The London Borough of Richmond-upon-Thames

**Engagement Document on the Proposed New Respite Service for Adults with a Learning Disability**

July/ August 2016

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# 1. Introduction

Planned and emergency respite is an essential resource for people with a learning disability and their families and carers. The London Borough of Richmond-upon-Thames has for some time been undertaking a review of this service aiming to improve its flexibility, efficiency, and the way it supports and enables service users.

Currently, respite is provided to people in Richmond-upon-Thames through a number of ways;

* Community support service
* Overnight and day respite through Shared Lives
* Overnight and day respite at a dedicated six bed residential respite unit (Egerton Road)
* Use of Direct Payments to purchase a broader range of options
* Emergency respite through existing supported living or residential settings

Demand for the service has changed hugely in recent years, and we are now looking at how best to meet this through the introduction of a new Respite Policy which will clearly set out how service users can access the available services, how they can be paid for, and how much respite is available. On top of this, we are also considering how we can incorporate care planning into services in particular to help service users feel as safe as possible during times of emergency.

This document will outline the current proposed model, and how it has been inspired and shaped by feedback received to date from service users, carers, and other important stakeholders. At its end, Appendix A outlines our initial plan for this final engagement window, and Appendix B gives some background to Shared Lives, the main element of the proposed model. It aims to provide sufficient detail and context to allow you to make the most of this final engagement window to ensure we get the new model right first time.

This final engagement window will close on **Friday 19 August at 5pm**, but please note that we will attend any 1 to 1 or community meetings into September to allow for the summer holidays, so long as these are arranged on or before **Friday 5 August**.

# 2. Context

Councils in England and Wales are facing increasing pressure and – whilst more people require social care now than ever before – must plan very carefully to provide high quality services within tighter fiscal constraints. This does not mean that we are looking to cut services, but rather that we have to review the best way to deliver efficient and sustainable support. This is a consistent theme across the United Kingdom, and Richmond-upon-Thames has a good track record of innovation and partnership working to meet this.

In light of this, we have to evaluate the benefit of each of our services. Engagement to date has indicated that the most important outcomes for service users and carers from respite is that;

a) the service user is safe and supported

b) the carer receives a break

For a number of years Egerton Road has been at the centre of our respite provision. It is a six bedded unit in a residential area of Twickenham, accessed via referral from a social worker and in some cases through direct arrangement with the facility itself. The service is open 365 days a year and provides 2190 overnight stays in a 12 month period. However, in recent years – since the introduction of Shared Lives and increased uptake in Direct Payments to purchase respite – the use of Egerton Road for planned respite has declined. In 2015, only 17% of the available overnight stays were used for planned respite and engagement with service users themselves has provided mixed feedback as to the suitability of this option.

The Council recognises that for the small number of people who use Egerton Road it is an important service, and this makes it even more important that we get the views of past, current, and potential stakeholder groups in how best get the future model of respite right.

# 3. Engagement to Date

Engagement has taken place over a number of years and in a variety of formats. Consultation has included face to face meetings with groups of carers and service users; this commenced in 2013 and has continued since then. We have attended the Service User Group at Respite (SUGAR) several times to ascertain the views of current service users, and questionnaires have been sent out to representative groups, including the Working Together Group and parent representatives. Information has been provided to the Learning Disability Partnership Board and the Council has used large meetings like the Big Event to further engage with carers and service users. Carers have also been offered 1-2-1 meetings, and this opportunity will continue throughout the final phase.

The Council acknowledges this has been difficult for carers and service users who want to know what the outcome of all the feedback will mean in the future, and would like to thank those who have given their valuable time in telling us what is important so far.

As mentioned, the overwhelming themes within feedback to date have been service user safety and a break for carers. The consistency of staff was also important as was the ability for the person receiving respite to build friendships. In some cases, service users have provided alternative views to those of families and carers; more often stating that they would prefer respite in their own home or the opportunity to stay with a paid carer through Shared Lives. It is for this reason that we have prioritised creating choice in the new model, and encourage where appropriate that service users explore taking up direct payments for maximum flexibility. One example of where this has worked well is a group of service users using community respite to undertake shared activities with paid carers, enabling them to get more out of their money, and build skills and socialise in the process.

The table below summarises the key feedback given to date, and any revisions made to the proposed model as a result.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Concerns raised by service users, families, and carers** | **LBRuT response** |
| A key concern raised is the importance of having an accessible residential option for comfort and safety | Our response has been to expand our Shared Lives offer, through which we can match service users to paid carers who will then be their consistent respite provider and offer planned and emergency respite stays |
| There is concern that Shared Lives currently has a waiting list, and it may be harder to access at short notice | We have increased the capacity of Shared Lives under the new tender. |
| Families and carers have told us it is very important that respite can be provided close to home | Shared Lives carers live in different locations across the borough, and this can be remembered during the matching process |
| Several families and carers indicated that they would be wary of service users living with Shared Lives carers who are new to them | Shared Lives carers undergo rigorous background checks and training, to the same extent as staff at Egerton Road or in a supported living or residential environment. A matching process will be developed that allows both service user and carer to get to know the Shared Lives carer beforehand, and there will be room to move on should a match not work. |
| Service users have indicated that often Egerton Road does not provide a relaxing environment as they are not always able to choose who else is there during their stay, and there is little break out space in which to relax | Shared Lives will allow service users to determine who their carer will be in advance, and give them freedom to indicate should a placement not be working. Each placement will have private space for the service user, who will also be welcome in shared areas.  Community respite services will be provided which will allow service users to come together and purchase joint respite – for example group daytime activities with their friends or new people of similar interests. |
| Some families and carers suggest that Egerton Road provides a valuable opportunity for service users to socialise and build skills | Shared Lives carers will be required to –where appropriate – allow service users to keep up any pre-existing commitments such as college or hobbies during their stay. On top of this, the service user will be included in activities in and out of the home.  As above, community respite services will provide the opportunity to socialise with existing or new friends, and skills-building activities can be identified and planned with the help of support workers. |
| Service Users said in an emergency they would prefer to stay in their own home | The council is proposing to develop an emergency response service that would enable this. |

The current proposed model has been developed with this in mind, and section 4 will detail each option and how we envisage it will meet this.

# 4. Current Proposals

The proposals below set out the Council’s future plans to provide respite to those who need it most. They are underpinned by a proposal for a newly commissioned service to support families plan for the future and prepare for emergencies.

Support for community activities

Shared Lives

Support in own home

Long-term and emergency care planning

Direct payments

Community support service

## 4.1 Support for community activities

We are looking to develop a community support service to act as a ‘hub’ and connect service users with opportunities in their local area, and enable them to explore these whilst giving carers a break. This would primarily be done on a daytime basis, and would allow groups of service users to get together and do social activities should they wish. It would also be an opportunity for them to explore skills development and think more about independent living where appropriate.

This service would also be able to support service users on a short-term basis, for example to meet the gap between when a parent or carer has to leave for work and the service user’s day activities begin. Egerton Road has been used for this purpose in the past, but a community service would increase capacity and flexibility in time and location.

## 4.2 Shared Lives

As engagement continued it emerged that families and carers had a preference for a dedicated residential option – particularly for use during an emergency - and a proposal for a specifically commissioned respite bed in an existing residential unit was put forward. However, this was met with apprehension and has since been removed in favour of the increased expansion of Shared Lives. Shared Lives is a national programme which connects adults with support needs to paid carers, who welcome the service user into their home on a long or short term basis. A number of people in Richmond-upon-Thames already use this to much success, and we have recently gone out to tender on an increased capacity service that we anticipate will help to provide respite for people with a learning disability. For more information on Shared Lives, please see Appendix B at the end of this document.

As part of the service arrangements are made to ensure the service user still has access to their preferred community activities and the friendships that are important to them. They are matched with their carer in advance, and are free to change carers at any point should they so wish. The thorough training provided to Shared Lives carers ensures families and regular carers can have a break, and the majority of placements are fully physically accessible.

## 4.3 Support in own home

Another option which will be made available during emergencies is for a carer to come to a service user’s own home. To date this has been met with mixed reviews, but there appears to be general support amongst service users themselves who cite a familiar location as the thing most important to them during an emergency.

## 4.4 Community support service

The above community support service would also act as first point of call in an emergency 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year. This service would be able to connect service users with the most appropriate option based on their need and feeling at that time, promoting choice and ensuring their personal safety is at the forefront of response.

## 4.5 Direct payments

Many people with a learning disability in Richmond-upon-Thames currently opt to take up a direct payment and use this to purchase their own respite. This allows for flexibility and in some cases gives the service user the opportunity to access services otherwise unavailable to them – for example by saving up a year’s worth of payment and using it to purchase a holiday abroad. It should be noted, however, that direct payments cannot be used to purchase council-operated services, for example Egerton Road. However, a DP can be used to purchase all other types of non-Council managed respite services.

## 4.6 Long-term and emergency care planning

Planning the long term care options for a relative can be a very stressful and challenging for both the carer and service user. However, poor or no planning can lead to admissions into short term care or respite which can be also be stressful. The Council proposes to offer a support service that would enable the carer and service user document what would happen in an emergency, who would be contacted if the emergency occurred in the middle of the night and detail what support would be available and how it can be accessed at short notice.

# 5. Respite Policy

In order to ensure that any new respite service is efficient and sustainable, the Council is looking to introduce a policy that enables all adults with support needs to access respite fairly and equally. This policy will cap the amount of planned respite for which each service user is eligible, and will help to ensure that there is always support available during emergencies.

# 6. Next Steps

The Council proposes to give notice on the lease for Egerton Road, meaning it would no longer be available for respite after 31 December 2016. Prior to that all service users accessing the service - dependent on their choice - will have support to decide which alternative would be best for them. The main residential option will be the Shared Lives scheme, and if people choose to access Shared Lives a thorough matching process will be started early on. The Council proposes to develop a detailed mobilisation plan to ensure there is a smooth transition to the new service. This would be completed in partnership with carers and service users. We would propose to commence this in October 2016, allowing for a three month transition.

# 7. How to tell us what you think

Appendix A sets out our planned engagement for the final phase of this consultation over the coming period. It includes the opportunity to attend meetings, respond to questionnaires, and give feedback via our website.

In the meantime and throughout this period, you can contact us at;

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Appendix A - Final Phase Engagement and Timescales

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Date (week commencing)** | **Type of Consultation** | **People Being Consulted With** | **Notes** |
| **11 July 2016** | Window for face to face meetings begins (includes one to one meetings with carers and service users, and council attendance at any group meetings)  13 July – meeting with families and carers of current or recent Egerton Road service users  Copy of Draft Plan sent to carers who do not currently use respite but may in the future.  Draft plan and questionnaire sent to the Learning Disability Partnership Board and Working Together Group.  Consultation Document sent to a range of other voluntary agencies by RCVS | All stakeholders  Carers who have used respite to date  Carers who may use respite in the future  User representative groups  Voluntary Sector | One to one meetings will be offered for those who cannot make sessions and any other interested parties |
| **18 July 2016** | Face to face meetings continue | All stakeholders |  |
| **25 July 2016** | Face to face meetings continue | All stakeholders |  |
| **1 August 2016** | Face to face meetings continue | All stakeholders |  |
| **8 August 2016** | Face to face meetings continue | All stakeholders |  |
| **15 August 2016** | Face to face meetings continue  16 August - engagement event tentatively scheduled for those that could not attend 13 July | All stakeholders  Carers who have used respite to date |  |
| **Final engagement window ends 19 August 2016** | | | |
| **22 August 2016** | Begin to collate feedback |  |  |
| **29 August 2016** | Pre-arranged group and one to one meetings will continue into early September to allow for the summer holidays |  | Meetings in this window must be arranged before 5 August 2016 |
| **5 September 2016** | Pre-arranged group and one to one meetings will continue into early September to allow for the summer holidays |  | Meetings in this window must be arranged before 5 August 2016 |
| **Final report to be produced after all meetings** | | | |
| **Please note the above timetable may be subject to change** | | | |

# Appendix B – Outline of Shared Lives

Shared Lives is an alternative to home care and care homes for disabled adults and older people. As well as providing long-term placements, it also provides a respite service and is used by around 12,000 across large portions of the UK.

Shared Lives carers are paid and trained carers who deliver care from their own homes. The carer has to undergo a very rigorous recruitment process including police checks, financial checks, and references, as well as a review of the accessibility and safety of their property. If accepted as a Shared Lives carer, the individual has to undergo a thorough training programme to the same level as staff in care homes or a respite setting.

Shared Lives schemes manage the carers and provide safety checks on a continuous basis. A Shared Lives scheme is usually delivered by an independent commissioned provider with extensive experience. The scheme has to be registered with the Care Quality Commission, who in turn monitors the quality of all placements.

Prior to any placement, service users have the opportunity to meet the carer and assess for themselves their suitability and appeal. Whilst in placement, there is the opportunity to engage in community activities and for the cared for person to continue to build relationships. Shared Lives carers are given a brief to – where possible – uphold any existing commitments of the person they care for (for example weekly classes or social appointments), and to provide stimulation throughout their stay.

A Shared Lives Carer does not replace the important role a family have, but they can provide quality respite in Richmond-upon-Thames and provide regular carers with a much-needed break.