

PaCC reply to BHCCs Short Breaks Options, January 2025

Recent developments

The Parent Carers' Council (PaCC) acknowledge that following parent carer feedback Brighton & Hove City Council (BHCC) officers have looked at options to increase the availability of specialist holiday activity places for families with children and young people (CYP) who have high-level specialist needs.

BHCC shared three suggested plans with parent carers at the **Short Breaks meeting** on **15th January 2025**. BHCC has prepared a summary report outlining these options, which you can read here. [Short Breaks Parent Carer Forum – summary sheet](#)

Since this meeting PaCC have shared concerns with BHCC regarding the suggested Plan A, B or C. We set out these concerns in this statement for Councillors and the SEND community to make clear our position, while continuing to work in co-production with officers and parent carers to pursue next steps.

Our main concerns:

- Parent carers who attended the meeting have said that the information/data presented on each plan was confusing and not clear enough for them to give informed feedback.
- Parent carers do not want to be pitched against each other in choosing a plan that will exclude some families.
- Plans based on the current Short Breaks budget are insufficient to meet eligible need and provide an inequitable offer to SEND families.

PaCC's analysis of the suggested Plan A, B or C provided at the 15 Jan meeting

PaCC have evaluated the number of available places for families across Plan A and Plan B, working within BHCCs proposal to aim to offer families three sessions per week as mentioned at the 15 January meeting. **Our calculations below show that the number families benefitting from a three day a week offer would be very low and not meet need.**

Plan A

BHCC can offer:

- **Specialist:** 512 places (equates to 39.35 sessions per week)
- **Targeted:** 564 places (equates to 43.38 sessions per week)

PaCC highlights this equates to:

- **Specialist** 39.35 places per holiday week = 13.11 families will receive three sessions per holiday for one child.
- **Targeted** 43.38 per holiday week = 14.46 families will receive three sessions per holiday week for one child.

Plan B

BHCC can offer:

- **Specialist:** 570 tickets (equates to 43.91 places per week of the holidays)
- **Targeted:** 652 tickets (equates to 50.23 places per week of the holidays)

PaCC highlights that this equates to:

- **Specialist** 43.91 places per holiday week = 14.63 families will receive three sessions per holiday for one child.
- **Targeted** 50.23 per holiday week = 16.74 families will receive three sessions per holiday week for one child.

PaCC acknowledge that not all families will want three sessions per week and using a parent carer survey to determine need is a good idea; we have concerns that timescales are tight to turn this around to inform planning for Easter 2025, and the commissioning team will require sufficient capacity to undertake this work.

Plan C

PaCC suggest that this option is unworkable for two reasons:

- Many CYP sitting within the targeted group are statutorily eligible as per the specialist cohort
- PaCC feedback that the aims of offering Short Breaks for CYP with a wide range of needs remain essential; parent carers must not feel that specialist and targeted provision families are being pitted against each other, to shout loudest for their own need, knowing there isn't enough for to provide for both.

These calculations demonstrate that implementing Plan A, B, or C will only benefit a small number of families in need of Short Breaks holiday provision. They do not meet the needs of families eligible for support in the city and the offer for SEND children and young people is hugely inequitable when compared to non-SEND.

The issue of insufficient Short Breaks availability is further partially evidenced by recent data received; during the Christmas holiday, the Link Up program, only 7 spots were available over 2 days out of 40 applications.

In summary:

This statement is a repeated plea for BHCC to address the Short Breaks sufficiency issues raised by PaCC, SEND families and the Send Us A Break Campaign Group, all which have been clearly communicated to BHCC since March 2024. We move into 2025 with no meaningful uplift in Short Breaks provision this is undermining community confidence in BHCC's stated policy commitments.

*BHCC Priorities for the Short Breaks Strategy in Brighton & Hove
Developing targeted holiday short breaks that meet the needs of children and young people with complex needs. We will:*

- *expand the range of providers to meet the needs and offer variety for school holidays*
- *utilise the special schools as a familiar venue for children and young people*
- *provide additional 1:1 support through specific PA support*
- *utilise and expand our existing provision at Drove Road and Tudor House*
- *consider all age groups*

BHCC Short Breaks Statement

All children and young people aged 0 to 25, who have a disability (as defined in section 17(11) of the Children Act 1989) and live in Brighton and Hove can have access to a short break.

PaCC recognise that Commissioners are working to develop the Short Breaks programme and improve systems, and we recognise that the task they have building sufficient capacity within the current budget, is impossible.

PaCC reiterate the significant consequences of inadequate Short Breaks in terms of CYP missing out on enrichment compared to non-SEND CYP, a clear equalities issue, risking further isolation, a financial and Mental Health strain on already stretched families if they can't keep up with their work commitments or have any respite throughout school holidays. Parent Carers report they are living at crisis point.

Recommendation

PaCC ask councillors to recognise that only an increase in the Short Breaks budget will allow for the necessary uplift in the number of sessions available to meet need as set out in Statutory Short Breaks regulations, as well as addressing significant Equalities issues.

PaCC welcome any communication in relation to this statement. You can contact us by emailing 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, SEMH (Social, Emotional, Mental Health) issues 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 710 signed up members.