

Public Sector Equality Duty

Case Study

Merrimans Respite Care and Support

Merrimans provides 24 hour respite care and support to adults with severe learning disabilities, physical disabilities and complex needs in a safe and appropriate way within a CQC registered service.

The service supports:

Young people aged 18+:

- Both male and female
- Adults with a learning and/or a physical disability
- Adults who are subject to a Deprivation of Liberty order

Service users who access the service generally live at home with family members and a stay at Merrimans gives families an opportunity to have a break from their caring responsibilities and for service users it provides them time away from the home environment where they can mix with peers.

During the pandemic, it became apparent that there were a lot of anxieties from families and care givers of the young people with accessing the respite services. The concerns were naturally around the young people's vulnerability to the virus and health and safety measures.

These concerns meant that some families had no respite at all for many weeks at a time and were exhausted.

The resident manager arranged for the following measures to be put in place:

- A video call with the family so they could see the Covid secure measures in place
- A planned visit for one member of the family to attend site when no one else was there so they could see the safety measures in place first hand: one-way systems of entry and exit, smaller cohorts of users that are 'bubbled', staff in full PPE, staff testing programs in place, temperature checks prior to entry and enhanced cleaning schedules.
- Ongoing communication with the family and young person.

These measures and support meant that the families were reassured enough to agree for their young people to access the respite in a safe way, and the care givers were able to receive the respite they needed.