



<u>Committee and Date</u>	<u>Item</u>
Young People's Scrutiny Committee	
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HAVENBROOK : SHORT BREAKS FOR CHILDREN ON THE EDGE OF CARE

Responsible Officer

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1. Summary

Havenbrook short breaks provision is part of the wider Looked After Child strategy which has the following principals:

- To prevent children and Young People needing to come into the Local Authority care system where it is possible and to support them to remain in their family care where it is safe to do so.
- To deliver our services with flexibility and use of innovative approaches to provide a range of services to children and families to provide the right service at the right time.
- To ensure that where children need to come into LA care we progress our assessments and care planning without undue delay achieving permanent and stable outcomes as soon as possible.

Havenbrook opened as a short breaks resource on 9th June 14 and will run as a pilot until December 14 when we will have completed an evaluation of the outcomes on individual young people and families and impact as part of the overall LAC strategy.

2. Recommendations

- To note the implementation of Shropshire's pilot short break residential provision for children on the edge of care.

REPORT

3. Havenbrook - Why and How?

3.1 Legislation and Care Planning

- **Children Act 1989** grants the Local Authority a power to provide accommodation as part of a range of services in order to discharge their general duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in need. Short breaks guidance confirms short breaks are a part of continuum of services which support children in need and their families and are viable to non-disabled children as well as disabled children.
- **Definition:** Short Breaks are defined as: the provision of day, evening, overnight and weekend activities for the child or young person and can take place in the child's own home, the home of an approved carer or in a residential or community setting.
- **Legal Status:** The Care Planning Placement and Review for Looked After Children in relation to Short Breaks Regulations were modified in their application to short breaks. Where no single placement lasts for more than 17 days, the provider is a single consistent provider and the total of the short breaks in one year does not exceed 75 days a child receiving short breaks does not require LAC status

3.2 Outcomes for Children, Young People and Families

- The decision a parent makes to have their child received or placed into Local Authority care is often a distressing and challenging one for the parent and the child. Whatever drives the parent's feelings, whether it is frustration, anger or desperation there is undoubtedly an experience for the child of rejection and loss. Asking a parent however if they would like their child to attend a short break "getaway" gives the management of that crisis situation a whole new meaning which nurtures the parent/child bond and supports or prevents full family breakdown.
- The aim of a short break is to enable the child to participate in a fun, interesting and safe structured social and physical activity programme that gives them personal challenge and achievement.
- It will provide a break from caring for the parents and a provision that could prevent full family breakdown if provided early enough and regularly enough as part of a child's early help plan or Child In Need plan.
- The child and family will have intervention from a lead professional or social worker to continue family work addressing relationships, needs and risk identified in the assessment.

3.3 Wider Outcomes

This proposal aims to achieve the following -

- Engage the Shropshire voluntary and community sector to provide the activities during the short break
- Offer those members of our community who are not themselves in employment or are now retired the opportunity to feel valued and inspired by sharing their skills with young people.
- Residential short breaks services for children on the edge of care do not exist regionally and as such this resource is a marketable resource to other Local Authorities

4. Research and Consultation

- We know from research that children often want their parents and themselves to receive help when they are facing family breakdown not be to be separated, we know children in care have poorer outcomes and we know that offering the right support at the right time prevents problems in families from becoming more complex and increased risk.
- As part of our proposal phase we undertook consultations with young people who had used our internal residential services to seek their view on whether or not this kind of resource would have been helpful to them. We identified 20 young people who had been placed at Havenbrook over the past two years on a voluntary admission i.e through request of their parent following family breakdown. 10 young people agreed to take part in our consultation.
- All the young people said they thought Havenbrook was a resource that would help some families but not all. They were able to identify if it would have helped them in their own situation and even if this was not the case they were able to identify others situations where they thought it would help.
- One young person felt that Havenbrook as a short breaks facility would help families to have an “escape” when things got really bad and then when things had calmed down they would be able to rebuild their family relationships.
- Another young person who is currently residing in one of the homes said that they felt if the option had been open prior to them coming into care then short breaks would have helped them remain within the family home. They said that it would have given both them and their other family members the chance to have some space and think things through instead of things getting so bad there wasn't a way back.

5. Case Study

Case Study Child A

Background

Child A was born on 03/02/2001 and placed with his adoptive parents when he was 20 weeks old along with his sister.

Child A was diagnosed with ADHD and autistic tendencies in June 2008. Parents had found his behavior very difficult to manage at home for various years prior to this.

In March 2013 and parents requested respite. The police were regularly called out to the family property due to Child A's behavior becoming aggressive towards his parents and sister. Father had to restrain Child A regularly. No criminal offences had taken place but Child A's behavior was escalating.

Child A did not meet the threshold for services through Disabled Children's Team and the case was transferred to the Child Social Work team as at risk of family breakdown.

Local Authority Accommodation

Child A was accommodated in crisis on 25/08/13 by EDT. Child A had thrown a ratchet/monkey wrench at his mother's face causing bruising and swelling above her eye. Child A was arrested and taken to Shrewsbury Police Station and parents refused his return home and requested that he be accommodated into LA care. Child A was then moved to our internal residential resource as his care needs could not be met by an identified family or foster care placement.

A 3 month assessment period was agreed with the plan for Child A to return home by the December 2013. 07/11/13 request made for this placement to be extended as given the level of crisis and breakdown relationship were very strained and insufficient work had taken place to support a potential return to parental care.

The plan agreed some more 1:1 parenting work to look at their parenting skills and management of Child A's behavior and a gradual increase in contact.

Since this point Child A's contact went quite well. In a meeting with parents on 13/01/14 and agreed the plan was for re-unification to parental care by April 14.

Future plan and support

- A referral had been made to Fostering Services to find a respite foster

carer but none could be identified through internal or external provision. Whilst Child A is able to function in his own family environment this is with the familiarity and support of his parents family care in another family environment is not something Child A would find it easy to adapt to and he has flourished in the supportive care of the small residential environment.

- Referral for post-adoption support has been made and they are able to do some EMDR therapy with Child A to help improve his self-esteem and confidence and help him find more appropriate ways of expressing his anger and calming down in difficult situations. They have also agreed to do some filial coaching with parents as well as Child A and his siblings in order to improve their attachment and quality time spent together as a family.
- The Parenting and Contact Team have also agreed to become involved again and will support parents on their parenting skills and keeping a consistent and predictable approach to boundaries and consequences for Child A and his siblings.
- Parents have also agreed to go on the Solihull "Understanding Your Child" parenting programme.
- The family will be accessing support from Autism West Midlands in relation to coping and managing Child A's behavior in relation to his ADHD and autistic tendencies.
- Monthly four day short break have been agreed as part of Child A's child in need plan to promote sustainability in his rehabilitation to parental care.

Wishes and Feeling of the child and parents.

Parents are extremely happy that they are finally being offered short breaks. They feel they have spent years attempting to get short breaks recognizing a "break" is what they needed on a regular basis to enable them to parent Child A positively and safely and continue to care for their other children. Whilst other types of support services have been offered parents feel these haven't addressed what they have seen as the need. They report feeling let down by services in the past and believe this contributed to the complete breakdown in August 2013 when Child A required full LAC accommodation.

Child A is extremely happy to be going home. He is happy to have respite and he understands that this is to give his parents a break and he feels that he too would benefit from this in the long term.

Child A returned home to the care of his parents on 11th April 2014 after eight months in local authority care.

6. Financial Implications

6.1 Financial Impact of intervention in this case study

- Placed in Shropshire local authority care residential accommodation 25-8-13 – 11.4.14. (approx. 8 months) Total cost : £78,720
- A four day placement at Havenbrook will cost £1601. As part of JF child in need plan, he will have a monthly four day break. Over the same 8 month period this would cost. £12,808.
- Therefore there would have been a financial saving in the region of £65,912 had we been able to provide short breaks and prevent his reception into care at the point of crisis.

6.2 Financial impact for Looked After Care placement costs

- The average cost of a three month stay in our internal residential resource is £31,980. The average cost of a monthly four day break over a 3 month period is £4,803
- This equates to a saving of £27,177 for each young person we are able to prevent being received into LA care by offering a short breaks support service to the family.
- Full time LAC residential care over a 12th month period a residential placement would cost on average £127,920. A Short breaks service at one stay per month (12 x 4 day placements) would cost £19,220. If we are able to use the short breaks provision to support earlier and sustained rehabilitation this equates to a saving annually of £108,697 per young person.
- It is important to note this does not include costing for the additional specialist social work services that are incurred in assessment and care planning process and it is also essential to consider not the only the financial benefits but emotional welfare benefits that can be achieved if we are able to offer the right support at the right time to prevent a family breakdown.

6.3 Children's Innovation Fund

- The Department of Education Innovation Programme seeks to support the development, testing and spreading of much more effective ways of supporting children who need help from social care services. Seed grants of up to £10,000 are available to help develop innovative proposals that have the potential to transform outcomes for children

who need help from social care services and/or be more cost-effective, and that have the potential to be applied widely across the system.

- On 24th June Shropshire were successful in our application to this fund and have been awarded a £10k grant in recognition of the innovative work underway at Havenbrook

7. Pilot and Evaluation Activity

- The facility is up and running with new referrals being received every week. We already have some excellent examples of how this resource has benefited individual children and made costs saving to the Local Authority. We have an expression of interest from another neighbouring LA and we will be starting our evaluation through case studies in September.
- We are planning an event for the voluntary and community sector in July to engage and recruit people able to lead activity sessions with the young people so we can extend further the range of experiences and skills they have during their short break.
- We have a full consultation plan in place as part of our evaluation of this pilot that will engage each young person, their parent and referring professional using Havenbrook between June and Dec 14.

List of Background Papers (This MUST be completed for all reports, but does not include items containing exempt or confidential information)
None
Cabinet Member (Portfolio Holder)
Ann Hartley
Local Member
All Members
Appendices
None