

# LARCHWOOD SHORT BREAK UNIT ANNUAL REPORT 2014 - 2015



Larchwood is a short break unit, providing respite care, and activities in the community for children with complex needs who have a learning and/or physical disability.

Larchwood short breaks enable 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, or for a two night stay on a regular basis.

The time that children and young people spend at Larchwood is tailored to meet their individual needs. Larchwood aims to create a positive environment and experience, where aspirations for children and young people are high, and achievements are celebrated.

The outcome of the unit's most recent full Ofsted inspection on 5<sup>th</sup> November 2014 was 'outstanding'. An interim inspection on 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2015 resulted in the outcome of 'sustained effectiveness'.

## **1 Context and Finance**

- 1.1** This annual report should be read in conjunction with the Statement of Purpose revised in April 2015. The Statement of Purpose provides more detail and sets out the legislative and regulatory context in which Larchwood Short Break Unit operates. In summary, services are delivered under the Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015 and associated Quality Standards which came into effect on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2015. The new framework replaces the previous minimum standards with nine new Quality Standards which must be met by children's homes.
- 1.2** This report provides details of activity over the financial year April 2014-2015 and sets out the plans for development and improvement for the year ahead.
- 1.3** The annual budget set for Larchwood 2014-2015 was £449,000. The approximate actual spend was £440,000. There was also an income target of £69,000.
- 1.4** The number of children receiving a service at Larchwood at the end of March 2014 is 23 (compared with last year's figure of 25).
- 1.5** 5 children left over the course of the year as they transitioned to adult services. Another 3 young people started attending the unit. There has also been an increase to 6 pre-existing care plans within Larchwood.
- The number of overnights during 2014/15: 735 (702 in 13/14)
  - The number of tea visits (under 4 hours) : 54 (60 in 13/14)
  - The number of day care (over 4 hours) : 294 (296 in 13/14)
- 1.6** The total number of children receiving an overnight provision is 14. Currently, 11 stay overnight on a regular basis, 4 of these receive a package of 2 nights per week. The remaining are a mixture of overnights, tea visits, day care, teenage group, and 'On the Move' activities.
- 1.7** The target was exceeded in regard income generation from Larchwood in 14/15. However it must be noted that this can fluctuate.

## **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, referrals from the CSST are discussed by a multi-agency team at the monthly Resource Allocation System (RAS) Panel.



### **3 Impact and outcomes**

- 3.1** Impact and outcomes have been reviewed under the nine new Quality Standards (Children's Homes Regulations, April 2015) as follows:
- 3.2 Quality and purpose of care** – The Unit Manager is required to undertake evaluations of the unit at a minimum of six monthly under regulation 45. A new format for the Regulation 45 Reports has been produced to allow information to be monitored and analysed more easily. A traffic light system is used to capture developing areas and areas that need action.
- 3.3 Children's views, wishes and feelings** - The teenage group 'The Titans' made some recommendations under their health and safety topic within the unit, which resulted in work being carried out to improve access to the trampoline. Children's wishes and feelings are currently captured on the daily handover log, actioned and collated in the Regulation 45.
- 3.4 Education** – Termly meetings have taken place throughout the year with the Unit Manager and a representative from the local school. The aims of this include facilitating information sharing between Larchwood link workers and school staff for individual young people.
- 3.5 Enjoyment and Achievement** - The Titans have taken part in various activities and explored various topics throughout the year. A visit to the local Fire Station was a real success. The topic on families proved to be very thought provoking for the group.
- 3.6** The fortnightly independent cooking sessions have seen amazing results with regards to young peoples' confidence and skills. The young people have cooked meals such as chilli con carne, chicken fajitas, and home made vegetable burgers and baked goods such as mince pies.
- 3.7** Five young people have been supported through transition from Larchwood into adult services and positive feedback has been received from families regarding this process.

- 3.8** The Cultural and Diversity evenings have included events such as Bastille Day and a Jamaican evening.
- 3.9** A total of 17 young people at Larchwood completed goal ladders successfully in 13/14, achieving aims in support of the development of various life skills.
- 3.10** **Health and well-being** – The report from the Ofsted inspection in November 2014 stated “The home provides a healthy environment where some young people with health needs are well cared for and staff work closely with the health professionals involved with individual young people”.
- 3.11** The physical, emotional, and mental health needs of the young people attending Larchwood have been fully incorporated into their care plans. These detail physical needs such as personal care and food intolerances, and strategies to support emotional well-being, such as massage, and opportunities for sensory stimulation and relaxation.
- 3.12** The healthy eating topic covered by The Titans has supported the young people’s understanding of the need to eat healthily, and what constitutes a healthy meal.
- 3.13** **Positive relationships** – The report from the Ofsted inspection in November 2014 stated “Exceptional relationships exist between young people and staff. The long-serving stable committed staff team understand the needs of the young people extremely well”.
- 3.14** A Chinese New Year party took place in February 2015 for all previous and current users of Larchwood, and their families. This event was well attended and a real success. This encourages friendships to continue past transition. In addition, consideration is given to developing friendships within the RAS panel meetings when considering how to group young people attending the unit, and in planning On the Move activities.
- 3.15** **Protection of children** - At the Ofsted inspection in November 2014, keeping children and young people safe was graded as ‘good’. The recommendations in relation to this aspect of the inspection were actioned promptly.
- 3.16** The keypad to the playroom door has been removed, which enables children and young people increased access to other shared areas of the unit. The security of external doors has been improved as a least restrictive measure to ensure the children and young people remain safe. A bespoke Child Protection Policy for the unit has been developed and approved. The management team are currently reviewing all risk assessments with regard to mental capacity and restriction of liberty arrangements.
- 3.17** **Leadership and management** – At the Ofsted inspection in November 2014 leadership and management was graded as ‘outstanding’. The report noted “Young people benefit from a service that is exceptionally well managed”.

- 3.18** We have appointed to two permanent vacancies, recruiting two new full time staff members. Additionally 4 relief staff have been appointed to support service delivery and expansion. The Registered Manager has returned full time from maternity leave, and continues to be supported by the Head of Service for Children's Specialist Support in the responsible provider role, and managed by the Team Manager of the Children's Specialist Support Team
- 3.19 Care planning** - New comprehensive risk profiles are being introduced for all children and young people. Larchwood staff continue to attend C.I.N/L.A.C reviews and education reviews.



#### **4 Ofsted Inspections**

- 4.1** Larchwood was inspected on 5<sup>th</sup> November 2014 and the overall outcome of 'Outstanding' was achieved.. This evidenced the impact of the team in building on their already well respected service which was graded 'good' by Ofsted in November 2013. The current report stated "Young people make excellent progress, through attending this short break service, in developing their personal and social skills".
- 4.2** This was followed by an interim inspection on 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2015, from which the outcome was 'sustained effectiveness'. The report stated "The home continues to provide an excellent quality service for children and young people with a range of disabilities. Young people thoroughly enjoy their stays, they make progress within a stimulating and caring environment".

## **5 Staffing Profile**

### **5.1 Full time**

- Responsible Person
- Registered Unit manager (supervised by Team Manager CSST)
- Senior Practitioner
- Administrator
- 6 Care Officers

### **5.2 Part time**

- Waking Night Care Officer – 30 hours
- Cleaner – 30 hrs
- 1 x Care Officers – 18.5 hours

**5.3** We have successfully recruited to two full time care officer posts, which became vacant due to the retirement of a staff member, and another staff member moving out of the area. Both new staff bring a wealth of experience and skills in working with children with additional needs.

**5.4** The Registered Unit Manager Samantha Whitehouse is based full time at Larchwood and is line managed by the Team Manager, Lou Richer of the Children's Specialist Support Team, who is managed by the Head of Service, Sonia Johnson, (the named 'responsible person' for Larchwood).

**5.5** All employees have undertaken the required statutory training, and additional training is provided in accordance with need. Larchwood and the CSST also joined together for a Team Away Day this year to further strengthen the effective communication and working relationship between the two teams.

**5.6** The overall training experiences include -

- Child sexual exploitation training
- E-safety training
- Fire safety
- Team Teach
- Data protection
- Information handling
- Epilepsy training
- Food hygiene
- Safeguarding training
- First Aid
- Manual handling



## 6 Developments/plans for the year ahead

- 6.1 A formal review of Larchwood was completed in February 2015 which considered the purpose and function of the unit in terms of best value and opportunities to reduce spending and increase revenue. Developments and plans identified within the review are outlined below.
- 6.2 **Outreach Service** - This year we plan to increase our new 'On the Move' service which provides bespoke opportunities for children and young people to access our local community. This service is available for children who currently access Larchwood and new referrals from the Children's Specialist Support Team. We provide fully trained staff to accompany children and young people with a disability in a variety of pursuits. These could be clubs, youth groups or social opportunities with their friends. We give careful consideration to matching up young people with a peer group/friend to ensure the activity is young person led.
- 6.3 **Consultation** - during review of individual packages of support there will be a requirement for individual consultation with children/ young people and parents who use or may use Larchwood to support our work in developing the service particularly in regard to the outreach provision.
- 6.4 **Income generation and collaborative working with neighbouring authorities and or partners** - we already provide a service for a number of young people from the Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead (RBWM). Subject to spaces being available, there is potential to generate more income from this type of arrangement. It should be noted that this type of income generation is not guaranteed due to changing requirements, families moving out of area and moving to adulthood etc.
- 6.5 Short Break provision is provided via assessment only for children meeting the criteria for support within RBWM and they are currently unable to offer overnight opportunities other than at Manor Green – where the peer group is likely to be unsuitable for those children with Autism in particular so Larchwood could provide families, with access to a personal budget, an

alternative to Agency care for example i.e. we could 'sell' services direct to families.

- 6.6 Building hire** - there could be value in exploring income opportunities by offering the Larchwood building during the school day when facilities are not being used i.e. from 9am – 3pm. To include:
- Site sharing agreements with Health or other agencies
  - Room hire for training and meetings
  - Offering use of the sensory room and play facilities to families with children under 5
  - Contact with Kennel Lane School and B&W College regarding use of facilities to support independence skills; travel training, kitchen and bed making facilities etc.
- 6.7** In addition, there could be an opportunity to explore provision of a weekly group in partnership with Early Years for a small number of children with complex needs where the sensory room in particular is made available. Some work would be required to get this up and running if further evidence supports sufficient income/ revenue generation.
- 6.8 Sleep Clinic** - our unique provision is developing and a number of children are now receiving support from trained staff. We are not yet in a position to offer this service to other authorities or to families directly but this could offer revenue/ income in the future particularly if combined with additional, time limited, overnight stays. There is real potential to grow this service.
- 6.9 Youth Work** - Larchwood has been offering a Friday night teenage youth group for a number of years now and has, on occasions, taken some young people to the Wayz Youth Group as part of their transition into adulthood. However this setting is not always suitable for young people with more complex needs and we have therefore been unable to include this type of inclusive provision on a regular basis. We are keen to develop this aspect of the service particularly as we are seeking opportunities for young people to focus on developing their independence, improving their money management, shopping and cooking skills in preparation for adulthood.
- 6.10** This type of opportunity should be available to all young people with disabilities and not just those who attend Larchwood and therefore this responsibility, financially and otherwise, could be shared with the Youth Service.
- 6.11** Please note that the Statement of Purpose is a 'live' document, which will be continuously updated to reflect any changes.

Samantha Whitehouse  
Registered Unit Manager

Lou Richer  
Team Manager

Sonia Johnson  
Responsible Individual

April 2015