

## SEND budget proposed cut totalling £1m; Home to School Transport budget proposed cut £0.5m

For attention before budget vote on 26 February 2015



We recognise that the City Council is facing unprecedented challenge to find savings in its 2015/16 budget. We are pleased to have had the opportunity to participate in the SEND review process, which we had understood would determine how best savings could be found in relation to children's disability services. Having reviewed the most recently published budget proposals, we are surprised and concerned to find significant cuts proposed to services in advance of the SEND review completing. The PaCC Steering Group would like to request that councillors postpone any decisions regarding these proposed cuts until the SEND Review is fully costed and EIAs are completed.

### EIAs

The PaCC queries why an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) has not been completed for each of these significant [total £1m] savings being proposed to SEND budgets. The EIA numbered S7A only sets out impact on staff posts with no detail on how these proposals could impact on disabled children and their families.

**We request that you ask for individual EIAs to be completed for each of the SEND proposals before making decisions on these significant cuts.**

### Other concerns:

#### **a) Capacity**

The recent SEND review has pinpointed many areas in which outcomes for disabled children are below the national average and so suggests there is a need for greater capacity to intervene and improve Equality for this growing population.

**Reducing capacity in frontline services goes against recommendations in the review findings. We ask for your commitment that no cuts will be made to front line services for children with SEND.**

#### **b) Increased need for short breaks**

The SEND Review paper identified that B&H spends under the national average on short breaks (£14 vs £17 national average).

**We ask that you specifically look into how the £341k proposed cut to respite/short breaks will not impact the 'amount or quality of service available to children and families' and seek your assurance that the total investment in short breaks is protected. (see also c) below).**

#### **c) Impact on much valued CVS-delivery organisations**

The proposal to save £200k from the Integrated Disability Service includes approximately £70k cuts to highly valued CVS services. So far three charities have said that these cuts are likely to impact the delivery of their front line services (two on short breaks provision and one on the Compass Card). We are aware of other proposed cuts to CVS partners (strategic grants) so we are concerned about the cumulative impacts on them. The potential cut to short breaks through the CVS sector is in addition to the £341K detailed in b) above.

**The EIA requested above needs to consider how these CVS cuts may impact front line services to our children with SEND.**

**d) Home to school transport cut**

The additional £500,000 (on top of £1m) saving in Home to School transport, primarily affects children with SEND. This cut is based on a yet to be agreed new home to school transport policy, which we believe is misleading and may possibly be open to challenge (see attached PaCC response to the consultation). While the PaCC welcomes independent travel aspirations we are concerned that the city has yet to identify how many individuals will realistically be able to take this up and how the necessary training will take place. The pace of change and subsequent budget reduction must reflect fully answers to these questions.

**The PaCC ask you to question this substantial cut. Statutory transport must be available for the city's eligible children with special educational needs and disability. We consider the proposed cut should be significantly reduced.**

We would very much welcome your comments and questions from councillors on these important issues and thank you in advance for any help in this matter.

Yours sincerely,



Fiona England

PaCC Co-Chair

***On behalf of the Steering Group  
Parent and Carers' Council (PaCC)***

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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 about 250 signed up members.