

17 July 2017**Agenda Item: 10****REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR, YOUTH, FAMILIES AND SOCIAL
WORK****ROTA VISITS TO CHILDREN'S HOMES: SPRING 2017****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 Spring 2017. Recommendations are made by Councillors when they visit and officers act on any recommendations that are made.
2. To identify any Members who are interested in undertaking rota visits to children's homes.

Information and Advice**Purpose of Rota Visits**

3. The Children's Act 1989 and 2004 places a statutory duty on local authorities to ensure that their children's homes are regularly inspected by personnel not directly involved with the line management of the home. Rota visits form an important part of Nottinghamshire County Council's governance role in relation to the Council's residential services. Members have a duty to ensure that each home is meeting the key principles of the Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015 and section 22(1A) of the Care Standards Act 2000, and ensuring that children and young people are safe and protected. There is also a requirement that each home is inspected monthly and these visits are called Regulation 44 visits which are undertaken by a person who is independent to the home. The homes are also inspected twice a year by Ofsted.
4. Rota visits are carried out twice a year by Members and reports on the findings of the visits are taken to the Children & Young People's Committee and the Nottinghamshire Safeguarding Children Board.
5. Members of the Committee who wish to undertake rota visits to children's homes are asked to contact Vonny Senogles, Children's Service Manager, Access to Resources, at vonny.senogles@nottsc.gov.uk for further information.

Rota visits – Spring 2017

6. **Lyndene** – former Councillor John Allin visited Lyndene on 11th April and a report is awaited.

7. **Caudwell House** was visited on 19th April 2017 by Councillor Boyd Elliott. During the visit Councillor Elliott noted that the home is warm, clean and inviting, with lovely recent pictures displayed, which have been enlarged. These can be stimulating and give a homely feel for long stay residents. There were two recommendations:
- Commended on ability to work at such short staffing levels, short breaks up 78%, encouraging out of County placements with City Council and Derby City.
 - Need a resident health professional.

A business case is being finalised to seek agreement to employ a part-time occupational therapist who will be part of the staff team. A report will be brought to Committee seeking approval.

8. **Minster View** was visited by Councillor Boyd Elliott on 19th April 2017. He noted that the electronic gate is in the process of being installed to improve the safety of the children and young people, and that all the children in residence have the opportunity to engage in new recreational experiences. There was one recommendation relating to the challenges in recruiting new staff to vacant posts.
- The reasoning behind the challenges in recruiting staff to new posts could be life style choices by candidates not wanting shift work. How can this be made more appealing?

The service continues to seek creative and robust advertising and recruitment processes, working alongside HR and business support, to try and address this challenge.

9. **Oakhurst** was visited on 13th April 2017 by Councillor Colleen Harwood. She observed that the home is well maintained and clean, with a homely feel, and there was evidence of young people using the living areas, but the home is well looked after and respected. They have monthly meetings where a range of subjects are discussed so that each young person feels respected and they have the opportunity to feel they have contributed to the house. They have recently been involved in interviewing new staff as part of a three-tier interview process. There were no recommendations

10. **West View** was not visited during this period.

11. **The Big House** was visited by Councillor Jacky Williams on 27th April 2017. Councillor Williams recorded that robust care plans are in place for each child. It was clear that on the previous evening, a child with very challenging behaviour had stayed at the house and staff were well equipped to deal with this. There is plenty of play equipment in the garden and the house itself is well equipped with soft toys, books and IT equipment as well as TV and DVD facilities (some in the young people's rooms). There was one recommendation:

- I have noticed that OFSTED do not take the elected member rota visit reports into account when carrying out their inspections. They might add a little more flavour to the overall impressions of the facility.

This has now been addressed. The manager(s) of the home ensures that Regulation 44 reports are made available to Ofsted inspectors during their inspection visits, and that these are discussed.

12. **Clayfields House** was visited on 25th April 2017 by Councillor Jacky Williams. Councillor Williams noted that the development work for the Scarlett unit is still ongoing, and that a tour of the home showed it to be in mainly good condition, with some new paintwork and lots of colourful and informative displays on the walls. There is ample evidence to demonstrate that the young residents are kept as healthy as possible and nurses and a local GP are regularly on hand to deal with minor ailments. Councillor Williams also recorded that a new initiative is an alliance, formed in November 2016, with the George Spencer (Academy) Alliance. This is of mutual benefit, with access to a range of resources and CPD for Clayfields teachers and support staff. Future developments could include opportunities for trainee teacher experience in working with complex and disillusioned young people in preparation for their careers. There was one recommendation:

- Work towards resolution of the Regulation 44 issues, which are preventing our children's homes from achieving an outstanding rating from OFSTED.

This has been addressed. The service manager for residential homes continues to brief Regulation 44 inspectors following all inspection visits, including rota visits and Ofsted.

Other Options Considered

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

Reason/s for Recommendation/s

14. The report is for noting only.

Statutory and Policy Implications

15. 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

That:

- 1) the outcome of the six-monthly rota visits to Nottinghamshire County Council's children's homes that took place in Spring 2017 be noted.
- 2) Members who wish to undertake rota visits to children's homes to contact the Children's Service Manager, Access to Resources, as detailed in paragraph 5 of the report, for further information.

Steve Edwards
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For any enquiries about this report please contact:

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Constitutional Comments

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

Financial Comments (SAS 20/06/17)

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

Background Papers and Published Documents

None.

Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected

All.

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