

# Overnight Short Breaks Members Briefing

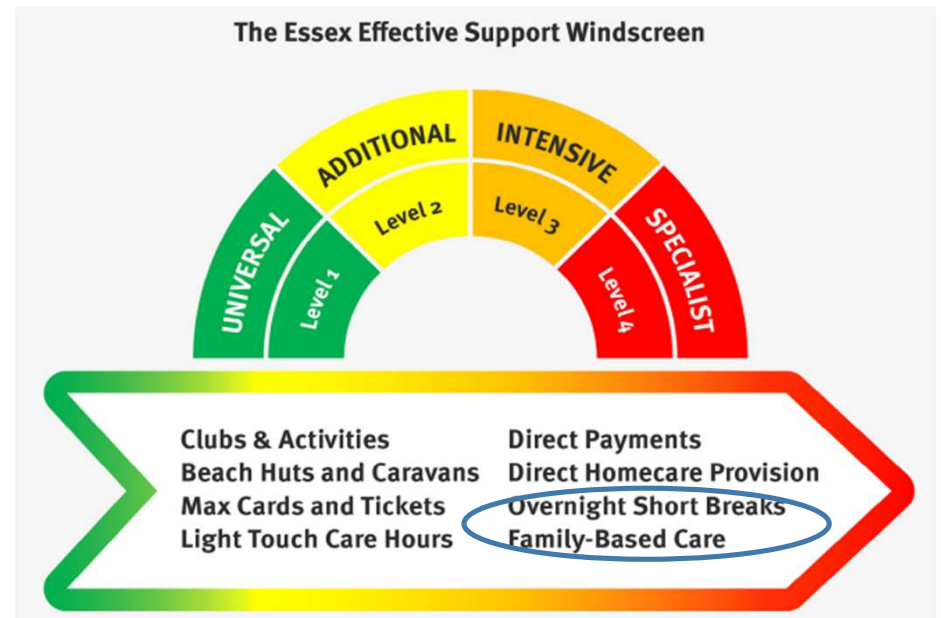
20<sup>th</sup> January 2023

# What are Short Breaks?

Section 25 of the Children and Young Persons Act requires local authorities to provide short breaks for families with disabled children. Short breaks gives parent carers and siblings a break while enabling children and young people to meet friends, take part in activities, develop independence and have fun.

**Children and young people can access ECC short break services if they are:**

- aged between 0-18, or 19-25 and have a personal budget
- have a diagnosis of special educational needs and/or a disability
- living within the administrative borders of Essex County Council



# Essex Short Breaks Commissioning Strategy 2021-2026



“Every family needs to  
go on their own journey.”



Developed with over 400 families through survey, interviews and coproduction meetings.

Final version consulted on and agreed Autumn 2021

Sets out the entirety of the Short Breaks offer, and how we want to improve and develop it over time

How we want different agencies to work together, to deliver better experiences for families

How we are intending to improve outcomes for children and young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities

To hear directly from families please watch this video which was coproduced between ECC and parent carers of children with special educational needs and/or disability: [Short Breaks: Every Family needs to go their own Journey - research into our service - YouTube](#)

# Strategy Objective

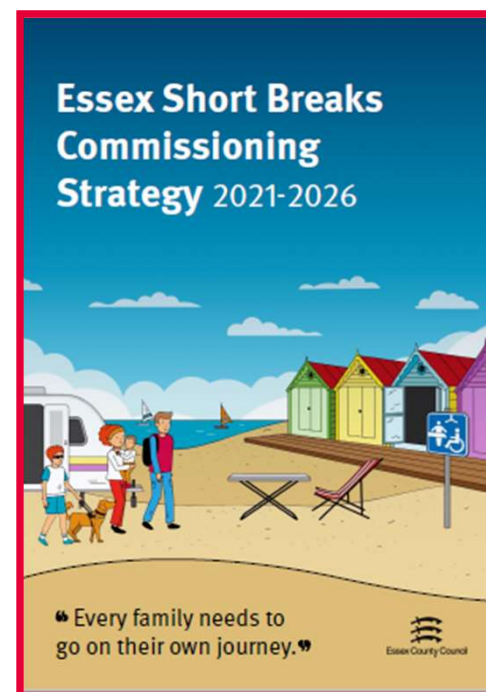
**Objective 5: Parents, children and young people can access overnight short breaks provision which meets need and enables good outcomes**

## What will we do:

We will review our offer for overnight short breaks to ensure it is sustainable and meeting need.

We will expand the range of options that are available as an alternative to overnight residential care, including our foster care offer, considering improvements that could be made through developing improved commissioning frameworks for short break foster care.

We will ensure our existing provision is as efficient as possible and appropriately targeted to those most in need of support.



## National Context

**Section 25 of the Children and Young Persons Act requires local authorities to provide short breaks for families with disabled children.**

**Under the [Breaks for Carers of Disabled Children Regulations 2011](#), LAs must provide, as appropriate, a range of short breaks for disabled children.**

As at 31 March 2020, there were **167** short-break-only homes in England.

A third of all local authorities (LAs) (51, **34%**) had no short-break-only homes within their boundaries.

Of the 100 LAs that had short-break-only homes within their boundaries: 64 had 1 home, 21 had 2 homes and 15 had 3 or more, including in some of the geographically largest LAs.

The majority of short-break-only homes (107, **64%**) were LA-run, compared with around 15% of children's homes.

Short-break-only homes have the best inspection profile of any of the 4 sub-groups of children's homes. They had both proportionately more **outstanding** and proportionately more **good** outcome judgements. [Children's homes providing short breaks, published 10 August 2021, Ofsted](#)

# Local Overnight Short Breaks Offer

## Internal Provision

- The Maples, Harlow
- Lavender House, Colchester

## External Provision

- Achieving Aspirations in Bury St Edmunds
- Achieving Aspirations in Clacton
- St Christophers Cottage in Southend
- Peartree in Hertfordshire

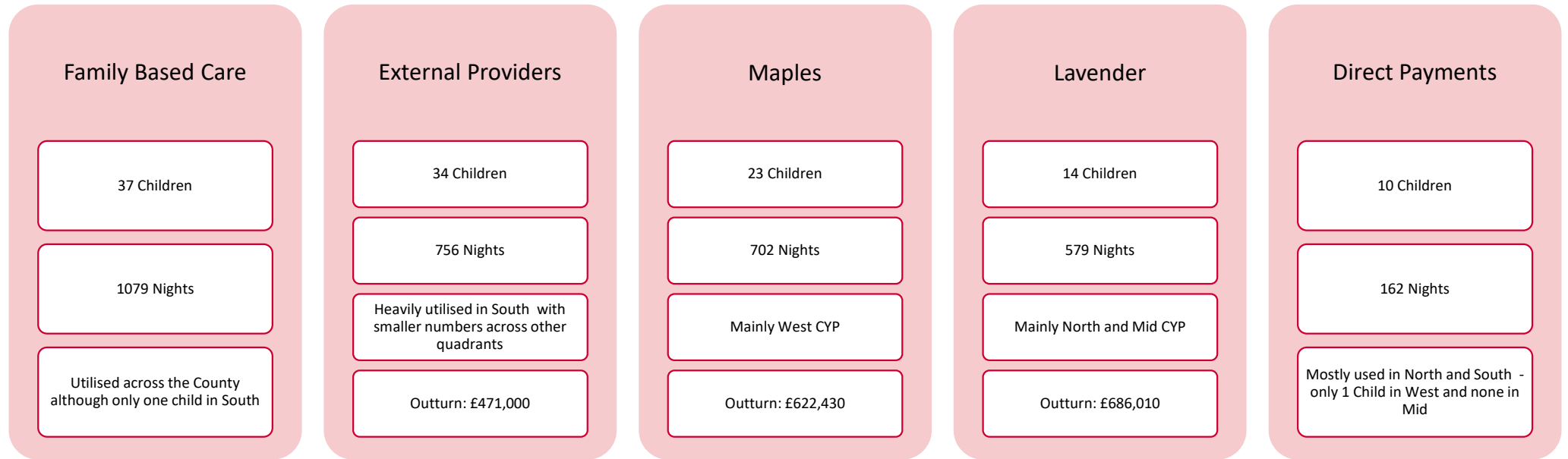
## Family Based Care

- Fee Paid Short Breaks Foster Carer
- Short Breaks Foster Carers

## Home Based Care

- Care in the home enabling the parent carer(s) to take their short break outside of the home
- Via Direct Payment or Direct Provision

# Demand, capacity & improvements



**142** children and young people currently have agreed OSB packages of **4128** nights between them. Of those 142 children and young people, 17 are waiting for provision to be identified. Engagement with families, staff and short breaks foster carers has identified:

- Overnight short breaks are received well by families
- The venue needs to be robust and secure
- The staff need to be highly skilled, and also warm and friendly.
- Availability can be limited and could be improved (particularly more weekends).
- Family based care offers a sense of routine, "calm" and works well for children for whom groups can be overwhelming
- There is a clear perception that overnights are offered as a last option
- There is a common perception that external provision costs more than internal.
- Families told us that transitions are not planned for in enough time

## Overnight Short Breaks Options Considered

1. New  
Centralised  
Offer

2. Condensed  
Blended Offer

3. Multi-Use  
Internal Offer

4. Externally  
commissioned  
offer

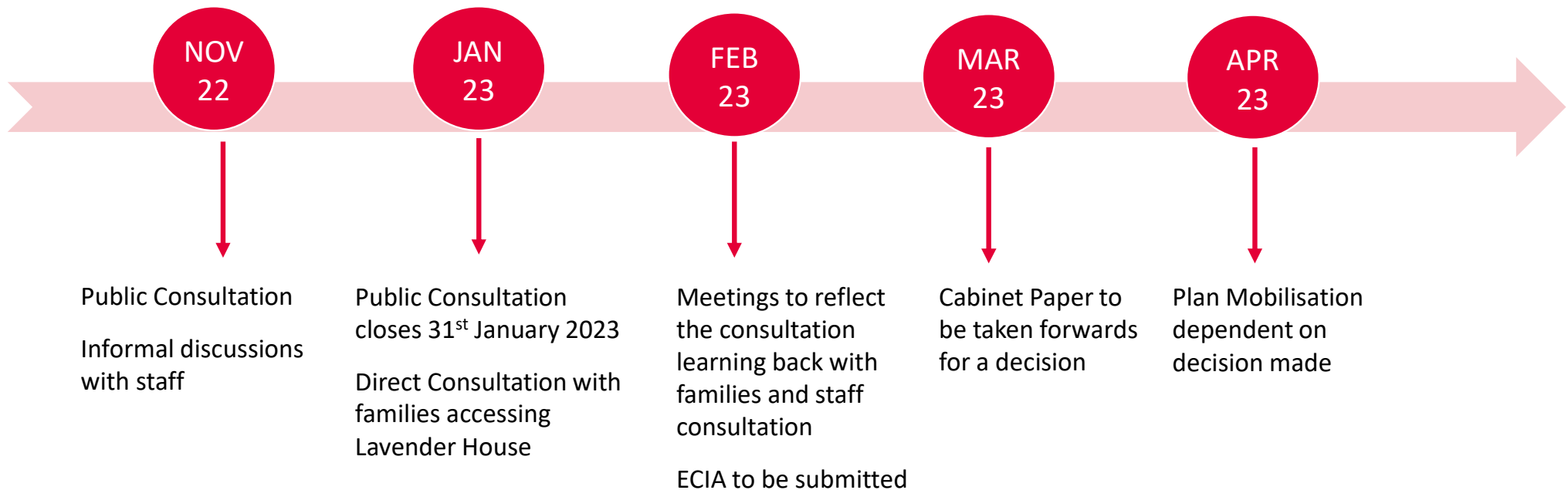
5. No change

# The Consultation

## Overnight Short Breaks Consultation - Parent/Carers - Essex County Council - Citizen Space

The consultation is transparent about the proposal and seeks the views of parent carers who would be impacted by it.

Responses will be collated and presented within the Equality Comprehensive Impact Assessment and subsequent cabinet paper.





This information is issued to Essex County Council Members

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