

Short Breaks Service is Launched

A new short breaks service offering support to adults with learning difficulties and complex needs officially opens in Edinburgh tomorrow.

The eight bed unit at Firrhill currently provides short stays for 60 people who are offered accommodation throughout the year ranging from a few days to a couple of weeks at a time.

The aim is to offer users the opportunity to experience new surroundings and meet new people whilst at the same time giving families and carers some time on their own.

People using the service are actively encouraged to make their own choices, make new friends and social contacts, maintain and develop independent living skills. They are also given the opportunity to go on trips to the cinema, local shops, places of interest and walks.

This can help build skills and confidence for service users and for some introduces the idea of being cared for away from home, leading eventually to them moving into their own supported accommodation. Respite also gives carers a physical break from the demands of their role.

The service is therefore vital in ensuring families are supported with the demands of caring for a person with very high support needs, which keeps them together and allows for all members of the family to have time to themselves, not just the person who is being cared for.

Councillor Paul Edie, Health and Social Care leader, said: "The short breaks service provided at Firrhill provides a valuable and much-needed facility to people across Edinburgh.

“Caring for someone is a demanding, and difficult job and both the cared for person and their families can benefit immensely from these short breaks. The user can build up their social skills and independence while the carer gets a much-needed break from the tough demands placed on them.

“Without this type of support many families would struggle to carry on with the daily pressures of caring for someone in their home.”