

18 July 2016

Agenda Item: 08

**REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR, CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE****ROTA VISITS TO CHILDREN'S HOMES: SPRING 2016****Purpose of the Report**

1. To inform the Committee of the outcome of six-monthly rota visits to Nottinghamshire County Council's children's homes that took place in Spring 2016. Recommendations are made by Councillors when they visit and officers act on any recommendations that are made.

**Information and Advice**

2. **Lyndene** - awaiting report on this visit.
3. **Caudwell House** was visited on 21 April 2016 by Councillor Boyd Elliott. During the visit Councillor Elliott noted that the home was clean, safe and extremely welcoming, warm and inviting on entry with an adequate signing-in procedure. All the staff were happy and confident to speak on all subjects. There was one recommendation made:
  - Amazing, only recommendation would be some form of accreditation from NCC.
4. **Minster View** was visited by Councillor Boyd Elliott on 21 April 2016. He noted that each child has an independent care plan, this is a necessity as they all have varying degrees of Autism, so what may trigger one child will not be the same for another; a very challenging environment, controlled by extremely attentive staff. Behaviour has to be managed, each child has a routine and these are adhered to. Extremely positive. There was one recommendation:
  - To speed up the issue regarding the gate across the entrance to the car park - correspondence between Manager, Rob Taylor, Vonny Senogles, Children's Service Manager, and Newark & Sherwood District Council planning.

*This is still an on-going issue, with decisions awaited regarding the design. As it has not been possible to procure from the Council's sole supplier the design awaiting approval, Property Services are currently seeking permission to procure elsewhere. Vonny Senogles and Rob Taylor, Manager of Minster View, are robustly monitoring this.*
5. **Oakhurst** - awaiting report on this visit.

6. **West View** was visited on 10 May 2016 by Councillor Philip Owen. He noted that there has been considerable redecoration carried out downstairs since his last visit. This was long overdue. The interior looks inviting and the new furnishings were chosen by the residents. Working relationships with CAMHS continue to be positive with regular meetings taking place. A recent innovation is the attendance of a transition worker at relevant meetings. No resident has gone missing since his last visit and there has been no self-harming by any resident and no assaults on staff with little verbal abuse. This is attributable in large part to the stability of the placements in the home. There were no recommendations made.
7. **The Big House** was visited by Councillor Jacky Williams on 26 April 2016. Councillor Williams recorded that the impact of moving into the new build continues to have a positive effect on the young people, with increased opportunities for their independence (particularly through the use of the small kitchen) and enhanced dignity (through the ensuite and improved bathing facilities).
8. A defibrillator has been installed in the porch of the new building. Whilst this may serve a useful purpose for the staff and young people, it is also being advertised as available for community use, through local media and the parish council. This will help to create a sense of the new building being a part of the local community.
9. Councillor Williams observed a young man who was attending for a second 'trial' visit, having been referred by his social worker for short break respite. She also spoke to the child's carer, who explained that he had initially been reticent about the child attending, due to media coverage of historic events in children's homes. However, having attended once previously, and witnessing his charge enjoying himself, as well as having had a complete tour of the facility, the carer was more than happy with the offer and possibility of the young person enjoying short breaks at The Big House. There was one recommendation:
  - It would be helpful if HR could align their processes in accordance with OFSTED requirements, specifically around the requirement for two written references for internal appointments.

*This has been addressed.*

10. **Clayfields House** was visited on 24 May 2016 by Councillor Jacky Williams. This visit was during a very busy and challenging period, with several challenging incidents being responded to by staff in the context of repair and reparation. Councillor Williams noted that during the course of this visit she was aware that there had been some 'issues' during the morning, and several young people had been separated and returned to their living quarters after a fight had broken out. Another young person had isolated himself in a room, having 're-arranged the furniture'. Overall, on this visit, she found it to be more disturbing than on previous occasions and remains in awe of the staff who work in these challenging conditions and environment.

It was encouraging to speak with the young man who was clearly hoping to go on to University and to see how education was helping him to improve his self-esteem and confidence.

The manager was not present at the time of Councillor Williams' visit as she had taken a young man to a conference at the House of Commons, as an example of good practice and positivity. This young man had completed his level 2 NVQ in hospitality and catering and had completed an apprenticeship at Clayfields, whilst living some distance away. He is now ready to move on and complete his professional training. There was one recommendation:

- Keep neighbours informed about new development.

*The management team has a plan in place to ensure the local community are informed of building works and other changes, as and when they are planned to happen.*

### **Other Options Considered**

11. As this is a report for noting, it is not necessary to consider other options.

### **Reason/s for Recommendation/s**

12. The report is for noting only.

### **Statutory and Policy Implications**

13. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of crime and disorder, finance, human resources, human rights, the NHS Constitution (Public Health only), the public sector equality duty, safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults, service users, sustainability and the environment and ways of working and where such implications are material they are described below. Appropriate consultation has been undertaken and advice sought on these issues as required.

### **RECOMMENDATION/S**

- 1) That the outcome of the six-monthly rota visits to Nottinghamshire County Council's children's homes that took place in Spring 2016 be noted.

**Steve Edwards**  
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### **Constitutional Comments**

14. As this report is for noting only, no Constitutional Comments are required.

**Financial Comments (TMR 21/06/16)**

15. As this report is for noting only, no Financial Comments are required.

**Background Papers and Published Documents**

None.

**Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected**

All.

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