

MODERNISATION OF SHORT BREAKS SERVICES FOR PEOPLE WITH A LEARNING DISABILITY

1. Learning Disability Commissioning Strategy 2008 - 2011

At the heart of this strategy we have prioritised the need to support family carers and to increase the range of short break opportunities, including increased support to maintain those with a learning disability at home.

Traditionally Plymouth City Council has delivered a residential short break service in two in-house units: Colwill and Welby. In addition the independent sector has provided a number of residential beds for people with complex needs.

2. Context for Change

Adult Social Care needs to change the way short breaks are offered to users and carers, particularly in light of a number of national strategies and policies including Putting People First and Valuing People Now – both of which promote person-centred planning and self-directed support. They emphasise the need to support people's independence, offer a wider range of innovative and alternative support than currently exists so that users and carers can exercise more choice and control over how they are supported.

The Government expects all Local Authorities to be able to offer all **people eligible for social care a personal budget from October 2010 and to have 30% of all service users with a personal budget by April 2011**. At the end of March 2010 there were 1814 people who had self directed support, 331 of whom had a personal budget. This represents 16.4% which exceeded the 15% target set for 2009/10.

A personal budget is the sum of money that the council has to spend on an individual persons care based on an assessment of their need.

This means that service users and carers have the money “upfront” to choose alternatives to the residential short breaks services they currently receive. For some, particularly those with complex conditions, traditional residential based services will be the services of choice. However as experience and confidence increases and as new opportunities become available we expect demand for such services to reduce over time.

Adult Social Care has also been successful in a bid to South West Regional Improvement and Efficiency Partnership for a capital grant to modernise our in- house services which will also give us the opportunity to consult on how we could reconfigure current provision to ensure the best outcomes for service users and carers.

This report seeks approval to engage users, carers and other stakeholders in consultation on the future model for short break respite services.

3. Proposals for re-provision of residential respite and short breaks

Definition

A short break is defined as “a session or more of care and support that enables a disabled or vulnerable individual to spend time away from the person(s) who provide them with regular and substantial care. This includes the provision of short breaks of day, evening and weekend activities as well as overnight stays. Such breaks can be provided in the individuals’ own home or in another setting.” (Valuing People Now)

People with learning disabilities are being encouraged and supported to aspire to lead ordinary lives and do the things, with support, that most people take for granted. The policy objective is to support people to live the lives they want as equal citizens in their community.

A major barrier to people having real choice and control over their lives is the way services plan and fund support. National and local experience of the introduction of self directed support, direct payments and personal budgets, supported by good person centred planning indicate these innovations are working well, there is increased take up and users/carers are experiencing better lives, including those with complex needs.

In this context we need to consider the appropriateness of traditional current residential respite and short breaks for people with learning disabilities to ensure individual choice and the best outcomes are achieved from public funds.

Current In-House Residential Short Break Provision

Plymouth City Council currently provides residential facilities for carers of adults with learning disabilities in the following facilities:

Residential Unit	Beds available	Occupancy 2008/09	Number of People Registered
Welby	10	83%	34
Colwill	10	81%	52

- There are 257 carers of learning disabled relatives in Plymouth.
- Of these there are 65 older carers aged over 70 caring for an adult with a learning disability.

As we introduce self directed support and personal budgets for service users and carers we expect to see a decline in the use of more traditional residential respite services over time. Nationally, we are seeing people choosing alternatives to traditional services such as:

- holidays away with friends or paid carers
- breaks at specialist activity centres
- support in their own homes to free carers to have time away

Welby

The facilities at Welby are outdated and are not fully DDA compliant. People with complex physical disability needs cannot be supported at the unit. Welby has been providing a planned short break service for people with learning disabilities from a Victorian property in the Peverell area of the city for over 20 years. It offers a city wide service, has 10 beds and the occupancy figures show that the demand is mainly for weekend breaks for carers. However, in recent years Welby has increasingly responded to requests to provide accommodation at short notice as a result of carers' breakdown or breakdown of other long-term care arrangements, especially for people with high support needs and challenging behaviour.

Colwill Lodge

Colwill Lodge has been in operation since 1990 and is a purpose-built facility in Estover providing a city wide service for people with a profound learning disability and complex physical and health needs that require high levels of personal care.

Potential Development on the Colwill Site

We have secured external grant funding of £250,000 from SW RIEP (South West Regional Improvement and Efficiency Partnership) and £80,000 from the Capital receipts (with contingency funding if necessary) to extend the service at Colwill Lodge to increase the support available from 10 to 14 beds. The full project was presented to the Capital Programme Board in December 2009 and received approval.

A feasibility study is now underway which will be completed by July 2010. Dependent on a successful outcome of the feasibility study and planning application, the completed extension could provide:

- 4 self contained apartments/flats designed to extra care standards fully DDA compliant and with the facility to enable people to bring their own care staff if required.
- Staff sleeping area and communal space
- Provision of planned bespoke short breaks for people with challenging behaviour living with family carers.

The potential redevelopment of the Colwill site provides the opportunity to realise the benefits and efficiencies set out in Section 5.4.1 of this report achieved through reprovision of in-house short breaks from a single site and therefore this proposal would form part of the consultation.

4. Independent Sector

There is further capacity in the independent sector to provide short breaks if required and to respond to emergency requests. In addition, as part of our strategy to promote choice and control, a range of options for short respite breaks has already been developed – for example, we have developed a Carer's Voucher Scheme whereby carers can be issued with vouchers to enable them to choose directly their preferred provision.

4.1 Budget

The budget for Welby is £819,620.00, and the budget for Colwill is £792,495.00. If there is a decision to de-commission Welby there would be a re-investment required in the independent sector to ensure that levels of service were not impacted upon.

Given current usage across both units combined with the growing use of direct payments and personal budgets, we estimate going forward that there will be a need for 14 beds (current number of beds across both units is 20). This could be achieved by extending the facilities offered at Colwill and incorporating all short residential breaks onto one site.

Emergency placements would be commissioned through the independent sector, although the proposal for the development of four individual units on the Colwill site would provide a flexible option and make available facilities that enable more individualised care for people who are in crisis. It is anticipated we will need 3 to 4 beds for this purpose.

In addition, a budget would be needed to develop community support to reduce emergency admissions. Therefore Colwill Lodge could provide a flexible resource that provides planned breaks for carers, short term residential support to people with complex physical and learning disabilities and those requiring emergency care.

4.2 Impact on budget availability for alternative provision in the independent sector.

Note that if the proposal is not accepted, the full year savings of £350k will still need to be identified from other areas within the Adult Social Care budget

4.3 Users of the Service

Consultation with all users and carers would be undertaken and supported by staff from the Learning Disability Partnership and Adult Social Care Commissioning Team. It will be conducted in a sensitive and supportive way and will take into account the individual's assessment of need. Some of the consultation will involve appropriately skilled external facilitators experienced in working with people with learning disabilities.

Consultation would include:

- Consultation with all users / carers and their families who are currently scheduled to use Welby for short breaks.
- Support will be available to users who may require assurance and extra support to contribute to the consultation, for example through an advocate.
- Consultation with users of Colwill to inform them of the potential to extend the facility and incorporate short breaks onto one site.
- Consultation with service user and stakeholder members of the Learning Disability Partnership Board and Plymouth People First.
- Provide information and support on the availability and access to direct payments/personal budgets.

4.4 Staff

A comprehensive human resource process and plan will be available and the relevant unions will be consulted with prior to any formal announcement to staff. This plan sets out in detail each step of the process, the timeframes involved and all the support and information staff will receive during the process.

Our intentions are to support our staff through the proposed de-commissioning if this decision is made following the consultation process and work towards finding suitable alternative employment (through the redundancy avoidance policy) with the Council. However, it is anticipated that not all staff will be successful in finding alternative roles and that some redundancies will be unavoidable.

4.5 Welby staff

The total number of staff on the Welby establishment is 21.

4.6 Future of the Welby building and site

An options appraisal will be undertaken by Asset Management on the building to consider its potential for future use if the decision is to de-commission.

5. Recommendations

It is recommended that:-

1. Consultation commence with service users and carers (using advocacy services and external facilitation where appropriate) and dedicated social work professionals about re-provision of short break services in the city

2. The successful capital bid to South West Regional Improvement and Efficiency Partnership provides the opportunity to also consult on combining residential short breaks onto one site and we recommend that the consultation takes this proposal into account
3. Consultation with staff and other stakeholders is commenced on the proposal.
4. The results of the consultation in relation to short breaks are reviewed by the Learning Disability Partnership Board.
5. Health and Adult Social Care Overview & Scrutiny Panel are asked to review the proposal as the beginning of the consultation and review the outcomes prior to them being presented to Cabinet.
6. Alternative management arrangements are explored for Colwill through a partnership approach with the independent and/or voluntary and community sector, adopting the same approach as outlined above.