

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL – PROPOSED RECORD OF DECISION

DECISION TO BE TAKEN BY:

**Sue Chandler, Cabinet Member for Integrated Children’s
Services**

DECISION NO:

21/00095

For publication *[Do not include information which is exempt from publication under schedule 12a of the Local Government Act 1972]*

Key decision: YES

Decision required because total value of contracts will exceed £1m and affects more than two Electoral Divisions.

Subject Matter / Title of Decision

Short Break Day Opportunities for Disabled Children and Young People

Decision:

As Cabinet Member for Integrated Children’s Services, I agree to:

- A) Authorise Commissioners to commence a competitive strategic grants process for the provision of Short Break Day Opportunities for Disabled Children and Young People.
- B) Delegate authority to award grants to the Corporate Director for Children, Young People and Education or other Officer as required by the Corporate Director in consultation with the Cabinet Member

Reason(s) for decision:

1. Background

- 1.1. In accordance the Children Act 1989, section 6, and subsequently The Breaks for Carers of Disabled Children Regulations 2011, Kent County Council has a duty to ensure sufficiency of short break activities available to families of disabled children and young people living in Kent.
- 1.2. The existing grant funding arrangement for Short Breaks for Disabled Children and Young People ends on the 31 March 2022 and it is proposed that a two year Strategic Grants Framework is competitively undertaken, to be in place from 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2024 to ensure sufficiency of short break activities, and co-production of an alternate delivery model for future provision

2. Financial Implications

- 2.1. The available funding for Short Breaks Grants Framework is expected to be £1,082,995 per annum and will be funded from the Children’s Disability 0-18 Commissioning Revenue Budget.

2.2. It is not expected that this programme will deliver savings, although the bids received will be tested for value for money prior to award

3. Legal implications

3.1. The Children's and Families Act places a statutory duty on the local authority to ensure sufficiency of provision for Short Breaks for Disabled Children and Young People.

3.2. In addition, the Health services and Public Health Act 1968 provides a legal framework for the local authority to give grants to the VCS where it is providing services which the Local Authority has a statutory duty to provide.

4. Equalities implications

4.1. An equality impact assessment has been undertaken and no issues have been identified at this stage. The equality impact assessment shall be kept under constant review as this project continues.

5. Preferred Option

5.1. The preferred option is to undertake a competitive process to establish Strategic Grants for the provision of short breaks for disabled children and young people from 1 April 2022 to the 31 March 2024. The grants prospectus will set out desired outcomes and intentions for a county wide offer to meet a range of needs, including how organisations should be promoting them.

Following the grant award, the new services will be updated on the Local Offer, shared with Local Children's Partnership Groups, social workers and the front door for the marketing, promoting, advertising. During the two-year grant period Strategic Commissioning will work with Families, Carers, Service Users and Providers to co-produce a sustainable short breaks model to be fully operational from 1 April 2024.

Cabinet Committee recommendations and other consultation:

The Children's and Young People Cabinet Committee consider the decision on (date)

This decision will be considered at the meeting of the Children's, Young People and Education Cabinet Committee on 16 November 2021

Further engagement with parents and other key stakeholders is planned as part of the Grant process

Any alternatives considered and rejected:

Other Alternatives Considered and risks if decision isn't taken.

- 1) Do Nothing - The current grants for Short Breaks for Disabled Children and Young People will end on the 31 March 2022. Kent County Council will fail in its duty to ensure sufficiency of short breaks activities are available to families of disabled children and young people.
- 2) Use a Direct Payment approach – Market analysis and engagement indicates a lack of capacity at present to respond to this option, meaning that some Parents and Carers will be challenged in sourcing a provider and increase the risk of putting families into crisis. Engagement with Parents and Carers on the use of Direct Payments identified that the process can be complex and difficult to navigate

Any interest declared when the decision was taken and any dispensation granted by the Proper Officer:

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signed

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date