

WIRRAL COUNCIL

FAMILIES AND WELLBEING POLICY AND PERFORMANCE COMMITTEE

30 JUNE 2015

SUBJECT:	Disability Service for Children – Progress Report
WARD/S AFFECTED:	All Wards
REPORT OF:	Director of Children’s Services
RESPONSIBLE PORTFOLIO HOLDER:	Councillor Tony Smith
KEY DECISION?	No

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 The purpose of this paper is to update members of the Policy and Performance Committee, on the children with disabilities budget option, a saving of £600,000, as part of a move towards an “All Age Disability Service”. The report specifically deals with the first two strands set out below, namely, proposals to make changes to the operational arrangements at Willow Tree short break unit for children and young people with disabilities and reviewing how support is provided to children with disabilities and their families.
- 1.2 It is anticipated that subject to consultation with families using the services and staff members, that savings can be made through greater efficiencies with minimal impact on families. This would be achieved by amalgamating services, adjusting management capacity, reducing the overall number of staff required and making changes to contracts and grades.
- 1.3 The principles of providing early help and support and working in partnership with children and families will continue to guide this work.

2.0 BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES

- 2.1 The Cabinet meeting on 9th December 2014 received a report on 2015/16 budget options. It stated a determination to continue the redesign of social care services, enabling a saving of £600k to be made through changes to the Willow Tree, a short break unit for children and young people with disabilities by:
- Reviewing how support is provided to children with disabilities and their families
 - A focus on greater involvement in intervention with other services.

Although the first two points relate only to Children’ Services the work as a whole is still seen as moving towards an ‘All Age Disability Service’. This is described in Future Council Consultation 2014 as involving

“An holistic review and redesign of the way we deliver services to disabled children and their families including overnight short breaks at Willow Tree and the interface between children’s and adult services. It would mean a redesign of how support is delivered, with greater integration with other service areas, in particular early help and adult social care. Detailed consultation with children and families accessing services will take place before any changes.”

2.3 Service Redesign:

2.3.1 The sections below provide more detail on how savings could be made as a first consideration through changes to the way services are delivered. Consideration also needs to be given to whether in the longer term this remains the right delivery model for supporting children with disabilities and their families, which would be considered at phase 2 at the appropriate time.

2.4 Willow Tree Short Breaks Service

2.4.1 Willow Tree is a 9 bedroom, 24-hour short break resource. The service provides accommodation for young people with complex learning difficulties who often present with extremely challenging behaviour and need an extensive short break package in order to maintain them in their own home. The service also provides support to young people with complex health and physical disabilities. The resource supports approximately 58 young people and is managed by a registered manager, a deputy team manager and three team leaders who manage Day and Night Residential Child Care Officers (RCCO’s) and Night Care Assistants (NCA’s). The service is regulated by Ofsted and there is a requirement to have a registered manager.

2.4.2 To meet the needs of children on a 24 hour basis, a shift system is in place that covers waking hours and throughout the evenings and night time. The RCCO’s provide direct support to young people and are trained to NVQ level 3; they support young people to ensure their emotional and developmental needs are met. A number of young people who use the service can display challenging behaviour and staff members are trained in supportive techniques in order to provide effective and safe care.

2.4.3 During night time hours young people are supported by night RCCO’s and NCA’s, with the former taking lead responsibility for making decisions as there is no manager on duty during night times, although a manager is always on call.

2.4.4 A key function of the RCCO’s is to provide a ‘key worker’ function, which entails being allocated to a number of young people and ensuring preparations are made for their stay and ensuring that all relevant documentation such as consent from parents, medication, care plans etc are all in place, alongside attending Reviews and planning meetings on an ongoing basis.

2.4.5 Ofsted rated Willow Tree as outstanding in June 2014 and this grading was maintained following a further inspection in March 2015. This is an excellent result and a tribute to all of the staff that care for some of Wirral’s most vulnerable children and young people.

2.5 Family Support Service for Children with Disabilities

- 2.5.1 The Children with Disabilities Family Support Service provides support to approximately 39 families both in the home and in the community. A team leader manages a team of Family Support Workers. The service has to provide planned and emergency support to protect and promote the welfare of children in partnership with the Children with Disabilities social work team, Willow Tree, key agencies, parents and children themselves. This entails contributing to social work assessments of need, supporting parents with managing behaviour and taking young people out into the community, which provides respite for parents and also positive activities for young people. During term time the service predominantly works with families after school. The service is at its busiest during school holidays.
- 2.5.2 The team comprises Family Support Workers who are also trained to NVQ level 3 and have received training in supportive techniques to care for children and to keep them safe. The team supports a number of young people who also attend Willow Tree Short Break Service.

2.6 Proposals and Impact on Staff:

- 2.6.1 The demand for Willow Tree's Services and the Family Support Service is high and although staff work as flexibly as possible, current contracts do preclude the full flexibility required to meet children and young people's needs. This is particularly the case for the family support service which has periods of 'down time' during the day during term time due to the majority of children being in school.
- 2.6.2 Both staff teams support children with the same level of complex needs and some of these children are supported by both services. Both staff groups are required to hold the same qualification and their training needs and skill base is very similar.
- 2.6.3 Willow Tree is frequently required to respond to emergency admissions, which increases pressure on the services and can have a significant impact on the staffing budget as additional staff can be required.
- 2.6.4 It is proposed that the services combine to form one service utilising the skills of both teams to provide a Short Breaks and Outreach Service for Children.
- 2.6.5 Willow Tree is staffed by 8 staff on each morning and afternoon shifts, with approximately 4 staff working at night times. This level of staffing provides for a maximum of 2,912 bed nights to be filled per annum however, current occupancy runs at 2,446 beds per annum leaving spare capacity of 466 (16%). Analysis shows it is possible to reduce the number of staff per shift to 7, giving capacity for 2,548 bed nights per annum leaving spare capacity of 103 beds. This analysis has been undertaken by the senior leaders within the service who know the children and the service well. It is assessed that this proposal will not impact on the quality of care, especially the safety of care afforded to the children.
- 2.6.6 With regard to the direct work with families this would instead be provided on an outreach basis with additional staff on rota in the afternoons/early evenings provided from Willow Tree. The major difference being, that there would no longer be a differentiation in role between staff working at Willow Tree and in the family support service as they have the same skills, qualifications and often work with the

same children. The roles of RCCO and family support worker would therefore, be disbanded and a new role of Residential and Outreach Worker created in their place.

2.6.7 Bringing the two services together would lead to :-

- A Remodelling of roles and responsibilities to meet a changed model of delivery of services to families
- More generic working
- A restructure and potential reduction of some roles
- A review of contracts, rota's and greater flexible working to aligning staffing with service demands

2.6.8 Subject to outcome of consultation, any required selection and recruitment processes will be undertaken in accordance with Council's policies. Transitional Pay will apply where appropriate.

2.7 Impact on Families:

2.7.1 These proposals will be subject to consultation. Families currently receiving a service from Willow Tree will not see the number of nights respite they receive reduced. We will have some capacity to provide additional nights where needed.

2.7.2 With regards to the family support service, existing and new families will continue to receive support after school and before school where required.

2.8 Savings:

2.9 The proposed savings are shown below with approximately £254k already achieved. It is proposed that the re-design of Willow Tree and the Family Support Service will achieve the remaining savings of £350k.

Post/Proposal	Costs, including on costs £	Implications
Service Manager Children with Disabilities	57,425	Already Achieved
Family Support Worker	31,509	Already Achieved
Transitions Manager		This saving will depend on which option for redesign is chosen
Willow Tree / Family Support Services redesign	350,000	Combining the two service areas to become a short break and outreach service. This will involve a reduction and change in the roles of Residential and Outreach Workers, and a small, safe reduction in management capacity. Consultation with staff and Trade Unions will be needed.
Short Breaks Commissioning	100,000	Already achieved
Holding 2 vacant social	65,003	Already Achieved

work posts and reviewing when new operational model in place (2016/17)		
Total	603, 937	

2.10 Next Steps:

2.10.1 Consultation with families receiving services will take place in July using questionnaires, one to one discussions and consultation briefings for a period of 6 weeks. Following this, consultation would then take place with staff members affected. All consultation will be completed by the end of September. It is proposed that the views of both groups will be taken into account to inform the implementation of changes.

2.10.2 The re-design will be incorporated into the broader All Age Disability proposal, ensuring a focus on early intervention and support for families and increased integration with Adult Social Services.

3.0 RELEVANT RISKS

3.1 Delay in implementation of the proposals will result in further delay in achieving the financial savings of £350k, which will not be realised in full this financial year.

3.2 Families and staff affected will be consulted but may not agree with all or some of what is being proposed, which may impact on the re-design.

4.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

4.1 The proposals affecting Willow Tree and family support are part of a broader All Age Disability Service proposal as highlighted above.

5.0 CONSULTATION

5.1 Future Council 2014

6.0 OUTSTANDING PREVIOUSLY APPROVED ACTIONS

6.1 None

7.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR VOLUNTARY, COMMUNITY AND FAITH GROUPS

7.1 There are no direct implications as the services are currently provided by the Council.

8.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: FINANCIAL; IT; STAFFING; AND ASSETS

8.1 The redesign of Disability Services will achieve a budget saving of £600,000. Given the consultation required will not be completed until later this year, part of the restructure will be delayed resulting in slippage in the region of £300,000.

BACKGROUND PAPERS/REFERENCE MATERIAL

BRIEFING NOTES HISTORY

Briefing Note	Date

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date
Cabinet	09/12/14