

WEST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE COUNCIL

Children, Education and Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee

25th September 2023

Report Title	Children and Young People’s Short Breaks and Respite – Proposed New Model and Engagement
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Purpose of Report

The purpose of the report is to share with the Scrutiny Committee the work undertaken to engage stakeholders on the potential development of a new model for short breaks for children with disabilities, the feedback received from parents, carers and professionals and to seek the views of the Committee on an emerging proposed model based on that feedback.

1. Executive Summary

The report sets out the background and rationale to a proposed redesign of short breaks for children with disabilities so that it can provide a more fit for purpose set of services that meet family’s needs and the operational imperative to work towards a new contract and delivery model by April 2024. The paper includes details of the public engagement activities undertaken for the children and young people’s short breaks services so far and an update on the next steps.

The report sets out the details of the case for change, the proposed new model, how it will be funded, how it will be different from the current model and the outcomes it will achieve.

The Short Breaks project to look at the redesign has been a collaboration across system partners, in particular Northamptonshire Children's Trust (NCT) and the Northamptonshire Integrated Care Board (NICB), the existing providers and most of all with parents and families. The aim was to find an innovative solution to ensure the sustainability of these vital services that support families with children with complex needs but also increase the choice and quality of what's on offer. This will ensure that services are able to cater for those children with the most complex health needs and disabilities who currently find it a challenge to access non-residential short breaks.

This committee report is timed to engage the Committee as we launch a final public consultation on the proposed model across all stakeholders and following for targeted engagement with families and children on the potential design now proposed. Throughout September and October we will be looking to engage the widest possible set of stakeholders and reach out through an electronic survey, provider events, parent and practitioner workshops and at community events to ensure a wide range of feedback on the proposed model is received. This will then inform a procurement process expected to start in November 2023 and the development of a specification that potential providers can consider and bid against.

2. Recommendations

The Scrutiny Committee is asked to:

- (i) Note the engagement undertaken to date to develop the proposed redesign of short breaks services
- (ii) Note the plans for a public consultation, due to finish in October 2023
- (iii) Provide initial views on the proposals
- (iv) Note the next steps in relation to procurement and anticipated timescales to let a new contract for a redesigned service from 1st April 2024.

3. Report Background

Short breaks are breaks for children and young people who have a disability and are designed to give them rich opportunities to experience different activities and services with other children and supported by professionals who can meet their needs. Vitrally, it also allows carers to have a break from caring and space to do things or support their own wellbeing that they could not otherwise do when caring for their children. Currently a blend of both residential and non-residential short breaks are provided and residential short breaks are offered to those families with the highest of needs to give them a longer break and support the important role that carers provide without which there may be a risk of the child coming into care.

The current model can be disjointed and so the new model, designed with parents and carers, proposes we have a single Lead Provider delivering both residential short breaks and non-residential short breaks which will still allow a mixed provision but will make the services easier to coordinate and more adaptable to the needs of parents and families.

The current annual budget envelope for the service is £2.8m, which is funded by the Children's Trust (£2.01m) and the Northamptonshire Integrated Care Board (NICB, £740k). It is hoped that by creating efficiencies through better use of resources all sat with one provider, a better range of choice and support will be offered to families and the overheads and administrative costs will be reduced. The model also hopes to be able to create a stronger focus on early help. This means providing more targeted help before families reach crisis point and require a residential short break to avoid a breakdown in the family home. The detailed proposal is set out in section 4 but in brief, the Lead Provider model will:

- Reduce the duplication of administrative tasks and improve ease of access by having a central hub supporting all the services with a single referral and assessment pathway
- Ensure staff work seamlessly across the contracts by having a single central base and whole service team meetings to ensure a joined-up approach and sharing of information, skills and knowledge
- Ensure that services can develop and grow by introducing a fundraising function
- Increase the staffing capacity within the services by having a volunteer co-ordination function along with specialist play work support to ensure that support staff time is freed up to maximise the number of children accessing services whilst keeping the quality of the activities
- Create a community link function that will help with community relationships and partnerships ensuring that the short breaks services are well advertised and there is a good knowledge of other community services available. They will also support families to step up and step down as support is needed.
- Provide a short breaks offer for day care activity sessions particularly for children with 1:1 and 2:1 staffing requirements
- Add home care services (Personal Care and Support Services) into the model at a later stage to further join up the services offered to families with children with disabilities
- Explore offering non-residential short breaks in different ways such as commissioning existing community groups and funding individual activities

Legislative Framework

There are important duties on both Local Authorities and Integrated Care Boards (ICB) as part of the **Children Act 1989 section 17 and The Children & Families Act 2014** to arrange for the provision of services or facilities for any children and young people who have special educational needs or who have a disability. Additionally, each ICB has a duty under section 3 of the NHS Act 2006.

Additional legislation can be found in the:

- Breaks for Carers of Disabled Children Regulations 2011 section 4
- Children Act 1989 paragraph 6 of schedule 2

Key statutory duties can be found within the following legislation:

- Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1970
- Children Act 2004
- Equality Act 2010
- Care Act 2014 (in relation to transition to adult social care)

Currently NCT and the NICB pay for a range of different breaks to meet this need. These are currently delivered by several different organisations. These include

- residential services provided by Northamptonshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust (NHFT)
- non-residential short-breaks (provided by Action for Children),
- personal care and support,
- holiday clubs,
- sensory impairment services provided by NAB (the National Association for the Blind) and Deaf Connect and
- sleep support (provided by Scope).

With no bidders for the residential short breaks tender in 2020 an agreement was reached between Northamptonshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust (NHFT), Northamptonshire Children's Trust (NCT), and Northamptonshire Integrated Care Board (NICB) for NHFT to continue delivery of the residential short breaks service for disabled children from 1st April 2021 under a 4-year contract with the proviso that the service was re-designed and transformed.

In September 2021 engagement took place with all stakeholders to understand how well the short breaks services were meeting need and to help develop the model.

Council for Disabled Children co-facilitated workshops to ensure an independent review and to bring their expertise and knowledge around short breaks services nationally, see report - Appendix A. The workshops were for short breaks stakeholders including parents and practitioners and also the views of children and young people accessing the services. There was further engagement in November 2021 with practitioners to develop the findings from the workshops.

Feedback from children, young people, parents, and other stakeholders reinforced how important these services are for families highlighting:

- ✓ The significance of residential short breaks to so many families;
- ✓ The lifeline that these services offer;
- ✓ The importance of short breaks in that they do not just provide respite for children and families but enhance and maintain healthy family dynamics and promote family resilience;
- ✓ They contribute to the emotional and social growth of disabled children and underpin the wellbeing of non-disabled siblings;
- ✓ They help to avoid family breakdown by children being taken into care; and
- ✓ The need to improve the transition from childhood to adulthood.

A Design Group was established in September 2021 which included representatives from the ICB, NCT and NHFT and reported into the CYP Transformation Programme.

The Group agreed to develop future delivery models across the whole of the Short Break pathway due to a lack of a co-ordinated and flexible earlier help which was creating pressure on the existing specialist part of the pathway, i.e. the residential short break provision. The scope of the review widened to include non-residential short breaks services and other services that provide a break for parents of disabled children or children with complex health needs with the aim to 'left shift' the spend from specialist support, residential short breaks, to earlier help and avoid families going into crisis and requiring specialist support. The Council for Disabled Children tested whether 'left shifting' the funding from residential short break (crisis support) to earlier help services would reduce the need for specialist services.

The Case for Change

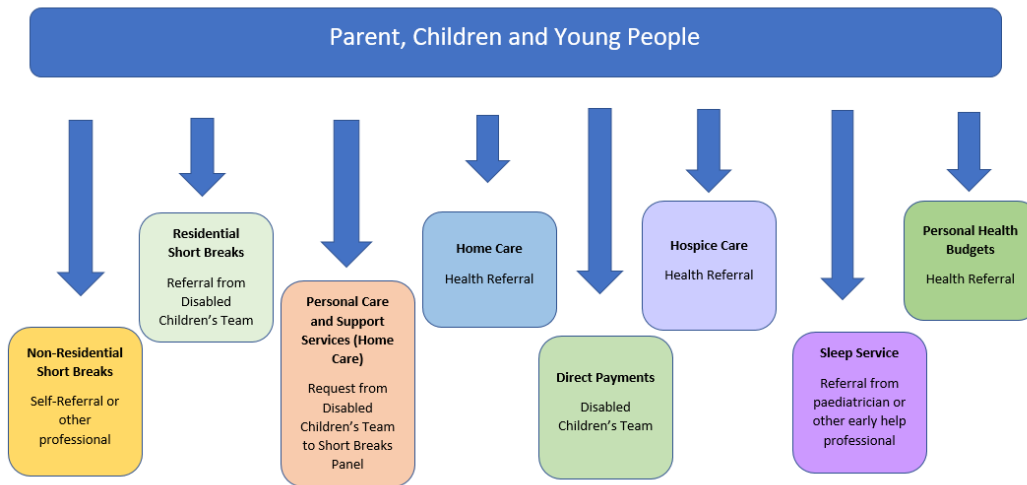
The engagement in 2021 identified the following problems with the short breaks services:

- Lack of co-ordinated and flexible earlier help is creating pressure for specialist services
- Services are all operating and being managed separately with individual referral processes which are difficult for families to navigate as they are not joined up
- Families and practitioners do not always understand what support is available for them
- Children and young people and their families access separate services rather than having support flex to meet their changing needs
- Families have to tell their story multiple times for each service
- Range of activities is limited and support is not always local / within families' communities
- Transition to adulthood is not as smooth as it should be
- Information sharing barriers
- Expertise of staff is not shared across organisations
- Workforce recruitment and retention issues

The current model has 5 separate contracts, and each service is monitored separately. Each service has individual referral pathways and operate independently. Much of the funding (71%) is spent on specialist services. Families often come into specialist services in crisis because they have not received any earlier help services to support the families as needs emerge.

Current Model

Services are not joined up, separate process to access each service.



The 'Left Shift' of Funding from Specialist Support to Targeted Support

71% of the current funding is for specialist services i.e. Residential Short Breaks. The aim of the new model is to shift some of the spend from the specialist end of support to earlier help services i.e. non-residential short breaks so that families can be supported earlier and reduce the need for specialist services.

The proposed model as described in section 4 will allow the left shift to happen and allow the service to be more flexible to meet the needs of children and their families.

Reducing the number of days that the residential short breaks services are open as detailed below will release funding to start growing the earlier help services.

Benefits of short breaks for families and children

A short break offers children and young people with disabilities the opportunity for growth and development including:

- The opportunity to socialise with peers
- Confidence, resilience and self-esteem building
- Nurturing independence
- The chance to learn, try new activities and face new challenges
- Relax and have fun

The benefit a short break offers parents and carers:

- A sufficient and convenient break from caring
- Confidence and reassurance that their child is safe and well-cared for
- Confidence that the Service can respond to the emotional, behavioural, physical and medical needs of their child
- Assurance that their child is undertaking positive and enjoyable activities that help them to grow and develop.

Need

Short Breaks services are commissioned on a countywide basis. The population of Northamptonshire will continue to increase for another 3 years but is then expected to start levelling out. It is difficult to know how many children there are with disabilities, the Children with disabilities Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) estimates that between 3% and 5.4% of children in Northamptonshire have a disability but Mencap report that 2.5% of children nationally have a disability. The rate of the population increase is slowing year on year so it is expected that the number of children with disabilities will also level out and potentially go down in years to come.

The estimates of the number of disabled children in 2022 in Northamptonshire is between 5,583 (3%) and 10,050 (5.4%). However, the school population of children with special educational needs and disabilities 2020 is 15,978. This is because this figure includes social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) and special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) rather than disabilities alone.

Children and young people accessing residential short breaks have the highest of needs which are multiple and complex. It has been found that despite increasing numbers of Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) and rising populations the number of children accessing residential short breaks has gone down from 131 in 2016 to 76 in April 21. As a result, the number of children with continuing care needs in residential short breaks has also gone down from 18 in 2016 to 12 in 2020. Compared with Statistical Neighbours, East Midlands region and England, Northamptonshire has the lowest percentage of children with an EHCP.

There are 8175 children aged 0 to 25 with a disability in the WNC area which is 8% of the 0 to 24 population. 4620 are aged 10 to 19 years old and 52% are female. Short Breaks services run in Daventry and Northampton and also support families living in South Northants. There is a residential short breaks unit in Northampton which supports children who are autistic and also children with learning disabilities.

4. Issues and Choices

Summary of engagement and consultation

NCT and the ICB are committed to working collaboratively with parents including the Northamptonshire Parent Forum Group (NPFPG). This transformation work has been a long journey travelled together by all stakeholders albeit some of the key personnel have changed during this time.

Stage	Who did we engage with	What you said	What we did
Initial engagement Sept 21 – Nov 21	14 people responded to the survey of which 13 were parents Plus 21 in person at the workshops	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✚ Need to improve transitions ✚ All children to be able to access support ✚ One referral process ✚ More early help support ✚ Need flexible, responsive, forward thinking, transforming services ✚ A simpler pathway to access services is required ✚ Not enough staff to support children with 1:1 or 2:1 staffing needs ✚ Flexible, integrated services ✚ Services close to home 	<p>Potential new model designed that included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✚ Single service offer ✚ Run and led by one organisation. <p>The redesign proposal was developed and by a Partnership Design Group.</p>
Design Phase Nov 21 – Mar 23	Children With Disabilities Board (members included NPPG and providers)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✚ These proposals were discussed and reviewed at each Children with Disabilities Board to shape the model. 	Redesign proposal was developed and agreed by a Partnership Design Group, agreed, and approved by the Children and Young People's Transformation Board.
Second phase April 23- Jun 23	233 people from an electronic survey and 6 focus groups. 43% of respondents were parents/carers 28% current provider staff 34% public	<p>Majority of respondents said:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✚ Bring residential and non-residential short breaks together ✚ Flexible team across services ✚ Increasing non-residential short breaks will reduce need for residential short breaks ✚ One referral point and joined up assessment and reviews ✚ More short breaks with 1:1 or 2:1 staffing ✚ Additional services: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fundraising • Peer support • Volunteer buddies • Whole family activities 	<p>The proposed lead provider model will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✚ Central hub supporting all services ✚ Single referral and assessment pathway ✚ Staff working across the contracts ✚ Grow capacity through fundraising and volunteers ✚ Specialist play workers to support with designing activities ✚ Build community relationships and links to enable greater choice of short breaks ✚ Advertise short break opportunities centrally ✚ Support families to step up and step down ✚ Additional day care activity offered a residential short break ✚ Add home care services
Third Phase Sept 23-Oct 23	Plans for engagement: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✚ Electronic survey ✚ Public workshops ✚ Short Breaks staff workshops ✚ Provider forums ✚ Community events ✚ Scrutiny Committees 		



First Phase - September 2021 – Council for Disabled Children Facilitated Workshops / Engagement

Feedback was that:

- Short breaks are critical in that they do not just provide respite for children and families but enhance and maintain healthy family dynamics and promote family resilience
- There is a need to improve the transition from childhood to adulthood
- All disabled children and young people should be able to access the support they need

- There needs to be one referral process
- More early help support is needed to avoid families going into crisis
- There is a need **for flexible, responsive**, forward thinking, transforming services
- A simpler pathway to access services is required
- There are not enough staff to support children with 1:1 or 2:1 staffing needs
- Services should be flexible, integrated and provided in places close to home

This feedback was then used to design a potential new model bringing everything together into a single service offer, run and led by one organisation.

The redesign proposal was approved by the Children and Young People's Transformation Board. These proposals were discussed and reviewed at each Short Breaks Board throughout the design period.

Second phase – 6 Week Engagement – April-May 2023

The second phase of engagement was to test out how stakeholders felt about the proposed model that had been designed. The proposals and questions were shared in advance of the engagement with NPFPG and NPFPG supported with ensuring the survey reached parents so that they had a chance to respond.

See attached engagement report which details the results of the 6 week engagement, Appendix B.

Third phase – Consultation September – October 23

A decision has been taken by Chief Executives across the Partner organisations that the likely changes within the new model are not a 'significant variation' to service delivery and therefore are not subject to a 12-week formal public consultation, however, further consultation on the specific changes to the proposed model should be consulted on.

Between July and September NCT, ICB and NPFPG are undertaking further engagement with parents, carers, staff within the short breaks services and other related professionals to finalise the model for the service specification and tender process.

This period is carefully planned out so that all stakeholders are given the opportunity to be involved. The managers of current provider organisations are fully briefed in advance and the ICB and NCT project leads will run both virtual and face to face sessions to discuss the proposed model.

NNC will host the online public survey on their community engagement platform and NPFPG have agreed to help us to circulate the public questionnaire as widely as possible amongst parents and carers through their social media channels and we hope to also give parents and carers the opportunity to attend face to face and virtual sessions supported by NPFPG.

NCT and the ICB will attend community events in September (NPPG fun day and WNC SEND strategy launch) to further engage with parents and carers.

All mediums available will be used to ensure the public are aware of the online survey and take part such as the NCT/ICB website, targeted emails and providers sending out to the parents of the children who attend their short breaks.

The voice of the child will be listened to by attending current short breaks groups to gain feedback on the activities that children like to do and through observing them enjoying their short break.

This phase of consultation, which is intended to test the detailed proposal with stakeholders to ensure that everyone understands what is being proposed and has a chance to comment, has started by meeting with NPPG and sharing key documents for their input, inviting them to the Communications sub group and developing the engagement workshops with them. Adjustments were made to the planned questionnaire and the consultation process from their feedback. Whilst NCT and ICB are committed to working with NPPG at the final stage of the consultation process, time pressures both on the lead up to the consultation phase, mainly with regards to partnership complex governance arrangements and with statutory timescales needing to be met under public procurement rules, has meant that the start of the consultation exercise has fallen during the summer school holidays. We acknowledge that this has not been ideal and has been a challenge for NPPG to be as involved as they would have liked. It is hoped that NPPG will support the events taking place over September to engage with parents and children.

Throughout the lifetime of the project representatives from NPPG have been members of the Children with Disabilities Board that meets quarterly to review the performance of the Short Breaks Providers. This allowed its members to gain an understanding and insight into the delivery of the short breaks services and speak directly with providers about their services. Updates on the Short Breaks project were provided at the Board with the opportunity for attendees to review and comment.

It is recognised and acknowledged that NPPG could have been more embedded in the Governance structure of the design phase of the project (hindered somewhat by the pandemic) and NCT and the ICB are committed to moving forward wholeheartedly in line with the NNC Coproduction Charter following its 5 values:

- Learning from lived experience
- Working Together
- Honest, Open and Transparent
- Responsive and Accountable
- Ambitious

As such the plan is to continue to develop the relationship with parents, children, and young people so that they are included in operational planning and Executive board meetings to ensure that their needs are considered at all times and that the long-term road map continues to be developed side by side with families. This will be written into the service specification to ensure that the new Lead Provider operates in line with the Charter.

Current Provision

Residential Short Breaks – There are two units, run by NHFT, which are open 7 days a week, John Greenwood Shipman Centre for children who have Autistic Spectrum Condition and/ or have learning disabilities; and Squirrels which is for children with complex health / medical needs. John Greenwood Shipman can support up to 8 children at any one time and Squirrels up to 6.

Non Residential Short Breaks – Action for Children currently run this service. There are weekly Saturday clubs in Corby, Daventry, Kettering, Northampton and Wellingborough. During the school holidays they run holiday clubs in the same areas. Youth groups are delivered in the evenings in Daventry, Northampton and Wellingborough. Action for Children sub-contract Greenpatch to run activities in Kettering and they deliver an afterschool club, Saturday club and holiday clubs at their allotment site.

The Sleep Service – Scope currently run this service and offers support by telephone to families with a child with SEND who needs help to sleep at night. They deliver a 6 week intervention on an individual family level. Training will be given to other practitioners so that they can offer initial support to families they are in contact with.

Sensory Impairment Services – Each service runs 7 holiday clubs each year. Deaf Connect will run a basic sign language course for parents and Northamptonshire Association for the Blind offer 1:1 support to families.

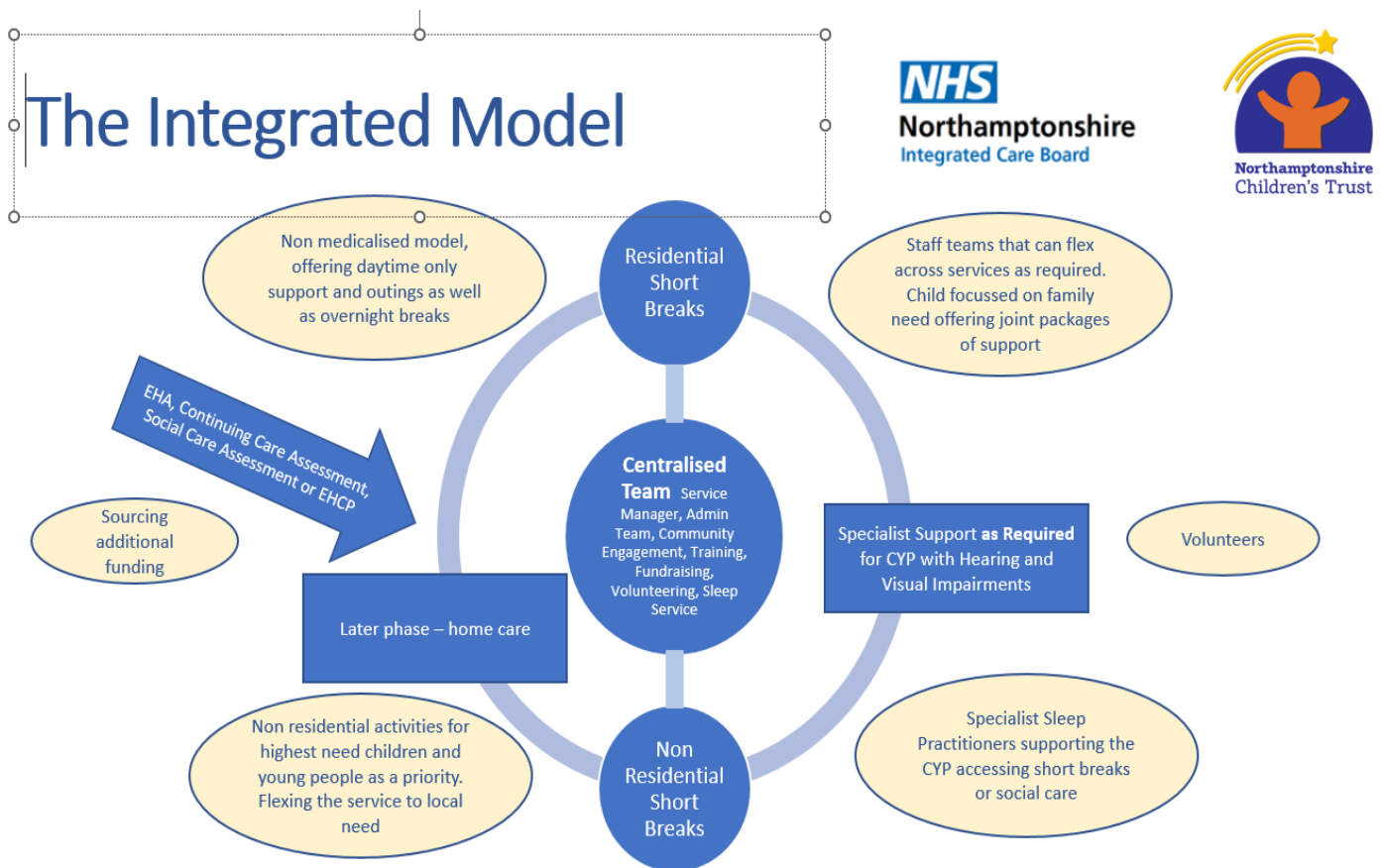
The Changes

The aim is to keep the essence of the current services but adjust them to current need by:

- Reducing the duplication of administrative tasks by having a central hub supporting all the services with a single referral and assessment pathway
- Ensuring staff work seamlessly across the contracts by having a single central base and whole service team meetings to ensure a joined-up approach and sharing of information, skills and knowledge
- Ensuring that services can develop and grow by introducing a new fundraiser post
- To increase the staffing capacity within the services by having a volunteer co-ordinator along with specialist play workers to ensure that Support Staff time is freed up to maximise the number of children accessing services whilst keeping the quality of the activities
- A community Link Officer will be introduced to help with community relationships and partnerships ensuring that the short breaks services are well advertised and there is a good knowledge of other community services available. They will also support families to step up and step down as support is needed.
- The residential short breaks units are used to offer day care activity sessions particularly for children with 1:1 and 2:1 staffing requirements

- To add home care services (Personal Care and Support Services) into the model to further join up the services offered to families with children with disabilities
- To explore offering non-residential short breaks in different ways such as commissioning existing community groups and funding individual activities.

The Proposed New Model



Residential Short Breaks Opening Hours

The proposal is that both sites reduce their days of opening to 6 days a week instead of 7 days a week in year 1 and offer 3 additional day care sessions at each site that could be used at the weekends, afterschool or in the holidays. The analysis shows that reducing the number of days open will continue to meet the need for overnight short breaks at the same level for the current service users (slightly more at JGS and slightly less at Squirrels although not significant numbers). This will require the units to run on an 85% occupancy rate (currently contracted for 85% occupancy although current operating capacity generally more around 60%-70%). By closing for one day this would give staff a consistent day off and have a consistent staffing rota, reduce the need to use of bank staff and reduce the overall cost of staffing whilst maintaining service levels as well as reducing overall workforce pressures.

Additionally, the new 3-day care places will offer significant additional capacity and an alternative to parents which will also allow more families to access the service during the day if required or an

opportunity to begin to step down from overnight care in a familiar setting but only if the family and child wish this.

From the responses to the survey, parents felt that improved access to the non-residential short breaks would reduce their need for an overnight break. By offering a day care provision at JGS and Squirrels children with highly complex needs will be able to utilise the non-residential provision more. It is hoped that the 1-day closure will reduce the workforce pressures within the units which will mean less reliance on bank/ agency staff and help the service to run more efficiently to meet the 85% occupancy target. The day the units will close will fall on the least used day of the week and would not be during the most popular times at the weekend.

Impact – Some families may have their overnight stay moved to another night; however, their allocated nights would not reduce and there would be additional opportunities for an afterschool club activity.

Reduction in number of children accessing Residential Short Breaks

Other services for this cohort have increased and improved particularly personal care and support services through better commissioning with an increase in providers who are on a framework. This provides an alternative offer for families.

Also, the sleep service now provides support to more families compared with in 2016. Although the demand is so high that this service always carries a significant waiting list. With a centralised referral hub this will be able to assess those most in need and consider in the context of other services the family requires a well as those they are already receiving. All staff can be trained in providing families with advice and support on sleep to help grow the capacity of this service.

In the next year there are 11 children turning 18 as detailed below and as a result will leave the children’s services.

Month	Number of YP turning 18	Number of Nights Per Month	Unit
March 2023	1	4	JGS
June 2023	1	4	JGS
July 2023	2	6	JGS
Aug 2023	1	2	JGS
Sept 2023	1	3	JGS
Jan 2024	2	9	JGS
Feb 2024	2	11	Squirrels
Feb 2024	1	3	JGS
TOTAL	11	42	

Multi Agency Panel

There is now a multi-disciplinary short breaks panel in place that includes representatives from ICB, NCT, including Family Link Fostering and the Short Breaks Providers. The panel manages the waiting list for the residential short breaks service.

Prior to the short breaks panel starting in 2022 there had generally been a waiting list to access the service, however, the panel process has worked so well that there is currently no waiting list for residential short breaks.

Non-Residential Short Breaks Services

The proposal will be that the Non-Residential Short Breaks services, including the Sleep Service and Sensory Impairment Services would only support families referred via an Early Help Assessment (EHA) into the Short Breaks single referral route.

Impact – Parents would no longer be able to self-refer however, by having an EHA to access services it would mean that a multi-disciplinary team will be in place and a full assessment of need is completed at the point of referral for quicker assessment and access to services to meet the needs.

In the proposed model the non-residential short breaks provider would be required to consult each area (Northampton, Kettering, Corby, Wellingborough, South Northants, Daventry and East Northants) on the best way to support children with disabilities based on the need and the services already available. A more innovative / flexible approach should be taken.

Impact – Instead of the current fixed activities, families will be able to receive a wider range of short breaks activities in their local community more tailored to individual needs. Some of the current activities may change.

The sensory impairment services would support any child with a hearing or visual impairment who are accessing the short breaks services.

Impact – Staff and parents/carers accessing any of the short breaks services will be better supported to meet the needs of their child with sensory impairments. This will have some effect on the activities that the sensory impairment services run themselves.

Future Access to Short Breaks Services

Families would only be able to access the services through an EHA, Social Care assessment or Continuing Care assessment. However, the service would support families to access other services if they did not meet the threshold to access the short breaks services. It is also being considered whether services could be accessed through an EHCP and work is currently being undertaken with North and West Northamptonshire councils to explore this approach and what the impact on services might be.

Proposed minimum specification

The following is the minimum specification but providers will be able to design and configure services themselves as long as they meet this minimum requirement:

Addition of a Centralised Team to do the following:

- Coordination of referrals and packages of support through an early help short breaks panel which will also ensure a regular review for each child.
- Set up a volunteer and buddy scheme recruitment and management -to match volunteer buddies to groups.
- Deliver the function of community link/ partnership building / grant allocation/ fundraising
- Capacity building amongst voluntary sector for them to be able to deliver to children with complex health and disabilities
- Advice and resources to support short breaks and develop quality activities and resources.
- Central information hub for families about short breaks within the county.
- Wrap around support/advice plus visual and hearing impairment services can be purchased on an individual basis from NAB and Deaf Connect as part of the assessment process.
- Sleep Service to provide advice, training and support to families

Impact – A simpler referral process which is easier for families to navigate and packages of support across all short break’s services tailored to individual need.

Current Financial Values of the Short Breaks Services

The proposal is to pool the funding from all the contracts and advertise one short break contract for a total of £2.831m (contributions NCT £2,092,032 and ICB £739,167). This is different to the current model and the way the short breaks services are delivered.

Impact – More joined up services that are easier for families to navigate.

To note – A temporary uplift of the Residential Short Breaks contract to £2.62m has been maintained during 2023 whilst the re-design of the services has been taking place, however, this must end on 31st March 2024 and revert to the base funding level of £2m from 1st April 2024

Difference Between the Current Model and the Proposed New Model

Please see Appendix D for details on how the proposed changes compares with the current model.

Risks & Mitigations

Risk	Mitigation
Delays to contract start date	Timetable set out and monitored by short breaks steering group. Oversight by Short Breaks Strategic Group
No bidders for contract when tendered	Provider engagement events prior to contract advertising to test the viability and appetite of providers delivering the model Negotiation time built in to procurement timetable before award Encouraging collaborative bids

Impact to current provider staff	Regular engagement sessions in person with staff to keep them up to date with progress
Impact to children, young people and their parents	Multiple engagement exercises to gain the views of families and shape the model accordingly

Next Steps

The new model will be a steppingstone to develop the services further. By June 2024 it is proposed that the personal care and support services for NCT and ICB join the short breaks collaborative. This could mean a blended offer of in house and external provider homecare support by developing a staff team within short breaks to offer personal care and support services in the home and the community in a joined-up way. This would increase the pooled budget from £2.8m to £4.748m and increase the opportunities at the same time. This would support the assessment of need and the support package that is offered to families even further.

Proposed Timeline (at the time of drafting the report)

Mile stones	Target date	Status
ICB Board Approval (Papers by 12 th June)	22 nd June	Complete
Strategic Group to approve questions	7 th August	Complete
NPFG to review question accessibility	14 th August	Awaiting update
Consultation begins	14 th August	
• Electronic Survey	21 st Sept	
• Public Workshops	16 th to 26 th Oct	
• Short Breaks Staff Workshops	14 th Aug to 8 th Sept	5 x staff sessions held
• External Provider Engagement (Includes Collaboration / VCS)	4 th & 7 th Sept	
• Community events (NPFG funday 09/09/23 - WNC SEND strategy event 26/09/23)	9 th & 26 th Sept	
NNC Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee (Papers by 4 th Sept)	12 th September	
WNC Children, Education & Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Papers by 13 th Sept)	25 th September	
Consultations closes	26 th October	
Consultation analysis begins	27 th October	
Specification writing (2 Weeks)	30 th Oct to 10 th Nov	
Advertise Contract (5 Weeks)	13 th Nov to 15 th Dec	
Negotiation (1 Week)	18 th Dec to 22 nd Dec	

Evaluations (1 Weeks)	8th Jan to 12th Jan	
Award (2 days)	15th Jan – 16th Jan	
Standstill (10 calendar days)	17th Jan – 30th Jan	
Demobilisation / Mobilisation (9 Weeks)	31st Jan to 29th Mar 24	
Contract Starts	1st April 2024	

In Summary

The proposed model of short breaks has been developed following multiple engagement sessions and the final model will be informed by the current engagement. Most respondents in the April / May 2023 survey agreed that it would be beneficial to bring the short breaks services together under one Lead organisation.

Parents and carers have shared the days that they would prefer to access the services which are mostly for the weekend and have agreed that there needs to be more earlier help services to avoid families going into crisis.

The new model proposes a change to the opening hours at Squirrels and John Greenwood Shipman units to open 6 days a week rather than 7 days a week so that the funding can be 'left shifted' to fund a central hub which will bring the services together. It would also fund additional posts such as volunteer co-ordinator, fundraiser, specialist play workers and a community / partnership officer to ensure that support staff have more time to support the children and young people, particularly those requiring 1:1 and 2:1 support.

The proposal is that all the current services join to focus on the needs of families by flexing to meet their needs rather than the other way around. Services are driven by outcomes and take a more collaborative approach and include parents in the process.