

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