

Learning Disability Services

UPDATE ON PLAN TO CLOSE No.1 THE GRANGE

Report to Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland
Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee, 17 March 2008

1. Introduction

This paper provides an update on the reports provided to the Committee at its meetings on 17 December 2007 and 11 February 2008, regarding the future provision of health short break services for people with learning disabilities currently provided at No.1 The Grange, Rubicon Close and Tournament Road.

It summarises the background to the decision to close the facility at No.1 The Grange, updates on the current situation in terms of work undertaken, notes communications with families using the service, and references other work relating to short break services that is taking place in the health and social care community.

The way forward is then set out for the next 6 months with regard to the availability of the facility for families, financial impact, governance arrangements with partners, and partnership working on future developments of the short break services.

2. Background

LPT provides short breaks, or respite services, from three homes: No.1 The Grange, Tournament Road and Rubicon Close. During 2007-08 a capacity analysis across the three homes identified a degree of spare capacity sufficient to consider providing the service from two sites instead of three. In September 2007, and in the context of pressures to secure savings for the 2007-08 and 2008-09 Cost Improvement Programme, the decision was taken to close No.1 The Grange at 31 December 2007. This approach was supported by Primary Care Trust and Local Authority commissioners of the service.

In December 2007, LPT decided to defer the closure of No.1 The Grange to 31 March 2008 in order to allow more time to:

- consult with families using the service;
- upgrade the environments at Rubicon Close and Tournament Road in the light of risk assessments;
- determine the additional training requirements for staff working in the redesigned service;
- review the process and criteria for referrals to the service;
- assess the potential impact of a changed client care mix as result of closing one of the homes;
- determine the allocation of short breaks in the light of a changing care mix;
- assess the findings of LPT's review into the decision and process of the proposed closure;
- consider the potential consequences on the service of the Local Authority Short Breaks Strategy Review and LPT's 2012 service model for Learning Disability Services.

3. Current Situation

Work undertaken to date has shown that sufficient numbers of appropriately trained staff can be made available to provide the health short break service in the remaining two homes. Also, it is possible to change the fabric and environment of the remaining homes in order to provide a safe physical environment for clients.

However, LPT has concerns about the care and management of clients with very different physical and psychological needs in the same setting. Whilst some of these concerns can be addressed through careful allocation of short break periods to avoid an inappropriate mix of care needs, this could result in some families experiencing a different pattern of short break service than previously.

Families of clients who use all three of LPT's respite homes raised similar concerns at a meeting with LPT on 27 February 2008 that was facilitated by CLASP.

The Local Authority Short Breaks Strategy Review is expected to reach its conclusions by August 2008. Formal consultation on the health Learning Disability Services 2012 service model is currently scheduled to take place during May-August 2008 as part of the local health and social care community 'Our NHS, Our Future: Next Stage Review'.

Finally, the review of the process leading to the decision to close No.1 The Grange highlights the need for improved governance arrangements between health and Local Authority partners in order to have clear accountability and understanding of their respective roles and responsibilities.

4. Proposed Way Forward

Given the current concerns relating to managing care mix, LPT considers that further time is needed to allow more detailed work to take place. Consequently, LPT no longer plans to close No.1 The Grange at the end of March 2008. The service will remain open for a further six months, until 30 September 2008. This decision was ratified by the LPT Trust Board at its meeting on 6 March 2008.

The postponement will allow for further planning work to take place that will inform the future arrangements required to manage the care mix appropriately across the service; it will also allow for the plans to be developed in the context of the Local Authority Short Breaks Strategy Review.

During the next 6 months further assessments of clients' continuing health needs will be undertaken. Options will also be explored for the way short breaks are planned and booked, in order to help with the management of the care mix.

The postponement will enable further discussion to take place with partners on the changes required in health short break services, in the context of the whole system of short break services and the emerging findings of the Local Authority Short Breaks Strategy Review.

Governance arrangements involving all partners will be put in place in order to ensure effective decision-making about short break services over the next 6 months and in the longer term.

It is proposed that the future provision of health short break services is included in the 'Our NHS, Our Future: Next Stage Review' consultation. This consultation will propose a future service model for health Learning Disability Services which focuses on providing highly specialist services for people with complex psychological and physical health needs. The consultation will provide carers with a formal process for providing and recording their views.

In addition, ongoing engagement of carers is planned through existing carer groups linked to the Partnership Boards and the Short Break Strategy Review. A follow-up meeting will be scheduled for about 3 months' time, with the carers involved in the recent meeting facilitated by CLASP.

In the meantime, carers have been advised of their bookings for health short break services for the period up to the end of September 2008.

The Trust's decision to keep No.1 The Grange open for a further 6 months has been informed by the views of carers and discussions with members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. It will, nevertheless, impose an additional cost pressure on LPT, which is being accounted for in the Trust's 2008-09 financial plan. The Trust's willingness to accept this cost pressure is an indication of the responsible approach and serious consideration that LPT has given to this matter.

10 March 2008