

## **Agenda Item 10**

**Residential Short Breaks during  
the COVID-19 Pandemic:  
Expansion of provision at  
Thornton Gardens**



# Falkirk Integration Joint Board

19 June 2020

## Residential Short Breaks during the COVID-19 Pandemic: Expansion of provision at Thornton Gardens

For Decision

### 1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 On 5 April 2019, the Board considered a report by the Head of Social Work Adult Services in relation to Residential Short Breaks. At that time, the Board agreed to the relocation of respite/short breaks provision for younger adults who have learning disabilities, from the premises at the Rowans (Lochview hospital site) to the Thornton Gardens in Bonnybridge. The Board further agreed to increase capacity for the service from three to four beds.
- 1.2 Thornton Gardens is a purpose built care facility that has 14 bedrooms, all with en-suite facilities and small kitchen areas.
- 1.3 Whilst planning our COVID-19 response, we sought temporary change in registration from the Care Inspectorate to enable us to use the facility to provide accommodation for both older and younger adult service users, and to increase the number of units from 4 to 14, to ensure that we had sufficient capacity to meet any potential increase in demand for bed based care within the community. The Care Inspectorate awarded the temporary change to registration.
- 1.4 To date, the additional capacity has not been needed, however there is now an increasing demand pressure to provide short breaks, particularly as a means to relieve carer stress. This report asks the Board to agree the temporary change in use and expansion in the number of short break beds offered. This provision would enable the Partnership to offer planned and emergency short breaks in a specialist, dedicated facility and thereby reduce or remove the need for short break placements to take place within our residential care homes, thereby minimising risks in respect of COVID-19.

### 2. Recommendations

The Integration Joint Board is asked to:

- 2.1 agree the temporary change in use for the premises at Thornton Gardens to cover both younger and older adult age groups
- 2.2 agree to expand provision from 4 to 14 beds for a period of 6 months to accommodate increased demand for short breaks provision whilst reducing the need to use our residential care home placements.

- 2.3 request an additional report at a later date; reviewing the benefits of the provision and outlining recommendations for the future and on-going use of the premises at Thornton Gardens.

### **3. Background**

- 3.1 Following a period of consultation and engagement with families, service users and stakeholders, it was agreed that the provision of short breaks services for younger adults would transfer from the Rowans to Thornton Gardens, and that the available bed resource would be increased from three to four.
- 3.2 Over the course of the last four months, the partnership has undertaken extensive work to the property and it now has 14 rooms available for use. These rooms have all been finished to an extremely high standard, all have en-suite facilities and private kitchen areas, which makes the facility ideal for short breaks and on going life skills development and reablement use.
- 3.3 The original plan was to open the unit to take short break residents from January 2020, however due to a combination of works that were required and the time taken to secure Care Inspectorate registration this was delayed.
- 3.4 It was planned that the first service users would use the facility from 16 March 2020, however the impact of COVID-19 meant that we were not in a position to offer placements at that time. Furthermore, it was anticipated that the demand for beds within the community setting may be significant given the severity and impact of the pandemic. As such, the partnership applied to the Care Inspectorate for a temporary change in use, to allow us to use the facility to accommodate a wider range of service users if needed.
- 3.5 The change in registration was approved on 25 March 2020 and allows the partnership to use the facility to accommodate both younger and older adults on the basis that it can provide respite and emergency short term provision.

### **4. Case for Expansion of Thornton Gardens**

- 4.1 The impact of COVID-19 has affected many of our resources, in particular the residential care sector has seen a significant number of homes across the partnership area being affected by both staff and residents contracting the virus.
- 4.2 Care Homes are a particularly difficult area to manage and protect within this outbreak, given the nature of the virus and the particular risk it poses to older people and those with underlying health conditions, and that fact that care homes by their very nature, are not clinical settings, rather homely settings for vulnerable people to receive care and support.

- 4.3 In order to protect their residents, care homes across Falkirk effectively closed their doors to all but essential visitors and new permanent admissions very early within the pandemic, and most still operate on that basis.
- 4.4 A number of care homes are currently closed to new admissions, and some have residents that are affected by COVID-19. This is true of both the HSCP's and privately owned care homes.
- 4.5 NHS Forth Valley, the HSCP, Scottish Care and the Care Inspectorate are working close with all care homes across the locality to provide support, advice and guidance to our care homes, and assurances to Scottish Government in respect of policy, practice, procedures and statutory guidance.
- 4.6 Short Break provision has been significantly impacted throughout the course of the COVID-19 pandemic to date. Indeed the HSCP's own care homes ceased accepting Short Break residents at the commencement of the outbreak as they too closed to all but essential visitors.
- 4.7 Vulnerable people have been self isolating within their own homes, often supported by close family members, who have in some cases been taking on far more direct care with less opportunity for a break.
- 4.8 Over recent weeks we have become more aware of the impact of carer stress as normal support services have reduced. It is clear that there is a need for the provision of short breaks to ensure that carers are fully supported in their roles and that service users can receive a high level of care and support whilst their main carers have some respite from the day to day demands of care.
- 4.9 Furthermore, we have seen an increase in the number of referrals relating to Adult Support and Protection, some of which relate to issues which could be addressed through short-breaks, as such, there is a clear need to offer some provision.
- 4.10 Given the temporary change in Care Inspectorate registration for Thornton Gardens, we have an opportunity to recommence Short Breaks for service users within a dedicated resource that up until now has not been utilised.
- 4.11 The Board is asked to agree the temporary change in use for the premises at Thornton Gardens to cover both younger and older adult age groups and agree to expand provision from 4 to 14 beds to accommodate increased demand for short breaks provision whilst reducing the need to use our residential care home placements.
- 4.12 If approved by the Board we have sufficient resource to expand its use to cover both younger and older adult groups.

- 4.13 Furthermore, it is proposed that the service is reviewed as part of the previously agreed work in relation to the models for residential care provision and reported to the IJB. This was outlined in the Health and Social Care Partnerships Medium Term Financial Plan to be taken forward in the period 2020 to 2021 as agreed at the Board in December 2019.

## **5. Conclusion**

- 5.1 Thornton Gardens staff compliment can be easily expanded within our existing resource to meet the level of demand for the service, with highly experienced staff that have worked with the service user groups. Indeed, the staff group working with younger adults is the same staff group that has worked with that specific service user group for a number of years at the Rowans.
- 5.2 The provision of expanded Short Break's service at Thornton Gardens would ensure that the partnership can continue to respond to demands for short break and emergency short term provision. We will ensure that our care homes can continue to maintain their policies of being closed to all non-essential visitors, to ensure the on going safety of residents as the service user population within these homes will continue to be their permanent residents.

### **Resource Implications**

There are no additional cost implications for the partnership other than adding to the existing compliment of staff. This additional staffing resource has been identified as requiring a Manager. This post and budget is already identified and in place. The service will also require additional Social Care Workers as the bed occupancy level increases. This resource can be funded through existing vacant posts and through the review and restructure of current service provision.

### **Impact on IJB Outcomes and Priorities**

This proposal offers the Health and Social Care Partnership the opportunity to further support carers in their roles.

### **Legal & Risk Implications**

There are no implications arising from the report.

### **Consultation**

As stated earlier, the decision to transfer the service from the Rowans to the Thornton Gardens facility was subject to wide ranging consultation and engagement with service users and their families. Given the proposed additional use for the premises, we would engage service users and carers on an on-going basis prior to any short break.

### **Equalities Assessment**

This was completed as part of the relocation of the care home. There will be ongoing work with people who will use the service and carers to inform the review process.

## **6. Report Author**

### **Martin Thom**

Head of Integration, Falkirk Health and Social Care Integration