

PaCC Position Statement: Brighton & Hove City Council Budget Proposals 2022/23

16 February 2022

Dear Councillors,

We are writing to you ahead of the Full Council Meeting on 24 February 2022, to provide PaCC's position on the budget proposals. PaCC represents families of children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities.

We have discussed the budget with Council Officers, and very much welcome assurances that there are no planned savings within children's respite and short breaks services. We know the pressure the council budget is facing and would like to thank officers and councillors for acknowledging the level of need faced by children and young people with disabilities and their families.

We would like to highlight four specific items within the draft budget. Page references are from Brighton & Hove City Council Budget Book 2022/23 & Medium Term Financial Strategy 2022/23 to 2025/26

Investment to support Corporate Plan Commitments and Service Pressures 2022/23

P 9 investment in Education Psychologists (EP) to manage the increase in Education, Health and Care Plans

PaCC welcome this proposed investment. There has been a big increase in the number of applications for EHCPs in the city and timely EP assessments are essential to identify and meet children's special educational needs

Families, Children & Learning Directorate

P 22. Services for children with disabilities; Direct Payments saving £50K.

We understand this reflects a reallocation of budgets rather than a saving. Direct payments are a lifeline to families in crisis, providing essential respite from their

caring responsibilities. Covid has put even more pressure on families, who often were unable to fully access respite due to restrictions, as well as managing school absences due to staffing pressures and illness. In a recent focus group, we heard about high levels of unmet need for respite so it is a frustration that direct payment budgets have not been fully drawn on. PaCC would like the council to prioritise a review of children's social care provision to identify – and address - any barriers to accessing this essential respite.

P 22 Services for children with disabilities; Contracted Services. Savings £50K

We have been reassured that this is a non-specified saving over a large number of contracts, and that no savings are planned which will lead to a reduction in front line support for children with additional needs (including short breaks) in the current recommissioning round. As above, PaCC highlight that the strain families were facing before the pandemic has been exacerbated by Covid, and we welcome protection of budgets for services for disabled children.

P 22 Learning Disabilities -Adults Community Care (ALD); Learning Difficulties. Savings £500K

We understand that this saving is conditional upon receipt of pressure funding. PaCC welcome any improvements in transition arrangements to adulthood and a broadening of the social care offer for young adults, where this provides more choice for people with disabilities. We know that many families face a 'cliff edge' when transitioning to adulthood, and PaCC stress that more investment is needed to ensure positive and sustainable outcomes for young people with disabilities.

PaCC welcome any communication on any of the issues contained in this document.

You can contact us by emailing **Diana Boyd**

PaCC Chair diana@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, mental health issue 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 **515 signed up members**.

Our position statements are developed using feedback from our Steering Group members and our partner groups.