

# LARCHWOOD SHORT BREAK UNIT ANNUAL REPORT April 2018 – March 2019



Larchwood is a short break unit, providing short breaks, respite care and activities in the community for children with complex needs who have a learning and/or physical disability. The service supports the permanency needs of children with disabilities and complex needs in their own families.

Larchwood short breaks provide children and young people with disabilities the opportunity to spend time away from their families in a planned way and for a specified period of time, in accordance with their assessed needs. This could be for a few hours at a time, for community activities (Larchwood On the Move) or overnight stays, on a regular basis.

The time that young people spend at Larchwood is tailored to individual need. Larchwood is a positive environment creating experiences and unlocking opportunities that are aspirational for children and young people, whose achievements are celebrated. Larchwood contributes significantly to children's permanency needs being met within their own families throughout their minority.

The outcome of the unit's most recent full Ofsted inspection on the 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> of December 2018 was overall 'Outstanding' with the overall experiences and progress of children and young people as 'Outstanding', how Larchwood children and young people are helped and protected as Outstanding and the effectiveness of leaders and managers also as 'Outstanding'. Furthermore there were no recommendations or requirements from this inspection.

## **1 Context and Finance**

- 1.1** This annual report provides evidence that Larchwood delivers services in line with the Council's narrative of value for money, opportunities to thrive and contributing to safe and self-reliant communities. Furthermore it provides details of activity over the financial year April 2018 – March 2019 and sets out the plans for continuous improvement for the year ahead.
- 1.2** The report should be read in conjunction with the Statement of Purpose revised in April 2019. Services are delivered under the Children's Homes (England) Regulations (2015), associated Quality Standards (2015) and the Social Care Common Inspection Framework (2017). The Statement of Purpose provides more service delivery detail and sets out the legislative and regulatory context in which Larchwood Short Break Unit operates.
- 1.3** The annual budget for Larchwood staffing and running costs for this period was £454,630, and the total spend was £416,482. Positively this was offset by an income target of £106,360 and our actual income generated was £109,884. Therefore the actual cost to the Council was £306,597.
- 1.4** Larchwood continues to provide an extremely high package of care to one individual who, without this support, would most certainly require a full time care placement. Currently Larchwood provide short breaks to two young people who are 'Children Looked After'. Additionally all the children attending Larchwood have complex needs and the provision provides services to prevent escalation of need.
- 1.5** The number of individual children receiving a service at Larchwood as at the end of March 2019 is 20 (compared with last year's figure of 18).
- 1.6** Three children have left over the course of the year, successfully transitioning to adult services. Another young person moved to a residential placement where by their needs are being fully met. Eight new children have joined Larchwood in this time.
- The number of overnights during 2018/19 : 471 (524 in 17/18)
  - The number of tea visits (under 4 hours): 144 (112 in 17/18)
  - The number of day care (over 4 hours): 282 (273 in 17/18)
- 1.7** The total number of children currently receiving an overnight provision as of March 2019 is ten, two of these young people are 'Children Looked After'. The remaining provision is a combination of overnights, tea visits, day care, Teenage Group, and 'On the Move' activities (Child In Need).

## **2 Referrals**

- 2.1** Larchwood is a specialist service for children and young people who meet the criteria for services from the Children's Specialist Support Team (CSST). To ensure fair access and the right offer to meet need, referrals from the CSST are discussed by a multi-agency group at the monthly Resource Allocation

System (RAS) Panel. This also offers an opportunity to look at joint arrangements with representatives from Heath, community Short Breaks (Kids) and the Special Educational Needs (SEN) Team attending this panel.

2.2 Children with additional needs who do not meet the criteria for Larchwood are signposted to the community Short Break Services, also run by the CSST.

### 3 Impact and outcomes

3.1 Impact and outcomes are reviewed under the nine Quality Standards (Children's Homes Regulations, April 2015) as follows:

#### 3.1.1 Quality and purpose of care

3.1.1.1 The Unit Manager is required to undertake evaluations of the unit at least every six months under regulation 45. These reports focus on the Children's Homes Quality Standards. The reports are comprehensive and are used to set targets in improving service delivery. Each report has a detailed action plan for improvements with SMART targets.

#### 3.1.2 Children's views, wishes and feelings

3.1.2.1 The children and young people are actively involved in and encouraged to make decisions and choices in relation to matters within the home. This year there has been a consultation on the redecoration of the lounge and the purchasing of new sofas, rainy day activities, hobbies and interests and the planning and implementation of the very successful annual Larchwood party, which this year was a beach party. Individual requests have consisted of a chess set and iPad downloads. Evidence of all consultations are displayed in a colourful, tactile and child focused manner.



**3.1.2.2 Larchwood was last inspected in December 2018 by Ofsted, graded as Outstanding in all areas.** Ofsted reported Children are involved in a range of activities that really enhance their experience. Over the past year, they have met their social workers informally taken part innovative ideas that support new skills, learning about other cultures, promoting healthy lifestyles, and having fun’.

### **3.1.3 Education**

**3.1.3.1** Termly meetings take place consistently throughout the school year between Larchwood and the Unit Manager, Kennel Lane School and now also Manor Green School. Larchwood support workers, also attend children’s annual reviews and their key school targets inform our practice with regards to the Children’s individual smart stars. Larchwood continue to provide educational materials and toys for the children and young people to access. The home is decorated with educational posters and easy access to all items.

**3.1.3.2** Ofsted report December 2018 ‘Preparation for adulthood begins formally when children reach the age of 14. However, the Larchwood support staff actively promote independence from the moment a child begins to use the service. Children learn to maintain and or develop self-help and social skills linked to clear targets, which are linked to other plans.

Educational items are displayed in all communal areas of the home, this is a picture of the left hand side play area.



### **3.1.4 Enjoyment and Achievement**

**3.1.4.1** Children and young people co planned the hugely successful Larchwood Beach Party in June 2018. They have also celebrated Eid and Harvest Festival, and participated in a sponsored walk for charity.

The Teenage Group have explored topics such as health and safety and hobbies and interests.

- 3.1.4.2** Larchwood have also undertaken outings to Beale Park, Tri-lakes, Marwell Zoo, Foot Golf, Pottery Painting, restaurants, coffee shops, cinema, bowling, and local parks.



- 3.1.4.3** The independent shopping / cooking sessions continue to see great results with regards to young peoples' confidence and skills. It is also a way for the children to try new foods.

- 3.1.4.4** Larchwood continues to have cultural and diversity events which have included a World at War week, this was enjoyed by all children and young people and entailed themed meals, ration boxes, dress up clothes, and educational materials. The home was decorated with bunting and hanging model aeroplanes and displays were up of the children and young people's art work. This was a truly wonderful educational event which engaged everyone through visual, practical and sensory/tasting opportunities.

### **3.1.5 Health and well-being**

- 3.1.5.1** Support workers continue to receive training and updates in individual health care plans which include gastrostomy feeding, administration of rectal paraldehyde, buccal midazolam and growth hormone injections. Support workers continue to support children and young people with making healthy food and lifestyle choices. The sponsored walk enabled all our children and young people to take part in a 2 mile event which raised £479 for cancer research. This year Larchwood are planning a Healthy Living event as our annual party.

- 3.1.5.2** Larchwood still offers a Sleep Clinic service and works alongside the behaviour specialist and the family worker within Children's Specialist Support team. The sleep clinic service has delivered a presentation to the Adapted Webster Stratton parenting course which received very positive feedback



### **3.1.6 Positive relationships**

**3.1.6.1** Larchwood continue to work closely with parents/carers and professionals. Larchwood promotes a 'friendship matters' culture where children with disabilities are encouraged to make friends and interact with peers. Children and young people's transitions are carefully planned and special celebrations are tailored to the individual's interests. This year Larchwood have implemented the 'Ready Steady Go' transition leaflets which support the young person to work together with parents/professionals in identifying their current skills and working towards achieving independence.

**3.1.6.2** Larchwood have undertaken a parent/carer and professionals consultation and acted upon feedback given. Whilst both delivered overwhelmingly positive results, Larchwood believe that with this process of regular consultation they can continue to promote positive and open relationships with others and continue their ethos of joined up working to provide good services to our children and young people.

### **3.1.7 Protection of children**

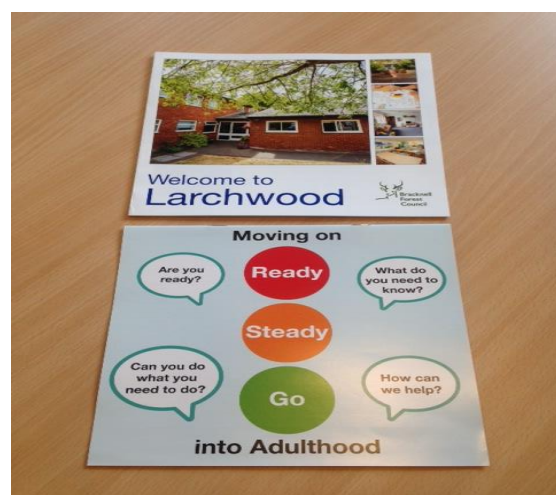
**3.1.7.1** Larchwood's safeguarding policy was updated in July 18 and amended March 19. It contains specific details on the use of the varying forms of communication, guidance on non-mobile bruising and management/ on call arrangements. The Unit Manager attends relevant child protection and core groups and conferences, ensuring care plans are kept relevant. Our complaints guidance details how Larchwood strive to recognise and respond to complaints from non-verbal children and young people.

### 3.1.8 Leadership and Management

- 3.1.8.1** Larchwood is part of the Children's Specialist Support Team (CSST) and Larchwood meet as a management team quarterly alongside quarterly CSST joint team meetings. Larchwood have attended the recent annual Children's Services Away Day, this provided us with learning and networking opportunities.
- 3.1.8.2** The Registered Manager is now supervised directly by the Head of Service for Children's Specialist Support (Registered Responsible Individual); this new structure affords a greater oversight for the role of the Registered Responsible Individual.
- 3.1.8.3** The management team work closely together to enable continuous improvement. The unit manager attends the RAS and support workers represent Larchwood at the quarterly frontline liaison meetings and at the Children's Social Care participation group. As a management team Larchwood are aware of the importance of good staff supervision to ensure good outcomes for children and 1-1's are provided at all levels in accordance with policy.
- 3.1.8.4** The team continues to be fully staffed with permanent workers. Maternity leave has been covered with the use of relief support workers and occasional agency use. This has not impacted on the level of care provided. Larchwood are about to recruit to 1.5 posts due to requests from full time staff to reduce their hours. Larchwood are excited about the opportunities that this will bring.

### 3.1.9 Care Planning

- 3.1.9.1** The updated 'Children's Guide' to Larchwood captures the daily routines within the home and incorporates the photos of the newly decorated lounge and bedroom areas. It also has a link to the digital version, which captures the atmosphere of the home.  
<https://youtu.be/lZvAucu2UJU>
- 3.1.9.2** Ofsted report (Dec 18) says 'When new children move in, they do so in a planned way. Managers and staff take time to gather information from a range of people to ensure that they can meet the individual and complex needs of the children. Working in partnership with parents, managers and staff ensure that plans are personalised and written to help provide continuity of care at home, at school and during short breaks'.
- 3.1.9.3** Behaviour support plans are in place for all the children and young people and a system is in place for reviewing incidents on a regular basis with the Intensive Behaviour Support Specialist (CSST).



**3.1.9.4** Comprehensive risk profiles are in place for all children and young people and Larchwood support workers continue to attend CIN/CLA reviews and Education reviews.

## **4 Ofsted Inspections**

**4.1** Larchwood is inspected by Ofsted at a maximum frequency of twice yearly. Following the introduction of the new Social Care Common Inspection Framework (SCCIF) in February 2017, providers judged as Good or Outstanding are inspected only once a year following a risk assessment completed by Ofsted. The SCCIF has also introduced two limiting and graded judgement areas. How Larchwood children and young people are helped and protected is a limiting judgement; this means that if inspectors judge this to be inadequate, then the overall experiences and progress judgement will always be inadequate. The effectiveness of leaders and managers is a graded judgement; if inspectors judge this area to be inadequate, this is likely to lead to a judgement of inadequate, and certainly no more than requires improvement for overall experiences and progress. Inspectors will make the limiting and graded judgements first so that they can take these into account for the 'overall progress and experiences' judgement.

**4.2** The full inspection held in December 2018 judged Larchwood as 'Outstanding' in all areas. Quotes below:

- The children's home provides highly effective services that consistently exceed the standards of good. The actions of the children's home contribute to significantly improved outcomes and positive experiences for children and young people who need help, protection and care.
- The registered manager has created a culture where children receive safe and effective care. Skilled staff understand the children's vulnerabilities and are extremely vigilant and recognise issues or concerns, which they respond to and report immediately. Senior managers ensure that their knowledge is up to date, using a variety of methods including learning from serious case reviews.
- The internal monitoring arrangements are comprehensive. The responsible individual is an integral part of the system and together with the registered manager, has very good oversight of the service.

## **5 Staffing Profile**

### **5.1 Full time**

- Responsible Individual
- Registered Unit Manager
- Senior Practitioner
- 4 Care Officers

### **5.2 Part time**

- Waking Night Care Officer – 30 hours
- Administrator – 30 hours
- Domestic – 30 hours
- 3 Care Officers – 20 hours each



- 5.3** The Registered Unit Manager Samantha Whitehouse is based full time at Larchwood and is line managed by Lou Richer Interim Head of Service CSST, who is the named 'Registered Responsible Individual' for Larchwood.
- 5.4** All employees have undertaken the required statutory training, and additional training is provided in accordance with need. Larchwood have four joint team meetings with the Children's Specialist Support Team per year.
- 5.5** The overall training experiences include -
- Child Sexual Exploitation
  - E-safety
  - Fire Safety
  - Team Teach
  - Information Security and Data Protection
  - Information handling
  - Epilepsy
  - Food Hygiene
  - Safeguarding
  - First Aid
  - Manual Handling
  - Prevent
  - Motivation and Team Morale
  - Managing Resilience

## **6 Developments/plans for the year ahead**

- 6.1** Over the coming year Larchwood will lead a piece of work in collaboration with the CSST to explore the impact of work to support young people in transition to adulthood, and to further inform our practice around this crucial area of work in the future. This will involve tracking outcomes for young people who have transitioned in recent years, looking at whether they have remained living with their families, and identifying their achievements in terms of education, training and employment.
- 6.2** In addition Larchwood will contribute to and embrace the recommendations and opportunities that arise from the People Directorate's Transformation programme.

Samantha Whitehouse  
Registered Unit Manager

Lou Richer  
Registered Responsible Individual

April 2019