



18 July 2023

Agenda Item 7

**REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR FOR 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 six internal children's residential homes in Nottinghamshire comprising two 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 is rated as 'Outstanding' by Ofsted. The Regulation 44 reports are always very positive highlighting the excellent service provided for children and young people. These Regulation 44 reports reflect the passion staff show and the feedback from parents demonstrates the strength of the home in ensuring that staff work closely with parents and other professionals.

Two of the resident children previously moved on to adult placements after a planned and supported transition. This left only two residents for a while which impacted on occupancy levels. However, these have now been filled with two out of county children from Derby being accommodated at the end of March and a child from Rutland who was placed in mid-April. The out of county children have settled in extremely well. The other two children have welcomed them into the home, they are a settled and happy group of children. Two of the resident children have been on holiday and the home has

many activities planned for the summer including trips to hydro swimming, farms, the seaside and the circus. The children have been part of the choosing and planning.

There are plans for one of the girls, who turned 18 in June, to move to an adult placement at the end of August so that a full transition can be supported. The child who is receiving treatment for Leukaemia continues to attend hospital regularly supported by staff. He participates in activities that he enjoys and is currently on holiday for two nights at the Disney Hotel.

The short breaks service offers accommodation for a maximum of five children, which allows the home to provide the 1-1 support needed to care for the children safely, considering the support they need with moving and handling and medical needs.

Maintenance work on the grounds has started with the removal of the sensory walkway. The home is aiming to get a suitable walkway for wheelchairs put into the adjacent sensory garden and this is expected to start in September. The new lights and sounds room within Bramley group has been completed. The children helped to decide how this was being furnished and it has been ensured that there is something to interest all the children using it.

Although there are still challenges to recruitment, the home has a settled staff team committed to making the children's lives as varied and fulfilled as possible.

- **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.

The Regulation 44 reports are very positive and highlight that *'the home is going from strength to strength. The children are having lots of different experiences and visiting different places. Children have choices and are heard and listened to by a dedicated staff team. The home ensures that children are given every opportunity to do a variety of things that they may not have the chance to do at home. The staff are proactive at planning activities and approach them with positivity'*.

Although some staff have left the service, the home has filled all vacant posts. This is excellent given the current and ongoing issues relating to the recruitment of staff. The new staff are all enthusiastic, proactive and bring new ideas to the home.

Mainstream homes

4. **Lyndene** is currently at full capacity, accommodating three children. Two children currently attend full-time education. One child has completed all GCSE exams, is on target to achieve 8 GCSEs at level 8/9 and has been accepted for a college placement in September, with aspirations for university and 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 and using incentives and rewards when children are in school.

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, wildlife animal parks, family time, clothes shopping and visiting skate parks.
6. All children have plans to participate in local community events this summer, such as 'Edwinstowe Bloom' where children have their own garden patch to maintain in the village thus ensuring they take pride in their own community. They will also be attending a summer festival in the local forest and designing posters to be displayed in the community for the 'Tour of Britain' that will begin in the local area.
7. Animals are important to children so staff bring their dogs to the home and go on walks with the children on a regular basis.
8. The Regulation 44 report continues to be positive, the report on the visit made in June concluding that children are effectively safeguarded, the home is well managed, adequately staffed, well led by management and that the children are effectively safeguarded and their wellbeing promoted.
9. There has been one missing episode with two children within the last month. This behaviour is out of character for one of the children and was clearly influenced by a peer. Risk assessments are reviewed and updated regularly and after any incidents. 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.
10. De-briefs are completed with children and staff by a manager as recommended by the last Ofsted inspection under Regulation 35. Monthly catch-up sessions are implemented with the children to explore their wishes and feelings, each child receiving a personal response from the manager with outcomes and actions. There have been no physical interventions in the home in June.
11. Currently there is one Residential Social Care Worker vacancy. A local recruitment drive has resulted in interest from the community.
12. On 9 June two members of the Panel visited the home which the staff welcomed. The members met the three children and took an interest in their journeys and their home environment. Staff look forward to further visits.
13. **Oakhurst** is a four bedded home that currently has two resident children. The home provides a range of care for children with emotional and behavioural difficulties with or without moderate learning disabilities.
14. The two children currently attend full-time education, one of the children is on target to achieve A levels, is planning to attend university and the staff team have been supporting

her to attend University Open Days in Nottingham, Sheffield, and Manchester. The second child attends Alternative Provision three days a week accessing a learning schedule bespoke to their needs, including support from therapeutic and pastoral support workers. On the remaining two days the child accesses one to one tutorial educational support on functional skills. The aspiration is that the child is to return to full-time education in September with bespoke support for his tutors and the staff team.

15. The home encourages children to participate in hobbies and leisure activities that will help their physical and emotional wellbeing. The home aims to build children's endurance, develop better social skills and maintain healthy lifestyles into adulthood and children are supported to take part in a variety of activities in order to support building their confidence and developing their interests.
16. All children are involved in the planning of their weekly activity charts and planned events such as camping, Ninja Warriors, swimming, Drayton Manor Park, gym, ice skating, a trip to Skegness and trips out to places such as Yorkshire Wildlife Parks. The home recently hosted a barbeque party to celebrate King Charles III's Coronation and supported the children to invite their family, guests and friends. The event went very well and was a lot of fun with apple bobbing, sponge throwing, football skills and royal mask wearing.
17. The home recently celebrated one of the children's birthdays, hosting a Harry Potter themed event with the staff team dressing up in costume. The home was decorated for when the child returned from school as a surprise and a birthday cake, party packs and games. His Mum and siblings were also invited to the party at the home.
18. The Regulation 44 reports continue to be positive, the report on the visit made in May concluded that *'the home managers continue to be a role model, coach and challenge practices that highlight contextual risk behaviors. The home was highlighted for its therapeutic approach to children'*.
19. The home is preparing for an imminent Ofsted inspection, having received its last inspection in July 2022 which rated it as 'Good'.
20. The home has introduced an equality and diversity display board. The destructive reactions from one child have all but dissolved and the slow transition to a more restorative approach appears to be having a positive effect on his behaviour. Both children and staff have spent time decorating and purchasing soft furnishings to create a homely look and feel at Oakhurst.
21. There have been no breaches of safeguarding, no incidents, no missing episodes and no physical interventions since January 2023. 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.
22. The new manager joined the home in January 2023. She has now made her application to Ofsted to be the registered manager and a fit person interview date is awaited.
23. The home remains understaffed and continues to utilise staff from the relief pool of workers. These staff are known to the children. Over the last months the home has taken

the lead in an intense recruitment drive through community-based initiatives to approach the public and have an open dialogue about potential job opportunities in the children's residential service. The result of this was a marked increase in people applying for positions at the home and consequently three people have been appointed as Residential Social Care Workers. They are currently going through their employment checks and will be in post imminently.

Clayfields Secure Children's Home

24. 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 child sexual exploitations (CSE) or are involved in child criminal exploitation (CCE) e.g., gang activity.
25. Clayfields House is due a full Ofsted Inspection in July 2023. Feedback was extremely positive from the last inspection which took place on 19 - 21 July 2022. 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".
26. The judgement continues to be Good in all areas, with overall judgement being a strong Good, with many of the areas on the edge of being outstanding.
27. Monthly Regulation 44 visits continue by an independent person and provides a healthy challenge to the service. The visitor summarised her visit in May 2023 as follows:

This visit is a typical example of the need to understand the context of the provision and be flexible as an independent visitor. The majority of what I had anticipated in the planned structure of the visit was addressed but little scope to explore any detail and so the report does reflect more questions than conclusive analysis.

The centre was busy as usual, there were some key staff absences since it was half term. The centre seemed to be moving out of a particularly busy period with a significant spike in incidents and increase in restrictive physical interventions. The movement of children both admitted and discharged was pretty much the norm but nevertheless an undertaking that requires significant attention and impacts the dynamics of the residents in a manner that is unlike any other nonsecure setting.

Behind the scenes the independent investigation into performance continues and should reach conclusion in due course. Despite the pace of work, I noticed that established processes to celebrate staff contribution continues and three members of the support services team were given the employee of the month this month and compliments also provided to the head of catering who seems consistent in the quality of his provision to the young people.

Overall, the view of external partners and staff on the units is that the young people are making progress, they do have opportunities to learn, relax and have enjoyable experiences. Risk seems to be managed reasonably well and the young people's best

interests are advocated by the team. Timely and difficult decisions are taken to safeguard the children which at times means terminating placements.

28. 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.
29. Whilst the home still has vacancies across different departments e.g., education, care, intervention and health, every effort is being made to advertise and appoint to these positions. 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, alongside the national piece of work being undertaken by the Secure Accommodation Network, which provides support, *guidance and advice to Secure Childrens 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 that meet the individual assessed needs of young people placed within an environment in which their liberty is restricted due to welfare concerns (as identified within sec 25 Children Act 1989/2004 or the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014) as well as those subject to criminal proceedings or outcomes.*
30. As of 31 May 2023, Clayfields has been operating on 99.72% occupancy level, with an overall bed night loss of eight nights, which continues to be positive news compared with 31 March where when it was at 97.33%.
31. The vacancy figures relating to Youth Custody Service beds are low, and the welfare bed referrals have been constant and consistent which is reflective of the low loss of beds 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. At the time of writing this report the welfare referral waiting list is at 58 beds with over 20 beds pending information.
32. As previous reported the service had done well in securing Department for Education capital funding programmes that were bid for and agreed, the main one being £2.85 million of capital to refurbish Loxley and Sherwood house units, including their external leisure activities/ yard. The total capacity at Clayfields was due to increase to 21 beds, however, due to the significant increase in building costs, the building programme will only undertake refurbishment and the number of beds will not increase. Alongside these funding bids, funding had already been received for the refurbishment of the main yard and an updated personal protection system for which the Department For Education had already agreed £340,000. However, again the cost has increased following an internal survey that has been undertaken. The Department for Education has provided an early indication that the additional funding will be agreed and alongside their approved architects have undertaken a feasibility report to modernise all secure children's homes nationally.

Developments

33. 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

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.

34. 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.

Other Options Considered

35. 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

36. 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

37. 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

38. 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

For any enquiries about this report please contact:

Laurence Jones
Service Director, Commissioning and Resources
T: 0115 9772590
E: laurence.jones@nottscc.gov.uk

Constitutional Comments (GMG 05/07/23)

39. This report falls within the remit of the Corporate Parenting Panel to consider (see p.125 of the Council's Constitution).

Financial Comments (CDS 04/07/23)

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

Background Papers and Published Documents

41. 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.

CF0090