

Consultation Feedback and Responses

This document gives details of the feedback received from parents, carers and other interested parties during the consultation and gives the Executive Group's responses to the feedback. In addition to this written response there will be an opportunity for parents and carers to meet with members of the Executive Group to discuss how these changes will affect the care to their child.

Throughout the process of review and consultation the Executive Group have sought to reassure parents and carers that the changes are being carried out in order to maintain, secure and improve the first rate service for families in the long term.

The proposed changes at Woodlands will not impact on the availability of the service to meet the agreed care plans for children currently using the service. Children's care plans are regularly reviewed by Children's Social Care in order to ensure that support is meeting the needs of the child and family.

It is intended that the management team will ensure that parents, carers and young people using the service will be actively involved in the monitoring and evaluation of the service.

The new service will fall under a more rigorous Ofsted inspection framework which will include one unannounced and one announced visit a year. This will build upon the recent positive Ofsted Inspection for the residence in November 2009.

This document has been set out with the comments in letters in bold with the response below. Where there is duplication comments have only been included once and have also been grouped together under headings.

1. The need for change

Comment

“Not enough context regarding the changing regional role of the residence and school. The omission of the context meant that the work done already by the school has not been acknowledged in the proposal”

Response

Woodlands School Residence developed a short break service for social care and health with the closure of Trengweth in September 2005. Until this time Woodlands Residence had only been used by Education for 4 nights of the week Monday – Thursday.

Woodlands Residence: Response to feedback from Parents, Carers and Governors.

The Residence now provides overnight short breaks for children with disabilities for 50 weeks of the year 7 nights a week and is being used by Devon and Cornwall. This expansion of the service into short break provision highlighted a number of issues:-

- There are 3 staff teams working alongside each other
- Members of staff working in the same role have different terms and conditions and contracts of employment
- The management team is term time only
- There is a shortfall between the cost of the service and the income

In order to achieve our high aspirations to meet the standards set by the national agendas of Every Child Matters, Better Care Better Lives and Aiming High for Disabled Children an independent Consultant has been brought in to undertake a review of the existing service and to support and advise the Executive Group over changes needed to meet the standards. The Consultant has considerable skill, experience and expertise on all of the above national agendas.

2. Children from Devon and Cornwall using the Residence

Comment

“Children accessing schools in Plymouth will go elsewhere and not attend Plymouth schools if they cannot access the residence on a weekly basis.”

“Plymouth should sell beds to other authorities to create additional funding to pay more staff.”

Response

One third of children currently using Residence are from outside Plymouth. This is only viable financially if places are made available at a price that reflects the full cost of the placement. The marketing of places to neighbouring Local Authorities has been taken into account in the proposal.

Plymouth City Council has involved our neighbouring authorities from the outset with the proposed changes to the Residence. Devon and Torbay met with staff from Plymouth Children and Young People’s Trust on the 26th June 2009. They took the opportunity to look around Residence and talk to Plymouth staff about the sort of service they want to buy from us in the future. Cornwall were not able to let Plymouth know their future requirements at that time but a meeting has been arranged with Cornwall to discuss in detail their future requirements.

Woodlands Residence: Response to feedback from Parents, Carers and Governors.

3. Are we doing what it says in Every Child Matters, Aiming High for Disabled Children and Department of health Better Care Better Lives?

Comment

“The proposal does not comply with the Every Child Matters agenda particularly Being Healthy, Staying Safe and Enjoying and Achieving or embrace the aims of the Aiming High for Disabled Children agenda or DOH Strategy”

Every Child Matters

being healthy: enjoying good physical and mental health and living a healthy lifestyle

staying safe: being protected from harm and neglect

enjoying and achieving: getting the most out of life and developing the skills for adulthood

DOH Strategy Better Care Better Lives “Most of the children who have life limiting conditions or who require palliative care will be disabled children. The strategy aims to improve the outcomes and experiences for young people and their families.”

Response

The principles of “Every Child Matters” and “Better Care Better Lives” informs the way in which we provide services. They identify that organisations need to ensure that quality is achieved through high standards of training and skills development of staff.

Plymouth has signed up to the Every Disabled Child Matters Campaign Charter and this underpins the way in which we provide our services.

Aiming High for Disabled Children

The vision behind Aiming High is for all families to have the support they need to lead ordinary lives. The Government has recognised that the needs of disabled children and their families are best met through a personal and tailored response from both universal and specialist services.

Aiming High says that disabled Children and their families should be able to access a range of short breaks not just residential short breaks.

Short Break services in Plymouth are in the process of being transformed following the Aiming High Full Service Offer agenda from the Government which requires Local Authorities to provide a wide menu of services for disabled children and their families to access.

The Aiming High agenda requires services to focus on outcomes for children and young people as well as the break that is provided for the carer.

Woodlands Residence: Response to feedback from Parents, Carers and Governors.

4. Consultation Process

Comment

The document was issued by the Wood View Executive group on behalf of the Federated Governing body of Wood View learning Community without first being discussed by the full Governing body.

Response

The Executive Group was established by the Governors of Wood View Learning Community in March 2009 in order to develop and move forward in a way that means a more efficient service is delivered within a balanced budget.

The task of the Executive was to undertake a review and to recommend a way forward with the work and the consultation was undertaken within this context.

Comment

Why is the consultation being undertaken on behalf of the governing body and not PCC due to significant changes to Woodlands School?

Response

The Executive Group chaired by the Director of the Wood View Learning Community and has representation from Trust partners:-

Head of Service	Plymouth Children's Integrated Disability Team
Senior Personnel	Advisor Plymouth City Council
Residence Governor	Wood View Learning Community
Parent Governor	Wood View Learning Community
Parent	Woodlands Residence
Senior Administrator	Woodlands School & Residence
Head Teacher	Woodlands School & Residence
Commissioning Officer	Plymouth City Council

The Executive group is advised by Karen Castle, the independent consultant whose time has been funded by Plymouth City Council.

Comment

- **Consultation is not taking place because there is a proposal put forward and the views of parents have not been taken into account**
- **Parents want to see the other 3 options that were not put forward as proposals so that parents can ensure that the service is needs led not finance led.**

Response

The Executive Group have met with parents, carers staff and Unions formally on 3 occasions to share information and listen to the views of parents and carers. The first meeting with parents was at an initial stage of the work.

As a result of these meetings parents and staff views have been incorporated into the development of, and helped to shape the final proposal. For example, the original staffing levels have been amended taking into account the views and concerns voiced by parents at an initial consultation meeting held in June.

The Executive group developed the proposal to go out to consultation so that staff and parents/carers would have something on which they can comment and consider. It would be irresponsible not to put together a proposal on which people can comment.

During the deliberations over previous months there have been a number of options considered by the Executive Group. The final proposal is the only option that is considered to be viable whilst at the same time meeting the long term needs of families.

5 Staffing Ratios

Comment

Staffing ratio of 4:6 children with a nurse as part of the team will restrict activities and put children at risk. Parents state that 1:1 is the minimum needed for safety and to access activities

Response

The safety of children and young people in the residence is our paramount concern in this proposal. Currently there is no 1:1 ratio of staff to children. The staffing levels change across the week and dependent on whether it is holiday or term time. The new service will develop a consistency over the number of children and young people accessing the service across the year with a corresponding consistent level of staffing. The manager will shape staffing levels to meet the needs across the day.

This is the minimum staffing ratio and if during the assessment process it is identified that a child needs over and above this level staffing will be provided in addition to the minimum staffing level of 4:6 children

In addition to the 4:6 minimum staffing in the new structure there are additional posts. These are for a Cook, Housekeeper and an administrator these are year round posts so care staff will not be required to take on these extra duties.

6. Management Issues

Comment

Families are suffering because of PCC poor management

Response

The current changes are not due to poor financial management on the part of the Residence or Plymouth City Council but are as a result of having to adapt

Woodlands Residence: Response to feedback from Parents, Carers and Governors.

the service to meet the changing nature and number of children coming to the service today and anticipated for the future.

Following the expansion of the service when Trengweath closed in 2005 Plymouth City Council and Woodlands School have been pro-active and undertook a self review and identified the issues already detailed in 1.3

The current consultation is the result of the work that has now been undertaken in order to secure and improve services for families for the long term.

7. Line management

Comment

“Recommend as part of his Performance Management and CPD he (The Director of Wood View Learning Community) urgently take part in appropriate Disability Awareness Training.”

Response

The Director of Wood View Learning Community has requested that disability awareness training is included in his performance management targets.

The Executive Group would like to reassure parents and carers that the changes are being carried out in order to maintain, secure and improve the first rate service for families in the long term.

The proposed changes at Woodlands will not impact on the availability of the service to meet the agreed care plans for children currently using the service. Children's care plans are regularly reviewed by Children's Social Care in order to ensure that support is meeting the needs of the child and family.

In addition to this written response Executive Group members will be available to meet with parents and carers individually to discuss how these changes will affect the care to their child. The enclosed letter gives details of how you will be able to book either a face to face time with members of the executive Group or telephone times can be booked if this is more convenient.