

13 July 2015

Agenda Item: 13

**REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR, CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE****ROTA VISITS TO CHILDREN'S HOMES: APRIL AND MAY 2015****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 April and May 2015. Recommendations are made by Councillors when they visit and officers act on any recommendations that are made.

**Information and Advice**

2. **Lyndene** was visited on 24<sup>th</sup> April 2015 by Councillor Colleen Harwood. She noted that the home was awaiting changes to the building to increase its occupancy from 3 beds to 4 with office accommodation being moved into the garden. She commented that the home was well kept and homely, and the two young people in residence were attending education, with one young person participating in GCSE exams. Councillor Harwood made 3 recommendations:

- Wi-Fi is needed at the earliest opportunity.

*We have now finalised our contract with Lantec, and they will be visiting Lyndene to install Wi-Fi over the next couple of weeks.*

- Suitable play and gardening equipment is needed.

*This will be purchased once the building works and office garden have been completed.*

- Youngest resident is desperate for an i-pad.

*All young people in our residential homes are due to have reconditioned i-pads over the next 2 – 4 weeks.*

3. **Caudwell House** was visited on 27 May 2015 by Councillor Boyd Elliott. During the visit he noted that, as with previous visits, the building was well maintained and extremely welcoming with enlarged action photos of the children and young people on display, giving a personalised feel to the home. He noted that education is taken very seriously, all the young people are encouraged to learn new activities and carers respond to the

individual needs making children as comfortable as possible. There were no recommendations made.

4. **Minster View** was visited by Councillor Boyd Elliott on 27<sup>th</sup> May 2015. He noted that the building was in good condition and that the general feel to Minster View was positive. Councillor Elliott documented that the staff are happy, but with a constant feeling of being made redundant which affected their well-being. There was one recommendation made:

- The security door needs investigating.

*This has been reported to property services.*

5. **Oakhurst** – there is no report available.

6. **West View** was visited on 12<sup>th</sup> May 2015 by Councillor Philip Owen. He noted that externally the building and grounds continue to be improved, but work is still outstanding on the front entrance step. Although there are still issues with children going missing, Councillor Owen commented that this had improved, and young people have been provided with mobile phones to allow staff to locate them as required. Working relationships with CAMHS continues to be good, with staff training and consultation. Multi-agency risk management meetings take place. He also noted that drug taking continues to be an issue, along with smoking. There were 4 recommendations made:

- Wi-Fi in the home needs to be sorted.

*Installation will be completed within the next 3 – 4 weeks.*

- The refurbishment needs to be completed as soon as possible.

*This is planned as part of the Capital Programme for all the children's homes.*

- Staff i-pads that become available to be recycled to residents.

*This is part of a rolling programme due to start in the next few weeks*

- Review of drugs policy to be undertaken.

*We continually review our drugs policies, procedures and practices as part of our risk strategy meetings. This also involves discussions with the police, and CAMHS.*

7. **The Big House** was visited by Councillor Jacky Williams on 22<sup>nd</sup> April 2015. She recorded that the new build is progressing well, and the future use and upkeep of the current building requires consideration once the move has occurred. Councillor Williams was also able to observe staff writing up care plans and noted the considerable time and attention required to provide personal and intimate care for the young people. She also noted her interest in the pilot out of hours telephone support line, and the development of family support services. There were 4 recommendations made:

- Ensure all appropriate furnishings and sensory equipment are available for the move to the new premises.

*This is being addressed via identification of what to take, and what to purchase for furnishing the new build. In relation to the sensory room equipment, we have met with colleagues in our Occupational Health services, to assess what equipment would be desirable.*

- Ensure families that could benefit from the service are aware of it.

*Identification of the need for a short break is via a full core assessment completed by a social worker. For families who may benefit from utilising the out of hours telephone service, this is being shared by social workers who visit families, and details are also being published in the next IRIS magazine.*

- Evaluate the take up and benefits of a support line for families and roll out if proven to be effective.

*Evaluation systems are already set up to monitor the usage of the support line. This will be regularly monitored and reviewed.*

- Invite Councillors to the official opening of the new build

*The opening of the new build will be planned in advance and invitations sent out in due course.*

8. **Clayfields House** was visited on 26<sup>th</sup> May 2015 by Councillor Jacky Williams. She has recorded that extensive building work has now been completed which allows separation for staff from the working units. She also noted the possibility of the DfE funding a rebuild and renovation of Scarlet unit, which could be expanded to become an 8 bedded unit, with the two additional beds being used to 'step down' young people who are transitioning back into the community. Councillor Williams commented that many of the young people feel so secure and cared for within the home that they are often reluctant to leave. She observed very positive interactions between staff and young people. Four recommendations were made:

- Consider the introduction of some gluten free foods to see if they impact on behaviour.

*This will be explored in management meetings, and in consultation with health colleagues, nurses, and the catering staff.*

- Councillor Jacky Williams to investigate the possibility of CDF funds to be used to support young people moving into the community.
- Ensure Scarlet unit is refurbished/rebuilt appropriately.

*This continues to be under review.*

- Ensure long term viability of the unit.

*Nottinghamshire County Council continues to support the work carried out at Clayfields House and manages the developments at the unit. Clearly there is a broader national and political context in which major changes are being proposed to the secure estate for young people. The County Council continues to believe that the high quality work carried out at Clayfields for young people secured through the Youth Justice system and those secured through the 'welfare' route should be valued and supported going forward.*

### **Other Options Considered**

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

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

10. The report is for noting only.

### **Statutory and Policy Implications**

11. 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 April and May 2015 be noted.

**Steve Edwards**  
**Service Director, Children's Social Care**

**For any enquiries about this report please contact:**

Shelagh Mitchell  
Group Manager, Access to Resources  
T: 0115 9774153  
E: Shelagh.mitchell@nottsgov.uk

### **Constitutional Comments**

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

### **Financial Comments (SS 23/06/15)**

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

**Background Papers and Published Documents**

None.

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

All.

C0667