



Corporate Parenting

Proposal for closure of Racecourse Road
Childrens Home and reconfiguration of the
resources, in line with Foster Care and Residential
Care Strategies.

Consultation Document

Consultation from Friday 6th November 2015 until
Friday 29th January 2016.

About the Trust

The Western Health and Social Care Trust was established on 1 April 2007. The Trust provides health and social care services across the five council areas of Limavady, Londonderry, Strabane, Omagh and Fermanagh.

The Trust's catchment area extends 292,000 sq. km and serves a population of approximately 300,000, including approximately 82,451 people aged 0-18 years. The Trust provides a range of health and social care services from a number of hospitals, community based facilities and also in people's own homes.

Our Mission Statement

“To provide high quality patient and client-focused Health and Social Care services through well trained staff with high morale.”

What are we consulting on?

The WHSCT propose to close one residential Childrens Home in Derry, and reconfigure the resources to enhance foster care services, particularly to provide additional 24/7 support to foster carers and reduce the level of foster care breakdowns for children. The additional resources will also enable the Trust to recruit a range of additional foster carers, who will provide support from assessment through to long term and specialist foster carers.

***We want to improve the way that
Community services are provided to
All people within the Trust...***

Introduction

The WHSCT's Women and Children's Directorate, are committed to delivering on the Six (UN) High Level Outcomes for Children;

- Enjoying, Learning and achieving
- Economic and environmental wellbeing
- Contributing positively to community and society
- Living in safety and with stability
- Healthy
- Living in a society which respects their rights.

The same high level outcomes are reflected in the WHSCT's mission statement for looked After Children.

“The Western Health and Social Care Trust is committed to ensuring that looked after children and young people have safety , security , stability, and grow up healthy and happy

Our aim is that children and young people reach their potential, and become confident adults who contribute to and feel valued in society.

The voices of all children, young people and their families will be valued and listened to at every stage of their journey”

The Western Trust's Corporate Parenting is managed within the Women and Children's Directorate. Put simply, Corporate Parenting means the Trust is responsible for providing the best possible care and safeguarding for children who are 'Looked After' by the Trust.

In the past 18 months 60% of children and young people placed in Residential childcare within the western Trust have come via fostering/adoption breakdowns. (In September 2015, 19 of 32 young people in Residential Care were from fostering/adoption breakdown).

The Corporate Parenting sub-directorate believe that by enhancing fostering services, including 24/7 support, this will reduce significantly the level of foster placement breakdowns. This will be achieved by appointing dedicated support staff who will be available in a planned and crisis manner on a 24/7 basis.

In addition fostering services will be better placed to recruit a range of foster carers from assessment carers to long term and specialist carers that would provide a greater variety of placements. Creating a variety of specialist and long term placement choices will assist the Trust to reduce the need to engage with Out of Trust Placement Providers.

The Trust Believe that by re investing the resources from the closure of Racecourse Road Childrens Home, to fostering services, we can reduce the overall demand on Residential Care, simply by reducing foster care breakdowns and having a greater variety of foster care homes available. It is widely regarded that children will experience better life outcomes, with an up bringing in a foster home, as opposed to a children's home.

Why do we need to Change?

In terms of Residential Children's Homes, there are seven residential care facilities across the Trust. Long Term homes are in Enniskillen, Omagh and Limavady. There are three Long Term homes in Derry and a Rehabilitation Home in Derry. There are 50 Places available within the homes, with an average of 35-37 places used at any given time in the past 18 months. Foster homes are in all locations across the Trust, including the significant increase in Kinship Foster care. For example in September 2011, there were 215 children in Mainstream foster care and 100 in kinship care. By September there were 206 in mainstream foster care and 222 in kinship care (Delegated Statutory Function Reports).

The Review of Fostering services (RQIA) 2013 recognised that the WHSCT fostering service is under tremendous capacity strain. Conversely the WHSCT has the most residential Children's Homes in NI. During the past few years and in particular since April 2013, an average of 60% of all residents in residential Care have been admitted due to fostering or adoption breakdown.

The Trust also have a number of young people who have needed to be accommodated outside of the Trust area, including in England and in Republic of Ireland. This has largely been due to not having the variety of placement opportunities in foster care and residential care to accommodate young people with complex needs

Our proposal

Impact of Proposed changes

The initial impact of the proposed changes will be experienced by the children who reside in and the staff who work in racecourse Road children's Home.

At present there are two children within the home and it is anticipated that their "care planners" can work effectively to provide a transition to a model of care that will enhance the young people's lives.

There are currently 20 staff based within the home; the WHSCT anticipate that through HR policy and procedures, that all staff will be successfully redeployed within the WHSCT.

The Home is based in a quiet area of Racecourse Road, in the Shantallow area of the City. The Trust do not anticipate that the closure will have any negative impact on the Local area.

Benefits of the proposed Change

- The Trust will be in a position to provide a wider range of foster care homes to children and young people
- Opportunity to create a system that will allow increased fostering support and Reduce placement breakdowns.
- Reduce/eradicate out of Trust placements by providing a broader range of foster care options.
- Increase levels of therapeutic interventions to support children, young people, families and carers.
- Provide a system that will support the strategic direction of all homes having no more than four residents (HSCB Residential Review)- it is anticipated that by reducing foster care breakdowns and having a wider range of foster placements available, that there will be less of a demand for residential child care services.

In essence, by providing a wider range of supports within fostering, the Trust will be in a position to achieve the Strategic Objectives set out within "Vision for Fostering" (WHSCT June 2015). In doing so, anticipated outcomes, include less fostering breakdowns, due to having a range of alternative foster placements and additional

24/7 support available. A proposed model of 24/7 planned and emergency response will enhance the level of support and responsiveness currently available to foster carers through the senior managers on call rota.

Your Views

The Trust wishes to consult as widely as possible on the service changes proposed in this document and associated Equality Screening document. We welcome your views on our proposals and a comments form is available on our website for you to complete. The Trust is consulting with all interested persons over a twelve week period from Friday 6th November 2015 to Friday 29th January 2016. In doing so, it will conform with our Equality Scheme accessible via the following link;

<http://www.westerntrust.hscni.net/about/1596.htm>

If you would like to make comments or have any queries about this consultation document and the proposed changes, please contact:

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You can send us your feedback by:

- Writing
- Emailing
- Telephoning

We welcome your views on our proposals...

Next Steps

When the consultation period is concluded all comments and suggestions that have been submitted will be fully considered. A summary of comments and the Trust's response will be communicated to all individuals or organisations that have contributed to the consultation. A full report on the consultation process and outcomes will be available on the Trust's website.

Promoting Equality and Good Relations

The Western Health and Social Care Trust is committed to fulfilling its statutory equality duties as set out in Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 (the Act) and has conducted an Equality Screening Template on the proposed changes in line with the Equality Commissions Guidelines. Through the equality screening process the proposed service model was assessed to be of minor impact and it was deemed not necessary to carry out a full Equality Impact Assessment however the screening process will remain live over the consultation period. This consultation exercise shall help inform the proposed service model and to help us to ensure measures are put in place to best promote equality of opportunity and good relations in accordance with Section 75 duties. This consultation document is available from the Western Trust website: www.westeritrust.hscni.net under 'Involving you' section. This document can also be made available in a range of alternative formats upon request

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Affected Staff

We value and respect our staff and will keep them informed at every stage of the process. The principles of the Trust's Management of Change Human Resource Framework provide a robust and transparent process for supporting staff through the change process. The principles of fairness, dignity and equity of treatment will be applied in the management of staff undergoing this change process. Steps will be taken to ensure that the implementation process in no way conflicts with the requirements of existing equality and antidiscrimination legislation. Existing arrangements such as reasonable adjustments for individual staff will remain. All staff will be kept fully informed and supported during the change process.