

Equality Impact Assessment



Hampshire
County Council

Proposals to close two overnight residential respite homes for children with disabilities

Accountable officer: Amber James

Email address: lorraine.frampton@hants.gov.uk

Department: Children's Services

Date of assessment: 04/01/2018

Description of current service/policy

Overnight residential respite is designed to give parents or full time carers an opportunity to have a break from caring whilst their child with disabilities is cared for in a residential children's home. Hampshire County Council currently operates three in-house children's homes that provide overnight residential respite and purchases services from other independent providers.

The provision of overnight respite is agreed following a social work assessment of need, and the allocations of overnight stays for each child determined by the County Allocation Panel (CAP).

Geographical impact: All Hampshire

Description of proposed change

It is proposed to close two of Hampshire County Council's children's homes where overnight respite is offered: Merrydale in Kings Worthy, Winchester; and Sunbeams in Aldershot. This will have a direct impact on 35 children and their families who, as of the 1 November 2017, use the homes. The proposal to close the homes would mean a potential reduction in staffing equivalent to 31.45 FTE (42 headcount) of which 23.31 FTE are permanent employees and 8.14 FTE are temporary employees

Impacts of the proposed change

This impact assessment covers HCC Staff (and partners)

Engagement and consultation

Has engagement or consultation been carried out? Yes

All affected staff within the specialist respite service and their union representatives have been consulted on the potential closure of Merrydale and Sunbeams and the impact on staffing. A separate staff and union consultation took place alongside the public consultation between 7 August and 2 October 2017.

Staff have been encouraged to provide comments and feedback through:

- a) Staff briefings – held in August and October 2017.
- b) HR drop in sessions held throughout August and September 2017
- c) Team meetings
- d) Emails to their relevant human resources teams.
- e) Trade union representatives or elected staff representatives

Statutory considerations	Impact	Mitigation
---------------------------------	---------------	-------------------

<p>Age: Medium</p>	<p>Based on staffing data as of 31 December 2017, 38 individual members of staff work in Sunbeams and Merrydale. 16 in Sunbeams and 22 in Merrydale - these staff are contracted to work a variety of hours. At Merrydale, 20 out of 22 staff (91%) are aged between 30 and 59.</p> <p>At Sunbeams, 14 out of 16 (87.5%) are aged between 30 and 59. Both are higher than the averages for all Hampshire County Council staff across those ages - 77.8% and for Children Services Department at 80.7% respectively.</p> <p>Some staff in both homes have achieved significant continuous local government service:</p> <p>Sunbeams: four have worked between 0-10 years, nine between 11-20 years, two between 21-30 and , and one member of staff has worked between 31-40 years.</p> <p>Merrydale: 13 have worked between 0-10 years, seven between 11-20 years, two staff have worked between 21-30 years, and two between 31 and 40 years.</p> <p>Staff who are older and employed in local government service for a long time, may be impacted by these proposals. It may be, or perceived to be, difficult for older staff to find new employment.</p>	<p>A key way to reduce the impact on staff would be to offer Enhanced Voluntary Redundancy (EVR2) which would be available to all eligible staff in scope of the review, with more than two years of service. This would provide an attractive severance package of 20 weeks pay (or up to a maximum of 30 weeks pay for staff who qualify for more than 20 weeks redundancy pay).</p> <p>If a decision is made to close the homes, staff who have been issued notice of compulsory redundancy would be given redeployment status and support for a three month period.</p> <p>If a decision is made to close the homes, staff aged 55 and above would be able to access their unreduced pension benefits.</p> <p>Outplacement support would be provided to staff at risk of compulsory redundancy in the form of a workshop to provide skills and guidance in areas such as writing CVs, completing job application forms and interview skills</p>
<p>Disability: Neutral</p>		
<p>Sexual orientation: Neutral</p>		
<p>Race: Neutral</p>		
<p>Religion and belief: Neutral</p>		
<p>Gender reassignment: Neutral</p>		

<p>Gender: Medium</p>	<p>The staff who work in the two homes are predominantly female. The data shows that of the staff employed to work in the homes, 94%.of staff (15 out of 16) who work at Sunbeams are female, and 77% of staff (17 out of 22) who work at Merrydale are female. Sunbeams is higher than the whole Hampshire County Council percentage of female staff at 86.38% and Children Services Department at 84%, and Merrydale is lower.</p>	<p>The EVR scheme would be open to all eligible staff and consideration of all applications would be carried out fairly regardless of the sex of the applicant. The terms of the EVR scheme represent an enhancement ameliorating the adverse impact of the reduction of staff numbers (FTE).</p>
<p>Marriage and civil partnership: Neutral</p>		
<p>Pregnancy and maternity: Neutral</p>		
<p>Other policy considerations</p>	<p>Impact</p>	<p>Mitigation</p>

<p>Poverty: Medium</p>	<p>The majority of staff working in the two homes work in relatively low paid positions, earning salaries between £19,848 - £22,338.</p> <p>At Sunbeams, 72.2% earn a salary between £19,848 - £22,338, and at Merrydale, 70.8% earn a salary between £19,848 - £22,338. This compares to the whole of the County Council, where 64% earn between £19,848 - £27,600. This is less than the national average salary of £27,600 (Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings – Office for National Statistics).</p> <p>Some staff at Merrydale and Sunbeams have raised concerns around the financial viability of being offered alternative employment at other locations across the county due to the additional travel costs of getting to and from work.</p> <p>The proposal could lead to voluntary redundancy or compulsory redundancy, leading to loss of earnings and confidence in going for further employment.</p>	<p>The opportunity for eligible staff to apply for EVR2 is intended to provide a severance package to those individuals who are at risk of redundancy over and above what they would be entitled to receive in a compulsory redundancy situation.</p> <p>If a decision is made to close the homes, staff who have been issued notice of compulsory redundancy would be given redeployment status and support for a three month period.</p> <p>Should the decision be made to close the homes, outplacement support would be provided to staff at risk of compulsory redundancy in the form of a workshop to provide skills and guidance in areas such as writing CVs, completing job application forms and interview skills.</p>
<p>Rurality: Neutral</p>		

Any other information