



12.11.24

PaCC Social Care Interim Statement (pre BHCC budget papers 25/26)

Including PaCC's clear reference of the Send Us A Break Campaign Group's Petition to be presented at BHCC Cabinet 14.11.24

PaCC reiterates to BHCC the key message shared in PaCC's response to the BHCC city budget 24/25 that Children and Young People with Learning Disability are being left behind.

PaCC recognise that the Send Us A Break campaign group was created due to the lack of both specialist social care provision in the city, and specialist wraparound childcare in schools/colleges. PaCC agree that insufficient provision for 0- 25-year-olds across overnight respite, breakfast and afterschool clubs/wraparound care, specialist holiday provision, and the ongoing lack of PAs, must remain an area of priority focus for BHCC, to redress the inequitable imbalance of support for CYP with high support needs compared to their non- disabled peers.

PaCC remain in close contact with the Send Us a Break Campaign group, and PaCC have shared with Campaign group members, BHCC senior officers and lead Cllr Emma Daniels that PaCC will continue to support the Campaign group on all shared areas of concern.

PaCC attend SEND Us A Break meetings and are included in the Whatsapp group for the purpose of capturing parent carer feedback relevant to Short Breaks provision, processes and gaps. PaCC's approach is to continue to challenge BHCC around the issues that families face and work in coproduction with officers, within PaCC's work capacity.

Where We Are Now

PaCC acknowledge that there has been an immense amount of work undertaken by a very small new team in the council to create new Short Breaks holiday provision in Brighton and Hove.

PaCC recognise that by May 2024, holiday provision commissioning to create an offer across Universal and Targeted provision (including an offer for CYP with neurodivergent conditions) had started, however the gaps in specialist provision presented (and remains) an acute problem.

Since May 2024, the feedback received from the wider parent carer community and the Campaign group to PaCC has focused on specialist Short Breaks provision, the strength of voice around these issues remains strong.

PaCC recognise that the new commissioning team at BHCC moved quickly on-

- Keeping in touch with parent carers via monthly meetings and having two dedicated feedback channels via the short breaks email (add) and PaCC's communication routes
- Drove Road and Tudor House created specialist on site daytime holiday provision for eligible CYP (but not CYP already receiving overnight respite)
- BHCC worked with DSDT to create a new specialist holiday daytime provision, Link Up.
- BHCC worked with Amaze to create places for CYP with high support needs in their new holiday provision
- BHCC worked with all Short Break providers to establish some further places for CYP with high support needs across other providers
- BHCC worked with providers to address any staffing issues, and where staffing issues occurred, BHCC agreed agency places
- BHCC are working towards making Direct Payment and Personal Budget information more accessible, and new documents have recently been made available for the community
- BHCC are in the early stages of a workforce development plan
- BHCC's wraparound care team are working more closely with the Short Breaks commissioning team.
- BHCC have committed to look at pay rates for PAs.

Moving Forward

PaCC acknowledge that the commissioning team and the Head of the Specialist Children's Disability Team are listening to the community and responding to the ask as part of the mid - longer-term planning of appropriate provision.

However, PaCC maintains a strong challenge to senior officers and Councilor leads that the focus to increase provision for CYP with high support needs must be achieved, to meet statutory duties and address stark inequalities in the City.

PaCC recognise that there is a clear distinction between Short Breaks and Wraparound care provision. However, it is necessary that the two separate teams in the council work closely together to provide sufficient support for families.

Parent Carers say -

"The offer of breakfast and afterschool clubs at my child's special school couldn't be more different, I can book my nondisabled children into multiple weekly sessions in their mainstream schools but in my child's special school I can't get even one session a week that will fit into my work shifts. This is totally unreasonable"

"I have Direct Payments for my child, but I cannot find a PA, in the summer holidays I had three sessions for my severely disabled child over the whole six weeks, BHCC are not meeting their statutory duty for families as three days of holiday provision is much shorter than the amount of direct payments we have been given to meet our assessed need"

The key issues raised by PaCC (including feedback from the SEND community and SEND Us A Break)

Send Sufficiency and Equalities

The community seeks greater confidence that data is driving commissioning decisions. PaCC note that BHCC have made a commitment in the **SEND Strategy 2021/26 to - Carry out a city-wide SEND sufficiency project. The purpose of this will be to identify what provision and services we will require for children and young people from different backgrounds in terms of Education, Health and Social Care for a range of needs.** Sufficiency of Short Breaks and wraparound care is the driver to address inequalities.

Statutory Duty

BHCC has a duty to address provision gaps when assessed needs in social care plans are not being met. BHCC Direct Payment and Personal Budget FAQ states ***You cannot be forced to accept a direct payment. The local authority will need to arrange support to meet your needs if you do not want a direct payment.***

BHCC budget

PaCC asks for Councillor scrutiny to ensure sufficient budget is allocated for BHCC to meet statutory duty within social care.

Joint working across BHCC departments

- ensure that SEND inclusion is being fully integrated into Universal with SEND offers & HAF
- BHCC must attend to the intersectionality between Free School Meals & SEND to ensure that those CYP can access the full HAF quota set out in the Govt guidance

Workforce development strategy

- the commissioning team requires dedicated resources to adequately address the significant crisis in PA/care staff numbers
- the community asks that BHCC develop an in house/bank of experienced support workers
- pay rates remain a stark barrier for any recruitment drive. In line with statutory duty PaCC notes that the Direct Payment/Personal Budget FAQs state ***If a direct payment is agreed, how much funding will I receive? The amount of funding must be sufficient to secure the provision required to meet the needs and outcomes in a personal health plan, care support plan or EHC Plan.*** PaCC stress that this guidance should be the driver for the promised pay review for Personal Assistants and Care staff

Skills and training ongoing

- create a skills audit and make regular medical and personal cares training available to staff to support those with complex needs

Communication

- evaluate how successful info is in reaching all families, in good time, assess and change where needed.
- timelines across all areas of provision delivery and development must be clearly communicated

Processes

- PaCC and the community to look and feedback on the Draft Personal Budget - Direct Payment Policy
- PaCC to collect feedback on the recent DP/PB documents.

- parent carers report continued issues with Eequ
- all staff in SCDS to understand Short Breaks holiday provision, Direct Payment guidance etc

- Social Workers/Social Work Resource Officers to work with families in good time, to ensure that holiday provision is well planned, and families feel in control of holiday arrangements
- improve the system to identify CYP who need 1:1 or 2:1 provision and work with providers to ensure skilled/medically trained staff are consistently available to protect choice for these CYP
- correct routing to clearly define the difference between Short Breaks and Continuing Health Care (CHC) to ensure both routes are appropriately populated

Provision

BHCC must remain aware and understand the community's ask for an increase in in-house provision, via existing services and new service development.

Drove Road/Tudor House provision

- PaCC remind BHCC that during the Drove Road/Tudor House review, a commitment was made to increase this provision
- extend provision to families in need without diminishing the respite that CYP already receives at this in-house provision
- recognise that some* existing overnight respite families also need to be able to access this holiday daytime provision for consistency

Specialist places

- increase the number of specialist providers across all provision, whilst factoring in that the SEND profile of many CYP requires consistency of staffing and location
- 'Cherish': develop this in house provision and increase the number of CYP that can access it

Wraparound care

- a high focus on meeting needs and addressing inequalities. Data needed to check on the equalities impact of current gaps in the special schools and colleges- eligibility for young people with SEND up to 18

HAF discretionary funding

- use this money to increase non-Free School Meal SEND places

Children and Young People who don't fit into any of the provisions

- identify these CYP, address their need for alternative provision

In addition to the community feedback above, PaCC stresses the need for BHCC to evaluate if one-year contracts for Short Breaks providers is a sensible option going forward. The contract review timetable must mitigate the risks of an annual churn of good providers waiting for a renewal of a contract.

BHCC Strategy Work

PaCC have been asked by senior officers at BHCC to facilitate two working groups of parent carers to look at the draft Short Breaks strategy and the draft Transitions strategy.

The community has fed back clearly that it is the delivery of provision that must now be the focus. Parent carers with CYP with high support needs face ongoing burn out and need to see these strategies launched and implemented rather than prolonged discussion. Based on this feedback, PaCC have suggested to BHCC that the working groups focus building a framework of what delivery plans (from a parent carer/ child and young person perspective) should look like, for BHCC to implement alongside strategies- demonstrating the *How and When* of delivery of services, with clear underpinning of data sets and government guidance.

PaCC have asked for further resource from the council to strengthen coproduction, and further that going forward ongoing Council strategy planning is better coordinated, to ensure that stakeholder groups have sufficient time to allocate the attention needed to respond to each strategy.

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PaCC acknowledge the financial pressures of BHCC alongside the stretched capacity of officers, and we further acknowledge that this statement presents a high level of challenge to BHCC, but we hope that all parties recognise that the work to date has only accomplished some of the essential developments needed. We hope that this interim statement is a useful focus for all, and that budget and staffing resources are allocated, alongside clear processes to ensure that CYP with Learning Disabilities are not left behind.

We invite the community's feedback on any gaps in this statement, and we welcome comments.

Email: admin@paccbrighton.org.uk

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. Find out more here <https://paccbrighton.org.uk>