

<b>CREATING OPPORTUNITIES AND TACKLING INEQUALITIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE</b>	<b>Agenda Item No. 7</b>
<b>10 SEPTEMBER 2012</b>	<b>Public Report</b>

## **Report of the Executive Director of Children's Services**

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### **RESPIRE AND HOME SUPPORT UNIT – CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES (CHERRY LODGE)**

#### **1. PURPOSE**

- 1.1 This report is being presented to make the committee aware of the short breaks services available in Peterborough for children and young people with disabilities with the focus on plans to establish Cherry Lodge as a central 'hub' that connects to a variety of 'wrap around' short breaks services.

#### **2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1 We ask the committee to consider the information provided which describes our current short breaks services and to support our plans for future service development.

#### **3. LINKS TO THE SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY STRATEGY**

- 3.1 In line with the Breaks for Carers of Disabled Children Regulations 2011, the local authority must provide 'a range of services which is sufficient to assist carers to continue to provide care or to do so more effectively.' With this as the objective, PCC under the Strategy, Commissioning and Prevention directorate, provides a variety of short breaks services to children and young people with disabilities between the ages of 4 and 19 via established and newly commissioned services. Meeting our responsibilities under this legislation links to the commitments outlined within the Sustainable Community Strategy and the Single Delivery Plan to support vulnerable people, to ensure equal access to services and opportunities and specifically to ensure people living in Peterborough are supported in caring for others, including children and disabled family members.

#### **4. BACKGROUND**

##### **4.1 Cherry Lodge**

Cherry Lodge is a purpose built, 8-bedded children's home providing short break and residential care for children and young people with severe and complex disabilities. Currently, there are 4 young people receiving a residential provision and 22 young people receiving a short breaks provision.

The home opened 8 years ago with a remit to provide needs-led packages of care with the hope that the request for residential placements would reduce. Throughout the time Cherry Lodge has been open there have been less requests for residential care and the young people who have moved into the residential provision have tended to be older than during the period when short breaks were not available through Cherry Lodge. In most instances, these young people have graduated from a short breaks provision to a residential provision in a timely and positive way rather than as a result of family crisis which has been attributed to the increasing demands of caring for a severely disabled child.

Cherry Lodge has demonstrated that forging links with partner agencies enables children with complex health needs to access a provision where their social needs are given due consideration and priority and they have the opportunity to engage with children and young

people who do not have such significant health needs.

During the home's last full inspection Cherry Lodge was judged to be Outstanding (see appendix 1). The inspector stated that 'children and young people benefit from attending a provision where their individual needs are recognised and their wishes and needs are listened to. This allows them to make exceptional progress. Staff have consistently high aspirations for young people and place the well-being of each child at the centre of their practice. Children and young people are kept safe, each child's individual communication style is valued and respected, and positive styles of behaviour are encouraged'.

#### **4.2 Outreach support**

Outreach services have been introduced to several families that have access to Cherry Lodge over the last two years and this has served as an effective alternative to increasing children's short breaks packages away from the family home. Building on the success of this service, plans are underway to offer outreach to families as a stand alone or intermediary service as well as an addition to a service in place.

#### **4.3 The Family Link Service**

The Link Service has recently transferred to Cherry Lodge from the fostering service. As well as expanding the service that has already been established, a Retained Link Carer Scheme is currently being implemented. A Link Carer with the necessary expertise has been retained by the department to provide regular short breaks to children and young people with complex and multiple needs including associated health needs. The primary aim of the scheme is a reduction in the numbers of younger children accessing residential short breaks services such as Cherry Lodge and The Manor. Several children between the ages of 2 and 5 have been identified as prospective matches for the retained link scheme. More retained carers will be recruited in response to need. Children accessing the retained link scheme will also periodically access activities and opportunities within Cherry Lodge so should a retained carer be unable to provide care to allocated children as a result of a medical emergency for example, Cherry Lodge could, if necessary be considered as an alternative. Future plans include drop in sessions for Link carers, children and young people to offer opportunities for support, advice and friendship.

#### **4.4 The Manor**

The Manor is a purpose built 8-bedded children's home providing a variety of short break services to children and young people with disabilities. There are currently 31 young people receiving a short breaks package at The Manor and 51 young people accessing their clubs and activities service. They are supported by a staff team who are equipped to meet the diverse range of needs of the children and young people who access The Manor and the services it provides.

Children and young people who access the home for day-care or overnight care require a higher level of support due to their behavioural or physical difficulties than those that access the various after school and holiday clubs that are on offer. These children and young people benefit from a safe environment in which to play develop and socialise and they have regular opportunities to access activities and events within their local community and further afield.

The clubs and activities service was developed following a best value review of Children's Services during which it was acknowledged that some parents, carers, children and young people didn't necessarily want day or overnight care and were looking for alternatives. The Manor responded to this by organising successful, well attended drama, art and cooking clubs.

The Manor and Cherry Lodge work closely together to ensure that cost effective consistent services are being delivered. Joint training initiatives that are coordinated from The Manor are in place and key staff from both homes are qualified to cascade training to their colleagues within the homes and carers from the Family Link Service.

Both homes recording systems and risk assessments are based on generic templates that will have adaptations where necessary dependent on the home's individual requirements. This strengthens consistency for the children and young people when, to minimise the need for agency workers, staff move between the homes to cover staff shortages.

During The Manor's most recent interim inspection the inspector found that 'young people continue to receive highly individualised, well planned packages of care' and 'staff work closely with schools and other people involved in the care of the young people; this ensures good continuity of care and young people make good progress'.

#### **4.5 Continuing Care**

As some of the young people who access Cherry Lodge are partly or fully funded by Continuing Care or Continuing Health Care, several senior members of the team are experienced in assisting health professionals with the completion of the appropriate checklists and assessments and presenting them to JASP. Recent collaboration between commissioning and health colleagues has seen the introduction of a more stream-lined process the benefits of which are already being seen. It has been agreed that Cherry Lodge staff and The Manor staff will complete CC checklists for the children accessing these provisions, the outreach service and the Link Service in liaison with the appropriate health professional if necessary. As well as the obvious financial benefits, having CC assessments in place and under regular review alerts adult providers of the need for specialist health support and it will inform commissioners who are scoping future service development.

Responsibility for managing and circulating a list of children and young people who have been or will be assessed for CC will be taken on by Cherry Lodge as of this month. The Head of Commissioning for Health and Well-being will have the current list to refer to in preparation for the JASP each month.

#### **4.6 Peterborough's Range of Short Breaks**

The Breaks for Carers of Disabled Children Regulations 2011 tasks the local authority to 'prepare a statement for carers in their area setting out details of the range of services provided.' Peterborough's Short Breaks Services Statement acknowledges the view expressed by parents, carers and young people during the Aiming High consultation that 'the school holiday periods are the biggest area of concern and worry'. In addition to the services already described, among the range of services offered to target school holiday periods as well as throughout the year are sports, leisure and play opportunities, specialist play-schemes, targeted youth clubs, after school clubs, befriending and family activity days all of which evidence the authorities commitment to provide a varied range of services. Commissioners ensure parents, carers, children, young people and other agencies are aware of services that are available regularly and intermittently.

### **5. KEY ISSUES**

- 5.1 Continuing to develop short breaks that are creative and appropriate remains a priority within the Strategy, Commissioning and Prevention directorate and establishing a central 'hub' at Cherry Lodge is key to this. The focus throughout will be on the preventative nature of short breaks being central to service delivery and the views of children, young people and their families being incorporated into that service delivery. This links to the commitment within the Childrens Services Improvement Plan to 'put in place a range of preventative services'. In addition, the draft Equality Action Plan refers to the 'work required internally by the authority and externally focussed actions that concentrate on the services we deliver and how we work with particular agencies and communities'.

### **6. IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 The short breaks services that have been described are reliant on PCC funding. While the preventative nature of current and future service delivery is a long-term, cost effective model there are the on-going financial implications to consider particularly as the rising population in Peterborough will have an impact on the annual budgets necessary to continue to provide the level and range of services.

## **7. CONSULTATION**

- 7.1 As we have developed our range of short breaks services we have referred to feed-back from the parents and carers of children and young people with disabilities who were involved in the Aiming High consultation.

In addition, the views and thoughts of children and young people and their families are encouraged in less formal consultation opportunities such as via Ofsted questionnaires and during child care and children in need review meetings.

## **8. NEXT STEPS**

- 8.1 We suggest that as services are developed the committee will be advised of progress as part of our on-going review process. Any further up-dates that the committee require will be presented as necessary.

## **9. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS**

- 9.1 The following documents were referred to while compiling this report:

The Draft Equality Action Plan  
The Sustainable Community Strategy  
The Single Delivery Plan  
The Breaks for Carers of Disabled Children Regulations 2011  
Peterborough's Short Breaks Services Statement

## **10. APPENDICES**

- 10.1 None