



**ADULT AND COMMUNITIES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**  
**2 JUNE 2025**

**REPORT ON PREVENTION REVIEW PROGRAMME**

**RESPIRE AND SHORT BREAK PROVISION**

**REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF ADULTS AND COMMUNITIES**

**Purpose of report**

1. The purpose of this report is to provide information on the review of the Council's in-house respite and short break provision and the case for change to deliver best value for the Council.
2. This report was requested by the Committee at its meeting on the 3 March 2025.

**Policy Framework and Previous Decisions**

3. The Prevention Review Programme commenced in 2023. The Programme was commissioned as part of a series of corporate reviews aimed at achieving medium term financial savings for the Council. The review was conducted in accordance with the Care Act 2014, which defines respite as short-term care for individuals with assessed eligible care needs, either in their own home or in a residential setting, to allow carers time out.
4. Over the last 18 months, teams have been working hard to review the Council's prevention services, with the aim of identifying opportunities to improve them, and expand the preventative offer where appropriate. By doing this, it will also help to identify financial efficiencies across the council.
5. The review includes 'Prevention' or 'Preventative' activity which falls within a definition of Prevention in social care:

*Social Care Institute for Excellence (SCIE) – "Prevention is about the care and support system actively promoting independence and wellbeing. This means intervening early to support individuals, helping people retain their skills and confidence, and preventing need or delaying deterioration wherever possible."*

6. The review is being led by the Director of Adults and Communities, with support from the Transformation Unit and teams across the council – primarily Children and Family Services and Public Health.
7. An example of prevention activity could include support for an informal carer to enable them to continue in their caring role or the provision of equipment to maintain an individual's independence without the need for formal paid services.

8. Prevention activity also includes the provision of respite to the cared for person to enable their carer to take a break from their caring role to sustain the relationship longer term and subsequently prevent the need for formal paid services.

### **Background**

9. The Prevention Review Programme was initiated to evaluate the Council's prevention activities and identify areas for potential financial efficiencies. In 2023, a data collection exercise was conducted to establish a baseline for the existing prevention offer, including costs, functions, activities, areas of expenditure, funding sources, current structures, staffing, providers, statutory basis for provision, and performance metrics.
10. The Prevention Review focussed on potential efficiencies to be derived from:
  - A reduction in prevention-based activity that is unable to evidence future cost and/or demand reduction;
  - Possible further investment in prevention-based activity that can evidence a reduction in medium-term future spend;
  - The substitution of existing funding for prevention activity through other income streams;
  - The transfer of Council activity to other parties.
11. The review looked at the end-to-end process across the whole Authority systemically and challenged if the Council is investing in the right provision to prevent future demand on high-cost services.

### **Respite for Adults – Current Position**

12. Current guidance defines respite as short-term care for the person, with assessed eligible care needs in line with the Care Act 2014, in their own home or in a residential setting, to allow the carer time out.
13. It can mean 'night sitting', or a longer-term break, where somebody requires a high level of care. It can also benefit the person with care needs by giving them the chance to try new activities and meet new people. Commissioned as part of a package of care in anticipation of the carer needing time out as part of the care and support assessment for the cared for.
14. The Council owned respite provisions for adults with a Learning Disability and Autism (LD&A) were considered as part of this review.
15. The Council currently operates three respite units – Melton Short Breaks (Melton Mowbray), The Trees (Hinckley) and Carlton Drive (Wigston) all offering overnight respite for adults with LD&A.
16. Analysis of bed occupancy from 2023/2024 has provided evidence to show in-house respite provisions are not being fully utilised with occupancy levels on average at 50-60% across all units. The reason for low bed occupancy includes difficulties with the recruitment of staff, and commissioning of services from independent sector providers.

17. Due to the flexible nature of respite bookings it is not realistic to aim to achieve 100% occupancy rates, however, occupancy of over 80% should be possible.

### **Proposals/Options**

18. The review of in-house respite care provision focussed on four areas of opportunity:
- Provision of in-house services to children and young people;
  - Ensuring in-house services is the County Council's primary offer to people before considering externally commissioned providers;
  - Extending provision of in-house services to people who are funded by other local authorities and/or the NHS;
  - Commissioning of all services in the external market and closure of in-house provision.

### **Children and Young People**

19. Consideration was given for shared opportunities with Children and Family Services for children and young people under the age of 18. However, following analysis and review it has been confirmed a joint children and adult overnight provision is not considered viable due to the complexities of dual registration.
20. Adult provision support the needs of an individual from 18 and above.
21. Children and Family Services require service provisions, suitable for those under the age of 18, to be Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) registered. Adult services require Care Quality Commission (CQC) registration where support is provided to people over the age of 18.
22. Consideration was also given to the current development of a children and young people's provision in partnership with Barnardo's designed to meet the need for overnight short breaks for children and young people.
23. Although offering an overnight provision to Children and Family Services has not been considered to be viable, there is an opportunity to look at utilising space to offer daytime breaks for young people preparing for adulthood and to utilise existing facilities to maximise independent living skills.
24. Discussions are at an early stage and are interdependent on work being undertaken in Children and Family Services focusing on the short breaks offer for children and young people.

### **Reprovision of external services**

25. The guidance in place to support commissioning workers currently defines respite as short-term care for the person, with assessed eligible care needs in line with the Care Act 2014, in their own home or in a residential setting, to allow the carer time out.
26. The weekly base costs for in-house services, taking into account inflation and cost of living increases, should increase to £2,814. The average cost of commissioning respite with the external market in 2023/24 with low/moderate levels of need is

approximately £2,458-£2,699 with the most expensive respite stay costing £6,288 per week.

27. A total of 28 individuals have received a short break in the private market since April 2022 equating to 136 episodes of respite care. Desktop reviews of people accessing external provision have been completed by managers and concluded needs could have been met by an in-house service. Progress to a formal review and assessment of need with a view to transitioning to an in-house provision for respite will be undertaken.
28. The current guidance will be reviewed to maximise the opportunity to utilise in-house provision as a first option before looking at alternative settings that may not represent best value for the Council.
29. To maximise bed occupancy, Melton Short Breaks and The Trees need to ensure staffing levels are maintained. There are approximately 18 FTE posts vacant across all units (data correct as at March 2025). There is a national shortage of care workers which has impacted on recruitment and retention locally.
30. To support recruitment and retention, a temporary Recruitment Co-ordinator has been recruited and commenced in post on 1 April 2025. The role will focus on targeted recruitment to existing vacancies, increasing the visibility of the service and expediting an induction program for all new starters as well as having a focus on staff retention.
31. Through networking activity, the Recruitment Co-ordinator has already to date successfully recruited to the remaining three vacancies at Melton Short Breaks and one remaining vacancy at Carlton Drive. Four vacancies have been recruited to at The Trees. These positions have been funded within the existing establishment.

#### Provision of services to external authorities

32. The discovery phase of the project highlighted neighbouring local authorities and NHS commissioners do not have internal respite provision for people with LD&A and are often presented with challenges when looking to commission respite stays. They are keen to explore opportunities to utilise the Council's respite units and have identified people they would like to put forward for initial consideration that offers the potential to generate income.

#### Closure of internal provision

33. It is not considered beneficial to close internal provision and rely solely on the external care market for respite care at this time. The external care market request an annual uplift in line with inflation year on year that is likely to result in the cost becoming unaffordable and not representing value for money for the Council.
34. As stated above the cost of external provision is equal to or exceeds the cost of in-house services.
35. In addition, neighbouring authorities are finding it a challenge to procure respite care for people, and rely on the independent sector only when required, owing to a scarcity of provision.

36. Cessation of in-house services would also incur substantial costs of closure and significant disruption to people drawing on support and their families.

### **Resource Implications**

37. It is estimated that a medium term financial benefit of £500,000 will be delivered over two years as staffing levels increase, and processes are put in place to improve referrals into the service. This benefit will be derived from additional income from externally funded services and a reduction in County Council funding to external providers.

### **Conclusions**

38. The Prevention Review Programme is making progress in improving the Council's in-house respite and short break provisions for adults with LD&A.
39. By addressing staffing challenges through targeted recruitment and retention strategies, key vacancies have successfully been filled, ensuring that the units are better equipped to meet demand.
40. The implementation of a revised base fee and the focus on maximising bed occupancy is expected to deliver the outlined benefits and will reduce commissioning levels with external providers, instead using in-house provision.
41. Ongoing discussions with neighbouring authorities and Health partners aim to create a cohesive system response for respite services, potentially increasing external income and further improving occupancy rates.

### **Background papers**

Care Act 2014 - <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2014/23/contents>

### **Equality Implications**

42. An Equality Impact Assessment is not required. Due regard has been given to the potential implications of the case for change on the Council's duty to:
- Eliminate discrimination, harassment, and victimisation;
  - Advance equality of opportunity between diverse groups of people;
  - Foster good relations between people of diverse backgrounds.
43. The project aims to ensure equitable access to respite services for adults with LD&A, addressing current under-utilisation and improving service availability.
44. Enhanced respite services will provide necessary breaks for carers, reducing stress and promoting better health outcomes for both carers and those they care for.

### **Human Rights Implications**

45. The review supports the rights of individuals with LD&A to receive appropriate care and support, promoting their independence and well-being.

**Officers to Contact**

Jon Wilson, Director of Adults and Communities  
Adults and Communities Department  
Tel: 0116 305 7454 Email: [jon.wilson@leics.gov.uk](mailto:jon.wilson@leics.gov.uk)

Santokh Dulai, Assistant Director (Operational Commissioning)  
Adults and Communities Department  
Tel: 0116 305 1039 Email: [santokh.dulai@leics.gov.uk](mailto:santokh.dulai@leics.gov.uk)