

## **Overnight Short Breaks for Disabled Children and Young People**

### **Executive summary**

This report summarises the joint review between the Council and NHS Wiltshire Clinical Commissioning Group on overnight short breaks for disabled Children and Young People in Wiltshire.

Following the review, the proposal is to change the service model including the closure of Hillcote (the NHS-run unit) from April 2014 and reinvestment of money in more family based care and early intervention support services for families of disabled children.

The proposal would retain access to overnight short breaks for families of disabled children, but would also provide an opportunity for more support for disabled children and their families to address issues families have highlighted they struggle with, such as challenging behaviour and sleeping difficulties.

Care plans will be developed with the five families who would be using Hillcote from April 2014 to ensure that the needs of the children, including their health needs, continue to be met.

The proposal is cost neutral with a focus on how to make best use of public money for families with a disabled child.

### **Proposal**

That the committee:

- a) Provides feedback on the proposal to change the model of delivery of short breaks in Wiltshire.
- b) Notes that the final decision on the potential closure of Hillcote will be taken at the NHS Wiltshire Clinical Commissioning Group Governing Body meeting in November following the three month consultation period.

### **Author:**

Julia Cramp, Service Director, Commissioning & Performance (Wiltshire Council and NHS Wiltshire Clinical Commissioning Group)

Contact details:

Email: [Julia.cramp@wiltshire.gov.uk](mailto:Julia.cramp@wiltshire.gov.uk) Tel.: 01225 718221

# Overnight Short Breaks for Disabled Children and Young People

## Purpose of report

1. This purpose of this report is to provide a summary of the joint review on overnight short breaks for disabled children and young people and invite feedback on the proposal to change the model of service delivery and close the NHS-run unit called Hillcote in Salisbury.

## Background

2. In January 2013, a paper was considered by the emerging Clinical Commissioning Group's Clinical Commissioning Committee which summarised the Joint Review of Overnight Short Breaks for Disabled Children and Young People and recommended that further work was undertaken to move from the current position where significant resource is invested in residential short breaks services to a mixed model of residential and family-based provision.
3. The recommended option (Option 2) was to close one residential unit and "use the annual savings to invest in alternative services to support children and young people in new ways. This will include early intervention services that will increase the potential for children to access opportunities with their peers and develop independence skills. Given the geographical location and the unit cost analysis of both services the proposal would be to close Hillcote releasing £608k revenue per annum for investment."
4. The approved next steps were: "the Clinical Commissioning Group agrees to further work taking place to develop Option 2 into a firm proposal for the closure of Hillcote and the use of the funding released to re-design an increased and enhanced range of services. This work would be done in conjunction with Wiltshire Parent Carers Council (who represent a large number of parents of disabled children and young people). This option would need to be the subject of a public and stakeholder consultation prior to any final decision on closure being taken."
5. In June 2013 a further paper was considered by the Clinical Commissioning Group's Governing Body which outlined the consultation and communication plans and approval was given to proceed with the consultation.

## Consultation

6. Section 242 of the NHS Act 2006 places a duty on NHS trusts, primary care trusts and strategic health authorities to make arrangements to involve and consult patients and the public in:
  - planning services they are responsible for
  - developing and considering proposals for changes in the way those services are provided

- decisions to be made which affect how those services operate
7. The Consultation Plan approved by the Clinical Commissioning Group can be summarised as follows:
- A Consultation Paper to be shared with a wide range of stakeholders July - October 2013
  - Detailed face to face meetings with families currently using the service August - October 2013
  - Workshops with families currently using the service to help develop service specifications for new services September 2013
  - Wiltshire Parent Carer Council (WPCC) to sit on the project Steering Group.
  - A final decision to be made taking into account the consultation in November 2013.
8. On July 24<sup>th</sup> 2013 a three month consultation period started and the consultation document (Appendix 1), a questions and answers document and an online feedback form were hosted on the WPCC website. Letters were sent to a range of stakeholders including families using Hillcote. Meetings were then arranged with the five Wiltshire families who would be directly affected by the closure of Hillcote.

### **Main considerations for the committee**

9. The current capacity and usage of Wiltshire Children and Young People Overnight Short Breaks Services is given below:

<b>Service</b>	<b>Beds</b>	<b>Capacity (bed nights)</b>	<b>Current Usage</b>
Canon's House	8 bed unit	2880	1980
Hillcote	10 bed unit	3600*	422**
Family Link	21 households	756	700 (approx.)
	<b>Total</b>	<b>7236</b>	<b>3102</b>

*\*Theoretical capacity based on a 10 bed unit. In practice Hillcote opens as and when required due to low usage.*

*\*\*Not including children known to be leaving prior to 1/4/2014*

The current model has significant surplus residential short breaks capacity. If Hillcote closed from 1 April 2014, the first priority would be to ensure suitable provision for the five families who would have been using Hillcote. Social workers are meeting with these families during September and early October to discuss possible alternative arrangements. A range of options will be considered including Canon's House, Direct Payments, Contract Carers and other residential provision. If Hillcote is closed the first priority for the money released will be to provide suitable alternative provision for these families.

10. The proposal (as stated in the consultation document) is as follows:
- Close Hillcote from April 2014.
  - Reinvest savings in more foster care family based overnight provision, allowing a wider geographical spread of services, greater equity of provision and a more cost effective use of public money.
  - Reinvest savings in additional services for families to help with the key difficulties they have identified (e.g. sleep, incontinence, behaviour and meal times) to enable improved outcomes for children. These services would work in collaboration with family based carers, Canons House residential short breaks unit and Special Schools.
  - Develop service specifications for the new services with input from families.
  - Develop the new services so they can start in 2014.
  - Jointly manage the change through a Steering Group consisting of officers from NHS organisations, Wiltshire Council and representatives from Wiltshire Parent Carer Council.
  - Work with families using Hillcote to ensure the needs of their children and families continue to be fully met from April 2014.
  - Continue to provide overnight short breaks that deliver a break from caring for parents.
11. The consultations document explains the rationale for the above recommendations and can be summarized as follows:
- The use of Hillcote is declining and the Unit now closes at times when no families use it.
  - The increase in the use of other services, partly as a legacy of Aiming High for Disabled Children, including the Short Breaks Scheme and Learning Disability Nurses mean that fewer families of children are requesting overnight short breaks.
  - Improved outcomes for children and young people would be supported by a mixed model of service provision including more support with the issues, such as challenging behaviour and parents being deprived of sleep, that can lead to the request for overnight short breaks.
  - Greater equity of provision would be supported by an increase in locally provided family based overnight care throughout the county.
  - The money tied up in providing the service at Hillcote could be reinvested in more family based care and early intervention support services.

### **Safeguarding considerations**

12. All referrals for overnight short breaks are made by a social worker who fully considers the safeguarding needs of the child or young person. Care plans and overnight short break services will continue to ensure all safeguarding requirements are met.

## **Public Health implications**

13. An increase in early intervention services will improve outcomes and the wellbeing of children and young people with SEN and/or disability and their families. There is no expected impact to the public health of the wider population relating to this proposal.

## **Environmental impact of the proposal**

14. The environmental impact of the proposal is minimal. It is anticipated that in the medium term an increase in local family based care throughout Wiltshire will contribute towards a small reduction in transport to and from overnight short breaks settings.

## **Equality and diversity impact of the proposal**

15. An equality impact assessment has been completed (Appendix 2). Key points from the document include:
  - The proposal is consistent with national and local policy and research.
  - The proposal is subject to a public and stakeholder consultation
  - WPCCC have been fully involved in the review and consultation and sit on the steering group.
  - Children and young people with disability and their families would benefit from the proposal due to an increase in locally based provision and an increase in early intervention services to support with the issues families have identified including sleep, incontinence and behaviour and thereby improving outcomes for families.
  - Care plans will be developed with families directly affected by the potential closure of Hillcote to ensure a package of support is offered to continue to meet their needs. These will include ensuring the health needs (including complex health needs) continue to be met and a transition plan is in place.

## **Risk assessment**

16. Prior to the start of the consultation it was identified that there was a risk that families using the service at Hillcote may be unhappy with a proposed change to their care package. It was anticipated that this could result in media interest and families contacting politicians. This could result in reputational damage for the agencies involved in the consultation. The following actions were identified to manage these risks:
  - A joint media statement was prepared between Wiltshire Council and the CCG
  - Great Western Hospitals prepared a media statement as the service provider
  - Media relations teams in all three organisations were briefed and were in contact with each other
  - A letter was sent to each Wiltshire MP and to Wiltshire Councillors

- Letters were sent to each family currently using Hillcote and these were followed up to arrange meetings with the five Wiltshire families who would be using Hillcote from April 2014.
17. Since the start of the consultation, two of the families using Hillcote have expressed that they are strongly opposed to the proposal and have been in contact with the media and politicians. A 'Save Hillcote' Facebook campaign has also been launched. Two articles have appeared in the Salisbury Journal and the media teams have responded as appropriate. Both families have been met with and the situation continues to be monitored. There is a risk that a decision to close Hillcote could continue to be met with opposition and/or continue to attract media interest.
  18. It was understood that there could be a perceived risk to disabled children with complex health needs using Hillcote changing to a different service because Hillcote is an NHS service. The actions to address this perceived risk are:
    - Clarify in the consultation documentation that Canon's House is fully able to support children complex health needs and that care plans that ensure health needs continue to be met will be developed with the families.
    - Reinforce the above message in the meetings with families.
  19. If the proposal is not implemented there will continue to be an inefficient use of public money. In addition funding will not be released to enable an increase in family based care and early intervention family support services which will hinder achieving better outcomes for families.

### **Financial implications**

20. The cost of running the Hillcote service is £608,000. The proposal is cost neutral, any savings released as a result of the closure of Hillcote will be reinvested in services for families of Disabled Children, in particular, meeting the needs of the five children and young people who would otherwise have been using Hillcote, family based care and early intervention family support services.

### **Legal implications**

21. Section 242 of the NHS Act 2006 requires a consultation. See paragraph 6 above.
22. Hillcote staff may be eligible for TUPE if Hillcote closes. GWH have begun a staff consultation and are exploring options for staff within health services. The HR team at GWH is engaged and the HR team at Wiltshire Council have been made aware of the potential for a TUPE consideration.

### **Options considered**

23. The consultation document (Appendix 1) describes the other options considered. In summary:

- a) Keeping both Canon's House and Hillcote open was rejected because it would not represent an efficient use of public money and would not enable the service development to improve outcomes for children and young people with disability and their families.
- b) Closing both residential units was rejected because feedback from families was that they valued overnight residential provision and it would create a capacity issue.

## **Conclusion**

24. The Committee is asked to approve the proposal detailed in paragraph 9 above subject to final approval by the Wiltshire Clinical Commissioning Group after the consultation period ends. The proposal offers the best option for continuing to meet the needs of children and young people with disability and their families, improving the outcomes for these children and making best use of public money.
25. In case minor points of detail need to be agreed at a later date it is requested that delegated authority be given to Julia Cramp, Joint Service Director, in consultation with Laura Mayes, lead member for Children's Services. This will ensure implementation and transition arrangements for families are not delayed.

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## **Background papers**

The following unpublished documents have been relied on in the preparation of this report:

1. Joint Project to Redesign Overnight Short Breaks for Disabled Children, June 2013
2. CCG Overnight Short Breaks Paper, November 2012

## **Appendices**

1. Joint Consultation on Overnight Short Breaks for Disabled Children
2. Equality Impact Assessment