

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL – PROPOSED RECORD OF DECISION

DECISION TO BE TAKEN BY:

Sue Chandler, Cabinet Member for Integrated Children’s Services

DECISION NO:

23-00084

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

Targeted Short Break for Disabled Children and Young People

Decision:

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

- a) Approve the provision of grants to external providers to deliver Short Breaks for Disabled Children and Young People Service by commencing an Open Grants Process for the period 1 April 2024 – 31 March 2026.
- b) Delegate authority to award grants to providers to the Corporate Director for Children, Young People and Education in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Integrated Children’s Services.
- c) DELGATE authority to the Corporate Director for Children, Young People and Education to take other relevant actions, including but not limited to finalising the terms of and entering into required legal agreements, as necessary to implement the decision

Reason(s) for decision:

1. Background

In accordance with Section 25 of the Children and Young Person’s Act 2008, The Breaks for Carers of Disabled Children Regulations 2011 and the Children Act 1989 and 2004, there is a requirement to offer short breaks to children, young people and their families. The existing grant funding arrangement for Targeted Short Breaks for Disabled Children and Young People ends on the 31 March 2024. It is proposed that a competitive open application grant process for two-years grants is undertaken, covering 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2026. This will ensure sufficiency of Short Break activities are in place, whilst also continuing to test alternate Short Break models and implement the Short Break Strategy. The proposed Decision falls within the Key Decision Criteria of affecting two or more electoral divisions and expenditure over £1million for the lifetime of the project.

2. Financial Implications

The available funding for Short Breaks Grants is expected to be £1,060,000 per annum and will be funded from the Strengthening Independence 0-18 Commissioning Revenue Budget. Additional funding from Kent and Medway Integrated Care System may be available to support children and

young people who are Neurodiverse, and discussions are currently ongoing. The total cost for the two years is £2,120,000.

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

Section 25 of the children and young person's Act 2008 requires local authorities to provide short breaks for families with disabled children.

To impose a duty on local authorities to provide, as part of the range of services they provide for families, breaks from caring to assist parents and others who provide care for disabled children and young people.

The Breaks for Carers of Disabled Children Regulations 2011

Each local authority must produce a Short Breaks Service Statement so that families know what services are available.

The Children Act 1989 and 2004

All local authorities must provide a range of social care services to support children in need.

4. Equalities implications

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

The preferred option is to undertake a competitive open grants application process for the provision of short breaks for disabled children and young people to be in place from 1 April 2024 to the 31 March 2026. The grants prospectus will set out desired outcomes and intentions for a county wide offer to meet a range of needs from mild to complex and can include learning and physical disabilities, sensory disabilities, and neurodivergent.

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 12 September 2023

Further engagement with parents, children, and young people as well as 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 2024. 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. Direct payments and other specialist services will still be available to support families to access activities and will require a Social Care assessment resulting in increased caseloads for social workers across the county. Vulnerable families not receiving Short Breaks risk escalation to more specialised services. Risk of family breakdown through lack of breaks from caring. Strong partnerships with the Voluntary Community Social Enterprise (VCSE) sector could be negatively impacted potentially leading to less

support services within the community. Risk of destabilising the VCSE sector through cessation of funding.

2. Extend the current service provision beyond the length of the grant agreement for a further two years - This approach does not account for the intelligence collected via engagement with families, professionals, and other stakeholders in the development of the Short Break Strategy, such as:

- More focused work on strengthening independence.
- Coproducing Short Break specification and commissioning process.
- Market development
- Engaging special schools.
- Building the market around complex needs

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

None

.....
signed

.....
date