



Committee and Date

People Overview Committee

3 March 2021

Item

Public

Short breaks to provide respite for all age carers

Responsible officers

Karen Bradshaw

Executive Director Children's Services

karen.bradshaw@shropshire.gov.uk

01743 254201

Tanya Miles

Executive Director Adult Services

tanya.miles@shropshire

01743 255811

1.0 Summary

1.1 This report provides an overview of the respite care that Shropshire Council offers, funds and commissions for carers of children, young people and adults.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 That the People Overview Committee:

- notes the report and
- identify specific topics that it wishes to consider in more detail at a future meeting.

3.0 Opportunities and risks

3.1 Providing short breaks for children and young people most in need is an effective way of working towards the goal of keeping children in their families. This may ultimately prevent family breakdown which may result in the need to accommodate children in expensive provision.

4.0 Financial assessment

4.1 Short breaks for disabled children

For foster carers offering short breaks to disabled children, one short break carer may provide care for up to three to four families over a rolling month. This may prevent a child requiring the provision of short break care in a specialist disability short break home, which would be significantly more expensive than a short break foster placement.

The number of disabled children in Shropshire is rising consistently. Accordingly, the demand on local authority resources for support is rising and is forecast to continue to rise. Planning to ensure the council continues to provide good support to these children and their families should take into account this growth in demand.

Current annual budgeted spend for respite for parent carers of disabled children is as follows:

- Overnight residential (used by approximately 60-70 families) £939,500
- Community access (used by approximately 140 families) £369,792
- Early help short breaks (used by approximately 500 families) £170,000
- Personal budgets for personal assistants, specific nursing care and childminding £395,963
- Foster care providing short breaks for disabled children (used by 2 families) £22,000

4.2 **Adults services respite commissioning**

Please see paragraph 8.2.4 for annual placement costs. The provision and availability of respite placements offers a preventative saving to Adult Social Care's purchasing budget. The ability to offer regular and effective respite placements to our informal carers in turn enables them to continue to provide the main care to their loved ones for longer as they are able to access regular breaks, which prevent the needs for these individuals to be placed permanently in alternative accommodation which would come at a much higher cost. All individuals can choose where they live and the respite break means being able to remain living at home with their care provided by their loved ones is able to continue to be a choice they can make.

5.0 **Report**

5.1 Shropshire Council provides a variety of opportunities for children, young people and adults to take a short break, providing respite to the people who care for them. This report will cover respite care that the council provides or commissions for:

- children with a disability
- looked after children
- children in need or subject to a Section 47 child protection enquiry
- adults with a learning difficulty, mental health condition or autism.

5.2 The legal and policy framework under which Short Breaks are provided is as follows:

- Children Act 1989
- Children Act 2004
- The Breaks for Carers of Disabled Children Regulations 2011 (aka Short Breaks Regulations) requires local authorities to provide breaks from caring to assist parents and others who care for children with a short break from their caring responsibilities and to produce and review a Short Break Statement; (Please see **appendix 1** for Shropshire's statement.)
- Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1970 requires a Local authority to provide to a disabled child a short break when necessary to meet that child's needs

- The Children and Families Act 2014 seeks to ensure that children, young people and families are at the centre of decision making. It requires Local Authorities to offer families the choice of having a personal budget to better enable them to have more control over the services they use.
- Equality Act 2010
- NHS Act 2006 (as amended by the Health and Social Care Act 2012)
- Care Act 2014 (in relation to transition to adult social care)

6.0 Children with a disability

6.1 Children with disabilities make up 6% of the looked after population. Having a child with a disability can bring challenges and difficulties that other families do not face. This can be particularly at times of transition, such as when a child is starting or changing school, or when a young person is preparing for adult life. Providing short breaks for these children, to provide respite for their parents and carers serves two purposes. As well as giving parents a break to attend to other matters, for example being able to focus on the needs of their other children, the break also provides the child with enrichment, new experiences and the opportunity to explore a degree of independence from their family.

6.2 The short breaks for disabled children, either provided directly by the council or commissioned through other providers, are a range of leisure activities, specifically designed to support carers and their disabled children and young people up to their 18th birthday.

The range of Shropshire short breaks is wide to ensure that it can sufficiently meet a wide range of children's disability, age and family circumstances. Some short breaks might involve a child or young person joining a group activity. Others might be supported individually such as by a personal assistant. Short breaks can take place after school, at the weekend, during school holidays or overnight. They can provide activities such as after school clubs, weekend activities, sports, youth groups, drama groups, holiday clubs and overnight stays with a short break foster carer or in a residential home. For example, breaks in a residential home take place at Bradbury House in Shrewsbury, where Action for Children are commissioned by the council to provide the care. Action for Children are also commissioned to help young people access activities in the community.

Some short breaks might also involve assistance in the home in the evening, at weekends or during the school holidays. Regardless of which type of short break is accessed, they all provide respite for carers.

6.3 As well as planned activities, the council also recruits foster carers who specifically provide short breaks in their home. Shropshire currently only has one foster carer who is approved to provide short breaks for disabled children. In recent years, the number of carers has been higher, however some of these

have chosen to resign from fostering or retire from fostering. There is currently a live social media campaign to recruit more short break foster carers.

- 6.4 Direct payments allow parents and young people greater choice flexibility and control, to employ their own workers at times convenient to them and in the way they wish, to provide an individual service to meet their need and provide a short break. Direct Payments are available if a child or young person is disabled and aged 16 or over or is a carer or parent aged 16 or over for a child with disabilities.

Direct payments can also be made to a willing and appropriate person on a disabled person's behalf if they lack the mental capacity to agree to and manage Direct Payments themselves.

Direct payments can be used to employ a Personal Assistant (PA)

- To take the young person/child into the community to access an activity, support inclusion, going to a club etc;
- To work with the child directly within the home, to give parents and siblings a break;
- To stay overnight to give respite to parents;
- Or a registered childminder or child home carer (for children aged under 8).

Direct payments can also be spent on

- Using an approved agency to provide direct care to meet your child/family's needs;
- After school clubs and holiday play schemes for your disabled child;
- Residential overnight breaks for your disabled child;
- By agreement with the team manager for direct payments, any service which meets assessed need for a short break.

- 6.5 Please see **appendix 1** for a detailed guide to the short breaks offered to families and professionals who support or care for a disabled child.

7.0 **Looked after children**

- 7.1 For those children already looked after, there will be some situations where there is a need to provide a 'foster break' for a child and their carers to prevent a family breakdown. The foster breaks policy for Shropshire is very clear that for the vast majority of looked after children, time spent away from their foster family may be detrimental to the emotional well-being of children. We encourage all our carers to take their children away with them on holidays so they can experience the enjoyment of a holiday with the rest of their household. Most foster carers in Shropshire do take their foster children with them on family holidays.

- 7.2 For some looked after children, where a foster break is in their best interests, local in-house arrangements are usually made with other experienced carers.

There are some foster carers who prefer to provide this short-term care arrangement and for others they may use a vacant foster care bed to provide foster breaks for children most in need. Some of these arrangements can be ongoing and some are provided in response to a presenting need at the time.

- 7.3 For some looked after children, time spent in other foster families can be difficult, either due to their presenting needs or due to the lack of available carers who will be able to offer what this child or children need. In these situations, some Looked after children will be able to access Havenbrook, Shropshire's short break home. Havenbrook can offer up to four short breaks at any one time for either a three-day break or a four-day break. There are over 80 children registered with Havenbrook who receive some form of short break and outreach support from the outreach service. The children and young people accessing short breaks can be children subject to a sect.17 Child in Need Plan, Child Protection Plan, Early Help plan or looked after children.
- 7.4 In addition to offering planned short breaks, Havenbrook are also instrumental in providing crisis placements where children have experienced a placement or family breakdown. Over recent years, these crisis placements have been provided for more Looked after children than ever before, with Havenbrook often caring for young people where we have been unable to provide an alternative residential provision.

There are very few provisions like Havenbrook available elsewhere. Other Local Authorities have previously been to visit Havenbrook to learn from our experience and to look at setting up their own short break homes.

- 7.5 Shropshire has an ongoing recruitment campaign for new foster carers. The service successfully introduced a new fee and allowance policy 2 years ago which means that foster carers now receive competitive rates when choosing to foster for Shropshire. From the period from the 1st April 2020, Shropshire has recruited 11 new fostering households, offering more than 15 new placements for children and young people. However, during this time, we also lost carers due to ill-health, resignations, retirement and one carer moving to foster to a private agency. Shropshire actively seeks to recruit new fostering households on an ongoing basis. Shropshire foster carers benefit from competitive rates of pay, robust training and support offer, buddy scheme and access to the support of Shropshire's Foster Care Association.

8.0 Adult Social Care

- 8.1 Adult Social Care Services are currently supporting 673 adults with a learning disability aged 18-65. Of those supported, 44 are living independently, 205 are in their own tenancies in Supported Living Services, 282 are living with family or friends (informal carers). Figure 1 below provides a full breakdown of current settled accommodation status.

There is also a smaller cohort of individuals living in residential homes, either short term whilst they are looking for a more suitable and long term home, in residential colleges or in long term residential placements.

As 60% individuals we support are not living with family and friends, there is less need for commissioned respite for these individuals.

Settled Accommodation Status

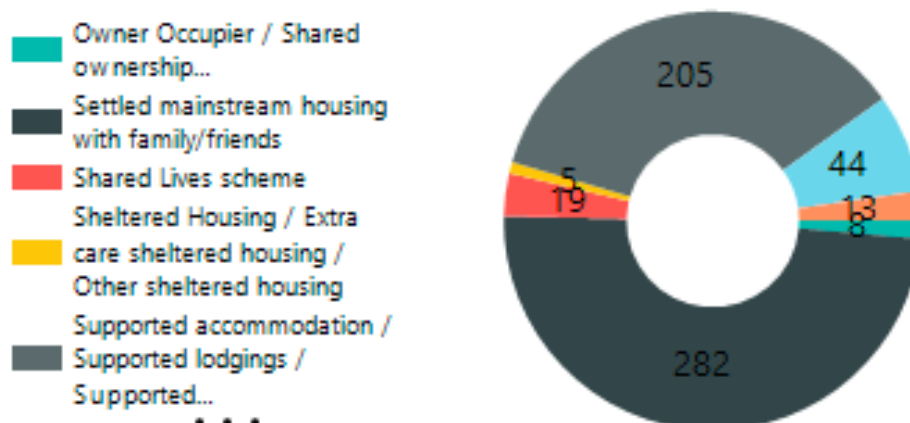


Figure 1: Settled accommodation status of adults with a learning disability supported by Adult Social Care

8.2 Current respite offer

Adult social care currently commissions two types of respite for adults:

8.2.1 Residential respite service, Barleyfield House

Barleyfield House is a respite facility registered for five beds with the Care Quality Commission, which currently provides a service to 36 individuals.

Many of the individuals and their families have been accessing the service for years, in some cases longer than 15 years, and have developed routines with their respite. There is also a cohort of people who use the service and continue to use the council day services during their stay. Due to the impact of the pandemic a number of these scheduled respite breaks have been delayed as families have been choosing not to send their loved ones due to the associated risks.

8.2.2 Shared Lives respite

In addition to Barleyfield House, respite support is also commissioned through our Shared Lives contract provided by Bethphage (an existing CQC registered supported living provider).

Shared Lives offers people an alternative and highly flexible form of respite, care or support using the Shared Lives carer's home as a resource. Shared Lives

arrangements are set up and supported by Shared Lives schemes and the care and accommodation people receive is provided by individuals, couples or families in the local community. Individuals and their Shared Lives carers enjoy shared activities and life experiences.

All individuals supported on a permanent basis who live with Shared Lives carers are also entitled to two weeks' respite. Those supported just for respite live at home with their families with their respite entitlement ranging from 14 to 56 nights per year. Shared Lives respite placements are currently offered by 25 different shared lives households and the numbers are increasing, there are currently five applications in process for shared lives carers who would like to offer respite.

In order to ensure the success of the respite placement a matching process takes place, information is gathered about the individual needing the respite, with their involvement, and about the Shared Lives carers. This information is then used to work out which Shared Lives carers will suit the person and begin the considered and planned steps of introductions as part of the matching process. This information is also used to recruit new Shared Lives carers to specifically meet the needs of the person.

Currently the Shared Lives services offers respite to 33 individuals with a learning disability, though access to these respite placements have been reduced in the past 12 months due to the impact of the pandemic, as with Barleyfield House.

8.2.3 In addition to commissioned respite placements, Adult Social Care also purchases spot respite placement for those who have specific needs, or where there is no capacity in the commissioned services. We have also been working with some of our block residential learning disability services who, when there is a vacancy in their residential schemes, have agreed to offer these beds as respite beds. We currently have four of these respite placements available.

8.2.4 **Direct Payments**

Direct payments are one way a individual can manage their personal budget, letting them arrange and pay for social care support instead of Shropshire Council arranging services for them. Direct payments offer greater flexibility, choice and control, so individuals can be as independent as possible. The Direct Payment is to buy care and support as detailed in an individual's support plan and can only be spent in this way. This may include using the direct payment to purchase respite care, this may be in the form of a break away from their family home with the support of their paid carer, or they may choose to make alternative respite arrangements with a private care provider.

8.2.5 Commissioned respite service annual costs are as follows:

Service	Annual cost
Barleyfield	£425,547
Shared Lives	£49,121
Spot Purchased respite	£41,597

8.3 Future plans for respite

Adult Social care supports a number of individuals living in their own accommodation, either independently or supported, which reduces the need for respite placements. However it is recognised that there is also a need to consider future planning for a number of individuals living with their families, even though they are able to access commissioned respite. The diagram below in figure 2 demonstrates the age ranges of the families and friends continuing to provide support to individuals in their family home.

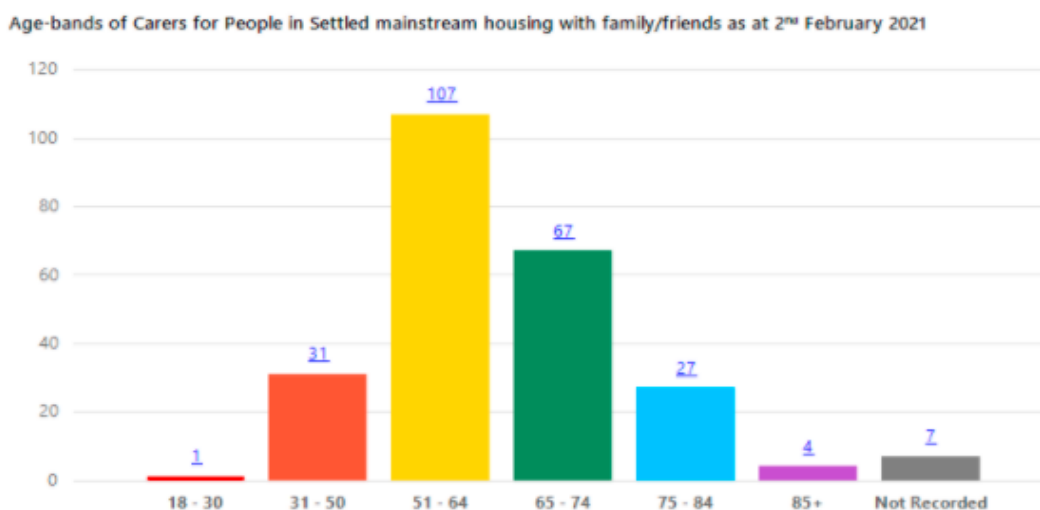


Figure 2: Age bands of carers for people in settled mainstream housing with friends or family

As you will see for the above, there are 94 informal carers looking after loved ones at home who are over the age of 64, and it is recognised, that, although a number of these families will be accessing respite services, there is an anxiety amongst some of these family carers around who will support their loved ones if they are no longer able to.

In response to this in 2019, Adult Social Care's engagement lead facilitated some carers' engagement sessions. These focused on future planning for carers, looked at what supported living means, how the individuals will be supported and the level of continued support that the families would be able to provide, but also be offered themselves. These sessions were well received and as a result some of the informal carers who attended the sessions began working with their social

care practitioners to look at the future planning and possible move on for their loved ones.

We would like to reinstate these sessions later in the year and reach out to more of the informal carers who still have their loved ones with a learning disability living at home with them, so that they are aware of the support and options available to them in the future.

In addition to this, we are working closely with our Preparing for Adulthood team and Shropshire's Parent and Carers Council (PACC) to look at the move on for young adults with a learning disability aged 16-25. Where these individuals have already been in residential college placements, the move from here to supported living is generally a smoother one.

For individuals looking to move out of the family home for the first time, this can be extremely daunting for them and their families. Therefore we are hoping to trial a 'Stepping Stones' project, which will allow individual to have a 'trial run' at living together and having a tenancy, whilst receiving 24 hour support from a care provider. The aim is that this will be a joint project with University of Chester Shrewsbury Centre, and we have already had a number of productive meetings. However this project in the very early stages of development.

Adult Social Care has a robust offer of accommodation and support to individuals with a learning disability, but recognises the need to continue to work with families to identify any service gaps and ensure that the right services are available to support individuals at the right time and in the right place for them and their families, to ensure that individuals are able to have choice and maximise their independence as much as they are able, whilst preventing carer breakdown.

List of background papers (This MUST be completed for all reports, but does not include items containing exempt or confidential information)

Cabinet Member (Portfolio Holder)

Portfolio Holder – Adult Social Services and Climate Change
Portfolio Holder – Children's Services

Local Member

All

Appendices

Shropshire Council Short Breaks Service Statement