

SHORT BREAKS UPDATE

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REASON FOR ITEM

Short Break provision was selected as an area of review by this Committee in 2008 and the Committee has requested an update on the progress of all its recommendations approved by the Cabinet.

The attached paper provides a brief summary of progress and next steps with regard to the development of short breaks for disabled children and their families in Hillingdon.

OPTIONS OPEN TO THE COMMITTEE

- To note the progress provided in the report .

INFORMATION

- The latest report is attached. The Committee may wish to consider the progress to date and developments since the last report to POC.

SUGGESTED COMMITTEE ACTIVITY

- Consider whether there are comments or suggestions that the Committee wishes to make that will aid future planning.

APPENDIX A

RECOMMENDATIONS	PROGRESS UPDATE AS AT SEPTEMBER 2011
1.1 Review signposting of services to ensure clear and consistent information is available via both our own information services including the contact centre, schools and via our partner agencies including the PCT	Following the POC report in 2008, improvements in communication and information were made, for example, regular short breaks newsletters and a parents/carers website. Most of the developments during that period have been sustained, including the using the Parent Partnership as a direct communication point for parents and carers. However, uncertainties over funding in 2011/12 (with a subsequent uncertainty over the funding of some services and some later-than-usual decisions around the funding of activities such as summer holiday programmes) have meant that this is an area where there will be renewed focus this autumn.
1.2 The demand of extra services within the Extended Schools programme to be assessed. Provision of inclusive services with mainstream settings to be reviewed together with the expansion of specialist provision via the special schools	<p>The Council has continued to contribute funding to the summer holiday activity programmes in 3 Hillingdon special schools.</p> <p>The expansion of Sports and Leisure short breaks has continued, for example, with two disabled children multi sports clubs now in operation, (at Queensmead and Botwell Green) enhanced swimming facilities at the new Hillingdon and Botwell Green pools, and a football project for young people with moderate learning difficulties (working with DASH) – all of which are new or enhanced since the POC report in 2010.</p> <p>In addition, the growth in disabled young people accessing youth services has continued. For example, whilst final figures are currently being compiled it is likely that the total number of children with additional needs accessing the summer FIESTA programme will be similar (i.e. 140) to the level of attendees last year; more than double the numbers accessing the programme 3 years ago. In addition, 94 places have been allocated for young people with additional needs through the specialised Summer SPARKS programme.</p>
1.3 To expand the current flexible payment arrangements ensuring that parents/carers can access the types of provision that best suits their needs	<p>Direct payments enable parents to directly commission and pay for services which more suit their child's needs. The use of direct payments has increased by approximately 30% in the last 3 years.</p> <p>Work is underway with Adult Social Care, who administer direct payments on behalf of Children's Services, to strengthen arrangements, both to ensure parents are using direct payments appropriately and to identify the types of service parents are using, as that will help inform the Council's own commissioning decisions around services.</p>
1.4 Ensure that suitable transport is available to enable all children to access extended school services:	Schools delivering the summer holiday short break programmes (funded by the Council) included transport to/from the activities as part of the programme offer.

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1.5 Provide clear information to all users on appeal processes.	LBH is the commissioner rather than the provider of short breaks in most cases. However when writing up service level agreements all providers are asked to consider and publish their complaints procedures. In addition, an analysis is currently being carried out by LBH's corporate complaints department to analyse any complaints received from parents of disabled children in 2011.
1.6 Review management of outreach services to ensure that cover is available when regular workers are absent. Methods of communication to parents to be reviewed	The outreach service is moving to its new office base in the newly developed first floor of Merrifield House in September 2011 (to be confirmed). This move will help ensure that cover is available for outreach services when regular workers are absent.
1.7 The Fiesta booking process to be reviewed to ensure ease of access for all users	The FIESTA booking process was enhanced in 2010 to improve access. These developments (for example, the simplified referral process for young people with additional support needs referred to the programme) have been sustained. In addition, other minor modifications and improvements have been implemented in 2011; for example, changing the web site content to ensure that disabled young people and their parents were aware that they could access both specialised provision (SPARKS) and other "mainstream" activities.
1.8 Further work to be undertaken to ensure that there is a smooth transition between child and adults services in particular for the most needy	The re-structuring of Children's Social Care into the same directorate as Adult Social Care (Social Care, Health and Housing directorate) has led to a major review commencing this autumn aimed at strengthening transition processes between child and adult social care. Options being considered include, for example, a creation of a transition team which would cover the activities currently carried out in separate functions within Children's and Adult Social Care.

Sustainability

The reduction in Aiming High funding from over £1m revenue grant in 2010/11 to approximately £700k in 2011/12 has led inevitably to some funding reductions, for example, paying for a smaller number of weeks/places on special school summer holiday programmes, a reduction in one-off short breaks grants made to voluntary groups, the deletion of the Short Breaks Co-ordinator post etc.

However, there are plans to expand on specific areas of short breaks provision, for example, growth in family link (foster-carer type) respite workers where this provision can clearly demonstrate a positive payback to both the Council and families supported (in this case, the respite helping the family to cope/stay together and avoiding the child/young person entering costly out-of-borough, long-term residential provision).

Summary and Further Development

Much of the momentum gained over the 2009-11 period of the ring-fenced Aiming High for Disabled Children grant has been sustained into the 2011/12 year, both in terms of services (improvements in both specialised and universal services) and infrastructure (for example, parent participation in the governance and shaping of services).

However, the tighter funding environment which now exists for short breaks means that continued funding of services and investments in new services will focus increasingly on:

- (a) those services where there is clear evidence that the service makes a difference/measurable positive impact on the child/young person and their family; and
- (b) where the money invested in short breaks now has a demonstrable payback in reducing the costs of local authority/public service interventions in the future.