

Overnight Short Breaks (OSB) offer to Children with Disabilities 10.06.2020
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Introduction

This report follows the overnight short breaks engagement meeting held with families on 2nd March and the contact with these families since this event.

It considers how the service review can be progressed if current pandemic restrictions continue for a significant period of time. It also provides feedback on the impact of the pandemic on this client group and considers how anxieties can be addressed and expectation managed going forward. It also provides data of the consultation between social workers and the OSB hub, forum outcomes and the numbers receiving different types of support within the CYPWD service.

Engagement Meeting:

The engagement meeting was attended by 10 parents whose children access a variety of overnight short breaks (OSB), Cllr McKinley and representative from ECC's CYPWD service. Essex Family Forum were unable to attend.

Further engagement:

The plan is to arrange further meetings with one parent representative from each type of OSB to continue discussions around improving the service offer/outcomes for children and young people. Due to COVID 19 further meetings have been put on hold.

Consideration will be given to how engagement with these families can continue via virtual meetings and how parents whose children are not attending school can be supported to engage.

Some families have taken the decision not to access OSB during the current period, especially those whose children are vulnerable medically.

How the pandemic has impacted on children and young people with disabilities and their families:

Many families are concerned about their children returning to school; many have good routines in place and feel there has been less stress and anxiety for their child which has resulted in reduced behaviour of challenge. However, for other families having their child at home has led to an increase in challenging behaviour.

Families have found WhatsApp messages and video calls from their social workers helpful and many children and young people have found it easier to engage virtually. Many families are becoming more exhausted as the lockdown continues. They have been resilient and have coped, but for some the pressure is increasing especially as parents are returning to work.

The mental health of some parents has been negatively impacted by the lockdown. Young people due to transition from school to college in September are anxious about this as they have been unable to attend college open days.

The flexible use of direct payments has been useful for some families.

Extended family such as grandparents not being able to provide support has had an impact on families.

The numbers of CYPWD accessing school has increased as the lockdown has progressed. On 20th May there were 4,404 attending school, 1222 of whom were 'vulnerable' children (across all social care categories, not just CYPWD). This was an increase of 62% from the beginning of lockdown and followed the drive by government and ECC for school to encourage more children to attend.

Current packages provided to Children and Young People with Disabilities across Essex:

Data from 404 cases that are open to the CYPWD service, with regards to the type of support the child/young person is receiving. This is around 1/3 of the cases that are open to the CYPWD service.

