

Savings Proposals 2015/16 & 2016/17



Proposal no.	CS001
Directorate	Children's Services
Service Name	Children's Social Care
Area of Service	Cared for Children

Subject:	Review of Residential Short Breaks Provision for Children with Disabilities	Cabinet Member:	Cllr Donna Martin
Report of:	Director of Children's Services		

1 Recommendation

- 1.1 It is recommended that members consider the proposal to review the way short breaks are provided to children with a disability and their family from Bridgefold Lodge in order to achieve savings of £200k.
- 1.2 It is recommended that the staffing implications once identified are agreed as a basis for consultation.

Reason for recommendations

- 1.3 Bridgefold Lodge provides a short break service to children and young people with a disability. The current arrangement provides children and young people with an allocated number of overnight stays as part of a rolling programme of respite care. However, an analysis of service need and provision indicates the service which has no waiting list effectively provides a service to 32 children/young people and is under used, when considered against the size of resource, available space and staffing and the costs involved. This suggests there could be an alternative service delivery model to meet the needs of this group that would offer better value for money and achieve substantial savings.

2 Background

Service Provision

- 2.1 Residential short-breaks are provided for some children who have disabilities at Bridgefold Lodge. In addition the service sometimes accommodates young people for longer periods: for example if they are pending transition to a permanent adult placement.
- 2.2 The unit currently offers a short break service for 32 children and young people. The level of stays vary, and are allocated via a multi-agency resource panel that focuses exclusively on support needed by children with a disability. The average short break

Savings Proposals 2015/16 & 2016/17

allocation per child is 24 days per year, 1 child receives a 48 day package whilst 2 others are allocated 38 days.

- 2.3 An analysis of the current usage suggests occupancy is under 70% and the pending departure of a longer stay resident will bring about an additional 364 days provision available within this service. This means Bridgefold Lodge could potentially offer service provision for up to 14 more children at 24 days per year each. Such a service is based on assessed need and demand for this kind of service appears to be reducing rather than increasing – possibly as a result of the increased range of other forms of short breaks provided to disabled children and their families over the last few years.

Staffing

- 2.4 Bridgefold Lodge's allocated staffing levels are currently subject to a review. This is because the service operates a system that is high cost and is not reflected in other children's homes in the borough which operate at lower cost and are as effective. This will realise some savings but they will not address the under usage issue.
- 2.5 The development of a personal budget for parents via the forthcoming SEN-D reforms will potentially change the way in which services are provided, commissioned and provided for children, young people who are assessed to be 'in need' and entitled to support. The service will need to be delivered at a lower cost that allows it to compete with private/voluntary sector.

Alternatives considered

- 2.6 The alternatives considered and to be further explored are:
- Work in partnership with another local authority to offer a combined short break service across both local authority boundaries with revised shift patterns. This would offer an economy of scale and reduce and share running costs, but would need to be subject to sufficient level of demand and 'take up'.
 - Work in partnership with parents/carers to develop the 'local private and voluntary sector market' to maximise the use of personal budgets; with a view to closing Bridgefold Lodge and providing a short break service offer that is flexible and responsive to individual need.
 - Reduce the operational costs of the service to increase cost effectiveness and consider it transfer to be part of a social enterprise.
 - Retain the service in its current form, reviewing levels of opening, staffing ratios and shift patterns to achieve required level of savings.
 - These options will require a full options appraisal and consultation with all stakeholders and service users before determining the most appropriate solution. What is clear is that the status quo is not an option because the service costs are too high and cannot be sustained.
- 2.7 Members could decide not to take the proposal forward and identify alternative

Public Consultation Pack

Savings Proposals 2015/16 & 2016/17

savings proposals.

3 Financial Implications

- 3.1 Bridgefold Lodge has an allocated operating budget of £606k and the saving proposal represents 33% of this budget.
- 3.2 This service type often operates at a higher unit cost (... ..), compared with other children's homes; The additional costs have been associated with the addition services/specialisms required, staff training, equipment and facilities however, this figure is still much higher than could be reasonably expected and is not competitive with external providers. This cost can be reduced by increasing capacity and reducing staffing costs.
- 3.3 Table 1 provides details of the reduction in the Bridgefold Lodge budget to deliver a £200k ongoing saving. This is planned to be on employees as staffing levels and shift patterns are being reviewed. The total number of established FTE's is 14.3 and the budget saving represents a 38% reduction in salary budgets.

	Savings 2015/16 £k		Savings 2016/17 £k		Total Savings £k	
	On-going	One off	On-going	One off	On-going	One off
Employees	150		50		200	
Other Costs						
Income lost						
Net savings	150		50		200	
Additional income generated						
Total savings	150		50		200	
Implementation costs						
Total savings less implementation costs	150		50		200	

Savings proposed are indicative because detailed work is still being undertaken on the review. There is also a risk that because of the timing of processes involved the savings may not be fully achieved in year 1, depending upon which of the potential options is agreed and implemented. It is for this reason the savings have been extended over two years.

Financial and potential staffing impact on another service

- 3.4 A change in the unit function/service delivery is expected to have a positive impact on the Children with a Disability Team Social Workers who are predominantly the lead professionals for children accessing the service and who currently consider those young people/children who access Bridgefold Lodge as 'looked after'. The 'classification' as looked after effectively creates additional statutory duties and recording requirements. Consequently a change in practice and compliance with the Short Break Guidance will release valuable Social Work capacity that can be used in

direct work with vulnerable children and families.

Developing greater use of personal budgets will be a supportive factor for disabled children who move through transition into adult services, where legislation requires a different level of support and provision for disabled adults, which some parents perceive as less generous. If families are able to engage in determining how allocated support funding is spent at an earlier stage in the child's life, this can assist in making a smoother transition and support longer term planning for families.

Voluntary Sector financial impact

- 3.5 There is no anticipated impact on the voluntary sector at this stage, but the outcome of the options appraisal may result in opportunities for the voluntary sector to become directly involved in future provision.

Asset implications

- 3.6 There are potential asset implications associated with the options appraisal, and if the decision is that unit is to be closed, these would need to be further addressed.

4 Legal Implications

- 4.1 Under the Children Act 1989 and in the Breaks for Carers of Disabled Children Regulations 2011, the authority has a duty to provide support to children with disabilities through short break arrangements so far as is reasonably practicable.
- 4.2 Under the Regulations, the authority is required to prepare and maintain a "short breaks statement", which details its range of services to assist carers to continue providing care effectively, sets out the criteria by which eligibility for those services will be assessed, and explains how the range of services is designed to meet the needs of carers in its area. Every time it revises that statement, it must have regard to the views of carers in its area.
- 4.3 The council must ensure that it remains open minded throughout the consultation period to all alternative proposals and expressions of interest.
- 4.4 There may be redundancy implications as per paragraph 5.1 below.

5 Personnel Implications

- 5.1 The proposals within this report will have staffing implications and as a consequence employees may be placed at risk of redundancy and formal workforce consultation will then be undertaken. However, the full details of the staffing implications have yet to be identified.

6. Risk Assessment Implications

- 6.1 Whilst there are clear benefits to be achieved from undertaking this review and because demand is reducing and there is a need to ensure services deliver value for money, there is also a significant risk that service users and their families will be opposed to the proposal, seeing this as a potential loss of an important service to them. This risk can be mitigated by ensuring full engagement and consultation on the

Public Consultation Pack

potential options available. This could also include an invitation for a representative group of parents to work with the Local Authority to develop an alternative offer.

7. Equalities Impacts

Workforce Equality Impacts Assessment

- 7.1 This proposal will have staffing implications and will be included in a full equalities impact assessment within the at risk groups of staff. This analysis will be reported separately to Members when the at risk cohort of staff are identified.

Equality/Community Impact Assessments

- 7.2 There are equality/community issues arising from this report, because it relates to a service that is delivered to disabled children and their families. A full EIA will be required.

8. Consultation

- 8.1 There may be a requirement to undertake consultations with Trade Unions and staff in accordance with statutory requirements as required within the agreed efficiencies consultation framework if the details of the proposals are finalised in time after consultation with stakeholders. Formal consultation will commence once the staffing proposals for consultation have been identified.

Consultation around these changes will include the following:

- Consultation with parents and service users.
- Consultation with key professionals such as Social Workers, Health professionals, Adult services and schools.
- Proposal to be promoted to the public via website and council communications arrangements in relation to savings proposals.

Consultation will take the form of written and direct engagement.

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT FOR SAVINGS PROPOSALS

<p>1. Please state the name of the officers leading the EIA</p> <p>Adele Ion.</p>
<p>2. Who has been involved in undertaking this assessment e.g. list the stakeholder groups which have been involved?</p> <p>Cared for Children Head of Service.</p>
<p>3. What is the scope of this assessment?</p> <p>The scope of this assessment includes assessing options for the development of a short break offer that is responsive to the needs of children with disabilities and their families within the level of resources available and which offers value for money. This includes assessing the equality impacts of the following options:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Working in partnership with another local authority to offer a combined short break service across both local authority boundaries with revised staffing arrangements. 2. Retaining the service in its current form, reviewing levels of opening, staffing ratios and shift patterns to respond to current levels of need and achieve required level of savings. 3. Working in partnership with parents/carers to develop the 'local private and voluntary sector market' to maximise the use of personal budgets; with a view to providing an alternative short break service offer that is flexible and responsive. 4. Reduce the operational costs of the service to increase cost effectiveness and consider transfer to be part of a social enterprise. <p>This assessment considers any impact the potential changes may have for carers and young people and anyone else who may require a service.</p>
<p>4 a). What does the function currently do? b). Describe the needs which this service meets?</p> <p>This service is specifically for children with a disability who require care and accommodation under the children act, and short break statutory guidance. This service provides a series of short term breaks for children and their families on an ongoing basis. Ensuring that appropriate levels of support are provided for families and carers of disabled children.</p>
<p>5. What proposed changes do you wish to make?</p> <p>The changes that are being considered relate to 3 specific areas around service delivery of the children's homes to increase the capacity for the number of children accessing short breaks so that more children and families can access services and support. These include reviewing the staffing ratios and shift patterns for the unit operation. In addition exploring with parents whether the development and implementation of a 'personal budget' or local short breaks better meet their needs than a residential unit and the potential a cross border arrangement would bring such as increased range and choice of overnight stays.</p>

<p>6. Who are the key stakeholders who may be affected by the proposed changes?</p>
<p>Children and families.</p>
<p>7. What impact will this proposal have on all the protected groups?</p>
<p>The potential impacts arising from each of the options suggested are given below:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Working in partnership with another local authority to offer a combined short break service across both local authority boundaries with revised staffing arrangements. A cross border arrangement, subject to the location of a short break unit may require parents/carers to travel in order to access, this may be further than what is currently expected. This can be mitigated by identifying an location that is relatively central and has good transport links. In addition there may be increased demand which will require better planning given the current service is under used and result in short notice usage. 2. Retaining the service in its current form, reviewing levels of opening, staffing ratios and shift patterns to respond to current levels of need and achieve required level of savings. <p>A review of shifts, staffing ratio's may have the impact of increased demands and care of the children not being adequate. This would be mitigated by ensuring any children who are carefully 'matched' and ratios appropriate and compliant with guidance.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Working in partnership with parents/carers to develop the 'local private and voluntary sector market' to maximise the use of personal budgets; with a view to providing an alternative short break service offer that is flexible and responsive. <p>What is the potential equality impact of this option?</p> <p>In the event of no change in the provision would see no significant change to the service.</p> <p>Data Used to Inform this Assessment</p> <p>Activity data and equality profiling information relating to carers and disabled children will be used assess the full equality impacts.</p> <p>It is intended the review will mean that children and families are able to access services that meet their assessed needs and provide a greater level of continuing support if appropriate.</p>
<p>Race Equality</p>
<p>There will be no significant impact upon race equality for the proposed changes. The changes will mean that children and their families may continue to engage with and access a service that is within their own demographic area.</p>
<p>Disabled People</p>
<p>Bridgefold Lodge provides a service specifically for children with disabilities and their families, the proposed changes will ensure that they will be able to access a service that is already able</p>

Savings Proposals 2015/16 & 2016/17

<p>to meet their needs as a result of any specific disability. The home is already adapted and regularly monitored and assessed in terms of accessibility and readiness to meet the needs of disabled children within a community setting.</p>
<p>Carers</p>
<p>Carers of children with disabilities may be supported to have regular breaks from their role in the knowledge that their children are being looked after within an appropriate setting to meet the needs of their children, with appropriate facilities and trained staff.</p>
<p>Gender</p>
<p>Children of both sexes may access this service and the changes will not impact negatively upon this.</p>
<p>Age</p>
<p>This service provides care and accommodation to children of a mixed age group and may only provide care and accommodation to young people from the ages of 10 to 17 years, this is stipulated by the regulatory body Ofsted and is regularly monitored and assessed by them for appropriateness of this age range. The changes proposed do not make any significant difference to current arrangements.</p>
<p>Armed Forces and Ex-Armed Forces Personnel</p>
<p>There is no noted impact to this group.</p>
<p>Religion or Belief</p>
<p>Bridgefold Lodge provides accommodation to children from diverse backgrounds and will continue to do so. All staff have appropriate training and a mix of skills and personal knowledge in this area which they apply to their practice and support of young people. This will continue.</p>
<p>Sexual Orientation</p>
<p>Bridgefold Lodge supports children with a range of specific needs and changes to this service will not impact on the needs of young people, staff or carers around sexual orientation. Current policies and procedures within the home would be applied to promote the diverse needs of all children. Employees and carers.</p>
<p>Gender Reassignment</p>
<p>There is no impact upon this aspect under the proposed changes.</p>
<p>Pregnant Women or Those on Maternity Leave or Those who have given Birth in the Previous 26 weeks</p>
<p>Current policies and procedures would be adhered to and changes would not have any negative impact upon this.</p>

Marriage or Civil Partnership
There is no impact upon this aspect under the proposed changes.
8. Conclusions and Recommendations
<p>What are the main conclusions from this analysis?</p> <p>The current short break unit and service offer is under used and meets the need of a small number of children who are disabled. This makes the service expensive and not good value for money. The proposals look to ensure the current service offers RMBC better value for money or explore alternatives that are considered by children, young people and their carers to be more responsive to their needs. . There are some risks identified which mitigation can be put in place. However, a further Impact Assessment will need to be completed once a clear proposal has been identified.</p> <p>What are your recommendations?</p> <p>It is recommended that the risks identified can be sufficiently mitigated (see section 6.1 for specific details), however following a period of consultation the impact assessment should be reviewed and focus exclusively on the preferred option.</p> <p>What evidence do you have which demonstrates that these measures will be effective?</p> <p>See above.</p>
9. Please provide details of who you will consult with on the proposals and the methods which you will use to consult. State your consultation and inclusion methodology.
<p>The Consultation and Inclusion Methodology Used.</p> <p>Consultation will take place using focus groups, links to council websites and written correspondence with stakeholders.</p>
10. Produce an action plan detailing the mitigation measures that you propose to put in place to address any adverse impacts.
This section will be completed following the consultation process