



FIRRHILL SHORT BREAKS SERVICE
For people with learning disability
INFORMATION PACK

This information has been put together to enable you to understand the service offered at Firrhill Short Breaks Service and to answer frequently asked questions.

Firrhill is an eight bedded unit offering short breaks to adults with learning disabilities and complex needs. The service was originally set up in 1987 and operated from our old site at Currie. The building is eco-friendly and has solar panels to provide hot water and power. There is a walkway around the whole building and the garden ground contains benches to enable people to sit and enjoy the garden. Plants, shrubs and trees have been planted which have made it an interesting garden to be in, providing lots to see and encouraging wild life.

The philosophy of Firrhill is to offer service users the opportunity to experience new surroundings and meet new people while at the same time giving families/carers some time on their own.

Service users are actively encouraged to make personal choices, establish relationships, maintain and develop independent living skills. Opportunities are also given to participate in local community activities (eg cinema, local shops, pubs, places of interest, walks etc).

Staff Team

Firrhill Short Breaks Service is staffed 24 hours a day. The staff team is comprised of the following people:

Bill Haddow	Unit Manager
Robert Smith	Assistant Unit Manager
David Tatton	Assistant Unit Manager
Caroline Hilton	Residential Worker
Alan Orr	Residential Worker
Lewis Mitchell	Residential Worker
Gillian Hogarth	Residential Worker
Jennifer Henderson	Residential Worker
Cathleen Halliday	Residential Worker
Sam Pooley	Residential Worker
Margaret Swan	Residential Worker
Lorraine Auld	Residential Worker
Asha James	Residential Worker
Ian Black	Night Social Care Worker
Helen Martin	Night Social Care Worker
Anne Thomson	Night Social Care Worker
Caroline Walker	Night Social Care Worker
Vacant Post	Night Social Care Worker
Liz McGarvey	Unit Clerical
Lynette Williamson	Unit Domestic
Bruce Cameron	Cook
Richard Emslie	Weekend Cook
Adrienne James	Weekend Laundry Assistant

Respite packages

Respite is accessed initially through your Social Worker. He/she will carry out an assessment involving both the service user and his/her carer. This information is passed to the Respite Allocation Panel. The information is assessed by the panel and a decision is made as to the level of service to be offered and which respite unit could best meet the needs of the service user.

Once a service user is offered respite with Firrhill Short Breaks Service, a key worker will be allocated and a series of visits will be offered. This enables the service user and carer to get familiar with the environment, staff and other service users. It also provides an opportunity to ask questions about the service and allows the staff time to gather relevant information. These visits can be in the form of tea visits, popping in for a coffee and overnight stays. During this period the key worker will draw up a comprehensive care plan to ensure that each person's stays are enjoyable and fulfilling. All being well, regular respite will then be offered on an annual basis. This will commence on the first 'full' year.

Letters are sent out late summer asking service users and families if there are any specific requests for respite dates. Once information is collated the respite planning team at Firrhill will arrange respite for the forthcoming year (January to December) for all service users and their families. It is important that you return this letter as soon as possible. Requests are given on a 'first come, first served' basis but also consideration will be given to differing needs of individual service users and whether the specific request can be managed safely. We have previously tried arranging respite over a six month period, but this proved unsuccessful for a variety of reasons. Service users and families seem to prefer having the year's respite in advance.

Firrhill Short Breaks Service is located in Colinton and shares the same grounds as Firrhill Day Centre. It is accessible by the 4, 10, 18, 27 and 45 buses. The full address is 257B Colinton Road, Edinburgh EH14 1DW and the telephone number is 0131 441 5117.

Medication

Service users who require medication must bring this in from home. This includes regular medication, as required medication (eg paracetamol for headaches), and emergency medication if required. **ALL** medication must come in clearly labelled boxes/bottles with the pharmacist's prescription label detailing the drug name and dosage, instructions re how often, how many etc, and service user's name. Additionally, all medication must be in date. Should there be a discrepancy between instructions from the carer and what is on the prescription label, this will need to be clarified before any medication is administered.

Staff are trained in administration of medication and receive a biennial update of administration of emergency medication (rectal diazepam and nasal/buccal midazolam) by Epilepsy Scotland. Any service user who is prescribed emergency medication must have an up to date epilepsy care plan clearly documenting types of seizures, when emergency medication is administered and the dosage. The care plan must be signed by the carer and the service user's GP. This is reviewed annually or should any changes occur.

We do not keep any supplies of medication therefore service users must bring in any medication they are likely to need.

Smoking, Alcohol and Drug Use

Smoking is not permitted within the unit or on council grounds. This is in accordance with the Scottish Executive and local policy. The use of non-prescribed drugs is prohibited. Service users may purchase alcohol whilst in respite but it will be restricted to moderate levels and consideration will be given to any contra-indications it may have with medication.

Clothing

Service users can have their clothes washed when staying at Firrhill. To minimise loss of clothing we complete a clothing list on admission and check this when packing clothes at the end of stay. We do our best to ensure clothes do not go missing but occasionally this does happen. Please ensure all clothing has either name labels or has a name written on the manufacturer's label and where possible, keep clothes to a minimum. It would also be helpful to have name labels on cases/holdalls and for dressing gowns/housecoats to be sent in.

Toiletries

Service users are required to bring in their own toiletries. We do not have supplies within the unit. Please bring soap/shower gel, shampoo, deodorant (if required), toothbrush and toothpaste and shaving equipment for the men. Also, should service users use incontinence aids, these also need to be brought in.

Personal belongings

While every effort is made to ensure the safety of service users' belongings, we are unable to accept full responsibility unless a request has been made to keep a particular item in the safe. Please only bring in what is reasonably required to minimise risk of losing belongings. Any electrical equipment, eg CD players, games consoles, etc, should be in safe working order and staff will make a visual check of any such equipment at the start of someone's stay.

Transport

We have our own mini bus which is used for social activities. Staff receive training and regular refreshers which provides them with the required legislative knowledge, responsibilities and training on the safe use of taking people out on the mini bus. Only those qualified in MIDAS will drive the bus.

We also use public transport where appropriate therefore would appreciate bus passes being sent in.

Outings and Personal Cash

Service users are offered a variety of outings while in respite. This is dependent on staffing levels and service users' needs. Outings could include cinema, pub outings, meals out, shopping, specific events, walks, picnics and places of interest. If service users wish to access community resources they will need to bring in spending money to access these. This money will be receipted on admission and kept in the safe (unless service users would prefer to keep their own cash). If staff are responsible for cash, receipts will be supplied for any money spent.

Individual Care Plans & Changes in care

Every service user has an individual care plan which details their needs, wishes, preferences etc. This is used as a point of reference for all staff to ensure each person receives a level of care which is appropriate to their needs. This is reviewed annually or sooner if changes occur. It is therefore important that we are fully informed of any changes to the service users' care. A phone call or written information on admission would be sufficient. This would include changes to diet, epilepsy pattern, medication, health, behaviour, etc.

Should a service user have any infectious illness (eg flu, chest infection, severe cold etc.) prior to their stay, it would be preferable that the stay be postponed. This is due to the vulnerability of other service users. We would then arrange another stay to compensate where a space is available.

Phone calls and visits

Carers/families should feel free to phone or visit. It would be appreciated if phone calls were avoided at busier periods (eg lunch and tea time) as staff are busy supporting service users with their meals. If carers/friends/family wish to visit a service user it would be advisable to phone in advance just to ensure they are in the unit. This does not mean you cannot drop in on the off chance of seeing someone.

Children visiting a service user must be in the company of an adult and will remain the responsibility of the adult.

Emergencies

Previously, we were able to accommodate emergency respite if we had a spare bed. This system has changed and any emergency must go directly to the social worker. If there is no allocated social worker then you should call Social Care Direct on 0131 200 2324, who will take information and provide guidance.

Suggestions/Complaints

Our aim is to provide a high quality of service to ensure service users' respite is a positive experience. However, if you feel dissatisfied in any way or would like to comment on any aspect of the service please let us know.

Complaints are initially dealt with at unit level to establish the facts and all the information. Circumstances are investigated and an explanation offered. Where appropriate, one of the management team may visit the complainant to give them the opportunity to discuss their grievance/complaint. If for any reason, you feel you cannot discuss this at unit level or continue to feel dissatisfied, you may speak to your social worker or phone Advice & Complaints Service at Waverly Court on 0131 553 8395 or email hsadvice.complaints@edinburgh.gov.uk for further guidance. Additionally, you can contact the Care Commission at www.carecommission.com or call their helpline on 0845 603 0890.

Should you have any suggestions which would improve the service we would appreciate your input. You can phone and speak to a staff member, write in or arrange to meet a staff member to discuss further.

A leaflet 'How to make the best use of this service' is included with this information pack and is available in a number of formats including tape, Braille, large print, various computer formats, Arabic, Bengali, Chinese, Hindi, Punjabi and Urdu. For any of the above please contact ITS on 0131 242 8181 and quote reference number 07414.