

Short Break Activities



Briefing Pack

Suzanne Smith – Head of Procurement, Commissioning and Placements



Hampshire
County Council

Agenda

Purpose:

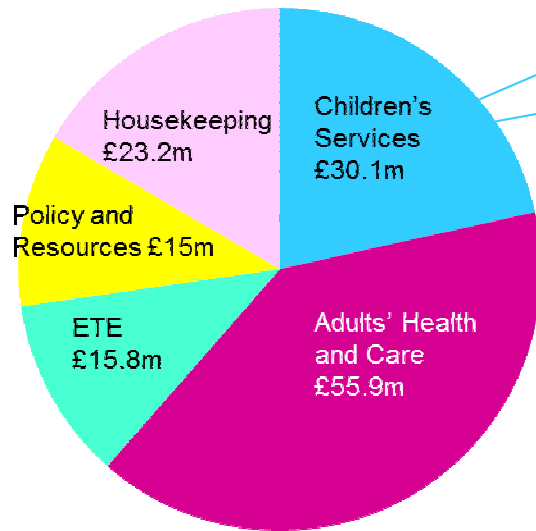
- To summarise the analysis and outcomes from the public consultation on reshaping the Short Break Activities Programme. To respond to questions stakeholders may have in relation to the consultation approach and recommendations to be made to the Executive Lead Member for Children's Services.

Objectives:

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

Context

Transformation to 2019: £140m Budget Shortfall

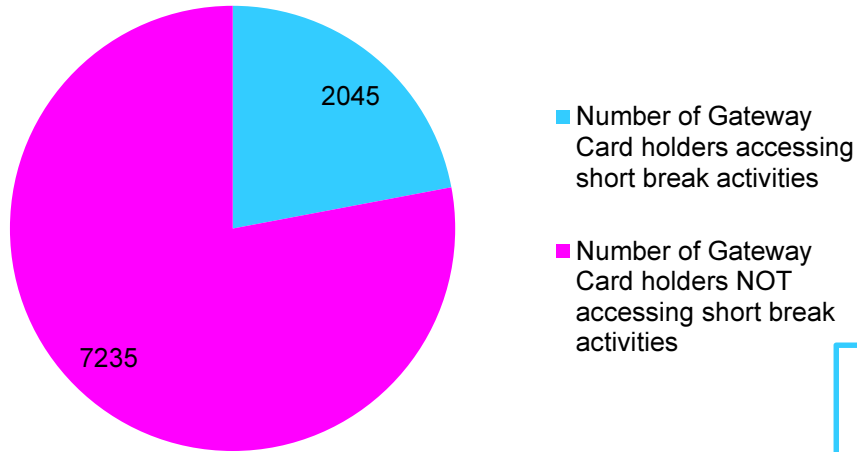


- The Children with Disabilities Service (CwD) has a savings target of **£3m**, which represents a **16%** reduction of the current overall CwD budget of **£18.9m**. Identified savings areas include;
 - Moving away from long term arrangements (where appropriate) and tightening commissioning arrangements
 - Increasing the use of technological support to build resilience
 - Health funding
 - Service redesign
- The workstreams above are anticipated to save the CwD service **£2m** of the **£3m** savings required.

- Children's Services propose that the remaining **£1m** of savings required could be achieved through the **reshaping of the current short break offer**.
- The rationale for proposing a reduction in short break activities funding is due to the far reaching savings initiatives already in progress to all statutory children's services.
- This could involve changes to the delivery mechanisms of the Short Break Activities Programme, the type of activities that could be funded and could potentially include more formal eligibility criteria.

Current Short Break Activity Access & Usage

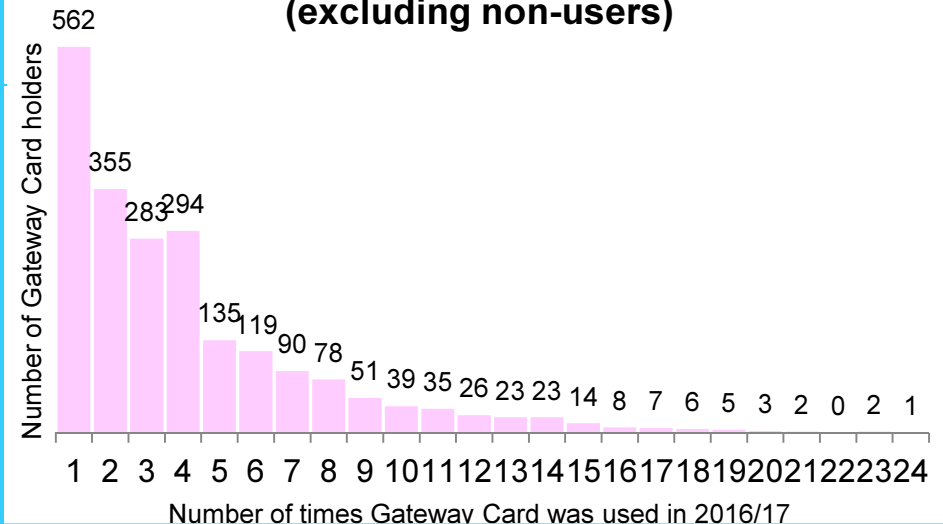
Gateway Card Holders











- Gateway card holders from higher income households in more affluent areas were more likely to use the short breaks service than lower income households from more deprived areas.

- Service is not currently being accessed equitably (i.e. 50%+ of short break activities were used by only 25% of active Gateway card users).
- The majority of services are being accessed by fewer than a quarter of families eligible to receive this form of targeted support.

Frequency of Gateway Card use in 2016 (excluding non-users)



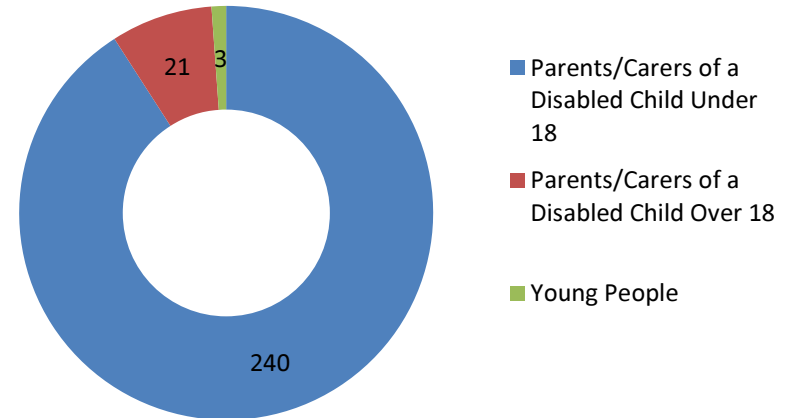
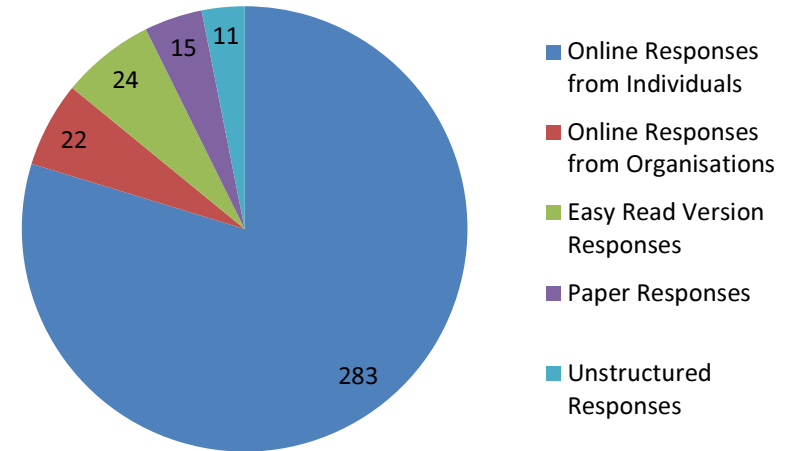
Summary of Proposals included in Consultation

No.	Proposal	Potential Saving	Consultation Feedback
1	Commission the Short Break Activities Programme on the basis of priorities, agreed with a representative parent/carer panel	£160,000	Neutral
2	Require parents and carers to pay in advance for Short Break Activities, and for providers to collect advance payment of parents'/carers' contributions for those activities	N/A	
3	Require providers of Short Break Activities to apply consistent parental/carer charges and hardship rates	£230,000	
4	To move to a new online Gateway Card application system	N/A	
5	Require evidence of eligibility from a professional as part of the new Gateway Card application to access the Short Break Activities Programme	N/A	
6	From 1 April 2019, to stop funding Short Break Activities for young people aged 18 and over	£228,000	
7	Short Break Activities would only be funded for children who live in the Hampshire County Council authority area	£62,500	
8	Only fund Short Break Activities which allow parents and carers to leave their child	£213,000	
9	Stop funding swimming lessons as a Short Break Activity	£107,000	
		£1,000,500	

Consultation Approach

- 12 week consultation
- Online and paper surveys;
- Easy read online and paper survey;
- 18 drop-in events across the county, utilising a mix of HPCN events & local library venues;
- Two scheduled virtual online question and answer sessions;
- Attendance at the SEND information day;
- Attendance at a meeting of Special School Head teachers;
- Attendance at the HPCN Information Event; and
- Engagement with young people who use Short Break Activities.
- Two consultation events for providers of short break activities.

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- Dedicated webpage
 - News item on Hantsweb and Hantsnet
 - Plasma screens in reception
 - Dedicated email address and inbox
 - Editorial in Hampshire newspapers
 - Social media posts – Twitter, LinkedIn and Facebook
 - School comms, Parent Voice, Support4SEND, FISH, HPCN
 - Two member briefings



1

Commission the Short Break Activities Programme on the basis of priorities, agreed with a representative parent/carer panel

Currently, Short Break Activities funding is awarded to through a system of grants.

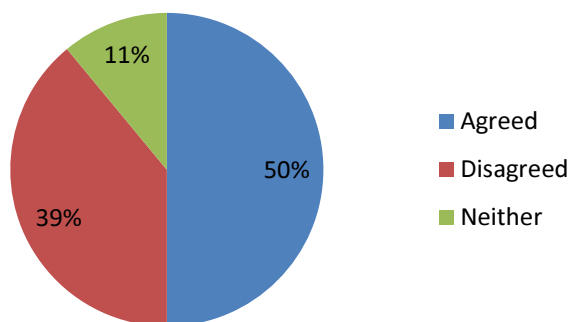


- It is proposed that applications are invited against an agreed set of priorities
- Short Break Activities commissioned are important to families and meeting locally set priorities.
- More effective, consistent and equitable way of distributing funding.
- Aims to reduce duplication and encourage collaboration between providers.

It is estimated that by changing the funding approach this would achieve potential savings of **£160,000**

1

Consultation Findings Relating to Proposal 1



Feedback:

- Organisations much more in favour of proposal 1 in comparison to the average 64%.
- Some organisations or groups expressed concerns that they or others may not be able to sustain services in the future, if Hampshire County Council moved to a commissioning model.
- Some concerns from parents/carers regarding composition and organisational arrangements for panels.
- Early priorities identified in consultation feedback were:
 - Having a break within the school holiday periods (including: half terms, Easter, Christmas and summer holiday periods);
 - Having a break that's available on weekends;
 - Having a break that's available on weekdays, during the school term.
 - After school clubs; and
 - Youth clubs.

Next Steps: Proposal recommended for approval

- Grant round from 2019/20 to open at the end of July for awards from 1st April 2019 for 6 months using priorities identified above
- Work with HPCN and other stakeholders to co-produce panel and associated ways of working
- Develop commissioning strategy and implement in full from October 2019. Likely to be a mix of contracted arrangements and grant awards

2

Require parents and carers to pay in advance for Short Break Activities, and for providers to collect advance payment of parents'/carers' contributions for those activities

The practice for parents and carers to make a financial contribution for a child to attend an activity varies from provider to provider. This leads to a number of 'no shows' and creates capacity issues for the activity provider.

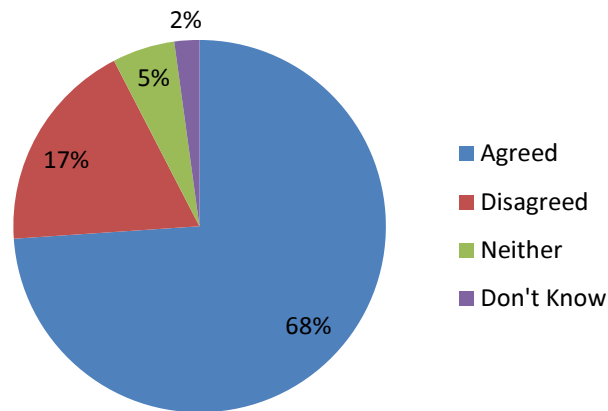


- Providers would be required to put in place a system that ensures payments, or a deposit.
- Families would have to pay in advance of a child attending activities. The benefit to families is that there would be a guaranteed space and given notice of spaces where cancellations are known in advance.
- Allow providers to plan staffing, ratios and activities.

Although this proposal would not result in direct savings, it would enable more effective management of access to activities

2

Consultation Findings Relating to Proposal 2



Feedback:

- Parents/carers of a child with disabilities agree to the proposal almost in line with the overall average for this question with 71% agreeing.
- Those that indicated they had a household income of up to £10,000 were more likely to disagree with the proposal compared with other groups (31% disagreement). However, half of this group are still in agreement (50%).
- Some concerns that requesting upfront payments from parents of autistic children might be difficult because an autistic child could refuse to go to an activity. Having to deal with last minute medical events which could make attendance impossible on a given day might mean cancellations.

Next Steps: Proposal recommended for approval

- Work with providers to ensure proposal is understood
- Requirement to be embedded in future contracts and grant agreements

3

Require providers of Short Break Activities to apply consistent parental/carer charges and hardship rates

Providers are determining their own hardship criteria, and how it is applied. There is no consistency of parental contributions for like activities

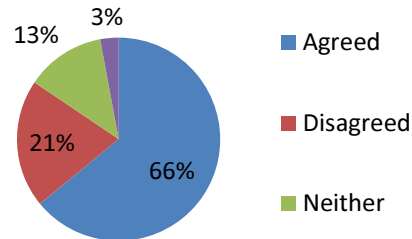


- Charges - This proposal would standardise and require a consistent parental charge for short break activities
- Hardship Rates - This proposal would also aim to standardise and require providers to apply a consistent hardship policy to all Short Break Activities

It is estimated that by standardising charges and hardship rates, this would achieve potential savings of **£230,000**

3

Consultation Findings Relating to Proposal 3



How much should parents and carers pay for the cost of an activity



Feedback:

- Those that said they had a disability that affected them 'a lot' were more likely to disagree with the proposal compared with other groups (29% disagreement).
- No organisations disagreed with this proposal.
- Some concern that parents and carers may struggle to meet the advance cost, with 30% of comments mentioning this as a potential negative impact.
- 25% of comments made by respondents reflected how there would be no initial impact on the organisation or group itself.
- In the main, the proposed parental charges are aligned to market rates. However, parents and carers seem to expect to pay less for holiday clubs and after school clubs, which actually charge more. Parental expectation here would only meet the proposed minimum rate.

Next Steps: Proposal recommended for approval

- Charing and concessions policy included in Decision Day report and also recommended for approval
- Work with providers to ensure proposal is understood, communicated effectively and implemented
- Requirement and contributions levels to be embedded in future contracts and grant agreements

3

Consultation Findings Relating to Proposal 3

Proposed Concessions Policy:

If parents/carers meet the following criteria, which is consistent with other parental contributions policies within Children's Services, the expectation is that they would be entitled to a reduced rate of up to 50% of the standard parental charge:

- In receipt of income support, any element of child tax credit other than the family element of working tax credit, income-based job seekers allowance, or income related employment support allowance;
- Low Income families earning a total household income from all sources of under £16,000.

4

To move to a new online Gateway Card application system

Gateway Cards are issued once with no requirement to reconfirm details after a period of time. Providers do not consistently capture Gateway Card holder details at point of access to Short Break Activities

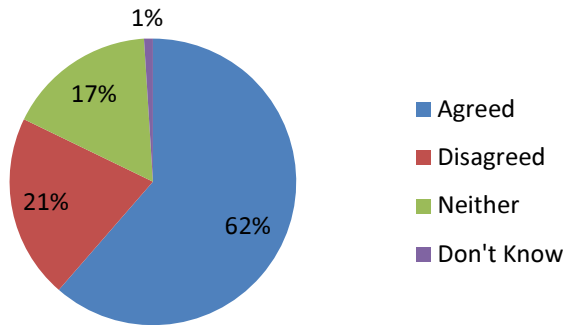


- Gateway Cards would be provided electronically
- Gateway Card holders would be asked to reapply for the new card.
- Gateway Card holders would be asked to declare any changes to their circumstances every 12 months.
- It is proposed that Gateway Cards are time limited and expire after a set period of time

Whilst this proposal would not have a saving by itself, this could support the effective management of service delivery

4

Consultation Findings Relating to Proposal 4



Feedback:

- 64% of respondents who were a parent or carer of a child with disabilities agreed to the proposal, slightly more than the average.
- Those who indicated they had a total household income of £50,000 or more, were more likely to agree with the proposal than the average (92% agreement).
- Most popular method indicated by respondents is the process that is currently used – to issue a plastic card, sent to a home address.
- During the consultation drop in events, parents/carers commented on a lack of information about the current Gateway Card, where it can be used and lack of information available online. Some parents did not even know a Gateway Card existed. Parents supported the idea of having an online Gateway Card application system (perhaps via an app), also suggesting this extend to booking activities.

Next Steps: Proposal recommended for approval

- If approved, all Gateway Card holders to be contacted to inform them of how to apply
- Work with providers to ensure that the new approach for collection of data is understood and implemented from 1st April 2019

5

Require evidence of eligibility from a professional as part of the new Gateway Card application to access the Short Break Activities Programme

No evidence of eligibility is currently required when applying for a Gateway Card



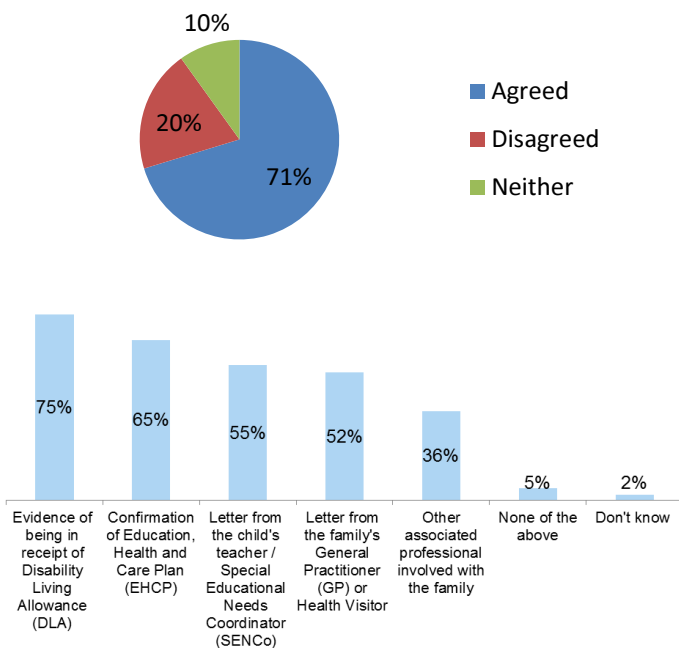
- Council would require evidence of eligibility in so far as the young person:
 - has a disability or additional needs and /or
 - needs support to take part in leisure activities.
- Acceptable forms of evidence could include:
 - letter from family's General Practitioner (GP) or Health Visitor;
 - letter from Child's Teacher / Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCo);
 - evidence of being in receipt of Disability Living Allowance (DLA);
 - confirmation of Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP);
 - other associated professionals involved with the family.

Whilst this proposal would not have a saving by itself, this may support:

- Reliable and accurate data being held about Gateway Card users, particularly in terms of current needs, which will inform future commissioning
- ensure those accessing the Short Break Activities Programme are eligible.

5

Consultation Findings Relating to Proposal 5



Feedback:

- Those responding on behalf of an organisation or group were more likely to have reservations about the proposal, with 32% disagreeing. However, just over half this group still agreed with the proposal (52%).
- Those that indicated they worked for a short break activity provider were more likely to agree than other groups, with 80% agreeing to the proposal.
- 46% of all respondents thought that reapplying every three years was the best option, and 24% thought reapplication should be every five years.
- In open ended responses, respondents also considered the potential benefits of proposal 5, with 15% mentioning the theme of providing proof as a good way for the County Council to make savings.
- Just over half of these respondents in their comments were calling for a far stricter process than what is proposed.
- 6% of open ended comments related to requiring proof, mainly with regards to reapplying and form filling, which could mean some families miss out on provision due to an already demanding and time consuming care-giving role.

Next Steps: Proposal recommended for approval

- If approved, all Gateway Card holders to be contacted to inform them of how to apply
- Reapplication and evidence for eligibility will be required every three years
- Template letter produced which families will be able to download from the Short Breaks website



6

From 1 April 2019, to stop funding Short Break Activities for young people aged 18 and over

Currently the Short Break Activities Programme is open to children aged 0-19 years

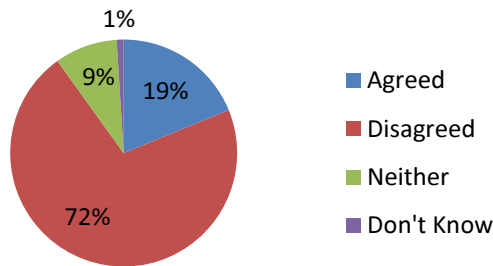


- It is proposed to cease funding for young people once they reach 18 years of age
- Affected families would be contacted by Adults Health and Care department to carry out an assessment

It is estimated that this proposal would achieve potential savings of **£228,000**

6

Consultation Findings Relating to Proposal 6



Feedback:

- Parents/carers of an adult with disabilities were more likely to disagree with the proposal compared with the average, with 80% disagreeing.
 - Those who indicated they had other children between the ages of 5 to 8 were also more likely to disagree when compared to the average, with 83% disagreeing.
 - Those who indicated they were responding on behalf of an organisation or group were much more likely to agree with the proposal than the average, with 52% agreeing.
- 6% of open-ended comments to the consultation specifically related to the proposal around funding activities for those that are aged 18 or over, with many suggesting the loss of Short Break Activities would particularly affect the mental wellbeing of those young adults as well as fuelling anxieties around the transition to other services.
 - At the consultation drop-in events, there was concern raised by parents and carers that many young people going through the transition from Children's Services to Adult Services would not meet adult social care eligibility criteria for support and the lack of a similar provision for young adults.
 - Of the 89 young people aged 18 and over currently accessing the Short Break Activities Programme, 74% are known to the Adults Health and Care department.

6

Consultation Findings Relating to Proposal 6

Next Steps: Proposal recommended for approval

- If this approval is approved, young people aged 18 and over who are accessing Short Breaks Activities (and/or their parents and carers), would be contacted by the County Council to advise them of alternative options available to them.
- For young people already receiving support from Adults' Health and Care under the Care Act, a review would be undertaken of their support plan to ensure any eligible needs continue to be met. A member of the Adults' Health and Care community team would contact the young person to arrange this.
- For young people not receiving support from Adults' Health and Care they would be advised of alternative options available to them. These may include the following options to be explored; family and friends, community based activities, voluntary groups, and supported breaks for example.
- If required they would also be advised of how to contact Adults' Health and Care, Contact and Resolution Team (CART), which could possibly result in a Care Act Assessment.
- The new age limit would mean that, once they reach 18 years of age, young people could possibly continue to access the activity (with the consent of the provider) but they may be required by the provider to pay the full rate, or they may access alternative community provision. Some young people may be entitled to support under the Care Act.

7

Short Break Activities would only be funded for children who live in the Hampshire County Council authority area

Currently the County Council funds Short Break Activities for children who live in the Hampshire County Council authority area and/or children who go to school in the Hampshire County Council authority area.

Local authorities are only responsible for providing and funding short breaks for those children and families who live within their area. The majority of neighbouring local authorities do not fund short break activities for those who do not live in their local authority area.

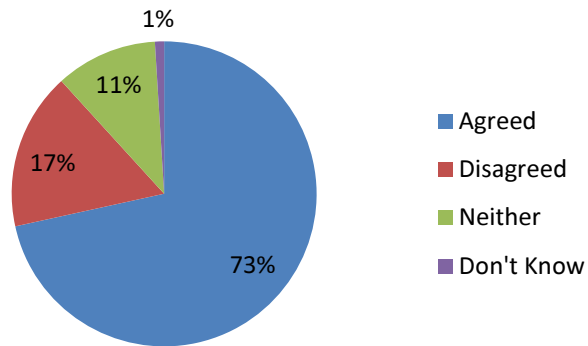


- Children who are accessing Short Break Activities Programme who attend Hampshire schools but **do not** live in the Hampshire County Council authority area will no longer receive a service funded by Hampshire County Council.

It is estimated that this proposal would achieve potential savings of **£62,500**

7

Consultation Findings Relating to Proposal 7



Feedback:

- Those who indicated they had other children between the ages of 16-18 were more likely to agree with the proposals when compared with the average (87% agreement).
- 48 young people currently accessing Hampshire County Council funded Short Breaks but not living in Hampshire area.

Next Steps: Proposal recommended for approval

- If this proposal was implemented, those young people who attend schools within the Hampshire County Council authority area, but reside in a neighbouring authority's area, would no longer qualify to access a Hampshire County Council funded short break. The children and young people may be able to continue attending if the activity provider agreed, however their place would need to be funded from the Local Authority in which they reside or be funded directly by the families.
- The 48 young people currently accessing Hampshire County Council funded Short Breaks would be contacted by Childrens Services to outline their options

8

Only fund Short Break Activities which allow parents and carers to leave their child

Short break activities are intended to enable parents and carers to have a break from caring. Currently a number of short break activities where parents are required to stay are funded.

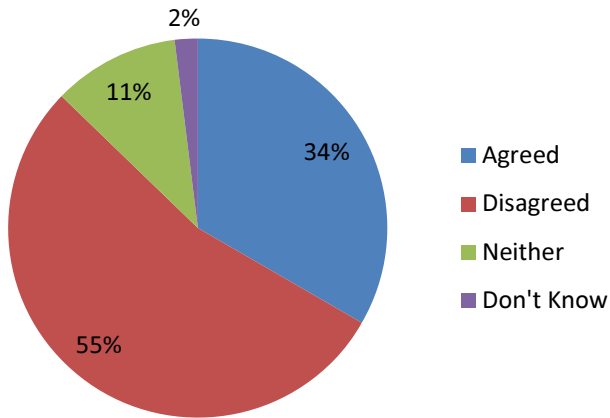


- This would mean Activities where the whole family can attend, or those activities where parents are **required by the Short Break Activities provider to stay**, would **no longer** be funded.
- This includes activities such as; some multi-activity clubs, swimming lessons, sensory sessions, climbing, family fun days, drama clubs, horse handling and daytime elements of family activity weekends.
- This proposal does **not** include time limited transition or settling in periods.

It is estimated that this proposal would achieve potential savings of **£190,000**

8

Consultation Findings Relating to Proposal 8



Feedback:

- Those who indicated they worked for a short break activities provider were more likely to disagree when compared to the average, with 80% disagreeing with the proposal.
- In their comments on the consultation as a whole, some respondents reflected on how some proposals will have a direct impact on the types of activities parents and carers receive. If a parent was required to leave their child, 14% of parents/carers commented on the potential loss of family breaks or activity days. Respondents reported that they value this type of short break, as well as highlighting the impact that will be felt if they no longer receive funding.

Next Steps: Proposal recommended for approval

- Work with providers to ensure proposal is understood
- Where families choose to continue accessing a family break they can either self fund and pay for these directly, or the activity provider can raise funds to deliver these services without statutory funding. A combination of both of these funding arrangements would be advantageous.

9

Stop funding swimming lessons as a Short Break Activity

Parent and carers are generally required to stay with their child during the lesson, and the lessons are a relatively short duration

500 funded sessions to provide swimming across 2017/18 and 2018/19

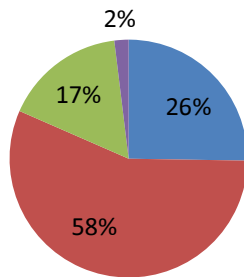


- From April 2019 swimming lessons will not be funded by the Short Break Activities Programme
- Funding may continue to be available for support to individuals to go to a swimming pool as a leisure activity if a local priority (Proposal 1)

It is estimated that this proposal would achieve potential savings of **£107,000**

9

Consultation Findings Relating to Proposal 9



- Agreed
- Disagreed
- Neither
- Don't Know

Feedback:

- Respondents generally mentioned a time frame of between 5-7 hours being the length of time a parent or carer considers best for a short break.
- Results are not as definitive as other questions asked, with 22% disagreeing and an additional 22% unclear either way if swimming provides a break.
- 45% of respondents said that they currently use swimming as a short break activity, accounting for the high prevalence of feedback about swimming.
- Those that said they had attended a swimming lesson were more likely to agree with the statement: “swimming lessons provide parents and carers with the chance to have a break,” with 78% agreeing that swimming does in fact provide a break for the *parent* or carer.
- 24% of respondent comments relating to this proposal mentioned swimming and the impact of the loss of this activity. Of those comments that mentioned swimming, 39% highlighted concerns around the potential loss of a brief, but important break for the parent or carer.
- Respondent comments that were related to swimming suggested that the break itself has benefits for a child’s development in terms of providing a valuable life skill.
- These concerns were echoed by parents and carers at the consultation drop in events, however, there was a consideration by some parents that swimming is too short and stressful to be considered a break.

9

Consultation Findings Relating to Proposal 9

Next Steps: Proposal recommended for approval

- Work with providers to ensure proposal is understood
- If this proposal is approved, the County Council proposes to work with local authority leisure providers to ensure that the needs of disabled children and their parents or carers are being taken into consideration, and are published on FISH (the Hampshire Local Offer) accordingly.
- Where families choose to continue accessing swimming privately they could self fund and pay for lessons directly to the provider. Providers could look to reshape current provision to provide smaller group lessons, instead of private one to one lessons, ensuring there are the correct staffing ratios in place. This could make the activity more affordable.



Questions?

