

12 February 2018**Agenda Item: 10****REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR, YOUTH, FAMILIES AND SOCIAL
WORK****ROTA VISITS TO CHILDREN'S HOMES: AUTUMN 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 Autumn 2017. Recommendations are made by Councillors when they visit and officers act on any recommendations that are made.

Information

2. 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.
3. 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.

Rota visits - Autumn 2017

4. **West View** was visited on 27th November 2017 by Councillors Vaughan Hopewell and Samantha Deakin. They noted that the carers and young people take pride in the home which is well maintained and has a warm and welcoming feel. There were no recommendations
5. **Lyndene** was visited on 30th November by Councillors John Peck and Paul Henshaw. Their visit evidenced that the home is very well maintained, and the new learning block/office is a well used resource. The young people's care plans evidence school attendance, health appointments, as well as the promotion of services for drug and alcohol misuse. They noted that staff are very proactive in encouraging school attendance

and leisure activities, and that the young people are treated with respect and have clear boundaries and expectations of behaviours. There was one recommendation:

- The holiday budget is very limited and would benefit from being increased. The Council might approach nearby Centre Parcs to see if an arrangement could be made for the young people to use their facilities.

The holiday budget has now been increased for 2018 – 2019 and the manager of the home is approaching Centre Parcs.

6. **The Big House** was visited on 13th December by Councillors Phil Rostance and Errol Henry. They commented that the home is very impressive, with a really warm and safe environment. Young people have extensive, detailed care plans and there is evidence of good liaison with staff, parents and other agencies to ensure carers are meeting the health needs of the young people, and that very challenging behaviours are managed safely and efficiently. There was one recommendation:

- To add padded walls to the sensory room.

This has now been completed.

7. **Minster View** was visited on 2nd November by Councillors Tracey Taylor and Boyd Elliott. They saw that carers have a clear understanding of the young people's needs, and care plans evidence independence targets for each young person to aspire to. The home has designated spaces for different levels of stimulation or quiet time. Participation and achievements of the young people are evident throughout the home. There was one recommendation:

- During the visit, a window cleaning company arrived, coming to the site from Birmingham. Whilst acknowledging tender processes and approved contractors, we would ask why we do not appear to be supporting local business in procuring services for Council facilities.

In response to this it was suggested that Members may wish to raise this with the appropriate Council officers who deal with tendering/procurement processes.

8. **Caudwell House** was visited on 2nd November by Councillors Tracey Taylor and Boyd Elliott and their visit noted that each resident has different social and health requirements that are all addressed within care plans. The layout and equipment in rooms shows consideration for the young people's individual needs, with clear safeguarding and child protection procedures in place. Young people are supported to achieve different levels of independence assessed according to their needs and abilities. There were three recommendations:

- The new monitoring system is not fit for purpose, this is being looked into, but should be dealt with sooner or later as it is causing a real problem at night time.

Work is taking place with support for ICT and contract departments at the highest level to rectify this. Members may wish to receive an update on this issue in due course.

- Outdoor play equipment is not safe. Can this be replaced with something more suitable.

Money will be identified from 2018- 2019 budgets to replace the wooden structure.

- Caudwell House is in desperate need of a resident health professional (nurse). We would ask the question “who” funded this position historically and the basis on who made the decision to withdraw this service.

Historically the nursing support was provided by the Children’s Disability Centre, and they were employed by health. Since then there have been many changes within Public Health, and we are now working closely with the Children’s Integrated Commissioning Hub and Public Health Nottinghamshire to see how we can work in partnership to provide the information and support to meet the needs of the service. However, this does not mean we can have the same arrangements we had before.

9. **Clayfields House** was visited by Councillors Errol Henry and Liz Plant on 20 November and a report is awaited.
10. **Oakhurst** was visited by Councillor Vaughan Hopewell on 16 January. He noted that the home was well maintained and has good links and relationships with the local community. Young people’s care plans address individual people’s needs. There was one recommendation:
 - Would it be possible to look at providing some outdoor gym equipment?

This has previously been discussed with the young people and they said they did not want any gym equipment. We also consider the outdoor space too small for any equipment to be used safely.

Other Options Considered

11. No other options have been considered.

Reason/s for Recommendation/s

12. The report provides an opportunity for the Committee to consider any further actions arising from the issues contained within the report.

Statutory and Policy Implications

13. 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

14. The increase of £500 to the holiday budget at Lyndene will be achieved by reconfiguring other internal budgets specific to the home. The money required for the replacement of the outdoor equipment for Caudwell House is being addressed via fundraising activities from a local charity.

RECOMMENDATION/S

- 1) That Members consider whether there are any actions or information they require in relation to the content the report.

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Constitutional Comments (LM 23/01/18)

15. The Children and Young People's Committee is the appropriate body to consider the contents of the report. Members will need to consider whether there are any actions they require in relation to the issues contained within the report.

Financial Comments (SAS 26/01/18)

16. The financial implications of the report are contained within paragraph 14 above.

Background Papers and Published Documents

None.

Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected

All

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