

**COMMITTEE:** CHILDREN'S SERVICES SCRUTINY PANEL

**DATE:** 1ST JULY 2004

**SUBJECT:** DEVELOPMENTS IN SERVICES FOR DISABLED CHILDREN

**REPORT BY:** HILARY GRIFFITHS, SERVICE MANAGER

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**IMPLICATIONS:**

LEGAL	COMMUNITY SAFETY
EQUALITIES	ENVIRONMENT
FINANCIAL	CONSULTATIONS
STAFFING	OTHER

**WARDS AFFECTED:**

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**PURPOSE**

1. To inform the Panel of developments in services for disabled children

**RECOMMENDATION(S)**

2. Children's Services Scrutiny Panel is recommended to note these developments.

**BACKGROUND**

3. LBC has been working with Luton PCT to develop joint services for children with disabilities. This has led to the development of a Sec 31 agreement for residential respite services.
4. The Health Service has provided a residential respite service for children in Luton and Bedfordshire at a home, Appledore, in Houghton Regis. Appledore has been closed due to serious Health and Safety concerns with the building. Overnight care ceased in Dec 2003 and the home closed fully at the end of March 2004.

5. We have worked closely with colleagues in Bedfordshire and all three PCTs to establish alternative provision following the closure.
6. Although the numbers of disabled children in the population remains fairly constant, there is an increase in the numbers of disabled children with very complex needs. This is largely because of the increase in the number of children with Autistic Spectrum Disorders and because developments in medical technology mean that although increasing numbers of very premature babies are surviving, these children are at much higher risk of having severe and complex disabilities requiring very high levels of support.

## **REPORT**

### Pooled Budget and Joint Commissioning

7. A section 3 agreement has been reached establishing Lead Commissioning and a Pooled Budget to be managed within Social Services. The aim of this is:
8. "To commission through a Pooled Fund budget, support services for children with disabilities, which minimise the effects of the children's disabilities, gives them the opportunity to lead lives that are as normal as possible and promote them being cared for within their own families and communities. Initially, these support services will be restricted to residential respite care services only."
9. We aim to develop the scope of the Pooled Budget to include other respite and support services by April 2005.

### Closure of Appledore

10. We have been working closely with colleagues from Health to make appropriate alternative care arrangements for the Luton children who used Appledore. This has been achieved for all except two children. This has been achieved in the main by:
  - Developing Fairway, Luton Borough Council's residential respite home, as a joint health and social care resource with appropriate input from Health Services
  - Commissioning additional respite care provision from Keech Cottage
11. Work is continuing to identify suitable arrangements for the two children who are not receiving a service and we hope this will be in place before the start of the school summer holidays.
12. The parents of children who used Appledore are understandable very distressed by the closure of Appledore and some remain unhappy that alternative care arrangements have not been able to provide exactly the same patterns of care as those provided at Appledore.

#### Development of Respite Strategy

13. An agreed objective of the Section 31 agreement is to develop a Joint Commissioning Strategy for respite services and we are doing this in line with Bedfordshire's review of respite provision.
14. This strategy will address the need to develop further Joint Services with Health across a range of different services, particularly developing support within families' own homes.
15. It will also address long-term plans for residential respite provision in the light of the closure of Appledore.
16. Developing services at Fairway is a key part of the Luton Futures project, which will look at how this service can develop to provide appropriate care for children with the highest levels of need in line with changes in the population of disabled children described above.

#### **LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS** **LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972, SECTION 100D**

17. There are no background papers relating to this report.