

CHILDREN AND EDUCATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE	AGENDA ITEM No. 7
25 SEPTEMBER 2023	PUBLIC REPORT

Report of:	John Gregg Executive Director Children and Young People's Service	
Cabinet Member(s) responsible:	Councillor Lynne Ayres, Cabinet Member for Skills, Education and Children's Services	
Contact Officer(s):	Alison Bennett, Service Director Safeguarding and Quality Assurance	Tel. 07980 722956

CLARE LODGE UPDATE

RECOMMENDATIONS	
FROM: Service Director Safeguarding and Quality Assurance	Deadline date: N/A
It is recommended that the Children and Education Scrutiny Committee read and comment on any aspects of the report.	

1. ORIGIN OF REPORT

- 1.1 Scrutiny committee members requested an update on Clare Lodge.
- 1.2 There was an Ofsted Inspection in July 2023 and this report includes an overview of the outcome of this.

2. PURPOSE AND REASON FOR REPORT

- 2.1 The purpose of this paper is to provide an update on the recent Ofsted inspection, which was undertaken at Clare Lodge, as well as the current financial position. This paper will set out:
 - The background of Clare Lodge and the regulatory framework which it is licensed against.
 - The Ofsted judgement and the actions that have and are being taken in response to the judgement.
 - The financial implication
 - The proposed next steps
- 2.2 This report is for the Children and Education Scrutiny Committee to consider under its Terms of Reference Part 3, Section 4 - Overview and Scrutiny Functions, paragraph No. 2.1 Functions determined by Council:
 - 1. *Children's Services including*
 - a) *Social Care of Children;*
 - b) *Safeguarding;*
 - c) *Children's Health*
- 2.3 This relates to the following elements of the children in care promise
 - We will work to keep you in a supportive and caring environment where you feel safe and happy.

- We will support you to maintain a healthy lifestyle and help look after your physical and mental health.

3. **TIMESCALES**

Is this a Major Policy Item/Statutory Plan?	NO	If yes, date for Cabinet meeting	N/A
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4. **BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES**

- 4.1.1 Clare Lodge Secure Children's Home is a national provider of secure welfare placements for vulnerable young women aged 10-17. The Home is owned and operated by Peterborough City Council (PCC), licenced by the Department for Education (DfE) and inspected by Ofsted against the Children's Homes Regulations (2015). Clare Lodge offers a unique service by being the only all-female, all-welfare Secure Home in the UK.
- 4.1.2 The Regulations set out standards that must be met by Homes. These quality standards describe outcomes that each child must be supported to achieve while living in the Children's Home. Each standard contains an over-arching, aspirational, child-focused outcome statement, followed by a non-exhaustive set of under-pinning, measurable requirements that Homes must achieve in meeting each standard.
- 4.1.3 The Regulations prescribe nine Quality Standards which must be met by Children's Homes:
- The quality and purpose of care standard (see regulation 6)
 - The children's views, wishes and feelings standard (see regulation 7)
 - The education standard (see regulation 8)
 - The enjoyment and achievement standard (see regulation 9)
 - The health and well-being standard (see regulation 10)
 - The positive relationships standard (see regulation 11)
 - The child protection standard (see regulation 12)
 - The leadership and management standard (see regulation 13)
 - The care planning standard (see regulation 14)
- 4.1.4 Clare Lodge specialises in offering services to vulnerable looked after young women (10 -17 years of age) at risk because of emotional and mental health issues, self-harm, sexual exploitation including a range of psycho-sexual problems because of abuse and complex behavioural issues.
- 4.1.5 As well as having its own Care, Education and Business staff, a range of specialist services are commissioned, which include specialist Health services provided by Cambridgeshire and Peterborough NHS Foundation Trust (CPFT) contracted by NHS England, independent advocacy services contracted by PCC and art therapy which is commissioned by Clare Lodge directly.
- 4.1.6 Through the delivery of these services, Clare Lodge aims to improve the lives and prospects of young people by assisting them to make positive connections with a range of adults who will listen to and advocate for them, acting as good role models.
- 4.1.7 Through supportive professional relationships, Clare Lodge promotes respect, trust, and a common understanding, giving the young residents time to reflect upon the issues that brought them into Clare Lodge and helping them move on.
- 4.1.8 Clare Lodge is a secure Children's Home; and offers secure welfare placements under section 25 of the Children Act 1989 to local authorities who's looked after young girl/s meet the secure welfare criteria for this provision. Clare Lodge is an income generating provision and it is therefore a requirement for this service to contribute financially to support the Council to maintain core services and balance its budget.

4.2 Ofsted Judgement – the current position

4.2.1 On 25 July 2023, following a 2-day full inspection, Ofsted graded Clare Lodge as good across all areas. This judgement was based on 4 areas which all received an individual judgement:

- Children’s education and learning – Good
- Children’s health – Good
- How well children and young people are helped and protected – Good
- The effectiveness of leaders and managers – Good

4.2.2 Ofsted said “Children make good progress in all areas of their lives. They are able to express themselves and are supported to develop and grow. They have good relationships with the staff, which supports their progress and ensures that they have positive experiences”.

“Managers have engaged staff in developing a positive culture that inspires them to deliver good-quality care to children, including through difficult times”.

4.2.3 The response to the judgement has had a positive impact upon the morale of the staff group and staff and managers alike are determined to improve further to make Clare Lodge a Centre of Excellence. Clare Lodge’s registration was restricted for some time, but this has now been lifted following the positive Ofsted inspection, with the current licence being for 16 young people.

4.2.4 In order to ensure an appropriate level of scrutiny is applied to the onward improvement journey a Clare Lodge Strategic Oversight Group has been established. The Strategic Group meets quarterly. A detailed programme plan continues to drive proactive improvement to deliver on several medium and long-term goals and this plan is reviewed fortnightly at the internal SLT meeting.

4.2.5 The leadership and management arrangements will remain the same, however, a mini restructure of the tiers of manager has been undertaken to ensure that there is enough capacity and resilience within the structure as admissions increase.

4.2.6 However, it should be noted that there are ongoing workforce and recruitment challenges for the service., Recruitment and retention options are in place, but with limited impact to date. We have seen some previously employed staff return to Clare Lodge which has been positive as these staff members are very experienced.

4.3 Next Steps

4.3.1 The service continues with the implementation of the programme plan, which has been put in place to ensure the improvement journey is focussed and timely and that we can continue to demonstrate progress in readiness for the next Ofsted re-inspection.

4.3.2 Over the coming months, the service will increase admissions at the new bed price in line with staffing capacity, to ensure the care received by the young people is not compromised.

5. CORPORATE PRIORITIES

5.1 *Consider how the recommendation links to the Council’s Corporate Priorities:*

1. *The Economy & Inclusive Growth*
 - *Homes and Workplaces*
2. *Our Places & Communities*
 - *Lives and Work*
 - *Health and Wellbeing*
3. *Prevention, Independence & Resilience*
 - *Educations and Skills for All*
 - *Children*
4. *Sustainable Future City Council*
 - *How we Work*
 - *How we Serve*
 - *How we Enable*

Further information on the Council's Priorities can be found here - [Link to Corporate Strategy and Priorities Webpage](#)

6. CONSULTATION

6.1 There has been no consultation but work has been done with the DfE on the operating model of Clare Lodge.

7. ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES OR IMPACT

7.1 Committee members has requested this update on Clare Lodge and may consider requesting annual reports on Clare Lodge.

8. REASON FOR THE RECOMMENDATION

8.1 It is a statutory requirement for there to be Ofsted Inspections of all Children's Homes.

9. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

9.1 None.

10. IMPLICATIONS

Financial Implications

10.1 In order to reduce the financial liability, the council was facing several options which were explored and presented to CLT. A decision was taken for Clare Lodge to increase the fees of the unit to enable full cost recovery.

10.2 Following this decision, three actions have been commenced.

10.2.1 The first is the running costs of the unit were reviewed. All placing local authorities accepted the new weekly fee.

10.2.2 The second action was to update the placement contract to ensure that a robust, watertight contract for services is in place to support the Council from placing local authorities not complying with financial changes to placements, and this action is complete.

10.2.3 The third action was to implement new payment terms, reducing the current 28-day to 7-day payment terms. The change significantly reduces the potential liability from debtors. The necessary changes have been made within the business team at Clare Lodge and they have commenced with the new payment terms from the start of the new weekly fee.

Legal Implications

10.2 There are no direct legal implications as the report is for information.

Equalities Implications

10.3 There are no direct equality implications as the report is for information.

Children in Care and Care Leavers

10.4 The children placed at Clare Lodge are all children in care.

11. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Used to prepare this report, in accordance with the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

11.1 None

12. APPENDICES

12.1 Appendix 1 - Children's Homes Regulations 2015