

PaCC Position Statement: Brighton and Hove City Council's proposed budget 2019/20



This is the response of the Parent Carers Council (PaCC) to the Brighton and Hove City Council's proposed budget 2019/20

PaCC includes all areas of short breaks within this position statement, it is essential that all key aspects are considered together. PaCC reminds officers and Councillors of the commitment of the SEND Review, for a broader and more cost effective offer of short breaks in Brighton and Hove. An equitable and inclusive offer has yet to be achieved. PaCC acknowledge officers' ongoing strenuous efforts to address need, however demand for short breaks continues to increase and significantly exceeds current provision. PaCC therefore requests that the short breaks budget is protected at current levels.

Families, Children's and Learning Directorate Budget Proposals

Residential, respite and short breaks, proposed saving of £140,000 page 189

The budget proposals state that the short breaks saving could have a *"potential impact on respite provision"*.

The serious consequences of any further reduction in short breaks provision are of significant concern in Brighton and Hove. These include;

- Breakdown of families
- Significant inequalities in parent carers accessing work
- Significant inequalities in children and young people (CYP) with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and their siblings accessing the community
- No wrap around day support and care for families under significant pressure.
- Increase in Not In Education, Employment or Training (NEET) figures

Extended day – 90k annual investment

PaCC continues to welcome the evolving extended day offer. However it is essential that decision makers understand that the extended day model remains at early planning phase, data needs collating and this project still needs to be fully costed. PaCC suggests Councillors need to be mindful that the pace and growth of an established extended day remains slow and the opportunity to mitigate funding pressures will not be met in the 2019/20 financial year. PaCC recommends the unspent 18/19 90k dedicated to the hub extended day is ring fenced for this project and rolled into and alongside the 19/20 90k investment. PaCC welcomes ongoing cross party scrutiny of this project.

Direct Payments page 190

Officers are explicit that there are significant pressures on this budget.

PaCC understand that the 'claw back' of unspent direct payments will go some way to alleviate this overspend in the current year. PaCC highlight that this claw back of revenue is a one off opportunity and will not resolve the pressures causing the overspend going forward. PaCC suggest that Councillors reflect that the claw back of

unspent direct payments relate to parent carers being unable to recruit PAs and are not related to lack of need.

Residential overnights at Tudor House and Drove Road

Due to the slower than anticipated roll out of the extended day provision, PaCC again requests a commitment to protect the number of overnights in these two excellent provisions.

Short breaks providers (voluntary sector). page 189

PaCC appreciate the commitment from officers to include Extratime, Barnardos and Crossroads as members of the extended day steering group, alongside officers, hub heads and PaCC, to co-produce the citywide short breaks strategy. These VCS short break providers are rated outstanding by Ofsted, hugely respected by families and an essential part of the citywide short breaks offer. This wealth of experience and resource must be protected and potentially expanded. Budget proposals suggest they will need to find efficiencies and expand their reach.

Inclusion:

The short breaks offer to CYP with SEND in mainstream schools. pg 191

PaCC asks that Councillors consider the parallel pressures on the inclusion funding budget. PaCC have previously requested that the CYP of non-working families were included in accessing this budget, PaCC welcomed officers' decision to extend this offer until March 2019. It is essential that CYP with SEND attending mainstream schools have an equitable extended day offer to their peers who attend the hubs and we recommend that an ongoing commitment is made to the mainstream community.

Education and Skills Budget.

Home to School transport pg 195 £39,000

PaCC are aware that Brighton & Hove City Council (BHCC) is working alongside Edge Public Solutions to ensure that key strategic decisions on the future of client transport provision are carefully considered, including those travelling from home to school. PaCC welcomes the invitation to sit as a stakeholder throughout this process. PaCC highlight that home to school transport must not be compromised for the SEND community. This statutory provision is a key requirement for inclusion at school.

Families at breaking point.

Statistics from the Compass Disability Register in September 2018 clearly evidence these ongoing and growing challenges:

- There are about 3,400 children with significant special educational needs or disabilities in Brighton and Hove
- Caring responsibilities: 71% of parent carers report that they spend 20 or more additional hours per week on the caring role due to their child's SEND. 21% say that it is more than 100 additional hours.
- Money worries: 55% live in or on the margins of poverty. 38% say their caring role means they can't work and 33% have had to take less senior roles or reduce work hours. 15% of parent carers reported skipping meals as there wasn't enough money to feed the whole family
- Health issues: 69% have experienced physical or mental ill-health as a result of their caring role. 30% of parent carers reported that they have a disability, learning difficulty or long term-health problem
- Relationship breakdown: 37% are single-parent families
- Feeling isolated: 44% report that they don't have enough social contact and a further 21% report that they have little or no social contact and feel isolated

- Exhaustion: 45% haven't had a break from their caring role in the past year and 33% said that they have never had a break. This has increased by over 8% in 7 years. Only 35% say they get a good night's sleep.

Service issues expressed in the 2018/9 PaCC position statement remain an ongoing concern, so are reiterated here:

- Long waiting times: PaCC members report that capacity within the children's disability team is already low and waiting times for assessment are long. A significant number of parent carers report that they are told by the children's disability team, that an assessment will not take place unless there is a family emergency. Families are being pushed to the brink of crises.
- Insufficient overnight respite: PaCC members report that families' need for residential overnights is high. Historically, budgets at Drove Rd and Tudor House are overspent and provision limited.
- Lack of personal assistants: PaCC members report huge challenges to recruit personal assistants (PAs) who are experienced and trained appropriately. Families report that PAs are unwilling to work for the small number of hours that form many respite packages. Retention of PAs for families with CYP with challenging behavior in particular is very poor. PAs leave quite quickly as the demands of looking after the CYP are too great. The parent/carer community also reports that the role of parent/carer as an employer is incredibly onerous, and some parent carers cannot manage this added responsibility.

PaCC Recommendations 2019/20:

1. **Maintain short breaks budget.** PaCC welcomed BHCC's commitment to protect the number of short break residential overnights in the previous year's budget. PaCC seeks reassurance that this commitment will be maintained and that the short breaks budget is protected at current levels.
2. **Ring fence extended day budget.** Detailed planning and delivery of the extended day across all three hubs and mainstream schools remains a priority, with ongoing co-production with extended day providers in the VCS, and cross-party scrutiny, to ensure savings are achieved as budgeted and the service offer is clear and equitable across the city. PaCC recommends the unspent 2018/19 90k dedicated to the hub extended day is ring fenced for this project and rolled into and alongside the 2019/20 90k investment. Additionally this project continues to be scrutinised at the Cross Party steering group.
3. **Maintain direct payments budget:** PaCC requests that this budget is protected at current levels.
4. **Inclusion in mainstream for all:** PaCC requests that the inclusion funding budget includes all eligible families, working and non-working.
5. **Maintain home school transport budget.** PaCC requests that BHCC fulfill their statutory duties to the eligible cohort of CYP requiring home to school transport.
6. **Impact assessments** The cumulative impact of Families, Children's and Learning Directorate saving proposals on families with disabled children is assessed and made available to families.

We thank you again for taking the time to read our position statement.
Please do get back to PaCC with any questions.

The PaCC representatives have talked widely with other parent carers to harness a wide range of views. Our position statement is a summary of these views, and will be used to inform our contribution to the Project Groups.

*PaCC welcome any communication on any of the issues contained in this document. You can contact us by emailing Fiona England PaCC Chair fiona@paccbrighton.org.uk or calling **01273 234862***

*The Parent Carers' Council (PaCC) is a parent-led forum which represents parent carers with children and young people with any kind of physical disability, learning disability, complex or long-term medical/health condition, or special educational need. The group was formed to enable parent carers to work closely together to help improve services and support. It aims to help parents get more directly involved in the strategic delivery of services for disabled children in Brighton & Hove and now has over **400 signed up members**. This position statement was developed through discussions with our Steering Group members and our nine partner groups: Barnado's Link Plus, Brighton Pebbles, Extratime, Autism Support and Awareness Promotion (ASAP), mASCot, T21, Sweet Peas, Amaze Face 2 Face and Children's Hearing Services Working Group (CHSWG).*