

Annex 1

LARCHWOOD SHORT BREAK ANNUAL REPORT 2013-14



Larchwood is a short break unit, providing short break respite care for children and young people with complex needs who have a learning and/or physical disability.

Larchwood short breaks allow disabled children and young people, aged up to 18 years, the opportunity to spend time away from their families. Short breaks can last from a few hours to a two day over night stay, and can include weekend over nights.

The breaks are pre planned, tailored to meet individual needs. Larchwood aims to create a positive experience where children are offered experiences and opportunities to achieve positive outcomes

1. Context and finance

- 1.1 This annual report should be read in conjunction with the Statement of Purpose, revised in April 2014. The Statement of Purpose provides more detail and sets out the legislative and regulatory context in which Larchwood Short Break Unit operates.
- 1.2 This report provides activity detail for the financial year April 2013-2014 and sets out the plans for service development for the year ahead.
- 1.3 The annual budget set for Larchwood 2013-2014 was £444K. The approximate actual spend was £435K.
- 1.4 There was also an income target of £58K which was exceeded with income totalling £109K.

1.5

The number of children receiving a service at Larchwood at the end of March 2014 : 26 (4 children left during the year & another 5 started)

The number of over nights during 2013/14 : 702

The number of tea visits (under 4 hours) : 60

The number of day care (over 4 hours) : 296

- 1.6 Currently, 15 children stay over night on a regular basis – nine stay once a week, two stay twice a week, five have weekend day care once a month, two have twice monthly tea visits, one has once a month weekend day care and three have twice monthly weekend overnight stays.
- 1.7 This has been another successful year for Larchwood. The management team / Larchwood have generated £109,000 worth of income. This is largely been due to successful applications for funding to Continuing Health Care Panel (£76K) for children and young people with challenging behaviour or complex health needs. The further £33K has been received from other local authorities placing children in the unit, both of which can fluctuate.

2. Referrals

- 2.1 Larchwood is a Specialist service are for those children and young people with a severe learning or physical disability or complex health need, who meet the current Children's Disability Service criteria and require a high level of service. Aiming High facilitates short breaks for children in Universal and Targeted need.

- 2.2 Currently Larchwood can be accessed as an outcome of a Children's Social Care Single Assessment. This process is under review inline with the implementation of personal budgets and use of a Resource Allocation System (RAS) the intention is to introduce a resource panel. The panel will assess and make decisions on social workers' requests to provide services to disabled children. Prior to any request being received at panel the social worker involved would have met with the child, family and assessed their needs using the Assessment Framework and RAS questionnaire.

3. Impact and outcomes.

- 3.1 Participation, during 2013/14 Larchwood support staff have worked keenly to increase opportunities for young people to become involved in decisions regarding Larchwood and the service delivery. The Titan's Teenage Group have successfully planned a trip for Fireworks Night to the London Dungeons. This group has also been consulted / involved in the Larchwood redecoration project and the development of a "Larchwood Friends" Tree in the reception area.
- 3.2 Young people continue to be encouraged to participate in a wide variety of ways. The shift plan has a section where staff can record comments and observations to support the development of the service. Examples include: "I would like an extra controller for the wii game so two people can play". Staff supported this young person to buy the devise during his visit.
- 3.3 Skill development - The travel training scheme has intensively supported one young person through the programme. This has increased the young person's independence and allowed them to walk to and from their local shop safely and independently.
- 3.4 Approaching adulthood - Three young people have been supported through transition from Larchwood into adult services. Larchwood worked closely with Adult Services, young people and their families during the year proceeding their 18th birthday to establish needs and aspirations. All three young transitioned to appropriate services for their needs and settled well.
- 3.5 Communication and Safe Guarding – An area of significant development during 2013/14. Whilst day to day image vocabulary was successfully used within Larchwood there was a need to develop child protection vocabulary. Whilst children and young people had tools to demonstrate what they wanted to eat for example , they did not have sufficient image vocabulary to communicate issues regarding their bodies and rights. A large display board in the playroom has been developed that has symbols available to support children's wishes and a tool has been developed to explore feelings with a mirror to encourage more self awareness. The bathroom areas have now got image vocabulary for feelings, rights , safety , personal care and sexuality.



One child regularly uses the “feelings” tool when she arrives and asks staff which “face” they are and indicates what she is, this has helped support workers atune with her emotional needs.

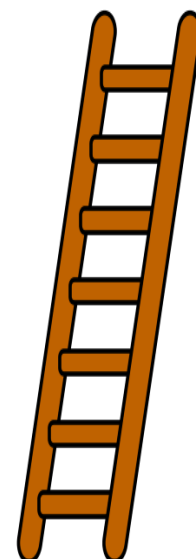
- 3.6 We have introduced audio switches with recorded requests for children who have limited or no verbal communication. These switches have facilitated increased choice and control, for example there is an audio switch at the lounge door which says “please may I leave the room”
- 3.7 Assited technology continues to be an area of development. With support from Aiming High Larchwood were provided with an ipad and autism apps. This has helped a number of young people increase their communication skills and has been invaluable.
- 3.8 Environment – The Larchwood playgrounds have undergone a significant refurbishment. This has been maintained to a high standard and we have a “Play Safe” certificate following an inspection of the equipment. Larchwood also have a “Pets as Therapy” dog, Jasper who visits when the children are here.
- 3.9 The physical environment is child friendly and managed with safety in mind. Larchwood works closely with the Aiming High behaviour support team, schools, parents and carers to ensure that challenging behaviour is managed in a child focused and consistent way. Seven of the staff team recieved “TeamTeach” training this year.
- 3.10 Many of the young people attending Larcchwood have done so for years, the client group is therefore significantly older than five years ago. Durign this year there has been a focused effort to update culture, language and ‘toys’ to be more age appropriate and akin with outcomes desired.

4 Upstairs Unit

- 4.1 The upper floor accommodation continues to be used by housing. Whilst this is independent of Larchwood, regular liasion is essentuial for the smooth running of both services.

5 Ofsted / Inspections

- 5.1 Larchwood were inspected in November 2013 and gained an overall judgement of “Good”, a service of high quality that exceeds minimum requirements with “Outstanding” for Outcomes for Children and Young People and Quality of Care. The reported stated “Staff work together well and there is a good team spirit which impatcs positively on the young people” This was followed in March 2014 with an interim inspection of ‘Good progress’. The report stated “Since the last inspection, much work has been done to evaluate the current level of service and to plan ahead for future areas of development for the coming year. The staff team are very proud of the young people’s achievements and the young people continue to receive well- planned care provided by a committed and competent staff team. Staff provide clear boundaries within a caring environment and the home has continued to provide young people with an excellent quality of care and enjoyable and fun visits”.



- 5.2 In line with the latest Ofsted requirements (Regulation 33) unannounced visits have been carried out each month by a member of the senior management from an independent team, accompanied several times a year by an Elected Member. These have been received positively and have assisted with the units ethos of continuous learning and development. A direct report on these visits is sent to Ofsted on a monthly basis.
- 5.3 From April 2014 a member of the Performance & Governance team, rather than a member of Children Social Care will undertake the Regulation 33 visits to ensure independence as required within the The Children's Homes and Looked after Children (Miscellaneous Amendments) (England) Regulations 2013.
- 5.4 Once again this year we have received no written complaints regarding the unit, and the consultation with young people and their families report a positive experience of having accessed a short break.

6 Current Staffing/Recruitment

Full time

- Unit manager (Maternity cover from June 2013- May 2014)
- Senior Practitioner
- Administrator
- 5 care officers

Part time

- Waking night care officer – 30hrs
- Cleaner – 30 hrs
- 1 x care officers – 18.5 hrs each

- 6.1 One staff member has retired and one part time worker has left. These hours are currently being covered by bank staff.
- 6.2 Larchwood is currently undergoing a review which will in part inform future service delivery and staffing needs. The report and outcomes are due for consideration at the beginning of June 2014.
- 6.3 Currently The unit is overseen by the Disabled Childrens Team Manager, who is managed by Head of Service, Sonia Johnson, and the named 'responsible person' for Larchwood.
- 6.4 Staff have undergone all statutory training, and additionally some bespoke training to address some more challenging behaviours exhibited from two of the young people.

The overall training experiences include -

- Debrief skills – one day course for all staff on managing emotions and each other after incidents
- Fire safety training
- Child Protection
- Team Teach

- Data protection
- Information handling
- Epilepsy training
- Food hygiene
- Safeguarding training
- I.L.M level 5 – (for the unit manager).

7 Developments/plans for the year ahead

- 7.1 Larchwood is recognised as a valuable resource with a motivated, skilled and committed staff team who care about the young people they support.
- 7.2 We are awaiting feedback report from the external evaluation for Larchwood which will assist us in exploring ways in which we can continue to develop and creatively reach a greater number of young people. Whichever direction 2014 takes us in the staff at Larchwood will strive to provide the very best service they can.

Additionally we are working on

- To increase efficiency, Larchwood intends to develop and encourage the use of emails for booking requests and confirmation dates.
- Whilst 'Goal Ladders' are working well for some of the children and young people, there remains a proportion of children with very complex and significant disabilities who need a more sensory approach to their 'progressive needs', rather than a task focused approach. Larchwood aim to introduce the use of 'Sensory Wheels' for some children, focusing on new experiences for those children who may not need or be able to learn new skills but may benefit from new tastes and sounds for example.
- Development of the Titans Group / participation of Young People and integration with youth services.
- Looking at ways to deliver an increased number of hours to an increased number of children.
- Looking forward Larchwood will work with other members of the specialist / Short Breaks service to update the short break sufficiency Statement, and develop a new three Year Plan for the service as a results of the changes from the SEND reform, the Local Offer work and reductions to the Aiming High spend.

Caroline Berry, Acting Unit Manager
 Sonia Johnson, Head of Service
 May 2014