



*Action for  
Children*





## Short Breaks Review – Acorn House, Dumfries and Galloway

Independent Consultation, July 2019



# Acorn House

Residential Short breaks for children and young people up to 18 years old with complex disabilities and/or profound health care needs and challenging behaviours.

## The Request:

- Independent review to capture the voices/views of:
  - Children, young people and families/carers currently or previously accessing service
  - those otherwise eligible for the service
  - staff and relevant professionals
- To determine whether:
  - the current residential short break service appropriately meets the needs of the population of children and young people with complex disabilities across Dumfries and Galloway.
  - other models of short break provision would be beneficial and provide best value in terms of service user experience and outcomes, and maximise the use of NHS Board and Dumfries and Galloway Council resources.

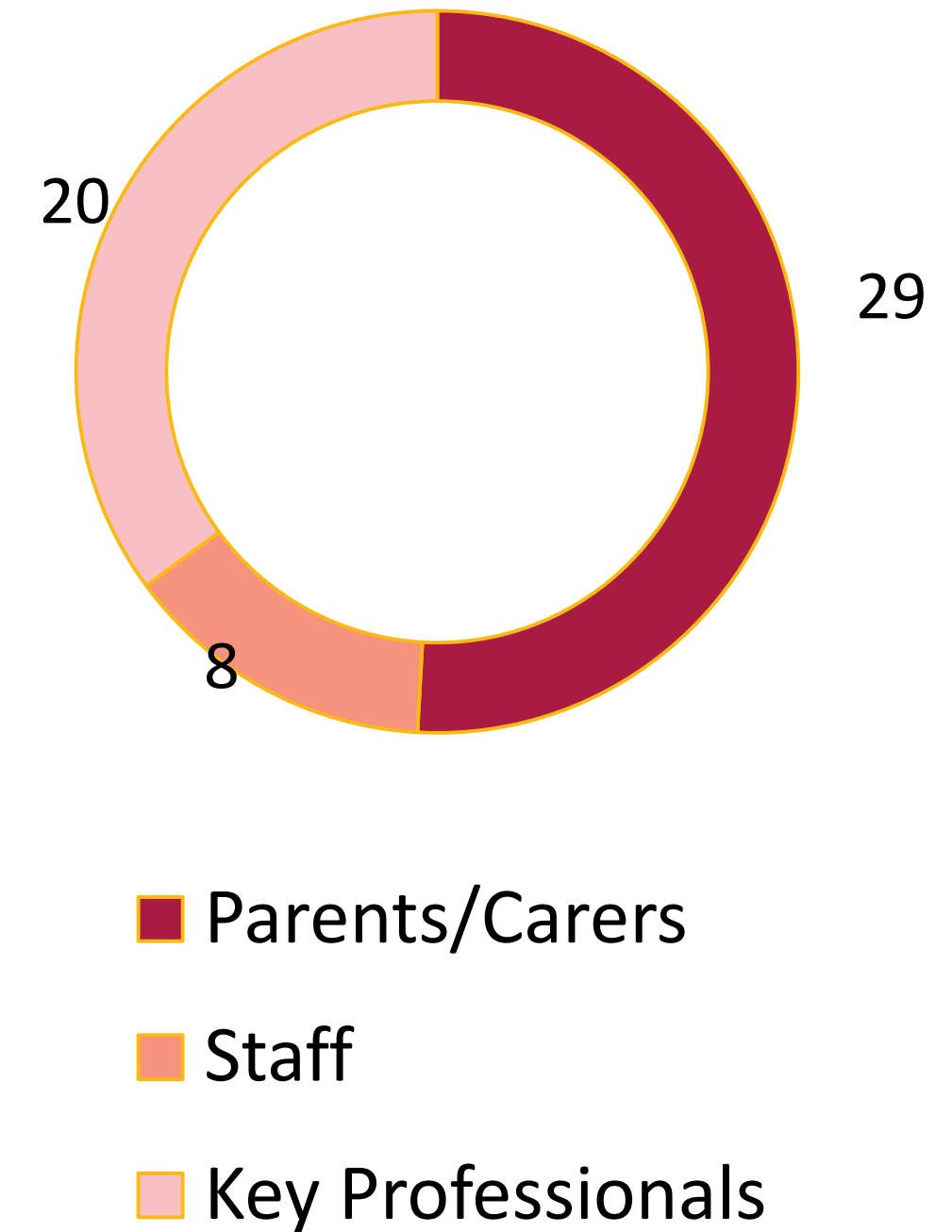
# Participants

Consultations: Independent and group session and observations

Limitations: Opt-in requirement (Data Protection compliance)

Key notes:

- 57 participants
- No participants west of Newton Stewart (disengaged).



# Key Messages

Acorn House short break service **plays an essential role** in maintaining the wellbeing of eligible families.

Across Dumfries and Galloway there is a general **lack of suitable services** available to meet the population of young people with complex disabilities needs.

An **outcomes focused service with a clearer multi-agency approach** would better meet the individual needs of service users.

There is a need for **wider service provision** e.g. evenings, weekends, holidays, group provision and alternative education placements.

Service would benefit from **independent registration**.

# Our Findings

Acorn House short break service plays an **essential role** in maintaining the wellbeing of eligible families.

- 100% of participating families currently accessing Acorn House find overnight short breaks essential to maintaining their family unit.
- Valuable respite provision
- Focus on safety, meeting physical care needs
- Positive relationships with wider NHS teams and between staff and service users.

# Our Findings

Across Dumfries and Galloway there is a **lack of suitable services** available to meet the population of young people with complex disabilities needs

- Acorn House supports 10% of eligible children, young people and families
- Most suitable for young people with physical care needs residing in Dumfries
- Wider population is not well served with suitable provision.
- Location and rigid structure limits access (particularly residents in the west)
- Geographical challenge is not exclusive to Acorn House/Complex disability service provision.

# Our Findings

An **outcomes focused** service with a **clearer multi-agency approach** would better meet the individual needs of service users

- 57% of participants recognise the current service does not meet the wider needs of young people.
- Parents emphasised the want to increase multi-agency working, with 45% of professionals agreeing communication with other agencies would help meet need of young people.
- Multi-agency input for consistent needs/outcomes led service (Social, educational and health).
- Consideration for wider needs of young people attending at one time.



# Our Findings

There is a need for **wider service provision** e.g. evenings, weekends, holidays, group provision and alternative education placements.

- 93% parents would like flexible drop off times with day, evening, weekend or holiday activities.
- 55% of parents consulted would like outreach provision across localities.
- 83% would like to see greater use of the space available at Acorn House.

# Our Findings

Service would benefit from **independent registration**.

- Presumption Acorn House offered a regulated and inspected service.
- Dissatisfaction with current quality/standards particularly the complaints process.
- Parents, staff and professionals would like independent regulation e.g. Care Inspectorate – setting guideline and expectations.

# The current service

## Benefits:

- Focus on safety, meeting physical care needs
- Positive relationships with wider NHS Teams

## Constraints/Limitations:

- Service supports 10% of eligible children, young people and families
- Location and rigid structure limits access (particularly residents in the west)
- Staffing levels/ratio's contribute to unmet wider needs of children and young people



# Meeting the needs of Children and Young People

Bringing benefit, improving outcomes and achieving best value:

- **Social care led model:** Continuing a Health and Social Care Partnership, clearly resourced service with timetabled activities/experiences and stretch and flex to meet demand - more beneficial service to a broader number of young people
- **Outcomes focused:** GIRFEC principles and SHANARRI wellbeing indicators
- **Flexible menu of provision:** Short breaks, residential, community outreach and holiday time provision
- **Nurturing** space, reflective of a 'home from home'
- **Multi-agency input:** Consistent needs/outcomes led service (Social, educational and health)
- **Staffing Structure:** Sufficient staff numbers, skilled, qualified, experienced
- **Independent regulation:** e.g. Care Inspectorate, regular inspections driving and maintaining service performance.

# Thank you

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