



16 May 2023

Agenda Item 7

REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR, COMMISSIONING AND RESOURCES

UPDATE ON NOTTINGHAMSHIRE CHILDREN'S RESIDENTIAL HOMES

Purpose of the Report

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

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. 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.
 - **Caudwell House (Southwell)** is a 12 bedded home, with either 4 resident beds and 8 short break beds or 5 resident and 7 short break beds dependent on demand at the time of need. It provides residential care for children with physical disabilities and associated learning difficulties and health care needs, and children with learning difficulties and on the autistic spectrum. The home may provide care and accommodation for no more than 12 children from the age of 10 to 18 years.

Caudwell House was inspected by Ofsted in October 2022 and was awarded Outstanding again. The Regulation 44 reports are always very positive, highlighting the excellent service the Council provides for children and young people.

Two of the resident children have moved on to adult placements after a planned and supported transition. This left only 2 residents for a while which impacted on occupancy levels. However, these have now been filled with 2 out of county children from Derby being accommodated at the end of March and a child from Rutland due in mid-April. The home has a resident on a leukaemia treatment plan and is responding well to this - he won the local award for a child of courage and will be attending the presentation.

Currently the home can facilitate 5 children on short breaks, not 8, otherwise the children would not have 1 to 1 staffing which is required for children with their physical disabilities and health needs. This is also currently being further impacted with the

challenges of recruitment and selection and not being able to fill posts. The home has extensive grounds that require a high level of maintenance. The sensory walkway and garden have been condemned due to being unsafe. However, land which was previously on loan to Minster View has been reclaimed and it is currently in the process of being turned into a sensory garden which will require wheelchair friendly walkways to enable the children to fully access it.

The children continue to access lots of activities both inside and outside of Caudwell House including 'The Deep', youth clubs, discos, horse riding, hydro, darts matches, ice hockey and sports events, pantomimes, theatres and cinemas. They have contributed to ideas on how to improve the process of obtaining children's wishes and views.

The staff are very child-focused, flexible and committed to Caudwell House and are the home's biggest asset in ensuring the home continues to be Outstanding. This is always commented on in the Regulation 44 reports.

- **The Big House** is a short break home in the village of Edwinstowe. At present the home provides overnight breaks for 27 children. Each child has a bespoke package of care ranging from 24 nights a year to 156 nights a year. Allocation is dependent on need and is subject to change, dependent on the changing needs of the children. Any child attending The Big House will have a severe intellectual disability, combined with manifestations of challenging and complex behaviour. Children must be of school age, attend their own school and can be up to 18 years of age. The child is expected to be mobile, but provision will be made for those who have some degree of difficulty with mobility.

There were no Ofsted inspections for a while due to the pandemic. The home had an inspection in November 2021 and was downgraded from Good to Requires Improvement. An interim inspection in March 2022 saw the home as improved in effectiveness. It then had a full inspection in October 2022 when it was taken back to Good. The staff team is thrilled that all the hard work they put in was recognised.

The Regulation 44 reports have shown improvement in the home with some very positive feedback. The visitor acknowledged the work that the staff team do and the positive way they look after the children, providing them with lovely experiences. The visitor commented on how the building looks significantly better from the entrance shelter all the way through to the bedrooms, with the atmosphere being noticeably warm and caring. The visitor loved speaking to staff who were experienced, knowledgeable and confident, as well as inexperienced but obviously caring and passionate and keen to do a good job. Risk assessments had improved significantly. Although there were no physical interventions, the visitor commented on the recording of incidents stating that the incident reports have comprehensive oversight and actions recorded, the detail of which demonstrates that managers have clear understanding of the lead up and responses in the scenario. Overall, it was a very positive report with four recommendations none of which were of a safeguarding nature.

The staffing situation has improved in the home, with recruitment to all their vacancies despite staff leaving over the past year. Although the home is fully staffed there are

staff who are looking at moving on which will then present further recruitment challenges.

Mainstream homes

4. **Lyndene** is currently at full capacity, accommodating three children. All three currently attend full-time education and one of the children is on target to achieve 8 GCSE level 8/9 grades and is planning to attend college then university to become a primary school teacher. Supporting children to remain in education remains a challenge, with staff working closely with education providers, including providing strategies for managing difficult behaviour.
5. All children have weekly activity charts and have a daily routine to follow. It is the norm for the home to have a variety of activities planned such as days at The Mill, bowling, walking in the Peak district, Alton Towers, Skegness trip, bike rides, attending local parks, family time, clothes shopping and visiting skate parks. Animals are important to children; staff bring their dogs to the home and go on walks with the children on a regular basis.
6. The home had a full Ofsted inspection in November 2022 and was judged to be Good in all areas, which was a disappointment for the staff and children as in the previous inspection they were judged to be Outstanding. There was a requirement under Regulation 35, which particularly referred to ensuring debriefs were carried out with a child who is the subject of a restraint. Three recommendations were made which related to: staff offering more of a challenge to those who do not provide the input and services needed to meet a child's needs; that the registered person should maintain good employment practice (this was regarding the verification of a person's reference not being evidenced); and children having access to the home's children guide, and the home's complaints procedure, when they are placed in the home.
7. The Regulation 44 report continues to be positive, the April visit concluding that children are effectively safeguarded, and that the home is well managed, adequately staffed and well led by the management team. There was one recommendation for a child risk assessment to be updated to reflect the change in social worker. There have been no incidents, no missing children and no physical interventions in March. When incidents occur, these are reported, the response of the child is recorded, and a management analysis is completed for each incident. Key work sessions are provided after incidents. Risk assessments are updated, and incident reports are reviewed by the manager. Currently there are two Residential Social Care Worker vacancies and a local recruitment drive has resulted in interest from the community.
8. **Oakhurst** received its Ofsted inspection in July 2022, rating it as Good. Whilst the home has had two reportable incidents of safeguarding in November, measures have been implemented to prevent future incidents and staff have accessed up to date training.
9. The Registered Manager and the Assistant Care Manager continue to drive progress in the home to ensure the focus is on the experiences and progress of children, granting staff the time and resources to support children in the home.

10. A deep dive audit was carried out that highlighted improvements being made and where improvements were required. The home continues to receive its monthly visit from the Regulation 44 visitor.
11. The visitor recognises that the home is going through transformation with the staff team, including the appointment of a new Manager in January 2023. There has not been any physical intervention or missing episodes, and only one incident had been logged.
12. **West View** is one of the Specialist Group Homes, a four-bed home which is currently closed due to a flood. The plan is to replace it with two new 2-bed homes and for the site to be converted to make it suitable for Nottinghamshire children with learning disabilities. The staff and children have been moved to Lyndene and Oakhurst which has helped to cover vacancies in those homes. West View was inspected by Ofsted on 7 June 2022 and the overall progress of children was judged to be Good, but Required Improvement in the effectiveness of leaders and management. This was an improvement on the previous year when the home was judged to Require Improvement. Plans are well underway to develop the two 2-bed home to replace West View.

Clayfields Secure Children's Home

13. Clayfields Secure Children's Home is a national resource providing Secure Care for up to 20 vulnerable young people between 10 and 18 years of age. Within the centre, a total of 20 places are available for purchase by the Ministry of Justice for children on remand or sentenced to custody, and for local authorities under Section 25 of the Children Act, for example, where children frequently abscond from care, are at risk of sexual or criminal exploitation or are involved in gang activity.
14. On 19 - 21 July, Ofsted inspected Clayfields House, and the feedback was extremely positive. The inspectors spoke about *"young people being safe"*, *"strong multi agency approach"*, *"staff know the children well"*, *"staff are warm and have a clear understanding of young people's needs"* and *"leaders and managers know the service well"*.
15. The judgement was Good in all areas – Overall Experiences; Health and Protection; Health; Leadership and Management; and Education. The overall judgement was a strong Good, with many of the areas on the edge of being Outstanding.
16. Ofsted identified one Statutory Requirement that related to Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCP) that action is taken in a timely manner in requesting and submitting EHCPs for young people. There were five additional recommendations to improve practice overall that are reflected within the service development plan.
17. This year, Clayfields had an Ofsted Assurance Visit on 28 February. Whilst the inspection team did not consider Education and Health Care arrangements, it did consider the Education recommendations in relation to the statutory requirements around EHCPs and they were satisfied with the improvements made in this area. This represented a positive inspection feedback on the work so far, and the service remains Good with 'no serious or widespread safeguarding concerns'.
18. In terms of Regulation 44 visits, these are undertaken monthly and provide a healthy challenge to the service. The report identifies the significant challenges that have taken

place around the investigation into the conduct of two members of staff. The service development action plan is reviewed by the regulatory visitor and is monitored to ensure the service continues its journey to become an 'outstanding service'. The visitor has been very complimentary of the work being undertaken by staff and senior managers.

19. The visitor summarised her visit in February 2023:

'CFS may not be as homely as other children's homes but the atmosphere and intended approach provided by all staff is from a place of care and ambition that change is possible. Children seeing their potential to learn, taking better care of themselves, having time to reflect and talk about their lived experiences is what is happening in this place. Children are safe and some are making changes to the way they think and feel about themselves which is helping them make plans for their future in a more positive way because of living at CFS'.

20. Whilst Clayfields has regulatory visitors, such as Ofsted and the Regulation 44 visitor, it also has focused quality assurance visits that are facilitated by the Youth Custody Service Contract Performance Manager on behalf of the Ministry of Justice, which has 60% of the current licensed beds. From these visits the service is assessed at the highest performance level, which is a 'green' rating, and which demonstrates the positive work staff and senior managers are doing with the young people to safeguard them but also to evidence that progress is being made with each young person throughout their journey at Clayfields and hopefully beyond.
21. Whilst the home still has vacancies, there have recently been some successful recruitment drives through two recruitment open evenings in January, which over 35 people attended. From these, over 12 staff have been recruited successfully and all are due to start on or before 17 April, which is the start of the service's two-week induction programme. As of 31 March 2023, Clayfields has been operating on 97.33% occupancy level, with an overall bed night loss of 68 nights, which is a positive position.
22. Whilst the vacancy figures are low relating to Youth Custody Service beds, the welfare bed referrals have been constant and consistent which is reflective of the low loss of bed nights overall. It appears that whilst the adult estate numbers are significantly increasing, youth custody figures remain low across the youth estate due to more community disposal orders, where young people are serving their sentences on license in the community.
23. The service has done well in securing Department for Education (DfE) capital funding programmes that were bid for and agreed, the main programme being the £2.85 million capital refurbishment of Loxley and Sherwood house units, including their external leisure activities yard. Once the DfE building programme commences on Loxley and Sherwood house units in July 2023 for 42 weeks, the occupancy figures will reduce by around 30% but the building programme will provide an additional welfare bed. This will be very much welcomed nationally as it will reduce the number of welfare young people awaiting a bed and will take Clayfields' total capacity to 21 beds, increasing revenue in the long term.
24. Two other successful bids will enable the upgrade of the personal protection system and a successful bid of £26,000 has enabled the refurbishment of the main yard which has vastly improved the area for the young people.

Developments

25. Plans are progressing to open two new 2-bed homes in the County for Nottinghamshire children in the care of the Council. One of these has already been identified and the search for a second property is about to begin. Requirements for refurbishment of the first are being discussed with the Council's property partner.
26. Work is also progressing on existing homes. One is to undergo a significant refurbishment to improve the lives of the children whose home it is and to make it easier for the dedicated staff team to provide the standard of care they strive towards. Another will be converted to make it suitable for Nottinghamshire children with learning disabilities, which has seen extensive architectural design work undertaken with the service over the last few months.
27. As the designs for each scheme are finalised it will become possible to formulate outline timescales. Where these plans affect children and staff they will be involved in discussions and enabled to participate.
28. At the previous meeting of the Corporate Parenting Panel, the staff vacancy position within the homes was noted and whilst the challenges remain, progress is being made. Managers have been working closely with the communications and recruitment colleagues, reviewing all recruitment documentation and exploring new avenues to advertise vacant posts. In addition, managers spent a day in Mansfield shopping centre promoting the service. There have been a number of interests in the vacancies which are being followed up. Similar events are being considered for the Sutton and Nottingham shopping centres.
29. Although staffing will continue to be a challenge in the short and medium term, the staff in the homes are committed to the children and are working hard to ensure children are safe and receiving a high level of care.

Other Options Considered

30. 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

31. 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

32. 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

33. There are no financial implications 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 (CD 17/04/23)

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

Financial Comments (CDS 12/04/23)

35. 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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