

# Education, Children and Families Committee

10am, Tuesday, 1 March 2022

## Holiday Support for Children Affected by a Disability

Executive/routine  
Wards  
Council Commitments

### 1 Recommendations

---

- 1.1 The Education, Children and Families Committee is asked to:
  - 1.1.1 Note that the Holiday Hub development worker is now in post.
  - 1.1.2 Note that work is underway on progressing support for summer 2022.
  - 1.1.3 Note that a report will be submitted to Committee in winter 2022 giving options for a sustainable and robust holiday support model going forward.
  - 1.1.4 Note that the holiday support continues to be impacted on by Covid-19 and now a National social care crisis.
  - 1.1.5 Note the work that children and family's officers have undertaken over the period of the Covid Pandemic to support children with a disability.

**Amanda Hatton**

Executive Director of Education and Children and Families

Contact: Andrew McWhirter, Acting Senior Manager, Communities and Families E-mail:  
[Andrew.McWhirter@edinburgh.gov.uk](mailto:Andrew.McWhirter@edinburgh.gov.uk)

## Holiday Support for children affected by a disability

### 4. Executive Summary

---

- 2.1 Since Easter 2020, holiday support provision for children with a disability has had to adapt to the Scottish Government restrictions as a result of Covid-19.
- 2.2 This has changed the support offered from large venues with large numbers of children and staffing to smaller venues with more bespoke provision for those most in need.
- 2.3 There were concerns that this adapted holiday provision could not offer support to some families who had previously accessed this support.
- 2.4 There is an aim to return to the level of provision provided in summer 2019 and to include lessons learned in the time frame since then.
- 2.5 There is an expectation that options for how the service could be developed would be explored, costed and reported on to this committee meeting.
- 2.6 There is now a holiday hub development worker in post who will be looking at a sustainable and robust model going forward including considering options as noted above.
- 2.7 While there are positive signs of a loosening of restrictions relating to Covid 19 there is a changing landscape and a developing national care crisis which will impact on what can be achieved by Easter and possibly summer 2022. This is mainly in relation to the difficulties in recruiting and this will have implications for service delivery and future developments.

### 3 Background

---

- 3.1 There have been issues with providing a robust and sustainable holiday support provision for children with a disability for a number of years.
- 3.2 There have been challenges in finding providers to run the support hubs, to identify enough staff, and to balance the provision of support for children with different levels of needs. There were also concerns about children spending lengthy periods travelling; children not always being with peers and support being spread very thinly with large groups.

- 3.3 In this service delivery model children, most in need were not always accessing support due to this service being allocated on a first come basis.
- 3.4 The number of children applying for support and the complexity of the support needed was also increasing and this impacted on the levels of support that could be offered. This related to extending our support to some children who had previously not been able to access such services.
- 3.5 From March 2020 as a result of the impact of Covid 19 there had to be significant changes to what could be provided.
- 3.6 With the landscape continuing to be unpredictable it has not been possible to consider a return to large venues with a large group of children that was provided in the summer of 2019.
- 3.7 This model also had serious risks associated with it but Covid-19 resulted in these not being able to be addressed. (please refer to previous reports in appendix for details)
- 3.8 Families have been under increasing pressure and have had significant additional stresses due to periods of lock down and the long-term stresses resulting from the impact of Covid. This has understandably increased the level of need at a time of more limited service availability.

## **4 Main report**

---

- 4.1 The holiday support provision for children with a disability was established to provide leisure facilities for children with a disability who could not access mainstream activities.
- 4.2 There has been issues with holiday support provision over a number of years (refer to background reading section which outlines the history).
- 4.3 From contacts with other Local Authorities, it appears that Edinburgh stands out in offering such a large and accessible holiday support provision for children with a disability.
- 4.5 Since March 2020, following the start of the Pandemic, holiday support provision has had to change and over the last two years this has been delivered in line with Scottish Government Covid regulations.
- 4.6 Council officers have worked creatively with partner agencies to develop holiday hubs. This was undertaken at a time of significant uncertainty leading to challenges both professionally and personally in delivering the service. However, it did result in strengthening partnership working in aiming to support as many children as possible over this challenging time.

- 4.7 Holiday support has largely been delivered on a local hub basis with support being provided on a 1-1 staff to child ratio, by a range of providers. This allowed children to be placed where their needs are best met, to have a positive experience and to develop friendship groups.
- 4.7.1 Due to a reduction in scale of what could be offered under Covid-19 regulations, support was targeted at those most in need.
- 4.8 As this left a gap in support being offered to a wider range of families, at the request of Councillors and in consultation with parents, an emergency hub was set up offering support to this group. This was set up for Summer 2021 and has continued.
- 4.8.1 The summer hub was held in Braidburn school and was able to offer support to 116 children and they received 4 days over the holidays. There were also another 16 children offered this support due to crisis situations, resulting in 132 children taking up places at the Braidburn Hub.
- 4.8.2 Children were offered 4 days rather than two days due to the lower take up than was anticipated.
- 4.8.3 Over October 2021, the same level of support was offered
- 4.9 For some families who couldn't access any support, additional funding was provided in recognition of the level of need and increased vulnerability of some families.
- 4.10 Support for February 2022 will be limited because of the impact of Covid and recruitment issues.
- 4.10.1 This holiday is usually delivered at a slightly reduced capacity as staff who work other holidays take this as a holiday and students generally are not available. However, there were also exceptional circumstances that will impact on this provision, namely the unexpected issues arising from the Omicron variant for Covid-19 and there being a national social care staffing shortage for a variety of reasons.
- 4.11 For Easter and summer 2022, the plan is to work with providers with the aim of increasing their numbers so that provision offered can better meet the demand.
- 4.11.1 These plans are dependent on improvements in recruitment and restrictions easing, and remaining eased, in relation to Covid-19.
- 4.12 Going forward from there, the aim is to have a safe, achievable, sustainable and financially viable holiday support provision.
- 4.13 Possible options
- 4.13.1 From the information that we have gathered over the last year and views noted by stakeholders there are different needs and expectations for holiday support that will have to be considered to meet the following needs:

- 4.13.2 Families who are vulnerable and in crisis and who without holiday support children would not be able to remain at home and who would then need a more intensive and costly support provision.
- 4.13.3 Parents and carers who need support to be able to continue to work over holidays periods.
- 4.13.4 Parents and carers who manage without any additional support, apart from the holiday provision, but who would need more costly and intrusive interventions if this was not available.
- 4.13.4 The needs of the children to access a safe and appropriate resource that meets their care and support needs along with the need to access leisure facilities with their peers.
- 4.13.5 All the above will be important considerations to differing degrees for families but are clearly difficult to reconcile in one delivery model.
- 4.14 The model provided in 2019 did not address the range of needs noted above and plans and options to cover the range of needs would need to be costed and the viability considered.
- 4.15 While it had been hoped that we could return to this committee with initial workings and possible costings for the different models above this has not been possible.
  - 4.15.1 More time is required to scope what the different models will involve.
  - 4.15.2 The changed landscape and current challenges will also need to be more fully understood for us to be able to report on options with any confidence and it would not be helpful to families to raise expectations at this time.
  - 4.15.3 The newly appointed holiday hub development worker will have the key role in this work going forward.
- 4.16 There continue to be challenges going forward, but we will continue to work creatively with partners and parents/carers to deliver as wide a service as possible.

## **5 Next Steps**

---

- 5.1 Development of an implementation timeline for Easter 2022 and summer 2022.
- 5.2 Update the Initial Impact Assessment for holiday support.
- 5.3 Progress establishing a sustainable and robust model going forward.
- 5.4 Liaise with SQA re qualifications for holiday support staff.
- 5.5 Undertake detailed work on possible models relating to the different expectations and to cost these.
- 5.6 Work will continue to prepare a fuller options briefing to present to the Committee in October.

## **6 Financial impact**

---

- 6.1 Budget provision – there currently is a budget for the holiday support of £1,003,000 per annum.
- 6.2 The option of parents/carers contributing to the cost of holiday support will be considered.
- 6.3.1 Going forward there may be financial implications for the holiday support provision. This will be detailed in the fuller analysis of the various options and potential costings.

## **7. Stakeholder/Community Impact**

---

- 7.1 There have been two survey monkey consultations with parents which will be analysed by the development worker.
- 7.2 The development worker will liaise with parents, carers, children, stakeholders and providers.
- 7.3 Consideration will be given to the feedback from the providers who have supported children.
- 7.4 There will be ongoing consultation with all relevant parties to assist with planning future provision.
- 7.5 The Integrated Impact Assessment will be updated.
- 7.6 Ensuring that this provision meets the Council's priority of supporting vulnerable people, those at the most risk and those in poverty.
- 7.7 There will be increased partnership working between the Council and those supporting children with a disability
- 7.8 We will aim to reduce 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 Committee report  
<https://democracy.edinburgh.gov.uk/documents/s31994/7.9%20Holiday%20Support%20for%20Children%20Affected%20by%20a%20Disability.pdf>
- 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 None