

People and Health Scrutiny Committee – 10 December 2021

Member Question

Question from Cllr Maria Roe

Parents and carers of people who have a disability are essential to their wellbeing, to enable them to care more effectively, prevent crisis.

In the Disabled Strategy I understand the delivery of lower cost care and support, aims to save Dorset Council £1 million, through changing the way short breaks are delivered. Please can I have the detail behind this and also I would like to know the details behind how you aim to maintain quality?

Response from the Executive Director for People, Children

We have been reviewing our service delivery and spend through this financial year for children and plan to spend our money differently:

- We do not have enough overnight short breaks (sometimes known as respite provision) available for children with disabilities and as a result some children have entered full time care or education placements. This is not necessarily what their families would have wanted and it is more expensive than providing short breaks. An important part of our strategy is to increase the availability of this type of support to reduce the need for full-time care.
- We have benchmarked the costs of the current fulltime care provision for children with disabilities and we can see that it is higher than would be expected and so we plan to look at all our available provision to make sure that we are maximising occupancy levels, offering good value care and supporting the development of new local provision to increase supply.
- We are recruiting more foster carers who are able to care for children who are disabled as we recognise that family-based care can deliver better outcomes and can be more cost effective than residential care.
- The availability of in-home support for families was greatly affected by the pandemic and as a result the cost of support packages has been much higher than usual. We are therefore working with adult's services on the Care Framework to be able to increase supply and affordability of this offer.
- Quality will be maintained through individual case planning, co-production with parents/carers/young people and robust performance and contract management.