

10 November 2014**Agenda Item: 11****REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR, CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE****ROTA VISITS TO CHILDREN'S HOMES: APRIL AND MAY 2014****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 2014.

Information and Advice

2. **Lyndene** was visited on 22 May 2014 by Councillor John Allin, who noted that the home's external and internal decoration was well maintained. He recorded that care staff work hard to support and help young people plan for their semi independence and preparation for when they leave Lyndene. There were no recommendations.
3. **Caudwell House** was visited on 21 May 2014 by Councillor Boyd Elliott. During the visit, Councillor Elliott noted that the home was very well maintained, with an excellent standard of cleanliness and that all the bedrooms were personalised. Young people were supported to take part in their reviews and decision making processes where appropriate. He observed secure and informed relationships with carers and young people, where education, leisure and independence support are actively promoted. Councillor Elliott made two recommendations:

- current arrangements for Regulation 33 visits are costly

We now have an arrangement with a pool of visitors, who claim for their mileage only

- that the current unit costs are accurate

This work is constantly under review with colleagues in Finance, linked in with occupancy figures.

4. **Minster View** was visited on 23 April 2014 by Councillor Elliott. He was satisfied that all building work since his previous visit had been completed and the scaffolding was gone. He recorded that there was evidence that all young people's health and educational needs were met within their individual care plans. Councillor Elliott noted that young people are involved in decision making dependent on their level of understanding and can choose their day to day activities, integrating well within the local community and

they are supported well during transitions to adult placements. Councillor Elliott made one recommendation:

- carry on the visits and improve our contact and interaction with the home. Show, in some way, commendation for the home's manager and staff for the continued outstanding Ofsted reports.

5. **Oakhurst** was visited by Councillor Colleen Harwood on 19 May 2014. She described the home as homely and welcoming, where young people participate in decisions from menu planning to choosing their activities, and that appropriate oversight and actions are taken in relation to sanctions and physical interventions. Councillor Harwood recorded that she was very disappointed that recommendations from her last visit in October 2013 were still to be carried out, and she therefore made two recommendations:

- that immediate repair and refurbishment of the downstairs bathroom be completed

This work has now started

- that Wi-Fi is made available

This is also currently being completed.

6. **West View** was visited on 1 May 2014 by Councillor Philip Owen. He noted that comments made in his previous visit have been addressed, but queried the absence of corporate signage identifying the home. The Service Manager responsible for the home has replied to Councillor Owen on this matter explaining that there is a formal sign identifying West View fixed to the front wall of the property. This does not incorporate the Nottinghamshire County Council corporate logo. Consultation with young people has resulted in this decision being made as young people generally do not want their home to be identified to the general public. There are also safeguarding and confidentiality implications highlighting the home as a Local Authority Home. Councillor Owen noted that there is now meaningful consultation offered by CAMHS, and that young people are actively involved in planning menus and activities. Young people have education plans in place and are encouraged to identify other interests, with one young person involved in a music project and another supported to make an application to join the army. He observed a robust system of sanctions and rewards in place, and an active response to young people's absence without permission from the home. This included going out to look for young people and bringing them home. He noted concern about the high level of assaults on staff, and stated this needed to have a full report to the Committee covering the whole of the County. Councillor Owen made three recommendations:

- policy review regarding assaults on staff

A separate report will be presented to the Committee

- policy review regarding involvement of police in incidents to drug misuse

The policy regarding contacting the police in respect of Children in Residential Care which includes substance misuse was amended in 2012 and the Residential Homes are working to this policy.

- a decision required on further delegation of budget to the home so that they can effect minor works themselves

The handy person is able to carry out minor works and therefore budget delegation in this area is not an issue. The issue relates to the lack of flexibility in being able to gain quotes from local companies to complete building works rather than the often more costly option of using County Supplies. Further advice is being sought regarding this issue.

7. **The Big House** was visited by Councillor Jacky Williams on 24 April 2014. She reported the external condition of the home deterioration, noting that the use of the building once the new build is completed needs consideration and repair. She reported that the home is clean and welcoming inside, with a large inviting play area outside. Young people are supported to experience as many activities as possible, both inside and outside of the home, making full use of the proximity to Sherwood Forest. Young people have individual diets, with attention given to foods that affect behaviours. Councillor Williams queried the food budget allowance being adequate for the home. There were two recommendations:

- consider a review of the provisions budget

This is monitored during monthly budget reports, with adjustment made where identified

- consider future use of the building and the extent of repairs/refurbishment that can be undertaken.

8. **Clayfields House** was visited on 27 May 2014 by Councillors Liz Plant and Jacky Williams. There were two separate reports following the visit. Both Councillors noted that the work on the vocational unit is progressing well with the internal condition of the home clean and brightly painted. Bedrooms were reported as being homely and highly personalised. Councillor Williams noted that the kitchen is 5* rated and young people meet with the catering manager to discuss their menus. Some young people can prepare their own breakfasts and undertake work experience within the catering environment. Risk assessments are regularly reviewed and understood by all staff, who have an annual training programme including child protection and bullying. All young people are supported to attend their reviews, young people's meetings, and Clayfields Council. Both Councillors noted that young people have clear education plans with Personal Education Plans (PEPs) in place, where young people show very positive outcomes. Ofsted has recently judged the education provision at Clayfields as Outstanding. Councillor Williams noted the concerns expressed by the Centre's Manager about the current welfare placement policy. There were no recommendations.

9. When any recommendations are made by Councillors in their rota visit reports, officers act on those recommendations.

Additional visits

10. In addition to the rota visits, Councillor Kate Foale makes regular informal visits to Nottinghamshire's children's homes and children's homes run by external providers where Nottinghamshire's children are placed.

Options Considered

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

Reason/s for Recommendation/s

12. The report is for noting only.

Statutory and Policy Implications

13. 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 2014 be noted.

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For any enquiries about this report please contact:

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Constitutional Comments

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

Financial Comments (KLA 23/10/14)

15. There are no financial comments arising directly from this report.

Background Papers and Published Documents

None.

Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected

All.

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