

Bath & North East Somerset Council		
MEETING/ DECISION MAKER:	Children’s and Adults Health and Wellbeing Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel	
MEETING/ DECISION DATE:	16 th June 2025	EXECUTIVE FORWARD PLAN REFERENCE:
TITLE:	Respite Care	
WARD:	All	
AN OPEN PUBLIC ITEM		
List of attachments to this report:		
Annex 1: Needs Analysis Fact Sheets		
Annex 2: Options Appraisal Summary		

1. THE ISSUE

- 1.1 Respite care sometimes known as short term breaks is a crucial support system for families and caregivers. They help individuals cared for to stay at home while easing caregiving demands. Respite allows carers to rest and recharge, ensuring their well-being and maintaining the quality of care they provide.
- 1.2 The all-age respite offer within the B&NES area currently consists of respite within the home, in the community, day centres or building based services, and overnight stays outside of the family home.
- 1.3 In response to market developments, we accelerated our planned commissioning activities and initiated a comprehensive review process. The methodology for this review was presented at the April meeting. This report updates on progress made since April, including the findings of the needs analysis, options appraisal and next steps.

2 RECOMMENDATION

The Panel is asked to:

2.1 Consider content of the report and provide comments.

3 THE REPORT

Needs Analysis

3.1 To date the review team has gathered information about statutory frameworks and requirements, service descriptions and delivery models for respite care. Work to map current provision and collate current needs and demand profile has been completed across the domains of Start Well and Live Well and continues to progress for Age Well. Through this process we gathered data on several areas such as the number of people currently accessing diverse types of services, predicted future demand for services and identifying any unmet needs. Needs analysis and supporting evidence have shown that:

- The profile of respite need has changed over the past 3-5 years. This evolving picture has been informed by several factors such as changes to access to services mandated during the pandemic, options families and individuals chose when services re-started post pandemic, changes in family circumstances and people's eligible needs which evolve overtime and might require different support solutions at different stages of life.
- To meet identified need people are using a range of community-based services including support in their homes, day opportunities, Shared Lives and other community settings; this aligns with the council strategy to support people earlier and closer to their home
- There is a need for residential respite for people with complex needs however the size of the current provision is larger than the current demand.

More detail can be found in Annex 1.

Working Group

3.2 A working group was established at the start of the review process. The purpose of this group is to develop options for residential respite for people with complex support needs beyond 2025. The group is attended by Suzanne Westhead, Director Adult Social Care, two commissioners and four family representatives. Papers and minutes from the working group are circulated to all families who use Newton House. There have been 3 meetings to date through March, April and May.

3.3 The first meeting focused on respite care in B&NES, discussing various aspects of adult social care, difficulties in accessing respite services, especially during the pandemic, and the complexities involved in care arrangements for individuals with complex health needs. Carers shared their experiences and highlighted the importance of communication and collaboration among stakeholders to improve care for individuals with complex needs.

- 3.4 The group also began to explore options for future residential respite services for individuals with complex needs, including continuing current services, council-run options, and tendering for new services, all while stressing the need for thorough needs analysis and flexibility in care provision.
- 3.5 The key findings from the needs analysis were shared with the working group at the meeting on 10th May and the Options Appraisal was presented to the group on 27th May.

Option Appraisal for building based respite

- 3.6 The findings of the needs analysis and feedback from representatives of the families has helped shape the options appraisal.
- 3.7 The options appraisal focuses on residential respite for adults of working age with complex needs. The objective is to have a building-based respite service that supports people with complex needs locally in B&NES.
- 3.8 The criteria for selecting preferred option are as follows:
- Minimise disruption to families and the people using the service – This means maintaining continuity of care or support during transition and ensuring that any change does not negatively impact access, quality or outcome for people and their families.
 - Offer flexibility – This looks to ensure that there is flexibility around the service and its delivery model to adapt and meet the needs of families.
 - Align with policy and best practice – This involves adhering to national and local regulations and statutory requirements and incorporating evidence based approaches and learning from other areas.
 - Offer best value for money demonstrating that the resources are used efficiently to deliver high quality outcomes.
 - Provide sufficient time to implement required changes and put new arrangements in place.
- 3.9 The following three options were co-designed with the representatives from the families who attended several meetings with commissioners and the Director of Adult Social Care:

Option 1 - Dimensions continue to run a respite service at Newton House post January 2026.

Option 2 - The Council run a respite service within one of the council buildings as the landlord and the provider.

Option 3 - Go out to tender for a new respite service from the external market.

A more detailed summary of the options appraisal can be found in Annex 2.

Emerging preferred option

- 3.10 The emerging preferred option of the working group, as a collective is Option 1 followed by Option 3. This way forward seeks to continue close working with the provider to enable Newton House to remain available to families until October

2026 when the contract is due to expire. This aligns the redevelopment of the residential respite offer for adults with complex needs with the broader strategic recommissioning of the learning disability offer across B&NES. This will also include the recommissioning of other learning disability services including day services, supported living, and care homes.

- 3.11 Dimensions as the provider and the landlord is supportive of the preferred options and we are proactively working through the details to finalise these arrangements. Dimensions have expanded their business offer more widely and have had additional interest from other purchasers enabling the service to be more sustainable.
- 3.12 We continue to engage in discussions with neighbouring local authorities and regional and national networks to research best practice and understand what works well in ensuring sustainability and flexibility of respite care.
- 3.13 The comprehensive review of the *Age Well* programme is ongoing. As part of this process, we are working to integrate all strands of the Respite Review into a single, cohesive framework

Newton House Update

- 3.14 Newton House continues to provide building-based respite for individuals with complex needs. Bookings for 2025 are open and families are taking them up.
- 3.15 All people currently using the service have had a reassessment or review. Several families whose needs and circumstances have changed overtime are being supported by social care practitioners to move to other long-term options. Shared Lives is being considered as an alternative day time or overnight support option by some families. Other families continue to book stays in Newton House for building based respite.
- 3.16 An operational group, which includes brokerage colleagues is in place to jointly review the assessed needs of each person affected and to identify suitable service provision.
- 3.17 A families meeting will take place week commencing 7th July for all families who use Newton House to update them on the latest position and next steps.

Next Steps

- 3.18 Dimensions has agreed costings for 2025/26 financial year. We are finalising the preferred option with the provider utilising contractual provisions in place.
- 3.19 The strategic recommissioning of the learning disability offer across B&NES will start later this year and this will include going out to tender for a building-based respite service for people with complex needs.

4 STATUTORY CONSIDERATIONS

- 4.1 Local authorities have a statutory duty to provide respite care, also known as short breaks, to children with disabilities or special needs. This requirement is primarily outlined in the Children Act 1989 and further detailed in the Breaks for Carers of Disabled Children Regulations 2011.

4.2 Key requirements include:

- Assessment and Eligibility: Local authorities must assess the needs of the child and their family to determine the appropriate level of support. The assessment should be holistic, considering the child's physical, emotional, and social needs, as well as the impact on the family.
- Service Provision: Services provided can include day care, overnight care, and support within the home or in other settings. The aim is to provide flexible and responsive support that meets the individual needs of the child and their family. This includes ensuring that services are accessible, culturally appropriate, and tailored to the specific needs of the child and family.
- Promotion of Welfare: The services provided should promote the welfare of the child and support the family in their caring role.

4.3 The Care Act 2014 outlines the responsibilities of local authorities in providing respite care for adults aged 18-100+.

4.4 Key requirements include:

- Assessment of Needs: Local authorities must assess the needs of adults who may require care and support, including their carers. This assessment determines the level and type of respite care needed.
- Duty to Meet Needs: If the assessment identifies eligible needs, the local authority has a duty to meet those needs. This can include providing respite care services such as day care, overnight care, and support within the home.
- Promoting Wellbeing: The Care Act emphasises promoting the wellbeing of individuals receiving care and their carers. This includes considering physical, mental, and emotional wellbeing.
- Support for Carers: The Act also recognises the importance of supporting carers, ensuring they have breaks from their caring responsibilities to maintain their own health and wellbeing.

4.5 Review of respite care described in this report is being undertaken under these legal frameworks with due regard to the key statutory requirements.

5 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (FINANCE, PROPERTY, PEOPLE)

5.1 Respite care for B&NES residents is being funded by childrens social care and adult social care budgets. These budgets are subject to the council's service and resource planning process conducted annually.

5.2 Resource implications of providing respite care will be explored and considered at the gaps analysis and options appraisal stages of the review.

6 RISK MANAGEMENT

6.1 A risk assessment related to the issue will be undertaken during all stages of the review in compliance with the Council's decision making risk management guidance.

7 EQUALITIES

- 7.1 An equalities impact assessment is being developed informed by the information generated by the review to date. The service is very aware of the importance of delivering equitable services to all those people who have drawn on care and support and their carers.

8 CLIMATE CHANGE

- 8.1 At this stage of the review, it is too early to say what impact future models of respite care delivery might have on climate change.

9 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 9.1 Conducting a strategic review of services required to meet residents' needs forms part of the commissioning cycle of analyse-plan-do-review. Options for future models of delivering respite care will be developed and considered during the later stages of the review.

10 CONSULTATION

- 10.1 The review will be informed by feedback and insights from individuals using respite care and carers, social care practitioners, providers and other stakeholders. Engagement and communications plans are being developed and will be updated to reflect requirements at each stage of the review. Focus will be on seeking to develop deep understanding of what good respite care looks like, what works well and what could be improved, what is missing and then using this information and insight to co-design and develop flexible and resilient delivery models.

Contact person	Natalia Lachkou, Assistant Director of Commissioning and Claire Hannan, Live Well Commissioning Manager
Background papers	
Please contact the report author if you need to access this report in an alternative format	

FACT SHEET – SERVICE DESCRIPTION AND DRAFT ANALYSIS OF SERVICE USE IN 2024-25**Start Well**

Service Name	Service Description
Befriending Service	One to one relationship that enables a child or young person to access a range of community or leisure activities.
Beaumonts (building based)	This is a 5 bedded service which provides short breaks over 4 nights of the week. There are 2 accessible rooms. The service provides support to the most complex young people.
Targeted term time provision and Targeted holiday provision	School holiday and term time, evening or weekend, schemes where activities will be child-centred and focused on disabled children and young people having fun, relaxing, playing and socialising with peers in age appropriate groups with flexibility according to their developmental stage and support needs of the individual child.
Family Link	This service currently has a small number of families who provide respite service within their own homes. The needs of the individuals tend to be less complex.
Direct Payments	These can be used to fund a personal assistant to support outside of the family home. This tends to be used more regularly when other respite services are not available or cannot meet needs.
Fostering Families	Provides support to families, can be used to support parents, provide overnight care and as seen as a 'grandparent' type relationship.
Specialist agency provision	Provides support for the young person away from the family. This can be in the form of community visits or support in the family home.
Self-funded short break opportunities	There are several volunteer groups and activities which can be accessed by the individual and their families.

Service use in 2024-25

Service	Number of people using service for respite	Capacity used
Befriending Service	84	tbc
Beaumonts (building based)	30	tbc

	This is a commissioned service to meet statutory short break requirement.	
Targeted holiday provision	103	100%
Direct Payments	95 Families independently organise this care, including care to meet need for respite.	N/A
Family Link	The decline in Family Link offer reflects broader, systemic challenges in workforce recruitment and retention—barriers that are not unique to our locality but are echoed nationally.	
Targeted term time		
Fostering Families		
Specialist agency provision		
Self-funded short break opportunities		

Additional information:

- **Short breaks for disabled children:** While there is a sufficient variety of short break services available, capacity is often fully utilised, leading to use of expensive agency staff to cover respite needs. Start Well are currently commissioning a new service to decrease the need to use agency staff.
- **Other short breaks services** provided by BAPP daytime through most school holidays, by BAPP & WECIL at weekends during school term time.

Live Well

Service Name	Service Description
Newton House	This is a 5-bed building based service for people with learning disabilities and complex support needs.
Base House	This is a 3-bed building based service for people with learning disabilities with a focus on developing independent living skills.
Shared Lives	Support for people in the homes of approved families and individuals within the local community. This includes overnight respite support where this has been identified as required.
Day services	There are several providers delivering a range of accommodation and community-based day opportunities providing meaningful activities and opportunity to develop new skills.
Community Support	1:1 support to people in their family home or the community delivered by a range of support providers.

Data as of 31st March 2025

Service	Number of people using service for respite	Capacity used
Newton House	17	60%
Base House	15	74%
Shared Lives	24	N/A
Day Services	<i>Unable to determine as services also meet other needs</i>	157 people
Community Support	<i>Unable to determine as services also meet other needs</i>	N/A
Home Support	<i>Unable to determine as services also meet other needs</i>	21 people
Direct Payments	<i>Unable to determine as services also meet other needs</i>	94 people

Additional information:

- **Shared Lives Services** are flexible and capacity can increase based on demand. This adaptability allows for a responsive approach to meeting the needs of individuals requiring respite care.

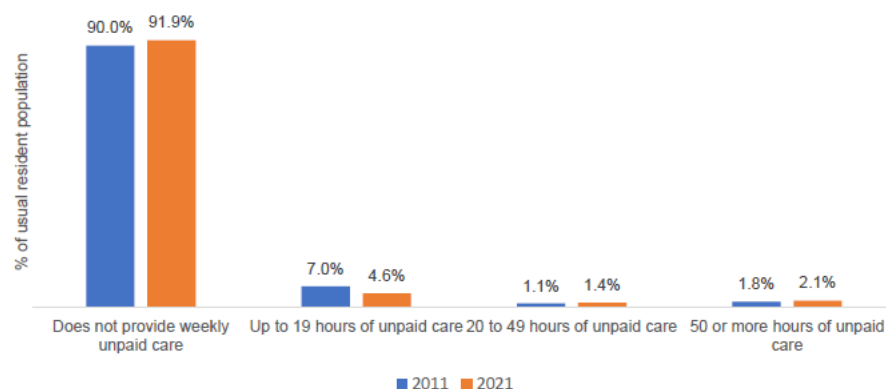
- **Building-Based Services**, such as Newton House and Base House, operate with a fixed capacity. Once this capacity is reached, it cannot be expanded. This limitation necessitates careful planning and management to ensure optimal utilisation of available resources.
- **Community and Day Services:** While these services are known to be used for respite care, it is difficult to separate when they meet the needs of the carer (as a respite) and/or the needs of the cared for person; often they do both.
- **People with support needs living at home:** We know that there are 147 individuals with learning disability and/or autism related support needs living at home. We are analysing this information to better understand their circumstances and which services are meeting their needs, including respite for carers where applicable.

FACT SHEET – UNPAID CARE OVERVIEW FROM B&NES STRATEGIC EVIDENCE BASE

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Unpaid Care

Proportion of the B&NES population by hours of unpaid care provided, Census 2011 and 2021



Unpaid care	B&NES (2021)
Provides no unpaid care	169,418
Provides 9 hours or less unpaid care a week	6,485
Provides 10 to 19 hours unpaid care a week	2,085
Provides 20 to 34 hours unpaid care a week	1,282
Provides 35 to 49 hours unpaid care a week	1,269
Provides 50 or more hours unpaid care a week	3,849
Total	184,388

- In the 2021 census, **8.1%** of the usual resident population of B&NES reported providing **unpaid care**, an overall **decrease** from 2011 (9.9%).
- The largest decrease was seen in those providing up to 19 hours of unpaid care per week, down from 7.0% in 2011 to 4.6% in 2021.
- A slight increase was recorded in those providing 50 or more hours of unpaid care per week at 2.1%, up from 1.8% in 2011.
- **6,485** usual B&NES residents report providing 9 hours or less of unpaid care per week in 2021, representing **43%** of all unpaid care provision reported in B&NES.

Data Notes:

- Census 2021 was undertaken during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. This may have influenced how people perceived and managed their provision of unpaid care, and therefore may have affected how people chose to respond.
- Caution should be taken when making comparisons between 2011 and 2021 because of changes in question wording and response options.
- Census 2021 question text asked: "Do you look after, or give any help or support to, anyone because they have long-term physical or mental health conditions or illnesses, or problems relating to old age? (Exclude anything you do as part of your paid employment)".

Sources:

1. ONS Unpaid Care Census 2021 Local Authority dataset <https://www.ons.gov.uk/releases/healthdisabilityandunpaidcarecensus2021inenglandandwales>
2. ONS NOMIS Unpaid Care Census 2011 dataset <https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/census/2011/ks301uk>

Annex 2 Options Appraisal

Objective – To have a building-based respite service that supports people with complex needs.

Criteria for selecting preferred option –

1. Minimise disruption to families and the people using the service
2. Offer flexibility
3. Align with policy and best practice
4. Offer best value for money
5. Provide sufficient time to implement

	Advantage	Disadvantage	Risks
<p>Option 1:</p> <p>Dimensions continue to provide a respite service from January 2026 – October 2026 under the current contractual arrangements</p>	<p>People can stay in a place they already know and trust.</p> <p>Staff are experienced and understand the needs of the people they support.</p> <p>No changes or moves needed for families or individuals.</p> <p>No need for capital investment or transition planning</p> <p>Strategic Alignment - Current contract end date aligns with the broader recommissioning of learning disability services in B&NES in 2026. This could be more attractive to the market and offer opportunities for innovation in care delivery and economies of scale.</p>	<p>Fewer people are using the service now, and that number is expected to decrease as people move on to long term placements.</p> <p>It's expensive to run a big building that isn't full.</p> <p>If there are not enough people using the service, it might have to close in the future.</p>	<p>Financial sustainability of the service if demand continues to decline unless capacity is commissioned by neighbouring authorities</p> <p>Potential for service closure before the end of the contract in October 2026.</p>

<p>Option 2:</p> <p>The Council run the service within one of the council buildings as the landlord and the Provider</p>	<p>The council would have full control over how the service is run.</p> <p>It could be easier to link with other local services and activities, for example by co-location respite service with a day service.</p> <p>Emergency respite could be more available.</p> <p>Access to activities and sessions in adjoining buildings/services.</p> <p>Service specification can be tailored to current and future needs.</p>	<p>Would require capital investment to adapt a building.</p> <p>Timeline for any building works and adaptations could be longer – this may not be in place for January 2026.</p> <p>Council would need to recruit and manage staff.</p> <p>Service is likely to cost more due to using Council terms and conditions.</p> <p>People might have to attend a specific day service during the week to allow respite stays to work.</p> <p>May not be able to provide a flexible enough service offer to ensure a sustainable service.</p> <p>Families and individuals may need to adjust to a new team and a new location.</p>	<p>Risk of replicating underutilisation issues if service is too large.</p> <p>Potential staffing challenges including TUPE processes.</p>
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<p>Option 3:</p> <p>Engage with the local market and go out to tender for a new respite service</p>	<p>Engaging with the market supports the opportunity to attract a mix of local providers including voluntary sector and social enterprises.</p> <p>Opportunity for innovation in care delivery.</p> <p>Potential for better value through competitive tendering.</p> <p>Service specification can be tailored to current and future needs.</p> <p>Aligns with strategic intention to recommission the wider learning disability services in October 2026.</p> <p>Supports the delivery of B&NES Procurement Strategy.</p>	<p>Long lead in time to procure and mobilise a new service with additional time required to modify a building means that this option is unlikely to be achievable by January 2026.</p> <p>Families and individuals may need to adjust to a new team and a new location.</p> <p>Few providers may be interested due to low demand if the opportunity is presented in isolation.</p>	<p>No one tenders for the opportunity.</p> <p>Risk of higher costs.</p> <p>TUPE implications for any new provider.</p>
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