



HAVENBROOK

SHORT BREAKS Planned & Emergency Pilot Evaluation

June - December 2014

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

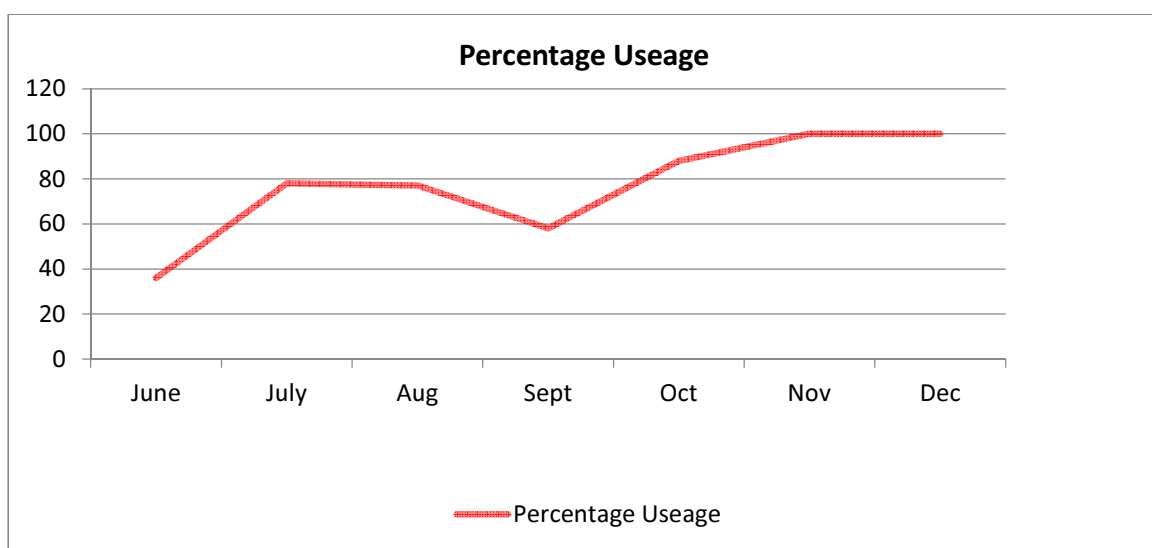
- To prevent children and Young People needing to come into the Local Authority care system where it is possible and to support them to remain in their family care where it is safe to do so.
- To deliver services with flexibility and using innovative approaches to provide a range of services to children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

1.1 Havenbrook opened as a ‘short breaks’ provision in June 2014, initially as a planned short breaks facility for children who had been identified as vulnerable children in need and at risk of family breakdown. In September 2014 the provision of emergency short breaks was incorporated into the pilot.

1.2 Planned short breaks and crisis short breaks aim to give time out to a young person and their family, with the aim of keeping the family unit together and where possible preventing the need for a young person to be received into Local Authority care.

2. Children Supported through a short breaks provision.

Graph A shows usage percentage.



2.1 This shows that the level of usage has steadily increased to the present maximum occupancy. During the initial stages of the pilot usage was lower than capacity as awareness raising and assessment of children was

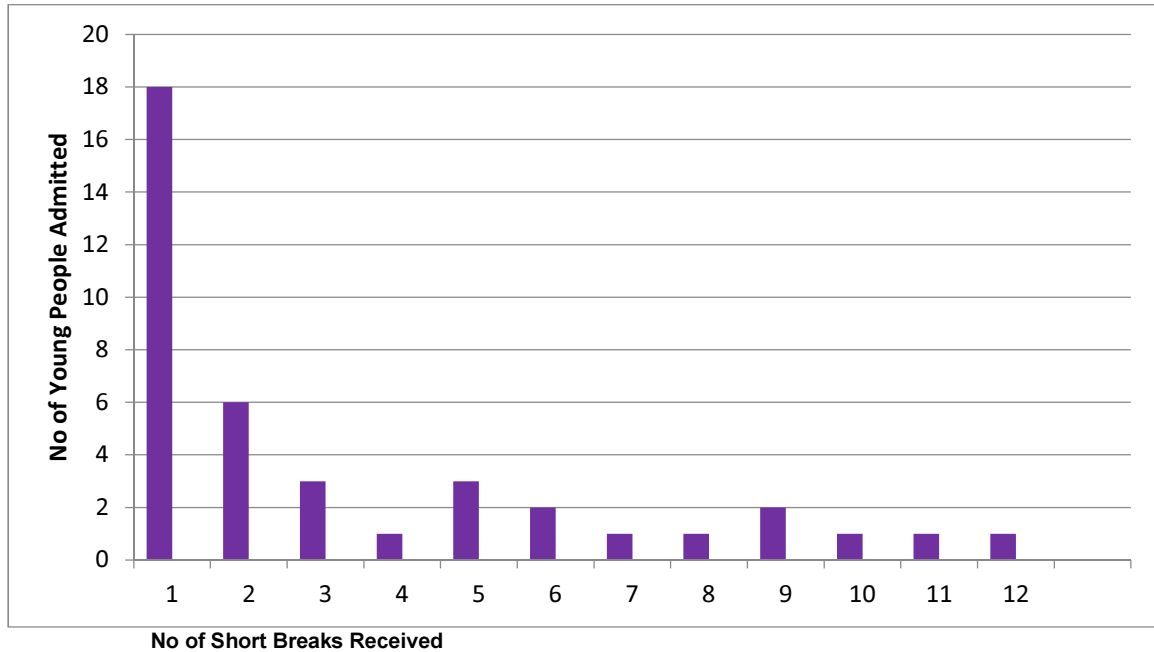
undertaken. During this period staffing was reduced alongside occupancy and staff either took annual leave or worked to support other internal residential staff shifts to reduce the need for agency/bank staff and to allow other to take accrued annual or flex leave.

- 2.2 To date 42 young people have received either single or multiple short breaks (see Graph B for a breakdown). In June young person in a crisis situation was admitted. Although crisis provision was not part of the original pilot it was identified that there was capacity at this time of need. The alternative option was for the young person to be placed in Devon in an external crisis provision. This was both high cost and unlikely to achieve positive outcomes due to lack of engagement from the young person, who wanted to remain local to family and friends. Therefore the skills of the staff team at Havenbrook, who had previously worked with crisis admissions, were utilised and a crisis short break was provided whilst assessment of need was undertaken to inform whether or not a return home was feasible and if not what placement match was appropriate for the young person.
- 2.3 The provision worked extremely well for the individual who had a very positive experience for 8 days at Havenbrook before being moved in a planned way to a local care placement where he was engaged and has continued to date to make positive progress.
- 2.4 Experience of staff and the young people receiving the planned short break led to the conclusion that with the right risk assessment and short breaks plan it was possible to offer crisis and planned provision at the same time. Crisis short breaks were therefore incorporated into the pilot
- 2.5 Of the 42 children who have used the short breaks service 13 have been crisis admissions.

3. Outcomes for children and young people receiving PLANNED short breaks.

- 3.1 Of the 29 young people who have received or are receiving planned short breaks, only 2 have gone on to become LAC (one of these young people was previously LAC and had been returned home to parental care on a full time basis but this subsequently broke down).
- 3.2 Of the 29 young people who have received planned single/multiple short breaks, 10 currently have short breaks planned for early 2015.
- 3.3 The graph below shows the number of short breaks received by individual children. For some of these regular monthly breaks is part of a plan to prevent crisis and family break down. For others one or two short breaks has addressed the problems and further breaks have not been required as a specific resource to support the child and family.

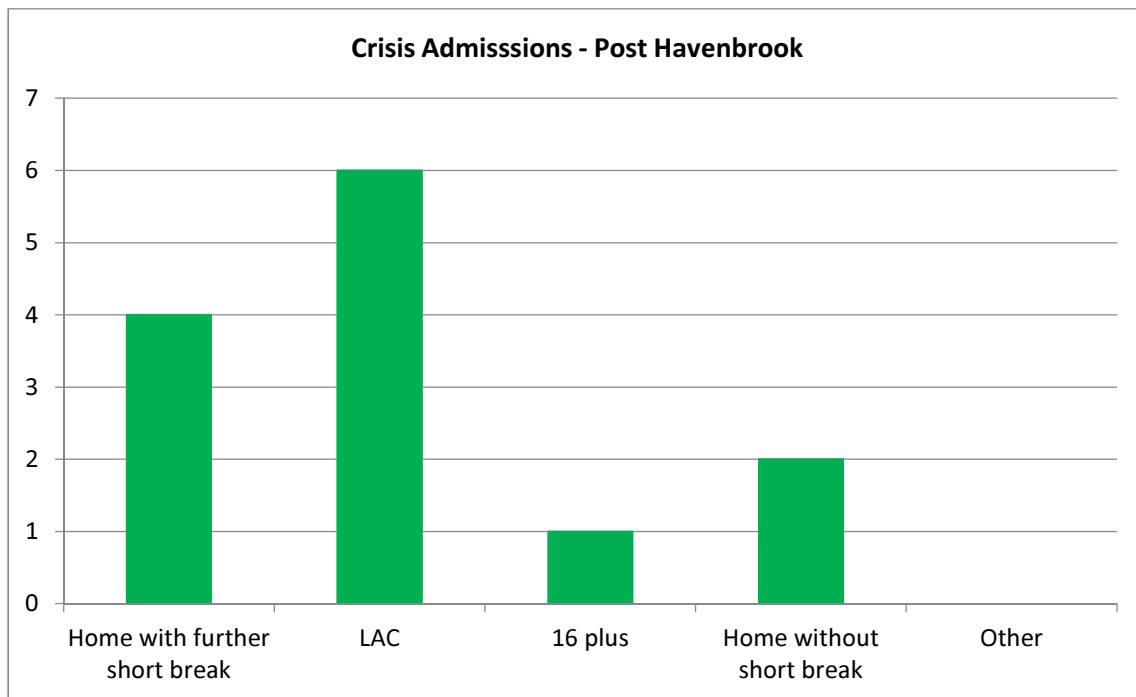
- 3.4 Whilst remaining at home in parental care is the primary goal this is only where it is safe and in the best interests of the child.
- 3.5 The outcomes identify that the threshold for short breaks is “edge of care” and show that where is necessary children will be received into LA care for their protection.



Graph B

4. Outcomes for young people requiring a crisis short break.

- 4.1 Of the 13 young people who received a crisis short break six went on to be received into local authority care, six went home to parental care and one moved into a 16+ supported living arrangement. Four of the six who returned home continue to receive planned short breaks as part of a child in need of support plan to prevent further breakdown. This is a 50% success rate of preventing LAC and supporting children to remain at home in parental care.



5. Feedback of Young People, Parents and Professionals

5.1 Views of Young People.

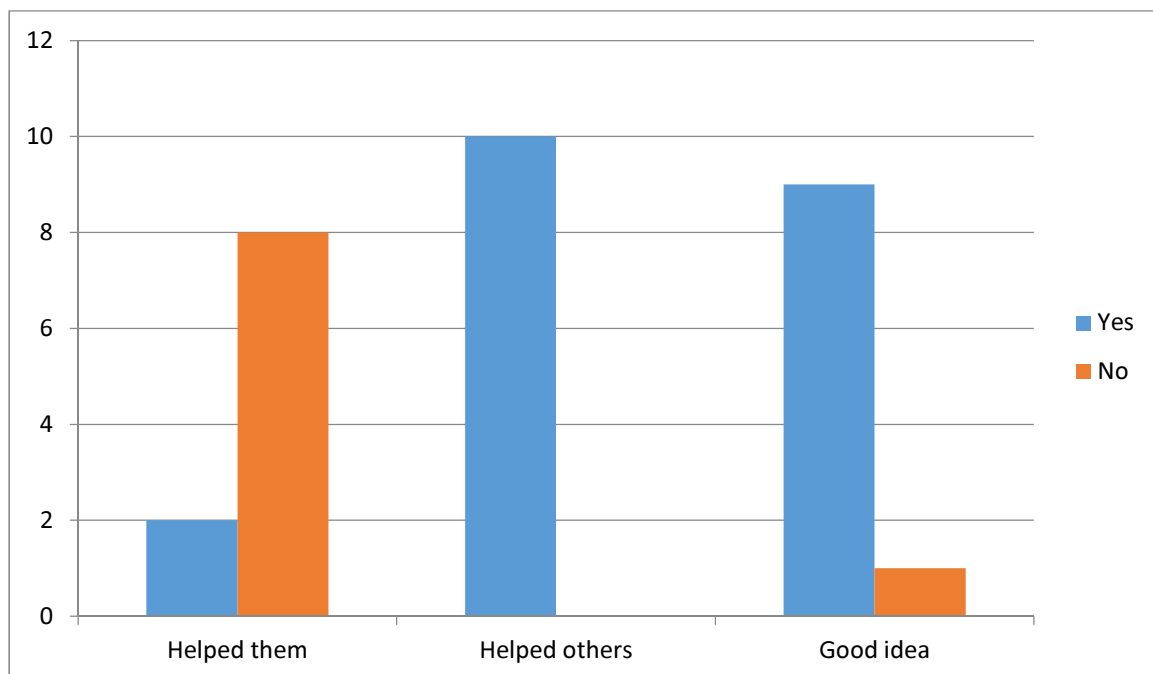
- 5.1.1 As part of the planning for this pilot a residential worker was tasked with speaking to the young people who had in last two years lived within one of the three local Authority Children's homes. Their views and opinions were sought as to whether a short break facility like the one proposed at Havenbrook would have helped them and their family and reduced the likelihood of them becoming fully Looked After.
- 5.1.2 In order to carry this research a list of names, legal statuses and social workers of the young people from the last two years were identified and the focus was made on those young people that were section 20 accommodated.
- 5.1.3 The worker made direct contact with the young people, some of whom already knew them, and explained the reason for the contact. There were 21 identified young people whom could possibly take part, unfortunately some chose not to take part and in total 10 young people gave their opinions.
- 5.1.4. Data presentation.
 Given the nature of the young people and the information that was required both Qualitative and Quantitative data has been used.
 The qualitative data is summarised below with comments from young people
 The quantitative data is presented below in the graph of the final decision of the young people as to whether the facility would have helped them or not.

5.1.5 Research findings.

The young people were very open about their feelings with regard to Havenbrook and how they felt the changes would or would not have helped them.

The young people felt that a short breaks facility would help some young people but not all. One young person felt that Havenbrook should be left as it is as they gained a lot from their time there and wouldn't want others to miss out on the opportunity that they had. Two young people said that due their circumstances (having just come out of prison/Police custody) they felt that they would not have been able to use such a facility as it required accommodation at home at the same time. However they felt such a provision would be very helpful for other young people and that the opportunity would help them to remain within their family unit.

One young person felt that as a short breaks facility Havenbrook 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.



5.2 Each child that attended the short break during this pilot period was asked to complete an evaluation form. The evaluation questions were asked of 24 young people and the findings are shown in the table below:

Question	Excellent	Good	Average
<i>How much did you enjoy your stay at Havenbrook?</i>	20	5	0
<i>How much do you think it helped with your problems at home?</i>	19	4	1
<i>How good were the activities that you got to do during your stay?</i>	19	3	1
<i>How would you rate the accommodation and food?</i>	20	2	2
<i>How supportive did you find the staff?</i>	22	1	1
<i>How safe did you feel at Havenbrook?</i>	21	2	1
<i>How happy did you feel whilst you were at Havenbrook?</i>	17	4	2
<i>How good was it to spend with other young people you may or may not know?</i>	18	4	1

5.3 View of Parents

29 parents used the planned service during this pilot period and each was asked to complete an evaluation form. 25 parents completed the evaluation forms. This represents a high level of engagement from parents who are experiencing stress and pressure in their family life and who can be difficult to engage. The answers were qualitative.

The questions asked were:

- Were you pleased with the arrangements for booking in and out of Havenbrook?
- How have you and your family benefitted from having this Short Break?
- What has having this Short break enabled you to do
- Has your child shared their experiences of their short break with you? If so; could you share those comments with us?
- Can you think of anything else that may improve this experience?

Responses were positive and a few examples are given below:

“Having the short breaks has enabled me to take the other children swimming and play games with them something that had previously been difficult. My daughter said that she really enjoyed her break; she said she felt happy and safe and the staff team are lovely.”

“Everything appears much calmer in the house when my daughter has a short break, which has allowed me to have some down time.”

“When my son was on his short break it enabled me to be able to take the other children away for the day, it was nice to be able to ‘chill out’ and to not have to worry about him ‘What he’s doing and where he is’.”

“We were able to ‘Chill out’ it was nice to have time at home without being stressed with each other.”

“My son having Short Breaks has enabled us as a family to have time to think, going through this process has enabled us to liaise with other agencies to get the support we need to improve things. Short Breaks has given us all ‘Breathing Space’.”

“During the time that our son has been on short breaks, our daughter has been more responsive to our guidance and requests to do things because she was starting to copy his behaviours. Short breaks have given us time to think, reflect and regroup as a Family ‘Things are calmer’.”

“The Staff team have really looked after our son, especially when he was feeling under the weather; he always comes home happy and looks forwards to his next break. We were initially concerned about how we would cope with his behaviours when he returns home from a short break, but it has been ‘OK’ We don’t get anxious anymore about him returning.”

“It has been wonderful for us, when our grandson has been on his short breaks, I have been able to tidy his bedroom, spend time with his siblings and it is ‘quiet’, which has been nice. It has allowed us to catch up, chill out and recharge the batteries. We are happy with the whole process and don’t think there is any need to make any changes to the way things are done. Our grandson said that he thinks the Staff are ‘Cool’ and they take him to all different places. ‘Thank you to everyone’.”

“Having Short breaks for my daughter has given me some breathing space, Havenbrook have been very flexible when I needed more support. I was struggling to manage my daughter’s behaviour, when she has a few days away it gives me the space to think and refresh and allows me to have more 1-1 time with the other children. The process has been made easier because she has been made to feel very welcome at Havenbrook which makes me feel at ease, she has also been able to make some new friends and do things that she hasn’t done before which she enjoys.”

6.0 Conclusions.

The evaluation evidences

- That the provision of a short breaks for children on the edge of care and at risk of family breakdown achieve positive outcomes for the child and family which have been sustained for up to six months.

- The saving that can be achieved through providing this type of provision as an alternative to local authority care.
- The threshold for “edge of care” is applied and therefore the evaluation evidences a reduction in demand (33 children) for LA care although this needs to be seen in the context of rising demand for social care and LAC care in Shropshire, regionally and nationally.

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