

Central Bedfordshire  
Council  
Priory House  
Monks Walk  
Chicksands,  
Shefford SG17 5TQ



**please ask for** Leslie Manning  
**direct line** 0300 300 5132  
**date** 22 December 2011

## NOTICE OF MEETING

### CORPORATE PARENTING PANEL

Date & Time

**Tuesday, 10 January 2012 at 2.00 p.m.**

Venue at

**Room 14, Priory House, Monks Walk, Shefford**

Richard Carr  
**Chief Executive**

### PLEASE NOTE THE START TIME

To: The Chairman and Members of the CORPORATE PARENTING PANEL:

#### **Elected Members (voting)**

Cllrs M A G Versallion (Chairman), Mrs A Barker (Vice-Chairman), D Bowater,  
N B Costin, Mrs S A Goodchild, Mrs D B Gurney, N J Sheppard and B Wells

[Named Substitutes:

Cllrs: P N Aldis and I A MacKilligan]

#### **Officers (voting)**

Deputy Chief Executive/Director of Children's Services  
Director of Social Care, Health and Housing

#### **Carers (non-voting)**

Only two of the four foster carers' co-opted representatives will be expected to attend at any one meeting.

# AGENDA

1. **Apologies**

To receive any apologies for absence and notification of substitute Members.

2. **Minutes**

To approve as a correct record the minutes of the meeting of the Corporate Parenting Panel held on 7 November 2011 (copy attached).

3. **Chairman's Announcements and Communications**

To receive any announcements from the Chairman and any matters of communication.

4. **Members' Interests**

To receive from Members declarations and the nature thereof in relation to:-

- (a) personal interests in any agenda item;
- (b) personal and prejudicial interest in any agenda item.

## Reports

| Item | Subject   | Page Nos. |
|------|---|-----------|
| 5    | <b>Review of Children's Services to Disabled Children, Young People and Their Families</b><br><br>To consider a report, previously submitted to the Executive, on the outcome of the review of services to disabled children, young people and their families and receive a verbal update on any decision taken by the Executive. | * 13 - 44 |
| 6    | <b>Quarter Two Report on the Adoption Service - April to September 2011</b><br><br>To receive an outline of activity in the Adoption Service during the first six months of 2011-12.  | * 45 - 48 |
| 7    | <b>Quarter Two Report on the Fostering Service - July to September 2011</b><br><br>To receive an outline of activity in the Fostering Service during Quarter Two, with comparison to Quarter One.   | * 49 - 54 |

To consider the Panel's work plan for 2011-12.

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**CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE COUNCIL**

At a meeting of the **CORPORATE PARENTING PANEL** held at Room 14, Priory House, Monks Walk, Shefford on Monday, 7 November 2011

**PRESENT**

Cllr M A G Versallion (Chairman)  
Cllr Mrs A Barker (Vice-Chairman)

Cllrs D Bowater  
N B Costin  
Mrs S A Goodchild

Cllrs Mrs D B Gurney  
B Wells

Apologies for Absence: Cllr N J Sheppard  
Mrs E Grant – Deputy Chief Executive/Director of Children's Services  
Mrs J Ogley – Director of Social Care, Health and Housing

Members in Attendance: Cllr P N Aldis

Officers in Attendance: Mrs S Gibson – Head of Learning  
Mr L Manning – Committee Services Officer  
Mrs C Parry – Assistant Director (Acting), Children's Services Operations  
Ms S Scholey – Team Leader for Looked after Children Team

Others in Attendance: Mrs H Hughes – Designated Nurse for Safeguarding Children and Young People, NHS Bedfordshire  
Mr L Miller – Head of Joint Child Health Commissioning, NHS Bedfordshire

**CPP/11/14 Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting of the Corporate Parenting Panel held on 5 September 2011 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman subject to adding Councillor N B Costin's name to the list of those members of the Panel present at the meeting.

**CPP/11/15 Chairman's Announcements and Communications**

The Chairman advised the Panel that the running order of the agenda had been changed so that the Head of Learning was not required to be present at the meeting unnecessarily. On this basis item 7 (Annual Report of the Virtual

School for Looked After Children) had been brought forward and would be considered before Item 5 (Quarter One Report on the Fostering Service – April-June 2011).

The Chairman then referred to the recent Children in Care Awards ceremony and commented on its success. On behalf of the Panel he expressed his thanks to the Acting Assistant Director Children’s Services Operations and her team for making the arrangements. The Chairman also thanked Members for their attendance and support.

CPP/11/16 **Members' Interests**

a) **Personal Interests:-**

| <b>Member</b>     | <b>Item</b> | <b>Nature of Interest</b>  | <b>Present or Absent during discussion</b> |
|-------------------|-------------|--|--|
| Cllr D Bowater    | 6           | Central Bedfordshire Council local authority governor on the South Essex Partnership University NHS Foundation Trust (SEPT). | Present                                    |
| Cllr Mrs D Gurney | 6           | Central Bedfordshire Council representative on the Bedfordshire Police Authority.  | Present                                    |
| Cllr D Bowater    | 7           | Authority governor on the governing body of Gilbert Inglefield Middle School, Leighton Buzzard.                              | Present                                    |

(b) **Personal and Prejudicial Interests:-**

None.

CPP/11/17 **Annual Report of the Virtual School for Looked After Children**

The Panel considered the Annual Report on the Virtual School for Looked After Children for the academic year 2010-11.

The meeting noted that the Annual Report contained the early outcomes for Looked After Children and that, because national and statistical information had not been available at the time the Report had been prepared, the results were provisional. To overcome this problem it was recommended that, in future, the Annual Report be submitted to the Panel in January each year as this would allow sufficient time for the collection of data from schools and the production of comparative information.

Following an introduction by the Head of Learning discussion took place during which Members sought clarification on the role played by the Virtual School in its provision of academic support for Looked After Children and raised numerous queries. Members then referred to the Key Stage 4 results and the significant difference in achievement levels between Looked After Children and others. In response the Head of Learning stated that, whilst there was a clear need to improve outcomes at Key Stage 4, the outcomes for the Whole School Cohort were better than the national figures in 2010. She further explained how achievement levels could vary from year to year as a result of the individual circumstances of the children themselves.

The meeting considered the role of the Virtual School, and of the schools attended by Looked After Children, in encouraging academic achievement.

The Head of Learning explained the sometimes complex needs and requirements of some Looked After Children and commented that Members should not underestimate how much individuals had achieved bearing in mind their particular circumstances.

**RESOLVED**

- 1 that the Annual Report of the Virtual School for Looked After Children be approved and adopted subject to amending the heading on the front of the report so that it states that the report covers the academic year September 2010-July 2011;**
- 2 that future Annual Reports be submitted to the Corporate Parenting Panel in the January following the relevant academic year in order to allow sufficient time to collect the required data;**
- 3 that the Key Stage 4 results for Looked After Children in the academic year September 2010-July 2011 be used as the benchmark figure for comparative purposes.**

**CPP/11/18 Quarter One Report on the Fostering Service - April-June 2011**

Members considered a report outlining activity within the Adoption and Fostering Service during Quarter One (April to June 2011).

A Member referred to the key events for marketing and recruitment undertaken by the service and queried how successful the events had proved. In response the Acting Assistant Director Children's Services Operations stated that such events were run on a regular basis and were regarded as very useful in attracting potential candidates. However, in connection with this point, the Member referred to that part of the report on the recruitment of foster carers and the apparently low number of new fostering households that were approved during the period. She queried whether this situation could be improved without the lowering of standards. The Acting Assistant Director replied that, in order to maintain the required standards, the Council could only assess those applicants that met the appropriate criteria.

The Acting Assistant Director advised the meeting of the types of venue used for marketing and recruitment events as well as the other methods employed. She added that officers were continually attempting to use the widest range of methods at their disposal for marketing and recruitment purposes.

A Member referred to the recent decision to increase the size of the allowance paid to foster carers and enquired as to whether this had led to an increased level of applications. In response the Acting Assistant Director stated that the increase had not yet been implemented and details of the decision had not been widely publicised so it was unlikely this was an influencing factor in the number of applications received.

The Panel then turned to compare the allowances paid to the Authority's foster carers with those employed by independent foster care agencies. The meeting noted that, although the latter paid more, the Council provided better training and practical support. This was clearly valued by foster carers as they chose to remain with the Council.

Members queried whether it would be possible to further increase the size of the allowances paid by the Council. In response the Acting Assistant Director reminded them that approval had only recently been given to an increase in the allowance so a further increase could not be considered at this time. However, annual reviews, in line with the Foster Care Network, would continue. She added that the allowance rates were comparable to those paid by other local authorities and were aligned to those set out by the Foster Care Network. She also questioned whether foster carers undertook the role simply to receive payment.

The Vice-Chairman sought clarification for the reasons why applicants decided to withdraw from the assessment process and expressed concern at the possibility that the Authority could fail to maintain its foster carer numbers as existing carers retired or resigned. In response, the Acting Assistant Director explained that the assessment process was laid out within the statutory guidelines and carefully followed. A full exchange of information took place at



all stages of the assessment between the applicants and the fostering service. If some applicants decided that they did not wish to progress their application, or if it was decided by the fostering service not to progress the application, the individual reasons for not doing so in each case were discussed by both sides and recorded. The Acting Assistant Director concluded by emphasising that the fostering service was recruiting sufficient new foster carers to replace those who left.

## **NOTED**

**the report.**

### **CPP/11/19    Looked After Children Health Reports**

The Panel considered the Annual Report on the health of Looked After Children for the period April 2010 to March 2011, which set out the delivery of service and the progress achieved for the health and wellbeing of children in care, together with a six monthly update for the period April 2011 to September 2011. The meeting noted that production of the Annual Report was required by the Department of Health Statutory Guidance 'Promoting the Health of Looked After Children' (2009).

The Head of Joint Child Health Commissioning, NHS Bedfordshire briefly introduced the Annual Report and update before seeking Members' questions.

In response to a Member's query regarding the current absence of a designated doctor to support the Primary Care Trust (PCT) in its statutory functions relating to Looked After Children the Designated Nurse for Safeguarding Children and Young People, NHS Bedfordshire explained that action was being taken to secure an appropriate clinician locally to fill the vacancy and it was hoped an appointment would take place within the next few months. The Head of Joint Child Health Commissioning added that the post had to be filled by a Paediatrician. He then advised the meeting that, if necessary, alternative means of filling the post would be considered, including the possibility of a short term appointment. He assured the meeting that sufficient funding was available.

In response to a query on whether other PCT's had undergone similar recruitment difficulties the Designated Nurse advised that some Trusts had adopted a different organisational model and so, with regard to this particular issue, had not experienced a problem.

The Vice-Chairman commented on the relatively small number of suitable candidates available to fill the position of designated doctor and she suggested that regional centres such as Great Ormond Street and Addenbrooks Hospitals should be considered as a possible source. She also commented on the need to ensure that the appointee understood that this particular role would include responsibility for young adults up to the age of 25 and not up to the usual age of 18. In response the NHS representatives thanked the Member for her suggestion and stated that, if necessary, they would seek candidates beyond the current local geographical boundaries.

A Member queried whether input was sought from the Police. In response the Head of Joint Child Health Commissioning explained that this did not take place directly but that individual services such as community health and mental health had such links.

In view of the forthcoming abolition of the PCT in 2013 the Chairman queried how the Annual Report would be produced in future. In response the Head of Joint Child Health Commissioning explained that this was still undecided but it was likely that responsibility would pass to the Clinical Commissioning Group. With regard to next year's Annual Report he stated that this would be produced far sooner after the end of the financial year.

**NOTED**

**the Annual Report and the six monthly update.**

CPP/11/20 **Looked After Children Awards 2011**

The Panel received a verbal report by the Acting Assistant Director Children's Services Operations on the outcome of the Looked After Children Awards ceremony held at Priory House on 27 October 2011. The Acting Assistant Director stated that the credit for the successful outcome of the ceremony should be given to the Participation Officer and the Children in Care Council for their planning and preparatory work. The Acting Assistant Director added that she had also received positive feedback from carers and others on the ceremony.

Discussion then took place on possible improvements to the ceremony. Consideration was given to inviting a wider range of guests including, for example, teachers although it was acknowledged that the use of the Council Chamber as the Awards venue restricted the number of attendees. The Acting Assistant Director suggested that the Children in Care Council could consider this issue and make a presentation to the Panel setting out its views.

The meeting turned to consider the date for the Looked After Children's Awards in 2012. The Acting Assistant Director stated that the last two ceremonies had been held during autumn half terms but this had not proved wholly successful as some potential attendees were on holiday at this time. The Panel asked that alternative dates be considered and a Friday evening during term time was suggested as a possibility.

**NOTED**

**the verbal report.**

CPP/11/21 **Work Plan 2011-2012**

The Panel considered its Work Plan for the remainder of the 2011/12 municipal year. In response to a query the Acting Assistant Director Children’s Services Operations informed the meeting that three sessions were being arranged to brief all Members of the Council on their role as corporate parents. Although dates and venues had yet to be finalised it was intended that the sessions would be held between now and the end of March 2012. A Member asked that consideration be given to holding one of sessions at Watling House in Dunstable for the benefit of those Members from the south of Central Bedfordshire.

A Member referred to recent criticism by the government regarding the time taken by some local authorities to deal with adoption applications. He asked that the six monthly adoption report, scheduled to be submitted to the Panel in January, include a response to the government’s comments, including a comparison of Central Bedfordshire’s performance with that of other Bedfordshire local authorities and the national figures.

Further discussion followed regarding the absence of foster carer representation and the arrangements for the remaining Panel meetings in the current municipal year.

**RESOLVED**

- 1 that the six monthly adoption report to the Corporate Parenting Panel on 10 January 2012 include comment from the Central Bedfordshire perspective on the government’s recent criticism of the delays experienced at some local authorities when those authorities were dealing with adoption applications;**
- 2 that the Committee Services Officer circulate details of the arrangements for the remaining meetings of the Panel in 2011/12;**
- 3 that the Acting Assistant Director Children’s Services Operations establish why there had been no foster carer representation at the meeting.**

(Note: The meeting commenced at 11.00 a.m. and concluded at 12.20 p.m.)

Chairman.....

Dated.....

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**Meeting:** Corporate Parenting Panel  
**Date:** 10 January 2012  
**Subject:** Review of Children’s Services to disabled children, young people and their families

**Report of:** Cllr Mark Versallion, Executive Member for Children's Services

**Summary:** Attached at Appendix A is the Executive report (10 January 2012) on the findings and proposals of the review of services for disabled children, young people and their families. The Corporate Parenting Panel is asked to note the content and receive a verbal update about the decision of the Executive.

The implementation of the agreed option will take place between April 2012 and March 2013

Corporate Parenting Panel is asked to discuss its aspirations for the children and young people arising out of the decision of the Executive.

**Contact Officer:** Catherine Parry, Assistant Director Children’s Services Operations (Acting)

**Public/Exempt:** Public

**Wards Affected:** All

**Function of:** Council

**CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS**

**Council Priorities:**

This report supports Priority 2 of Central Bedfordshire’s Strategic Plan 2009-2011, Educating, Protecting and Providing Opportunities for Children and Young People. The information also supports the Children and Young People’s Plan priorities, Priority 2 Protecting Children and keeping them safe and Priority 1, increased educational achievement.

**Financial:**

1. This is laid out in the Executive paper.
2. These proposals will not increase costs for the Council.

**Legal:**

3. The legal framework is set in the draft report.

**Risk Management:**

4. Risk Management is set out in the report.

**Staffing (including Trades Unions):**

5. Consultation with staff and unions will need to take place.
6. An early informal consultation with Trade Unions will be required.

**Equalities/Human Rights:**

7. Adherence to Human Rights and Equality issues is maintained.

**Community Safety:**

8. There are no new community safety issues arising from the report.

**Sustainability:**

9. The proposals outlined in the review will ensure that services to disabled children, young people and their families are fit for purpose, will meet the requirements of the emerging legislation and can be delivered within planned budgets and supporting grants

**Procurement:**

10. Not applicable.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

**That the Corporate Parenting Panel discuss its aspirations for the children and young people arising out of the decision of the Executive.**

**Appendices:**

Appendix A – Executive Report 10 January 2012

**Background Papers:** None.

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**Meeting:** EXECUTIVE

**Date:** 10 January 2012

**Subject:** Review of services to disabled children, young people and their families.

**Report of:** Cllr Mark Versallion, Executive Member for Children's Services

**Summary:** The report provides the outcome of the review of Children's Services to disabled children, young people and their families living in Central Bedfordshire. It makes recommendations about the future delivery of services.

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**Advising Officer:** Edwina Grant, Deputy Chief Executive/Director of Children's Services

**Contact Officer:** Catherine Parry, Assistant Director, Children Services, Operations (Acting)

**Public/Exempt:** Public

**Wards Affected:** All

**Function of:** Council

**Key Decision** No

**Reason for urgency/  
exemption from call-in  
(if appropriate)** N/A

#### **CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS**

##### **Council Priorities:**

This report supports Priority 2 of Central Bedfordshire's Strategic Plan 2009-2011, Educating, Protecting and Providing Opportunities for Children and Young People. The information also supports the delivery of the Children and Young People's Plan priorities, Priority 2 Protecting Children and keeping them safe and Priority 1 increased educational achievement.

##### **Financial:**

1. This review has been undertaken to ensure increased efficiency and value for money in the existing expenditure. If efficiencies can be made when the staffing changes have been implemented, this may release Early Intervention Grant to be reallocated in the 2013/14 budget rounds. Budget proposals currently subject to consultation for 2012/2013 include elements of proposed efficiencies for commissioning and the more efficient use of administrative staff in all teams that will use the new case management system. The disability team will be reviewed alongside all other teams to identify opportunity for such efficiencies. The total budget for this area is £3,332,380 and any monies released from the element of Early Intervention Grant, which is £908k in 2012/13, will be reinvested to provide improved outcomes for children and young people.

**Legal:**

2. The legal framework is laid out in The Children Act 1989, Children and Young Persons Act 2008 and new Care Planning and Regulations implemented nationally in April 2011 (“Planning Transition to Adulthood for Care Leavers”). The Break for Carers for Disabled Children regulations 2011 also came into force on the 1 April 2011. The Council has published a statement for carers, which is now available on the website at [www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/Images/Short\\_Breaks\\_Statement\\_tcm6-24408.pdf](http://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/Images/Short_Breaks_Statement_tcm6-24408.pdf)
3. This review has taken into account the requirement, announced in March 2011 by the Department for Education (DfE) for each Council to prepare for all young people with Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) to have a single assessment and single plan across health, education and social care by 2013, (SEND Green Paper March 2011). This will ensure the services are delivered in the most effective and efficient way, provide value for money and put services on a sustainable long term footing.

**Risk Management:**

4. Regulatory risk: these are statutory services.

**Staffing (including Trades Unions):**

5. There are staffing and Trade Union implications contained within these proposals.

**Equalities/Human Rights:**

6. Public authorities have a statutory duty to promote equality of opportunity, eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and foster good relations in respect of nine protected characteristics; age, disability, gender re-assignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. The Council has undertaken a detailed Equality Impact assessment as part of the review process and will keep the Statement under review during the implementation process.

**Community Safety:**

7. There are no implications from these proposals.



**Sustainability:**

8. The proposals outlined in the review will ensure that services to disabled children, young people and their families are fit for purpose and will meet the requirements of current legislation.

**Procurement:**

9. Any tendering processes required as a result of the proposals will be subject to procurement regulations and guidance.

**Overview and Scrutiny:**

10. This matter was considered by Overview and Scrutiny on the 15 December 2011 and the Committee agreed that the delivery of services to disabled children via the "hub and spoke" model, to include closure of the "Poppies" facility by March 2013 at the latest, be endorsed for consideration by the Executive at its meeting on 10 January 2012.

The Children's Overview and Scrutiny Task Force chaired by Cllr Angela Barker, referenced in Section 19 refers to work done by Cllrs Costin, Goodchild, Dodwell, Mackilligan and Pepworth. Also part of the group was Mrs Copley, governor representative.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

**The Executive is asked to:**

1. **approve the implementation of the proposals to deliver services to disabled children as set out in the report by:**
  - a) **agreeing that a "hub and spoke" model be adopted for the delivery of services**
  - b) **agreeing the closure of the "Poppies" by March 2013 at the latest and that the support to families arising from individual assessments be delivered within the proposed revised model as part of the "hub and spoke" delivery.**

*Reason for Recommendations:*

1. *To ensure the Council is compliant with Statutory Guidance and Legislation.*
2. *To ensure services are delivered in the most effective and efficient way, provide Value for Money and put services on a long term sustainable footing.*

**Executive Summary**

11. The Council has a duty to provide services to disabled children, young people and their families, under present legislation.

12. The review findings identify the current provision of services to disabled children and young people can be better coordinated, delivered to improve efficiency and effectiveness and provide better value for money.
13. The recommendations and proposals outlined in the review will ensure that the Council will meet the requirements of the development of the service to meet the requirements of current and emergent legislation outlined in the Special Educational Needs and Disability Green Paper 2011.

### **Background**

14. An review of services for children and young people with disabilities was commissioned in July 2011 to:
  - a) Look at services provided to disabled children, young people and their families, to include the social work support, residential services and all short break provision.
  - b) Examine the interface between the Council's Children's Services, NHS Bedfordshire services and the work of the voluntary sector.
  - c) Take into account any future developments regarding the national and local policy changes for children's centres.
  - d) Make recommendations, with options, about how services to children, young people and their families, excluding but taking into account school provision, can be delivered in the future.
  - e) Take into account the outcomes of the review of special schools and future delivery of special educational needs services in Central Bedfordshire.
  - f) Take into account any decisions regarding the proposal to create an Area Special School in the south of the area.

**APPENDIX A**

The review of services to disabled children was set within a national and local context. The key national policy drivers underpinning the review include:

- a) Special Educational Needs and Disability Green Paper 2011 – Support and Aspiration: A new approach to SEND.
- b) Short break guidance and Legislation Transforming Community Services for Children, Young People and Families (Department of Health 2009): emphasis on integration and single point of access for services for children with disability or illness.
- c) Healthy Lives, Brighter Futures – the Strategy for Children and Young People’s Health (Depart for Education [then Department for Children, Schools and Families] and Department of Health, 2009): emphasis on multi-agency working and short breaks for children with disabilities.
- d) Aiming High for Disabled Children (AHDC): launched in May 2007 This provided the transformation programme for disabled children's services.
- e) Revised Operating Framework for NHS in England 2010 (Department of Health) and the White Paper; Liberating the NHS July 2010. This signalled substantial changes in future years as to how the NHS will function, with a clear direction to phase out PCT’s and devolve responsibility for commissioning services to GP’s and practice teams working in consortia.
- f) Better Care: Better Lives – improving outcomes and experiences for children, young people and their families living with life-limiting and life-threatening conditions – Department of Health.

16. The key local policy drivers underpinning the review include:

- a) Future Delivery of Special Education Needs (SEN) Services in Central Bedfordshire agreed by Executive in May 2011
- b) Short break consultation with parents leading to the publication of the Central Bedfordshire Short Breaks Statement which is at [www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/Images/Short\\_Breaks\\_Statement\\_tcm6-24408.pdf](http://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/Images/Short_Breaks_Statement_tcm6-24408.pdf)
- c) The establishment of the Shadow Health and Well Being Board agreed by Executive in October 2011.

**The Review**

**APPENDIX A**

17. There are a range of social work services delivered by Central Bedfordshire Council which have been considered within the scope of the review. The scope of the review includes:
- a) The Disabled Children Social Work Fieldwork Team.
  - b) Residential provision.
  - c) Community short breaks services.
  - d) Out of county placements.
  - e) The functioning of the children with disabilities register
  - f) Parental involvement and consultation
  - g) The work done by staff to help families plan for transition to adulthood
18. The review was supported by an external Consultant with experience in the area, who advised the Director of the national and regional policy, context and compliance with emergent legislation. Appendix A provides data that sets this review in a national context. **In this appendix, the Central Bedfordshire numbers in each category per 10,000 will be added when the Executive report is finalised.**
19. In addition, a Task and Finish Scrutiny Group, comprising of representative members of the Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee, has been involved in monitoring the outcomes of the reviews as it was on going in order to provide a broader perspective. Their contributions have been taken into account in the formation of these proposals. In particular, the group visited resources, met with staff and took an overview of the evidence of the review proposals as they were being developed.

**Outcomes**

20. The outcome of the review is that some changes are required as set out below to ensure that services are delivered to:
- a) Improve outcomes for disabled children and young people by the delivery of coordinated and integrated services across health, education, social care and the voluntary sector.
  - b) Embed prevention and early intervention by the implementation of the single assessment and single plan.
  - c) Use existing funding and resources more effectively.
  - d) Improve access for families to universal provision.
  - e) Promote choice and independence by increasing the range of short break options.
  - f) Provide improved information about what services are available and how they can be accessed.
  - g) Improve plans to secure transition to adulthood and therefore improve services for children and young people who have special needs.

**APPENDIX A**

21. The main findings of the review relate to two areas of work. The first is the way social care staff are deployed and proposes a “hub and spoke” model. The second relates to the provision from “Poppies”, the Community Support Team.
22. Proposal 1 – Hub and Spoke Model

All children’s services should be delivered through a ‘hub and spoke model of service delivery to ensure maximum impact. This is a re-organisation of staff which will take place under officer delegations to provide a service closer to communities and families and where possible, save on travel costs. Staff numbers increase and decrease in teams according to need and where possible efficiencies will be made to ensure the most effective deployment of staff. Base budget savings were not built into the proposals as usage can go down and up. Currently, the Children with Disability services are supported by an allocation from the Early Intervention Grant. When the review proposals are implemented operationally, any capacity that can be driven out due to efficiencies will reduce the claim on this grant in 2013/14.
23. The proposed model of service delivery identifies 2 sites in the County, one in the east, Biggleswade, on the site of the Ivel Valley School and one in the west, Houghton Regis, on the site of the Hillcrest School and nearby Glenwood School. It is proposed that each site provides and develops similar functions which build on and link to the developments outlined in the Special School proposals.
24. It is proposed to develop the newly refurbished site in Biggleswade and the residential and school sites at Houghton Regis as the ‘Hub’ elements of Hub and Spoke model. It is proposed that existing services continue to be delivered from the sites and in addition, develop and coordinate other services from both bases.

**APPENDIX A**

25. The proposed function of the hubs is to coordinate services on the site and develop networks with the spoke elements of services and to:
- Provide a multi disciplinary team service from the site which includes social work, health (including occupational therapy) and, where relevant, education professionals, with formal links with the Ivel Valley School in the east and Glenwood and Hillcrest Schools in the west. This will facilitate the development of an integrated single assessment, single plan and named lead 'professional/key worker' to support families.
  - Provide a social work outreach to schools, Children and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) and Child Development Centre (CDC) to ensure the development of an early intervention approach and coordinated pathways for those young people with more complex needs.
  - Develop and coordinate the family support services (previously the team) from the site, although the service may be based and delivered in other locations across the geographical area when needed.
  - Develop activities for after school and weekends for young people aged 0 -25 years either 'on site' or within the local area.
  - Provide a 'one stop shop' for parents, carers, young people and professionals for Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) about services and how they can be accessed.
  - Act as a focal point and venue for networks of parent/carers, disabled children and young people and those organisations supporting them.
  - To ensure the information element includes the statutory Parent Partnership and the disability register information function together with information networks of Parent Carer Involvement Board (PCIB).
  - Begin the formal involvement of young people so that the 'Voice of the Child' informs all policy and decision making.
  - Develop links with range of universal and community services in the east and west of the County
  - Coordination of transition services to support transition to adulthood.
26. The spoke element of the model is to encourage and support the use of mainstream/universal provision where appropriate whilst ensuring specialist provision is available where necessary. The accessibility of universal services is seen as key to the transformation of services for disabled children and young people.
27. Appendices B1 & B2 show diagrammatically the existing (B1) and proposed (B2) models.

**APPENDIX A**

28. Proposal 2 – Reallocation of the services currently provided by the Children with Disabilities Community Support Team based at Poppies due to the current high cost of the delivery of the service and the isolation of the staff teams. See Appendix C1 for the existing configuration of Disabled Children’s services and how Poppies fits into this. See Appendix C2 for the proposed configuration of Disabled Children’s Services and how Poppies would fit into this.
29. Proposal 2 “Poppies” provides a home care service as part of the provision of the council. Appendix D shows the analysis of the different provision with usage and costings. “Poppies” is identified as high cost with isolated staff. The remainder of the provisions, for the short to medium term, will become more cost effective as the proposals for the review are implemented. This will include the increased usage of Central Bedfordshire short break residential provision by children and young people currently accessing this in Bedford Borough Council residential homes.
30. Alternative proposals for “Poppies” provision were analysed and are set out below with Option 1 being the preferred option.
31. The four options for delivery are set out below, with option 1 being the preferred option.
32. Option 1 – Close existing service and relocate to the east and west hubs.

Advantages:

- Opportunity to redefine/refocus service to meet changing priorities and support the proposed functions of the hub and spoke.
- Opportunity to achieve better value for money.
- Opportunity to develop flexible staff group to meet service specific skill set.
- Opportunities for coordination of complex packages of support across health education and social care.
- Opportunity to link services with health and education services.
- 24 hour back up from residential services.
- Reduction in building costs

Disadvantages:

- Loss of building and opportunities for specialised building and centred packages of support.
- May be associated redundancy costs

33. Option 2 – Keep existing level of provision but deliver the service from each hub in a “hub and spoke” model

Advantages:

- Service linked into core social care services to support the implementation of the hub and spoke model of service delivery.
- Services linked with other health and education services.
- Economies of scale in relation to the management of coordinated service.
- 24 hour back up from residential service.
- Reduction in building costs

Disadvantages

- Loss of building and opportunities for specialised building centre packages of support
- Staff complement who will not have skill set required for change in service and roles.

34. Option 3 – No Change

Advantages:

- Building provides opportunity for developing individual packages of support to young people with severe challenging behaviour.
- Building provides base for staff.

Disadvantages:

- Services remains physically and professionally isolated and separate from proposed “hub” services
- No economies of scale in management
- Little opportunity for change



35. Option 4 - Keep existing service and attach as outreach to each residential unit

**Advantages:**

- Opportunity to redefine/refocus service to meet changing priorities and support the proposed functions of the hub and spoke
- Opportunity to achieve better value for money
- Opportunity to reconfigure staff establishment
- 24 hour back up from residential service
- Reduction in building costs

**Disadvantages:**

- Loss of building and opportunity for specialised building centre packages of support
- Staff complement who will not have skill set required for change in service and roles.

35. Option 1 is the preferred option as it provides the greater focus on improved provision for children, young people and their families by keeping facilities closer to families, reducing travel and management costs and allowing for flexibility in operation.

**Conclusion**

36. Timescales for change:

December 11 – February 2012 – Develop the change programme including consultation with staff and a communication plan with parents.

April 2012 – March 2013 – Implementation of the change programme.

**Appendices:**

Appendix A – Disabled children and young people in Central Bedfordshire Needs Analysis

Appendices B1 & B2 - Existing (B1) and proposed (B2) models

Appendices C1 & C2– Existing Configuration and proposed new configuration of Disabled Children's Services (social care chart)

Appendix D – Analysis of provision – usage and costings

**Background Papers:** None.

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**Disabled children and young people in Central Bedfordshire Needs Analysis**

**1. Population estimates\***

|         |                                  |
|---------|----------------------------------|
| 614,800 | Bedfordshire County (All ages)   |
| 255,200 | Central Bedfordshire (All ages)  |
| 75,600  | Central Bedfordshire (Ages 0-24) |

\*Office for National Statistics 2010 mid year estimates unless otherwise stated

**2. Disabled children and young people population estimates**

|       |   |
|-------|---|
| 7,560 | 10% Lancaster University <sup>1</sup>                           |
| 5,292 | 7% Family Resource Survey & ONS <sup>2 3</sup>                  |
| 5,292 | 7% School Census <sup>4</sup>                                   |
| 1,970 | 2.6% Disability Living Allowance <sup>5</sup>                   |
| 607   | 0.8% DLA Higher care rate <sup>6</sup>                          |
| 225   | No. of Cases held – Child Disability Team Ampthill <sup>7</sup> |

N.B Only 1 in 13 disabled children receive a regular support service of any sort from their local authority.(Contact a Family: Statistics)<sup>8</sup>

**School Census January 2011 – Primary Learning Difficulty/ Disability (LDD) Levels of need**

|  | Nos. per category | Percentage per category | Nos. per 100,000 rounded up |
|--|-------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Behaviour, Emotional and Social Difficulty (BESD)                | 699               | 25.5%                   | 27960                       |
| Moderate Learning Difficulties (MLD)                             | 428               | 15.6%                   | 17120                       |
| Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD)                                 | 388               | 14.1%                   | 15520                       |
| Speech, Language & Communication Needs (SLCN)                    | 348               | 12.7%                   | 13920                       |
| Specific Learning Difficulties (SPLD)                            | 313               | 11.4%                   | 12520                       |
| Severe Learning Difficulties (SLD)                               | 189               | 6.9%                    | 7560                        |
| Other (OTH) which may include children without a clear diagnosis | 118               | 4.3%                    | 4720                        |
| Physical Disability (PD)   | 113               | 4.1%                    | 4520                        |
| Hearing Impairment (HI)  | 79                | 2.9%                    | 3160                        |
| Visual Impairment (VI)   | 37                | 1.3%                    | 1480                        |
| Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulty (PMLD)                 | 26                | 0.9%                    | 1040                        |
| Multi Sensory Impairment (MSI)                                   | 8                 | 0.3%                    | 320                         |
| <b>Total</b>   | <b>2,746</b>      | <b>100.0%</b>           | <b>109840</b>               |
| Total number of all children and young people on school census   | 39,214            |                         |                             |

<sup>1</sup> 'The Socio-Economic Circumstances of Families Supporting a Child at Risk of Disability in Britain in 2002'. Lancaster University .Emerson, E. and Hatton, C. (2005) analysed the 2002 Families and Children Study using a broader definition of disability. Their results suggested that 10% of all children are disabled. This equates to just under 1.2 million children under the age of 17 in the UK.

<sup>2</sup> The Family Resource Survey 2005-2006, Office for National Statistics also estimates over 700,000 (7%) children under the age of 16 with an 'estimated longstanding illness, disability or infirmity that limits their activity'.

<sup>3</sup> 'Living in Britain, Results from the 2002 General Household Survey', Office for National Statistics (2004) reports there are 770,000 (7%) disabled children in the UK.

<sup>4</sup> 7% - rate of LDD prevalence found within the School Census (January 2011)

<sup>5</sup> Entitled Disability Living Allowance cases aged 0-24. DWP - February 2011

<sup>6</sup> Number of children in receipt of higher rate DLA has been used as a proxy indicator as recommended by the government (HM Treasury & DfES 2007). These children are by definition severely disabled with substantial care and/or mobility needs.

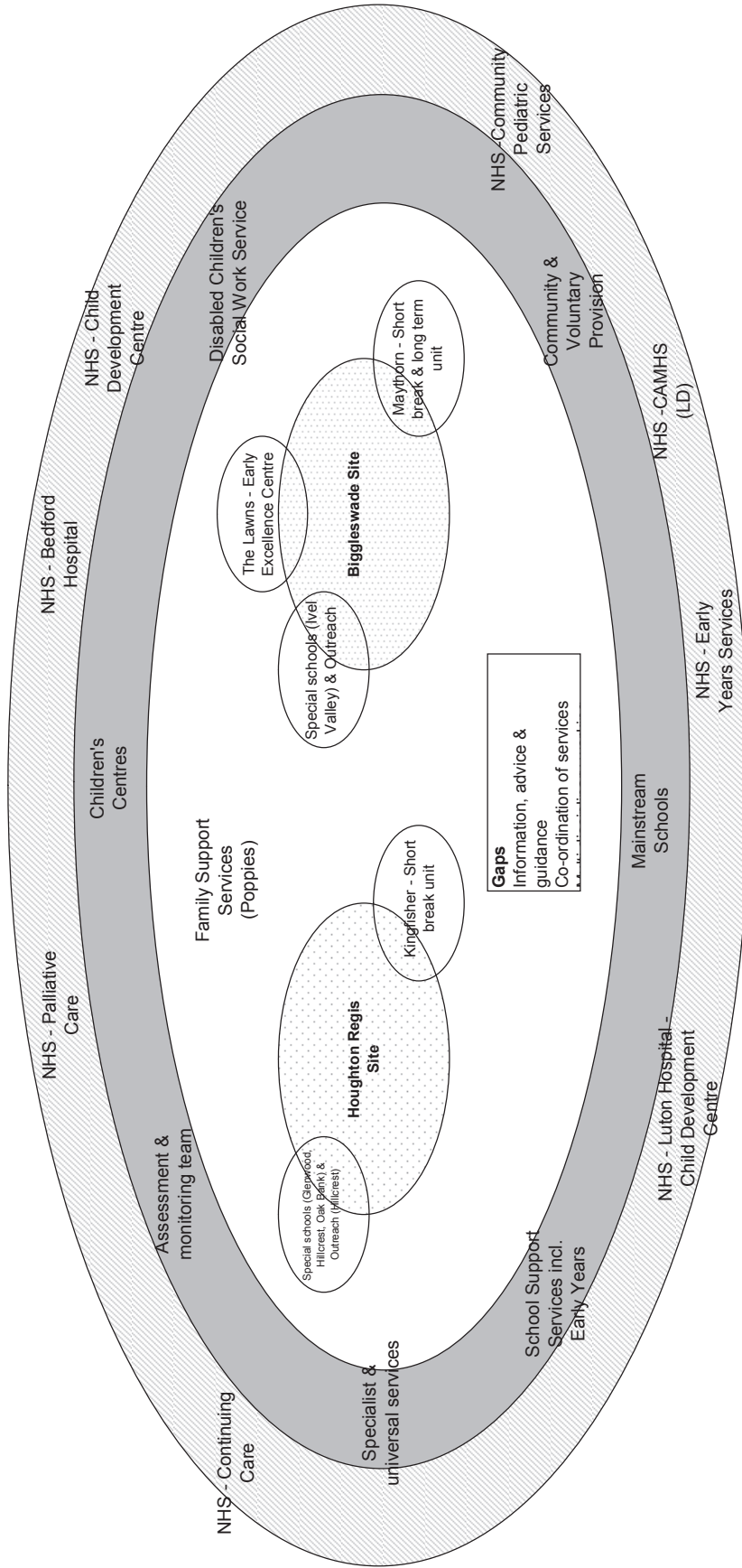
<sup>7</sup> No. of Cases held (All Roles) at 20 October 2011




<sup>8</sup> 1 in 13 disabled children based on school census as a proxy indicator in Central Bedfordshire would equate to 407.

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Appendix B1

Existing configuration of disabled children's services

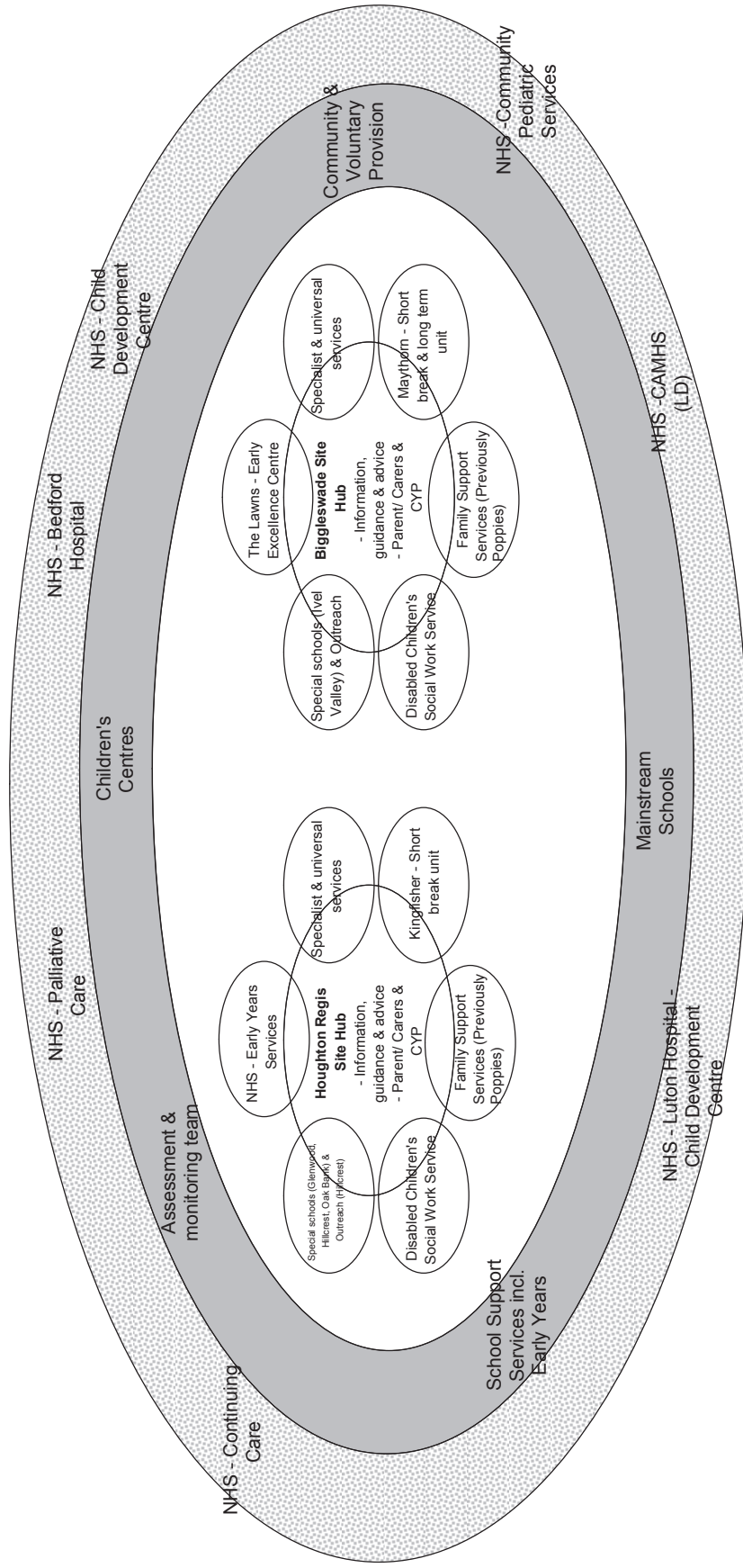


-  Existing configuration of services to disabled children and young people
-  Central Bedfordshire Social & Education Services
-  NHS Bedfordshire

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Appendix B2

Proposed reconfiguration of disabled children's services

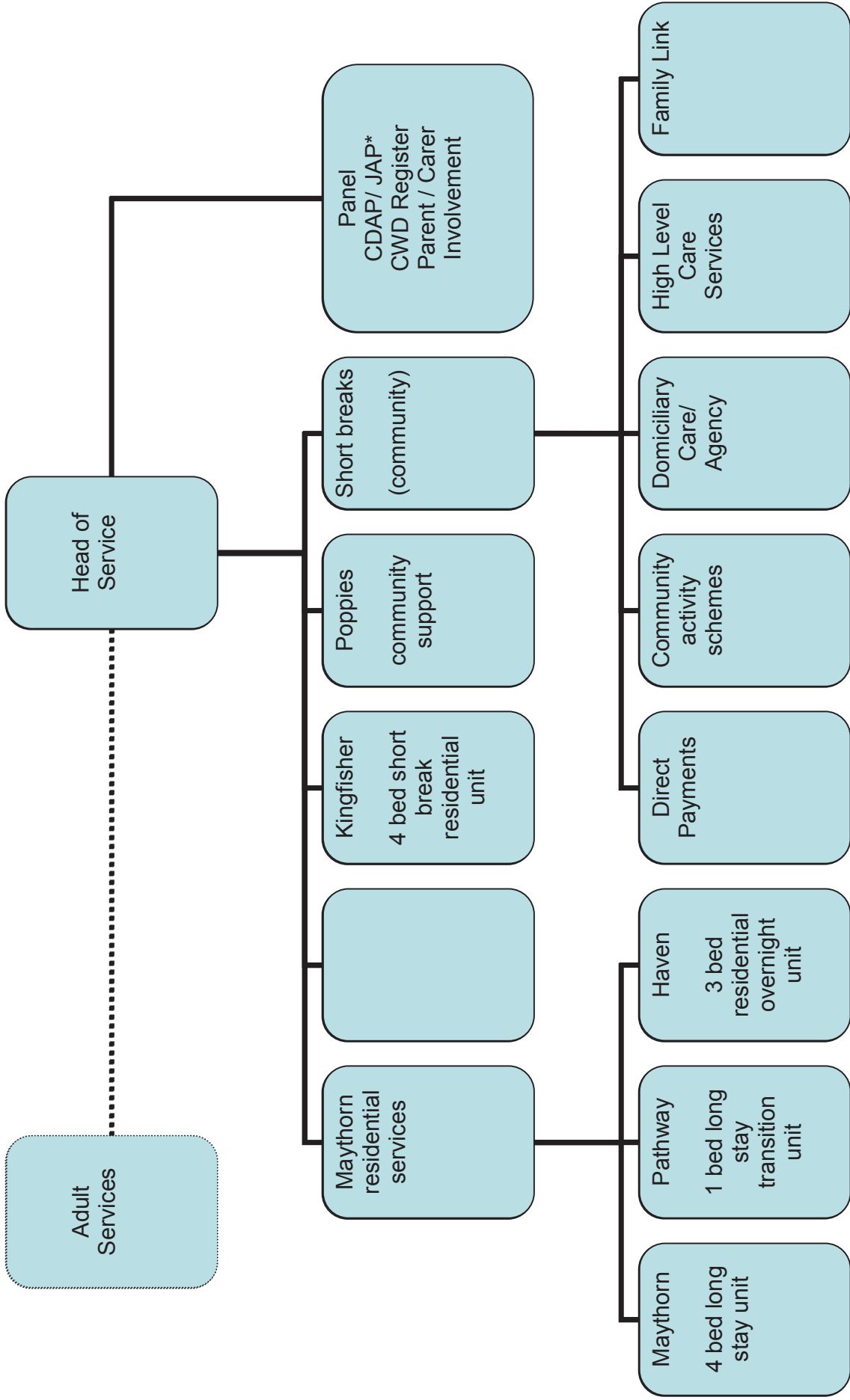


- Proposed reconfiguration of services to disabled children and young people
- Central Bedfordshire Social & Education Services
- NHS Bedfordshire

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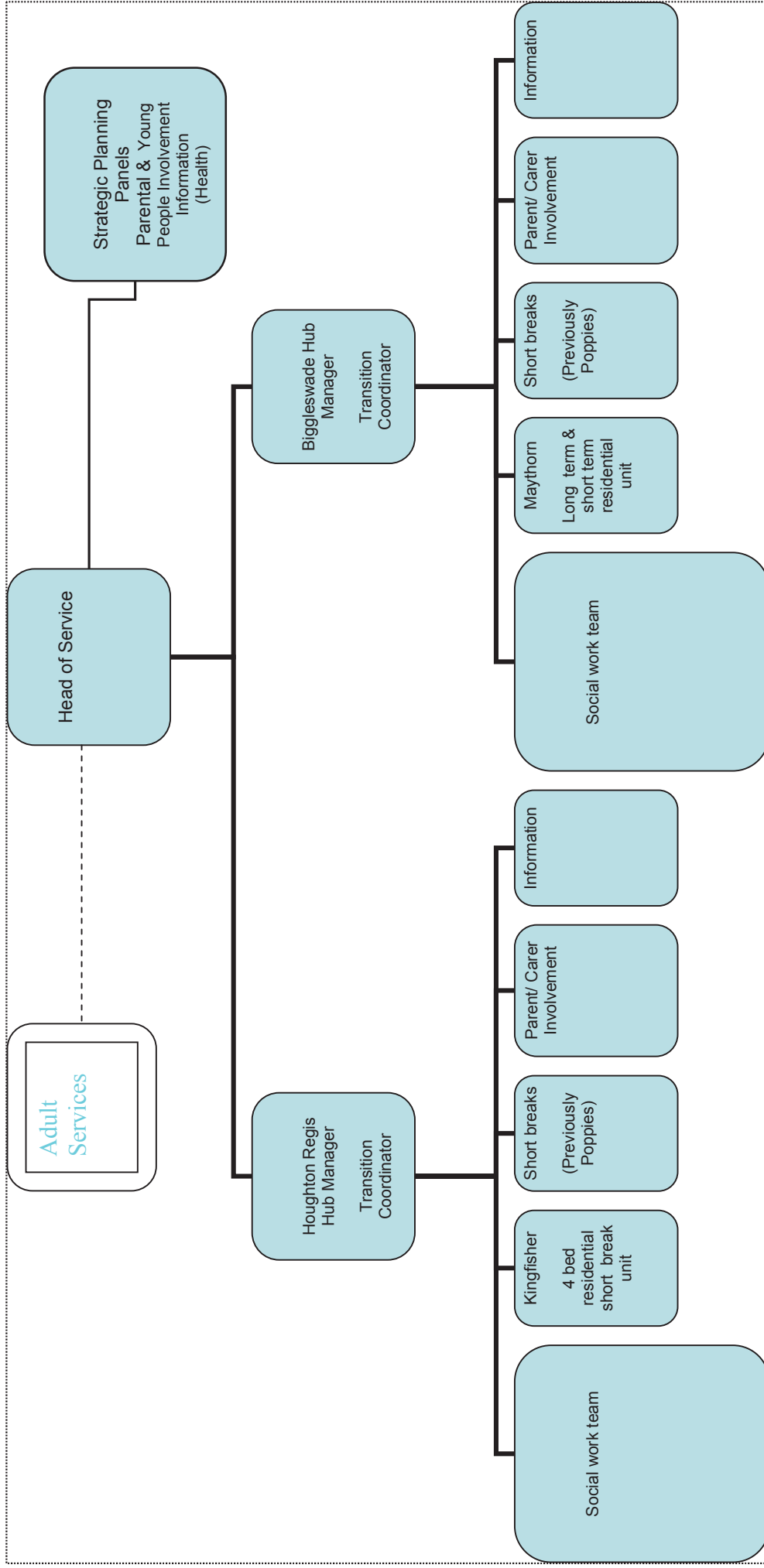
Existing Configuration of Disabled Children's Services (Social Care Structure Chart) Appendix C1



\* Children with Disability Allocation Panel (CDAP) Children with Disabilities (CWD)  
Joint Assessment Panel (JAP)

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# Proposed Configuration of Disabled Children's Services (Social Care Structure Chart) Appendix C2



## Role of Hub Manager

- Manage disabled children's social care service
- Ensure designated members of social care team have formal links with Education, Child Development Centres, CAHMS, Adult Services and Vol Sector.
- Co-ordination of Hub activities and resources

## Role of Head of Service

- Manage the delivery of all social care services across the 2 Hubs
- Responsibility for maintaining strategic links with Education, Health, Adult services and Vol Sector
- Ensure delivery of single assessment single plan in partnership with other senior managers

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## Summary of Services

| <b>Central Bedfordshire Council - Summary Chart of Disabled Children's Services</b>  |   |
|--|---|
| <b>Service Area</b>  | <b>Notes</b>  |
| Disabled Children Field Work Team  | A specialist team of 17 qualified and unqualified social care workers who undertake assessment and service provision for disabled children and their families. An Occupational Therapy service is provided to the team by Adult Services. |
| Residential Short Term – Bedford Borough Council provision   | 'Spot purchased' overnight short breaks from Foxgloves and Sunflower Units  |
| Residential Short Term - 'In House' (Kingfisher) based on the Hillcrest and nearby Glenwood School sites in Houghton Regis | 1 x 4 bed overnight residential short service children with autism and challenging behaviour  |
| Residential Long Term Unit (Maythorn) based on the Ivel Valley School site in Biggleswade                                  | A single storey residential unit in Biggleswade from which the following services can be delivered:<br>1 x 4 bed long term service<br>1 x 1 bed transition unit<br>1 x 3 bed, overnight short term service                                |
| Community Short Break Services CBC wide  | A range of community support to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community Support Team (Poppies)</li> <li>• High level Support</li> <li>• Direct payments</li> <li>• Family Link</li> <li>• Activity Schemes</li> </ul> |
| Out of Authority Placements  | Children placed out of authority for education and social care reasons  |
| Transition   | Adult Care Services provide a transition service to young people aged 18 years and over   |
| The Register of Children with Disabilities   | Over 1000 families registered. Provides good opportunities for information exchange and involvement of parent/carers  |

### **Disabled Children Field Work Team (Statutory Social Work Services)**

The Disabled Children Field Work Team provides a CBC wide service and is based in offices in Ampthill.

Table 1 provides detail of the workload/activity levels of the Children with Disabilities social care team and activity levels of other social work teams in CBC

| <b>Table 1<br/>Summary</b>                          | <b>No. of staff</b> | <b>No. of Cases Held (All Roles)</b> |
|---|---------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Child Disability - Ampthill                         | 17                  | 225                                  |
| Child Intake & Assessment - Bedford Borough Council | 25                  | 323                                  |
| Children Family Support - Biggleswade               | 17                  | 225                                  |
| Children Family Support - Dunstable                 | 21                  | 395                                  |
| Children L.A.C & L.A.A.C - Central                  | 25                  | 305                                  |

Table 2 shows comparison of activity levels of disabled social care teams with statistical neighbours

| <b>Table 2<br/>Child Disability Team</b> | <b>Central Bedfordshire Council</b> |                               |                      | <b>Statistically relevant Council for regional comparison</b> |                               |                      |
|--|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------|----------------------|---|-------------------------------|----------------------|
|  | No. of staff                        | No. of Cases Held (All Roles) | Average no. of cases | No. of staff  | No. of Cases Held (All Roles) | Average no. of cases |
| Senior Practitioners                     | 2                                   | 48                            | 24                   | 2   | 58                            | 29                   |
| Social Workers                           | 9                                   | 165                           | 18                   | 21  | 513                           | 24                   |
| Social Work Assistant                    | 2                                   | 12                            | 6                    | 15  | 303                           | 20                   |
| <b>Total</b>                             | <b>13</b>                           | <b>225</b>                    | <b>17</b>            | <b>62</b>   | <b>1,392</b>                  | <b>22</b>            |

**Activity:** The development of the “hub and spoke” model will allow the number of cases held to be brought to the level of the “regional comparison” as case numbers change and staff can be allocated and reallocated against need.

### **Residential Services**

#### **Residential Short Term (Independent) Foxgloves and Sunflower House**

The Foxgloves unit is based in Bedford Borough Council and provides a service to young people with learning difficulties and associated challenging behaviours living in Central Bedfordshire.

Sunflower House is based in Bedford Borough Council and provides a service to young people with learning disabilities and associated health disabilities living in Central Bedfordshire.

## Summary

| Unit            | Nos. young people | Total nights | Cost p.a. @ 2010/11 prices<br>£ | Average Cost per bed night<br>£ |
|-----------------|-------------------|--------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Foxgloves       | 6                 | 257          | 111,936                         | 436                             |
| Sunflower House | 17                | 611          | 256,096                         | 419                             |
| <b>Total</b>    | <b>23</b>         | <b>868</b>   | <b>368,032</b>                  | <b>424 (1)</b>                  |

### Analysis:

#### Foxgloves

6 young people receiving service at Foxgloves (Bedford Borough Council):

- 2 young person due to leave November 2011
- 4 in transition to Maythorn (Haven Short Breaks) to be completed by January 2012

#### Sunflower House

17 young people receiving service at Sunflower:

- 5 young people no longer receive service at Sunflower House (Bedford Borough Council) but have formed part of an existing contract.
- 12 young people to transfer to Kingfisher and Maythorn units, subject to full assessment

Note (1) Bedford Borough Council have advised they will increase the hourly rate to £600 per night from 1 April 2012.

#### Activity:

1. Undertake feasibility study of viability of moving the remaining 12 young people from Sunflower House (Bedford Borough Council) to Kingfisher and Maythorn units by April 2012
2. For those young people who are unable to transfer to either Kingfisher or Maythorn units develop options for future provision

#### Kingfisher

The Kingfisher unit provides a service for young people with Autistic Spectrum Disorder and associated challenging behaviours, aged 8 – 18 years.

The service at Kingfisher has been assessed as ‘Outstanding’ by Ofsted.

The unit has not been fully adapted to meet the needs of young people with severe physical and health needs, although the unit can provide a service for some young people with physical disabilities

**Summary of usage**

| 2010/11    | Number of bed nights/ (beds) available | Number of bed nights used | Budget £ | Expenditure £ | Average cost per bed night £ |
|------------|--|---------------------------|----------|---------------|------------------------------|
| Kingfisher | 1,241                                  | 693                       | 512,014  | 451,750       | 652                          |

**Analysis:**

- The Kingfisher unit is running at 56% occupancy. The occupancy rate has decreased over the past 2 years
- The unit must increase efficiency. This can be achieved in the following ways:
  - Increase bed night usage and therefore capacity
  - Reduce overall costs and unit costs by closing unit for 1/2 nights per week and examining staffing structures
  - Increase range of services provided from the unit

**Activity:**

1. Undertake feasibility study of the viability of transfer of young people from Sunflower House (Bedford Borough Council) to the Kingfisher unit and any associated costs
2. Undertake review of the long term viability of the service at Kingfisher
3. Identify gaps in provision and consider how services could better support those young people at risk of being placed out of county

**Maythorn Unit**

The Maythorn unit provides a service for young people with Autistic Spectrum Disorder and associated challenging behaviours aged 8 18 years.

The services at the Maythorn unit have been assessed as ‘Good’ by Ofsted

The Maythorn building is old and whilst the unit provides 3 separate services and is fit for purpose, it would need a considerable amount of capital to ensure it is fully compatible to meet the needs of the range of young people who will require services ‘in authority’



The unit has not been fully adapted to meet the needs of young people with severe physical and health needs, although the unit can provide a service for some young people with physical disabilities

### Summary of Usage

| 2010/11  | Number of bed nights available | Number of bed nights used | Budget £ | Expenditure £ | Average cost per bed night £ |
|----------|--------------------------------|---------------------------|----------|---------------|------------------------------|
| Maythorn | 2,920                          | 1,551                     | 818,978  | 911,766       | 588                          |

### Analysis:

- The Maythorn unit including the Pathway unit services are running at 85% occupancy, providing permanent accommodation for 6 young people
- This figure does not include the 3 vacant beds at the Haven which has not been used to provide any service over the past year

### Activity:

1. Transfer young people to Maythorn (Haven) from Foxgloves (Bedford Borough Council)
2. Transfer of young people from Sunflower (Bedford Borough Council), subject to full assessment
3. Undertake review of the long term viability of delivering services from the unit
4. Identify gaps in provision and consider how services could better support those young people at risk of being placed out of county

### Community Short Breaks

| Summary - Community Short Breaks      |                          |          |               |                 |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------------|----------|---------------|-----------------|
| 2010/11                               | Number of hours provided | Budget £ | Expenditure £ | Cost per hour £ |
| Community Home Care/Support (Poppies) | 6,119                    | 425,153  | 294,509       | 48              |

### Community Home Care/Support (Poppies)

- The hourly rate for home care services provided by Poppies is £48 per hour

- Poppies provides a service to 45 young people
- Staff group is professionally isolated
- Terms and conditions of staff group are linked to residential terms and conditions which impacts on average hourly rate
- Service is provided from a base that is geographically isolated
- Service requires urgent review to ensure changing needs and priorities of Central Bedfordshire Council are met
- Staffing establishment consists of:
  - 1 x team manager
  - 1 x team leader
  - 8 x support workers
  - 5 x relief support workers

**Poppies proposal/options:** (see also Executive cover report – included for completeness)

1. Close existing service
2. Keep existing service and attach as outreach to residential units
3. No change
4. Keep existing service and attach as outreach to each residential unit

### **Option 1 – Close existing service**

Advantages:

- Opportunity to redefine/refocus service to meet changing priorities and support the proposed functions of the hub and spoke.
- Opportunity to achieve better value for money.
- Opportunity to develop flexible staff group to meet service specific skill set.
- Opportunities for coordination of complex packages of support across health education and social care.
- Opportunity to link services with health and education services.
- 24 hour back up from residential services.
- Reduction in building costs

Disadvantages:

- Loss of building and opportunities for specialised building and centred packages of support.
- May be associated redundancy costs

### **Option 2 – Keep existing level of provision but deliver the service from each hob in a “hub and spoke” model**

Advantages:

- Service linked into core social care services to support the implementation of the hub and spoke model of service delivery.
- Services linked with other health and education services.

- Economies of scale in relation to the management of coordinated service.
- 24 hour back up from residential service.
- Reduction in building costs

#### Disadvantages

- Loss of building and opportunities for specialised building centre packages of support
- Staff complement who will not have skill set required for change in service and roles.

### **Option 3 – No Change**

#### Advantages:

- Building provides opportunity for developing individual packages of support to young people with severe challenging behaviour.
- Building provides base for staff.

#### Disadvantages:

- Services remains physically and professionally isolated and separate from proposed “hub” services
- No economies of scale in management
- Little opportunity for change

### **Option 4 - Keep existing service and attach as outreach to each residential unit**

#### Advantages:

- Opportunity to redefine/refocus service to meet changing priorities and support the proposed functions of the hub and spoke
- Opportunity to achieve better value for money
- Opportunity to reconfigure staff establishment
- 24 hour back up from residential service
- Reduction in building costs

#### Disadvantages:

- Loss of building and opportunity for specialised building centre packages of support
- Staff complement who will not have skill set required for change in service and roles.

### Community Short Breaks

| <b>Summary of Community Short Breaks</b> |                                 |                 |                        |                                |
|--|---------------------------------|-----------------|------------------------|--------------------------------|
| <b>2010/11</b>                           | <b>Number of hours provided</b> | <b>Budget £</b> | <b>Expenditure £</b>   | <b>Average cost per hour £</b> |
| High Level Support (Base Budget)         |                                 | 493,761         | 578,584                |                                |
| Family Link/ Shared Care (Base Budget)   |                                 | 140,321         | 214,392                |                                |
| Direct Payments (Base Budget)            | 64,336                          | 152,869         | 185,718                |                                |
| Aiming High Grant                        |                                 | 952,333         | 869,003 <sup>(1)</sup> |                                |

- Awaiting stats detail for these services.
- <sup>(1)</sup> This figure represent the Aiming High Grant in 2010/11 and has been replaced by Early Intervention Grant (available until at least 2015)
- Expenditure of the Aiming High Grant in 2010/11 was used to increase community activities and build capacity in the workforce and market place

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**Meeting:** Corporate Parenting Panel  
**Date:** 10 January 2012  
**Subject:** Quarter Two Report on the Adoption Service – April to September 2011  
**Report of:** Catherine Parry, Assistant Director Children’s Services Operations  
**Summary:** The report outlines the activity in the Adoption Agency during the first six months of 2011-12.

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Contact Officer: Fiona Mackirdy, Head of Adoption and Fostering  
Public/Exempt: Public  
Wards Affected: All  
Function of: Council

#### **CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS**

##### **Council Priorities:**

Central Bedfordshire Council’s Strategic Plan 2009-11 Priority 2 – Educating, protecting and providing opportunities for children and young people.

The Children and Young People’s Plan 2011-2014 Priority 2 – Protecting children and keeping them safe.

Adoption is a key statutory service to Looked After Children.

##### **Financial:**

1. Adoption and Fostering within Children’s Services has an annual budget of £5.015 million, including income from Bedford Borough Council under the Shared Service arrangement. There are no new financial considerations arising from this report.

##### **Legal:**

2. Regulations, associated Statutory Guidance and National Minimum Standards outlines the requirement to report to Members on the management and outcomes of the Adoption Agency, in order that they can satisfy themselves that the services are effective and achieving good outcomes for children.

##### **Risk Management:**

3. Regulatory Risks: Failure to report to Members would be a breach of National Minimum Standard.

##### **Staffing (including Trades Unions):**

4. Not Applicable.

**Equalities/Human Rights:**

5. Adoption and services provided to Looked after Children affects all sectors of communities.

**Community Safety:**

6. Not Applicable.

**Sustainability:**

7. Not Applicable.

**Procurement:**

8. Not applicable.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

**that the Corporate Parenting Panel note and comment on the content of the report, particularly paragraph 22.**

**Background**

9. The Children Act 2004, Care Standards Act 2000 and associated Relevant Regulations and National Minimum Standards require Local Authority Adoption Agencies to report to Members at six monthly intervals. This will be achieved by presentation of a six monthly, Quarter 2 update to the Corporate Parenting Panel and a full year Annual Report to this Panel and the Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee in June each year.
10. The Adoption and Fostering service is a shared service hosted by Central Bedfordshire Council. Annual reports contain information activity in respect of both Councils. This report will also be provided to Bedford Borough Council.
11. This report covers activity in the period April to September 2011. Comparative data with the previous year is included where relevant.

**Recruitment of Adopters**

12. During the period 40 households attended information evenings about becoming adopters and 21 households attended for a subsequent in-depth interview.
13. 13 assessments of new adopters commenced in the period. This means the service is on track to meet the recruitment target of 26 new adoptive households in the year.
14. 7 new adoptive households completed their assessment and were approved by the Adoption Panel.

### **Adoption planning and placements for Children**

15. In this 6 month period there were 42 referrals for permanence planning including those where the plan was adoption. 21 were from CBC and 21 from BBC. This took the total number of family finding cases to 35 Borough cases and 43 for CBC.
16. 8 cases were presented to the Adoption Panel for a recommendation as to whether adoption should be the plan for the child.
17. 12 children were placed with adopters during the period (8 from Bedford Borough and 4 Central Bedfordshire Council children). This takes the total number of children placed with adopters and awaiting the adoption order to 14 5 adoption orders have been granted since April 2011, 3 for Bedford Borough children and 2 for Central Bedfordshire children.

### **Special Guardianship and Adoption Support**

18. Children's Services staff working in adoption and permanence support play a key role in supporting children placed under a Special Guardianship Order or for adoption after the legal order is made. At the end of September the team were providing adoption support to 42 families (23 BBC and 19 CBC) and Special Guardianship support to 23 families (8 BBC and 15 CBC).
19. Support was also offered by 213 "letterbox contact" cases (119 BBC and 94 CBC). This work is identified as part of the children and young people's plans for permanence, it ensures they have a record of contact with their birth family including letters and sometimes photographs, that birth family send into the team for them to distribute to the adoptive carers and children.

### **Adult Adoption work**

20. Over the period there were 23 referrals from adopted adults or their birth relatives seeking support to trace records or for intermediary services to facilitate contact.

### **Key Events**

21. The 3-yearly inspection of the adoption agency took place in August 2011, resulting in a judgement of the service as good with outstanding features. One recommendation was made by Ofsted in relation to the content of reports when making reference to children's birth family. The work on the action plan has ensured that all staff have been reminded to record these very sensitive observations and challenges in a way that can be understood and accepted by an adult that may want to look at their records later in life. Specialist training will be made available to frontline practitioners from January 2012 to improve this practice further.

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22. There has been an increased volume of activity and this work is compliant with updated guidance and legislation. At the time of writing, sufficient staff are in place to respond in a timely and effective manner to adoption matters. This will be kept under constant review. The national interest in adoption and recent inspection has provided an additional focus on work to demonstrate this compliance and evidence of good practice that is child focussed.

**Appendices:** None

**Background Papers:** None



Report title Quarter Two fostering report v2  
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**Meeting:** Corporate Parenting Panel  
**Date:** 10 January 2012  
**Subject:** Quarter Two Report on the Fostering Service – July to September 2011  
**Report of:** Catherine Parry, Assistant Director Children’s Services Operations  
**Summary:** The report outlines the activity in the fostering service during Quarter Two, with comparison to quarter one

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Contact Officer: Fiona Mackirdy, Head of Adoption and Fostering  
Public/Exempt: Public  
Wards Affected: All  
Function of: Council

#### **CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS**

##### **Council Priorities:**

Central Bedfordshire Council’s Strategic Plan 2009-11 Priority 2 – Educating, protecting and providing opportunities for children and young people.

The Children and Young People’s Plan 2011-2014 Priority 2 – Protecting children and keeping them safe.

Fostering is a key statutory service to Looked After Children.

##### **Financial:**

1. Adoption and Fostering within Children’s Services has an annual budget of £5.015 million, including income from Bedford Borough Council under the Shared Service arrangement. There are no new financial considerations arising from the Annual Reports.

##### **Legal:**

2. Regulations, associated Statutory Guidance and National Minimum Standards outlines the requirement to report to Members on the management and outcomes of the services, in order that they can satisfy themselves that the services are effective and achieving good outcomes for children.

##### **Risk Management:**

3. Regulatory Risks: Failure to report to Members would be a breach of National Minimum Standard.

##### **Staffing (including Trades Unions):**

4. Not Applicable.

**Equalities/Human Rights:**

5. Fostering and services provided to Looked after Children affects all sectors of communities.

**Community Safety:**

6. Not Applicable.

**Sustainability:**

7. Not Applicable.

**Procurement:**

8. Not applicable.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

**that the Corporate Parenting Panel note and comment on the content of the report.**

**Background**

9. The Children Act 2004, Care Standards Act 2000 and associated Relevant Regulations and National Minimum Standards require Local Authority Fostering Services to report to Members at three monthly intervals. This will be achieved by presentation of quarterly updates to the Corporate Parenting Panel and a full year Annual Report to this Panel and the Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee in June each year.
10. The Adoption and Fostering service is a shared service hosted by Central Bedfordshire Council. Annual reports contain information activity in respect of both Councils. This report will be provided to Bedford Borough.
11. This report covers activity in the period July to September 2011. Comparative data with the previous quarter is summarised in the tables in Appendix A.

**Recruitment of Foster carers**

12. During the period 84 enquiries were received from members of the public interested in becoming foster carers.
13. 18 assessments of new foster carers commenced, including 10 assessments of households caring for a child within their own family. These family placements are assessed under the regulation 24 of the Care Planning regulations and guidance of April 2011. These placements demonstrate the Council's commitment to retaining children and young people within their family environments where possible.

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14. 8 new fostering households were approved by the Fostering and Permanence Panels. Taken with changes to carers' approval and resignations there was a net increase of 2 fostering placements in Quarter 2. This brings the net increase in the year to 9.

### **Placements for Children**

15. In these 3 months there were 96 requests for new or change of fostering placements. 22 of these requests did not materialise into placements as children did not become looked after or did not move placement.
16. 38 children were placed with in-house foster carers of whom 16 were Central Bedfordshire children. 10 CBC children were placed in Independent Fostering Agency provision.
17. At 30 September 2011, there were a total of 130 children living with in-house foster carers of which 67 were Central Bedfordshire children. This was a significant increase on the previous quarter.

### **Training for Foster Carers**

18. 15 training courses took place involving 157 delegates. This included preparation training for prospective foster carers as well as short courses and workshops for approved foster carers.

### **Key Events**

19. Marketing and recruitment events took place at Bedford Market (every Wednesday in August), Linslade Canal Festival and Sandy Upper School New Intake Evening.
20. Advertising and press releases were placed in the local newspapers and publications. A mail shot advertising the youth care scheme open evening was distributed to 250 establishments including council buildings, sports facilities, Upper Schools, Job Centres, Community and Church premises.
21. An information evening for the Youth Care Scheme was held in September, and staff attended the Job Fair in Flitwick.

### **Key Issues**

22. The national changes to state benefits relating to housing could have unintended negative consequences on some of our non working foster carers, or those carers that live in social housing. It could also discourage members of the public from applying to be assessed as potential foster carers if they are in social housing or claiming benefits. The fostering service will be monitoring this closely alongside foster carers and taking mitigating action where necessary.
23. Looking after young people post 16 may become more financially challenging for carers as a result. This will be monitored closely and mitigating action taken where necessary to secure options for looked after children.

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**Appendices:**

Appendix A – Comparative Data

**Background Papers:** None

Appendix A

Chart one shows the allocation of in house placements to Central Bedfordshire Council (CBC) and Bedford Borough Council (BBC) during Q1 and Q2.

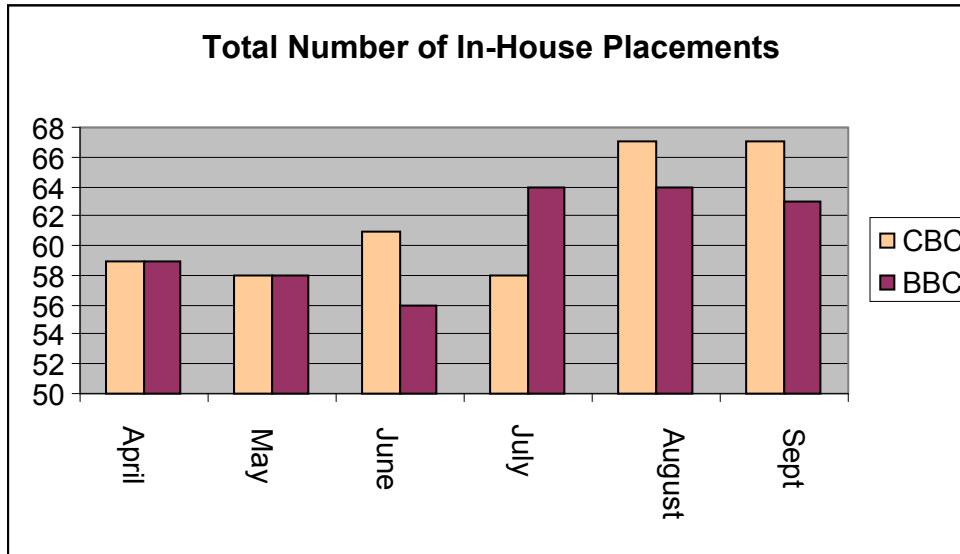


Chart two shows the proportion of new placements made in CBC and BBC Q1 and Q2.

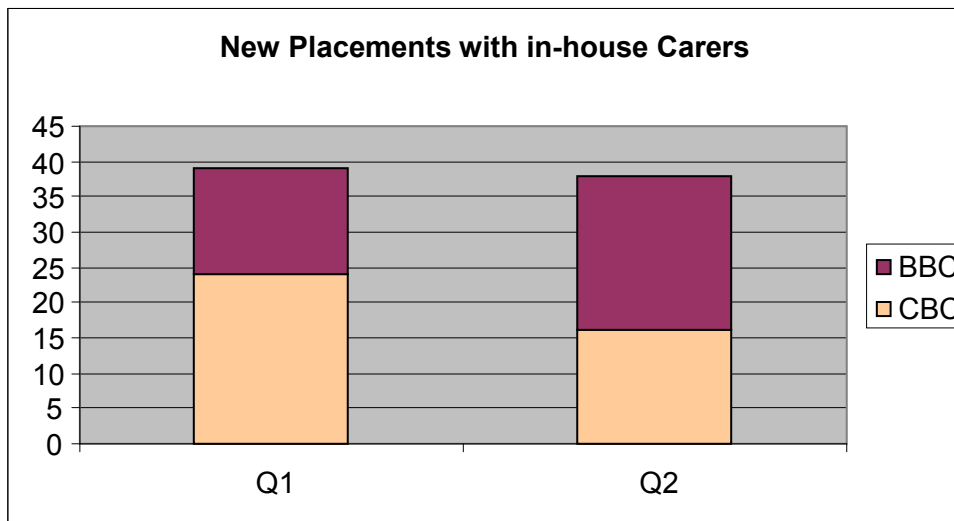
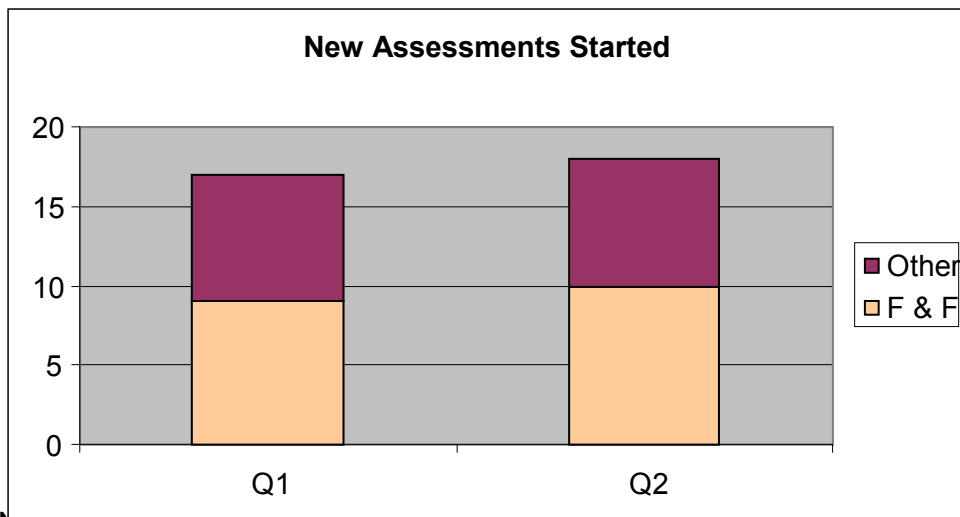
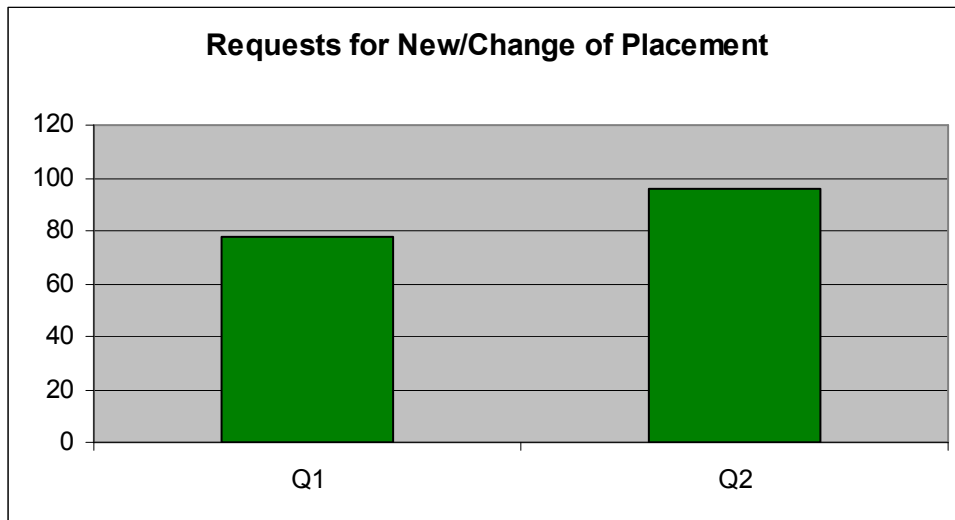


Chart three shows the number of foster carer assessments started in Q1 and Q2.

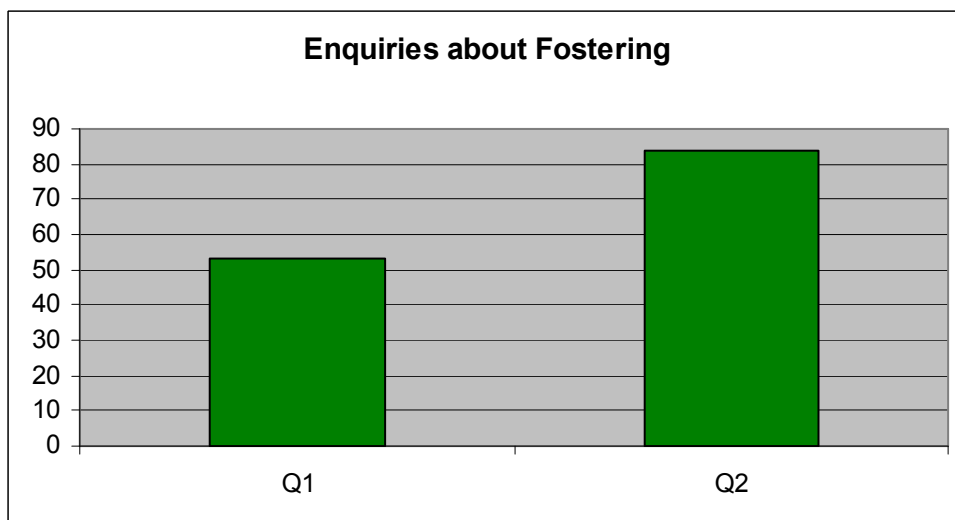


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**Chart four shows the total number of requests of both councils for new placements and a change of placement in Q1 and Q2.**



**Chart five shows the total number of enquiries made about fostering in Q1 and Q2.**



# Central Bedfordshire Council

## Corporate Parenting Panel

### Work Plan 2011 – 2012.

| Meeting Dates CPP   | Reports Scheduled   | Report Note |
|---|---|-------------|
| <b>2012</b>   |   |             |
| <b>Tues<br/>10 Jan</b>  | Review of Disabled Children's Services<br><br>Qtr 2 Fostering Report<br><br>Qtr 2 Adoption Report   |             |
| <b>Thurs<br/>8 Mar</b><br><br><b>*Proposed<br/>Agenda<br/>items – tbc</b> | Qtr 3 Fostering Report<br><br>*Children in Care Council year end report and presentation<br><br>*Placement sufficiency report. Commissioning improvements for Looked After children.<br><br>*Priorities for 2012 – 2013 verbal. |             |

**Regular reports:** Fostering: Quarterly and Annual Report to be presented in June of the municipal year.  
Adoption: 6 Monthly performance reporting and an Annual report in June of the municipal year.  
Health: 6 monthly and an Annual report in June of the municipal year.  
Education: An Annual Report presented in January of the municipal year.  
Children in Care Council attend 3 times a year.

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