



**24 January 2023**

**Agenda Item 9**

## **REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR, COMMISSIONING AND RESOURCES**

### **OFSTED AND INDEPENDENT VISITOR FINDINGS IN NOTTINGHAMSHIRE CHILDREN'S RESIDENTIAL HOMES**

#### **Purpose of the Report**

1. The report provides an update on the inspection activity and the key findings of the independent (Regulation 44) visitors to children's homes operated by Nottinghamshire County Council. The full reports are not suitable for publication due to matters of confidentiality relevant to children and staff in the homes but can be made available confidentially to individual Panel Members upon request.

#### **Information**

2. There are seven internal children's residential homes in Nottinghamshire comprising three providing for children with disability, three mainstream homes and one secure home.
3. **Caudwell House (Southwell)** was inspected by Ofsted on 4 & 5 October 2022. The overall experiences and progress of children and young people were judged as **outstanding**, how well children and young people are helped and protected was also judged as **outstanding** and the effectiveness of leaders and managers was assessed as **good**.
4. Ofsted commented that:

*"Over time, children make significant progress from their starting points. Some children have made the type of progress that can be life-changing. For example, some children are able to communicate more effectively, and some are learning to walk. This is because staff work closely with other professionals, and with parents, to ensure that children have the help and resources they require to thrive. Children enjoy living at this home or visiting the home for a short break. They have rich and varied opportunities due to the space and resources available to them in the home. For example, there is a large garden with space for sports equipment, a boccia pitch, a quiet area and garden rooms. They also have sensory rooms, a mood room and a games room. Children have accessed the local and wider community by utilising the home's vehicles or going for a walk. They go swimming, horse riding and visit a music studio, among other trips".*

5. Ofsted made three recommendations in relation to Caudwell House which are being actioned by the registered manager and service leadership. The recommendations were:
- The registered person should ensure that monitoring devices used to keep children safe must not remove reasonable privacy and should allow as much privacy as possible.
  - The registered person should ensure that the home meets children's basic day-to-day needs and physical necessities. This specifically refers to the size of the kitchens and the lack of equipment to support children in wheelchairs to use the kitchens.
  - The registered person should ensure that staff employment records demonstrate why an applicant left their last place of employment and that all relevant qualifications are evidenced.
6. **Clayfields House** was inspected between 19 & 21 July 2022. The overall experiences and progress of children and young people was assessed as **good**, children's education and learning as **good**, children's health **good**, how well children and young people are helped and protected as **good** and the effectiveness of leaders and managers also as **good**.
7. Inspectors commented that:
- “Children make progress from their starting points due to the good standard of care and support that they receive from staff. Children make progress in relation to their physical and emotional health, education, well-being and safety. There is an abundance of cheerfulness in the interactions between staff and children. The children are courteous, chatty and comfortable around each other, the staff and visitors. Children are mirroring positive staff role-modelling; they are relaxed, confident, settled and comfortable within their home environment”.*
8. The Inspectors made five recommendations for the home which are being implemented as part of a rolling improvement plan:
- The registered person should make sure that children's homes are nurturing and supportive environments that meet the needs of their children. They will, in most cases, be homely, domestic environments. In particular, ingrained stains on floors should be removed from the children's en-suite bathrooms. Those scratched protective window and glass coverings in bedrooms and some lounges should be repaired or replaced to be in line with the general good quality of the environment.
  - The registered person should ensure that for children who have experienced severe trauma, have mental health difficulties or have been excluded or out of education for significant periods, there is support to address and work through their past experiences and present needs to be able to positively participate in learning activities and formal education. In particular, leaders need to improve their support for children's learning in the classroom. Making sure that all teachers and support assistants make swift interventions to minimise the lesson disruption.
  - The registered person should ensure that the progress in education can be measured and evidenced in various ways, including but not limited to success in academic, vocational, and other awards and qualifications; other formal attainment tests that are part of national assessment arrangements; and teachers' ongoing assessments. Measurements of progress should include qualitative information such as how well the child is being prepared for their next stage of education, training or employment, and

quantitative data where available. In particular, leaders should support the sharing of good practice in the development of learning resources between subject areas, so that children can produce high-quality evidence of their learning across the curriculum.

- The registered person should ensure that a detailed record is maintained of the checks and observations completed for children on elected and enforced separation and that records relating to directed and enforced separation make clear why the reimposition of this measure of control is necessary when children have been engaging positively before and after being released.
- The registered person should ensure that all those with a leadership and/or a management role should be visible and accessible to staff and children to enable them to deliver their leadership and/or management responsibilities. In particular, the senior leadership team should spend time and meet with all staff and children routinely.

9. **The Big House** was inspected on 6 & 7 October 2022. Inspectors assessed the overall experiences and progress of children and young people as **good**, how well children and young people are helped and protected as **good** and the effectiveness of leaders and managers also as **good**.

10. Inspectors remarked that:

*“Staff understand the children well. They ensure that children are supported with a child-centred approach to meet their individual needs. This supports children to make excellent progress. Children have the chance to embrace new experiences. Staff make sure that children’s complex needs do not stop them from accessing activities and facilities that they enjoy. The range of activities provided helps children to develop social skills and achieve positive outcomes. Staff want the best for children. They persevere through challenging times. Staff are passionate and motivated. They always recognise the progress that children make, no matter how small this might be. For example, one child is now able to use cutlery independently, and another is spending more time with peers and staff. This is good progress”.*

11. Inspectors made three recommendations which are being actioned by the home’s leadership team:

- The registered person should ensure that the children’s home is a nurturing and supportive environment that meets the needs of the children. They will, in most cases, be homely, domestic environments. Registered persons should seek as far as possible to maintain a domestic rather than ‘institutional’ impression and ensure that the decor in the home is improved.
- The registered person should specify the procedures to be followed and the roles and responsibilities of staff when a child is missing from care or away from the home without permission and how staff should support the child on return to the home.
- The registered person should have systems in place so that all staff, including the manager, receive supervision of their practice from an appropriately qualified and experienced professional, which allows them to reflect on their practice and the needs of the children assigned to their care.

12. **West View**, which is temporarily closed as a consequence of a flood and the subsequent need for repairs to be undertaken to make it safe and fit for purpose, was last inspected by Ofsted on 7 June 2022. The overall experiences and progress of children and young

people were assessed as **good**, how well children and young people are helped and protected as **good** and the effectiveness of leaders and managers was assessed as **requiring improvement** to be good.

13. The inspectors commented that:

*“The home was without a permanent manager for a substantial period, due to the registered manager being absent. During this time, the home was supported by managers from within the organisation and an agency manager. The registered manager has since returned and has begun to implement systems in the home. At the time of this inspection, the management arrangements were relatively new. Management monitoring and systems are in place but are not yet embedded. Staff engage well with children who have previously had poor experiences in residential care, or whose previous placements have ended in an unplanned way. Staff are resilient and determined. Children feel that they are valued and cherished by staff. The child currently living at the home has made good progress. Children’s health needs are met. For example, children are supported to develop skills in maintaining their own personal hygiene. This has enabled the child at the home to develop their independence and become more confident”.*

14. The inspectors set out a number of requirements for improvement against the regulations which will be implemented once the home reopens.

15. **Lyndene** was inspected on 22 & 23 November 2022. Inspectors found that the overall experiences and progress of children and young people were assessed as **good**, how well children and young people are helped and protected as **good** and the effectiveness of leaders and managers also as **good**.

16. Inspectors noted that:

*“Children living at this home have complex needs. They are making good progress because of the care and support provided by staff. The staff encourage children to communicate and express themselves, for example, by using ‘communication cards’ to good effect. Children are given the opportunity to explore their identity and they are supported by staff to embrace new experiences. This allows children’s confidence to grow. Children attend school or an alternative education provision. Staff are ambitious for the children and support them in the classroom. For example, staff remain in school to support children who may be struggling to focus. Staff work closely with other external professionals. A designated safeguarding lead from a school said, ‘Never worked with a home before and have experienced a similar, positive working relationship, staff have gone beyond expectations.’”*

17. Inspectors made three recommendations:

- The registered person should where the placing authority or another relevant person does not provide the input and services needed to meet a child’s needs during their time in the home or in preparation for leaving the home, the home must challenge them to meet the child’s needs. Staff should act as champions for their children, expecting nothing less than a good parent would.

- The registered person should maintain good employment practice. They must ensure that recruitment, supervision and performance management of staff safeguard children and minimise potential risks to them.
  - The registered person should ensure that the children's views, wishes and feelings standard is met.
18. Finally, **Oakhurst** was inspected on 26 & 27 July 2022. Inspectors found that the overall experiences and progress of children and young people, how well children and young people are helped and protected and the effectiveness of leaders and managers were all **good**.
19. Inspectors noted that:
- “Children like living at this home. All of the children said that the staff are friendly and supportive. As a result, children are happy and are thriving. Children’s education is seen as very important. The staff support children with homework and revision. One member of staff takes a lead role in ensuring that educational plans are kept up to date. There is regular communication between the staff and education providers. This has contributed to children making good progress in their education. Children’s views and wishes are central to making decisions. ‘Listen to me discussions’ take place between the staff and the children. The manager responds to each child afterwards. This has led to children feeling listened to”.*
20. The inspectors made no specific recommendations for Oakhurst.
21. Regulation 44 independent visits by experienced social care professionals have continued to take place monthly and all recommendations are responded to by the registered manager and plans to address any issues identified put in place. Corporate Parenting Panel members visiting homes will have access to the latest Regulation 44 report prior to visiting a home.

### **Other Options Considered**

22. To not update the Panel on the current inspection activity in relation to the Council's children's homes: this option is rejected as knowledge of inspection activity 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**

23. 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**

24. 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**

25. 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.

**Laurence Jones**  
**Service Director, Commissioning and Resources**

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### **Constitutional Comments (LPW 12/01/23)**

26. The recommendation falls within the remit of the Corporate Parenting Panel by virtue of its terms of reference.

### **Financial Comments (CS 10/01/23)**

27. 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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