

# HOUSING CABINET MEMBER MEETING

## Agenda Item 49

Brighton & Hove City Council

<b>Subject</b>	<b>Learning Disability Short Breaks Policy</b>		
<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	<b>10<sup>th</sup> September 2008</b>		
<b>Report of:</b>	<b>Director Adult Social Care and Housing</b>		
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	<b>Name: Naomi Cox</b>	<b>Tel: 295550</b>	
	<b>E-mail: naomi.cox@brighton-hove.gov.uk</b>		
<b>Key Decision:</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Forward Plan No. HSG 2635</b>	
<b>Wards Affected:</b>	<b>All</b>		

### FOR GENERAL RELEASE

#### 1. SUMMARY AND POLICY CONTEXT:

- 1.1 In January 2008 a report on Learning Disability Short Breaks was taken to the Adult Social Care Committee and the following recommendations were approved:
- a. That the Committee agrees to a period of formal consultation with existing and where possible future users of short break services for adults with learning disabilities regarding the use of the proposed short breaks assessment.
  - b. Subject to formal consultation that the outcome of this consultation is brought back to the Adult Social Care Committee for a decision to be made regarding the Short Breaks Policy and the use of a short breaks assessment.
- 1.2 In line with local and national priorities the Brighton and Hove Learning Disability Services recognise the importance of family carers in supporting people with learning disabilities to remain in the family home in their local communities. Short breaks for the family and the person they care for are an important part of the care package of support for carers. Currently 58 families receive short breaks at the Councils directly provided short breaks service (Pioneer House) and 28 families receive short breaks in the independent and voluntary sector some via Adult Placements.

- 1.3 The need for breaks from caring is well documented nationally and locally. Short Breaks are valued by family carers and people with learning disabilities. Mencaps national campaign in 2003 highlighted the need for short breaks for families so they could continue caring for their relatives with learning disabilities. The need for 'Time Off' is one of the key principles of the 'Brighton and Hove Carers Strategy 2006-09' which states that :
- All carers have a right to a life outside caring.
  - Provide breaks services that work in partnership with carers and cared for, are flexible, give confidence, can be trusted and are a positive experience for the user and meet their individual needs
  - Provide a range of breaks to carers and cared for that offer choice and flexibility”

## **2. RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- 2.1 That the Housing Cabinet Member approve the short breaks policy and assessment tool.
- 2.2 That the That the Housing Cabinet Member authorise that the short breaks policy be implemented from the beginning of October 2008.

## **3. RELEVANT BACKGROUND INFORMATION/CHRONOLOGY OF KEY EVENTS:**

- 3.1 Brighton and Hove City Council directly provide short breaks to adults with a learning disability and their families via Pioneer House. Historically the service has a waiting list where families may wait up to three years for a short break because of limited capacity.
- 3.2 Some families have large amounts of respite and some very little as the assessment tool for allocating short breaks has not been effective. Many families choose to use their allocation of nights at weekends leaving Pioneer full at weekends and running under capacity mid-week.
- 3.3 The new short breaks policy will ensure that all families will have a short break and that the number of nights they receive is allocated fairly and according to need. Families will only be able to book a limited number of weekend stays and will have to use the remainder of their allocation mid-week which will ensure that everyone has the opportunity to have a short break at weekends and that Pioneer will be more effectively used throughout the week.
- 3.4 The proposed short breaks policy and the assessment tool is attached as appendix 1.

## 4 CONSULTATION

- 4.1 The formal consultation period began on the 25.2.08. Everyone who uses Pioneer House was sent a copy of the draft short breaks policy and the assessment tool which would be used to allocate the number of nights families received. 24 responses were received in writing and 11 of these were from families who were not happy with the proposed changes. The manager of Pioneer House met with these families to discuss their individual situations and explain what the new policy would mean for them. For 8 families they had not understood the policy and their short breaks package would not change as much as they had thought.
- 4.2 A meeting for carers who use Pioneer House was held on the 27<sup>th</sup> March which 21 families attended. Feedback was given and the draft policy was amended to allow for more flexibility in booking short breaks and the process and the way short breaks could be booked was made clearer.
- 4.3 After this meeting every family was assessed using the proposed assessment tool and informed of the number of nights they would receive under the draft policy. There were 11 families who would receive less respite than they currently do and the manager at Pioneer met with them to discuss their personal circumstances and negotiated their new allocation. For three families their existing number of nights was honoured, the other families although they had more nights allocated under the old policy they had not used their full allocation each year and so a compromise was negotiated.
- 4.4 All relevant stakeholders were also sent a copy of the draft short breaks policy and feedback requested. The people consulted with were the community learning disability team, the children's disability team, the transitions care manager, the Carers Centre, Amaze, in-house day services and the carers care manager. The feedback received (from 2 stakeholders) was mostly around the way in which the policy would be implemented, no direct responses about the content of the policy were received.
- 4.5 Service users were also consulted with. Speak Out the main advocacy support group were visited and the draft policy discussed and people who use Pioneer House were asked their views about the proposals. This included accessible letters, speaking directly with their key workers and the service user forums that run at Pioneer. The feedback received mainly focused around people wanting to remain in their friendship groups when staying at the weekends and that they could still use Pioneer at the weekends. Most people understood that Pioneer cannot accommodate everyone at weekends and that some stays would need to be mid-week.
- 4.6 A final meeting was held on the 8.7.08 so that families had a chance to comment on the final version.

## **5 FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:**

### **5.1 Financial Implications:**

There are no direct financial implications arising from the recommendations made in this report. However, the proposed policy will help to ensure that Pioneer House is better occupied during the week and reduce the need for purchasing of weekend short breaks with independent providers. This should lead to a corresponding reduction in the unit costs of the service.

*Finance Officer consulted: Mike Bentley*

*Date 23/6/08*

### **5.2 Legal Implications:**

Individuals should be identified as needing respite care via an assessment carried out under the National Health Service and Community Care Act 1990, which also includes an assessment of carers' needs under the Carers Recognition and Services Act 1995.

As the Council is seeking to introduce a new policy regarding respite care, and this could change the entitlement to respite care that a number of families have under the existing scheme, a consultation exercise should be carried out with those potentially affected, prior to any decision being taken by Members on adoption of the policy.

*Lawyer consulted .Serena Kynaston*

*Date 24/6/08*

### **5.3 Equalities Implications:**

People with learning disabilities are a disadvantaged group. An Equalities Impact Assessment for all of Learning Disability Services is due to be undertaken later this year

### **5.4 Sustainability Implications:**

There are no direct implications arising from this report.

### **5.5 Risk and Opportunity Management Implications:**

Development of policy in this area will be undertaken with due regard to appropriate risk assessment requirements.

### **5.6 Corporate / Citywide Implications:**

There are no direct implications arising from this report.

## **6 EVALUATION OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTION(S):**

- 6.1 The alternative option was to leave the short breaks service as it was which would result in an inequitable allocation for families, a long waiting list for weekend breaks and the under use of Pioneer House in the week.

## **7 REASONS FOR REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 7.1 Adopting a fair and transparent system for assessing need and allocating short breaks for family carers.

## **SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION**

### **Appendices:**

Appendix 1 short breaks policy and assessment tool.

### **Documents In Members' Rooms:**

None

### **Background Documents**

- a) Mencap – Breaking Point – A Report on Caring without a break for children and adults with severe and profound learning disabilities (2003)
- b) Family Matters – Valuing People 2001
- c) Valuing People Now – Consultation Dec 07
- d) Brighton and Hove Multi-Agency Carers' Strategy 2006-2009
- e) Report of Adult Social Care Committee 28<sup>th</sup> January 2008 – Learning Disability Short Breaks Policy.

