

## **WIRRAL COUNCIL**

**CABINET - 22nd JULY 2010**

### **REPORT OF DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES**

#### **PROVISION OF A MODERN SHORT BREAK SERVICE FOR CHILDREN WITH COMPLEX NEEDS.**

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##### **Executive Summary**

This report follows on from a report in July 2009 which provided direction for a review of the Children with Disability residential and provider services to secure better value for money and quality of care. This report proposes a revised staffing structure be introduced, reflecting reduced staffing requirements. It proposes building work be completed within the current Capital programme to allow the consolidation of the residential short breaks provision on one site at Rosclare House. The changes to the staffing structure and building work, if approved will be undertaken within this financial year.

##### **1. Background**

- 1.1 The Aiming High for Disabled Children programme requires the Council to provide a stepped change to the provision of short breaks services; and to meet a full service offer which responds to the needs of all groups of disabled children; which specifically provides an increase to the range, choice and quality of provision. The Aiming High guidance sets out clear expectations that the Council will review its short break provision and consider whether services should be commissioned with an external provider, or to develop a service level agreement with such services, if ultimately it is considered more appropriate to retain these services in house. The Government published a review by Price Waterhouse Cooper (2007) "Market for Disabled Childrens Services – A Review" in which it reinforced its view that there should be a clearer separation between the commissioning and provision of services within both the Council and NHS. This report proposes that before tendering for this service is commenced in April 2011, that work is done in the lead up period to develop service standards and specifications. The report also proposes service developments in the realignment of staff teams across the short breaks residential service and building work at Rosclare House; in order to facilitate the commissioning of services and improve the potential for contestability. A more robust approach to the monitoring of costs and outcomes will clearly form part of this process.
- 1.2 To date the residential service has operated across two sites: Rosclare House providing long term and shared care; with Willow Tree providing short breaks. Willow Tree is also an office complex for the social work and some multi agency teams, for children with complex disabilities. A number of young people who were accommodated on a full time basis at Rosclare House have, in recent months moved into Adult provision, which now leaves significant capacity within this building. It is therefore proposed to consolidate the residential service into the one building at Rosclare House; which will also allow for a more cost effective staffing arrangement, particularly at night time. The future of the Willow Tree site will then be considered within the Council's Strategic Asset Review.
- 1.3 A programme of minor building work will be required at Rosclare House; to increase the bed capacity in this Home, and to allow the building to be used more flexibly with different groups of young people especially, for those young people who may find sharing space

with others problematic, in terms of their behaviour. The aspiration will be to raise the standards of accommodation and support to ensure the quality of experience is truly world class. It is proposed to personalise bedrooms to provide for en suite bathing facilities, as far as practicable. Play areas and lounges will also be improved to increase the facilities, with an emphasis on this being a place to have fun, and be somewhere young people feel positively excited about visiting. We will look to involve a group of parents and young people to consider colour schemes, room layouts, furnishings and facilities. Parents will also be involved in looking at the service standards and specifications for the new service.

- 1.4 As part of the Aiming High for Disabled Children programme the Council has set up a new specialist family based foster care scheme (sometimes termed a Contract Carer Scheme) through a service level agreement with Action for Children. This scheme will provide overnight breaks for children and young people at an earlier age than residential provision. It is expected that once the scheme is operational that for many parents it will provide a more personalised and preferable alternative to using residential provision. The aim is to recruit foster carers who will provide overnight care in their home. It is expected that unit costs per night will be approximately 60% of that of a residential provision, and that once the scheme is operational this should reduce the demand on more expensive residential services.
- 1.5 There are changes in guidance and regulation in respect of short break provision. In March 2010, the Government published new guidance and regulation to strengthen the professional oversight of care planning arrangements for children in care; there is specific clarification of guidance and regulation for children with a disability, who are in receipt of overnight short break provision. The aim of this is to clarify the statutory framework relating to short breaks in different settings and the requirements for assessment, planning and review of children receiving short breaks. This will substantially increase the reviewing and care planning responsibilities to children in receipt of these services; in lowering the Looked after children threshold from 120 to 75 days, (if a child receives more than 75 days provision per year, they will be reviewed in the same way as all looked after children), and in increasing the frequency and depth of review arrangements and requiring more detailed short breaks plans for young people.
- 1.6 The guidance, which will clearly be subject to review in view of the change of Government, will place a duty on Councils, from April 2011 to provide a short breaks service. The Council has been required to develop a Short Breaks Development Strategy as part of the Aiming High for Disabled Children programme including a needs assessment, vision and key objectives. The key principles are:
  - Early intervention and prevention
  - Personalisation
  - Engagement and Involvement
  - Financial sustainability
- 1.7 The Children with Disability residential service has, over a number of years, changed from providing long term provision to a model based on the principles of early intervention; where families are offered wrap around provision including shared care, short breaks services, and specialist family support, integrated with parenting support from CAMHS, to ensure children can remain secure within their families. The need for long term provision has reduced over the last few years and numbers of children looked after and / or placed out of Borough has significantly reduced, through the delivery of improved preventative activity. Following concern expressed in the 2007 Annual Performance Assessment about the lack of placement choice for long term placements, a

tendering exercise was completed which identified a number of local providers who could respond to this need within the private sector, as and when the need arose. In essence the proposals will provide for the same amount of shared care and short breaks provision as is currently provided, and a reduction in long term provision.

- 1.8 OFSTED currently rate both Rosclare House and Willow Tree as satisfactory. Willow Tree rating includes 4 good and 2 satisfactory areas; with Rosclare having 5 satisfactory areas and 1 inadequate. (The inadequate rating related to the 3 young adults still being resident at the time of the January Inspection, and has now been resolved). As a consequence of this level of performance a Practice Review was undertaken from October 2009. The findings and action plan were briefed out to managers and staff, together with their Trade Union representatives in March 2010. Action plans will continue to be implemented as part of the process of engaging staff and managers in driving forwards the service improvement agenda.

## **2. New Staffing Structure**

- 2.1 Consultation will begin on a new proposed staffing structure. The principles of the new structure will be:

- support in the development of the service specification for the residential and family support service
- improve commissioning activity with health services for children with more complex needs, in line with continuing care guidance
- support planning for young people within the transition to adult services to deliver best value for the Council
- improve monitoring of external provision with the Contracts Section
- improve planning for young people across services to achieve better outcomes
- increase the orientation to outreach and family based provision
- provide increased separation between provision and commissioning, required by new guidance
- improve risk management within the service
- retain practitioners, with suitable residential and disability experience and expertise
- further develop leadership and performance management against National standards
- improve systems for listening to young people and parents

- 2.2 It is proposed that, in the short term the Team Manager (Children With Disabilities Residential and Provision); will have the role of :

- strengthening management arrangements within in - house provision,
- overseeing the reconfiguration of the service.

Once this key task is completed, their role will move to:

- developing the specification for the new service with key stakeholders ;
- supporting commissioning of this and family support services ;
- enhancing care planning with Social workers and NHS Wirral.

A separate report will be provided in relation to the proposed staffing structures of both the residential service, the Aiming High for Disabled Children project team and Family Support Services.

### **3 Risk Assessment**

- 3.1 The proposed staffing structure for the service will ensure that children with the most complex behaviour are supported to remain with their families.
- 3.2 The financial sustainability of this service will be improved, providing better value for money and reduce the risk of young people becoming looked after on a full time basis.
- 3.3 OFSTED will be notified of changes to the purpose and function of the service. The changes to the service are designed to improve management arrangements and result in improved performance.
- 3.4 Parents and young people will be supported throughout the proposed changes to maintain the continuity and quality of support throughout.

### **4 Financial Implications**

- 4.1 It is estimated that the changes to the Children with Disabilities staff structure and reductions in other running expenses will potentially reduce costs by £300,000 in a full year. The development work at Rosclare is included within the capital programme reported elsewhere on this agenda and is estimated to cost £150,000.
- 4.2 In the first year the savings will be required to meet the organisational costs. This will be subject to a report to employment and appointments committee.
- 4.3 Capital Costs of refurbishment will be met from within the CYP capital programme.

### **5 Staffing Implications**

- 5.1 Meetings will take place with trade unions and staff in relation to these proposals and the outcomes of these discussions will be reported to the Employment and Appointments Committee.
- 5.2 Potential risks around equal pay in part inform the changes being considered across this part of the service. The selection process for appointing to posts in the new structure will be fully discussed with staff and Trade Unions and managed in accordance with the Council's policies on redeployment and EVR.

### **6 Equal Opportunities Implications/Health Impact Assessment**

- 6.1 Disability services are driven by the imperative that disabled young people should have the opportunity to lead an ordinary life as valued members of their community.

### **7 Community Safety Implications**

- 7.1 No specific implications emerging from this report.

### **8 Local Agenda 21 Implications**

- 8.1 No specific implications emerging from this report.

### **9 Planning Implications**

9.1 There are none arising directly from this report.

## **10 Anti-poverty Implications**

10.1 No specific implications emerging from this report.

## **11. Social Inclusion Implications**

11.1 Disability services are driven by the imperative that disabled young people should have the opportunity to lead an ordinary life as valued members of their community

## **12. Local Member Support Implications**

12.1 Managers within the service are clear of the need to maintain a positive image and credibility in the community.

## **13 Background Papers**

13.1 Aiming Higher for Disabled Children - [www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/ahdc](http://www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/ahdc)

13.2 Short Breaks Duty and Care Planning Regulations

<http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/everychildmatters/safeguardingandsocialcare/childreninca re/careplanning/careplanning/>

## **14 Recommendations**

14.1 To agree the proposals to develop a world class residential care facility to provide short breaks for children with disabilities.

14.2 To approve the development of a new staffing structure for consultation with a subsequent report to the Employment and Appointments Committee.

14.3 To agree in principle the closure of Willowtree as a residential care facility, as part of the proposals to be developed.

**Howard Cooper**  
**Director of Children's Services**