

## HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

### Executive Decision Record

<b>Decision Maker:</b>	Executive Lead Member for Children's Services and Young People
<b>Date:</b>	11 November 2020
<b>Title:</b>	Proposed changes to the Short Break Activities Programme and consultation outcomes
<b>Report From:</b>	Director of Children's Services

**Contact name:** Sarah Roberts,  
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#### 1. The decision:

- 1.1. That approval is given to take forward the proposed changes to the Short Break Activities Programme to ensure that a Short Break Activities Programme for Children with Disabilities can be provided from April 2021 within a reduced budget, and taking into account relevant information and the outcomes of public consultation:
- a) Proposal One: To reduce the overall annual grant awarded to provide Short Break Activities to £539,500. **Recommended for implementation.**
  - b) Proposal Two: To primarily accept funding applications that meet the core Short Break Activity priorities but retain a small 'exceptions' fund of £20,000 per annum. **Recommended for implementation.**
  - c) Proposal Three: To require Short Break Activity providers to secure a minimum level of funding from other sources. **Not recommended for implementation.** Two-year grant funding in next round, in response to feedback: **Recommended for implementation.**
  - d) Proposal Four: To reduce the annual grant awarded to Hampshire Parent Carer Network to £17,500. **Recommended for implementation.**
  - e) Proposal Five: To commission Short Break Activities through an external grant-giving body. **Not recommended for implementation.**
  - f) Proposal Six: To introduce a two-tier Gateway Card scheme, including proposed evidence requirements to support Gateway Card applications for each tier. **Recommended for implementation.**
  - g) Proposal Seven: To place a limit of 30 sessions per child, per year on Short Break Activities. **Not recommended for implementation.**
  - h) Proposal Eight: To redesign the Community Buddy Scheme. **Recommended for implementation,** including:

- Increases to parental hourly contributions from £5 per hour to £6.50 per hour, and mileage from 25p to 30p per mile.
- no longer giving access to non-Hampshire County Council area residents, or young people aged 18 years of age or over, saving £11,000 at current levels.
- Commissioning a new service, incorporating a single point for coordination and a differentiated offer within the scheme.

## **2. Reasons for the decision:**

- 2.1. Children's Services is proposing to save £1.3m from the Children with Disabilities budget, a 7.5% budget reduction, as part of an indicative £17.2 million savings target to be delivered by April 2021. The Children with Disabilities budget includes £1.7m of funding for a Short Break programme: £1.4m is used to provide open access Short Break Activities delivered by third sector and charitable providers; a Community Buddy Scheme; participation grant to Hampshire Parent Carer Network; and includes the cost of maintaining the Gateway Card IT system. The remaining £0.3m is spent on Care Support and Direct Payments.
- 2.2. Local Authorities have an obligation to provide a range of services that is sufficient to assist carers to continue to provide care or to do so more effectively, including educational or leisure activities for disabled children outside their homes, but there is Local Authority discretion around what is provided. The changes proposed to the current Short Break Activity Programme offer will achieve an estimated annual saving of £696,000 (a 4% reduction in the Children with Disabilities budget).
- 2.3. In November 2019, a range of savings proposals, including a reduction in the Short Break budget, was considered and approved by Full Council, subject to further consultation and executive decision-making where necessary. The County Council carried out an 18-week open, public consultation from 9 March to 12 July 2020 to seek residents' and stakeholders' views on proposed changes to the Short Break Activities Programme. The timescale of the consultation was extended by six weeks (from 12 weeks to 18 weeks), to enable as many contributions as possible during the government-enforced lockdown due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Eight proposals, incorporating 13 questions, were included within the consultation.

## **3. Other options considered and rejected:**

- 3.1. In addition to the eight proposals consulted upon, the following were considered and rejected:
  - To only make Short Break Activities available for families who are not eligible for social care - this would increase the financial pressure on social care budgets and could mean that assessed needs would not be met.
  - To reduce the number of providers the County Council funds to deliver Short Break - no significant benefits of this approach were identified.

- To enable families to access Short Break Activities via an allocation of hours or sessions within a virtual wallet - this would be complex to administer and would need new processes to be created to assess needs in order to calculate the allocation for each family.
- To reduce the amount of rent charged by schools to providers - this was not considered to be feasible in the light of the pressures on school budgets.
- To stipulate that Direct Payments be used for families to purchase Short Break Activities themselves - this would increase the administrative burden on parents and carers and would only shift the financial pressure from one area of funding in Children's Services to another.

**4. Conflicts of interest:**

4.1. Conflicts of interest declared by the decision-maker: none

4.2. Conflicts of interest declared by other Executive Members consulted: none

**5. Dispensation granted by the Conduct Advisory Panel: none**

**6. Reason(s) for the matter being dealt with if urgent: not applicable**

**7. Statement from the decision maker:**

In reaching this decision I note the unanimous support for the recommendations from the Children and Young People Select Committee at their meeting on the 11 November 2020.

**Approved by:**

**Date:**

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**Executive Lead Member for Children's Services and  
 Young People  
 Councillor Patricia Stallard**

**11 November 2020**