

Short Break Activities Programme

Children and Young People Select Committee
11 November 2020

Page 1

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Children's Services | Hampshire County Council



Introduction

Purpose:

To summarise the analysis and outcomes from the public consultation on proposals to achieve savings from the Short Break Activities Programme. To respond to questions stakeholders may have in relation to the consultation approach and recommendations to be made to the Executive Lead Member for Children's Services and Young People.

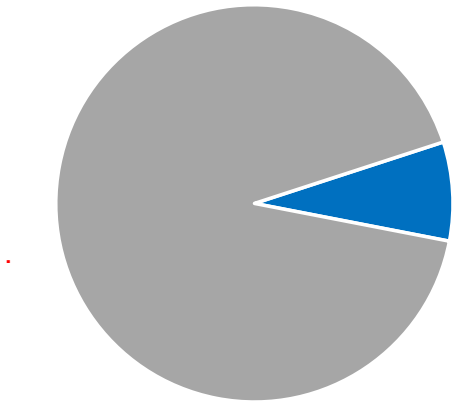
Page 2

Objectives:

- Explain the context of the savings
- Explain the consultation approach
- Review of proposals and consultation feedback to those proposals
- Questions

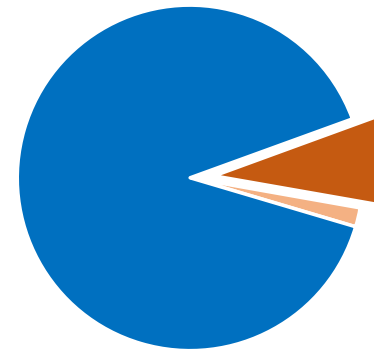
Context: financial

Children's Services budget
(excluding schools)
£208.6m



- Children with Disabilities (£16.8m)
- Other CSD spend (£191.8m)

Children with Disabilities
budget
£16.8m



- Short Break budget (£1.4m)
- Short Break budget - out of scope (£0.3m)
- CwD social work case support - out of scope (£15.1m)

Children's Services indicative savings target: **£17.2m**

Children with Disabilities indicative savings target: **£1.3m**

Short Break indicative savings target: **£696,000**

Context: service

Legal context: a local authority must provide, so far as is reasonably practicable, a range of services which is **sufficient** to assist carers to continue to provide care or to do so more effectively. There is some Local Authority discretion around what is provided.

The range of services includes:

- **educational or leisure activities** for disabled children outside their homes, and
- services available to assist carers in the **evenings**, at **weekends** and during the **school holidays**.

Page 4

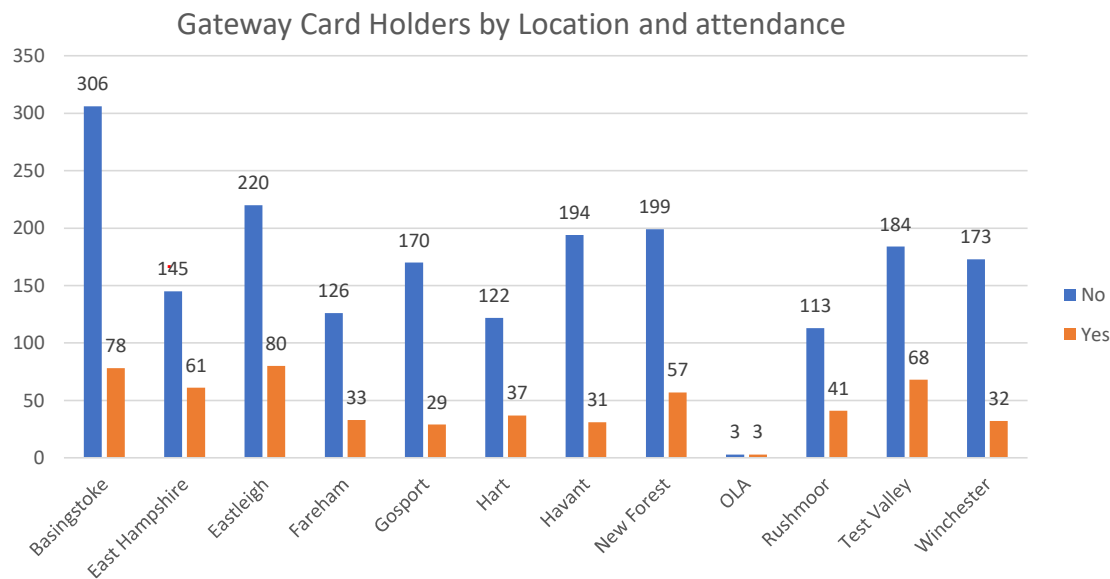
Short Break Activity providers apply for a grant from the Council **grant budget** of £1.2m to support the delivery of these activities. In addition, the Short Break grant budget funds a community buddy scheme £140,000, participation via Hampshire Parent Carer Network £35,000 and fund for maintaining the IT system for Gateway Cards.

Specialist services provided for children with assessed social care needs were **not included** in this consultation.

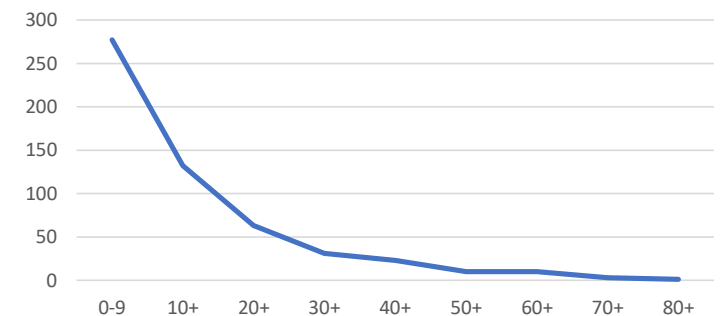
Context: service

In order to access a Short Break Activity, families need to apply for a [Gateway Card](#). There are currently around 2,500 card holders in Hampshire, of whom 550 attended a Short Break Activity in 2019/20.

Page 5



Sessions attended April 2019 to March 2020



Usage is open access with variable degrees of uptake: 50% of those attending activities went to less than 10 sessions over the past year.

Consultation approach

Commenced Monday 9 March 2020

- Pre-engagement with Hampshire Parent Carer Network
- Online information packs and response forms
- Printed versions available
- Easy Read versions for adults
- Young person's Easy Read response form
- Dedicated [webpage](#)
- News items on Hants Headlines
- Plasma screens in EII reception
- Dedicated email address and inbox
- Emails to Gateway Card holders
- Social media posts – Twitter, LinkedIn and Facebook
- School comms, Hampshire SENDIASS, FISH/Local Offer, HPCN, providers, FE Colleges
- Member briefing, Covid-19 briefing to MPs and Chief Executives of District Councils
- HALC news articles

8 Proposals



Consultation: Covid-19

Engagement

- 13 drop-in sessions 1 in person, 12 virtual in conjunction with HPCN and NAS
- 2 provider sessions via phone and MS Teams
- Attended 2 virtual 'Meet the SEN Team' HPCN hosted events

Page 7

Sessions at variety of times, including evenings

Created version of response form that enabled parent/carers to upload video or audio responses from young people

- YouTube video presentation explaining the proposals
- Support to complete response forms via Hampshire SENDIASS
- In addition we have offered different times, to hold more sessions, facilitated questionnaire completion sessions, telephone slot, promotion of paper packs
- Providers held sessions with children and young people

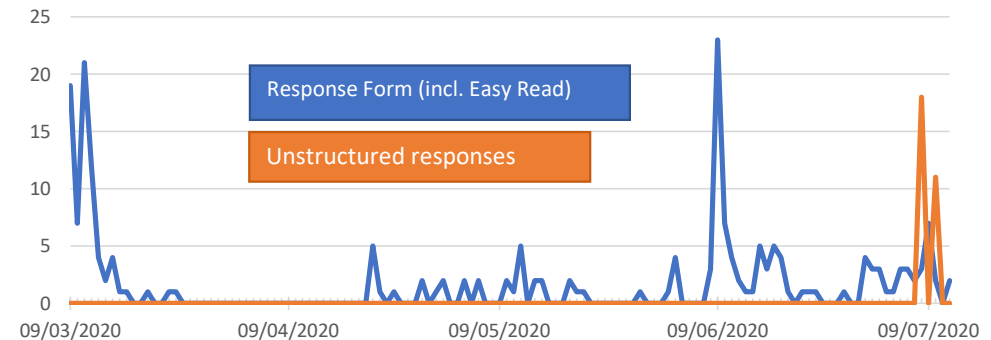
Consultation drop-in events for parents and carers

| Event Name | Date | Time | Location |
|-----------------|------------|-------------|----------|
| Virtual Drop-in | 09/03/2020 | 10:00-11:00 | Zoom |
| Virtual Drop-in | 09/03/2020 | 14:00-15:00 | Zoom |
| Virtual Drop-in | 09/03/2020 | 18:00-19:00 | Zoom |
| Virtual Drop-in | 09/04/2020 | 10:00-11:00 | Zoom |
| Virtual Drop-in | 09/04/2020 | 14:00-15:00 | Zoom |
| Virtual Drop-in | 09/04/2020 | 18:00-19:00 | Zoom |
| Virtual Drop-in | 09/05/2020 | 10:00-11:00 | Zoom |
| Virtual Drop-in | 09/05/2020 | 14:00-15:00 | Zoom |
| Virtual Drop-in | 09/05/2020 | 18:00-19:00 | Zoom |
| Virtual Drop-in | 09/06/2020 | 10:00-11:00 | Zoom |
| Virtual Drop-in | 09/06/2020 | 14:00-15:00 | Zoom |
| Virtual Drop-in | 09/06/2020 | 18:00-19:00 | Zoom |
| Virtual Drop-in | 09/07/2020 | 10:00-11:00 | Zoom |
| Virtual Drop-in | 09/07/2020 | 14:00-15:00 | Zoom |
| Virtual Drop-in | 09/07/2020 | 18:00-19:00 | Zoom |

From consultation web page “We have worked to arrange alternative ways to enable face to face contact with us and provide people with an opportunity to ask questions about the consultation and proposals. A number of virtual open events have been set up, in collaboration with Hampshire Parent Carer Network (HPCN), and will take place via the Zoom application. Please see dates below and contact HPCN for the Zoom meeting details that will enable you to join in – email: participation@hpcn.org.uk or call 0300 303 4330. If you wish to join the National Autistic Society session, please email NASSouthHampshireBranch@nas.org.uk for details.

We have added a telephone session for people to ask questions about the consultation and proposals, on Friday 10 July 9am to 10am. To book on to this please email short.break@hants.gov.uk or call 0370 779 5186.”

Extended by 6 weeks, running 18 weeks in total



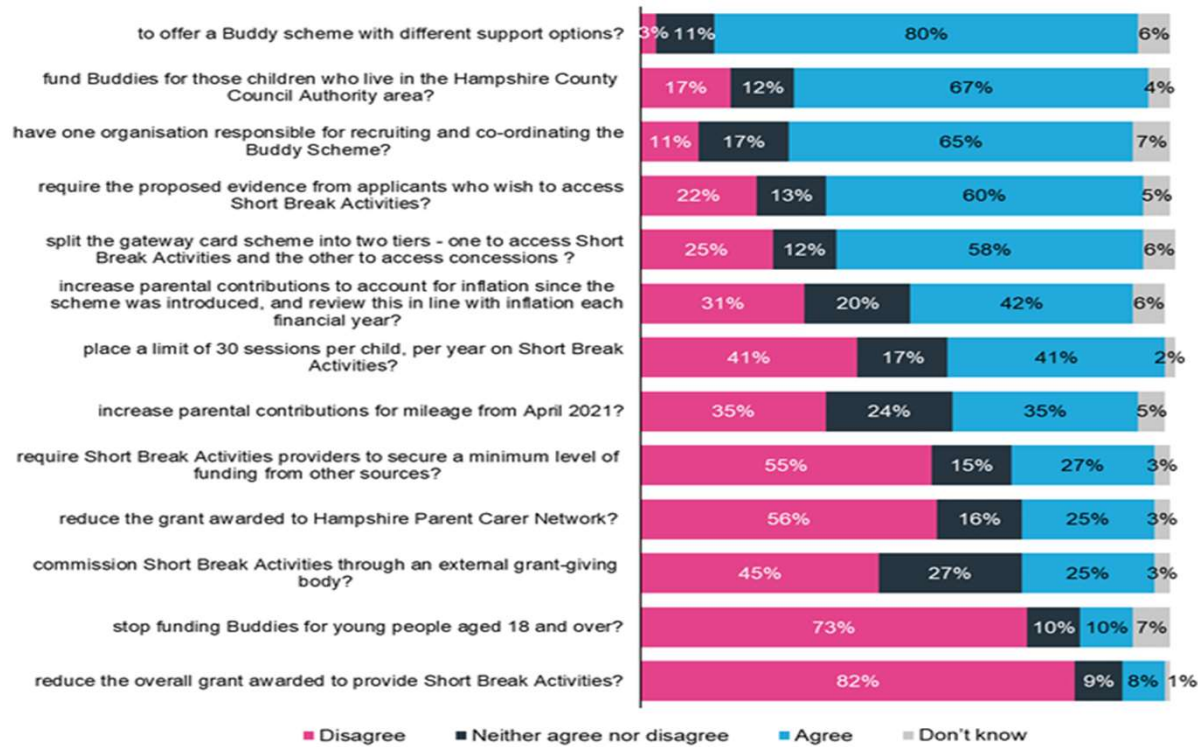
Consultation drop-in events for parents and carers

| Area of County | Planned date and time | Event type | Actual event |
|----------------|--|---|--|
| Whiteley | Friday 13 March 9:30am to 11:30am | Hampshire Parent Carer Network (HPCN) meet-up | Took place |
| Eastleigh | Monday 16 March 8:00pm to 9:30pm | South Hants National Autistic Society meeting | Replaced with online session 10 June |
| Winchester | Wednesday 18 March 10:00am to 12:00pm | HPCN meet-up | Replaced with online session Wednesday 17 June |
| New Forest | Monday 23 March 10:00am to 11:30am | HPCN meet-up | Replaced with online session Monday 22 June |
| Alton | Wednesday 25 March 10:00am to 12:00pm | Drop-in | Replaced with HPCN Zoom consultation event |
| Alresford | Friday 27 March 10:00am to 11:30am | HPCN meet-up | Replaced with online session Friday 26 June |
| Waterlooville | Tuesday 31 March 9:00am to 12:00pm | Drop-in | Replaced with HPCN Zoom consultation event |

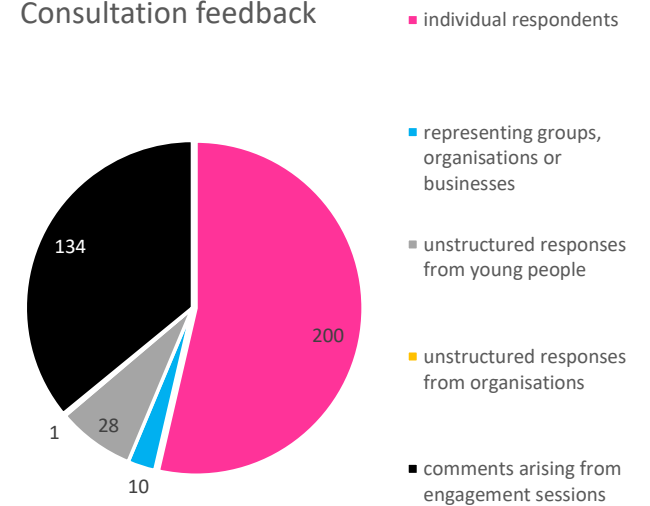
| Area of County | Planned date and time | Event type | Actual event |
|----------------|--|--------------|---|
| Fareham | Wednesday 1 April 10:00am to 12:00pm | HPCN meet-up | Replaced with online session Wednesday 6 May |
| Basingstoke | Wednesday 22 April 10:00am to 12:00pm | HPCN meet-up | Replaced with online session Wednesday 13 May |
| Farnborough | Thursday 7 May 10:00am to 12:00pm | HPCN meet-up | Replaced with online session Thursday 4 June |
| Andover | Monday 11 May 10:45am to 12:45pm | HPCN meet-up | Replaced with online session Monday 8 June |
| Havant | Tuesday 12 May 10:00am to 11:30am | HPCN meet-up | Replaced with online session Tuesday 9 June |
| Romsey | Thursday 14 May 10:00am to 11:30am | HPCN meet-up | Replaced with online session Thursday 14 May |

Summary of responses to proposals

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposal to:
(base 201-207)



Consultation feedback



Proposal 1: To reduce the overall grant awarded to provide Short Break Activities

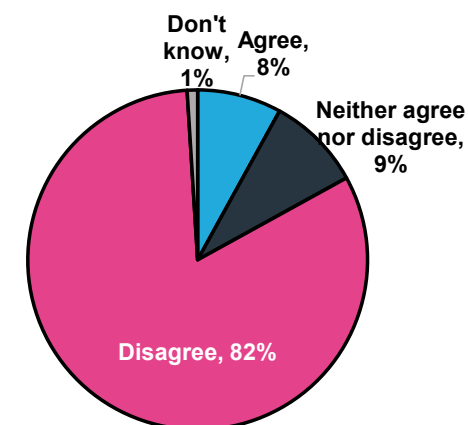
- To continue to commission Short Break Activities, according to **priorities** agreed with parents
- ... but with a reduction in total value of grant funding available
- Current grant round purchased more places than anticipated; 21% of Gateway Card holders accessed Short Break Activities during 2019/20; most providers rarely have a waiting list; in some cases surplus of places not been taken up

Feedback:

- potential impact the proposals may have on funding and support for Short Break Activities
- noted how the proposal adds to the budgetary reductions from previous years, putting further pressure on services that support children and young people with SEND in general
- the service is highly valued, emphasising that it is fundamental to families that rely on it for respite

Next steps:

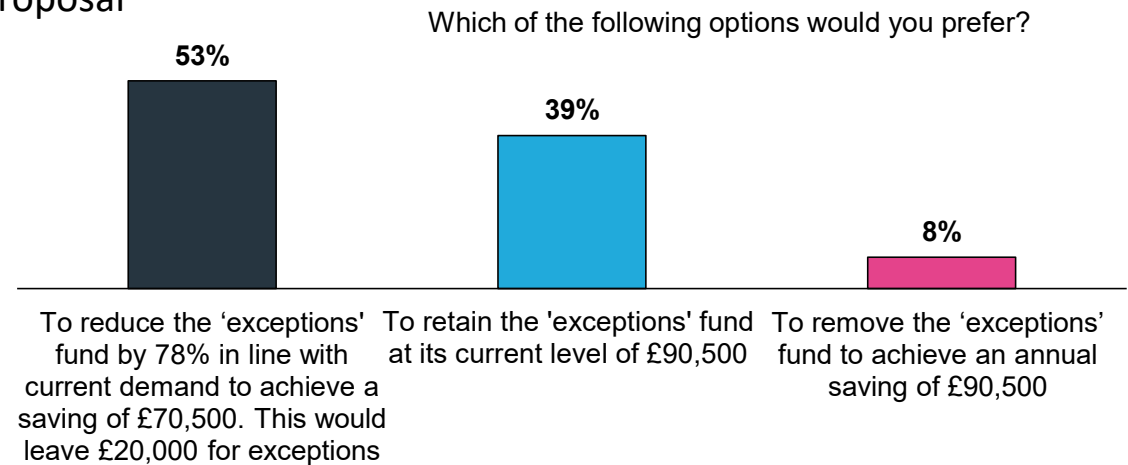
- **Recommended for implementation**
- engagement to help determine priorities for Short Break Activities
- use Gateway Card data and data on usage of schemes to target schemes where they are needed most
- determine if provision for children with autism should be a priority within the grant round
- continue to offer subsidised rates for activities for families on low income or receipt of benefits
- if it is confirmed as a priority explore innovative approaches to delivery, the sharing of resources and closer joint working to reduce costs and help break down geographical barriers to delivery



Proposal 2: To only accept funding applications that meet the core Short Break Activity priorities

- Grant applications are made against priorities agreed with parent representatives
- Additionally, an exceptions fund: currently £90,500 pa
- Over the last three years around £450,000 left unallocated
- Exceptions fund could be removed completely, or reduced in proportion to current demand

61% respondents supported this proposal



Next steps: **recommended for implementation**

'Exceptions' fund would be included alongside the main grant round. In line with the opinion of the majority who responded, a reduced 'exceptions' fund of £20,000 per annum is proposed

Proposal 3: To require Short Break Activity providers to secure a minimum level of funding from other sources

- Grant intended to help providers meet any 'additional costs' of running an activity for children with disabilities
- Providers currently asked to show how they would also contribute, but there is no threshold, and it is not enforced
- Over half of providers make no contribution at all while a few go to significant efforts
- Proposed minimum **10%** match-funding requirement
- Potential saving of **£65,000**
- Feedback sought on length of grant period

Feedback:

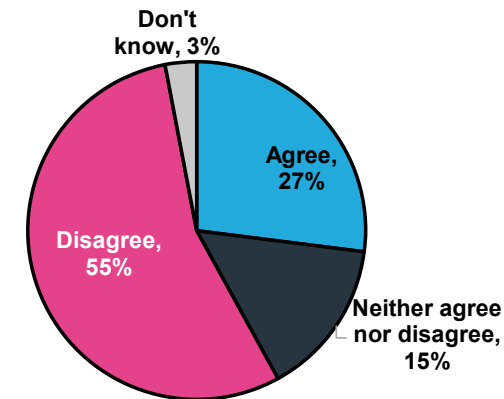
Most comments focused on the impact that the proposal may have on providers, specifically that providers could be at risk if they were unable to secure 10% of the value of a grant being awarded

Next steps: **not recommended for implementation**

The introduction of a minimum level of 'match funding' is considered to put detrimental pressure on the sector at a time when it is hard to secure other sources of funding, following the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic.

A minimum level of match-funding is a proposal that the Council may wish to revisit in future, in a desire to ensure that schemes are sustainable over the medium term and not reliant on Council grants.

A two-year grant allocation would be beneficial in terms of providing a degree of certainty about provision for both providers and families and it is **recommended that this is implemented from April 2021**



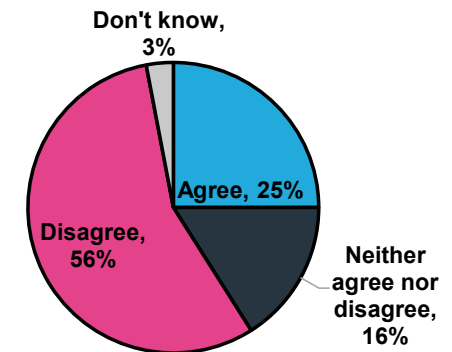
Proposal 4: To reduce the grant awarded to Hampshire Parent Carer Network (HPCN)

- Parent carer forums work with local partners to influence the development of services for children and young people with SEND
- Each parent carer forum receives funding by DfE at flat rate of £15,000 pa – inadequate for very large counties; Children's Services has been topping up with **£35,000** annual grant
- Yet only about half of work is for Children's Services
- Proposed grant reduction and annual saving of **£17,500**.

Feedback:

42% respondents were members of HPCN – 72% of them disagreed with the proposal

Comments reflected how the service that HPCN provides is highly valued, offering a helpful resource to parents and carers



Next steps: recommended for implementation

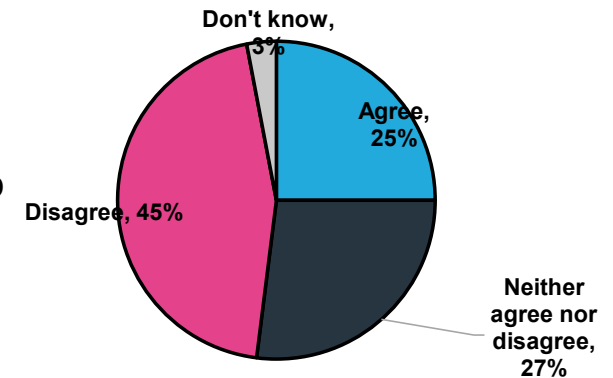
- Proposed grant for HPCN would be reduced to £17,500 in line with the anticipated level of activity required to support services for Children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities from April 2021.
- 29% of HPCN activity has related to health activity. The NHS Clinical Commissioning Groups in Hampshire have committed to contributing to annual HPCN grant funding, in reflection of this work, which will result in no net reduction in funding for 2021/22 for HPCN.

Proposal 5: To commission Short Break Activities through an external grant-giving body

- Working with an external grant-giving body to conduct grant award process either on the Council's behalf, or in collaboration
- External organisations may be able to draw on sources of funding that the Council cannot (e.g. CSR, bequests)
- If taken forward may mean Proposal 3 (match-funding) is less likely
- **No savings target** – aim is to create more public value by pooling funds with same target use.

Feedback:

- 58% of respondents - more appropriate for the County Council to work in collaboration with partner organisations, rather than on its behalf
- Main concerns raised were about potential to increase administration costs and that it may create a lengthier process for providers to obtain funding.



Next steps: **not recommended for implementation**

- no clear advantage identified with implementing this proposal
- other grant-giving bodies likely to be facing funding challenges post Covid-19

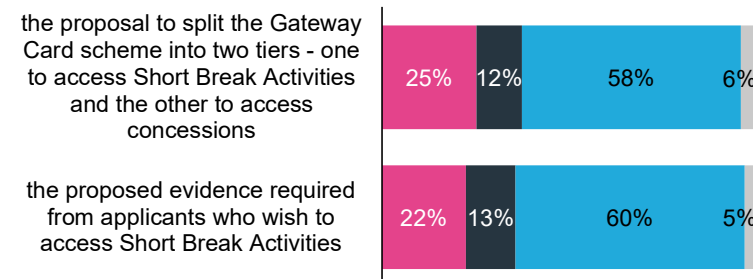
Proposal 6: To introduce a two-tier Gateway Card scheme

- Only 20% Gateway Card holders have used it to access a short break activity during 2019/20
- Parents tell us they also use the scheme to gain concessions to attractions
- Two-tier system would take both uses into consideration and improve our understanding of level of demand for short break activities
- In order to access a Short break Activity, families would need to evidence DLA/PIP, EHCP, or social worker referral
- **No savings target** - aim is to better direct resources.

Feedback:

- 58% respondents in favour of two-tier proposal, and 60% agreed with proposed evidence for accessing a Short Break Activity
- Gateway Card holders who responded indicated 24% use their card for concessionary entry to other activities/attractions

■ Disagree ■ Neither agree nor disagree ■ Agree ■ Don't know



Next steps: recommended for implementation

- IT system enhancements to record tiers for card holders, providers and admin
- changes from the next annual confirmation of circumstances for existing card holders, and with immediate effect from April 2021 for new applicants
- Providers to be briefed, and liaison with mainstream providers to expand concessionary offer
- Contact potentially affected cardholders; can request a social care assessment if feel needs are not able to be met through mainstream activities.

Proposal 7: To place a limit of 30 sessions per child, per year on Short Break Activities

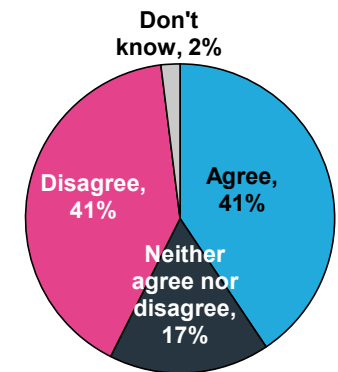
- Currently, Gateway Card holders can book onto as many Short Break Activities as they wish (subject to availability)
- Most have attended only one, but a small number attend many more
- A cap may help make access to Short Break Activities more equitable.
- **No savings target** – aim is to make more effective use of the scheme.

Feedback:

- 30 sessions insufficient to support caring role
- limit could impact on the funding and support received
- Suggestions of a different approach to the allocation of Short Break Activities, eg needs-based approach.

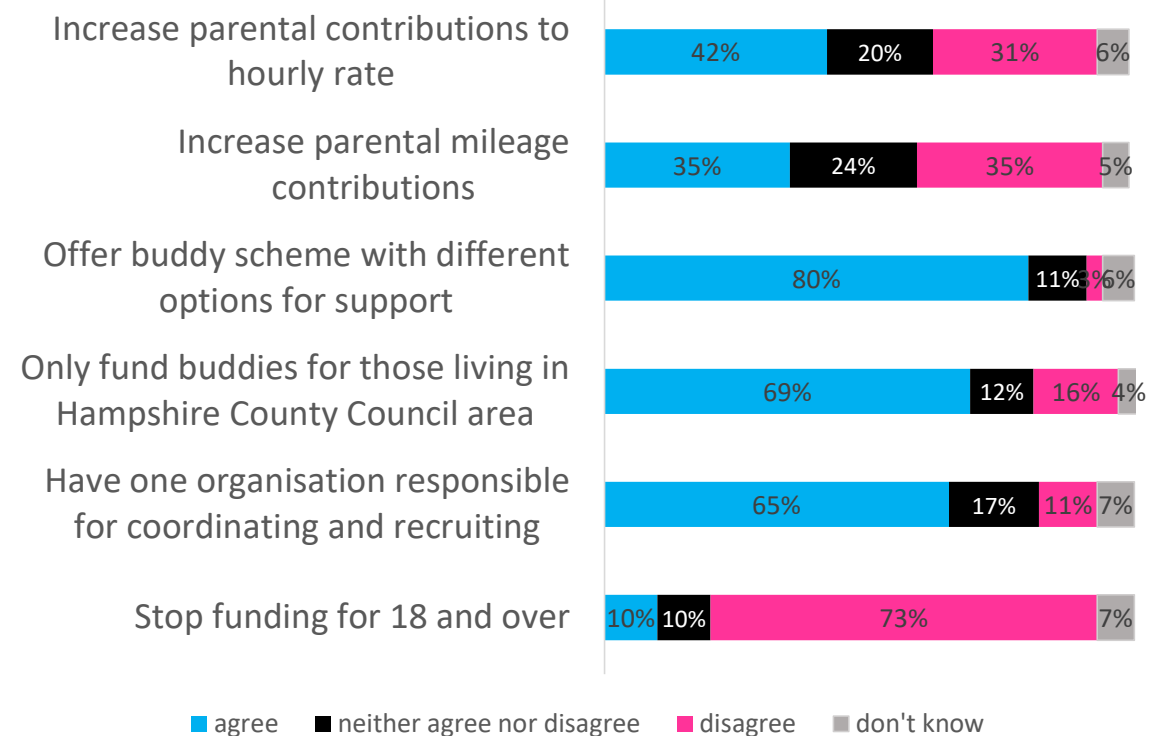
Next steps: **not recommended for implementation**

- Instead of taking forward the proposal, which would involve significant changes to the IT system, social care teams will review high uptake on a regular basis and consider whether other provisions might be suitable, or whether a social care assessment might be required in order to support a family



Proposal 8: to redesign the Community Buddy Scheme

- Demand for community buddies currently outstrips supply, and no coordinated strategy for managing numbers
- Proposal to have single organisation to recruit and coordinate
- Also look at different types of buddy offer e.g. provide support in groups, mentoring as well as 1:1
- Parental contributions have been the same since 2012/13
- **Increasing parental contributions** to hourly rate from £5 to £6.50 and mileage from 25p to 30p or 45p could create contributions to scheme of **£8,000** each year
- Ceasing to provide scheme to 18 and 19 year olds and to young people not living in Hampshire would save **£11,000** per year at current levels.



Proposal 8: to redesign the Community Buddy Scheme

Feedback

- 40% respondents preferred to increase parent mileage contribution from 25p per mile to 30p per mile, whilst 35% preferred to keep the mileage contribution at the current level of 25p per mile
- Concerns raised about ability to afford additional costs, with this becoming a barrier to accessing the scheme
- 54% of respondents preferred a combination of the proposed support options, with the most popular combination being one to one and joint buddy support

Next steps: recommended for implementation

- Changes to parent/carers' contributions would be implemented from April 2021, being increased from £5 to £6.50 per hour
- Mileage contributions would be increased from 25p to 30p per mile, in line with public opinion. These would contribute up to £7,000 towards the scheme, at current activity levels.
- Young people not living in the Hampshire County Council area and/or of 18 years or above would not be able to access the buddy scheme from April 2021 – contact families of any affected young people and provide information about support from Adults' Health and Care
- re-design the service - aimed for relaunch in September 2021

Short Break Activities Programme

Questions?

Page 19



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