a Board we have a very superficial view of all the numerous issues and challenges the Service faces, and whilst we have high regard for all the staff who have worked so hard to implement many changes to improve the Service in the last few years, we feel we would be failing in our remit if we did not present the following findings.

Reflections and recommendations:

One of our main concerns is the reported apparent poor communication between Senior Management and front line staff, who feel they are presented with decisions and situations which impact on their work and ultimately their relationship with the Y.P. in their care, with little or no consultation.

We suggest that this may be one of the reasons we have taken so long to be introduced to the Respite Homes, and the reported difficulties experienced at Brig-y-don (B.Y.D.) and Casa Mia (C.M.) may also have benefited from better communication.

We remain concerned and unsure of the reasons behind the closure of the White House (W.H.) and suggest that the situation at B.Y.D. and C.M. – as reported in individual Home findings – could perhaps have been avoided had the Service had the option of using the W.H.

Issues that came to our attention regarding Secure Accommodation Order (S.A.O.) reviews and placements were discussed at Board meetings and the following recommendations were made:

1. S.A.O. Reviews could be made more 'child friendly' within the secure unit.
2. Enhanced communication from outside professionals - particularly on Exit Planning may prove constructive for both residents and staff.
3. Contingency placement plans need developing when a S.A.O. lapses.

The Board of Visitors contend that a small therapeutic unit on the lines of the White house, set up in the community for young people experiencing repeated S.A.Os., would benefit the service's resources whilst enabling an intense supervision team to work towards breaking this repetitive cycle with the Y.P. – in a homely situation.

The Board are very concerned regarding the current situation at Brig-y-don. In our opinion there appears to be a lack of leadership, and a general feeling of the staff being at a loss to know how best to deal with the many challenging situations that arise. We feel that the culture of the home needs to change in order to provide a suitable environment for the Y.P. to grow and develop.

The Board would strongly support maintaining and furthering the current drive to increase fostering in Jersey, as we feel that these Y.P. would benefit greatly from the support a foster placement can offer.

This may be achieved by making the recruitment process shorter and less inhibitive and fast forwarding the plans for it to be properly remunerated. Likewise by creating an incentive for those foster carers willing to take children who are 10+, may result in an increase in numbers offering this important service.

Recently the Board informed the C.S. of the confusion around the arrangements for all L.A.C. to have the opportunity to have a holiday once a year –in or out of the Island. This has resulted in a formal arrangement and budget to be put in place for 2014. We are grateful for the prompt and effective result that our Service Representative on the Board Mike Bowyer (MB) has achieved. We would like to request that the Y.P. are given plenty of notice of their holiday plans, as we feel that 50% of any enjoyment is in the planning and expectation, it also allows staff to exploit the educational possibilities surrounding the planning of such a trip.

The move to Strathmore from St Marks and the increased age range of the residents from 18 years to 25 years has resulted in a request from the Manager for the board to see any of the older residents, if asked. The Board would be happy to acquiesce to this request if the CPG is agreeable; a similar request has been made by the Jersey Association of Youth and Friendship (J.A.Y.F.) as two of the Y.P. from St Marks has been re located to their care. At present the Chair does not feel the Board has the recruitment to agree to this. The move into the Respite homes and possibly the Young Offenders Centre has to take priority.

The news that the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (N.S.P.C.C.) was to set up an advocacy service for L.A.C. came as a complete surprise to the BOV and MB. We question why no discussion took place between ourselves and the relevant organisations, regarding what appears to be an overlapping of our services; once again lack of communication appears to be a factor in our unease.

Whilst accepting that the depth of service which, we believe, the N.S.P.C.C. appear to be offering is not in our remit – we strongly refute the opinion, expressed by the trainers at the advocacy work shop, that the Board of Visitors role is only to check that policies and procedures are being adhered to, and that the Board Of Visitors was set up as a ‘tick the box’ exercise for the Williamson report. That was certainly not the impression that any of the Board were given at interview for membership of the Board of Visitors, where we were assured one of the main areas of our role would be to listen to the Y.P. and put their views forward - to keep the Children and their interests at the centre of what we do.

In this light the future for the B.O.V. which is currently able to boast voluntary status, independence, growth in numbers and remit, is we believe a very valuable asset for L .A.C. and the Service as a whole, particularly as we are able to build trusting relationships with the Y.P. in an independent manner.

Consequently when the N.S.P.C.C. inaugurates its new paid professional Advocacy Service and expects the young people to take on board yet another set of names and faces and confusing roles, they could either be met with ambivalence, or sadly they could succeed in enforcing the B.O.V. volunteers’ efforts into redundancy.

If that is in the interests of the Y.P. we have come to know and respect for the courage they show in challenging situations, we would of course withdraw.

Acknowledgements:

To all the staff in the Residential Homes who make us welcome and spend time with us no matter how busy they are; who show such commitment to the work they do - often going above and beyond their remit to help the young people in their care - you have our admiration and support.

To the managers who make every effort to resolve any problem we bring to them fairly and quickly.

The Board owe a debt of gratitude to Mike Bowyer, whose input into the Board meetings is always considered, insightful, and compassionate; whose response to our concerns is always measured and appropriate; who deals with queries quickly and at all times with respect for all parties.

To the Joint Safeguarding Board for the use of their offices for our Board meetings.

Finally to the impressionable young residents who allow us into their troubled lives and who trust us to share their concerns during our informal visits- we wish them well.

Statistics: (October 2012 – October 2013)

	Hours
Announced Visits	98
Unannounced visits	19
Board Meetings	217
Travel time	87
Report writing	135
Training	61
Additional hours	105
Total	722

Additional hours included.....

Training and interviews for new Members

Introduction/meetings re: Strathmore/ Eden House /Oakwell

Meetings with... Joint Safeguarding Board

H.M.P.

Children's Service

Respite Service

Education Dept

Inspectorate

Attending Secure Accommodation Order Reviews

Collecting Key to J.S.B. offices for Board meetings /recording Minutes

Sheila Warren

Chairperson Board of Visitors