



Brighton & Hove City Council

Short Breaks - You Said, We Did

A response to the questions raised by Parent Carers May 1st 2024.

June 2024 update.

Development of the Short Breaks Offer:

Parents / carers requested that the range of activities on offer be expanded, to include activities other than sport, and offer quiet / calm sessions.

- *"BHCC asked that families suggest alternative providers BHCC can approach for summer (see list in full notes). Parents and carers ask that they are involved in future decision making around Short Breaks"*
- *"Provision for all ages...with diverse activities (not just sport) and calm / quiet sessions."*
- *"Parent / Carer: outlined the need for calm and quiet sessions, a safe space to play"*

To increase the range of activities on offer, and include activities such as arts and crafts, and quiet / calm sessions Brighton & Hove City Council (BHCC) has compiled a list of all providers suggested by parents and contacted many of these who could support the Short Breaks offer. This feedback was valuable in understanding which providers are trusted by parents, the types of activities and the providers across the city who were not approached for the Short Breaks tendering process in November 2023.

Parents and carers shared the following providers their children have enjoyed:

1. Puzzle Bored Cafe – workshops for children and young people in a quiet, low demand environment.
2. Ferring Country Centre
3. Kangaroos (PALS School Holiday Club and Family Fun Days)

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4. Ariel Othellos (Performing Arts)
5. Aiming High (Trampolining)
6. Out of Bounds SEND Activity Events (Stay and Play) & Holiday Day Camps (1:8 ratio)
7. Music Workshops
8. Turner Summer Camps (HAF Provider, eligible for Inclusion Funding)
9. Carousel Arts Explorer Workshops
10. Art Pod (HAF Provider)
11. Orchestra 360

Parents / carers can use their direct payments to cover the cost of any of the sessions offered, and if you would like your child to attend any of these, please speak with your social worker.

Clarification around access to Inclusion funding for 1:1 support and ensuring direct payments can be used to fund the higher rate for a PA.

- *"BHCC needs to facilitate parents accessing more 1:1 support for their CYP to attend mainstream holiday provision"*

BHCC reached out to all mainstream primary, secondary, and special schools in the city to understand what clubs they are intending to offer during the summer. We spoke with SENCOs, Assistant Heads and Headteachers to understand whether the Local Authority could increase the number of SEND children who are able to attend by providing a 1:1.

School:	Update:	Eligible for Inclusion Funding?
Woodingdean Primary School	VIM Camps offers children's activity camps (9am – 3pm) in Woodingdean. They offer paid and fully funded HAF places for CYP with SEND.	Yes
Aldrington C of E Primary School	Stay and Play Summer activities (HAF). They offer paid for and fully funded HAF places for CYP with SEND. BHCC has identified pupils with SEND who would like to attend this club, and are	Yes

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	working with the provider to offer them places with 1:1 support for the summer holidays.	
Longhill Secondary School	SportsCool Summer club works with families to provide a 1:1 coach for CYP with SEND where available.	
Brunswick Primary School	Outdoors Project – BHCC have reached out to understand how they support CYP with SEND at their school holiday activity camps. Once we have a response, we will share this with the wider community.	Yes
	Brunswick Buddies – BHCC are reviewing how we could support with staffing to ensure CYP have sufficient support, as the scheme is staffed by volunteer teachers.	
Mile Oak Primary School	ACE - BHCC have reached out to understand how they support CYP with SEND at their school holiday activity camps. Once we have a response, we will share this with the wider community.	
Carden Primary School	Play PE Summer Clubs.	Yes

These clubs and activities will be included in the list of Short Breaks offers which will be shared with SENCOs and special schools to circulate through their newsletters and bulletins frequently throughout the summer term. For more information on **Communications, see Part 2.**

Georgina Clarke-Green confirmed Direct Payments can be used to fund Short Breaks sessions in the meeting on 01.05.24. BHCC are working to ensure all existing providers offer tickets for spaces funded by Direct Payments on their Eequ listing.

Parents / carers requested for schools or other familiar sites across the city to be used for Short Breaks activities, and for special school Heads to have input into the Short Breaks offer.

- *"Trusted relationship with providers, who know the CYPs. Settling in sessions required."*

- *"Special School Heads should have input as it is known that families with a high level of need may not be known to the SCDT"*

BHCC have identified that Hill Park Primary School premises will be used for a new complex offer, run by the Downs Syndrome Development Trust. This is both a provider and site which is familiar to many of our families, children and young people across the city. They will offer 7 x one day camps over the summer holidays for 10 children aged from 8 years old with complex needs who do not have Down's Syndrome.

- We are working with providers to support them in hosting stay and play / drop-in sessions for prospective parents / carers ahead of the summer holidays where possible. Updates will be shared with schools and SENCOs to advertise dates have been confirmed. Tickets to these sessions will be available on Eequ.
- Where a visit beforehand isn't possible, we have encouraged providers to create visual aids and social stories detailing their venue and core staff, which can be shared with children and young people who are not familiar with the venue or provider ahead of the summer.
- As part of our Eequ developments (**See Communication, Part 2**) we are improving our activity descriptions. This means ensuring that the facilities and equipment is described in detail and providers offer a bio of their core staff so that parents / carers can make a judgement on the suitability of the activity for their child.

We liaised with SCDS and special schools to identify families who may find it challenging during the summer without access to Short Breaks.

Increasing the duration of Short Breaks sessions.

- *"... of meaningful duration ie 4-8hrs ...providing Short Breaks which reflect the intention of a meaningful break for families"*

The duration of summer Short Breaks sessions will be as follows:

- Activ8: 8:30 - 12:30 / 12:30 - 16:30 (4/8 hours)
- Amaze: 10am - 2pm (4 hours)
- Treasure: 11am - 3pm (4 hours)
- Angling4Education: 10:30am - 1:30pm (3 hours)
- BHAFC: 10am - 2pm (4 hours)
- Parable Dance: 10am - 3pm (5 hours)
- NEW DSDT: 10am – 4pm (6 hours)
- DSDT: 10am – 2pm (4 hours)

The following HAF providers offer sessions between 4 – 9 hours in duration. Children and young people with SEND, who are eligible for HAF, can attend the following with a PA:

- Stay and Play: 8:30am - 3:30pm (7 hours)
- VIM Camps: 8am – 5pm (9 hours)
- B&H Food Partnership: (4 hours)
- Moulsecomb Table Tennis Club: 10am – 3pm (5 hours)

BHCC are working with Eequ on improving SEND and HAF listings to make it clear to families who access Free School Meals which HAF providers also offer SEND Support.

Parents / carers asked that existing providers be consulted on whether they could provide sessions for children and young people with complex needs.

All 72 providers (including those we liaised with in November 2023 at the point of tender) were contacted to find out if they could provide sessions for CYP with complex needs. Providers were given 3 weeks to submit a proposal, but none were received. Some reasons providers cited for declining were: staffing, the nature of their provision and its suitability for CYP with complex needs, and capacity to offer sessions of meaningful duration (4+ hours) as an extension to their current offer.

Confirmation of a daytime holiday scheme at Drove Road and Tudor House:

- *"It is positive that daytime holiday scheme provision is being developed at Tudor House and Drove Road, and potentially the special schools. BHCC needs to confirm eligibility and how bookings will be made, especially by families not currently accessing this in-house residential short break provision."*

An offer has been confirmed for CYP with complex needs at Drove Road and Tudor House. Each venue will offer 3 days a week in August, for up to 5 children (numbers will flex based on the needs of the CYP). This offer will be available for families who don't currently use the services, whilst also ensuring those who already access support at Drove Road or Tudor House don't lose out. Both sites have identified staff to oversee and run the provision, and several existing TAs have come forward to support the sessions.

Ensuring parents / carers have access to timely and trustworthy information on Short Breaks providers.

- *"Suitable facilities, sensory space, hoists, full size changing facilities, wheelchair access for those with severe mobility impairment".*
- *"It is unclear who is responsible for continuous performance monitoring of provision, how feedback is being gathered and reviewed, and who has oversight of this. Clarity is needed around accountability and risk management."*

BHCC hosted a provider forum on 14.05.24 with all existing Short Breaks providers.

The purpose of this was to:

- share parent feedback
- offer support to providers
- facilitate shared learning
- ensure providers are aware of their roles and responsibilities when managing bookings (ie, contacting schools to assess CYPs needs, not based on "a providers opinion on this")

Feedback after the forum was positive – providers felt more confident answering questions from parents / carers and identified positive changes for May half term and summer sessions.

The following action has been taken as a result:

- Identification of training required and confirmation of training sessions to cover communicating with non-verbal children, positive behavioural support (PBS), medical training ahead of the summer holiday.
- Identification of where adaptations had to be made to the space and discussions about how activities will be planned around this knowledge for the following school holiday.
- Providers are now familiar with their venues and what facilities (hoists, sensory spaces changing facilities) they have access to. BHCC are working to ensure these are all clearly marked on the summer listings.
- Providers have been encouraged to collect feedback from parents / carers, and the CYPs in their sessions where possible. This will all be fed back to BHCC as part of the Short Breaks oversight. As detailed in Part 2 below, an email address

has been created for parents / carers to share feedback, both positive and constructive, with BHCC directly.

- Previously, quality assurance visits were conducted by Michelle Hunt. Moving forwards, Katie Rowe (Katie.Rowe@Brighton-Hove.gov.uk) is responsible for continuous performance monitoring of provision, and will be conducting quality assurance visits on all providers throughout the summer.

Communication and Eequ Developments:

Improved communication channels between BHCC and Parents & Carers.

- *"single point of contact for support/advice on provision and bookings at BHCC"*

BHCC has set up a central inbox, which will be monitored by Jacqui Parfitt and Katie Rowe.

Short.Breaks@Brighton-Hove.gov.uk

Whilst the providers are responsible for all bookings, parent / carers are encouraged to share all queries and feedback regarding the Short Breaks offer with this email address. While we have collaborated with our providers to ensure they are proficient in the booking process and can address questions related to bookings, any inquiries about the upcoming holiday or feedback after your child has attended a session should be shared directly with us.

Please note, this inbox will monitored at set times throughout the week, and we endeavor to respond to all enquiries within 2 working days.

Parents / carers have requested consistent and regular communication from BHCC, with information about the Short Breaks offer shared well in advance each school holiday.

- *"Effective communication and promotion of the Short Breaks offer available"*
- *"BHCC will establish regular (monthly) communication updates and meetings with parent carers, especially SCDS. PaCC and Amaze continue to disseminate information and strengthen their reach into diverse communities,*

taking on board learning from the Short Break campaign group's communication"

This report is part of the ongoing updates on the development of the Short Breaks offer. BHCC has committed to holding monthly face to face meetings (with on-line option) with parents / carers together with PaCC and SEND Us a Break. Having sought advice due to the potential difficulty for some parents / carers to attend during the summer holidays, BHCC has confirmed that a meeting will proceed in August. Agendas and accompanying documents for these meetings will be shared at least one week in advance.

Amaze have agreed to create a page on their website which will host communications / updates from the parent carer meetings.

BHCC is currently developing its digital offer in collaboration with the Local Offer. This initiative aims to ensure that families have access to the latest information and to facilitate parents / carers in accessing the right support at the right time. The digital offer will include a communications element to act as a first port of call for families to see what the Local Authority is working on and to provide their feedback.

Eequ Developments

- *"There needs to be significant improvements made to the holiday scheme booking system, including timely access to full information which families need to ascertain whether providers can meet need"*

BHCC hosted a provider forum on 15.04.24, which was attended by BHCC colleagues, PaCC, CEO of Eequ, and all existing Short Breaks providers. It was a chance to share parent and carer feedback from the Easter sessions, and support providers to improve their listings.

During this meeting, it was agreed that all providers would publish tickets for the summer activities after the May half term to ensure parents / carers have sufficient time to plan holiday activities.

BHCC are working with Eequ to establish a 'gold standard of listings' for SEND sessions which providers will use as a template for their summer sessions and beyond. This is to ensure each listing is informative and the level of detail is standardised across all providers.

The article advises all providers provide a high level of detail, including but not exclusive to categories such as:

- Facilities (identifying if the venue has changing facilities, hoists, sensory rooms and quiet spaces)
- Staff biographies (including professional experience and personal interests)
- Confirmation of whether the site is secure
- Staff experience supporting non-verbal and non-speaking communicators

BHCC has worked with Eequ to ensure the booking system is more efficient – questions will be more concise and easier to read on a mobile phone. There will be an ‘autofill’ function on Short Breaks booking pages. All answers to the booking questions will be pre-populated, and parents / carers will only have to fill in this information once. There may be some provider questions which are specific to the activity on offer, and these will not be completed by the autofill function.

PA Support:

Ensuring there is sufficient 1:1 support at Short Breaks sessions across the city, and that parents / carers feel confident and familiar with the providers.

- *"Trusted relationship with providers, who know the CYPs."*

To support the summer Short Break offer at Drove Road and Tudor House and their existing staff teams, BHCC has shared an Expression of Interest with existing Teaching Assistants (TAs) and Vehicle Passenger Assistants (VPAs) asking if they wish to work during the holiday. We have received a positive response and all colleagues will have access to training and induction support ahead of the summer holiday.

We recognise that these Short Breaks providers are new and unfamiliar to many parents, carers, and CYP. In response to the need for BHCC to “create their own workforce” (Meeting Minutes, Agenda item 4), the deployment of existing TAs and TPAs from across the city and we hope that some may be a familiar face for the CYP attending short breaks sessions.

Importance of skilled staff who can offer trustworthy and consistent 1:1 support

- *“1:1s not at risk of cancellation which then prevents the CYP from being able to attend”*
- *“Sufficient skilled staff capacity to meet specialist / complex needs of CYPs....Provider commitment to 1:1s, 1:2, 1:3:1:4, 2:1 etc needs to be real”*

To strengthen the offer of 1:1 support and minimise cancellations, we have now engaged an additional provider, Bleep 360. We will continue collaborating with both providers to ensure continuity for those already supported by Happiest at Home carepals and to enhance the capacity of Short Breaks providers to offer 1:1 support at future sessions.

BHCC have worked with providers to ensure they are confident in their knowledge of ratios. Adjustments have been made to summer holiday ticket listings on Eequ to ensure the availability of different ratios is clear to parents when booking.

Other:

Development of after-school clubs for CYP with SEND.

- *“After school clubs provision remains limited.”*

Both Hill Park and Downs View will be offering after-school clubs to pupils. There is every intention for this to continue but we all want to ensure that the offer is a robust one and can be sustained so as not to let parents down and we are working with the schools to address any challenges as they occur.