

Committee:	Corporate Parenting Panel
Date:	18 October 2013
By:	Interim Director of Children's Services
Title of Report:	The Children's Disability Service
Purpose of Report:	To inform the panel of the range of services provided by the Children's Disability Service including those to Looked After Children
Recommendation:	The Panel is recommended to note the structure of the Children's Disability Service and the services provided by it, specifically how these relate to Looked After Children who are severely disabled.

1. Financial Appraisal

- 1.1 There are no financial implications arising from the recommendations of this report.
- 1.2 The total funding for the Children's Disability Service is £8,778,800 of which £1,383,100 is set aside specifically to fund the two residential units, Acorns and The Bungalow.

2. Supporting Information

2.1 The Children's Disability Service (CDS) provides a range of services to children and young people with severe or complex disabilities: social work (including safeguarding, and the statutory responsibility for Looked After Children), short breaks, behavioural management, helping parents directly in the home; lifting and moving, getting children ready for school or into bed and sibling support. Further detailed information is contained in Appendix 1.

2.2 There are two specific routes into the CDS for LAC; disabled children and young people have an increased vulnerability to abuse of all kinds therefore, to ensure disabled children are appropriately safeguarded, they will become LAC via the legal route of care proceedings. Alternatively for some LAC within the CDS the agreement for them to become Looked After is agreed on a voluntary basis in recognition of the high level of family need due to either challenging behaviour or family breakdown, rather than as a result of child protection concerns.

2.3 Only children or young people with the most complex or severe levels of need relating to their disabilities will meet the CDS eligibility criteria. Social work support to the wider group of children with less severe needs is provided within Locality and LAC services. Of the 661 children attending special schools, the CDS is currently engaged with 276 families and children.

2.4 Currently the CDS is responsible for 38 looked after children and young people.

3. Conclusions and reason for recommendations

3.1 The CDS provides a wide variety of support services to families with children who are severely disabled or who have complex needs. A proportion of this group of children will be LAC and it is important that ESCC fulfils its statutory obligations. More importantly it is crucial that the Council acts as a good Corporate Parent to this vulnerable group of children.

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Local Member(s): All
BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS: None

1. Background Information

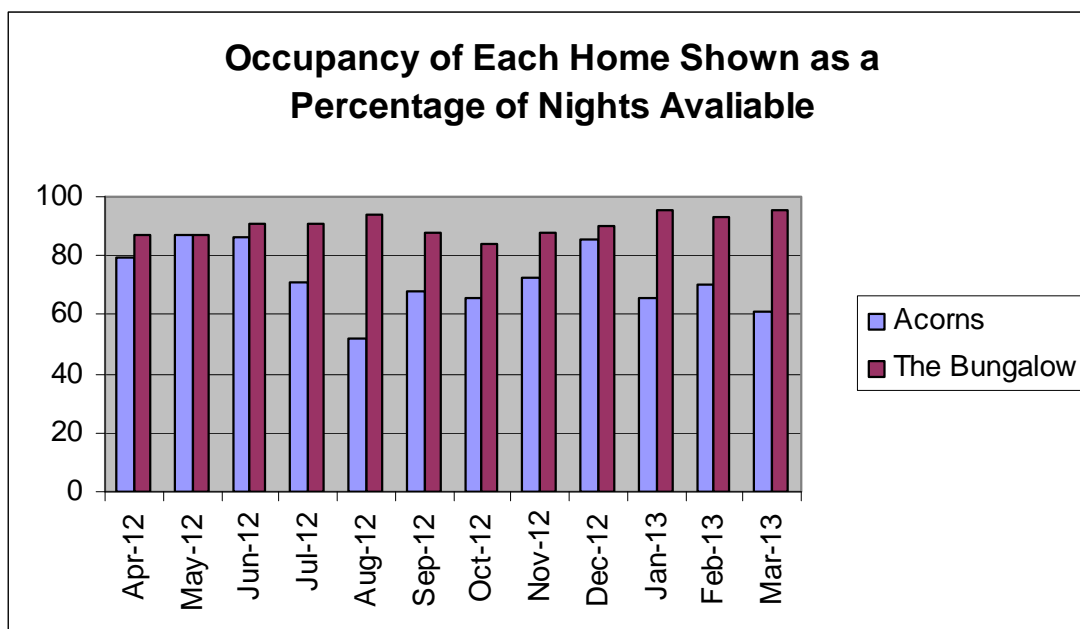
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- 1.4 There are 7 special schools in East Sussex which provide education to children with the most complex needs and with whom the CDS has close links:

Special School	No of children on roll
Glyne Gap Academy	105
Hazel Court	88
South Downs	99
Saxon Mount	116
Torfield	79
Lindfield	83
Grove Park	91

- 1.5 Looked after children in the CDS are cared for in a range of different placements:
- In-house foster placements
 - Agency Foster Carers
 - Residential Homes
 - Residential Schools
- 1.6 The Children's Disability Service continues to work closely with the Fostering Service to recruit short break, short term and permanent foster carers for children with a disability. To encourage prospective foster carers and already approved carers to apply to foster for East Sussex there needs to be a support strategy in place to ensure financial incentives and "wraparound" services are available to promote placements and ensure children are placed safely and securely with well motivated, well supported and well trained specialist foster carers.
- 1.7 Currently the CDS is responsible for 38 looked after children and young people.
- 1.8 The total funding for the Children's Disability Service is £8,778,800 of which £1,383,100 is set aside specifically to fund the two residential units, Acorns and The Bungalow.

2. Residential Services

- 2.1 Acorns in Bexhill and The Bungalow in Eastbourne are specialist residential homes for young people aged between 7 and 19 years who have severe learning difficulties. Both units are fully equipped to accommodate young people who also have physical disabilities. Currently 42 families use the two units. The two units employ a core staff of 28 fte in total.
- 2.2 The homes combine short and long term care. The size of respite packages for young people varies according to their assessed need. For example, some young people have just one night per fortnight, some one day a week, some a weekend every month. One young person stays at Acorns for exactly half the time as part of a shared care arrangement. Young people are classed as Looked After if their package exceeds 75 nights per year and at that point ESCC will meet the full statutory obligation to them, often in partnership with parents who will remain very involved with their children.
- 2.3 Short breaks in the residential units are offered in response to a young person's assessed need and will usually be for one of 2 reasons:
- The young person's behaviour excludes them from accessing other respite options
 - The young person is frequently awake at night but their behaviour makes them unsuitable for overnight short breaks in a foster family
- 2.4 Young people can be accommodated full-time in either of the homes if they are unable to remain at home, it is not possible to identify a foster family for them and if they have a stable education placement locally. Close attention is paid to making sure that the specific needs of Looked after Children are met, and that sharing their home with young people who attend for respite care is not detrimental to their well-being. Currently there are 6 young people being looked after between the two units on this basis.
- 2.5 The homes are registered with Ofsted and have one announced and one unannounced inspection a year; in addition each home has a regulation 33 off line management visit every month, these appear as the pink reports to panel. A new Advocacy contract has been awarded to an organisation called POhWER with experience of supporting individuals with severe or complex disabilities.
- 2.6 For the past seven years Acorns and The Bungalow have both been judged by Ofsted as achieving outstanding outcomes for children and young people. Additionally in recognition of the increasing numbers of young people with autism, both units have achieved Autism Accreditation, an autism-specific quality assurance programme, implemented by the National Autistic Society; currently both units remain the only non-school establishments nationally to hold this award.
- 2.7 The chart below shows that autism is currently the primary diagnosis of the young people accessing the homes. The proportion of young people attending who have physical disabilities has fallen dramatically in recent years most likely as a result of an increase in the provision of Disabled Facilities Grants which has provided funding for adaptations such as specialist bathrooms and hoists in family homes. Many young people with autism have associated conditions including communication difficulties, epilepsy and other health complications.
- 2.8 On rare occasions, numbers of young people staying in the homes need to be reduced for a range of reasons. The behaviours some young people display can, at times, put them or others at risk of harm.
- 2.9 The chart below shows occupancy levels for the two units in the last financial year.



2.10 Emergency admissions to the homes are rare. When these do occur, it may be necessary to reduce the respite care support packages for some families. This is always a last resort, wherever possible their packages will be fulfilled in one of the units. Places across both sites will be prioritised, ensuring that there is no reduction in respite for young people where there are safeguarding concerns or for those families at risk of breakdown.

3. Social work services

- 3.1 Families' access social work support through the Duty and Assessment Team (DAT). The focus of the team is to assess disabled children to determine their level of need and ensure appropriate support services are put in place. The DAT team also undertake child protection investigations in relation to disabled children. The team holds responsibility for 152 cases; 5 LAC, 1 CP 91 CIN and 55 Review only.
- 3.2 Where families are in receipt of services but do not require ongoing social work intervention they are held by the DAT Team on a review only basis. Reviews are undertaken annually.
- 3.3 The DAT Team also provide advice and guidance to families on services that they can access for support without needing an assessment, thus ensuring families receive help more quickly.
- 3.4 Longer term support is provided by the Family Support Team (FST). The FST is currently working with 124 families; 6 on protection plans, 33 LAC and 85 CIN. The families who continue to be in need will have complex problems; children on the edge or care or requiring a co-ordinated multi-agency approach to ensure that they receive the right level of help and support.

4. After School Clubs and Holiday Play Schemes

- 4.1 The After School Clubs and Holiday Play Schemes service is for children and young people, aged between five and nineteen. There are 148 young people attending running across seven school sites within East Sussex.
- 4.2 All the young people who attend have a learning difficulty, and some may have a physical disability in addition. For the young people who have a physical disability, the clubs they

attend are equipped with moving and handling equipment necessary to meet their needs safely.

- 4.3 After School clubs run in term time, ranging from 2-5 afternoons a week, up to 3 hours. All the clubs also provide play schemes in the school holidays, ranging from 3-4 days a week, running for 6 hours. Following a successful pilot September 2012, transport home for young people who attend South Downs After School Club is being provided. The service has also run four, two night residential breaks for young people who attend Saxon Mount, Hazel Court FE, and Lindfield Club. The service is continuing to develop with the introduction of "Saturday Clubs" at four of our schools. Parents and carers pay £3 an hour towards the cost of the services
- 4.4 Grove Park and Saxon Mount Clubs are now registered with Ofsted. This will enable working parents to reclaim some child care costs. We are currently working on registering Hazel Court Club. Eventually our plan is to have all seven clubs registered.

5. Direct Intervention Team

- 5.1 The Direct Intervention team comprises: Outreach, Spectrum, Sibling Support Groups Sessional Workers and a Behavioural Support service. The services support disabled children and young people between 0-19 years.

6.0 Outreach

- 6.1 Outreach is the largest team within the Direct Intervention Team and has bases in Eastbourne and Bexhill, supporting disabled children and young people across the county. The team offers a range of services:

- Early intervention for children on the edge of care
- Short breaks
- Life Skills
- Nursery groups
- Working with parents
- Contact

7 Spectrum

- 7.1 Spectrum works across East Sussex to support young people with autism to independently access activities in their community. The Team aim is to give young people with autism the same opportunities and experiences as their peers.

8 Siblings Service

- 8.1 The Siblings service supports children from the age of 6 to young people aged up to 18, who have a disabled brother or sister. Currently 110 children and young people attend. This is an important service as it acknowledges the often difficult experiences of siblings as young carers.

9 Sessional Workers

- 9.1 The Sessional workers undertake various roles in the support of all the services in the Direct Intervention Team as required.

10 Training & Development Consultant: Behaviour Support and management

- 10.1 The consultant provides support and advice to families around promoting positive behaviour by using a number of techniques to help identify and implement strategies that reduce the

incidents of challenging behaviour. The service works to agreed outcomes and specific timeframes, providing regular reviews with the family and other carers to monitor the agreed outcomes.

- 10.2 The consultant also coordinates and delivers P.R.I.C.E which is physical intervention training across the Children's Disability Service and LAC services.

11 Transition into Adulthood

- 11.1 On their 16th Birthdays, young people in the Children's Disability Service, transfer to the Transition Team in Adult Social Care (ASC) in preparation for moving into their adult life.
- 11.2 The Transition Team was set up in September 2011 and currently has responsibility for 139 young people 16 -19, most of who will meet the threshold for ongoing support from either Adult Social Care or Adult Continuing Care.
- 11.3 Of these 139 young people the team holds responsibility for 10 LAC who are deemed as Care Leavers; however their pathway plan will involve ongoing support from ASC.

