

APPENDIX 1

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PEOPLE & COMMUNITIES
DIRECTORATE
Peterborough City Council
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Tuesday 10th April 2018

Dear Helen,

Thank you for all the correspondence you have sent to the Council and meeting with Cllr Smith and me.

I have looked at the Petition and your original letter to Gillian Beasley, I hope Cllr Smith and I responded to the concerns you raised when we met.

Below I have responded to all the concerns and questions you have raised in your correspondence to us.

We know this is a difficult time for families and we are committed to doing everything we can to support them. We will ensure that the needs of families are met and they will not be left without appropriate provision.

It has been a difficult decision to take this action; however for the last two years the Council has not been able to achieve the income from health and other local authorities that it had done in the past and is not able to continue to supplement this income anymore. You will know that the Councils grants from government have been reducing year on year and we are facing very challenging financial times.

There are more services available for short breaks than there were previously and more families are able to access these; Link Foster Care, Outreach, Clubs and Activities, Direct Payments. These can be matched against individual children, young people and family's needs and are able to be provided at a more affordable cost. This is why health and other local authorities are not using the residential respite provision in Peterborough as they used to.

We do accept that families may want overnight residential respite; however if Councils, or others such as Health, are able to provide other services to meet need that are more affordable they will

do so. Many families have benefited and continue to benefit from Link Foster Care and we are growing this service. Link Foster Care can provide flexibility as needs increase or decrease. Another benefit of Link Foster Care, unlike residential care, is that matching of children or young people is not an issue - this is often a prohibiter in residential care to fuller occupancy.

As background to the Councils decision:

The Manor (in Dogsthorpe) and Cherry Lodge (between Orton Waterville & Orton Malborne) provide short breaks in the form of overnight care, as well as day care and outreach. Cherry Lodge is open for respite 7 nights a week; for residential care and works with those children who have the most complex needs. The Manor takes young people with less complex needs and is open for respite care for 4 nights per week. All children that access both homes attend local schools.

There is one joint budget for both homes with a £500k income target based on health and other local authorities in the past purchasing placements. In the last few years the requests for placements from health and other local authorities has decreased as they are purchasing other sorts of support. This has resulted in a level of income that has decreased to about £250k, giving us a £250k budget pressure.

The average occupancy over the last six months at both homes is:

- The Manor 22.6%
- Cherry Lodge 60.2%

To clarify we are looking to cease The Manor overnight stays, but retain the building for non-residential work, this will achieve the reduction in expenditure we need to offset the shortfall in income.

Training

As our current Outreach Workers are also Residential Workers they complete the CWDC induction in their first six months. They move on to the National Diploma 3, which replaced NVQ's, after their first year, this qualification takes about a year to complete. In addition they have to attend the following mandatory training;

Medication administration
Understanding epilepsy
Fire safety
First aid
Infection control
Safe moving and handling
Behaviour management and physical intervention techniques
Safeguarding
Understanding autism

They have to complete the following PCC e-learning modules;

Prevent strategy
Equality Act/Equality in the Workplace
Disability and Discrimination
Learning Disability Awareness
Fire safety
Safeguarding
Infection control
Data protection

Introduction to risk assessment
Introduction to freedom of information

We organise other training which the majority of the permanent staff will attend such as sensory integration, restorative practice and postural awareness, workers will also attend specialist training specific to children they are working with such as administering gastro feeds, oxygen, suction etc. and periodically we arrange good practice/further development events with national organisations such as NYAS. I can give you examples of these if you want them.

As we further develop the outreach service and have workers who are not necessarily residential workers as well we will continue with the same training programme apart from possibly the CWDC induction as we will develop an induction specific to outreach.

Some of the current Manor staff are likely to secure jobs at Cherry Lodge as part of the residential offer and Outreach, so we will retain their skills.

We already have five Link Carers, regarding new Link Carers, in addition to the skills to foster and other training they attend via the foster carer's programme they will also access the training we organise and specialist training specific to the children placed such as oxygen, moving and handling, medication administration and gastro feeds.

Choice

We have recently re-specified and re-tendered for short break provision, as part of this process Family Voice sent out a survey asking parents what they wanted. (I sent this to you) the survey clearly showed families wanted more community based services. We have had requests for Link Foster Care and Direct Payments from families who have used residential overnight care. We do accept that families may want overnight residential respite; however if Councils, or others such as Health, are able to provide other services to meet need that are more affordable they will do so. Many families have benefited and continue to benefit from Link Foster Care and we are growing this service. Link Foster Care can provide flexibility as needs increase or decrease. Another benefit of Link Foster Care, unlike residential care, is that matching of children or young people is not an issue - this is often a prohibiter in residential care to fuller occupancy.

Use of The Manor

We will use the Manor for non-residential services. This is likely to include group and individual work; the specialist bathrooms and equipment will enable a range of needs to be met whilst children and their families access this provision.

Other Commissioners of places at Cherry Lodge and The Manor

Cambridgeshire and Lincolnshire Councils and the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Clinical Commissioning Group purchase places at The Manor and Cherry Lodge; however the number of places they are purchasing has decreased over the last couple of years; They are now only purchasing places for the children and young people with the more complex needs, choosing other forms of support such as community activities and outreach.

The income target we have is 500k, we are only achieving 250k, and this is despite offering more places to other authorities and health. By closing the residential provision at The Manor we will achieve the 250k shortfall in income and be able to invest 250k into Outreach and other services to support children and young people with disabilities.

Managers

The Manor and Cherry Lodge have individual Registered Managers. Claire Young who is the Registered Manager for Cherry Lodge is the overall service manager with responsibility for the budget that funds both homes.

Equality Impact Assessment

We consider the impact of our actions will have a neutral impact as children, young people and families will be provided with alternative provision to meet assessed needs.

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Work with Families who use the Manor

The Social Workers for all the children and young people who access The Manor have had contact with them, in person and in writing. Families were made aware of the proposal to cease the overnight short breaks at the Manor prior to publication of the proposal in the budget. They were able to respond to the proposal and there were a number of responses in the budget consultation in respect of the Manor. We will continue to work with individual families to secure appropriate alternative provision.

Visits to The Manor

Both Cllr Smith and I have visited the Manor. I have visited on a number of occasions and spent time with the children and young people who were there.

Please be assured that Cllr Smith and I are committed to ensuring the needs of all the families who use the Manor are met appropriately and we will not close the overnight provision at the Manor until we have done this. We envisage this will take between three and six months.

Yours sincerely



Wendi Ogle-Welbourn
Executive Director People & Communities for both Peterborough & Cambridgeshire Councils

Here is a link to TACT who are delivering all our fostering and adoption services, including Link Foster Care.

<https://www.tactcare.org.uk/>

<https://www.tactcare.org.uk/foster-with-us/types-of-fostering/children-with-disabilities/>

<https://www.tactcare.org.uk/foster-with-us/types-of-fostering/respite/>

TACT, who are the UK's largest fostering charity, are delivering all fostering and adoption services on behalf of Peterborough City Council.

TACT and Peterborough City Council entered into an innovative and ground breaking partnership that will improve outcomes for children and young people in care and on the edge of care. The service aims to reduce the council's reliance on higher cost independent fostering and residential placements as well as offering high quality training and support to all foster carers in Peterborough.

As a foster carer for TACT Peterborough will benefit from:

- Local support and advice, 24 hours a day, seven days a week
- A comprehensive training and development programme
- Competitive fostering fees and allowances

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