
Cabinet Member

Name of Cabinet Member:

Cabinet Member for Children and Young People - Councillor P Seaman

Director Approving Submission of the report:

Deputy Chief Executive (People)

Ward(s) affected:

All

Title:

Review and extension of Coventry City Council's community short breaks offer.

Is this a key decision?

No - although the proposals affect more than two electoral wards, the impact is not expected to be significant.

Executive Summary:

Local authorities are required by law to provide a range of short breaks for children who have disabilities. Short breaks give children and young people who have disabilities the opportunity to join in with an enjoyable activity away from their parents and carers whilst providing a break from caring responsibilities.

The Breaks for Carers of Disabled Children Regulations 2011 state that a local authority must provide, so far as is reasonably practicable, a range of services which is sufficient to assist carers to provide care or to do so more effectively.

In Coventry, the duty to provide short breaks is exercised through a range of service provisions including, community short breaks. This service offers group activities to children and young people aged 5-17 who have a disability and live in Coventry.

This proposal is to extend the current service offer to different locations across the city and facilitate extra sessions, within the existing budget envelope.

Recommendations:-

[Type here]

The Cabinet Member is requested to:

- 1) Consider the options set out in this report;
- 2) Approve the proposal set out in option 2 to maintain and extend the short breaks provision as a service provided by Coventry City Council.

List of Appendices included:

Background papers:

None

Other useful documents

The Breaks for Carers of Disabled Children Regulations 2011:

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2011/707/made>

Special Educational Needs & Disability Code of Practice 2015:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/398815/SEND_Code_of_Practice_January_2015.pdf

Has it been or will it be considered by Scrutiny?

No

Has it been or will it be considered by any other Council Committee, Advisory Panel or other body?

No

Will this report go to Council?

No

1. Context (or background)

All children and young people who have a disability and live in Coventry are entitled to receive a short break. There are different types of short breaks available for children and families;

- universal groups such as youth clubs, brownies and scouts
- community short breaks; group-based activities for children who are aged between 5 and 17 years and have a disability
- targeted short breaks; for children who, following an assessment of need, require additional support to access activities
- specialist short breaks; overnight short breaks for children and young people who, following an assessment of need, require a high level of support.

This paper focusses on the community short breaks service which is delivered by Coventry City Council. Activities are recreational and take place mainly at the Broad Park Centre. During school holidays, other community venues are utilised. Each activity lasts for between 1 and 2 hours and sessions are offered to two age groups: 5-11 years and 12-18 years. During term-time there are 8 activities in total each week. There is an extended offer in school holidays of between 10-13 activities per week. The service is staffed by 8 casual support workers and a short breaks development officer.

Feedback about community short breaks has been canvassed from children and young people, parents, carers and staff. In light of this, it is apparent that there is a need to refresh the current service offer in view of extending the provision to a wider range of locations across the city and increasing the number of available sessions.

2. Options considered and recommended proposal: -

2.1 Option 1

In 2016, the market was tested for alternative voluntary sector providers to deliver community short breaks on behalf of the Council. There was very limited interest and one provider submitted a proposal to tender for the service, which was later withdrawn.

2.2 Option 2– recommended option

The recommendation is for community short breaks to continue to be run by Coventry City Council. The proposal is to extend the offer within the existing budget envelope of £98k.

The current casual staff will be offered permanent contracts and any remaining vacancies will be advertised. The staffing structure will provide 74 permanent staffing hours each week.

In order to be able to respond to and meet the needs of children and young people with disabilities, there is a need to maintain flexibility within the service offer. An illustration of the impact of the increase in staffing hours is that it would be possible to facilitate 11

sessions per week during term time. This represents an increase of 3 sessions per week when compared to the current offer.

The number of children in each session will vary, depending on the type of activity and needs of the individual children. Currently staffing ratios are on average 1:4 or 1:3 depending on the needs of the children and this works well. Through employing permanent staff, it will be possible to consistently facilitate approximately 11 sessions during school holidays.

Parents and carers have expressed that they want the activities offered to be facilitated at a range of locations across the city, to reduce the need to travel to the Broad Park Centre. They would also like a broader range of activities. The plan is to extend the provision to a range of locations across the city.

In accordance with the principles of coproduction set out in the Special Educational Needs & Disability Code of Practice 2015, the sessions will be co-designed by children, young people, parents and carers. The proposal is to transform the current service from delivering recreational activities into a service which delivers activities for children and young people that are aspirational, and outcome focused.

3. Results of consultation undertaken

Whilst no formal consultation has taken place, the views of children, young people, parents and carers have been ascertained.

Approximately 25 parents / carers attended two engagement sessions:

- 12/7/19 with One Voice parents' group
- 17/7/19 with parents of children currently accessing the community short breaks service.

The wishes and feelings of 15 children and young people who attend community short breaks were obtained. Overall, feedback was positive. Several children stated a wish to be able to join in with a wider variety of activities.

An online survey was completed via the, "let's talk" website and 9 people responded to this survey.

The key themes arising from the feedback given by parents and carers are as follows:

- (a) a desire for a more sessions taking place at a greater range of venues across the city which would be easier to get to
- (b) parents wanted longer hours for short breaks, this was usually linked with how long it took to get children to the centre. This was particularly true for those using public transport
- (c) a desire for a broader range of activities and special events, including activities that promote learning and development and trips for special occasions
- (d) parents gave very positive feedback about the staff
- (e) the need for the online booking form to be simplified. This has already been completed.

The results of the above feedback have fundamentally informed the proposal put forward

4. Timetable for implementing this decision

- 4.1 The new offer will be launched in mid-December 2019 and the revised offer will be implemented fully by the end of February 2020.

5. Comments from Director of Finance and Corporate Services

5.1 Financial implications.

It is possible to extend the service within the existing budget envelope of £60K. The increased staffing costs will reduce the activity budget. However, it is anticipated that the remaining budget will be sufficient to run the sessions and the increased offer represents better value for money. There is some financial risk due to potential redundancy, but the costs would be minimal, and this will be mitigated by offering permanent posts.

5.2 Legal implications

The community short breaks offer is part of a range of short breaks services which together fulfil the Council's duty pursuant to The Breaks for Carers of Disabled Children Regulations 2011. This is to provide, so far as is reasonably practicable, a range of services which is sufficient to assist carers to provide care or to do so more effectively.

The types of provision which the Local Authority must provide is as follows:-

- (a) Day-time care in disabled children's homes or elsewhere.
- (b) Educational or leisure activities for disabled children outside their homes.
- (c) Services available to assist carers in the evenings, at weekends and during the school holidays.
- (d) Overnight care in the homes of disabled children or elsewhere

The Council is also required to publish a Short Breaks Service Statement which sets out the current range of short breaks available, how to access short breaks and the eligibility criteria for short breaks. In this regard, Coventry's community short breaks offer is encompassed in the Short Breaks Service Statement.

If the current casual workers within the service have acquired employment rights as a result of their work for the Council this will need to be considered in the establishment of the new structure in terms of potential redundancy payments and deployment opportunities.

6. Other implications

The service is exempt from needing to register with Ofsted as each child attends for less than 2 hours each day. This impacts on the length of each individual session.

Registration with the Care Quality Commission (CQC) is not required as none of the activities regulated by the CQC are undertaken by the service.

Whilst personal care is an activity registered by the CQC and some personal care may be undertaken on occasions (such as assistance with toileting), the activity of undertaking personal care only requires CQC registration if it is undertaken in the persons own home.

6.1 How will this contribute to the Council Plan.

The extended community short breaks offer will contribute to the Council Plan In the following ways:

Locally committed:

- The new service will give children and families access to a wider range of short breaks across the city
- Short breaks will improve outcomes for children with disabilities and contribute to them getting the best possible start in life
- By providing short breaks, Coventry City Council is helping to support children and families who are facing multiple and complex needs

Delivering our priorities with fewer resources:

- Short Breaks puts children and their families at the heart of the service and the 'customer journey.
- The service adds social value to the lives of children with disabilities

6.2 How is risk being managed?

The level of risk to the City Council is minimal. There is a potential that casual staff will not want to accept permanent contracts. If this is the case immediate recruitment will begin to mitigate the risk.

6.3 What is the impact on the organisation?

There is no impact on the organisation.

6.4 Equality and Consultation Analysis (ECA)

A formal equality and consultation analysis has not been completed. However, the offer will be co-produced with children and their families as documented in the report

The Short Breaks Services Statement is published which means that the short breaks offer is open, transparent and understood by all.

6.5 Implications for (or impact on) climate change and the environment

None.

6.6 Implications for partner organisations?

This proposal will have a positive impact on partner agencies and community groups, through strengthening partnership working by using more community venues such as schools, family hubs and community centres to deliver the short breaks offer.

Report author:

Name and job title:

Helen Rennocks, Operational Lead, Children with Disabilities Team.

Directorate:

People

Tel contact: 02476787980

Email contact: Helen.Rennocks@coventry.gov.uk

Enquiries should be directed to the above person.

Contributor/approver name	Title	Directorate or organisation	Date doc sent out	Date response received or approved
Contributors:				
Usha Patel	Governance Services Officer	Place	14/11/2019	18/11/2019
Michael Phillips	BP Accountant	Place	14/10/19	21/10/19
Gillian Carter	Solicitor	Place	14/10/19	21/10/19
Names of approvers for submission: (officers and members)				
Finance: Name	Rachael Sugars	Place		29/10/19
Legal: Name	Julie Newman	Place	21/10/19	21/10/19
Director: Name	John Gregg	People		18/11/19
Members: Name	Cllr P Seaman		18/11/2019	18/11/2019

This report is published on the council's website:

www.coventry.gov.uk/councilmeetings

Appendices