

**Decision Maker:** Care Services PDS Committee

**Date:** 26th June 2014

**Decision Type:** Non-Urgent Non-Executive Non-Key

**Title:** **REPORT ON CONSULTATION ON SHORT BREAKS FOR  
DISABLED CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE**

**Contact Officer:** Hilary Rogers, Service Manager (Joint Commissioning),  
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**Chief Officer:** Executive Director of Education, Care & Health Services

**Ward:** (All Wards);

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**1. REASON FOR REPORT**

- 1.1 In September 2013 Members approved a three month consultation with parents/carers and disabled children & young people on the future commissioning of Short Breaks for disabled children & young people.
  - 1.2 This report details the responses to the consultation which will inform the Council's Short Breaks Commissioning Strategy for the future.
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**2. RECOMMENDATION(S)**

- 2.1 Care Services PDS Members are asked to note and comment on the detailed response from the Short Breaks consultation.

### Corporate Policy

1. Policy Status : Existing Policy : Draft Care Services Portfolio Plan for 2014/15
  2. BBB Priority: Children and Young People – achieve their full potential, ensuring the health and well-being of children and young people and their families, promoting independence:
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### Financial

1. Cost of proposal:: Contained within current resources of £2,432,400
  2. Ongoing costs: :
  3. Budget head/performance centre: Children’s Disability Services, Social Care
  4. Total current budget for this head: £2,432,400
  5. Source of funding: Revenue Support Grant
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### Staff

1. Number of staff (current and additional): n/a
  2. If from existing staff resources, number of staff hours:
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### Legal

1. Legal Requirement: Statutory Requirement: Children Act 1989 requiring local authorities to provide services designed to give breaks for carers of disabled children. Regulations relating to this duty enforced April 2011 (Short Breaks Duty)
  2. Call-in: Not Applicable
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### Customer Impact

1. Estimated number of users/beneficiaries (current and projected): 400 disabled children & young people
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### Ward Councillor Views

1. Have Ward Councillors been asked for comments? Not Applicable
2. Summary of Ward Councillors comments:

### **3. COMMENTARY**

#### **3.1. Background**

- 3.1.1 The Children's Act 1989 requires local authorities to provide services designed to give breaks for carers of disabled children. Regulations relating to this duty were brought into force in 2011 requiring each local authority to offer a relevant range of Short break services.
- 3.1.2 Short Breaks provide opportunities for disabled children to have enjoyable experiences away from their primary carers, thus contributing to their social inclusion and personal and social development. They also provide the parents of disabled children with a necessary and valuable break from their caring responsibilities.
- 3.1.3 However, the number of disabled children and young people is increasing both nationally and locally and the needs of these children are becoming increasingly complex. This is happening at a time of increasing budget pressures which require resources to be used as effectively as possible.
- 3.1.4 In September 2013 Members approved a three month consultation with parents/carers and disabled children & young people seeking their comment upon the range and choice of Short Breaks offered by LB Bromley.
- 3.1.5 The outcome of this consultation is intended to reflect service users views within a long term Short Breaks Commissioning Strategy..

#### **3.2 Consultation Process**

- 3.2.1 In early 2013, officers carried out a review of Short Break services and produced a range of information including numbers of disabled children by age, disability, assessed levels of need and type of services currently used. This review formed the basis for the consultation.
- 3.2.2 The essential information sought from the consultation was in respect of :-
- Overnight short breaks : either in a residential home, foster carers homes, or parents making their own arrangements for overnight care
  - Group based short breaks : preferred times and days when this should be available,
  - One to one short break care, e.g. childminding : developing service into evening sitting, using providers outside of Bromley
  - Direct Payments: support provided to facilitate ease of use, availability of suitable Short Break provision to purchase, clarity of eligible services for direct payment spend
  - Access to universal provision for Short Breaks
  - Obvious gaps in Short Break provision
- 3.2.3 Parents were advised of the consultation through Bromley's website, and through the MYLIFE site, communications were sent out by voluntary sector partners (Bromley Mencap, Burgess Autistic Trust), and flyers sent via special schools and via Bromley Parent Voice. Social Workers from the Disabled Children's Team also provided information on family visits and the team's Specialist Information Officer informed all relevant contacts.
- 3.2.4 Parents were invited to express their opinions in a number of ways:-
- On line, via 'Bromley Mylife'
  - Through face to face meetings with Council officers
  - Through face to face meetings facilitated by Bromley Parent Voice.
- 3.2.5 Bromley Young Advisors had worked throughout 2013 to obtain views from disabled children and young people and represented these views in workshop presentations.

- 3.2.6 Three key documents were made available for respondents:
- A summary of the purpose of the consultation – detailing Bromley’s vision statement for short breaks and advertising details of group consultation meetings,
  - A short ‘key facts’ document, providing a précis of current Short Break services
  - A review information booklet, providing detail of the review information

### **3.3 Data on Consultation Responses**

#### **3.3.1 On line questionnaire**

A total of 39 responses were received, of which 13 replied that their child does not receive a Short Break.

Appendix One shows the main findings. The most numerous responses were in respect of direct payments and offered good user perspective into the Council’s policies and procedures.

#### **3.3.2 Face to face meetings with Council officers**

A total of 8 meetings were held, borough wide and at different times of the day and evening. There were 30 attendees in total, representing parents and carers.

Appendix Two shows the main findings, with comment on group based provision being the main topic for response.

#### **3.3.3 Face to face meeting facilitated by Bromley Parent Voice**

Two meetings were facilitated by Bromley Parent Voice, (BPV) , with a total of 49 parents attending. BPV reported that parents would prefer to discuss their issues with other parents and expressed that the Council is not good at listening to their (the parents’) views.

Appendix Three shows the main feedback from these meetings

- 3.3.4 Council officers subsequently met with BPV representatives to discuss the consultation feedback. This proved a good vehicle for Council policy and decision making rationale to be discussed and for improved lines of communication to be agreed, particularly when key decisions are being considered.

### **3.4 Summary of Consultation Responses**

- 3.4.1 Overall parents/carers and disabled children & young people requested a better range of services be made available which would increase choice to suit individual need which would contribute to improved life outcomes.

- 3.4.2 It has been possible for a number of operational issues which were raised from the consultations to be addressed immediately. This has been valuable in ensuring that parents/carers are having their needs better met and also in terms of gaining parental confidence that the Council is listening to their concerns and demonstrating that changes can be made in response to this.

- 3.4.3 An overall summary of the consultation responses concludes the following:-

- Parents are very satisfied with the service delivery at Hollybank, the Council’s residential overnight provision but better use needs to be made of the highly skilled staff resource.
- Parents value group based weekend and holiday provision and prefer for the Council to continue to commission this service
- Parents would like a greater choice of services that can provide breaks within the child’s own home, particularly an evening sitting service

- Direct Payments : whilst they offer greater flexibility, the process is confusing and time consuming which often negates the purpose of parents having a break from their caring responsibilities.
- Direct Payments: the market needs to be developed by the Council's Commissioners in order for real choice to be available
- Dissemination of information must be improved

### **3.5 Council Response to Consultation Outcomes**

3.5.1 In response to items detailed in 3.4 above, Council officers have undertaken the following:-

- Commenced a further review of Hollybank, proposing a new service model which will utilise the resource more efficiently. This will be separately reported to PDS in September 2014.
- Commissioned additional group based short break provision which commenced in May 2014, specifically to provide for children & young people with challenging behaviour and those with complex needs. Parents were included in the evaluation panels for these services
- A Personal Assistant (PA) Register has been commissioned by the Council which should increase the supply of good quality and competent support workers to assist disabled children & young people to safely access community facilities
- Seeking permission to commission a greater range of services including befriending and evening sitting services which parents could use their direct payments to purchase. This is separately reported to June PDS in the paper entitled 'Commissioning of Short Break Services 2014/15'.
- Commissioned a cross borough framework agreement for domiciliary care, including 20 specialist agencies , which offers a robust choice in terms of support staff skills, knowledge and competencies.
- Increased efficiency in respect if direct payment processes, working with colleagues in Adult Social Care, LBB Finance and Internal Audit.
- Identified a resource to enable an Inclusion Officer to improve facilitation for access to universal services.
- A Disabled Children's Register has been created which will enable immediate dissemination of information to all those registered. In addition, the development of the Local Offer which requires the Council to publish details of services available within the borough and surrounding boroughs will further assist parents/carers with sourcing information
- A long term Commissioning Strategy is being developed which will support parents/carers into the future.
- A copy of the outcomes from the consultation will be added to the Council website and Bromley MyLife web portal.

### 3.6 Summary

- 3.6.1 Disabled children and their families are not a homogenous group. The population of disabled children represents a wide range of conditions, needs and personal circumstances. For many families the needs of their child may be complex and these families may require high levels of support including specialist services, possibly requiring one to one or two to one support, either in the home, at groups or residential locations. Conversely, some disabled children will require lower levels of service intervention and in some cases their needs can primarily be met through universal services, with some support provided to help them access that provision. This may be sufficient to maintain family stability and achieve good outcomes for the child.
- 3.6.2 In order to meet this wide spectrum of needs, local authorities are required to offer a diverse range of services, designed to meet local need. Some services may be low in cost whilst offering essential support or access whilst some services may be of high costs and of great value to those families with the greatest needs.
- 3.6.3 In future we will have to robustly assess the impact Short Breaks are having on families, ensuring enhanced life outcomes for children.

## 4. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

This outcome from this consultation will be in line with the Draft Care Services Portfolio Plan 2014/15 : ‘ to support children with complex disabilities to remain within the family home and their local community through the provision of a range of high quality short break services.’

## 5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The current financial resource for Short Breaks is £2,432,400. The Short Breaks Commissioning Strategy which will be informed by this report will ensure that costs are contained within existing resources.

## 6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The Children’s Act 1989 requires local authorities to provide services designed to give breaks for carers of disabled children and regulations relating to this duty were brought into force in 2011 requiring each local authority to produce an annual Short Breaks Statement and to offer a relevant range of short break services for disabled children and young people who have a disability that has a substantial and long term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day to day activities.
- 6.2 The Children and Families Act 2014 requires local authorities to publish a Local Offer of services and eligibility criteria relating to access to those services

<b>Non-Applicable Sections:</b>	Personnel Implications
Background Documents: (Access via Contact Officer)	The Breaks for Carers of Disabled Children Regulations 2011 <a href="http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2011/707/made">http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2011/707/made</a>  Children & Families Act 2014 <a href="http://www/legislation.gov.uk">http://www/legislation.gov.uk</a>