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# NOTICE OF MEETING

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**EDUCATION, CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY PANEL**

**MONDAY, 16 SEPTEMBER 2019 AT 4.15 PM**

**CONFERENCE ROOM B - CIVIC OFFICES**

Telephone enquiries to Anna Martyn Tel 023 9283 4870

Email: [anna.martyn@portsmouthcc.gov.uk](mailto:anna.martyn@portsmouthcc.gov.uk)

If any member of the public wishing to attend the meeting has access requirements, please notify the contact named above.

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## **Membership**

Councillor Frank Jonas BEM (Chair)  
Councillor Tom Coles (Vice-Chair)  
Councillor Ben Dowling

Councillor Jason Fazackarley  
Councillor Hannah Hockaday  
Councillor Jeanette Smith

## **Standing Deputies**

Councillor Chris Attwell  
Councillor Jo Hooper

Councillor Terry Norton  
Councillor Neill Young

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(NB This Agenda should be retained for future reference with the minutes of this meeting.)

Please note that the agenda, minutes and non-exempt reports are available to view online on the Portsmouth City Council website: [www.portsmouth.gov.uk](http://www.portsmouth.gov.uk)

## **AGENDA**

- 1 Apologies for absence**
- 2 Declarations of interest**
- 3 Minutes of previous meeting held on 15 July 2019 (Pages 3 - 4)**

RECOMMENDED that the minutes of the meeting held on 15 July 2019 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

- 4 Review into support for children with disabilities - revised scoping**

**document (Pages 5 - 6)**

The revised scoping document is attached for reference. This can be updated during the review.

**5 Information pack with initial evidence (Pages 7 - 90)**

Information pack with initial evidence from Children's Services:

- Children with disabilities in Portsmouth - summary report
- Targeted Short Breaks scheme
- Short Breaks annual report 2018
- Portsmouth Parent Voice
- Enableability Business Plan 2018-2021
- Prepaid cards with feedback
- Department for Education advice on short breaks for children with disabilities

**6 Date of next meeting**

To agree a date for the next meeting.

Members of the public are now permitted to use both audio visual recording devices and social media during this meeting, on the understanding that it neither disrupts the meeting or records those stating explicitly that they do not wish to be recorded. Guidance on the use of devices at meetings open to the public is available on the Council's website and posters on the wall of the meeting's venue.

Date Not Specified

# Agenda Item 3

## EDUCATION, CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY PANEL

Minutes of the meeting of the Education, Children & Young People Scrutiny Panel held on Monday, 15 July 2019 at 4.15 pm in Conference Room A, floor 2, Civic Offices

### Present

Councillors Frank Jonas (in the Chair)  
Tom Coles  
Ben Dowling  
Hannah Hockaday

### Officers

Alison Jeffery, Director of Children, Families and Education  
Denise Lingham, Head of Safeguarding Monitoring  
Mike Stoneman, Deputy Director of Children, Families and Education

#### 1. **Apologies for absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Jason Fazackarley and Will Purvis.

#### **Declarations of Members' Interests**

There were no declarations of interest.

#### 3. **Minutes of the Previous Meeting - 17 June 2019**

**RESOLVED that the minutes of the Education, Children and Young People Scrutiny Panel held on 17 June 2019 be noted as a correct record.**

#### 4. **Review into support for children with disabilities**

In discussion on the draft scoping document the following points were made:

Portsmouth Parent Voice (PPV) (funded by PCC and based at the Frank Sorrell Centre) do crucial work in supporting families with disabilities and were instrumental in obtaining parents' views during the recent inspection of Children's Services. The Dynamite group aims to give a voice to young people with disabilities. Representatives from these organisations could give evidence and PPV could help with hearing from parents. Enableability was also suggested as a source of evidence.

The panel discussed how much emphasis on health should be included in the review. As children's health and social care are becoming more integrated it might be helpful to consider parents' views and how health would benefit by coming under Children's Services. An inspection a few weeks ago reviewed health services and as health is covered by other organisations and committees it was agreed there would be not be a great emphasis on health.

The recent inspection showed that although the model for therapy services was good it was not communicated as well as it could be. The review could consider how families are made aware of services and help.

When considering provision for short breaks (respite) the panel agreed the review should include sites other than Beechside and also how parents access these facilities. For example, access to Beechside currently needs a referral from a social worker. The review could also include holiday play schemes and pre-paid schemes along with how families receive money to purchase respite and care packages. Education is due to carry out a consultation on targeted short breaks during the Autumn 2019 so perhaps the review and consultation could feed into each other.

Children's Services could write to parents who receive services but they have just been asked for their views during the recent SEND Local area inspection so asking again might be overload. Parents could be contacted through PPV or special schools.

Site visits to Beechside and schools would have to take place during the day but early evening would be the best time to meet parents.

Officers agreed to prepare initial evidence comprising a profile of children with disabilities, how many there are, what families appreciate, how far Children's Services' remit stretches and current spending. The panel could also receive information on PPV, Dynamite and Enableability. This will be circulated to members in advance of the next meeting.

The proposed timeline of meetings is:

- 16 September - meeting to discuss the evidence prepared by Children's Services and perhaps hear from organisations such as PPV, Dynamite and Enableability
- October - site visit
- November - meeting to consider evidence from site visit and provision for 19 to 25 years for which Children's Services now has statutory responsibility.

#### **5. Next meeting**

The next meeting will be held on Monday 16 September at 4.15 pm in Room B, floor 2, Civic Offices.

The meeting concluded at 4.45 pm.

Signed

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Councillor Frank Jonas (Chair)

# Agenda Item 4

## EDUCATION, CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY PANEL DRAFT SCOPING DOCUMENT

### A review of support for children with disabilities

#### 1. Background

The topic was agreed by the Scrutiny Management Panel at its meeting on 28 January 2019.

#### 2. Objectives of the review

The review will consider:

- (i) How well the council supports children with disabilities and their families with the provision of community based packages of support to promote their care and wellbeing, how families are made aware of the support that is available and how they receive money to purchase packages
- (ii) The appropriateness and effectiveness of arrangements for placing children with disabilities in "out of city" residential provision, including residential care homes with and without education
- (iii) The provision of residential short breaks for disabled children and their families and how families are made aware of support available and receive money to purchase placements

#### 3. Witnesses

Evidence for the review will be sought from:

- (i) Children, young people and families in receipt of support from the council
- (ii) Social Work Practitioners and Managers who support children and young people with disabilities aged up to 25 (to include Adult Services)
- (iii) The Manager and residential staff at the Beechside short breaks centre
- (iv) Schools attended by children with disabilities in receipt of support from the council - this will include special schools such as Mary Rose, Cliffdale and Redwood Park Academies.
- (v) Managers of residential schools/care homes (names of schools/care homes to be advised) attended by children with disabilities from Portsmouth
- (vi) Cabinet Members for Children & Families and Education

#### **4. Timeline**

**Monday 15 July:** Initial meeting to agree the scoping document and agree evidence gathering programme.

**September to December:** Meetings to gather evidence

**Monday 16 September** - to consider first evidence from Children's Services and organisations such as Parent Voice

**October:** Site visit, perhaps to Beechside and one or two other organisations (schools, care homes, groups); perhaps meet parents

**November:** Meeting to consider evidence gathered at site visits and any meetings with parents and provision for young people aged 19 to 25.

**December to January:** Officers write report with recommendations and conclusions.

**January to February:** Meeting to agree and sign off report (February/early March?).

There may be informal meetings between the formal meetings.

#### **5. Background documents**

Ofsted inspection referred to in meeting on 7 December 2018.

# Agenda Item 5

## Report for Education, Children & Young People Scrutiny Panel

Re

### Portsmouth Children with Disabilities

(data as of 05.08.19)

	Children's Social Care	Early Help	Children receiving short breaks at Beechside
Number of children with disability open	195 (12.39% of cases open to CSC)	59	51
<p><b>Of the 51 children receiving short breaks at Beechside 49 are children in need and two are looked after children. Additionally there is one child from Hampshire accessing the provision and this placement is funded by Hampshire.</b></p>			
AGE	Children's Social Care	Early Help	Beechside
Age 0-5	22 (11.28%)	4 (6.77%)	0
Age 6-13	85 (43.59%)	39 (66.10%)	30 (58.82%)
Age 14 - 17	73 (37.44%)	16 (27.11)	21 (41.17%)
Age 18 +	15 (7.69%)		
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>195</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>51</b>
<p><b>Across all services the 6-13 year old disabled children are the largest percentage group accessing services.</b></p>			
Case type	Children's Social Care	Early Help	Beechside
Child in Need (CIN)	106 (54.36%)		49 (96.07%)
Child Protection (CP)	5 (2.56%)		
Looked After Children	69 (35.38%)		2 (1.03%)
Care Leavers	15 (7.69%)		
Targeted Early Help		59 (100%)	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>195</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>51</b>
<p><b>Access to Beechside can be via CSC or Early Help, however once a child accesses regular overnight short breaks away from their home they require statutory services from CSC as a Child in Need.</b></p>			
Gender	Children's Social Care	Early Help	Beechside
Male	138 (70.77%)	42 (71.18%)	35 (68.62%)
Female	57 (29.23%)	17 (28.81%)	16 (31.37%)
<p><b>In all areas of intervention there are more than double the number of disabled boys accessing services to the number of girls. Data is fairly consistent across the three areas above.</b></p>			

Locality	Children's Social Care	Early Help	Beechside
North	60		25
South	21		9
Central 1	31		15
Central 2	5		
Through Care 1	60		2
Through Care 2	15		
Adoption	3		
Early Help South		56	
Early Help Central		3	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>195</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>51</b>

**When the Children's Disability Team were disbanded at end of June 2019, the staff and cases moved to the North, South and Central 1 localities. There are significantly more disabled children and their families living in the North of the City. This is thought due to larger houses in the North which better suits the needs of these families. The children in the Through Care teams are looked after children or Care Leavers.**

WARDS	Children's Social Care	Early Help	Beechside
Baffins	8 4.10%	6	2
Central Southsea	7 3.59%	6	2
Charles Dickens	29 14.87%	5	5
Copnor	7 3.59%	1	6
Cosham	21 10.77%	6	5
Drayton and Farlington	9 4.62%	2	4
Eastney and Craneswater	0 0.00%	2	
Fratton	8 4.10%	7	5
Hilsea	8 4.10%	6	3
Milton	5 2.56%	3	2
Nelson	12 6.15%	1	4
Paulsgrove	24 12.31%	11	7
St Jude's	6 3.08%	7	1
St Thomas	20 10.26%	3	3
Confidential	1 0.51%		1
Out of City	30 15.38%		1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>195</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>51</b>

**It is interesting to note that disabled children are accessing services from all Wards in the City and all but one Ward have children accessing short breaks at Beechside.**

Ethnicity	Children's Social Care	Early Help	Beechside
White British	162		39
White Other	7		



White British/Black African	1		
Mixed white/black Caribbean	1		1
Black Caribbean	1		1
Mixed white/Asian	3		1
Mixed white/ black African	1		
Black/black African	4		3
Black/black other	2		1
Black	2		
Asian	2		2
Not reported	5		
Other	3		2
Chinese	1		1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>195</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>51</b>

#### Domestic abuse - Children's Social Care

30 disabled children in need (CIN) are recorded as being exposed to domestic abuse either currently, historically or both  
3 disabled children subject to Child Protection plans (CP) are recorded as being exposed to domestic abuse either currently, historically or both  
51 disabled Looked After Children (LAC) are recorded as being exposed to domestic abuse historically.  
12 disabled Care Leavers (CL) are recorded as being exposed to domestic abuse historically.

#### Targeted Short Break Scheme

The attachment describes the range of targeted short breaks available to Portsmouth disabled children and their families.



Targeted Short Breaks.docx

2018/2019 data shows that;  
154 children attended the specialist Holidays Playschemes  
36 children attended the Autism Support Gym Club  
17 children attended the Autism Support Youth Hub  
25 children attended the Teenage Holiday Scheme  
37 children attended the Teenage Project  
81 children attended the Inclusive Holiday Playscheme



Enable Ability Business Plan 2018-20

Additionally 193 prepaid cards were issued to parents/carers of disabled children.



Report - Prepaid  
Card Feedback - Dece

### Education

Of the 195 children receiving services through Children's Social Care 45 are attending Mary Rose academy, 12 Cliffdale, 18 Redwood, 7 The Willows Nursery, 11 Harbour Schools and the remaining 102 are attending main stream schools and out of city schools.

Of the 59 children receiving services through Early Help, 27 are attending Mary Rose Academy, 6 Cliffdale, 1 Redwood, 2 The Willows Nursery, 4 Harbour Schools, 2 are educated at home and the remaining 17 are attending main stream schools and out of city schools.

### Co-production

**Portsmouth Parent Voice** represent the views of parents and carers of disabled children and young people and work alongside local authorities, education, health and other service providers to ensure the services they plan, commission, deliver and monitor meet the needs of children and families.



Portsmouth Parent  
Voice - Summary.doc

**Dynamite** represent the views of disabled young people and work alongside local authorities, education, health and other service providers to ensure the services they plan, commission, deliver and monitor meet the needs of young people. Dynamite are involved in the review of services available through the Local Offer, providing them with feedback on the positive aspects of the service and areas of improvement.

### Short Breaks Annual Report 2017/2018



Annual Report 2018  
FINAL.pdf

## **Targeted Short Breaks**

Local Authorities must provide a range of 'short breaks' to enable carers of disabled children to have breaks from caring. These should include:

- a) Provision which will enable disabled children to participate in educational and recreational activities,
- b) Provision of day-time care for disabled children in both their own homes and elsewhere,
- c) Provision of overnight care for disabled children in both their own homes and elsewhere, and
- d) Emergency care, for example, due to illness in the family.

The responsibilities described in c) and d) are delivered through the Children and Families Service as the specialist short break offer via Beechside short break respite provision.

The responsibilities described in a) and b) are together referred to as the 'targeted' short break offer. This includes:

1. Targeted 1 offer, covering (a) above
2. Targeted 2 offer, covering (b) above
3. Pre-paid cards (which can be used for a or b above)

The Portsmouth targeted short breaks offer refers to;

- a) open access recreational activities in the format of the Inclusive Holiday Playscheme, Teenage Holiday Programme, Teenage Project and the Portsmouth Autism Support Network activities (referred to as Targeted 1)  
and
- b) day time care in the format of the Specialist Holiday Playscheme.

Families of children with an EHCP and attending a special school or in receipt of full time support in a mainstream school, are entitled to a Personal Budget which is provided in the form of a pre-paid card. This can be used for any short break activities the parent feels best meets their child's and family's needs as part of the targeted offer.

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# Portsmouth Local Offer Annual Report

2017 - 2018

[www.portsmouth.gov.uk](http://www.portsmouth.gov.uk)



The Children and Families Act 2014 requires that the Local Authority publishes an Annual Report on Special Educational Needs and Disability. In this report we hope to update you as to what has been achieved over the past year 2017 - 2018, what feedback we have received and future plans.

The Special Educational Needs Code of Practice 2014 states that the purpose of the Local Offer is:

- to provide clear, comprehensive, accessible and up-to-date information about the available provision and how to access it
- to make provision more responsive to local needs and aspirations by directly involving disabled children and those with SEN and their parents, and disabled young people and those with SEN, and service providers in its development and review

More information on what the Local Offer should include is in the [SEN \(Local Offer\) regulations 2014](#) and the [SEND Code of Practice 2015 - chapter 4](#).

To ensure we are meeting the requirements of the Children and Families Act 2014 we must also ensure that we continue to:

- Consult with all partners on the information to be held
- Involve children, their parents and young people in the preparation and review of Local Offer
- Publish comments on the Local Offer
- Ensure that the information is accessible to everyone



When all group members together agree outcomes, co-produce recommendations, plans and actions. It is an approach which builds upon meaningful participation and assumes effective consultation and information sharing through a dynamic group process where there is equal value for participant's contribution including service users; parents, carers and young people.

Portsmouth City Council remain committed to working in co-production with parents, carers and children/ young people with Special Education Needs and Disabilities. The Portsmouth Local Offer website was originally co-produced with parents, carers and young people and is regularly monitored through a 'mystery shopper' process and through the use of case studies produced by the parent/carer co-production group, reporting any issues back to the Local Authority. Parents and carers of children and young people with SEND remain an integral part of the ongoing development of the website. Both the parent/carer and the young people's co-production groups continue to meet monthly and their views and opinions are genuinely valued and regularly sought on a range of issues including the overall strategic development of services and information about them. Both the parent/carer and young people's co- production groups report quarterly to the SEND Board.



## **Shaping Better Futures Together – Coproduction, Futures in Mind and Local Offer Steering Group**

The co-production group currently consists of over fifteen people, two thirds of whom are parents. A further two members are both professionals and parents.

This year we have joined together with the futures in mind co-production group. This has slightly widened our remit to include Special Educational Needs and Disabilities as well as Mental Health.

We have continued to monitor the Portsmouth Local Offer using case studies where appropriate to ensure the information held is easily accessible to all users. This has included routinely tagging entries, this ensures that keyword searches quickly and easily bring the desired results.

The co-production group have also produced memory sticks to aid professionals to work with parents in coproduction. These memory sticks include the videos we produced, some documents on how to work in co-production and useful tips for professionals.

Parent appreciation awards have continued to be awarded to recognise individuals who have made a significant impact on a family who have a child with SEND. Over 100 have been awarded so far.

School SEN champions are now in 14 schools across Portsmouth. These volunteers are sharing information with parents and carers and supporting them to use the Portsmouth Local Offer.

Parent friendly documents continue to be produced to support parent carers to understand various SEND related information.





## Dynamite – Coproduction and The Local Offer Annual report

The Dynamite Core Group consists of 8 young people with SEND. The Young Inspectors team currently consists of 13 young inspectors. 7 young people are both core group members and young inspectors.

Our Young Inspectors inspect a different Local Offer service each month, reviewing both the service and the entry on the Local Offer.

Reports from these inspections are fed back to services, to Portsmouth City Council's SEND board, and, where relevant, other strategic meetings (for example Young Inspectors reports on colleges are fed into the college leads meetings)

Jargon continues to be a big barrier to young people accessing the local offer, as well as services not giving the kind of information which young people want about a service.

Young Inspectors took part in a review of different local offer pages, they found that the entries which were co-produced with young people were easier to understand and gave the information which young people want.

Dynamite Core Group took part in a peer review of Surrey's local offer, we found that the way in which information about colleges was presented there was very useful for young people. We have fed this into strategic groups and our young inspectors are due to spend a day in September developing information about college's on the local offer.

Our 2017/18 survey has found that increased numbers of young people are aware of the local offer. One in six young people have used the local offer.

It also found that the Local offer is underused by young autistic people.

In June 4 Young Inspectors spent a day with a member of PCC's SEND team to review the 'This is Me' tool hosted on The Local Offer and used in the co-production of EHC plans.

This took place after a morning of training for those young inspectors to understand the purpose of this tool, how it is used and the relevant laws and guidelines which relate to it.

A report and recommendations from this review has been shared with the SEND team and they are preparing to act on those recommendations over the summer.

A report has been produced which provides a summary of the actions achieved in implementing the SEND Reforms in Portsmouth, as set out in the Children and Families Act 2014, during the initial implementation phase from September 2014 to March 2018.

These achievements were celebrated at a SEND Stakeholder Conference on 19th March 2018. The conference was an opportunity to recognise the progress so far and to mark the move from the implementation phase to embedding the SEND reforms as business as usual.

### **Key Achievements**

#### **Co-production with Parents and Carers**

- The Local Offer Website: co-produced and co-designed
- The Shaping Better Futures Together meeting is attended by parent carers and the Local Offer Officer. During the meetings, the website is reviewed and tested using case studies. Key words are added as tags to ensure that parent carers can search using a variety of words and phrases.
- Future in Mind- the U Matter Service was commissioned in response to parent carers' feedback, co-designed, co-produced and reviewed with parents
- Since June 2016, a group of parents worked in partnership with the Portsmouth Clinical Commissioning Group.
- Future in Mind: Guide and Poster for parent carers
- Parents reviewed and amended the guide and poster to ensure that the information was usable and in an easy read format.

#### **Co-production with Young People**

- Surveys, coproduced with young people reaching hundreds of young people with SEND.
- Monthly core group meetings attended by 7 young people and a representative from PCC.
- Bimonthly Pizza/Buffer evenings designed by the core group and attended by on average 15 young people.
- A team of 13 Young Inspectors who have visited over 20 local offer services.
- Training events and sessions run by young people for professionals.
- Visiting events for young people and meeting with services for young people.

#### **Preparing for Adulthood**

- Change to EHCP format (Education) to reflect PfA outcomes.
- Introduction of Profile of Need tool which will indicate young people who may be eligible for Adult Social Care Support.
- Local Offer development - development of tools and information to supplement details of services.
- Market events held annually that inform stakeholders of what is available.
- Partners in Planning: a course facilitated by In Control to support and empower families.

## **Inclusion**

- An Inclusion Group has been established this has developed a collaborative approach to inclusive practice.
- The Inclusion group is chaired by a secondary head teacher and has wide representation including parents and young people representatives, health, school head teachers and SENCOs (primary, secondary and special schools), the virtual school, education psychology, outreach services and the director of children's services. There are two sub groups with clear action plans to ensure that progress is made towards the objectives.
- Links with specialist MH Services:  
CAMHS clinics have now been established in all of the secondary schools in the city, these are highly valued by the schools. The clinics provide direct work with young people and professional advice and consultation with school staff. All schools are able to get advice from CAMHS via the single point of access (SPA)
- Expectations for ordinarily available provision (OAP): The guidance for schools on what constitutes OAP has been revised and is currently published in draft. This outlines the provision that the LA expects to be made available in education settings according to the ages and stages of the child or young person. There is an emphasis within this document that Portsmouth is a needs led city and any provision or support should be provided in line with the needs of the child or young person and is not dependant on any formal diagnosis.
- Development and implementation of a Wellbeing and Resilience in Education Strategy: This strategy was published in April 2017 progress is being made against all of the recommendations. In particular:
  - Named wellbeing leads in schools: Communication with school has been significantly improved by establishing name leads in each school and college
  - Restorative approaches: Schools are actively engaged in the roll out of restorative approaches and there is an ongoing programme of training, support and network meetings
  - Anti-bullying: Our anti-bullying guidance and resource pack has been updated and circulated to all schools. Specific guidance to support trans inclusion is being developed and training on gender identity has been provided in partnership with Stonewall.
- Inclusion Conferences (2014-2017): Our Inclusion Conference is established as part of the annual calendar of events. This has been very well received by delegates and receives very positive evaluations.

## **Education Health and Care Plans**

- Person centred planning / Co-production; Parents and young people are more involved in the EHC needs assessment process by meeting to discuss the Education, Health and Care Plan and Annual Review to incorporate the child / young person's aspirations into the outcomes.

- Quality of Education, Health and Care Plans; The SEN Team have worked closely with Education, Health and Care partners and evidence writers to ensure that consistent outcome focussed, specific and quantified advice is received, alongside regular workshops for EHC plan writers and continued reviewing and refining of the EHCP template.
- The Designated Clinical Officer has implemented a number of processes including a template and process for a combined health report, has developed and delivered training for health professionals on what is a need, what is an outcome and specificity of health provision, and has introduced a rigorous quality assurance / sign off process for health evidence.
- Timeliness of EHC needs assessments (reduced timescales from 26 to 20 weeks). Despite a significant increase in requests for EHC needs assessments, the SEN Team has been able to complete 98.45% of assessments within the 20 week timescales. This has been due to a revised and clearly set out process which is reviewed termly; the introduction of a new EHC needs assessment request template in liaison with SEN Coordinators, and good communication and liaison with evidence writers.

The full report which includes the impact of the key achievements and next steps can be read on the Local Offer website at: <http://www.portsmouthlocaloffer.org/local-offer-search/item/472>

## The Past Year - What Have We Done

Over the past year we have developed our You Said, We Did reporting tool. Portsmouth Parent Voice, in collaboration with Portsmouth City Council, produce a What's Trending Report on a monthly basis. This information forms the basis of the topics covered in the You Said, We Did document which is then regularly published on the Local Offer. It provides an opportunity to highlight what issues parents, young people and professionals have been raising and to respond appropriately. Below are some of the issues raised through this process and other feedback routes.

You said	We did
<p><b><u>Dyslexia</u></b></p> <p><b>You told us that:</b></p> <p>The Portsmouth Local Offer held no information on dyslexia</p>	<p><b>We have ....</b></p> <p>Ensured that the relevant information is now on the Portsmouth Local Offer and will be found by searching for 'dyslexia'. We hope the information contained will be helpful in supporting children and young people with reading difficulties.</p> <p>The guidance can be found at <a href="http://www.portsmouthlocaloffer.org/local-offer-search/item/442">http://www.portsmouthlocaloffer.org/local-offer-search/item/442</a></p>
<p><b><u>Choosing a secondary school</u></b></p> <p><b>You told us that...</b></p> <p>Parents / carers of children and young people with Education, Health and Care Plans are being asked for their preferences for secondary school places before secondary schools have their open evenings. This may make it difficult for them to make an informed decision regarding their choice of school.</p>	<p><b>We have...</b></p> <p>Spoken to school SEN Co-ordinators to remind them to ensure that transition to secondary school for children with an Education, Health and Care Plan is discussed at the Year 5 Annual Review and that parents are encouraged to visit secondary schools during Year 5. This is due to the deadline for parents to express preferences for secondary school placements being at the beginning of Year 6 (September / October) which is often before secondary school open evenings.</p> <p>The SEN Team ask for preferences at the beginning of Year 6 to ensure that secondary school placements are secured and named in the Education, Health and Care Plan by the statutory deadline of 15<sup>th</sup> February every year. This is to allow adequate time for parents / carers to appeal to the First Tier Special Educational Needs and Disability Tribunal if necessary, and ensure that robust transition programmes are in place during Year 6.</p> <p>There is always the option for parents to visit secondary schools again during Year 6 after initial preferences have been given, and parents will have another opportunity to confirm their preference for secondary school placement before the final amended Education, Health and Care Plan is issued.</p>

<p><b><u>Pupil Premium</u></b></p> <p><b>You told us that...</b></p> <p>Parents would like to know more about how schools are allocated pupil premium and how this funding is used by schools.</p>	<p><b>We have...</b></p> <p>Provided information on pupil premium to Portsmouth Parent Voice and published an entry on the Portsmouth Local Offer which includes a link to a range of central government information on pupil premium. The Portsmouth Local Offer entry can be found by clicking the following link  <a href="http://www.portsmouthlocaloffer.org/local-offer-search/item/451">http://www.portsmouthlocaloffer.org/local-offer-search/item/451</a></p>
<p><b><u>School Attendance</u></b></p> <p><b>You told us that...</b></p> <p>Parents would like to know more about the responsibilities of parents; the Council and health services to make sure children attend school regularly.</p>	<p><b>We have...</b></p> <p>Invited the Service Manager for Attendance, Admissions, Exclusions and Reintegration from the Local Authority to the Empowering Children and Families meeting. He spoke to the group about all aspects of school attendance, including the role of the Local Authority and Schools. 5 parent representatives attended this meeting as well as representatives from voluntary organisations and Portsmouth City Council. The group were able to ask questions, find out further information and clarify any attendance related issue they may have. The group were told that schools should look to approach attendance with a combination of pastoral support alongside the more punitive framework.</p> <p>Further information on school attendance can be found at  <a href="https://www.portsmouth.gov.uk/ext/schools/school-attendance-and-home-educating">https://www.portsmouth.gov.uk/ext/schools/school-attendance-and-home-educating</a></p>
<p><b><u>Choosing a School</u></b></p> <p><b>You told us that...</b></p> <p>Parents/carers would like some advice on what questions they should ask when looking for a school for their child who has special educational needs/disabilities.</p>	<p><b>We have...</b></p> <p>Put the following information on the Local Offer newsfeed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A 'Guide to Choosing a School' can be found on the following link <a href="http://www.portsmouthlocaloffer.org/local-offer-search/item/319">http://www.portsmouthlocaloffer.org/local-offer-search/item/319</a></li> <li>• All schools and colleges must publish their SEN Report which provides information on how they support children and young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities. This information can be found on individual school's websites or is contained under their entry on the Portsmouth Local Offer.</li> </ul>

<p><b><u>Continence Service</u></b></p> <p><b>You told us that...</b></p> <p>Parents/carers, whose child is not in a special school or known to the specialist health visitors/children's community nursing teams, are sometimes experiencing difficulties with the current process/assessment for accessing the continence service.</p>	<p><b>We have...</b></p> <p>Portsmouth Parent Voice are carrying out a survey on parent/carers' experience of the continence service which will hopefully provide useful information to ensure the system can work effectively for all those who use it. This is the link to the survey <a href="https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/ZJ23XZH">https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/ZJ23XZH</a></p>
<p><b><u>Support Groups</u></b></p> <p><b>You told us that...</b></p> <p>Parents value support groups and are keen to know of any that take place locally or of any newly formed groups.</p>	<p><b>We have...</b></p> <p>Reminded people through the Local Offer newsfeed of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is information on a range of support groups on the Portsmouth Local Offer. Just enter 'support groups' in the search box.</li> <li>• Portsmouth Parent Voice provide information on support groups through their monthly Impacting On You newsletter.</li> <li>• The Portsmouth Carers Centre has a guide to carers support groups available in Portsmouth. <a href="http://www.portsmouthlocaloffer.org/local-offer-search/item/384">http://www.portsmouthlocaloffer.org/local-offer-search/item/384</a></li> </ul> <p>In addition to this, Portsmouth Parent Voice held a networking event in May 2018 for representatives from support groups and activity providers.</p>
<p><b><u>SEN Support</u></b></p> <p><b>You told us that...</b></p> <p>You wanted to know more about what was available for children on SEN support and how schools would support your child.</p>	<p><b>We have...</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensured all schools have a link to their SEN Information Report on their Local Offer entry.</li> <li>• Reminded people that all schools must publish their SEN Information Report</li> <li>• Encouraged them to read these reports and speak to the school's SENCO for further information.</li> </ul>

<p><b><u>Parents/carers guide to services available for children and young people with emotional or mental health needs</u></b></p> <p><b>You told us that...</b></p> <p>Portsmouth Parent Voice (PPV) in collaboration with NHS Portsmouth Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) and Portsmouth City Council (PCC) have designed a guide and poster for parent carers explaining where to get support for mental health and wellbeing issues for their child or young person. Since publishing the guide and poster last year, we have received feedback from parent carers and professionals stating that the documents did not give details as to where they originated from.</p>	<p><b>We have...</b></p> <p>In response, we have amended both documents in order to clarify that PPV, Portsmouth CCG and PCC have worked in co-production to design the guide and poster. We have also added a contact email if further information is required or if anyone would like to order printed copies.</p> <p>Further feedback from parents stated that they would like a leaflet to accompany the guide and poster in order to have the information at hand rather than an A3 poster and guide. Our Future in Mind co-production group will work over the next few months to design a further leaflet which will be published before the end of March 2018.</p> <p>The guide and poster can be found at <a href="http://www.portsmouthlocaloffer.org/local-offer-search/item/411">http://www.portsmouthlocaloffer.org/local-offer-search/item/411</a></p>
<p><b><u>Universal Credit</u></b></p> <p><b>You told us that...</b></p> <p>You were concerned that the introduction of Universal Credit might impact on your entitlement to Free School Meals and Home to School/ College transport.</p>	<p><b>We have...</b></p> <p>Asked the Access and Entitlement Team at Portsmouth City Council to produce a brief fact sheet explaining how Universal Credit may affect your entitlement. This has now been written and can be found under the Free School Meal entry on the Local Offer <a href="http://www.portsmouthlocaloffer.org/local-offer-search/item/285">http://www.portsmouthlocaloffer.org/local-offer-search/item/285</a></p>



<p><b><u>Activities</u></b></p> <p><b>You told us that...</b></p> <p>You are often looking for activities for your child or young person to take part in and also for the whole family.</p>	<p><b>We have...</b></p> <p>Advised people through the Local Offer newsfeed of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Click the Leisure button in the relevant age category on the Local Offer</li> <li>• Use the search function to find resources i.e leisure, clubs, support groups, activities, swimming, play schemes</li> <li>• Other information may be found on the following links:</li> </ul> <p><a href="https://www.list.co.uk/events/kids/location:Portsmouth(50.8094,-1.0717)/">https://www.list.co.uk/events/kids/location:Portsmouth(50.8094,-1.0717)/</a>  <a href="https://www.facebook.com/portsmouthparentvoice/">https://www.facebook.com/portsmouthparentvoice/</a>  <a href="http://www.portsmouthparentvoice.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/IOY-Easter-2018.pdf">http://www.portsmouthparentvoice.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/IOY-Easter-2018.pdf</a>  <a href="https://www.visitportsmouth.co.uk/things-to-do/get-active">https://www.visitportsmouth.co.uk/things-to-do/get-active</a></p>
<p><b><u>Local Offer Template</u></b></p> <p><b>You told us that...</b></p> <p>Some of the language used in the template sent to those wishing to be included on the Portsmouth Local Offer was not always easy to understand and perhaps too formal for some entries. This particularly applied to services used by young people ie. sport and social clubs.</p>	<p><b>We have...</b></p> <p>Asked Dynamite, the young people's co-production group to produce an alternative template which they felt would contain all information they would need to know about a service. This is now available to use, along with the original template and can be seen on the following entry on the Local Offer  <a href="http://www.portsmouthlocaloffer.org/local-offer-search/item/435">http://www.portsmouthlocaloffer.org/local-offer-search/item/435</a></p>

## Local Offer Entries

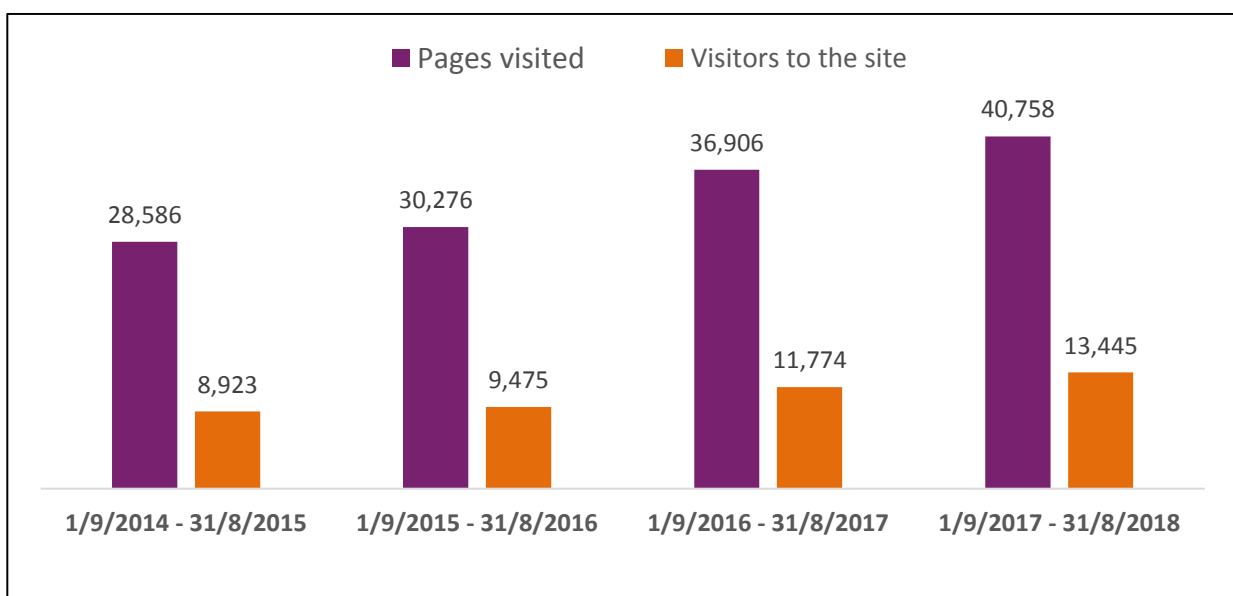
Entries on the Portsmouth Local Offer have steadily increased over the past year, and the website now has 465 entries. See table below for the breakdown of Services and Information categories. Please be aware that some entries will appear in more than one category.

Category	Number of Entries
Education - including schools, education services and general education information	106
Care	38
Health	59
Leisure	74
Advice, Information and Support - including guidance and forms	225
Learning and Work - including colleges, guidance and forms	83

## How many people have been looking at the Portsmouth Local Offer?



The number of visitors to the site has increased by 14% over the last year and the number of pages visited has increased by 10.5% (See table below)





## Why did people contact us in 2017 - 2018?

- To ask for their organisation/service to be included on the Portsmouth Local Offer
- To ask for advice re: the Education, Health, Care Plan process or which forms to use
- To advise of changes or inaccuracies to their Portsmouth Local Offer entry
- To ask for advice re their searches for:
  - Parenting Courses
  - Dyslexia
  - Yellow Disability Card
  - Mental Capacity Act
  - Special Schools in Portsmouth
  - Short Breaks Prepaid Card
- To advise that there was missing information for School Admissions
- To make us aware of problems with the links to other websites
- To compliment the Videos on the Portsmouth Local Offer website

## The Year Ahead 2018 - 2019

The following have been identified as the priorities for the coming year.

-  To continue to develop the local offer as a 'one stop shop' of information for parents/carers and professionals
-  To effectively promote and publicise the local offer to parents/carers, young people and professionals
-  To further develop the local offer as a planning tool for young people
-  To continue to monitor the Portsmouth Local Offer and respond to feedback

Civic Offices  
Floor 2, Core 6  
Guildhall Square  
Portsmouth  
PO1 2EA

Telephone: 023 9284 1166

Email: [portsmouthlocaloffer@portsmouthcc.gov.uk](mailto:portsmouthlocaloffer@portsmouthcc.gov.uk)

[www.portsmouth.gov.uk](http://www.portsmouth.gov.uk)



Date of publication: August 2018

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## **Portsmouth Parent Voice (PPV) – What is a parent carer forum?;**

- PPV – is part of the voluntary sector and is supported by the Local Authority and the Department for Education. We are under the umbrella of Portsmouth Disability Forum, who are a registered charity.
- PPV – is for YOU, the parent carer of a child or young person with an additional or special need and/or disability; aged from 0 – 25 years old, to voice your opinions on what you would like for your child or young person.
- PPV will assist you to find the right support or service you need.
- PPV aims to have the voice and active involvement of parent carers in the service planning and decision-making processes within the local authority and how services are shaped and delivered locally for families with a disabled child or young person, and to make them more focused on the needs of the families with disabled children and young people.

This is YOUR opportunity to express your views about what your child or young person needs. Let us help to enable you to make your voice heard about what support your child or young person needs by contacting us either by telephone or email.

## **PPV commit to provide;**

- A regular e-newsletter “Impacting On You” to keep you informed and updated on current developments and activities: please see our News and Newsletter page.
- Coffee morning/information session in partnership with Autism Hampshire, Information Advice and Support Service and The Carer Centre.
- Help to organise family activities and parent support groups.
- A central telephone number and e-mail address.
- A Facebook page and a Twitter account.
- A central information store; links to other services and resources.
- Parent carer training.

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working with disabled people



## Strategic Business Plan 2018-2021

## Executive Summary

Enable Ability is established as an independent charity for the care, welfare and advancement of disabled people in Portsmouth and the surrounding area. We work in partnership with disabled children and adults, their families and carers, to provide a range of high quality, professional and confidential services.

We support people with severe disabilities as well as those whose needs are at a more 'mild to moderate' level. Altogether we provide for approximately 500 children and adults via 11 different services. The charity is funded through Local Authority contracts, grant awarding bodies (e.g. Children in Need and The National Lottery), fees, donations, fund raising events, investments and rental income.

Our key challenges over the next 3 years comprise: building sufficient capacity to meet increased demand; responding effectively to parent / carer expectations concerning levels of service provision; reductions in funding that we will receive from statutory agencies, increased competition for grant funding and having the capacity to fully meet fundraising targets through events, sponsorship and donations.

As a charity that provides services to people with disabilities, we aim to be as inclusive as we can be and actively represent the Voluntary & Community Sector through membership to the multi-agency SEND (Special Educational Needs & Disabilities) Board set up by the Local Authority to establish and implement a 'Removing Barriers to Inclusion Plan' for the locality, a large part of which relates to the development of inclusive and integrated services.

Enable Ability has always taken a 'needs-led' approach to service development, as a result of which it regularly consults with existing and potential clients, professionals and colleagues from other relevant local organisations. Client / service user views & feedback always play a vital role in the decision-making process concerning changes to services provided and the shaping of those that it seeks to further develop.

Key future developments include the re-configuration of existing services to ensure age-appropriateness and effectiveness in delivery, the introduction of new services to more fully accommodate the needs of our service users and the enhancement of client contact through the introduction of a new customer relationship IT system and a re-vamped website.



## Business Description

### Our Children's Services comprise the following:

**Child Befriending** – a respite scheme that provides one-to-one support for families that have a child with a moderate to severe disability. Support workers enable the children to access wide-ranging activities including outings to places of interest, leisure and sporting pursuits, shopping trips and home-based support as required. We currently support 45 children and during the next 1 – 3 years aim to adapt our child befriending service to more fully accommodate children with wider-ranging needs – including the provision of a viable option for the substantial number of families that are now in receipt of pre-payment cards that can be used to buy services of their choice.

**PALS (Partnership for Active Leisure Service)** – this service supports children aged 6 to 16 years with physical and learning difficulties to enjoy a varied programme of group activities in leisure, sport and recreation; friendship building and the achievement of greater independence whilst building confidence and self-esteem are central to the aims of this project. PALS currently supports approximately 50 children and during the next 1 – 3 years the service will re-configure to focus on providing a service to children aged 6 to 12 years and then further develop its activities in specific locations across the region.

**Play Schemes** – Our Specialist Play Scheme for children aged 5-18 years supports approximately 150 of the most severely disabled children living in Portsmouth during all school holidays. Comprehensive daily programmes of activities include arts sessions, cooking, games, swimming, outings and festival days. Consistently identified as the most valuable 'Short Breraks' service that we offer by parents of children with disabilities (especially during the long summer holidays), one of the parents fed back as follows: 'For the boys this provides an opportunity for them to make friends and try out new things in a safe environment; the staff are fabulous and we would be lost without the Play Scheme being available'. Additionally, trained staff are employed to support up to 70 children with additional needs at mainstream settings across the city of Portsmouth. During the next 1-3 years the Specialist Play Scheme will explore options for further developing life skills and social interaction whilst its inclusive counterpart will support children's progress towards greater independence.

**Saturday Club** – This project, which runs throughout term-time, offers theme days that enable 5-16 year olds with severe disabilities to develop a range of skills to increase their confidence and self-esteem by participating in activities that would not be otherwise available to them. Up to 25 children attend each week during term-time and by allocating places into 3 different age groups on a rotational basis, we support up to 85 children each year. During the next 1-3 years we will build upon our existing framework to extend the range of opportunities available to broaden their experience and help them to more fully achieve their personal goals.



**Portsmouth Teenage Project & Holiday Scheme** – These two projects dovetail across term-time and holiday periods for 14-17 year-olds with activities taking place one evening per week during school term-time and daily during school holiday periods. Providing for young people with mild to moderate disabilities these projects provide tremendous opportunities for personal development through group activities in partnership with local organisations – including drama at the New Theatre Royal and Sailing Skills at Ben Ainslie Racing. Up to 20 young people attend each session for both projects and approximately 60 attend throughout the year. During the next 1 to 3 years the project will attract a wider range of participants (including young people with autism) and extend the range of options available via further local partnerships.

**Sports Club** – has provided a range of indoor mixed sports sessions (including football, basketball and child-led games) together with swimming for children aged 6 to 18 years. We currently have 40 children registered for this project, with an average of 15 attending per session. During the next 1-3 years this service will be re-configured into a leisure group that embraces a wider range of sporting and related activities whilst also offering greater opportunities for socialisation for children aged 11-16 years – thereby providing a follow-on group for the younger children that will have been attending PALS.

**Wheelchair Basketball** – Based at a large gym this fun-packed team sport provides great opportunities for children and young people to engage in some friendly competition whilst developing fitness. Providing sessions for both beginners and more experienced players the project is focussed on helping to develop the skills of individuals so that ultimately the more able participants can aspire to playing competitively at a regional or even national level. There are places for up to 16 young people per week and we currently have 25 registered for the activity. During the next 1-3 years we anticipate that the training and experience we provide will support more individuals to progress to regional and national competition levels.



## **Our 16+ and Adult Services comprise the following:**

**Adult Befriending** – In addition to providing continuity of service for young people once they reach 18 years of age, our Adult Befriending service is designed to provide a few hours support each week to individuals aged 18 to 65 years who are either socially isolated or severely restricted by virtue of their disability. The service currently supports 30 adults – and this is expected to increase as a result of further progression into adulthood and fresh referrals. As well as on-going one-to-one support, during the next 1 - 3 years, this service will pilot larger group sessions to offer opportunities for further socialisation. We will also work in partnership with local organisations to encourage additional supported volunteering sessions in areas of specific interest to the clients.

**Advocacy** – Our Issue-Based Advocacy Service is free, confidential and provided by independent trained advocates to ensure a voice for disabled people together with the necessary support. Unique to the area in its approach to advocacy, individuals can be helped in making informed choices, dealing with family or work related problems, accessing legal services and tribunals. This service receives up to 300 referrals per annum and of those that require follow-up, we support approximately 20 individuals through tribunals each year. This valuable and well-respected service will be extending its reach during the next 1 - 3 years by ensuring greater representation at coffee mornings, drop-ins and other events that are organised to specifically provide support for adults with disabilities (as well as parents of children with disabilities).

**Hampshire Youth Scheme** – This project is specifically designed to support young people aged 16 to 25 years living outside of the city of Portsmouth in the South East Hampshire region. Activities offered are designed to enable young people to interact and socialise with other peers on a regular basis whilst being provided with opportunities to volunteer, gain work experience and – where appropriate – seek employment. This project has over 50 young people registered, with an average of 12-15 attending individual sessions (40-45 per month). The next 1 – 3 years will be focussed on further developing the young people’s employability skills and extending the range of opportunities made available to them.

**Portsmouth Youth Scheme** – Having recently been trialled as a pilot, this project is designed to mirror the already successful Hampshire Youth Scheme with a similar focus on the provision of volunteering and work experience opportunities to develop employability, thereby supporting these young people to reach their potential. It will initially build upon the work already undertaken with the young people that have attended the Portsmouth Teenage Project and Holiday Scheme during recent years. The level of interest expressed during recent consultations suggests that this project will be at least as popular as its Hampshire counterpart.

## **Additional Services Comprise:**

**Wheel chair Accessible Minibus** – We own a 14-seater wheelchair accessible minibus which is available for hire.

**Umbrella Body for DBS Checks** – We are registered as an Umbrella Body for obtaining Disclosure and Barring Service checks on behalf of client organisations.

## Market Analysis

**Our Service Users** – comprise children aged 5 rising to 18 years and adults aged 19 to 65 years with both mild to moderate and severe disabilities, within the Portsmouth and South East Hampshire geographical area. Whilst diagnosed disabilities mainly comprise cerebral palsy, Down Syndrome, autism spectrum disorders and severe learning difficulties, our services are designed to meet the needs of service users with wide-ranging physical, learning, sensory and communication disorders. Altogether we support over 350 service users and their families on a regular basis.

**Other Providers** – The services that Enable Ability provides are generally unique to the locality. A number of other charities provide limited specialised services similar to ours and where there is benefit to the client population, we are happy and prepared to engage with these to explore and provide joint provision.

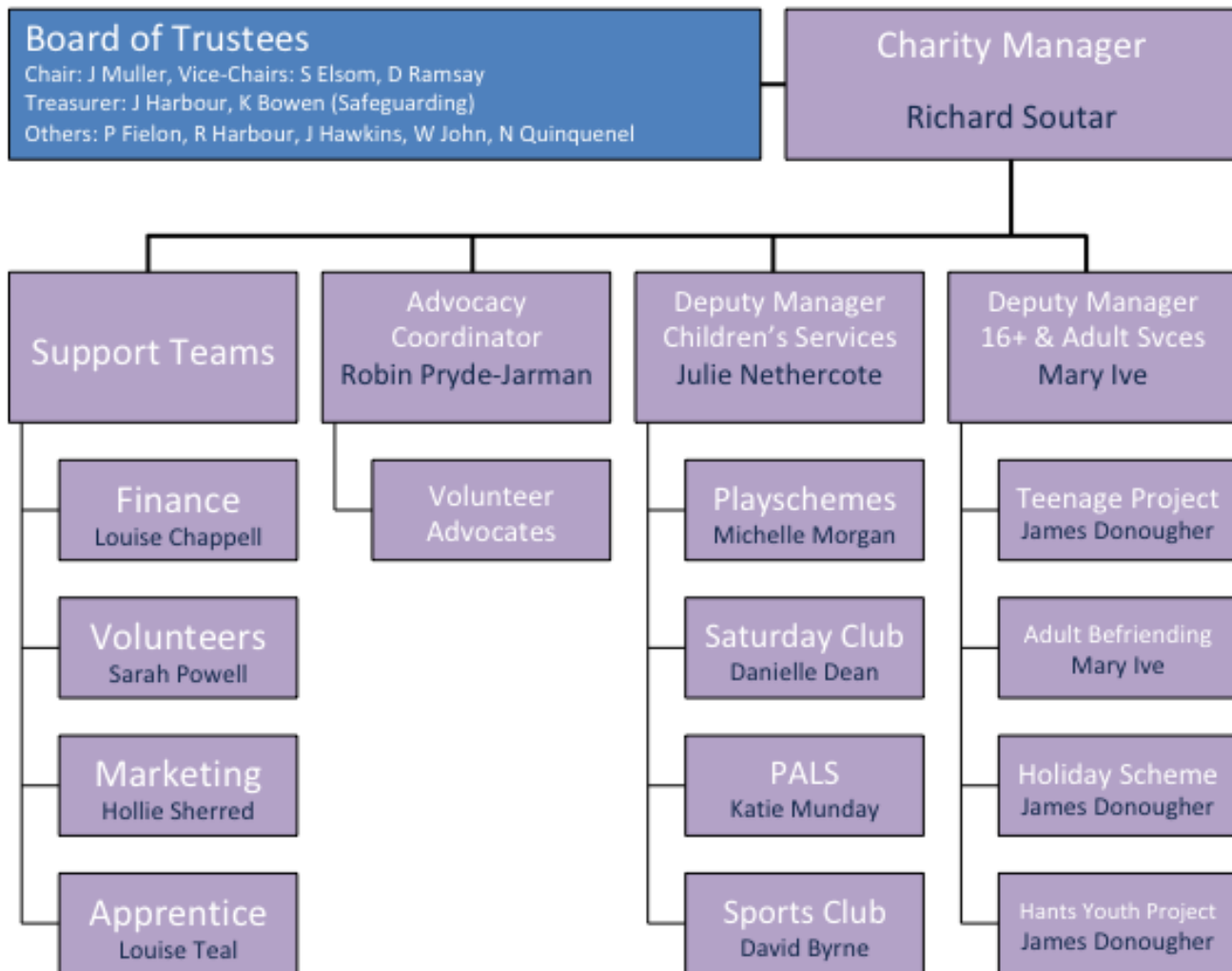
**Future Objectives** – In addition to the services detailed above, Enable Ability intends to develop capabilities to offer volunteering and work experience opportunities to its adult service users. To meet this intent, senior managers and trustees have been giving due consideration to the development of a Social Enterprise. Although at a relatively early stage, discussions have already taken place with another local charity about jointly developing an existing retail outlet. As always, Enable Ability aims to be needs-led and as inclusive as possible in its approach and has already started to schedule further discussions with other local charities towards achieving this aim.

The charity is also reviewing ways in which it can develop its existing play scheme provision to meet the increased level of need, whilst ensuring that it responds on an age appropriate basis for all of its services users.



# Organisation Management

## Enable Ability Organisation Structure



**How We Operate** – Enable Ability receives referrals from many sources. Increasingly, initial contact is made via word of mouth. For play-schemes, child & adult befriending and all projects that involve group activities, where possible, each referral is followed up with a home visit to both ensure that the individual meets the eligibility criteria and to complete the registration process (which always includes a comprehensive risk assessment).

Subject to availability, potential service users are then allocated places at appropriate projects where every effort is made to fully accommodate their needs. All services are continuously monitored and, in many cases, in-depth reports are required for presentation to our funders on a regular basis.

All staff employed by Enable Ability are recruited in accordance with recognised 'Safer Recruitment' practices and are required to have an enhanced-level Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check in place before commencement of any unsupervised contact with children and / or vulnerable adults. All staff are inducted and given appropriate training, including mandatory courses (e.g. Safeguarding).

**Support Services** – The charity employs a part-time Volunteer Coordinator to actively recruit and induct appropriate individuals to its respective projects (and a full acknowledgment of its successful deployment of young people as volunteers resulted in Enable Ability receiving the 'Charity of the Year Award' from the Department of Employability at the University of Portsmouth in 2016).

The charity ensures that all of its staff members receive mandatory and other relevant training to fulfil their roles. We have always endeavoured to ensure that our paid staff and volunteers are treated as fairly as possible and have continuously achieved 'Investors in People' status since 2000. At its last inspection (in 2016) the assessor stated that she was aware of a step change in the charity. Two of the key points that she made in her summary were as follows: 'People like working with Enable Ability and see it as something which is good to have on their CV' and 'Good leadership is in place, focused on delivery of high quality services in a 21st century world'.

**Market Awareness** - Acknowledging the need to more effectively promote the charity, a part-time position of 'Social Media and Partnerships Officer' was created 3 years ago. Individuals employed in this role have helped the organisation to develop a number of valuable partnerships in the local community, expand its funding base and establish a regular programme of fund raising events throughout the year. This role has now been re-branded as 'Marketing and Events Officer' and provides the necessary liaison and follow-up to ensure a growing presence in the local community.

**Governance** - Enable Ability's governance is conducted via a board of 10 trustees. As well as service user representation, their wealth of expertise (including backgrounds in banking, adult social care, statutory children's services, education, legal services, IT and marketing) provides the necessary strategic direction to ensure that the charity progresses in an effective and measured way.

Recent strategic planning sessions within the leadership team identified opportunities for enhancing our management of client information – making us both more efficient and more capable of managing our clients across services. After due market research we chose the Charitylog customer relationship management (CRM) system. We are now completing the data entry phase and already the system is paying major dividends in office efficiency.

Other aspects of office efficiency have also continued to be enhanced, including VOIP cloud telephony, standardised software platforms, network printers and local 'cloud' storage. Future plans include a complete revamp of our website and possible migration from our current outlook email to the Google-mail suite.

**Fund Raising** – During the last 7 years we have developed a very pro-active fund raising group (comprising staff, service users and volunteers). We employ a part-time Marketing Officer who also takes lead responsibility for organising fund raising events. Within the last year these have included participation in a Dragon Boat Race, a gig night (with a local band that designated us as their charity of the year – and performed at the 'Victorious Festival'), a Sponsored Walk, Zumbathon and Quiz night. Future events already booked for the forthcoming year include a Bingo Night, an Art Auction and bag-packing events at a local Asda store (as well as the Annual Dragon Boat Race and Sponsored Walk).



## Promotional Strategies

The services that we provide are promoted via flyers, our website and other social media, newsletters, the 'Local Offer', events and 'word of mouth'. Whilst the majority of referrals are received via the Local Authority and agencies in the locality that are in contact with people with disabilities, individuals may also self-refer. An immediate priority for us during the first 6 months of the 2018-19 financial year will be the re-development of our website and other social media to significantly improve accessibility and communications at all levels.

During the first 3 months of 2018 the trustees agreed to invest in the production of a professional video for promotional purposes. This has now been completed and will be made available on the website (a 4 minute version with access to the full 12 minute version); the full-length version will be used for presentations to existing and potential partners as well as being widely distributed within our existing network.

Enable Ability has a long history of working in partnership with organisations locally to ensure that the services that it delivers are appropriate and needs led. The charity works particularly closely with Portsmouth Disability Forum (a local lobbying and campaigning organisation that includes DIAL [Disability Information Advice Line] –who regularly refer advocacy clients to ourselves), The Bivol Trust (who provide services to a very similar client group and with whom we have jointly run fund-raising events) and Portsmouth City Council (with whom we have a number of service contracts).

Increasingly the charity has worked with potential employers, including The Mary Rose Museum, to be able to offer volunteering and work experience opportunities to our service users. During the next 1 – 3 years we aim to both further develop existing partnerships and establish new ones.



## Funding Requirements

The current turnover for Enable Ability is slightly in excess of £700,000. Our funding ultimately comes from many and varied sources and at present, the breakdown is approximately: 65% Grants & Local Authority Contracts; 20% Fees; 10% Investments & Rental Income and 5% Fund Raising & Donations. Budgets and funding requirements are carefully calculated for each individual project together with strategies for achieving the necessary levels of income (ensuring that overheads and management / administrative costs are also fully covered). With ongoing increases to the National Minimum Wage, the charity is facing growing cost pressures and has, of necessity, reviewed the most effective way of fully meeting its funding requirements.

During the past 12 months the charity has undergone a significant reorganisation, resulting in an improved management structure whilst at the same time realising efficiency savings. Regular finance meetings between senior staff and trustees facilitate an effective monitoring process.

Fund raising events are carefully scheduled throughout the year via the Marketing and Events Officer to maximise income and build new and existing partnerships within the local community. Our fund raising target for the forthcoming year is £30,000.

## Financial Projections

We anticipate that the expenditure for the current financial year will be approximately £725,000 - £750,000 and we aim to achieve the full amount via contracts, grants, fees, investments and rental income, donations and increasingly via fund raising and sponsorship.





## In Conclusion

Over its strategic three-year horizon:

- Enable Ability will prioritise the re-configuration of existing services to ensure age-appropriateness and effectiveness in delivery whilst introducing new services to more fully accommodate the needs of its service users.
- The website platform and content, integrated with social media, will be fully re-engineered to ensure that it serves the charity, its service users and everyone that has an interest in the organisation as effectively as possible.
- The charity will continue to further develop its marketing and fund-raising strategy with the aim of building upon existing partnerships, developing new alliances and organising events throughout the year.
- As a charity that provides services to people with disabilities we will continue to work towards being as inclusive as practicable and actively engage in the local inclusion agenda.
- Enable Ability will fully explore suitable options for the development of a Social Enterprise.
- We will actively use the Charity Commission Governance advice to assist the Trustees in effectively steering the charity.
- We will continually seek input from users and partners through surveys and other means to inform us of our progress and where we need to continue to focus.



Charity Registration: 276422  
Company No: 1405937

working with disabled people

311-313 Copnor Road  
Portsmouth  
Hampshire  
PO3 5EG



023 9267 1846



[enquiries@enableability.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@enableability.org.uk)



[www.enableability.org.uk](http://www.enableability.org.uk)



[@enableability](https://www.facebook.com/enableability)



Portsmouth  
CITY COUNCIL



INVESTORS  
IN PEOPLE

**Report to:** Julia Katherine, Head of Inclusion  
**Report prepared by:** Fiona Donaldson  
**Date:** December 2018  
**Title:** Short Breaks Prepaid Card Feedback

**1. Purpose of this report**

To report on the feedback obtained from parents and carers on the Prepaid Card.

**2. Background**

Portsmouth City Council introduced the Prepaid Card as part of the personalisation agenda in August 2016. Each eligible child receives an allocation of £300 per year, with the first card issued on a pro-rata basis depending upon when their application was made.

A feedback form was sent to gather views from parents and carers on how they have used the card and the impact this has had on the family. Feedback was previously sought from families who had been issued with the card between August 2016 and April 2017. This new wave of feedback was gathered from those families who received the card between April 2017 and March 2018.

**3. Responses**

176 letters were sent and 54 (21%) were returned. Feedback was anonymous.

**Question 1 - What have you used the card for?**

There continues to be a wide range of activities/services being accessed. The most popular include; paying for playschemes, days out, meals out, sports and leisure sessions, annual passes, cinema/theatre and theme parks.

For full breakdown see Appendix 1.

**Question 2 - How has the Prepaid Card helped you and your family?**

Wide range of positive feedback, such as spending time with their other children and as a whole family and being able to access short breaks they would otherwise not be able to, due to now having the money to do so.

Comments include:

"The card helped enormously, relieved a great deal of stress"

"This has been truly life changing for my son and given us as a family the tools to help my son's extra curricular activities"

"Can't thank you enough as my son gets loads of lovely days out and cost wasn't a worry"

"It has given me valuable time off caring responsibilities and also spend quality time with my other children"

For full breakdown see Appendix 2.

### **Question 3 - How has the Prepaid Card helped your child?**

The card has enabled the children and young people to experience and try new things, spending time away from their family and with their family, days out, and increased interaction with other children/peers.

For full breakdown see Appendix 3.

### **Question 4 - Did you have any difficulties using the card? If yes, please tell us.**

43 out of the 54 respondents had no difficulties with using the card. Of the remaining 11, 4 had some payments declined (this is due to blocks on certain merchants or the cardholder does not have sufficient funds), the remaining issues were related to loss of PIN and problems with the online access. The latter occurred as a result of the new GDPR rules and the prepaid card company introducing another level of security to cardholders accounts. This has been remedied with the amendment of information sent to parents upon card issue.

### **Question 5 - Please tell us of any areas you feel would improve the card.**

31 of the 54 fed back that there were no areas of improvement. Of the remaining 23, the following comments were made.

3 would like more money.

1 would like it to extend past age 18

The rest are process related, limited by the systems functionality and internal audit restrictions , for example; would like to be able to get a balance of the card, choose their own PIN number, be able to withdraw cash and where they can use the card.

### **Question 6 - Overall, how would you rate the prepaid card? Please circle a number between 1 and 5, with 5 being the highest.**

**April 2017 - March 2018:** 83% rated it 5, 9% rated it 4, 8% rated it 3 and 1 parent rated it 10.

The previous survey was rated as below.

**August 2016 - March 2017:** 62% rated it 5, 32% rated it 4, 6% rated it 2/3.

## **Additional Comments**

1 parent commented:

"Without the short breaks prepaid card I am sure that many families would be unable to fund any type of playscheme/respice care, without which there would be an adverse/negative impact to mental health of family members and a strain on family budget. The rewards of the scheme are so transparently obvious that I would like to see the greater government/ local authority funding to enable all families with disabled children to benefit to a far greater degree than they are able to with the current level of funding".

The majority of the remaining additional comments were positive as below:

"Again just a huge thank you"

" I have no further comment to leave here, other than how delighted I am to have the prepaid card. This gesture has helped us positively regarding our financial situation. It is so convenient to use and accepted in all the places we visited".

"Just to say thank you for giving my child this card. We can do so much more now. It's been great".

"Thank you very much, it has helped get the kids out a lot more".

"Love this"

"Thank you for running the scheme. It is comforting that children with disabilities are given a helping hand to experience new things".

"As much as I've liked having the card, life has got harder since they were given out as now everyone has one and see it as "free money". Everyone is now using playscheme a service they never used until getting this card, which has limited places. My child is a big user of Enable Abilities playscheme, we have always used it and always paid. Since the cards have been out there's now very little days he can go to the playscheme because of the numbers and a lot of people are using it because its free childcare. If they needed help and respice why didn't they need it when they had to pay, that's what DLA is for? Sorry but it makes me angry! If this card changed the rules and could no longer be used to pay for playscheme 50% of those children would no longer attend". Please note: The Specialist Holiday Playscheme has a block contract for a maximum number of places within the budget allocated.

#### **4. Impact, previous feedback and next steps**

The main issue identified in the previous feedback was the blocked code for The Dockyard and the YMCA Playscheme. This was resolved through Portsmouth City Council paying a small charge to amend the blocked code list.

The majority of this feedback has highlighted the positive impact it has had on the parent's, carers and their family and the child.

Further feedback will be gathered from the new cardholders on annual basis to identify any other areas of improvement.

## 5. **Appendices**

See embedded documents on the next page

**Appendix 1** - What have you used the card for?



Appendix 1

**Appendix 2** - How has the Prepaid Card helped you and your family?



Appendix 2

**Appendix 3** - How has the Prepaid Card helped your child?



Appendix 3



# Appendix 1 - What was the card used for?

What the card was used for?

Short holiday break  
Eating out

Trip to Disneyland Paris

We have used the card for the cinema

Travel, Days Out, Cinema, bowling, holiday club

I used the card to help get clothes for a family day out and whilst at legoland, then for dinner after. Also she had a father daughter day at the cinema

Theatre and trip to London. War Museum.

Paying for playscheme

Swimming. Enable Ability during the school holiday

Cinema, swimming, outings and MacDonalDs

for swimming, leisure, day care

Days Out (Theme Park)  
Playscheme (Enable Ability)

To pay for Enable Ability

Season Ticket for Portsmouth Football Club  
Marwell  
Enable Ability

Enable Ability Playsheme  
Days out over the summer holidays (Zoos etc)

To fund School holiday/half term playscheme for our disabled son

To pay for days out as a family

Paying for Enable Ability Playschemes/Saturday Club

Swimming pool for the garden

We have used the card for Playschemes and also purchased a tablet for my child

Cubs, Holiday Playscheme

Extra hours with sessional worker with Enable Ability

Socialisation, visitng friends (Chichester)

Enable Ability playscheme and Saturday club

Horse Riding Lessons  
Gymnastics

1-1 swimming lessons, Enable Ability Playscheme. Fairthorne Manor day camps

attending YMCA activities

What the card was used for?

We have used the card for many things including a hotel break and coach tickets, play centres and Flip Out and a paddling pool in the garden.

Towards holiday expenses and travel costs

YMCA Services/Holiday Childcare

Playscheme - Enable Ability

Going out for food

Day Trips to the cinema

Playschemes

Days out

Fuel etc

Youth Scheme holidays

Youth Scheme evenings

Summer playscheme

Saturday Club

We have used the card for a caravan holiday on the Isle of Wight

Short breaks

Fun and Theme Parks

Pays for Saturday Clubs and summer holidays playscheme and support worker to stay at home or take him out for a few hours

My son loves going to the cinema, bowling, he also loves eating out

Fuel, Staunton Country Park, Clothes for my daughter, trip to hayling Island

Trip to London for sight seeing and visited some places of interest for the children. Cafes at Gunwharf, Vue Cinema.

We have used the card for day trips out

Swimming, Pizza Hut, Playzone, Flipout

Trips out for my child. Cinema, bowling, swimming etc

We had a couple of days at Paultons Park and went to see Santa

Day Trips/Meals

Bike rides

We have used it for days out and to access services across the city

Enable Ability PALS Activities such as archery and playzone. Enable Ability Teenage Project activities such as cinema, Romsey Rapids, beach BBQ and arcades. Portsmouth Autism Support Network Football and Youth Hub

pay for annual membership to Marwell. Take my child's brother out for lunch. Pay for my child's riding lessons

I buy clothes for 2 disabled kids and I pay for cinema and meal after

day trip to Marwell. Ten Pin Bowling. Day trip to Peppa Pig World

What the card was used for?

Family Days out - activities for the children, sports activities while on holiday

Mainly car fuel for family trips, havent used it much

To pay towards 2 family breaks

Camping holiday, Cinema, Krazy Kaves, Monkey World

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## Appendix 2 - How has the card helped the family?

How the card has helped the family

It gives a chance to get together and spend more time as a family

I was able to use the card to pay for a friend to help during the trip as a support for myself and my child

We all went out together to do something that is normally too expensive

It has helped us enjoy more time together

It helped as a family because we was able to do a family day out at Legoland which without having that I woulnt be able to afford.

I have not had a credit card before so was a little nervous to use it. But it was okay.

It has helped a huge amount especially with playscheme fees

So my son has some fun days with other children

Very helpful

Save money and gives valuable time away from caring.

It has helped pay for days out as a family, also allowed my child to interact with other children at Playscheme

To give me a respite

He loves Zoo's and we can go anytime for as long as he can manage. When he goes to Enable Ability it gives the family a break.

It has helped us so much. We would not have been able to afford the playscheme and its so important for our duaghter to go. She loves going and it helps to keep some form of routine for her so she can cope better. Its also important for us to then be able to spend that one to one time with our other daughter which we wouldn't be able to do otherwise.

An opportunity for our son to socialise independently  
For us to spend quality leisure time with our daughter  
For us to be given a brief break from caring duties

Enabled us to go to places we werent able to such as Peppa Pig World

We have not used it very much yet

being able to buy the swimming pool saved so much wasted money on days out and it is a great safe place for my daughter to play as she enjoys swimming but struggles with noisy swim centres

It has helped us to spend time with my other child. And also given us a short respite from otherwise full on childcare

Yes

Enormously, relieved a great deal of stress

yes definitely

How the card has helped the family

Allows my child to spend time with other children in a safe environment, while we get a break.

It helps pay towards lessons

It has enabled my child to participate in activities she wouldn't have been able to otherwise. It has also give us some respite.

financially greatly

It has been a massive help during the school holidays when the children are especially bored and restless. Having the card made me less stressed about how I would entertain them.

IT has helped us with the cost of inflation going up towards petrol etc

Access childcare during the year. Grateful for support during treatment (Summer 2018)

as a family we have more funds to go out to do things together

It gave us the much needed time to have a break and also go out as a family.

Given us time to spend with other child

This has truly been life changing for my son and given us as a family the tools to help my sons extra curricular activities

We have had special time trying something different and getting away from home for the weekend

Its given me valuable time off caring responsibilities and also spend quality time with my other children

Able to pay for clubs and support worker otherwise I wouldn't be able to fund his club. I am able to have some free time with my other child

Can't thank you enough as my son gets loads of lovely days out and cost wasn't a worry.

To be able to get about

The Prepaid card has assisted us financially. I was able to take the children to cinemas, cafes, and to watch movies on big screens.

It has saved us so much money as we can do so much more

It has helped a lot with taking the kids out as places can be very expensive to get in.

It has given her more opportunity to do a variety of activities without worrying about the cost.

Its very helpful and helps keep the cost of summer holidays down

To give us some freedom and to spend time together

Has given my son the chance to go out on his bike with an adult and learn more skills on his bike as well as a break for us.

It has been able to provide us with good memories

How the card has helped the family

It enables us to have funds set aside so that my child can choose whatever social activities he wants do that month. It gives us the freedom and reassurance to say "yes, give that a go" without worrying about cost.

It has taken the pressure of. I no longer need to justify the spending to myself

Yes

We have been able to enjoy days out as a family that we wouldn't have have been able to without the card.

by having a little extra money to do more of the things he enjoys doing, especially during the summer holiday.

See above

This card has been used to spend quality time as a family. It has enabled us to take our daughter to places she may not have had the chance to go to.

Enabled us to have short breaks away and days out as a family

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## Appendix 3 - How has the card helped the child?

How the card has helped the child

It gives them the opportunity to experience and try new things.

My child and my stress levels were reduced by having an extra care giver during the trip

She got to choose the film and had a treat

Given him more opportunities to enjoy activities he likes

It helped her get out of the house and have some needed bonding time with her Dad.

The theatre is so expensive and my daughter likes to go, we could not have gone without it.

Hugely

To experience new things when out with Enable Ability team

It has helped very well and are pleased that my child got it.

My child had fun doing positive activities

Been able to socialise in environments (such as Theme Parks) where we normally wouldnt go. She loved it!!

To be able to access Enable Ability

He enjoys time watching his football team. He gets to meet new children at Enable Ability. Helps with his empathy with other disabled children.

It helped provide not only more of a routine by giving her time at playscheme but also the opportunities to have days out which we wouldn't be able to afford. She has met people and learned a lot.

Our son has gained independence from us as his parents/primary carers  
Our son has increased opportunities during a variety of activities

Able to experience new things

To access services (specifically those provided by Enable Ability)

She is able to play in the safety of her own garden with minimum supervision

It has helped my child to also have a break from us.

To do things he likes

Gain access to a normal life outside of school

My child has been able to go for days out over the summer. Without the card we wouldn't be able to do it.

He loves all the different activities at playscheme and Saturday club. He is always really chatty when he comes home.

The lessons help core stability as her posture is bad

as above

How the card has helped the child

She is able to attend her 'club' and meet up with all her friends

It has helped her get out of the house and do different activities that I would otherwise might not have been able to afford.

Holiday

As above - access care during breaks

Sometimes we go out with friends to the cinema so socialising is a big thing for my child's confidence

This helped them to integrate with other children at playschemes during school holidays. They have also enjoyed going out as a family.

Socialisation

Occupied during holiday

My son looks forward to attending Saturday Club and is always asking when he can next go. The card has provided the financial support for him to have independence and go.

She has experienced caravanning, which probably wouldn't have done if it wasn't for the prepaid card. WE also explored a new area as a family and made memories

It has helped him access activities in town he wouldn't otherwise have been able to.

Someone to take him out for a while as I cannot control him when we go out. Going to club he has a bit of a social life.

My son loves going to the movies and he has got to see every new movie that he wanted to see

To access places and do things she would otherwise be unable to do

The prepaid card has helped my child in respect of being able to meet her immediate needs. It has helped her to visit places I have told her about in the past and seen on television.

My child is always busy as we can do lots more. He is very happy.

By letting them go out more and not just every now and then.

She has been able to try activities she may not have been able to experience before due to cost.

We have been able to take her to places and days out.

To enjoy day trips up to London

Same as above - the enjoyment for him is great, he loves his bike and without short breaks he wouldn't be able to go far on his bike.

They have been able to interact with other children.

It's broadening my child's experiences and comfort zone. Fun! Increasing his independence as some activities they go on the bus/train etc., buy own drinks, meeting other youngsters. Interacting with new adults.

He loves the zoo and has benefitted in terms of development skills from the riding.

How the card has helped the child

Used money to go to cinema and eat lunch, kids love that.

It has helped him to access more social experiences and environments.

as above

See above

Has allowed her to try new things and experience new places

We are able to do more things as a family which my son enjoys

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Department  
for Education

# **Short breaks for carers of disabled children**

**Departmental advice for local  
authorities**

**March 2011**

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# Executive Summary

## About this advice

The Government has now published proposals of reform in the education and health support for disabled children and young people and children with special educational needs. Short breaks for children and carers feature throughout the consultation document.<sup>1</sup>

The Government has already announced a continued investment in short breaks by providing over £800 million over the 2011 to 2015 period as part of the Early Intervention Grant.

Local authorities, therefore, may find it helpful to consider the following non- statutory advice within the context of the Green Paper proposals.

This first section of the advice is intended to give an overview of the legal position in relation to the Breaks for Carers of Disabled Children Regulations 2011 and then provide examples of good practice which have been developed over the period 2008 to 2011.

This is non-statutory advice from the Department for Education. It has been produced to help local authorities understand how to fulfil their duties under the Children Act 1989 and the Breaks for Carers of Disabled Children Regulations 2011. In this document, these Regulations are referred to as “the Short Breaks Regulations”.

## Who is this advice for?

This advice is for local authorities.

## Legal context

The Short Breaks Regulations provide further detail on how local authorities must perform their duty in the Children Act 1989 (“the 1989 Act”) to provide, as part of the range of services they provide for families, breaks from caring for carers of disabled children to support them to continue to care for their children at home and to allow them to do so more effectively. In summary, the Short Breaks Regulations require local authorities to do three things:

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<sup>1</sup> [Support and Aspiration: A new approach to special educational needs and disability – A Consultation.](#)

- to ensure that, when making short break provision, they have regard to the needs of different types of carers, not just those who would be unable to continue to provide care without a break;
- to provide a range of breaks, as appropriate, during the day, night, at weekends and during the school holidays; and
- to provide parents with a short breaks services statement detailing the range of available breaks and any eligibility criteria attached to them.

## Summary of advice

### Local authorities must:

- provide a range of short breaks services;
- give families the choice to access short breaks services using a direct payment;
- publish a statement of their short breaks services on their website;
- keep their short breaks statement under review;
- state in their short breaks service statement the range of short breaks services available, the criteria by which eligibility for services will be assessed, and how the range of services is designed to meet the needs of families with disabled children in their area;
- consult parents as part of the review of the statement;
- consider the legal implications of the eligibility criteria they apply to short breaks services; and
- not apply any eligibility criteria mechanistically without consideration of a particular family's needs.

### Local authorities should ensure that:

- short breaks are reliable and regular to best meet families' needs;
- local authorities should try to reach groups of parents who may be more difficult to engage;
- parents are engaged in the design of local short breaks services;



- short breaks can build on and be offered by universal service providers;
- they are working in partnership with health services to understand the range of short breaks services in their area and to train the workforce;
- short breaks promote greater levels of confidence and competence for young people moving towards adult life;
- local authorities should ensure that those who use short breaks services have the chance to shape the development of those services; and
- they continue to develop their workforce in relation to short breaks services.

The following represents key areas of good practice which have been developed over the Aiming High for Disabled Children short breaks programme.<sup>2</sup>

### **It is good practice for local authorities to ensure that:**

- a "local offer" is considered in order to provide families with access to some short breaks services without any assessment;
- formal assessment of families' needs leads to a tailored package of services for them;
- in preparing the short breaks services they have thought about how best to share information about disabled children between agencies within existing data protection requirements;
- they have considered working together with partners to ensure strategic sign-off and shared accountability locally for the statement and the services it refers to; and
- commissioning is leading to more responsive short breaks services.

### **Related legislation**

- Section 10 of the Children Act 2004 provides the legal basis for partnerships working across local authorities, health authorities and other relevant parties. These may be used for the planning and delivery of short breaks services.

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<sup>2</sup> Aiming High for Disabled Children was set up as a transformation programme for Disabled Children and their families during 2008-2011 more information can be found on the [Department's website](#).

- Section 6 of the Carers and Disabled Children Act 2000 ('the 2000 Act') places local authorities under a duty to carry out an assessment of a carer's needs in certain circumstances.<sup>3</sup> When assessing a carer's needs under these provisions the local authority must take account of whether the carer works or wishes to work, undertakes or wishes to undertake education, training or any leisure activity. The local authority must take this assessment into account when deciding what services (such as short breaks) to provide under section 17 of the 1989 Act. For further guidance on undertaking integrated assessments of the needs of the child and family, please refer to guidance on short breaks issued as part of the Care Planning, Placement and Review Statutory Guidance.<sup>4</sup>

The other provisions listed here relate to the services which local authorities must provide to disabled children in addition to short breaks:

- Local authorities are required to ensure their services are accessible to disabled people, to promote equality for disabled people, and to encourage their participation in public life. The scope of the Equality Act 2010 to extend to schools and other public authorities.
- Local authorities are required to secure sufficient childcare to meet the requirements of parents in their area to enable them to work, or to take up training and educational opportunities which could lead them to work.<sup>5</sup> When determining whether the provision of childcare is sufficient, local authorities must have regard to the needs of parents in their area for the provision of childcare which is suitable for disabled children.<sup>6</sup>
- Local authorities must also make sure they provide information about local services for children, including specifically families with children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Local authorities must be proactive in the way they disseminate information about children's services, rather than waiting for families to ask.
- Local authorities are required to ensure disabled young people aged between 13 and 25 have access to sufficient educational and recreational leisure-time activities which are for the improvement of their wellbeing.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Section 6 of the 2000 Act requires local authorities to carry out an assessment (i) where the carers are providing a substantial amount of care on a regular basis; (ii) they request such an assessment; and (iii) where the local authority is satisfied that the child and family are persons for whom it may provide services under section 17 of the 1989 Act.

<sup>4</sup> More information on the [Department for Education's website](#).

<sup>5</sup> Section 6 of the Childcare Act 2006.

<sup>6</sup> The Disabled Children Access to Childcare programme funds to local authorities to support the development of childcare for disabled children.

<sup>7</sup> Section 507B of the Education Act 1996.

# 1. Who should be considered for access to breaks from caring

1.1 We know that short breaks benefit both disabled children and their parents. Children benefit from new interests, relationships and activities, while parents can catch up with 'everyday activities' (sleep, cleaning, shopping), attend to their physical and psychological wellbeing, and maintain and develop social networks.

## Short breaks should not just be there for those at crisis point

1.2 Short breaks should be used to enhance the ability of parents to care for their disabled child and any other children they may have. In performing its duty under the Short Breaks Regulations, the local authority will need to consider a broad spectrum of families and family circumstances – families should not have to reach crisis point before they receive a short break.

1.3 Local authorities should carefully consider the needs of the parent and should look out for signs that a short break is needed. It is likely that short breaks will have a positive impact where a carer is:

- unable to attend regular training, education or leisure activity because of the level of care required by the child;
- unable, or limited in their ability, to provide care for other members of the family or attend to maintenance of the household because of the care needed by the child:
- struggling to find the capacity to care for the disabled child without a short break; and
- where the provision of short breaks would clearly enable a carer to provide more effective parenting and care.

'For some parents the provision of short breaks simply means the difference between being able to cope with their disabled child and not being able to cope.'

(A report on Themes Emerging from the Qualitative Research into the Impact of Short Break Provision on Families with Disabled Children Centre for Disability Research, December 2009)

## Access to short breaks must not be judged on impairment alone

1.4 Impairments vary in severity and their impact on family life. Caring for children with profound and multiple disabilities, complex health needs and challenging behaviour may be particularly demanding for families. The impact, particularly on the health and wellbeing of carers and brothers and sisters, is hugely variable and will strongly influence the determination of need.

1.5 The Framework for the Assessment of Children in Need and their Families provides the statutory guidance for local authorities to assess the impact of any disability on family life by considering:

- the child's developmental needs;
- the parents' parenting capacity; and
- family and environmental factors.<sup>8</sup>

1.6 Local authorities have a duty to assess the needs of carers taking account of their wish to undertake work, education, training or leisure activities. Parents often report how highly they value opportunities to participate in ordinary everyday activities. It enables them to overcome the social isolation and stresses often associated with having a disabled child. Having a break from caring responsibilities reinforces the long-term resilience of families to continue to care for disabled children.

1.7 The impact of a child's disability on their siblings must be an integral part of the family's assessment. One of the most frequently mentioned benefits to families of a short break for their disabled child is time to attend to the needs of their non-disabled children.

## Local Offer

1.8 A local offer presents a choice of short break opportunities to families. It can enable local authorities to direct resources to services, rather than funding unnecessary assessments. Families accessing a local offer are not subject to any additional assessment by the local authority, and instead provide existing evidence of a disability. In some local authorities, disabled children are all registered, and all those registered can access the local offer. In others, families already registered with health or other local authority services relating to their disability are able to access a local offer.

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<sup>8</sup> Visit the [Department of Health website for more information.](#)

1.9 An advantage of the local offer approach is that families can refer themselves to these services. The child's eligibility has already been determined and is generally well known to one or more services, for example through attendance at a child development centre or specific educational provision. Families often find the local offer accessible and in keeping with their wish to lead lives which are as ordinary as possible. They will often not need or wish to have an additional assessment. This allows local authorities to deploy scarce resources for assessment where they are most needed.

The local offer in Wiltshire has been designed to let families choose the type of short break that works best for them. Wiltshire has published a leaflet setting out who can access the local offer, what short break services are available and how to register.

[www.wiltshire.gov.uk](http://www.wiltshire.gov.uk)

In Enfield the local offer was devised in the light of extensive consultation with disabled children and their parents whose views are at the heart of local developments.

[Enfield council website.](#)

## 2. The range of short breaks the local authority must provide

2.1 Local authorities must provide a range of short break services.

### The range of short breaks

2.2 Local authorities should enable carers of disabled children to have breaks from caring by providing, as appropriate, a reliable range of services. The local authority should secure, as appropriate:

- a) Provision of day-time care for disabled children in both their own homes and elsewhere, including befriending, sitting (for example where someone is commissioned to look after a child who for example cannot leave home) and sessional services;
- b) Provision of overnight care for disabled children in both their own homes and elsewhere;
- c) Provision which will enable disabled children to participate in educational and recreational activities; and
- d) Emergency care, for example, due to illness in the family. If the emergency relates to safeguarding concerns the guidance in Working Together must be followed.<sup>9</sup>

Together for Disabled Children found that:

“An analysis from seventeen self-selected areas provides overwhelming evidence that lead us to conclude that the development and delivery of a wide range of short breaks has led to a reduction in the number of disabled children and young people becoming ‘looked after’. All the participating areas stated that the short breaks programme had enabled them to focus on early identification and support and as a result disabled children and young people are no longer requiring emergency and long-term looked-after placements at the level they were before Aiming High for Disabled Children. This, of course, has led to some significant cost savings across a range of services, and these are analysed in depth within the report.”

While this study is not representative across the country it provides a number of case examples where savings have been identified as a result of investment in short breaks as a preventative service.

[Together for Disabled Children website](#)

<sup>9</sup> <http://www.education.gov.uk/publications/standard/publicationdetail/page1/DCSF-00305-2010>

## Short breaks should be culturally appropriate

2.3 Short break provision should be culturally appropriate so that it meets the racial, cultural, linguistic and religious needs of disabled children and their families. The information about short break provision should be provided in community languages and accessible formats. Evidence suggests that families with disabled children from particular ethnic minorities are less likely to access short breaks and other support, so it is important that local authorities find ways to reach those families.

### **'Bollywood' comes to town**

Bollywood movies are very much part of the South Asian family culture in Bolton. Families get together and make a night of it, but families with disabled children have often found it difficult to go to the local cinemas together.

Usually one parent or family member has stayed behind with the disabled child, meaning they've both missed out on a fun opportunity. Families said they wanted somewhere they could all enjoy the movies together 'without being judged by the public', not worrying about their children running around or not having to sit in the front row.

In December 2009 the resource worker organised a Bollywood night. An events room at a local restaurant was set up as a cinema space and nine families attended its premier event, with some additional support on hand. A good night was judged to be had by all. This has become a popular monthly event and a new venue is being sought to meet the demand for more space.

Council website is: [www.bolton.gov.uk](http://www.bolton.gov.uk)

Paul McGinney, Commissioning Manager from Durham, said:

Our short break programme has delivered not what we thought people needed, but what people actually wanted. As a result we have delivered a hugely successful programme at a low cost per unit price. We have supported more families and made progress on our strategy of reducing high cost residential places. If we reduce just one place per year a saving of around £220,000 will be made. As disabled children currently in residential placements move to adulthood we will see a real reduction in placement costs of potentially £500,000. In consultation with parents we have invested substantially in a broad range of short breaks based in the voluntary sector. This has already reduced the number of placements made in crisis and the costs of formal assessments. If we can develop this trend we are confident, and research supports this, that we can reduce our high costs cases substantially.

<http://www.durham.gov.uk/Pages/Service.aspx?ServiceId=1173>

2.4 While each area will make its own decisions about the appropriate range and balance of different types of short breaks to meet local need, it is apparent from the experience of the Aiming High for Disabled Children programme that certain guidelines are important to follow:

- families should be involved in decisions about the types and volume of services which should be commissioned;
- families should have choice;
- services should be age appropriate;
- choices should reflect the changing needs of families;
- families value services which are flexible, reliable, and where they are confident their children will be looked after safely and sensitively by staff with the necessary expertise; and
- ease of access to services is a key consideration.

## **Short breaks should be reliable and regular to best meet families' needs**

2.5 Local authorities will want to ensure that they develop a dynamic short break provision with a mixture of both innovative short break options and reliable and regular services. Reliability and regularity are hallmarks of a quality short break



service in the eyes of parents. There are considerable consequences of the sudden loss of a short break service for family routines and commitments. Some children, for example those with autistic spectrum disorders, are particularly distressed by an unexpected change in routine. That said, we know some parents appreciate, and their children often appreciate more, a range of exciting and innovative options. The exposure of disabled children to a range of new activities, for example playing golf and skiing, has developed children's confidence and provided them with the kind of enjoyment many other children take for granted.

## **Parents should be engaged in the design of local short breaks services**

2.6 Many local authorities have found that the key to getting the balance right when developing a broad range of short break activities is the engagement of local parents in service design. Parents can support local authorities to identify the best ways to provide personalised packages of care to meet individual family need.

In April 2009 Enfield Council collaborated with The Family Fund, Wilf Ward Trust and Haven Holidays to support seven families to enjoy a holiday with assistance provided by carers – a minimum of 10 hours and maximum of 20 hours per week. This opportunity meant that families were able to enjoy additional relaxation and leisure opportunities.

One parent described it as like 'winning the lottery' and another stated that being able to have a coffee by the poolside and read the paper for half an hour while her husband played with their son and the carer supported their daughter in the pool made all the difference. Families remarked that having 'bite-size' periods of support made a huge difference to all family members in enabling them to have a fulfilling and memorable holiday. For some families this was the first time they had ever taken a family holiday because the prospect of managing alone was too much.

[www.enfield.gov.uk](http://www.enfield.gov.uk)

Rochdale has commissioned Barnardos to provide a short breaks service promoting increased access for disabled children to universal provision. Depending on the child's own interests, personalised short breaks are provided in a wide range of community settings, from cheerleading to cycling.

[www.rochdale.gov.uk](http://www.rochdale.gov.uk)

## Short breaks can build on and be offered by universal service providers

2.7 Universal services and other community facilities can provide exciting, positive opportunities for disabled children and young people to socialise with other children, and to access fun and/or educational activities in a safe environment. There is an increasing role for universal services in the delivery of short breaks, and they can provide local authorities with opportunities to easily extend the range of breaks they offer.

2.8 Local authorities should be clear that the short break must be in addition to the universal positive activities to which families should normally have access. For example, local authorities should consider how they can improve general access to their local swimming pool to enable more disabled children to use it. That might include some training for pool attendants and other staff to better understand how to support children with challenging behaviour, for example. An individual disabled child on a short break might also need some additional one-to-one support when in the pool to enable them to swim safely and enjoyably.

2.9 Childcare providers have often been trained to support disabled children, and are in a good position to support those children in short breaks. Where local authorities find ways to use childcare providers and facilities to offer short breaks, they must ensure that the short break is in addition to the childcare all families should normally have access to. In general, it might be helpful for local authorities to think of childcare as enabling more parents to work, or to undertake training and educational opportunities which can lead to work. A short break should be supporting parents to care for their disabled child more effectively by giving them a break.

Under the Disabled Children's Access to Childcare programme, Solihull Council has undertaken a number of initiatives to ensure disabled children have access to childcare provision. To ensure families' needs were at the centre of service developments Solihull established:

- a team of parent champions who provide information, advice and assistance to parents to enable them to access childcare, activities and other services;
- a support service to enhance the skills of childcare settings to meet the needs of disabled children;
- additional resources to settings to reduce ratios of children to adults where necessary.

[www.solihull.gov.uk](http://www.solihull.gov.uk)

Hampshire County Council is working with other key service providers and service user representatives to ensure disabled children enjoy a choice of leisure and recreation activities within their local community, providing parents and carers with a short break from caring knowing that their children are in a fun, safe and supportive environment. A multi-agency commitment underpins this work.

[www.hants.gov.uk/childrens-services](http://www.hants.gov.uk/childrens-services)

## **Local authorities should work in partnership with health services to understand the range of short breaks services in their area and to train the workforce**

2.10 Health services have multiple roles to play in the provision of short breaks for disabled children in their areas. They will directly provide and commission some services, for example, short breaks for children with complex health needs. (For some children, this may involve spending some time in a hospice.) They will also support local authority and voluntary and Community sector provision, for example, by training the workforce and providing nursing support and timely access to necessary equipment.

## **Local authorities must give families the choice to access short breaks services using a direct payment**

2.11 Local authorities are under a duty to provide families the choice of receiving a direct payment in lieu of the support they would have been provided with under section 17 of the 1989 Act.<sup>10</sup>

2.12 Direct payments are a useful way of giving families with disabled children greater choice and flexibility to access the services they want and need to support them.<sup>11</sup>

2.13 The evaluation of short breaks pathfinders found that more and more families are choosing to access short breaks services through direct payments, and that they are enjoying the ability to buy exactly what they want.

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<sup>10</sup> The duty can be found in section 17A of the 1989 Act and the Community Care, Services for Carers and Children's Services (Direct Payments) (England) Regulations 2009.

<sup>11</sup> A parent's guide to direct payments can be found on the [DfE website](#). More formal guidance is available on the [Department of Health website](#).

2.14 There are a number of things local authorities should do to help ensure the provision of direct payments is beneficial to families:

- All families should be supported to understand how a direct payment might benefit them;
- Families should not be forced to take a direct payment where they are not confident to do so;
- Families who choose direct payments should be supported to make confident appropriate choices for their family; and
- Local authorities should not use direct payments as a way of limiting access to support. The funding provided through a direct payment must enable a family to access all the support they have been assessed as needing.

2.15 Direct payment initiatives have led to a number of positive outcomes, for example:

- a) increasing the choice of short breaks for families and increased access to community-based provision;
- b) enabling some children with rare and complex conditions to access breaks; and
- c) expanding the workforce of short break carers by families approaching people they know to offer short breaks to their child; for example members of the extended family and the family's social network.

2.16 A number of pathfinders have promoted the increased uptake of direct payments as a key component in helping more families to access short breaks. One outcome of this approach for many families has been to raise their expectations and ambitions for themselves and their disabled child.

2.17 As part of the Department for Education Aiming High pilots, some local authorities are using individual budgets to draw together social care and non-mainstream education funding. Some are linked to the Department of Health's personal health budget pilots, enabling NHS resources to be drawn into a single combined budget.

2.18 The individual budget is controlled by the parents or the young person with appropriate support from either the local authority or voluntary organisation and used to support a set of agreed outcomes for that child. The budgets are not necessarily provided to parents as cash payments, but decisions about how the money and/or resource is spent is made by them. The purpose is to encourage a parent-led and personalised approach to funding for disabled children. Local authorities using

personalised funding are finding that as parents gain confidence in managing the fund they become more creative in the services they chose to meet their child's needs.

Derbyshire is a site for an individual budgets pilot and also for piloting personal health budgets. This allows service users to access different funding streams to devise a personal package of care which best meets their needs. For example, one young man was funded jointly by health and children's services to attend an independent special school which also provided much of his short break care. With support from the pilot projects this young man and his family opted for an alternative range of short breaks. They employed a personal assistant to support their son at home and ultimately to support him to go on a family break with them. The individual budget enabled the family to consider a broader range of possibilities for the young man's adult life.

[www.derbyshire.gov.uk](http://www.derbyshire.gov.uk)

## **Short breaks can be a key service to promote greater levels of confidence and competence for young people moving towards adult life**

2.19 It will be important for short breaks to be planned and provided to enhance independence with a view to continuity of provision once the young people become young adults. This will require close liaison with adult services and local health care agencies.

As part of its short break strategy the London Borough of Richmond upon Thames has piloted a project to develop confidence and promote independent living here individual's pool part of their self-directed support budgets to promote friendships and develop wider social networks and activities. An independent charity has produced a guide, promotes and offers support to disabled young people and their families to employ personal assistants to support them in their chosen activities with their chosen friends. Young people have stated that they feel more grown up and able to enjoy the activities without their parents and with the support of a worker that they have recruited and chosen. This option enables young people to be more in control, to have consistency in support and continuing friendships into adulthood.

[www.richmond.gov.uk](http://www.richmond.gov.uk)

### 3. The short breaks services statement

3.1 Parents frequently comment on the difficulty of finding information about the short break services. Families need to receive timely information about the full range of service in plain language and in accessible formats so they can make informed choices.

3.2 Families with disabled children need clear information to access services. This is why each local authority must publish a statement about short breaks services in their area.

#### The short breaks services statement must state:

- the range of short breaks services available;
- the criteria by which eligibility for services will be assessed; and
- how the range of services is designed to meet the needs of families with disabled children in their area.

3.3 The statement must be kept under review and it should be revised when new services become available, or when there are changes to existing services. Carers' views must be taken into consideration when preparing and revising their statement. The views of disabled children and young people and of voluntary sector organisations working with disabled people should also be taken into account.

Wiltshire County Council and the London Borough of Enfield have prepared draft short breaks services statements which will form the basis for local consultation with families with disabled children and other partners. These two examples show how the regulatory requirements can be met and how differences in approach reflect local circumstances.

[www.wiltshire.gov.uk](http://www.wiltshire.gov.uk)

[www.enfield.gov.uk](http://www.enfield.gov.uk)

3.4 The experience of Wiltshire and Enfield would suggest that the statement is best prepared and reviewed in a partnership with local organisations (parent forums, local health services, the voluntary sector and schools).

## **Local authorities should consider how best to ensure strategic sign-off and shared accountability locally for the statement and the services to which it refers.**

3.5 It would be good practice to consider how partners from local health services should be involved, as well as delivery partners from the voluntary and charity sectors, and local parent groups. The Children's Trust or local health and wellbeing board could both provide an appropriate forum.

Cambridgeshire has funded a small voluntary organisation, a parent information service called Pinpoint, to develop a website which not only gives a range of local activities but also allows families to comment.

<http://www.pinpoint-cambs.org.uk/>

## **In preparing the short breaks services statement, local authorities should consider how best to share information about disabled children between agencies (bearing in mind the need to operate within existing data protection legislation).**

3.6 This will ensure a coordinated provision according to need. It will be helpful for local authorities and Primary Care Trusts (PCTs) and other relevant partners to use a common database of disabled children.

3.7 Relevant information which might support a good description of local services could include:

- a) data on the current and projected prevalence of disability in the child population, available in the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment;<sup>12</sup>
- b) aggregated data from the assessment of individual children and families – this will indicate which needs can be met currently and which cannot readily be met; and
- c) views of all concerned (disabled children and young people, parents; voluntary organisations and service providers).

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<sup>12</sup> Visit the [Department of Health website](#).

During the operating year April 2008 to March 2009 Durham County Council worked with parents to undertake an analysis of needs and services, including costs and gaps in services. They identified target groups, particularly children with autism, where local provision was insufficient and subsequent costs of residential placements were high. This needs analysis formed the basis of the short break strategy which has been underpinned by substantial investment.

[www.durham.gov.uk](http://www.durham.gov.uk)

### **Halton – Bright Sparks**

Halton has commissioned an independent local advocacy service to support young disabled people to participate fully in all consultations for young people in the borough. A group of disabled young people, Bright Sparks, has been provided with a training programme covering topics such as time management, planning a schedule, listening skills, confidence building, and the ability to speak up and ask questions in a group. They have produced a DVD.

[Visit the website for more information.](#)

### **Wiltshire County Council focuses on outcomes in its service contracts.**

Working in partnership with parent carers, in particular through the Wiltshire Parent Carers Council, is at the heart of the Aiming High for Disabled Children programme. Parent carers have been involved in the commissioning of services (including the planning of service specifications and tender evaluation), have provided feedback on the delivery of the services, and have been involved in the review of services. Wiltshire Council's partnership approach to working with parent carers is supported by the contract for each commissioned service, which requires the service provider to seek feedback regularly from the parent carers and children and young people using the service, and to present this in their service review reports. A focus of each service review meeting is how the feedback from service users is influencing the development of the service. Parent carers have attended service review meetings so commissioners and providers can hear first hand their feedback on the quality of the service and suggestions for service development.

Visit the [Wiltshire website for more information.](#)



3.8 The examples provided by Wiltshire and Enfield may help local authorities think about short breaks service statements. Local authorities should prepare and agree their own statements based on their individual local circumstances.

3.9 Local authorities may wish to consider, in drafting their short breaks services statement, the extent to which:

- services meet the needs of all disabled children and promote improved outcomes;
- universal services are including disabled children;
- services are available and accessible fairly across the authority;
- information is available to all disabled children and their families;
- there is choice for families and a range of providers including the voluntary and community sector;
- services are culturally appropriate;
- services are age appropriate;
- the availability of suitable transport is supporting access; and
- services are supporting the transition to adult services.

And also:

- the balance of provision between direct services and direct payments; and
- the advice and guidance available to support families who opt for direct payments.

## **Local authorities must publish their statement of short breaks services on their website**

3.10 Families with disabled children must have access to a statement which is concise and clear. It would be good practice for local authorities to also consider additional ways of making the information available, for example in paper format for people without computer access. Public notice boards in doctors' surgeries and children's centres can also ensure information is accessible.

## **Local authorities should ensure that those who use short breaks services have the chance to shape the development of those services**

3.11 The standards for participation and feedback set out in the Aiming High for Disabled Children Core Offer provide a good framework for effective consultation.<sup>13</sup>

3.12 Carers and children and young people should be involved in the decision making about the nature of services and their relative priority. Feedback by authorities to families about the outcomes of the consultation is essential.

3.13 Participation is more effective when:

- families are involved in decision making about provision (and setting budget priorities); and
- there are structures (such as parent forums) to support systematic and sustained participation of both parents and children.

3.14 Local support groups and grassroots organisations can be key partners in ensuring broad-based and effective consultation. Local decision making with full consultation is more likely to lead to local service users achieving their desired outcomes.

## **Local authorities should try to reach groups of parents who may be more difficult to engage**

3.15 This may be:

- because English is not their first language;
- because they live in rural areas; and
- due to the nature of their child's impairment.

3.16 Failure to engage could lead to widening inequalities.

3.17 Local authorities may also consider the views of families whose disabled children have been placed out of their home area in order to have their needs met. Such children may be placed in health, education or social care establishments. This will enable authorities to consider whether some families would have been able to continue to care for their children at home given higher levels of short breaks support.

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<sup>13</sup> <http://www.chimat.org.uk/resource/item.aspx?RID=66227>

### **Nottinghamshire – messages from families**

Nottinghamshire County Council and NHS Nottinghamshire County asked ibk initiatives (a parent led development agency specialising in raising the voice of disabled children, young people and their families) to find out the views and experiences of disabled children, young people and their families using support services for children and young people with complex medical conditions and/or life-limiting illnesses.

[www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk](http://www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk)

## **Good practice in commissioning is leading to more responsive short breaks services**

3.18 In some authorities the nature of commissioning has fundamentally changed in order to provide innovative and responsive services. Small community led and family-led processes appear to be better able to provide services tailored to specific local needs.

### **Kent – parental involvement**

Kent is developing innovative approaches to ensure families with disabled children remain at the heart of service development. There are five resource centres across the county. Based on an established parent consortium in North West Kent, the other centres are developing parent-led bodies which in time will be the managing agents of the resource centres and have the ability to subcontract service delivery. It is hoped in time they will be able to attract additional sources of revenue and be a powerful local voice speaking up for disabled children. A number of organisational options have been considered and each area is developing a model of a parent-driven charity which best fits its needs. Training for parents as well as expert advice and support have been essential in preparing the local groups for greater autonomy.

Visit the [Kent County Council website for more information.](#)

## Local authorities must keep their short breaks statement under review

3.19 The local authority must review its short breaks services statement and where necessary revise its statement. The frequency for review is a matter for each local authority to decide. This flexibility allows the local authority to revise and keep the document current according to local circumstances. Carers' views must be considered. The views of disabled children and young people are equally important and should also be considered.

### **Manchester summer activity evaluation report**

A programme of play schemes and activities were commissioned over the summer period in and around Manchester. An evaluation report has been produced which puts together whether the activity/scheme had a positive outcome and met the needs of parents and children.

[Visit the Manchester council website.](#)

3.20 Local authorities should be able to monitor how far children and families using services match the overall profile of disabled children in their area. Local authorities will want to ensure there is equity of access according to ethnic origin of family, the nature of the child's disabilities, as well as other socio-economic factors.

3.21 Following an assessment of local needs, some authorities have targeted specific groups within the population of disabled children, for example children with autism or children living in remote areas.

## Local authorities should continue to develop their workforce in relation to short breaks services

3.22 Increasing the provision of short breaks for disabled children has made new demands on the workforce employed by short break providers and by families through direct payments. Local areas are meeting this challenge in a number of innovative ways.

### **Buckinghamshire – training guide**

This new training guide is aimed at people who work with disabled children and young people. The training is also available to those who want to enhance their skills for working with disabled children, young people and their families. The guide includes details about the Short Break Carer Training Pathway and the Inclusion Training for mainstream providers.

Visit the [Buckingham Partnership website](#).

Solihull Borough Council has developed a programme of work to help achieve its vision of 'a diverse, integrated workforce which is flexible, competent, confident, respected and safe, and fully equipped to enable all children, young people and their families to grow and develop'. The plan focuses on universal and specialist services and its implementation is supported by a dedicated part-time post.

Visit the [Together For Disabled Children website](#).

## **4. Eligibility (and the Islington judgment)**

### **Local authorities must publish, as part of their short breaks service statement, details of the eligibility criteria they apply to short breaks services**

4.1 The application of eligibility criteria to short breaks and other services for disabled children and their families should be considered within the context of the requirements of the Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1970 (“the 1970 Act”) and the 1989 Act.

4.2 The 1970 Act imposes various duties on local authorities towards disabled people of all ages. Section 2 of this Act requires authorities to consider whether it is necessary, in order to meet the needs of a disabled person (including a child), for the authority to provide services of the type categorised at section 2(1)(a) to (h). These services include practical assistance in the home, adaptations, assistance in accessing leisure and recreational activities, help with meals, travel and holidays. If the local authority identifies that a person will need a service from the list at Section 2 of the 1970 Act, they must provide that service.

4.3 Section 17 of, and Schedule 2 to, the 1989 Act set out the general duties and powers conferred on local authorities to provide family support services to children in need, which includes disabled children.

4.4 There is considerable overlap between the services which can be provided under the 1989 and the 1970 Acts. The essential difference is that under the 1970 Act, once the local authority has decided that there is a need for services under section 2, it has a duty to provide those services, while services provided under section 17 of the 1989 Act are discretionary.

### **Local authorities can provide families with access to short breaks services without any assessment**

4.5 Many local authorities are achieving the expansion of short break services through a ‘local offer’ of disabled children’s services, to which families with disabled children refer themselves.

4.6 Local authorities who provide access to services through a local offer must think through their criteria for access to it. For example, it’s no good only allowing access to children who attend special school; some families will have opted to send their child to mainstream school. Equally, the single criterion of the higher level of Disability Living Allowance (DLA) is discriminatory, due to the nationally uneven uptake of this benefit and the specific residency requirement of 26 weeks in the last year. Eligibility criteria should be applied with some flexibility in order to ensure fairness to all potential beneficiaries.

## **For many families, a formal assessment of their needs will enable the local authority to provide a tailored package of services to them**

4.7 Where the local minimum offer does not meet the needs of the child and family, local authorities should undertake further assessment of the child and family.

4.8 Local authorities should refer to the statutory guidance *Framework for the Assessment of Children in Need* when they wish to establish a family's need for additional services. Where it is apparent that a child is 'in need' within the meaning of section 17 of the 1989 Act, the local authority should consider carrying out an initial assessment. This initial assessment should determine whether the child is a child in need of services or not, the nature of the services that are required and whether more detailed assessment is necessary. This can be a brief assessment and may be dependent on whether the child's disability has already been established. Much of the information required may already have been supplied through the Common Assessment Framework.

4.9 Having completed the initial assessment, and the core assessment if necessary (paragraph 3.11 of the *Framework*), the local authority should next consider what provision it will make to meet the assessed needs.

4.10 In order to meet its duties under section 2 of the 1970 Act, the local authority should carry out a two-stage analysis. First, it must consider whether it is necessary, in order to meet the needs of a disabled child, for the authority to provide support of the types outlined in section 2, such as appropriate housing. Eligibility criteria may apply at this stage of assessment to provide local authorities and service users with clarity about which services they could expect to receive.

4.11 Where the local authority is satisfied that it is necessary to provide section 2 support to a disabled child, the local authority must, in the second stage of analysis, ensure that it meets the needs in question. At this stage no further eligibility criteria can be applied.

4.12 Where there is an obligation to provide services to disabled children under section 2 of the 1970 Act, those services can be provided under section 17 of the 1989 Act. However, local authorities must not avoid their duties (and apply additional eligibility criteria) towards a disabled child under section 2 of the 1970 Act by purporting to act under their powers under section 17 of the 1989 Act.

## **Eligibility criteria must not be applied mechanistically without consideration of a particular family's needs**

4.13 Local authorities may apply eligibility criteria if they are using their powers to make provision, for example to provide overnight short breaks through section 17(6) or section 20(4) of the 1989 Act. Such criteria should not be applied mechanistically without consideration of the particular needs of the individual child and their family, and must take account of the duties specified in section 149 of the Equality Act 2010.

4.14 Eligibility criteria have a much more limited role where local authorities are complying with their duties in making provision. For instance, eligibility criteria must not be applied where a duty to provide accommodation under section 20(1) of the 1989 Act arises or where the local authority has decided that support of the types categorised in section 2(1)(a) to (h) of the 1970 Act are necessary in order to meet the needs of a disabled child.

## **There is a legal precedent for a parent to challenge the eligibility criteria applied to their access of short breaks services**

4.15 The case of R (on the application of JL and another) v Islington London Borough Council [2009] (the Islington judgment) clarified a number of issues in respect of how and whether criteria for eligibility for services should be used and, in particular, whether or not a local authority should use such eligibility criteria in relation to services for disabled children.<sup>14</sup>

4.16 The following principles can be drawn from the judgment:

- Local authorities should be aware of the specific legal powers and duties they are using when making decisions about services;
- Eligibility criteria are appropriate in those situations where local authorities are using their discretionary powers to meet needs (for example, under section 17 or section 20(4) of the 1989 Act) but not in situations where they have established there is a duty to meet need (for example under section 20(1) of the 1989 Act and section 2 of the 1970 Act);
- Eligibility criteria must not be applied before there has been adequate assessment of the child and family's needs;
- Local authorities should ensure that there are two distinct processes: the assessment of need and decisions on the provision of services. They must not allow their eligibility criteria to confuse or distort the assessment process;

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<sup>14</sup> EWHC 458 (Admin)



- Eligibility criteria should never be applied mechanistically. Decisions should always take into account the particular circumstances and needs of the child and family; and
- Eligibility criteria should be informed by the local authority's duties under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, which includes duties to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, to advance equality of opportunity and to encourage participation by disabled persons in public life.

## **Examples of local authority eligibility criteria**

Local authorities may find it helpful to refer to the attached eligibility criteria developed in Enfield and Wiltshire. However, each local authority should seek its own legal advice in developing its own criteria.



Department  
for Education

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