



Southern Health  
and Social Care Trust

# Consultation Document

***Strategic Direction for Services for  
Children and Young People***

*and*

***New Service Model for Residential Child Care Provision***

ST 132/08

## 1.0 Strategic Direction for Children and Young People

The Southern Health and Social Care Trust (the Trust) is publicly consulting on its 5 Year Strategic Plan 'Changing for the Better'. The consultation document can be accessed on [www.southerntrust.hscni.net](http://www.southerntrust.hscni.net).

The Trust's Strategy for Children and Young People is shaped by:

- Strategy for Children and Young People in Northern Ireland 2006<sup>1</sup>
- Children Matter<sup>2</sup>
- Care Matters<sup>3</sup>
- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
- Families Matter<sup>4</sup>

The Trust is committed to playing its part in achieving these outcomes, and will develop and reform our services over the next 5 years to contribute to better outcomes for children and young people in the southern Trust area.

In providing services for children, young people and their families, the Trust will work in a way that reflects the following values and beliefs:

- **A person-centred approach**, putting the needs of the child and young person first and ensuring that each child is respected as an individual with rights and needs.
- **A 'whole child' model**, considering the range of needs of each child and how they impact on one another.
- **Supporting families**, working with parents, families and communities to meet the needs of their children and young people.
- **Seeking stability** for children in their care and upbringing.
- **Working in partnership** with other agencies to improve the wellbeing of children.

The key strategic priorities include:

- Developing the range of family support and early years services

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<sup>1</sup> The Ten Year Strategy for Children and Young People in Northern Ireland 2006 -2016

<sup>2</sup> A Review of Residential Child Care Services in Northern Ireland 1998

<sup>3</sup> Care Matters in Northern Ireland – A Bridge to a Better Future 2007

<sup>4</sup> Families Matter 2007

- Empowering families to identify and implement their own plans to resolve difficulties through family group conferences.
- Working with partner agencies and the voluntary sector to improve services to young people and their families, reducing the risk of family breakdown.
- Achieving permanence for look after children and young people, through family placements and adoption, where that is appropriate.
- Increasing our numbers of foster homes, including kinship placements and specialist foster care.
- Developing enhanced therapeutic models of care in our children's homes ensuring that our residential services are further developed as specialist services to meet complex needs.

The overarching themes in the above strategic documents is the demand to increase placement choice for children and young people which includes the enhancement of family support, family placement, foster care, outreach and early intervention services for families.

Over the past number of years there has been significant investment in a range of services which provide an alternative to residential placement:

This investment has included:

- The development of outreach services
- Additional foster care placements
- Adolescent services
- Development of family support services

The impact and success of this continued investment in service provision to prevent family breakdown should reduce the requirement for short term assessment residential care places.

The Trust is publicly consulting on the configuration of residential care, and on our analysis of the Equality Impact of this proposed service change.

The Trust wishes to consult as widely as possible on this consultation document and associated EQIA. With this objective in mind, the Trust proposes to consult with all interested persons over a 12 week period from Monday, 15 December 2008 until Friday, 6<sup>th</sup> March 2009. In doing so, it will conform with the guiding principles governing consultation contained in section 6 of its Equality Scheme and the Commission's Guide to the Statutory Duties.

All enquiries regarding this consultation process and responses to this consultation document should be directed to:

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The outcome of the consultation will be brought to the Trust Board for decisions at its meeting on Thursday 26 March 2009.

The Trust's Equality Scheme and a copy of this consultation document can be made available on request, in an alternative format or in languages for those who are not fluent in English, by contacting the above named person.

## **Section 2: Future Need for Residential Care Services for Children and Young People and Proposal for Service Change**

### **2.1 Current Provision of Residential Care**

The Trust currently provides a total of six residential units across the Southern area. Short term residential care services are offered to children aged 12 – 17 (as per departmental guidelines) for up to a 6 month period, intensive support 6 to 18 months and long term residential placements from 6 months to 5 years. The placement of young people in short term, intensive support or long term home is determined by their assessed care needs.

The current provision of residential care is:

<b>Home</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Type of Care</b>	<b>No of Places</b>
Cedargrove	Newry	Long Term	6 Place
Woodside	Armagh	Long Term	6 Place
Edenvilla	Banbridge	Long Term	5 Place
Cherrygrove	Lurgan	Intensive Support	6 Place
Bocombra	Portadown	Short Term Assessment	8 Place
Drumglass	Dungannon	Short Term Assessment	7 Place

### **2.2 Assessment of Need**

The Trust currently provides a range of services to children and young people in need of care. This ranges from short term and long term residential care, foster care placements, family placements and other specialist placements. In each case the Trust endeavours to identify the most suitable option available to the child and young person to meet their assessed needs. For some young people admission to a residential placement is the most appropriate option.

### **Strategic Direction**

The Trust's strategic development, supported by increased investment and targeted service development, is impacting on the need for residential care:

- Strengthening our assessment process and outcomes for children and young people in the community using the Understanding the needs of Children in Northern Ireland Model (UNOCINI) and family group conferencing, resulting in improved assessment and use of appropriate interventions.
- Creating more flexibility for families and tailoring the use of short term residential care to provide a more flexible respite service to parents.
- Developing a model of assessment in short term residential care which should reduce the length of time for assessment which is currently six months.
- Investment in and expansion of services to prevent children being admitted to care, including increases in outreach services, adolescent services and family support packages.
- For children admitted to care, a focus on providing family placements and foster care arrangements as the preferred type of care where this meets the needs of the child. and for young people who require long term residential care and enhanced therapeutic environment. Investment in foster care services and family support services has and will continue to be made.
- A focus on securing permanence for the child through adoption and Residence Orders.

### **Service Developments**

Service developments which have particularly impacted on the need for residential care include:

- The development of outreach services over the last 2 years to support young people at home with their families to prevent admission into residential care.
- The development of family group conferencing.
- Development of specialist foster care services which provide intensive support, close supervision and therapeutic intervention to young people while living as part of a family
- Enhancement of current adolescent projects, aimed at supporting young people in their family environment.

Including this year and the previous two years, there has been a very significant investment of some £6.5m across a range of services which provide alternatives to residential placements. The additional investment in foster care, including enhancing the rate is some £2m.

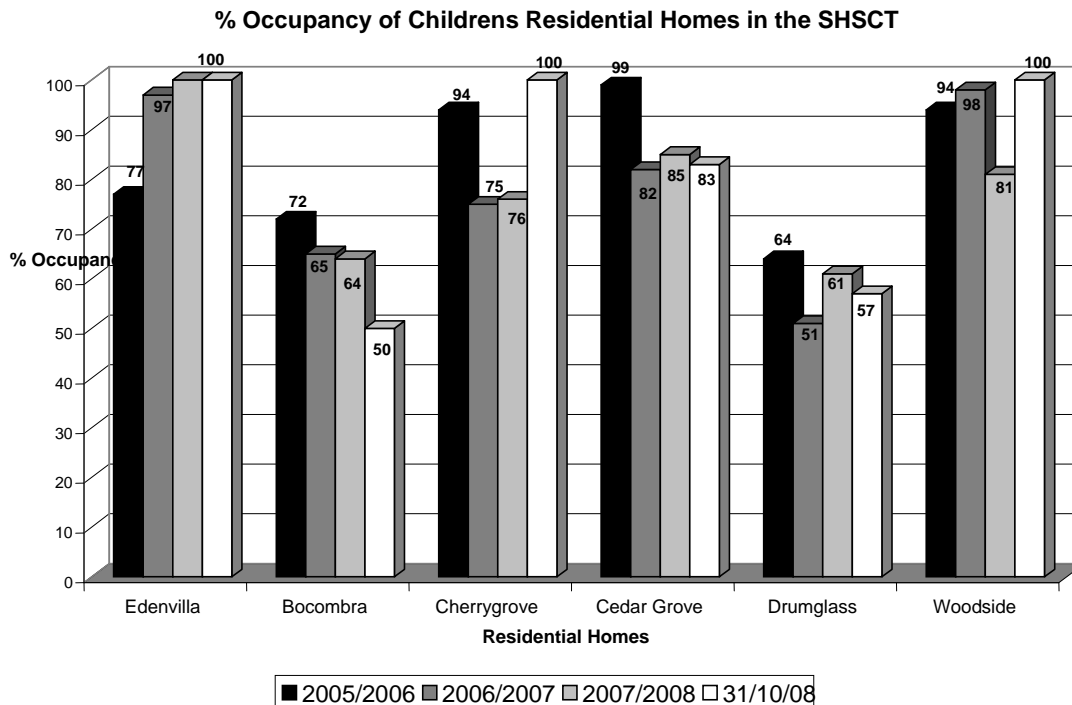
The clear strategic intention of the Minister is to continue to invest in children and young people’s services and a target has been set to reduce the number of looked after children by 9% by 2011. Further, investment has and will continue to be targeted at expanding adoption, fostering and family support services.

The impact of these and other investments in service developments has been assessed to reduce the need for short term assessment residential care.

### Occupancy Levels in Residential Care

Occupancy levels in residential care over the past 3 years are illustrated in the chart 2.1.1 below.

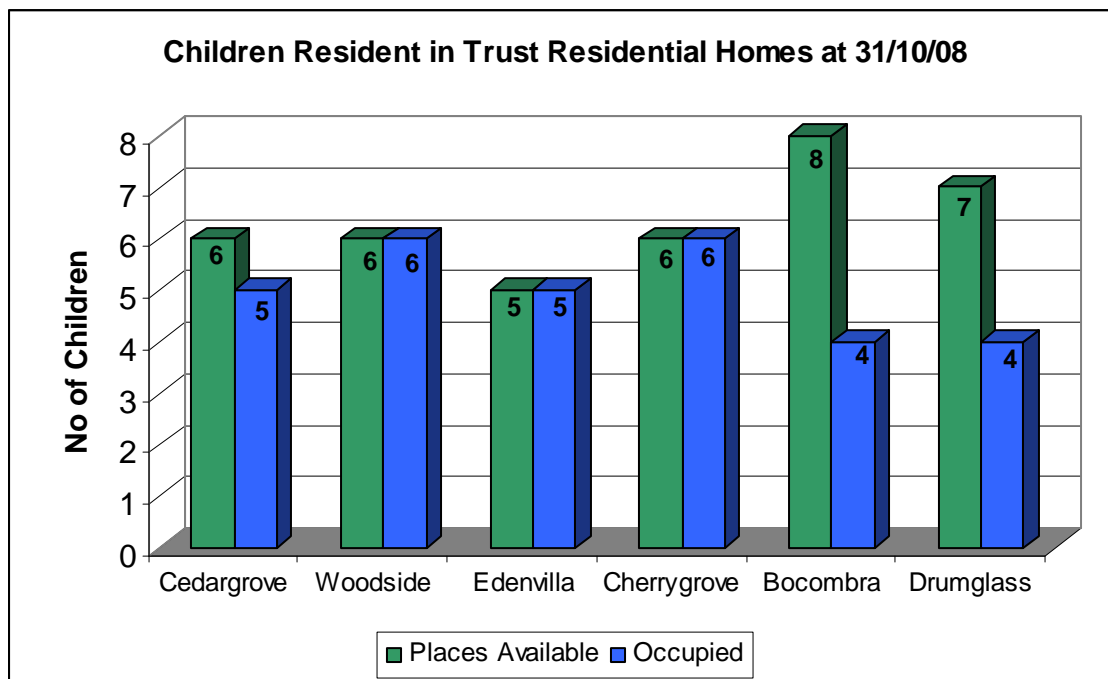
**Chart 2.1.1 Occupancy Levels 05/06 to 31/10/08**



From the period 2005/06 there has been a significant reduction in occupancy levels in homes providing short term care. Occupancy in Bocombra has reduced from 72% in 2005/06 to 64% in 2007/08 (an average of 5 places occupied compared to 8 places available). Drumglass has also had a significant drop in occupancy levels with the lowest occupancy level in 2007/08 of 61% (average of 4 places occupied compared to 7 places available). Overall within Children's short term assessment residential homes occupancy levels have decreased which can be attributed to the investment and developments of alternative service provision such as outreach.

In contrast average occupancy levels over the past three years in long term residential homes has remained consistently high: Edenvilla has an average occupancy level of 91% (an average of 5 places occupied compared to 5 places available), Cedar Grove 89% (an average of 5 places occupied compared to 6 places available) and Woodside 91% (an average of 5 places occupied compared to 6 places available). Cherrygrove, the intensive support unit, has an average occupancy level of 82% (an average of 5 places occupied compared to 6 places available). At October 2008, the number of children placed in each home is illustrated in chart 2.1.2 below:

**Chart 2.1.2 Children in Residential Places as at 31/10/08**



The current occupancy levels would support a reduction in the number of places for short term assessment residential care.

### **Future Service Need**

The future plan for residential service provision includes the requirement to have a long term residential unit in each of the legacy Trust localities with the aim of ensuring that there is equitable access for young people and their families to long term residential care. The Trust propose to maintain the current area wide intensive support provision for young people with more complex needs located in Cherrygrove, Lurgan.

Based on current trends in utilisation of residential care and the number of vacant places for short term assessment in the Trust's residential homes at 31/10/08 the Trust proposes a future configuration of care places as follows:

- 18 Places for Long Term Care (an increase of 1 place)
- 6 Places for Intensive Support
- 7 Places for Short Term Assessment Residential Care (a reduction of 8 places)

This proposal will require a reduction in statutory residential homes from six to five homes. The following section details the option appraisal undertaken by the Trust to identify the most appropriate residential service for closure. In the proposed service change the Trust intends to ensure that there is minimum disruption to young people and staff.

### **2.2 Options for Proposed Future Provision of Residential Care**

The Trust is proposing a reduction in residential care provision which will require the provision of five of the current six residential care homes. In order to identify the most appropriate home for closure, a detailed option appraisal has been undertaken, which is summarised in this section.

## 2.2.1 Evaluating the Service Model

In the previous section, examining assessment of need, each form of care has been assessed against the following criteria:

- Criterion 1: Strategic Fit
- Criterion 2: Occupancy levels

In order to robustly test the service model, these two criteria were assigned 48% of the available scores. The outcome of this analysis was that the current provision of short term assessment scored lowest in relation to both Strategic Fit and Occupancy Levels, therefore the proposed service model is supported by this evaluation.

The proposed reduction in short term assessment residential care is in keeping with the strategic direction of the overall change in service provision. The advantages of this proposed service change are:

- Responds to strategic direction and need for service change
- Provides an opportunity for the Trust to reconfigure its remaining residential service with particular reference to the location of a long term service in each of the legacy Trust areas.
- Meets children and young people's needs in the community.
- Provides opportunity for the enhancement of alternative service provision
- Optimum use of resources
- Provides support to families
- Emphasis towards children and young people living in family settings

The outcome of the assessment of need, supported by this evaluation, creates the opportunity for the Trust to review the location and function of its remaining residential units, locating these services in those of our current facilities which have the highest quality of accommodation and are most accessible. This analysis is explored in the following section.

## 2.2.2 Evaluating the Most Suitable Facilities within which to deliver the service model

In delivering the proposed service model, it is proposed that only 5 out of the 6 current homes are required. The Trust evaluated which of the 6 current homes provided the best quality of accommodation and accessibility for the delivery of the proposed service model. Each residential facility was therefore assessed against a set of criteria aimed at examining quality of accommodation and accessibility. These criteria were assigned 52% of the available scores, and each criteria was weighted in relation to the importance for the provision of high quality care. The criteria and weightings are summarised below:

Criterion 3 Quality of environment	20
Criterion 4 Estates appraisal of accommodation	16
Criterion 5 Accessibility	16

The table below indicates how each of the options scored against the agreed criteria. (Low, medium, High)

	Quality of Environment	Estates Appraisal	Accessibility
<b>Drumglass</b>	High	Medium	Medium
<b>Bocombra</b>	High	Medium	Medium
<b>Edenvilla</b>	Low	Medium	Low
<b>Cedar Grove</b>	Medium	High	High
<b>Woodside</b>	High	High	Medium
<b>Cherrygrove</b>	High	High	Medium

The outcome of the option appraisal demonstrated that the facility which scored lowest against the criterion of quality of accommodation and accessibility was Edenvilla. The detail of the option appraisal is available on the Trust's website [www.southerntrust.hscni.net](http://www.southerntrust.hscni.net) click on Just Published or on request by contacting the Trust at the address shown in Section 1 of this paper.

The outcome of the appraisal has created the opportunity for the Trust to review the location of the proposed service model. The Trust proposes to reduce the number of short term assessment places to 7, and to centralise these in Drumglass, Dungannon. This would free up Bocombra, which has been assessed as having good quality accommodation and good accessibility, for the relocation of long term residential care places from Edenvilla Home in Banbridge. This would enable the Trust to achieve the optimum accessibility of long term service provision across the Trust's geography. The location of the Trust's area wide intensive support unit will remain in Cherrygrove, Lurgan.

This reconfiguration would have the following benefits:

- It will provide a geographically accessible service for long term residential care across the population served by the Trust.
- It will ensure the Trust's future service model for residential care is located in those facilities with the best quality of accommodation.
- It will minimise the number of current homes affected by the change in the model of service.

### **3.0 Summary of Proposals for Service Change**

Based on the evaluation of each option against the criteria, the Trust is now publicly consulting on a new model of service provision for residential care for children and young people as follows:

- 18 Places for Long Term Care (an increase of 1 place)
- 6 Places for Intensive Support
- 7 Places for Short Term Assessment Care (a reduction of 8 places)

The implementation of this service model will require only 5 of the 6 current residential facilities in the Trust.

The strategic fit and occupancy of the service model was evaluated and this supported the assessment of need and proposed service model.

The quality of accommodation and accessibility of each of the current homes was evaluated to assess their suitability to be a location for the

delivery of the future service model. The home which scored lowest in terms of quality of accommodation and accessibility was Edenvilla, Banbridge.

Based on this outcome, the Trust is proposing to:

- Cease long term residential provision in Edenvilla, Banbridge
- To locate long term residential care in three locations across the Trust to maximise accessibility and provide quality accommodation to support quality of care. These locations will be Bocombra in Portadown, Cedargrove in Newry and Woodside in Armagh.
- To reduce the numbers of places for short term assessment from 15 to 7, and to provide these places in Drumglass in Dungannon.
- To continue to provide intensive support residential services in the purpose built facility at Cherrygrove, Lurgan.

### **3.1 Proposal for alternative use or disposal of facilities**

The preferred option associated with the closure of a residential facility (which is subject to consultation and approval) would enable Edenvilla to be disposed of or re-designated for alternative use/purpose.

### **3.2 Assessment of Proposed Changes**

The impact of planned service developments to reduce the need for residential care admissions will be reviewed in Autumn 09 to ensure that there is satisfactory progress and that the proposed service model can proceed within the agreed timeframe.

## **4.0 Equality Impact Assessment - Summary**

### **Section 75 Northern Ireland Act 1998**

The Southern Health and Social Care Trust (the Trust) is committed to fulfilling its statutory equality duties set out in Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 (the Act) and has conducted an Equality Impact Assessment on this proposal in line with the Equality Commission's guidelines. The Trust is also committed to the safeguarding and promotion of human rights in all aspect of its work.

A summary of the main findings of the EQIA are as follows:-

This proposal will impact on Bocombra in Portadown which is a short term residential assessment facility and Edenvilla which is a long term residential facility in Banbridge. It is proposed that Bocombra would cease to provide short term residential care and Edenvilla would relocate from its current location in Banbridge to Bocombra in Portadown. The relocation of Edenvilla to Portadown would enable the Trust to continue to provide a long term residential service in each of the legacy Trust areas. Portadown (Bocombra) is a more accessible location for the majority of the Craigavon and Banbridge population than Banbridge.

This proposal, if approved, will not be implemented until 2010 and therefore will have no impact on the children who are currently living in Bocombra as their short term assessment will be complete. For those children currently living in Edenvilla this will have no impact either because of their age profile they will have left long term residential care by 2010.

The Trust's focus will be to further develop community based services to support young people at home with their families with the objective of avoiding admission to short term residential care for assessment. These services include outreach, adolescent services, placement with family and specialist fostering.

The Trust will endeavour to avoid compulsory redundancies as a result of these changes. Where possible all staff will be offered a choice of post within residential, outreach, adolescent, fieldwork services or other suitable posts within the Children and Young People's Services Directorate.

The full version of the Trust's Equality Impact Assessment on this service change will be made available on request by contacting the Trust as detailed in Section 1 of this document and is also available on the Trust's website [www.southerntrust.hscni.net](http://www.southerntrust.hscni.net) click on Just Published.