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Respite Care Services for Children within Belfast Health and Social Care Trust

Please find below a list of questions relating to respite care services for children within your Trust.

1. Which units within the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust (Belfast Trust) provide respite care services for children?

Currently:

- Forest Lodge provides Short Break services to Children with Disabilities and Complex Healthcare needs.
- Willow Lodge has a dual Statement of Purpose and is currently accommodating a Looked After Child, full-time, as per Part Two of Statement of Purpose (Emotional And Behavioural Difficulties), but will revert to Short Breaks for children with Learning Disability and Behaviours of Challenge (Part One Statement of Purpose) as soon as possible.
- Belfast Trust has access to four Beds within Lyndsay House, which is managed by South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust. It is a unit for children with Learning Disability and Behaviours of Challenge.

2. Please provide statements of purpose for each of these units. Have there been any amendments to these since January 2020?

Please see attached the two most recent Statements of Purpose:

- Willow Lodge – the Statement of Purpose was amended in agreement with the Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority (RQIA) in May 2020, November 2020, April 2021 and June 2021 to reflect challenging operational circumstances.
- Forest Lodge Statement of Purpose was amended in June 2020 and November 2020.

3. Have any units that have provided respite care services for children been closed or repurposed since January 2020.

- Forest Lodge - From 25 September 2020, Forest Lodge functioned as an Isolation Unit, as Belfast Trust was required to have an Isolation Unit for Looked After Children.

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Following engagement with RQIA, the home was able to provide limited Short Breaks from 22 October 2020, with one child per day permitted to stay (as per RQIA guidance). Overnights or day care were offered depending on staffing levels. The home ceased to be used as an Isolation unit on 30 January 2021.

- Willow Lodge was repurposed in April 2021 as a home for a Child with Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties and no placement. The Statement of Purpose was amended to reflect this in June 2021.

4. What are the staffing complements for each unit within the Belfast trust that provides respite care services for children? Are all the available posts filled? Does each unit use bank/agency staff?

- Willow Lodge has 13.5 staff and 2 vacancies, which are in the process of being filled.
- Forest Lodge has 21.1 staff and 3.8 vacancies, which are in the process of being filled.
- Both units have a list of experienced Bank Staff who regularly work in the Homes. Agency staff complement the substantive and Bank staff, as and when necessary

5. Does the Belfast Trust have a budget for respite care services for children and if so can you please provide this. What is the budget for each unit?

- Willow Lodge budget is £562k
- Forest Lodge budget is £856k
- The Self Directed Support / Direct Payment Budget totals £1.2m and it is estimated that 50 - 60% of this is spent on Short Break support by families - 199 families have Direct Payments. It is not possible to disaggregate Short Break and non-Short Break provision within the figures, as these are direct arrangements between families and providers.

6. How long are the waiting lists currently for each unit that provides respite care services for children?

Belfast Trust holds a composite waiting list for overnight Short Breaks rather than individual lists. Decisions on priority are made on the basis of complexity and risk, rather than length of time on the waiting list.

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7. Does the Belfast Trust provide any alternatives to respite care services for children? If yes, please provide details of each of these alternative services.

See above in respect of Self Directed Support / Direct Payments and the Short Break / family support services commissioned are as below.

Community and Voluntary Services (CVS) groups:

- Autism Initiatives Community Short Breaks (min young people)
- Barnardo's Homelinks Family Placement Scheme (10 young people)
- Barnardo's Homelinks After Schools support (up to 6 young people)
- Cedar Foundation Outlook (up to 24 young people)
- Cedar Foundation Inreach (15 - 20 children)
- 174 Trust Youth Club provision – Junior and Senior (max 32 young people)
- Action Deaf Youth – Youth Club provision (10 children)
- SOLAS Afterschools and social activities and Saturday morning club up to 9
- Kids Together Afterschools and social activities (16 young people)

8. Have any business cases been filed to increase respite service provision within the Belfast Trust since January 2020?

Yes – one Outline Business Case to Capital Priorities for increase in Short Break provision. This will be subject to a full Business Case in the next financial year.

9. How many complaints have been made about lack of access to respite care services for children since January 2020?

Since January 2020, 11 complaints have been made about the lack of access to Short Break services in Belfast Health and Social Care Trust - 6 were responded to formally and 5 via local resolution.