

Education, Children and Families Committee

10 am, Tuesday 7 December 2021

Holiday Support for children affected by a disability

Executive/routine
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1. Recommendations

- 1.1 The Education, Children and Families Committee is asked to:
 - 1.1.1 Note the current provision for holiday support for children affected by a disability of a planned return to a 2019 level and the interim arrangements that have been put in place in light of Covid restrictions and the lessons learned.
 - 1.1.2 Note that wider consideration of the provision is required in light of the above, in line with parents' views and wishes, and in recognition of a widening of need with more families requiring support along with the experience over the last year. The wider consideration on the future model of service delivery will be developed as outlined in section 5 (Next Steps).

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Report

Holiday Support for children affected by a disability

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 This report provides updated information on holiday support for children affected by a disability as requested by Education Children and Families Committee on 2nd March 2021.
- 2.2 As previously reported, there have been changes to this support due to the Covid-19 Pandemic and the resultant guidance and restrictions issued by the Westminster and Scottish Governments.
 - 2.2.1 Over summer 2021 period there was increased provision, but due to the timing of the relaxing of restrictions, the support could not return to the capacity of summer 2019.
 - 2.2.2 Over October 2021 holiday period, support was provided but this was at a reduced capacity due to the lack of social care staff across all provisions.
- 2.3 Following consultation and agreement with Conveners, a Development Officer post has been created and is being advertised.
- 2.4 The post holder will lead the remodelling of the service, on the basis of the outcome of the two consultations carried out with parents/carers. This will include an assessment of the existing options and their viability within budget and any Covid related restrictions should they continue.
- 2.5 The role will involve engaging with the SQA about the option of a formal qualification for the staff employed to support the children and the young people, whose feedback will inform the service being developed
- 2.6 With progress in the lifting of Covid restrictions, priority will be given to an open and timely communication with parents and carers, including coordination and consideration of any required parental contributions for support provided.

3. Background

- 3.1 This report is an update on support for children with a disability as requested by a previous Committee meeting.

- 3.2 This has been requested due to the changes that had to be made as a result of the pandemic and to look at a model going forward that offers an improved service and is open to all eligible children on a needs-led basis.
- 3.3 The request to return to the 2019 service cannot be progressed safely without careful consideration of new elements and lessons learned while looking at plans going forward.

For background details please refer to the history noted in section 8 of this report. These outline the history and past challenges for all involved, including families and staff in developing the right service for children affected by disability in holiday time.

- 3.4 It was agreed that any provision must be equitable, sustainable and safe and the service must develop flexibility

4. Main report

- 4.1 Holiday support for children with a disability has been previously provided on a first come basis and was offered to large numbers of children which offered parents short breaks and childcare over holiday periods and allowed access to play and leisure activities for the children.
- 4.2 This method of allocation supported some parents and their children however some of the most vulnerable children could not access the support.
- 4.3 This model did not enable staff to develop peer groups for the children. Additional challenges for staff were identified in meeting and balancing children's needs while mitigating risks associated with the numbers involved and linked to the differing needs of children in each setting.
- 4.4 When the pandemic hit, the service provision was inevitably forced to change, as the provision could no longer be provided in such large groups.
- 4.5 Since March 2020, and over the last year, the holiday support service has been offered in compliance with Scottish Government rulings in relation to Covid 19 and targeted at the most vulnerable children where there were risks of family breakdown. Such revised provision was delivered in partnership with the third sector. This allowed for bespoke provision and a reduced travelling time for some children who were able to access a more local venue.
- 4.6 Over summer 2021, a new provision for children with complex health/care support needs was offered to the parents/carers.
- 4.7 It is acknowledged that some families who accessed the pre-Covid support could not access this support.

To support and mitigate the consequences of this, following consultation with a representative Parents group, an additional 5 weeks of provision was arranged for children who could not access the above provisions (See appendix one for details of support offered over summer 2021).

- 4.8 In October 2021, a similar provision was provided, though the volume had to be slightly reduced due to a lack of available staff across all providers, consistently with the crisis in the wider Health & Social Care sector (See appendix one for details of support offered over October 2021).
- 4.9 The national shortage of social care staff will likely impact on the provisions being planned for February 2022. Historically, there have always been fewer staff available during the October and February holidays, and this needs to be considered for future provision. It is therefore anticipated that a similar level of provision will be offered, given the above issues.
- 4.10 We commit to reviewing the feedback from families, children and providers from the summer and from the October holiday support to help inform the development of future service provisions.
- 4.11 From the lessons we have learned, we have identified that there are differing support needs for children and their families with a disability over holidays periods.
- 4.11.1 children who are vulnerable and who are unlikely to be able to stay at home without this support. This includes families in poverty, children where there are child protection or welfare issue and children with a high level of health/care support needs
- 4.11.2 parents who need childcare provision to allow them to work
- 4.11.3 families who don't need support over the school year but without holiday support would need further support from services.
- 4.11.4 opportunities for children with a disability to access play and leisure facilities and to build up peer relationships
- 4.12 From discussions with parents and their feedback, the range of different support needs has meant that there have been very different expectations of holiday support, making it clear that a return to the 2019 provision would not address all the range of needs identified.
- 4.13 While there is a positive view of the 2019 level of support, emerging needs and a larger number of children being identified means that we need to look at possible developments of the service to be a combination of open and targeted support.
- 4.14 We suggest that we look at what the scope and costs would be for the Council for a provision that considered all the above and report back on this.

5. Next Steps

- 5.1 The wider consideration on the future model of service delivery will be developed
- 5.1.1 by the Development Worker being recruited
- 5.1.2 taking into account parental feedback
- 5.1.3 ensuring parents and cares are consulted throughout the process

- 5.1.4 considering financial implications for the service with the implementation of any new or extended model
- 5.2 We will review summer and October 2021 feedback from families, children and providers and develop an implementation task timeline from now to Easter 2022 and then to summer 2022.
- 5.3 We will update the initial Integrated Impact Assessment and liaise with Scottish Vocational Qualification team
- 5.4 A further report will be submitted in March 2022 to update the Committee on the outcome of the above actions

6. Financial impact

- 6.1 Budget provision – there currently is a budget for the holiday support of £950,000
- 6.2 The option of parents/carers contributing to the cost of the support will be considered.
- 6.3 There may be financial implications for the service of any proposed changes. Costs for the future delivery of the programme will be reviewed and reported on as part of the update report

7. Stakeholder/Community Impact

- 7.1 There have been two survey monkey consultations with parents. One in April 2021 to which there were 119 responses and one in October 2021 with 320 responses.
- 7.2 There is also feedback from the providers who have supported children which includes the views of the children and attending the provisions.
- 7.3 Stakeholders also provide feedback on the support offered.
- 7.4 There will be ongoing consultation with all relevant parties over the re-design process.
- 7.5 The previous Integrated Impact Assessment will be updated by the Development Officer post holder.
- 7.6 This provision meets the Council's priority of supporting vulnerable people, those at the most risk and those in poverty.
- 7.7 There is increased partnership working between the Council and those supporting children with a disability
- 7.8 There may be reductions in the amount of travelling that the children need to do to access support if we can continue to develop support for children in their local communities.

8. Background reading/external references

- 8.1 Update for October Committee.
- 8.2 Item 10.a – Holiday support for children with a Disability, 2 March 2021.
- 8.3 Item 7.15 - Play Schemes for Children with Disabilities Progress Report December 2018
- 8.4 Item 7.8 - Play Schemes for Children with Disabilities Progress Report August 2018
- 8.5 Item 7.10 - Holiday Activity Programme for Disabled Children and Young People Report March 2018

9. Appendices

- 9.1 Appendix 1 Numbers of children who accessed summer support 2021 and October 2021.

Appendix 1

Information on holiday support offered to children with a disability

SUMMER 2021

The Yard

The Yard ran three different provisions:

- Family sessions: the parent/carer attended with their child to use the facilities at the Yard. Ten families could attend each day; five in the morning and five in the afternoon
- Short breaks sessions: providing care from 10am-2pm each day for six children per session. 36 children in total were offered this service over the holidays.
- Oaklands Hub: this was for children with complex health and care support needs. Two groups of 17 children were each offered three weeks of support running Monday to Thursday.

Action for Children

Five children each day with complex behavioural needs related to learning disability and Autism. Support was provided at a 2-1 staffing ratio. Places were offered to 12 children, who received between six and 14 days of support depending on their level of need.

Primecare Health Autism

10 children with complex behavioural needs related to Autism were offered support. This was on a 2-1 staffing ratio. Due to the behavioural needs of the children, support was offered in half days for most of this group. Children were offered two half days per week throughout the summer.

Capability Scotland

10 children attended their base each for two – four days, with there being two groups over the five weeks.

Action Group

53 children attended this provision. Each received on average 4.5 days support; however, families who were known to be in crisis over the summer were offered additional days.

Lothian Autistic Society

34 children attended this provision. The average number of days offered was five and additional days were offered to families who were known to be in crisis.

Barnardos Hub

14 children who have behavioural needs were offered support at this hub as it was a smaller setting and numbers for the children to manager. Each child was offered 4-6 days each.

Braidburn Hub

Places at this service were allocated via applications from parents whose children had not accessed the other provisions. There was initially the capacity for 30 children to be offered two days each over the holidays. Due to the reduced numbers who took up this offer, the families who applied were offered four days support. There was also some leftover capacity to respond to crisis situations. There were 30 spaces available each day and 135 children in total participated in this service.

TOTAL CHILDREN OFFERED SUPPORT = 347

TOTAL NUMBER OF CHILDREN WHO ATTENDED SUPPORT = 332

NUMBERS OF DAYS OFFERED - 4-6 days

OCTOBER 2021

The Yard

The Yard ran two different provisions:

- Family sessions: the parent/carer attended with their child to use the facilities at the Yard. Ten families could attend each day; five in the morning and five in the afternoon
- Oaklands Hub: this was for children with complex health and care support needs. Two groups of 17 children were each offered 2 days each.

Action for Children

Five children each day with complex behavioural needs related to learning disability and Autism. Support was provided at a 2-1 staffing ratio. Places were offered to 10 children, who received between 1-2 days of support depending on their level of need.

Capability Scotland

17 children attended their base each for 2 days, with there being two groups over the week split in to a younger and older age group.

Action Group

15 children attended this provision. Each received 2 days support.

Lothian Autistic Society

34 children attended this provision. The average number of days offered was five and additional days were offered to families who were known to be in crisis.

Barnardos Hub

11 children who have behavioural needs were offered support at this hub as it was a smaller setting and numbers of children for them to manager. Each child was offered 2 days each.

Braidburn Hub

Places at this service were allocated similarly to the Hub at the summer. There was capacity for 25 children who were offered 2 days each over the holiday week.

TOTAL CHILDREN OFFERED SUPPORT = 131

TOTAL NUMBER OF CHILDREN WHO ATTENDED SUPPORT = 74

NUMBERS OF DAYS OFFERED - 2 days each