

Equality Impact Assessment



Hampshire
County Council

Short Break Activities Programme T21

Accountable officer: Suzanne Smith

Email address: sarah.1.roberts@hants.gov.uk

Department: Children's Services

Date of
assessment: 03/11/2020

Description of current service/policy

Children's Services' Short Break Activities Programme provides support to parents and carers of children and young people with disabilities. It seeks to offer a range of fun and educational activities for children and young people with disabilities and additional needs, so that their parents or carers can have a short break from their caring responsibilities. Through the respite offered by the Short Break Activities Programme, parents and carers can take part in education and training courses, leisure pursuits, day-to-day tasks, and other activities. Short Break Activities are provided in the evenings, as well as at weekends and during school holidays.

Geographical impact: All
Hampshire

Description of proposed change

Several changes to the Short Break Activities Programme are being considered (corresponding to Proposals 1, 2, 4, 6 and 8 from the 2020 consultation):

- The overall grant awarded to provide Short Break Activities would be reduced by £597,000.
- Only accept applications that meet the core Short Break Activity priorities, except for a £20,000 exceptions fund.
- The grant awarded to Hampshire Parent Carer Network would be reduced by £17,500.
- A two-tier Gateway Card scheme would be introduced, and the evidence requirements changed.
- Redesign the Community Buddy Scheme, increase parental contributions, and limit access to the scheme to Hampshire County Council area residents who are under 18.

Impacts of the proposed change

This impact assessment covers Service users

Engagement and consultation

Has engagement or consultation been carried out? Yes

A public consultation on proposed changes to the Short Break Activities Programme from April 2021 was held. It was open for 18 weeks, from 9 March to 12 July 2020, having been extended to mitigate the disruption caused by Covid-19. It was promoted through numerous channels (e.g. social media, targeted emails, and partner organisation communications). 15 engagement sessions were held, mostly online, attended by 47 unique individuals. 239 consultation responses were received in total. Additionally, 134 individual comments were collected from the engagement sessions.

Statutory considerations	Impact	Mitigation
<p>Age: High</p>	<p>The service is for children with disabilities under the age of 18, therefore any changes made to the service have a high impact on this demographic. The number of registered Gateway Card holders constitutes 1.1% of the 0-17 age population in Hampshire.</p>	<p>Mitigations include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> *ensuring the Council engages with young people and their parents to help us determine priorities for Short Break Activities * the proposed introduction of a two-tier Gateway Card system to better understand needs of Gateway Card holders and the services required, and the creation of better links to places offering concessions * proposed retention of an exceptions fund to enable ad-hoc grant applications to be made. * ensuring signposting to support from Adult Health and Care services is available from age 18

<p>Disability: High</p>	<p>There are currently around 2,600 Gateway Card holders who are registered to be able to access Short Break Activities. This is a small proportion (0.2%) of the overall Hampshire population of 1.382million (2019) and 1.1% of the under 18 population in Hampshire, however the impact will be on children and young people with disabilities and their parent/carers.</p>	<p>Mitigations include: * the proposed introduction of a two-tier Gateway Card system to better understand needs of Gateway Card holders and the services required, and the creation of better links to places offering concessions * working with social care teams to better understand instances of high uptake of Short Break Activities to ensure the families' needs continue to be met * designing a differentiated offer for the buddy scheme in order to commission different approaches to enable children and young people to work towards their desired outcomes. * By consulting with children and young people with a disability, and their parents/carers, we will seek to maintain a Short Break Activity Programme that continues the highest priority Short Breaks, in line with activity usage data, within the budget constraints.</p>
<p>Sexual orientation: Neutral</p>		
<p>Race: Neutral</p>		
<p>Religion and belief: Neutral</p>		
<p>Gender reassignment: Neutral</p>		

<p>Gender:</p> <p>Medium</p>	<p>There is a possibility that the proposals have a greater impact on boys than girls, who make up 51.3% of the 0-17 population in Hampshire (2019). In 2018/19 60% of attendees on Short Break Activities were boys.</p> <p>Autistic Spectrum Disorders account for almost 63% of the disabilities of Short Break Activity attendees. The number of estimated boys with autism in this age range is four times higher (2,241) than girls (560).</p> <p>In terms of parents/ carers, many primary carers of children with a disability are mothers. By potentially reducing the number of Short Break Activities available this may have a greater impact on this group as they may have fewer opportunities for a break from their caring duties</p>	<p>Mitigations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consult with parent/carers and young people to determine if provision for children with autism should be a priority within the grant round, and work with National Autistic Society (South Hampshire Branch) and Hampshire Parent Carer Network to evaluate grant applications, to ensure the best opportunity to provide provision to this group of children and young people. • Consult with parent/carers to seek to maintain a Short Break Activity Programme that continues the highest priority Short Breaks, in line with activity usage data, within the budget constraints.
<p>Marriage and civil partnership:</p> <p>Neutral</p>		
<p>Pregnancy and maternity:</p> <p>Neutral</p>		
<p>Other policy considerations</p>	<p>Impact</p>	<p>Mitigation</p>

<p>Poverty: Medium</p>	<p>Caring for a child with a disability can have a financial impact on a family, particularly where the primary carer has stopped working to enable their caring role. If there is a reduced Short Break Activity offer these families would potentially have fewer opportunities for a break from caring. Providers may also increase their prices in response to a reduction in grant funding from the Local Authority.</p>	<p>By consulting with parents/carers, we would seek to maintain a Short Break activity offer that continues the highest priority Short Break activities, in line with activity usage data, within the budget constraints. We would also continue to offer subsidised rates for activities where families can evidence receipt of benefits to enable families on low income to be able to access Short Break Activities and maintain the charging and remissions policy.</p>
<p>Rurality: Medium</p>	<p>There may be some disruption for people accessing this service who live in rural areas. This will depend on which providers apply for and are awarded a share of the grant for April 2021.</p>	<p>By consulting with parents/carers, we would seek to maintain a Short Break activity offer that continues the highest priority Short Break activities, in line with activity usage data, within the budget constraints. We would ask Short Break Activity providers to ensure that they give consideration to families from surrounding areas in their grant applications and if it is confirmed as a priority by parents/carers and young people, explore innovative approaches to delivery, the sharing of resources and closer joint working to reduce costs and help break down geographical barriers to delivery.</p>

Neutrality statement (if all considerations have a neutral impact)

Any other information

Specialist services for children with disabilities whose needs have been assessed as requiring a social care package are excluded from the proposals. These services comprise 91.67% of the Children with Disabilities budget.