

OPTION: SHORT BREAKS

BUDGET SAVING: £320,000 increased income

DESCRIPTION OF OPTION

This option proposes a modernisation to short breaks for people with disabilities and mental health needs.

The option involves the following:

Long stay and respite services for people with disabilities

- i) In the short term, the recommended option to progress the move of the 8 residents from Girtrell Court and 'mothball' 50% of Sylvandale.
- ii) In the longer term, subject to consultation with service users and carers and staff, the closure of Sylvandale will result in a further release of resources that will be reinvested into the Community Care Budget, thus making this proposal cost neutral.

Respite services for people with mental health needs

- i) Funding of £500,000 to maintain the service at Fernleigh was allocated as a one year policy option until 31 March 2013. If the service remains unchanged this will result in a budget pressure in 2013/14. The closure of Fernleigh will require the commissioning of 7 beds in the independent sector at an estimated cost of £160,000; this will need to be accommodated from within the Community Care Budget. However, revenue pressures of £340,000 and capital investment of £900,000 will be avoided.
- ii) In the longer term, the closure of both Sylvandale and Fernleigh will result in sufficient release of resources in to the Community Care budget to ensure that the provision of short stay places, for people with learning and physical disabilities and mental health need will become cost neutral and contained within the Community Care Budget.

The re-commissioning of these services will allow the disposal of the Fernleigh and Sylvandale buildings.

RATIONALE FOR SAVINGS

The Council currently provides residential respite and crisis services for people with mental health needs. It also provides long stay residential and short breaks services for people with physical disabilities and learning disabilities from three locations. Fernleigh is located in Leasowe, Girtrell Court in Saughall Massie and Sylvandale in Bromborough.

Council run residential services have not been maintained to market standard and have sometimes been seen as less flexible and innovative than alternative types of provision.

The Department is seeking to balance the needs of those known to the services and the cost pressure of continuing to provide all three services. The proposals would allow sufficient capacity to “lease” four beds to the NHS to enable them to relocate their crisis bed service to Girtrell Court. It is anticipated that this would generate additional income of £320,000 in a full year.

An analysis of the type of short breaks provided by neighbouring Councils has revealed a different pattern of services to that provided, again reinforcing the need for change.

The proposed changes will seek to offer choice and control to people and to make best use of available resources. The model is predominantly one of Councils purchasing short breaks beds from other providers on an “as needs” basis. No Council maintains more than 2 short breaks beds compared to Wirral’s 8.

IMPACT

Should recommendations not be agreed, the Council runs the risk of providing services at Sylvandale and Girtrell that people will not use. This will result in additional financial pressure as resources will be locked into empty buildings rather than being reinvested into supporting people in the community.

With regard to Fernleigh the risk is that the Council will miss the opportunity to modernise the service in line with current best practice. This will result in the Council not being able to run the service, not only due to the significant capital investment required to bring the building up to an acceptable standard but also the additional unbudgeted revenue expenditure.

Both of these proposals involve the closure of Council run buildings with the resultant risk to staff employed. Whilst management has been covering vacancies with agency staff there is still a potential impact on the 100 staff directly employed by the Council.

MITIGATION

A market analysis exercise has been undertaken with a number of Wirral residential providers to ascertain whether there was the capacity within the current market to provide respite care. Although only one of the providers had current capacity, 5 of the 6 contacted indicated that they would be interested in providing a short breaks service.

In addition all people able to access secondary mental health services are now offered a self directed assessment and personal budget which enables them to purchase their own care through a personal assistant or agency.

There is also the potential for the VCF sector to be involved in the provision of these services, in particular as the Department will be looking to commission short stay services within the independent sector.

EIA Status

- **EIA not received**

HR staffing template

- **Awaiting HR Confirmation**