

9 January 2024**Agenda Item: 8****REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR, COMMISSIONING AND RESOURCES****UPDATE ON NOTTINGHAMSHIRE CHILDREN'S RESIDENTIAL HOMES AND
SECURE ACCOMMODATION 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, on welfare grounds across England and Wales.
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. At present, short breaks are being provided for 4 out of county children. One of these is PEG (percutaneous endoscopic gastronomy) fed through the night and training has been organised for the night staff in preparation for their first overnight stay at the end of November.
6. The last Ofsted inspection was November 2023, and the home received a judgment of Outstanding. The home is absolutely thrilled with this outcome, and it shows the extent of the hard work that the staff team have put in since November 2021 when the home required

improvement. The feedback from the Ofsted inspector was very positive and she acknowledged how well the children are looked after, encouraged to take part in a range of activities and the progress they have made and how this is evidenced.

7. The monthly reports from the Regulation 44 visitor also evidenced the improvements that have been made and continue to make. The feedback in these reports acknowledges the commitment and dedication of the staff team to make a difference to the lives of some of the most vulnerable children. 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.
8. The children continue to enjoy a variety of activities including Captain Jacks soft play, trips to Nottingham on the tram to see the Christmas lights, trampolining, swimming, bowling, fun golf, park walks etc. The staff continue to encourage the children to do lots of different activities. All the children work to their own individual Measurable Outcomes (MO) which are planned in line with their Education, Health and Care plan. These MO include preparing snacks, road safety and dressing themselves. It is great to see what progress the children are making and how happy they look when they achieve something.
9. The level of incidents remains low even though there has been a 2-week school holiday which the children struggle with due to lack of routine and structure. The staff have well established, positive relationships with the children and are able to understand the body language and change in demeanour, enabling them to diffuse situations before they develop into incidents, which is why there are not many.
10. A new residential care worker has recently started. Recruitment is still taking place although the home is fully staffed due to having the support of the staff from Minster View, who are still working with The Big House.

Caudwell House

11. 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 House 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.
12. There are currently 4 resident children, one of whom is due to move to an adult placement on 9 December. There has been a delay due to having to await a court ruling to agree the placement along with other concerns related to care and contact with their mother. This has now been given and the transition plan has begun, and visits have started. They are very excited about their new placement and the move will be very positive for them. A new child will be moving in mid-December in residential so the home will be up to 4 residents again. Assessments and transition visits have started and it is thought the new resident will be a good match with the 3 other residents.
13. Another resident who has leukaemia will be 18 in March 2024, and is currently on a maintenance plan which entails Caudwell House working very closely with health professionals and the transitions team to ensure any move to adult care is managed sensitively and that they have sufficient knowledge about their condition. This will probably mean an extension in placement to prepare for this. The resident has been on a short

break in Blackpool to see the illuminations and is already talking about further trips they want to do.

14. Another resident has been part of a community dance group, attending rehearsals over October half term with a performance on the Sunday afterwards in Lincoln. This is a child who when they came to us would not wear clothes, would not bath, and spent much of their time screaming and avoiding any noise or contact with people, needing 3 or 4 people to support their personal care. They have progressed beyond belief, now wearing clothes, accepting being bathed, less anxious around people and loving being part of the dance group. Their parents and grandparents sent the home a wonderful email and card recognising the positive changes and thanking the home for what it does.
15. A fourth resident is making excellent progress with communication and is making their needs known more which has then seen a change in a behaviour, showing less distress. A relative who was always the main carer is at end of life so the home is working with the school to try and prepare the child for this loss. The home has 2 County residents, 1 Rutland and 1 Derby City.
16. The short breaks service offers accommodation for a maximum of four or five children (depending on need), 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 (Vagus Nerve Stimulation), 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.
17. There are 6 new children due to access the short break service but there is some delay due to waiting for either child specific training to be delivered and staff to be assessed as competent or for an Occupational Therapy assessment to be completed to determine appropriate bed, bathing equipment and other seating equipment/plan. There is a part time Occupational Therapist (OT) employed at Caudwell House who left, and the home has been unable to recruit, and have therefore been reliant on buying in a service from county OT services who were undertaking these assessments as additional work. However, due to a shortage of OTs this results in the waiting list for the service extending and long waits for the admissions to progress. Consideration is being given to using an agency but this is proving challenging as there is a shortage of OTs. A meeting will be taking place with the Service Manager, Integrated Children's Disability Service, to discuss possible solutions. There are still lots of activities being enjoyed by resident and short break children both within Caudwell house and outside; they regularly go to the theatre, cinema, bowling, parks and swimming.
18. The new sensory walkway has been completed but was disturbed due to the heavy rain and needs a further coat to smooth out the ridges that were produced as a result. The bottom of the garden where the old sensory walkway was removed needs a layer of topsoil and grassing when the season is more appropriate. News is still waited on the two kitchen refurbishments which has been escalated due to Ofsted raising them at the last two inspections.

19. A new Residential Social Worker has been appointed from within Caudwell House from Residential Care Worker (RCW) staff and a Residential Care Worker is leaving. 2 RCWs have been appointed and are undergoing pre-employment checks. There are still 2 vacancies for RCW posts which are currently being advertised, in addition to the part time OT post.

Mainstream Homes

Lyndene

20. 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. Managers are supporting managers at Oakhurst to identified bespoke training to new staff and experienced staff to develop practise and work therapeutically with children. 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.
21. Education plans are in place for each child. All children are in full-time education. Two children go to mainstream school. One child was in an alternative provision in school, but has gone into year 10 and is now accessing all mainstream classes. Another child is at Nottingham hub completing childcare level 3 and has a placement at a nursery on Mondays and Fridays but is currently waiting for a DBS (Disclosure & Barring Service) to be completed so that they can start the placement. 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.
22. Two children are working on independence tasks; 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.
23. All children are kept busy and stimulated. The children go to the gym, swimming, ice skating, walks, local parks, cinema, clip and climb, scooter parks and trampolining. One child attends Mansfield Stags disability football team and attends games and training weekly, achieving man of the match and receiving trophies. The children all baked for a Macmillan coffee morning and raised money towards a good cause.
24. 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. The children have all been involved in pumpkin picking and creating intricate designs, they dressed up and went into the local community with staff for Halloween, returning with lots of goodies. The children attended the festival of lights at Rufford Park which was themed The Wizard of Oz. One child visited Leeds Armoury and enjoyed the day out. The children visit Doncaster Dome weekly swimming and ice skating in one session keeping them active and ensuring they have a good night's sleep.

25. In November the children visited Walesby scout camp for bonfire night, watching the fireworks and going on fair rides which was enjoyed by all. Celebrating achievements is important for all the children and there were two birthdays to celebrate in September and November - staff work to personalise each birthday with banners and balloons, choosing a theme with each child. One of the night workers bakes themed cakes and it was ensured the children received gifts and had a super day. Families are involved in the children's plans and attend Lyndene to celebrate children's achievements and celebrations joining the home for parties or calling in for a cup of tea and building positive trusting relationships.
26. The home had one missing episode this year. Staff and managers work closely with children to support them 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 ensuring that children feel valued and respected.
27. Multi-agency working is a strength of the home and working monthly with CAMHS (Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services) is essential to discuss any issues/concerns relating to any of the children and supports staff to understand trauma and attachment. Managers continue to work a variety of shifts having oversight of the team and children and they continue to complete spot checks in the early hours of the mornings and support night staff with extra supervision. Managers are completing in-house training with staff around the Children's Regulations and how this is embedded into their roles and practise.

Oakhurst

28. Oakhurst is a four bedded home that is fully occupied and has four children. The home continues to provide a range of care for children with emotional and behavioural difficulties with or without moderate learning disabilities.
29. Oakhurst officially moved to West View on 13 October 2023 due to the refurbishment of Oakhurst. Prior to the move a lot of thought and careful planning had been discussed by the team to manage the stress for the children during the transition. Each young person was invited to West View to look round and choose their bedroom to reduce any concerns or worries about the house move. The commitment and dedication of managers and staff to manage a house move included preparing children well, managing performance issues, inducting new staff and taking two new children (siblings) within this time frame.
30. Three children currently attend full-time education, two of the children are accessing additional support through school and the home to improve their predicted GCSE grades. The third child continues to attend Alternative Provision four days a week accessing a learning schedule bespoke to their needs, including support from therapeutic and pastoral support workers. Having signed off the child's Education, Health and Care Plan, it is anticipated that they will commence full-time education in the New Year. A similar arrangement has now been agreed for a fourth child who arrived at Oakhurst in October that they are to commence full-time from the New Year.
31. 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 weekly gym sessions with a staff member, for some of the children this is a new experience. Menus that reflect tasty and healthy

meals are now fully embedded in the home and each child takes it in turn one night a week to prepare a meal for the home, under the supervision of a staff member.

32. The children have enjoyed varied and exciting half-term activities. They attended a weekend holiday to Matlock to support the move from Oakhurst to West View, visited Drayton Manor Park, Yorkshire Wildlife Park, Eden Camp modern history museum, Doncaster Dome and Roller World.
33. There have been two breaches of safeguarding, an allegation that was unfounded and the second concluded with the employee receiving a formal warning. During the past few weeks the manager's drive has been focused in raising contextual safeguarding specifically incident reports, timeline chronologies, management audits and analysis. There are no reported incidents of children leaving the home. The staff team has worked tirelessly with a child who when they are feeling distressed will walk to the top of the drive and sit at the bus stop, returning to the home after 10-15 mins to allow them to process events. On each occasion staff have acted quickly to safeguard and ensure that the child returned home safely. Oversight of such incidents has ensured robust challenge to practice has taken place when required. Ongoing team discussion, supervision and training ensure that lessons learned, and reflective practice are constant to improve practice moving forward.
34. The home continues to have the support of two members of staff from Lyndene to drive improvements and good practice within the home. A further two new staff members have joined the team which has enabled the home to alleviate the pressures of workloads, improved morale and helped the team to get back to their peak capabilities. An intense induction programme has been devised jointly with Lyndene to support new practitioners entering the role as Residential Social Care Worker (RSCW), this consists of mandatory training, case file discussion, shift planning, shadowing opportunities, role play, and feedback from employees and children as to each individual's progress and development.
35. The home has successfully recruited two RSCWs and one night wake staff that will commence towards the end of December 2023.
36. The home continues to anticipate the imminent arrival of Ofsted.

Clayfields Secure Children's Home

37. 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 12 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.
38. Clayfields House had a further full Inspection on 24 & 26 October, where the judgement remains to 'Inadequate', which primarily is around how children and young people are being 'managed away' and single separation, which is around regulation 20 (Restraint and

the Deprivation of Liberty). Ofsted reported that children were managed away and locked on corridors for extensive periods of time when the legal criteria was not being met and that children had questioned why they were being managed away. Ofsted also noted that the leaders and managers in the centre were not having thorough oversight of the recording and reports in relation to the episodes of managing away. This again related to one young person who was being managed away at the time of their visit and resulted in a compliance notice, which has already been met and satisfied following a further visit from Ofsted on 22 November. Clayfields has achieved the work through discussions in staff briefings and the establishment of a Behaviour Management Oversight panel, which the Service Manager chairs weekly, so senior leaders' oversight of the records and practice can be evidenced. Ofsted are likely to revisit again around week commencing 22 January 2024, which will give the opportunity to showcase the positive work that continues to be evidenced through these inspections and to satisfy inspectors of managerial oversight, which relate to the regulation 13 compliance notice. Whilst Ofsted provided a negative judgement, there were many positive observations that inspectors evidenced, and below are a few comments which have been taken from the report:

Overall, children benefit from strong and trusting relationships with staff. Staff work hard to develop these relationships, and they recognise how their relationships impact positively on children's experiences. As a result of this, children feel able to go to staff if they have worries or concerns. Children say they are happy living at the home and they feel safe.

From the point of their admission, children make progress.

A child who has recently come to live at the home has already told his social worker that he has staff he can talk to. Additionally, a child said that the staff are the best thing about living there.

Children are helped to prepare for moving on. Their moves are well planned, and importance is placed on finding the right next placement. This makes sure that children are provided with the right support to meet their needs and gives them the best chance to succeed going forward.

Children going to their next placement benefit from the staff working with the new carers before the move. This ensures that the new carers are better equipped to provide suitable support and care for the child.

Children are physically restrained only when required to keep themselves and others safe. Staff make concerted efforts to avoid restraint and physical interventions, using a range of de-escalation strategies.

Feedback from professionals and parents is very positive. Children benefit from seeing and/or having telephone contact with their families routinely. Parents feel that their children are safe. This regular contact helps children to maintain important relationships and essential support networks.

Children's complaints are taken seriously. If a child makes a complaint, swift action is taken to look into it.

Safeguarding concerns are referred to local authority children's services in a timely manner. Records are detailed and show that actions are taken to keep children safe.

Safe recruitment practices are in place. This ensures that the staff employed to care for children are suitable to do so.

Consistent care of the children is achieved as a result of the regularly held and purposefully planned meetings. These meetings are used to disseminate crucial information and share the decisions made about the care of children, practice and the running of the home.

Staff are able to routinely access managers for support and guidance. The staff value regular formal supervision sessions, where there remains a focus on staff welfare, care practice, training and development.

Staff knowledge and skills are extended through the provision of induction, mandatory and more specialist training. This enables the staff to meet the individual needs of the children who come to live at the home.

39. The monthly Regulation 44 visits continues by an independent person and provides a healthy challenge to the service. The visitor summarised their visit in November 2023 as follows:

What an inspirational visit. I absolutely loved speaking with (A CHILD) who was very reflective about where she was a year ago. Christmas is a really tough time for children in care not least (A CHILD) who was remembering where she was last Christmas. She clearly has a long way to go in terms of stabilizing her emotional well-being, but she has done amazingly well and is showing signs that life is not as consistently tough for her. The team around her have done what they do well with all children. They have been consistent and reliable in their support; they have been honest and not indulged her when she is edging toward behaving in a risky way. The home are doing well to meet the diverse needs of the children and at times challenged to manage the dynamics some children and their families bring together but there are some great pieces of work being done to help children make progress and keep them safe.

I do really like the combination of the positive steps to improve RPI recording and oversight, managing away and reflect and repair which collectively harmonises the principles of the statement of purpose and more consistently reinforces the life lessons young people need about dealing with crisis and challenges in a manner that is restorative.

There are no worries or concerns on my part since I can see what is in hand to be addressed in terms of staff mistakes or errors, I can see children are safe and being managed with sensitivity and care.

The home have delivered staff briefings regarding a number of themes but including the implementation of a centre wide restorative approach. This will require staff to encourage 'reflect and repair' when unwanted behaviour occurs. It was shared that two opportunities for this will be offered to young people and if this is refused as a last resort a sanction will be applied.

40. There continues to be a really positive commitment from the current Senior Leadership Team who are working together to address the Ofsted Compliance notices and whilst this has been disappointing for them, they have not let this affect their attitude, and are resolute to get this right for the children and young people. The positive attitude seems to be creating a much more positive culture throughout the centre and staff report that they are happy to be at work even when it is hard work. The young people continue to have a positive input into their life at Clayfields and their views, wishes and feelings are taken into account whenever possible and in particular through Clayfields Council and young people's meetings.
41. Behind the scenes the independent investigations are coming to a conclusion, with the disciplinary hearings due to conclude on 11 December 2023. This will leave one outstanding investigation.
42. 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 work with human resources around considering market factor supplement payments or the return of the secure allowance for frontline staff, which is in place for other local authority secure children's homes.
43. As of 30 November 2023, Clayfields has been operating on 83.5% occupancy level, with an overall bed night loss of 194 bed nights. This is an increase from the last reporting period of 58.06% in August. However, with the Department for Education (DfE) Capital Building Programme, this will reduce throughout the programme, which is currently estimated as a 47-week building programme.
44. Whilst staffing is an ongoing issue for the service due to recruitment challenges, the centre has been reduced to running two house units to full capacity, this means that there has been a difficult decision made to reduce the number of welfare children and prioritise the beds of the Ministry of Justice contract. Operating two house units has given the staff more confidence in keeping the young people safe, reducing incident numbers and ensuring that staff can undertake the training prioritised for the service. The Ministry of Justice contract remains a high priority and current bed availability across the secure children's homes is low, currently 10 beds available nationally across England and Wales.
45. The successful DfE Capital Building Programme continues, and an update has been provided to the DfE, which includes an updated financial position with a 'change request' for additional funding of £409,430. Part of the funding agreement is the works will need to be completed by 1 April 2025, so that all outstanding finance and other queries can be addressed. This building programme will ensure the Loxley and Sherwood house units are refurbished to the same standard as Scarlet house unit. The personal protection funding is underway and is progressing at pace and will be fully operational by April 2024, which will improve the security and communications across the centre. The personal protection revised system will incorporate a Dect telephone, as part of the minder system.

Developments

46. 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.

47. They will be supported in their aim to provide homes for some of the children with the most complex needs by the newly appointed Specialist Social Worker. The postholder will offer direct help to children who have experienced trauma and ensure staff providing care are trained to help those children thrive.
48. Clayfields outlined in the previous report to the Corporate Parenting Panel that they had 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*' and has been led by Atkins (DfE Architects). The Council's property commissioning team, alongside Arc Partnership, have put in a bid of £17,000, which will increase the administration block, especially with the increased staffing and facilities required for the future. Whilst this has not been given the full agreement, at least considerations are being made looking ahead and future proofing the environment for the future. This will be undertaken with the support of colleagues in the Council's Property Commissioning team and Arc Partnership.

Other Options Considered

49. 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

50. 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

51. 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

52. 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 (GMG 14/12/23)

53. This report falls within the remit of the Corporate Parenting Panel to consider under Section 7, Part 2, para 36 on p.125 of the Council's Constitution.

Financial Comments (CDS 13/12/23)

54. There are no financial implications directly arising 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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