

17 October 2023**Agenda Item:7****REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR, COMMISSIONING AND RESOURCES****UPDATE ON NOTTINGHAMSHIRE CHILDREN'S RESIDENTIAL HOMES AND
SECURE ACCOMODATION SERVICE****Purpose of the Report**

1. The report provides an update on Nottinghamshire children's residential homes.

Information

2. There are five internal children's residential homes in Nottinghamshire comprising two providing for children with disability and three mainstream homes. Nottinghamshire also has a secure accommodation service, which houses 20 young people who are placed on remand or on welfare grounds.
3. The current children's disability homes are Caudwell House and The Big House, although there are plans agreed to convert West View to become a specialist disability home in the future.

The Big House

4. The Big House is a short break home in the village of Edwinstowe. At present the home provides overnight short breaks for 23 children. Each child has a bespoke package of care ranging from 24 overnights to 156 overnights a year. Allocation is dependent on need and is subject to change dependent on the changing needs of the children.
5. Any child who comes to The Big House will have a significant intellectual disability. They may also display risk behaviours when distressed or have an unmet need. They may also have moderate physical disabilities and sensory and medical needs. Children must be of school age, attend their own school and can be up to 18 years of age. Due to reaching the age of 18, some children leave this year, 2023. At present, the home also provides short breaks for 3 children who are out of county children. A package of overnight care for 3 other children from Derbyshire and 1 child from Nottingham City have recently been agreed. These are still in the planning stages and introductory visits have been provisionally arranged.

6. The last Ofsted inspection was October 2022 when the home received a rating of good. A Regulation 44 visitor visits the home every month and the feedback in the reports have shown that The Big House is going from strength to strength regarding the care it provides. The atmosphere around the home is one of warmth and care with a proactive staff team working to provide a high quality of care for the children.
7. The children have just returned to school following the summer holidays. During this time, they got to experience a varied number of activities, including seaside trips, boat trips, Drayton Manor Park, trampolining, and soft play – to name a few. Swimming continues to be very popular with the children and a private pool is hired out so the children can enjoy this without the noise and bustle of a general pool.
8. There has been a limited number of incidents through the summer holidays. Due to the level of disabilities the children have, they find school holidays difficult due to being out of a routine. There were only 5 recorded incidents through August, which is positive and shows the relationships that the staff have developed with the children. It also shows that the staff team know the children well and can plan for their stays in a proactive way. The staff are excellent at encouraging the children to go out of their comfort zone and do different things. The staff are proactive at planning activities and approach them with positivity.
9. The home has had staff leave and some staff have been recruited. An interview took place for a residential care post recently and the candidate was successful. A new residential social care worker also started recently. The home is currently advertising a further 2 residential social care worker posts. Given that there are some staff from Minster View based at The Big House the home is fully staffed.

Caudwell House

10. Caudwell House (Southwell) is registered as a 12 bedded home, with 4 resident beds and 8 short break beds, although to provide the necessary and safe 1 to 1 care the children at Caudwell need, the current staff team can only provide a service for a maximum of 9 children at any one time. It provides residential care and short breaks for children with physical disabilities and associated learning difficulties and health care needs.
11. Caudwell House is rated as Outstanding by Ofsted. The Regulation 44 reports are always very positive highlighting the excellent service provided for children and young people. They always commend the staff for their dedication to the children and for their creativity and imagination and the managers for their leadership and determination to offer the best care possible.
12. There are currently 4 resident children, one of whom is due to move to an adult placement at the end of October. There is a meeting later this week to look at best interests as despite the efforts of all professionals their mother is not cooperating fully with the process, which may result in a court hearing to ensure the young person's needs are met. A full transition plan will be supported by Caudwell.
13. Another resident will be 18 in March 2024, and the remaining 2 children are from Rutland and Derby. One of the residents has leukaemia and is currently on a maintenance plan which entails Caudwell working very closely with health professionals and the transitions

team to ensure any move to adult care is managed sensitively. Future placements will have to have the knowledge and skills to continue to support this young person's needs.

14. The 2 out of county children have settled in well and are making fabulous progress. Two of the resident children have been on holiday and all the children have been on many trips over the summer including trips to hydro swimming, farms, the seaside and the circus, theme parks, animal parks, aquariums, ice skating and bowling. They have also enjoyed an array of in-house activities and made use of the new sensory garden which has been developed in addition to the other sensory environments within Caudwell House. The children have been part of the choosing and planning of equipment for this area. Caudwell is already planning a holiday for the 2 new children for next year and some short breaks for the young person with leukaemia.
15. The short breaks service offers accommodation for a maximum of five children, which allows the home to provide the 1 to 1 support needed to care for the children safely, considering the support they need with moving and handling and medical needs. All staff undertake moving and handling and health training to support the children's needs which includes peg feeding, medication, yankur suctioning, anaphylaxis, managing epilepsy and the use of VNS, giving oxygen in addition to child specific training such as deep suctioning, catheter care and giving injections. All staff must be assessed as competent with each procedure three times by health professionals before they are able to perform the tasks.
16. Maintenance work on the grounds has nearly been completed with the removal of the sensory walkway and sensory garden. It has been agreed that a walkway for wheelchairs will be put into the new sensory garden (land acquired from Minster View) This work is expected to start in September 2023, following funding being agreed. Caudwell has purchased some new sensory equipment and replenished equipment that was broken or worn.
17. Although there are still challenges to recruitment, with the home is still trying to recruit 2 Residential Care Workers, a Residential Social Care Worker and a part time Occupational Therapist. The home has a settled staff team committed to making the children's lives as varied as possible whilst having fun and new experiences, enabling them to reach their full potential.

Mainstream Homes

Lyndene

18. The home is at full capacity accommodating 3 young people, 2 males and a female. The staff team remain committed to the home. There is currently one vacancy in the home for a Residential Social Care Worker. Several staff from Lyndene are currently supporting Oakhurst due to staffing shortages. Both homes are very proactive in supporting each other to ensure that all shifts are fully covered and all children receive a good standard of care.
19. Education plans are in place for each child. All children are in full-time education. Two children go to mainstream school. One child requires support in school and therefore attends an alternative provision that is linked to the school. One child has completed their GCSEs achieving levels 5 and 6 this has secured them a place at Nottingham Hub College attending childcare level 3; their aspirations are to attend university to become a primary

school teacher. The staff team link incentives to education and celebrate all achievements no matter how big or small. Staff work with children to complete homework and attend Personal Education Plan meetings. All staff support children in school to manage behaviours and emotional issues when they arise.

20. One child is working on independence, this consists of a weekly budget to plan their menu shop and cook their meals. Getting children ready for post 18 involves using public transport and working through their independence file and assisting them with problem solving.
21. All children are kept busy and stimulated. The children go to the gym, swimming, ice skating, walks, local parks, cinema, scooter parks and trampolining. The children have visited theme parks and had day trips to the seaside as well as attending the Mill for body boarding, canoeing, and climbing completing the leap of faith. This year the children have been on two holidays including Whitby in April and Cleethorpes in August. The children have taken part in Edwinstowe in Bloom and painting bikes for the Tour of Britain.
22. Children have weekly activity planners which provides structure and guidance for each child to know what activities they are doing daily. Providing nurture and reassurance for children is extremely important and this is embedded in all children's plans to support children to feel valued, safe and to build positive relationships which supports staff to manage behaviours. Staff plan events in advance with children such as birthdays. The home has a Macmillan coffee morning in September, a 'come dine with me' as well as a Halloween party in October. The children all get involved decorating the home with banners and balloons and cooking, baking and making and sending out invitations to family and friends. The children have all been involved in decorating the home, learning new skills such as painting and wallpapering.
23. The home had one missing episode this year. Staff and managers work closely with children to support children to understand risk and encourage positive choices. Staff complete keywork sessions with children daily. Monthly catch-up meetings are planned. Taking children outside the home and listening to their wishes and feelings is also key to ensure that children feel valued and respected.
24. The home continues to work with the reg 44 inspector each month and the reports remain positive. The most recent report concludes:

'Advice is sought from CAMHS to assist with meeting the needs of the children. Strengths include keeping the children active and happy during the summer holiday with a comprehensive activity planner including a summer holiday, helping the children cope with family relationships, preparation for independence including budgeting, cooking, using public transport and decorating. Staff continue to work with other services such as education providers, the police, health services and CAMHS. Managers continue to provide leadership, out of hours support, support on shift, back staff up and reinforce staff messages. The home is well managed, adequately staffed and well led by the management team.'

Oakhurst

25. Oakhurst is a four bedded home that currently has three resident children. The home provides a range of care for children with emotional and behavioural difficulties with or without moderate learning disabilities.
26. Two children currently attend full-time education, one of the children is on target to achieve their predicted GCSE grades. The second child continues to attend Alternative Provision three days a week accessing a learning schedule bespoke to their needs, including support from therapeutic and pastoral support workers. In the forthcoming weeks it is anticipated that the young person will be attending education full-time. The home's newest resident is not in education and full discussions are being held with the head teachers and the SEND team to identify a bespoke education provision for them.
27. The home continues to encourage children to participate in hobbies and leisure activities that will help their physical and emotional wellbeing. The home has an emphasis on health and fitness activities and all the children attend the gym twice a week with a staff member. A range of activities that are physical are used to negate the children's fixation with using electronic devices. Menus that reflect tasty and healthy meals are now fully embedded in the home.
28. The children have enjoyed a varied, exciting and fun summer. They attended a holiday to Hartlepool visited Harry Potter World as well as swimming, trampolining, football camp, boxing, youth club, gym, Trentham Monkey Forest and Twycross Zoo.
29. There have been no breaches of safeguarding. Three incidents of children leaving the home without consent have occurred. On each occasion staff have acted quickly to safeguard and ensure that the child returned home safely. Oversight of such incidents have ensured robust challenge to practice has taken place when required. Lessons learned and reflective practice also assist to improve practice moving forward.
30. Recent changes have been made and two members of staff from Lyndene have joined Oakhurst to drive improvements and good practice within the home. Two new staff members have joined the team which has enabled the home to take another child and has alleviated the pressures of workloads, improved morale and helped the team to get back to their peak capabilities.
31. The Regulation 44 visit held in August concluded that-

'Mentoring, guidance in team meetings and reflective practice discussions are tackling practices that are percolating to the surface. My observations during the visit, assured me that the home is revisiting conversations with staff about care priorities and shift leading responsibilities. The records whilst a little disjointed in places are a step up from my last visit and I can see some triangulation of team discussions being translated into actions agreed. I am delighted to see timely debriefs and key work sessions that are attempts to help LM make sense of his current world. The plethora of activities for the summer holiday are impressive also. It is good to see staff have taken on board manager advice to give praise for the small stuff as this is really showing effect in LM swearing less and having fewer outbursts.'

32. The home continues to anticipate the imminent arrival of Ofsted.

Clayfields Secure Children's Home

33. Clayfields Secure Children's Home is a national resource providing Secure Accommodation for up to 20 vulnerable young people between 10 and 18 years of age. Within the service, a total of twelve beds are available for purchase by the Ministry of Justice for children and young people on remand or sentenced to custody and eight for local authorities under Section 25 of the Children Act 1989, for example, where children frequently abscond from care, are at risk of child sexual exploitation (CSE) or are involved in child criminal exploitation (CCE) e.g., gang activity. Clayfields House also accommodates young people from the police under the Police and Criminal Evidence Act (PACE) 1984 legislation for young people who are deemed vulnerable.
34. Clayfields House had an inspection on 18 - 20 July, whilst the feedback was incredibly positive the outcome of the full inspection was a negative judgement of Inadequate, which primarily centred around three restraints. The County Council has formally challenged this judgement, but Ofsted has maintained their assumption that the actions of staff had an impact on the children, even though this related to one complex and challenging young person. Having had an independent 'subject expert', the service has continued to challenge this view and will be writing to each local authority where they have a young person residing at Clayfields, so there is transparency that their child is being well looked after and the service continues to safeguard their welfare. That said children and young people continue to be well looked after and this was demonstrated when Ofsted revisited on 6 September and were happy with the changes that have been put in place but were unwilling to review their previous decision. There is a comprehensive Ofsted action plan and an overarching Governance Service Development Plan to support the long-term developments. Ofsted will be revisiting within the next few months to re-inspect limited areas around 'help and protection', 'overall experiences and progress of children and young people' and 'effectiveness of leaders and managers'. Education and Health areas will not be reinspected, as these areas were considered Good but were negatively impacted by the Ofsted judgement around restraints.
35. The monthly Regulation 44 visits continue by an independent person and provides a healthy challenge to the service. The visitor summarised their visit in August 2023 as follows:

The leadership of teams at CFS, whilst stretched and covering gaps in SLT, is working harmoniously, and are having a positive impact on the culture of the home.

The morning coordination meeting was a great example of this with the chair allowing some banter but refocusing the task in hand. I saw managers affirming child centred actions, reminders to get children's views and strong safeguarding thinking and actions.

Information and support is very evident, interpersonal communication is much better and staff are feeling listened to. Whilst some challenges continue, I have a sense that staff with a renewed feeling of being valued and heard can dig deep and carry on.

The care teams observed this visit were reasonably attuned to the children present. The children themselves had enjoyable activities to look forward to and felt listened to. Silly behaviours were checked by staff as I would expect.

Risk behaviours are responded to quickly and whilst I feel there is a self-consciousness about being involved in a restraint, that is not inhibiting interventions but perhaps raising helpful reflection and questioning which has to be healthy in the long run.

I had easy access to information requested as well as sight of confidential documents and was well supported throughout the visit. I appreciate that this is a busy time and I place yet another demand on people who are already stretched with the business at hand. I appreciate the support and access thank you.

I really like the feedback and the introduction of the new electronic recording of incidents which in time staff will be able to populate more quickly and evidence be more legible and professional, the system also more efficiently joining up with other data collection.

Partnerships internally and externally was the resounding picture of strength taken from this visit.

36. There is a distinct feeling of change and positive transformation in Clayfields; the Senior Leadership Team seems to be working well together, the building is looking positively different, and young people are able to contribute to the changes that are being made.
37. Behind the scenes the independent investigation into performance continues and should reach a conclusion in early October and will hopefully fully conclude by the end of November.
38. Whilst the service continues to have vacancies across different departments e.g., care, education, intervention, support services and health, every effort is being made to advertise and appoint to these positions on a permanent basis. The service is exploring all possible avenues to recruit and retain staff including market factor supplement payments or the return of the secure allowance for frontline staff, which is an exercise the governance board is taking forward. This is alongside the national piece of work being undertaken by the Secure Accommodation Network (SAN), which provides support, guidance and advice to Secure Children's Homes in order that they can grow and develop a range of trauma aware and psychologically informed integrated care, health and educational services and interventions. Work is underway with human resources to address this and information is currently being gathered on national pay and conditions within secure accommodation, which is a strategic piece of work being undertaken by SAN. This piece of work will significantly benefit staff in secure accommodation and help and support to retain staff, as well as value them. It is acknowledged that working in these areas is significantly different and more challenging than mainstream residential or children with disability services.
39. As of 31 August 2023, Clayfields has been operating on 58.06% occupancy level, with an overall bed night loss of 194 bed nights, however, as a trading occupancy, this continues to be positive, estimated at 93%.
40. The vacancy figures relating to the Youth Custody Service beds continues to be low, and the welfare bed referrals have been constant and consistent and remain high with over 70

'live' referrals. However, whilst the adult estate numbers are significantly increasing, youth custody figures remain stable across the youth estate due to more community disposal orders, where young people are serving their sentences on license in the community. However, early indications across youth custody is this is likely to change over the coming months.

41. The service had been successful in securing Department for Education (DfE) Capital Building Programme funding, as previously reported to the Panel in May 2023; the initial bid was £2.85 million of capital and an additional £403,597 is now required to refurbish Loxley and Sherwood house units, including their external leisure activities/ yard. The total capacity at Clayfields will remain at 20 beds but the overall centre facilities will be re-aligned across the centre and will benefit all children and staff working at Clayfields. Alongside this funding bid, funding has already been authorised to update the personal protection system at an increased cost of £418,000 (up from £340,000).

Developments

42. A property bought last year has been leased to the Council's largest provider of children's homes. Following refurbishment, it will seek Ofsted registration with a target to open as a two-bed home in early autumn. This will provide much needed capacity to provide more Nottinghamshire children with a good quality home environment in the County, enabling them to maintain links with their communities and support networks. Plans are also advancing for the refurbishment of some of the Council's existing children's homes.
43. They will be supported in their aim to provide homes for some of the children with the most complex needs by the appointment of a Specialist Social Worker. This new role is currently being recruited to. The postholder will offer direct help to children who have experienced trauma and ensure staff providing care are trained to help those children thrive.
44. Clayfields have been given permission by the DfE to undertake an initial feasibility study, which is part of the '*Secure Children's Homes Estate Review – December 2022*', which has been led by Atkins (DfE Architects). Work has been identified to increase the administration block, especially with the increased staffing and facilities required for the future. The current facilities have limited space for the number of staff and could do with improving. The Clayfields Senior Leadership Team continues to bid for government capital grant, which currently will be around £20,000 to £30,000 for the initial feasibility study. Work is underway to undertake this piece of work, with the support of colleagues in the Council's Property Commissioning team and Arc Partnership.

Other Options Considered

45. To not bring this report to the Panel: this option is discounted because this report provides information that forms an important part of the Panel's remit in assisting the Council in fulfilling its legal corporate parenting duties and acting as an effective corporate parent.

Reason/s for Recommendation/s

46. The report provides an opportunity for the Corporate Parenting Panel to consider any further actions arising from the information contained within the report

Statutory and Policy Implications

47. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of crime and disorder, data protection and information governance finance, human resources, human rights, the NHS Constitution (public health services), the public sector equality duty, safeguarding of children and adults at risk, service users, smarter working, sustainability, and the environment and where such implications are material they are described below. Appropriate consultation has been undertaken and advice sought on these issues as required.

Financial Implications

48. There are no financial implications directly arising from this report.

RECOMMENDATION/S

- 1) That the Corporate Parenting Panel considers whether there are any actions it requires in relation to the information contained in the report.

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Constitutional Comments (SF 19/09/23)

49. The recommendation in this report falls within the remit of the Corporate Parenting Panel being 'to assist the Council in fulfilling its legal corporate parenting duties to ensure the Council and partner agencies act as effective corporate parents' (Constitution Section 7 Part 2 Terms of Reference).

Financial Comments (CS 20/09/23)

50. There are no financial implications arising directly from this report.

Background Papers and Published Documents

Except for previously published documents, which will be available elsewhere, the documents listed here will be available for inspection in accordance with Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972.

None.

Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected

All.

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