

Proposed changes to residential short break services for children and young people in North Tyneside (March 2019)

Questions and answers for parents and carers accessing Heatherfield Mews and Addison Street

1.) **Why is the service changing?**

Services are routinely under review within the Local Authority. It is recognised that neither Addison Street nor Heatherfield Mews is running at full occupancy and we have an increased demand for residential placements that Heatherfield Mews could provide. In addition, we anticipate that we can provide a much better quality of service in a better location closer to community activities.

2.) **Will I still receive the same number of nights for my respite?**

The proposal is **NOT** about changing the number of nights that you will receive for your respite care. You will continue to receive an annual review of your child's needs from your allocated Social Worker who is responsible for identifying the number of nights that will meet yours and your child's needs.

3.) **Will my current bookings for respite be honored?**

It is intended that all current requests will be honoured. Bookings will be made in exactly the same way as they are now with parents receiving request forms. Requests for emergency respite will be dealt with in the same way as at Heatherfield Mews.

4.) **What if I am unable to get booked in for respite when I need it?**

We understand that there will be times when the service is busy; the service manager will work with you closely to ensure your respite needs are met. If it is not possible to be booked into the service for a particular time period, then the service manager will look at other alternatives with you. We will endeavour to work with you to provide a suitable solution.

5.) **Will my child/dependent be at a disadvantage if they previously accessed Heatherfield Mews for their short break?**

No. Clients who will access Addison Street in the future will follow the same booking procedures which will be fairly managed by the service manager.



6.) Will my child/dependent have the same travel arrangements for school?

If your child already accesses Addison Street, then yes. If your child will be accessing Addison Street in the future, the service manager and allocated key worker will work closely with you to ensure appropriate transport is in place to ensure your child attends school. We recognise that this will have a greater impact on some young people and we will work closely with the families to resolve any issues. We are committed to ensuring people have the right arrangements in place to meet their needs.

7.) My child/dependent has a positive relationship with staff at Heatherfield Mews; will they continue to have the same staff?

It is recognised that staff are important to the children and young people that they care for. We anticipate that some staff members will move to Addison Street to support the number of children who will access the service. Some staff members at Addison Street have previously worked at Heatherfield Mews and sessional staff work across both services so expect some clients will be familiar with staff members at Addison Street. The staff at Heatherfield Mews will also work closely with Addison Street staff to support transitions and ensure that care needs are met.

8.) Will the new service be able to meet demand for everyone who requires?

The current numbers of clients who require accommodation based short break services will be able to have their needs met at Addison Street. There are enough bed nights to meet current needs. There will still be some remaining capacity and as young people move on to Adult services or decide to access other services to meet their respite needs, then new spaces will become available to meet new demand.

9.) Will my child still be offered the same access to leisure facilities such as swimming?

A wide range of leisure and social activities are arranged and undertaken during young people's stays, which are planned due to young people's interests and requests. We currently hold a metro community pass; an annual pass for Alnwick gardens and have a variety club minibus enabling groups to access activities.

10.) Is there an additional cost to me?

There will be no additional costs to parents. Addison Street operates in exactly the same way as Heatherfield Mews. The only contribution required will be pocket money for young people to use during stays. Pocket money held by Heatherfield Mews will transfer with young people with agreement by parents/carers.

11.) If my child has any specific dietary requirements, will Addison Street be able to meet this need?

Addison Street also cares for young people with specific dietary needs. Addison Street has 2 kitchens which means that food can be prepared, cooked and stored separately if needed. All staff members at Addison Street receive exactly the same training as the staff at Heatherfield Mews.

12.) Will I be able to visit Addison Street as part of the consultation process?

Yes. We would welcome parents to visit and this can be arranged by contacting the unit on 0191 2006178.

13.) What is going to happen in 6 months' time? What happens if there are 3 crisis placements?

We are committed to ensure that transitions are planned carefully with families. There has been a lot of the work carried out to map individual cases and consider people's circumstances to ensure transition and access to the service is successful. Addison Street will not offer emergency placements. There is a strong accommodation offer across the Local Authority and options are being explored to best manage crisis options.

14.) What are the timescales for a new build? How long off would this be?

Funding for a new build is yet to be secured. There have been attempts to access different pots of money but some pots are not eligible for the type of provision we want. The Authority is committed to progressing towards the ambition of having a purpose built respite unit and a project group has been established to develop this. If funding was secured relatively soon, it would be unlikely that a new service will be operational until 18 months/2 years' time.

15.) How many bathrooms are there in Addison Street?

Addison Street currently has two bathrooms available. It is recognised that parents are concerned about children accessing the toilet if the bathrooms are occupied. The Authority is happy to consider the possibilities of separating the toilet and bathroom so that there are separate bathing and toileting facilities.

16.) How will you ensure the building is safe so that children are unable abscond?

It has been highlighted through the consultation events that the fences at Addison Street need to be made higher and the sheds in the garden pose a safety risk to children who may climb on them to abscond. The Authority is committed to ensuring the safety of all children is prioritised and will look to remove sheds and ensure fencing is appropriate to mitigate any risks identified. It is acknowledged that this needs to happen before transition to Addison Street.

17.) What will the staffing ratio be?

The staffing ratio will be determined to meet need for all bookings made. Naturally, this is dependent on the mix of the group booked in for any given stay. If a child is assessed as needing a specific staffing ratio within their care plan and risk assessments, then staffing will be provided as appropriate. The staff team at Addison Street will be increased by 3 full time members of staff to provide flexibility for this.

Additionally, there is the option of waking night support if necessary, especially through the transition phase and as appropriate to meet specific need.

18.) What about meeting the needs of challenging behaviours?

There are varying degrees of challenging behaviours presented that are well managed currently by staff teams at both Heatherfield Mews and Addison Street. The staff team are well trained and highly skilled in managing challenging behaviour. It is recognised that there needs to be a considered approach to understanding the group dynamics and compatibility of clients who access the service at the same time. This knowledge will be built up over time but the staff will also work closely with the BATS team to ensure behaviours are well managed and the right support mechanisms are identified and implemented by staff. Staff will carefully consider compatibility when bookings are requested.

19.) What is the overall capacity of Addison Street?

Full capacity is difficult to determine because it depends on level of need and number of allocated nights required to meet assessed needs. Based on previous experience of the service managers, Addison Street has supported up to 50 families at any given time.

20.) What is the 'back up' plan if clients don't settle?

We want to ensure that the transition to the new service is successful. We recognise that this is disruptive for some families and we are committed to ensuring that we carefully plan transition on a case by case basis involving all of the relevant professionals to support this.

21.) Will there be a rigorous risk assessment of the building to ensure clients who access it are safe?

Yes absolutely. There is a continuous process to assess any safety concerns with the building. A full and rigorous risk assessment will be carried out to reassure families about the safety of the building. We would welcome parents to be a part of a safety risk assessment also to ensure considerations are made with respect to individual needs.

22.) What about fire/evacuation procedures?

There are extensive fire evacuation procedures in place which are currently in place at both services. The middle door at Addison Street remains on a fob system which staff will need to operate which will avoid the risk of absconding. Staff members are alerted immediately and are well trained to manage these situations and children who access the service are included in fire drill practices.

23.) What if parents disagree with the proposal?

This consultation period will end on the 30th April 2019. It is intended that this period of consultation is the opportunity for people to disagree with the proposal. Once the

consultation has ended, all information will be presented to the senior management team for a decision on whether the proposal will go ahead or not. If people are unhappy with the decision that has been made, then people have the right to go through the normal complaints procedure. Details of the complaints procedure can be found on the North Tyneside Council website through the following link
<https://my.northtyneside.gov.uk/category/479/complaints-procedure>