

## The Child's Journey

### Identifying a Need

Many parents and carers of children and young people (CYP) who have additional needs require some extra support at some point. This can be from friends and family and universal services such as your GP, school or local children's centre.

However sometimes the needs of CYP and the family require specialist support. This could be from holiday or Saturday clubs, sitters and befrienders or family support workers, but could also be overnight short breaks.

### Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) referral or Professional referral

If you feel like you require additional support you can make a referral through the [MASH](#), or one of the professionals already working with you and your family. For example, school staff, a GP or Family Support Worker.

The staff at MASH will determine who and how to best progress your case. Their decision will be based on the Pathway to Provision – Multi-Agency Thresholds Guidance for Nottinghamshire Children's Services.

### Graduated Response

All professional working with you will adopt a graduated response to your needs and support services. This means they will try to use services available at Level 1 (children in need of Universal Services) before moving on to Level 2 (Children in need of Early Help Services) or Level 3 (Children in need of Targeted Early Help Services) as set out in the Pathway to Provision.

The Big House and our overnight short breaks are offered at Level 4 (Child in Need of Specialist Services) where there are complex needs in relation to disability.

### Children and Families Assessment

If you meet the threshold for Children's Social Care involvement at level 4, then you will be allocated a Social Worker (SW) from the Children's Disability Team (CDS).

The Social Worker will meet with you and your child and produce a Children and Families Assessment.

The Children and Families Assessment will be used as a tool to assess how to best meet the needs of your child and the family. This does not necessarily mean a Level 4 service, and a graduated response will still be employed at this stage.

If you and your Social Worker feel you and your child would benefit from overnight short breaks, with their Team Managers approval, will take your case to the Overnight Short Break Panel.

### Overnight Short Break (ONSB) Panel

The ONSB Panel consistent of relevant professions who will look at all cases individually and decide on how best to meet the needs of the child and their family, again using the Pathway to Provision as a framework. One service they may authorise along with others in the package of care may be Overnight Short Breaks. The panel will also decide on the number of ONSB, this could be from 24 to up to and over 100 nights per year and will be needs based.

### Identification of service

Once ONSB have been agreed at the ONSB Panel you and your SW will discuss where your child could access these.

The Big House is one of Nottinghamshire County Councils Short Break homes for children with learning disabilities and it may be deemed that we are in the best place to meet your child's needs. Other factors to consider are our geographical location to your home and child's school. It will also depend on our capacity.

### The Big House criteria

The Big House's criteria to admit a child to access ONSB is; the child must have a significant learning disability, combined with manifestations of challenging and complex behaviour. The child or young person should be of school age, up to 18 years old and attend their own school. Parents/carers and the child should fully participate in the planning of all short breaks. The child is expected to be mobile but provision will be made for those who have some degree of difficulty with mobility and may have a high dependency need.

### Initial visit

We appreciate what a big decision it is to agree to ONSB for parents and carers. As such we invite all parents and carers to come and visit the Big House and meet our staff before making a decision. In our experience this can really help alleviate some anxiety and answer a lot of questions. We will give you a copy of our Statement of Purpose and a Children's Guide to the Big House.

### Residential Keyworker and the Fact finder

Once ONSB have been agreed at the Big House we will assign a Residential Key Worker. This will be dependent on who we think will be the best fit for your child and our staff workloads. The key worker will be responsible for meeting with you, generally in your home, to carry out a fact finder. They will gather all the necessary information to keep you child happy and safe and make a success of their stays. The Key worker will also do school visits and meet your child before their first overnight stay. The keyworker will use all this information to produce a Residential Action Plan which contains an All About Me booklet, health information and Risk Assessments.

### Placement Planning Meeting

Before your child's first visit your Social Worker will **usually** hold a Placement Planning Meeting. This is usually held at the Big House and you will be invited along with the Big House Key Worker and any other relevant parties. This ensures that everything is in place before the visits and overnights are started. Also if you have any questions or concerns we can discuss them in this meeting.

### Bookings

We **can** book your child's dates up to one year in advance. The number of nights will be spread equally over the year. Our year runs from January to January. If the ONSB start part way through a year, they will be given pro rata. The dates will also be evenly distributed over week, weekend and holidays to ensure equality for all our children and their families. If you require particular dates then every effort will be made to accommodate these and you should try to request these with as much notice as possible. We will also endeavour to help you if possible in an emergency or at short notice for example hospital stays, funerals or any family emergency.

### First visits

Parents or carers are required to come with their child for their first visit and will be responsible for all their child's care needs at this point. We understand this can be an anxious time and as such do not put any pre-determined schedule in place.

Some children come and only a few minutes is enough where other will come and not want to leave. Generally it is one to three hours and is very much led by the child themselves. This enables the child/young person to explore and look around, meet some of the staff team while feeling safe and secure being with their parents or carer.

#### Tea visit

Once the initial visit is completed the child can come on their own for a tea visit. This could be on a week day, being admitted to the Big House from school transport, staying for their tea and then being picked up by parents up to a few hours later. We try to ensure that their Key Worker is on shift so they have a familiar face.

#### Day visit

Usually as well as tea visits, we try to book a longer visit on a weekend or holiday. This will give your child the opportunity to really explore the Big House and start building relationships with the staff and other children and experience the handover period when staff teams change.

#### First overnight stay

Once your child has had a number of successful day **and or tea** visits, this will **usually** be child led, some children needing more than others, then we will move on to their first overnight.

We understand this can be a nervous time for parents and the child. We have a dedicated parents room should you wish to also stay at the Big House and you can of course ring and speak to your child or staff for regular updates.

Tea and day visits are not taken from your allocation of overnight short breaks, only overnight stays are taken from your allocation.

#### Stepping down

Once your child has had a number of stays and your case is deemed as being settled your social worker may not be required to hold your case any longer. This will also be dependent on how many nights your child has at The Big House and their legal status. This process is called 'stepping down' and your social worker will no longer be a point of contact. You will be given the details of who to contact should you require any support or have any questions. However we are always here should you need anything.

#### Reviews of service

If you have a Social worker they will hold a meeting at least once a year to review all the services you have in place including the ONSB package at The Big House.

If you no longer have a SW in place a Short Break Reviewing Officer (RO) will hold a short break review once a year.

Staff from the Big House and wherever possible your child's Key worker will attend these meetings to discuss any issues, changes or developments. The Key worker will produce a review report to celebrate all the child's achievements over the year at The Big House and areas to develop further.

#### Increase in overnight short breaks

If you feel you and your child would benefit from additional services for any reason then in the first instance you should speak to the relevant professional already working with your family as they will be best placed to advise you on how to access additional support.

If additional overnights are required this could be raised with your Social Worker or during a review meeting.

You or any professional working with your child and family can also make a referral to MASH in the same way as when first accessing a service. Your case will again be looked at using the Pathway to Provision and using a Graduated Response. Your social worker or an allocated social worker may need to update you Children and Families Assessment and this again will be seen at the ONSB panel. The panel may decide that additional ONSB are required or other services may be put in place.

#### Transitions

Once your child reaches 18-years-old they will be ready to move on to Ault Services. This can be a very daunting time for both the young person and their family. Hopefully the transitions work will have started well in advance of their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday and you will be allocated a Transition Social Worker who will guide you through the process. Your child's Big House keyworker will also be available to support through the transition process.

#### Out of county provision

We accept children from other counties who wish to access a service from the Big House. This must have been pre-approved by their own Local Authority as this will have a cost implication and a formal agreement has to be put in place.