

DERBYSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

CABINET

28 July 2015

Report of the Strategic Director for Children & Younger Adults

THE AIMING HIGH DERBYSHIRE OFFER – (Children and Young People)

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 To update Cabinet on the outcomes of the consultation on potential changes to the Aiming High Derbyshire Offer held between October 2014 and January 2015.
- 1.2 In light of the consultation feedback, to propose a revised set of proposals for potential savings to the Aiming High Derbyshire Offer budget.
- 1.3 To seek Cabinet agreement to consult on recommendations for the future delivery of the Aiming High Offer.

2. Information and Analysis

2.1 Background and Context

Short breaks are intended to give:

- Disabled children and young people enjoyable experiences away from their primary carers, thereby contributing to their personal and social development and reducing social isolation;
- Parents and families a necessary and valuable break from caring responsibilities.

Derbyshire offers a 'menu' of short break provision for disabled children, young people and their families at different levels of need. This report proposes consultation on a revised set of proposals for the future of 'Aiming High' short breaks, which form one strand of the wider short breaks offer.

Appendix 1 describes the current Derbyshire short breaks offer, and the needs 'Aiming High' short breaks are intended to meet.

The existing short breaks offer was developed as a result of increased funding that was made available to Local Authorities to extend access to short breaks for disabled children and their families. In 2010-11, Derbyshire County Council received a Government grant of £2.37 million for this purpose. The grant was used to increase the range of short break services, including "Aiming High" and a number of Social Care services for families with the highest levels of assessed need.

Whilst this has been extremely positive, this funding stream is no longer ring-fenced. It has been subsumed first into the Early Intervention Grant (EIG) and subsequently into the main Council funding. Although it is impossible to identify the current notional grant allocation for short breaks, these wider budgets have been cut by between one third and one half. Over the same period, however, spending on short breaks has increased year on year. The 2015-16 budget for short breaks for disabled children and young people (excluding universal services) is almost £3.8 million, well in excess of the 2010-11 Government grant. Almost £1 million of this budget relates to Aiming High short breaks.

Spending on Aiming High short breaks has increased year-on-year, by 15% on average. To date, spending has remained within the allocated budget but this will not continue to be the case beyond 2015-16. Continued delivery of the current model is not affordable or sustainable, as it would require an increasing budget in 2016-17 and 2017-18. Over the period 2015-16 to 2019-20 the Council's budget is expected to achieve savings of over £146 million. The Children and Younger Adult's (CAYA) share of this total could be over £30 million. The majority of CAYA's reduced budget will be required to fulfil statutory functions relating to safeguarding and child protection, children in care and care leavers, and to provide services to meet children and families' assessed needs. As a consequence, there is a need to review the priorities of the service and to agree what can be maintained in the future. Changes to the current Aiming High Short Breaks offer will be necessary, both to enable the Authority to keep within its budget and to ensure that the scheme is sustainable into the future.

On 5th August 2014, Cabinet therefore agreed to a period of consultation on proposals to reduce and change Derbyshire's Aiming High Short Breaks.

2.2 Outcome of the first consultation

A consultation took place between 8th October 2014 and 15th December 2014 on proposals to:

- Reduce the budget for group activities from £300,000 to £150,000, with only one provider per district commissioned to provide group activities;
- Reduce the budget for flexible one-to-one support and short break grants from £666,000 to £366,000, and use the reduced budget to make one-to-one flexible support available to families on the basis of an Early Help Assessment (EHA) by the Multi-Agency Teams (MATs). MATs would then spot-purchase short break services for eligible families from the existing 'Framework of Providers'. It was proposed that the access to the cash grant be removed;
- Cease the small grants for Summer Playschemes – making a saving of £35,000: there are no on-going contracts in place and no commitment to any on-going funding;
- Introduce interim arrangements between April – September 2015

The consultation report is included at [Appendix 2](#). There was significant opposition to cuts to provision for disabled children. Also, during the consultation period, some issues were identified which required further thought and consideration, including:

- Whilst people felt that the principle of MATs assessing families' needs was fair, they were concerned that this would involve a disproportionate extra cost of assessment and the potential for backlogs;
- Access to support without further assessment was valued, and it was felt that those meeting the current criteria should have something they can access without an assessment;
- Grant: there was a strong view from some families that the short break grant enabled greater flexibility for activities and support that could not be delivered by the contracted providers of flexible one-to-one support. Many families advocated keeping the grant, although there were also concerns voiced about use of the grant.
- Some consultees expressed the view that disabled children and young people should be more fully involved in the consultation process to ensure that their views were fully considered in the decision making process.

Consideration of the responses to consultation, alongside further analysis using newly acquired data, has led to consideration of alternative means by which savings to the Aiming High budget might be made.

2.3 The proposed models for consultation

It is proposed that a period of further consultation takes place on the following revised proposals for one-to-one flexible support and short break grants:

- To retain the current criteria for families to access Aiming High flexible one-to-one support, without the need to request an assessment by MATs or Social Care. There would however be a reduction in the maximum hours available to families from 80 to 40 per year;
- To continue to give families the option of choosing a short break grant as an alternative to one-to-one support, with a reduction in the maximum grant from £800 to £400 per year. In addition, there would no longer be an option for families to use the grant to fund family holidays.
- To consult on (a) implementing these changes for all families from 1st April 2016, or (b) implementing these changes for new applicants from 1st April 2016, and allowing existing service users to step down to a maximum of 60 hours/£600 in April 2016 and 40 hours/£400 in April 2017.

These proposals would continue to offer some flexible one-to-one support to families who meet the existing criteria, without the need for an additional assessment. This responds to the consultation feedback. Families who need additional support, beyond the maximum of 40 hours, would be able to request an assessment by MATs or Social Care.

These proposals would also continue to provide the option of choosing a short break grant, which many families said they wanted, albeit within the context of stricter criteria than now. The proposal that grants could no longer normally be used to fund family holidays is likely to generate considerable debate. During consultation, many families expressed the view that a holiday is a short break; that they are the best judge of what is needed in their family and that they could not afford a family holiday without the grant. On the other hand, there is growing demand for the grants and the majority of applications are to help fund family holidays. Concerns were raised by some about whether it is right for public money to subsidise the cost of family holidays, given the budget pressures the Authority is facing. Concerns were also raised that grants were being used to subsidise family holidays at the expense of regular short breaks that might better help the

disabled child or young person to maximise their friendships, social contacts and try new activities.

In addition, the consultation would confirm, subject to any additional feedback in the further consultation that the Authority is proposing to:

a) Implement the previous consultation proposals to:

- Reduce the budget for group activities from £300,000 to £150,000 with one provider per district commissioned to provide group activities for disabled children. Actual spend on these group activities in 2014-15 was £239,135. The reduction would produce a saving of £89,135.
- No longer offer one-off funding to voluntary organisations to provide summer play schemes. Providers already offer a range of activities during the summer holidays, therefore it is not anticipated that the removal of this offer would have a serious impact on access to summer activities or families' abilities to care for their children. As there were no costs in 2014-15 and no budget included for 2015-16, this saving has already been accounted for. Therefore if this service were to cease permanently, there would be no impact on the current ongoing budget shortfall.

b) Triage requests for Aiming High through Starting Point. Starting Point aims to provide a new 'front door', i.e. single point of access, for referrals into Children's Services. It would therefore be appropriate for requests for Aiming High one-to-one support and grants to be triaged through Starting Point, resulting in:

- A more consistent approach to processing requests
- Appropriate eligibility checks, not relying solely on Lead Professionals
- Families needing additional support would be directed to the appropriate services
- Consistent data capture.

c) Strict application of the expectation that (i) families will not be able to access flexible one-to-one support or grant if their child is able to attend group provision without one-to-one support and; (ii) families will not be able to receive both Aiming High and social care provision at the same time.

2.4 Proposed Consultation Arrangements

It is proposed that consultation takes place from mid-August to 2nd October. It is important to ensure that there will be enough time to enable meaningful

consultation with disabled children and young people after the school holiday period as well as their parents/carers. It is therefore proposed that:

- All families who use Aiming High short breaks receive a letter informing them about the consultation and how to respond;
- The letter offers support from the participation team, to help their child or young person to give their views directly;
- Further group consultation takes place with young people in special schools and Derbyshire County Council targeted youth groups;
- The Derbyshire Parent Forums are asked to promote the consultation through letters, notices, meetings and focus groups;
- The consultation is publicised through other routes to potential future users of Aiming High short breaks, including the County Council website, libraries, schools, colleges and NHS services.
- Key stakeholders, such as special schools, and representative groups will also be invited to contribute to the consultation.

2.5 Additional Considerations.

The proposed changes would affect families who have been receiving services through the Derbyshire Aiming High Offer, in some cases for several years.

Current uptake of allocated one-to-one hours is in the region of 70%. In 2014-15, 57 of the 194 individuals who were allocated the full 80 hours of flexible one-to-one support utilised their full allocation. This implies that the impact of a reduced offer would be felt differently by families: around 30% would experience the full reduction of 40 hours; however most families would experience a reduction of approximately 20 hours compared with now.

Reducing the scope of the Derbyshire Offer would result in disabled children and their families receiving a reduced service, however, those families with higher levels of need could request an Early Help or social care assessment in order to determine whether a higher level of support was needed.

In addition to the Aiming High Offer, disabled children are able to access activities and short breaks through mainstream and other targeted provision and Derbyshire will continue to support the inclusion agenda, extending the reach of universal services by continuing to provide support and advice to settings as required.

3. Financial Considerations

A breakdown of anticipated costs and savings relating to each of the consultation proposals can be found in Appendix 3. A summary is below:

- Option 1 provides figures based on implementation of changes for all families from 1st April 2016;
- Option 2 provides figures based on implementing changes for new applicants from 1st April 2016, and allowing existing service users to step down to a maximum of 60 hours/£600 in April 2016 and 40 hours/£400 in April 2017.

Anticipated spend/savings based on the current number of users:

Proposal	Baseline budget	Predicted Spend 2016/17	Anticipated savings 2016/17	Anticipated savings 2017/18
Option 1	£965,946	£518,925	£447,021	£447,021
Option 2	£965,946	£630,825	£335,121	£447,021

Anticipated spend/savings if there continues to be a 15% year-on-year increase in users:

Proposal	Baseline budget	Predicted Spend 2016/17	Anticipated savings 2016/17	Anticipated savings 2017/18
Option 1	£965,946	£638,400	£327,546	£254,364
Option 2	£965,946	£791,625	£174,321	£254,364

4. Legal and Human Rights Considerations

The Council is obliged to consult with all those whose service may be significantly affected by the proposals.

In putting forward the revised proposals for consideration and, potentially, for further consultation, officers have taken into account the relevant statutory duties and powers.

However, Members will wish to be satisfied that any recommendations for changes to existing provision that are put forward following consultation comply with the Local Authority's duties under section 17 of the Children Act 1989 (the promotion of the welfare of children who are 'in need'), section 2 of the Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1970 (which sets out a list of services including short breaks that the council must provide to disabled children,) , the Children and Families Act 2014 (which defines and prescribes the content of the 'Local Offer'), the Breaks for Carers of Disabled Children Regulations 2011, the Special Educational Needs and Disability Regulations 2014 and associated guidance.

An equality impact assessment will be required as part of the next stage of these proposals. Members will therefore have a full opportunity in due course to consider any potential detriment on protected groups, particularly

in relation to the Council's disability equality duty, under the Equality Act 2010.

Article 8 of the Convention on Human Rights provides for a (qualified) right to family life and to a private life. Article 3 of the UN Convention refers to the need to consider disabled children's best interest in the decision making process. Members will also wish to consider any implications this may have for the proposals following the consultation and equality analysis being carried out.

5. Other Considerations

In preparing this report the relevance of the following factors has been considered: prevention of crime and disorder, equality of opportunity; and environmental, health, human resources, property and transport considerations.

6. Key Decision

No.

7. Call in; Is it necessary to waive the call-in period?

No

8. Officer Recommendations

That Cabinet agrees that a further period of consultation takes place with children, young people, parents, carers and stakeholders on the basis of the identified preferred proposal set out in this report.

That Cabinet receives a further report following the consultation on the further feedback received and the results of the equality impact assessment.

Ian Johnson
Strategic Director for Children & Younger Adults

Appendix 1

The table below describes Derbyshire's current short breaks offer to disabled children, young people and their families. The areas shaded in grey would be affected by the proposals in this Cabinet report.

Universal	Inclusive Local Clubs and activities (for example, Children's Centre groups, Derbyshire Youth Service universal services, after school clubs etc)	No eligibility criteria: Open to all children and young people. The Disability Inclusion Team can provide support to universal settings to help them meet the needs of disabled children and young people.
Targeted	Specialist DCC Youth Service Disability Groups	No eligibility criteria as such; however the age range is age 11+ and some of the groups have a specialist focus e.g. there are groups for deaf and hearing impaired young people.
	Small grants for summer playschemes	No eligibility criteria as such; grant funding has been made available to organisations and small community groups to provide activities.
	Aiming High group activities – these should reflect what young people and families in each area say they want. Usually there is a mix of different activities e.g. summer holiday playschemes; after-school clubs; youth clubs; day trips; outdoor activities. Provided by voluntary sector – usually 2 contracts per District.	No eligibility criteria: Open to any child or young person with a disability aged 5-17. Families approach the providers directly to access activities. There are no waiting lists; however the amount of provision each young person can access may vary according to demand
	Aiming High flexible one-to-one support <i>or</i> a short break grant <i>or</i> a combination of the two. Those who meet eligibility criteria can access up to 80 hours of support or an £800 grant per year without a social care assessment. The one-to-one support is provided by voluntary organisations.	These are for children/young people aged 5-17 who cannot access any group activities due to the nature/severity of their needs. Applications need to provide evidence of the young person's disability and be signed by a lead professional. The eligibility criteria are: "The children and young people will have impairments and support needs related to severe disabilities, mainly:

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ children and young people with Autistic Spectrum Condition who are likely to have other impairments, such as severe learning disabilities or challenging behaviour; □ children and young people with complex health needs; □ children and young people with moving and handling needs that require equipment and adaptations; □ children and young people where challenging behaviour is linked with other impairments e.g. severe learning disability. <p>Children and young people must not receiving any other short breaks or similar support</p>
Social Care & Specialist short break services	Aiming High activity weekends – provided by the voluntary sector.	These are occasional weekend activity breaks for older children and young people with more complex needs. Access to the activity weekends is based on an assessment of need and is approved by a Social Care Panel.
	Disabled Children's Core Services: Fostering, Residential, Outreach and Family Support Services	At the highest levels of need, Social Care provide or fund essential support to families of children identified through statutory assessment and who, without this support, would not be able to look after their disabled child

CONSULTATION REPORT ON THE AIMING HIGH DERBYSHIRE OFFER

1. Purpose of report

On 5th August 2014 Cabinet agreed that there would be future consultation on the proposal for the Aiming High Derbyshire offer

This report explains the detail of the consultation and outcomes.

2. Methodology and Approaches

Formal consultation on the proposed changes took place between 8th October and 15th December 2014. This report will summarise views, opinions and suggestions submitted by those that responded to the consultation.

The consultation used a mixed method approach by offering both qualitative and quantitative ways to gather responses on the proposed changes. As many people as possible were enabled to take part by offering a range of ways in which people could share their views.

- 14 Parent Forum sessions were delivered across the county with varying attendance, 69 in attendance overall. 40 attendees confirmed they were receiving Aiming High support; however 6 of the 69 did not specify.

Date	Location	Total Attendance	Breakdown of Attendance Total		
			Currently Receiving AH	Not Currently Receiving AH	Did not specify
10/11/14	Ashbourne	1	1		
11/11/14	Dronfield	9	6	2	1
12/11/14	Swadlincote	5	3	2	
13/11/14	Chesterfield	3		2	1
14/11/14	South Normanton	7	5	2	
17/11/14	Clay Cross	4	1	3	
17/11/14	Etwell	2	2		
18/11/14	Ilkeston	6	5	1	
20/11/14	Long Eaton	8	2	5	1
20/11/14	Swanwick	Cancelled			
21/11/14	Buxton	4	1	3	
24/11/14	Belper	6	2	2	2
25/11/14	Glossop	1	1		
26/11/14	Cromford	6	5	1	
27/11/14	Bolsover	7	6		1

One group was cancelled due to nil attendance.

Each forum was attended by at least one officer of Derbyshire County Council accompanied by a parent forum representative. Information on these focus groups had been widely available via the internet, each family receiving support through Aiming High and parent forum member had been sent a letter inviting them to attend the forums and take part in the consultation questionnaire.

- A Derbyshire Parent Forum officer collated notes from the briefing sessions as well as gathering feedback by other methods. A summary report by the Derbyshire Parent Forum is at [Appendix A](#) of this document.
- In order to engage young people in the consultation and in view of the complexity of the proposals a representative from the Children's Disability and Inclusion Service conducted tailored consultations at specialist youth groups and in special schools. 67 young people were offered the opportunity to participate in the consultation, the methodology is at [Appendix B](#) of this document; not all young people attending the groups chose to provide feedback and the views of 26 young people were included in the final consultation summary.
- Online consultation: current Aiming High providers and families using Aiming High services were all written to and invited to respond to the online consultation. Alternative methods of responding were available through Call Derbyshire; respondents could chose to request a paper copy of the questionnaire, with a free post return address or respond directly on the telephone. Geographical locations of all those that responded can be found at [Appendix C](#). There were 227 responses in total, 34 of these responses were from young people with an age range of 10 to 23. All the responses are summarised in the Aiming High Consultation Response Summary report, graphs showing the number of responses are at [Appendix D](#).
- In addition to existing service users and their families, responses were invited from all who might have a legitimate expectation of accessing the affected services. Therefore, the consultation was publicised widely through Derbyshire GP surgeries, Libraries, schools and children centres and all documentation was made available on the council's website.

3. Summary of the Consultation Responses

Briefing Sessions

There was a general understanding that the authority is in a difficult position and having to take difficult decisions. Although there was a real strength of feeling that there was not enough support available currently for disabled children, there was an appreciation that this funding is not ceasing altogether. The common themes that were raised from the briefing sessions are as follows:

Interim Arrangements

Concern was expressed that by reducing Aiming High more families would request assessments from Social Care or fall into crisis with potential cost implications for the Social Care budget. Parents stated that they use a higher proportion of hours or of the grant during the summer break in order that they can go to work, therefore thought pro-rata hours proposed in the interim arrangements would restrict this.

Targeted Approach

Families fed back that the grant provision is able to deliver options and flexibility that is not available from current Aiming High providers, however, it was felt that this provision should be more closely monitored to ensure the funds are appropriately spent. Concerns were raised regarding the framework of providers and how this would work: parents wanted clarity on how the framework could be used, would they meet the providers they were considering before making a decision, was there flexibility to move providers if they were unhappy with the support and what administration processes would this involve. There was general agreement that the framework of providers would be beneficial in enabling access to support based on assessed need.

Proposed eligibility criteria

There were specific concerns raised that the proposed criteria was based on an assumption that children should be supported by family members where possible. It was stated that other family members also need a break from their caring responsibilities and some children would want and benefit from activities not supported by family members in order to develop independence. There was a view that all families with a disabled child or children will experience significant stress; and that this may result in all families with disabled children meeting the eligibility criteria. Additional concerns were the potential for subjective interpretation of the criteria and lack of training for staff in Multi-Agency Teams (MATs) leading to inconsistency across the County.

Early Help Assessments

There was a general agreement with the principle of targeted funding and support based on families' needs. There were, however, concerns about the capacity of MATs to produce assessments in a timely manner as well as variable knowledge and understanding of disability and its impact. There were discussions about the number of assessments that families with disabled children are already subjected to and fears that having to participate in additional assessments would prevent some families from seeking support, potentially leading to crisis.

Group activities

There was concern that reducing the amount of the provision would lessen flexibility and reduce choice for families which could lead to social isolation. There was a view that it would be difficult for a single provider to offer a range of activities across all age groups that met all family's needs: different times and types of sessions will appeal to different children and young people and one model would not be right for everyone. Trips to new places and different types of activities were considered inappropriate for some children and young people with autism. Some parents valued consistent activities in familiar surroundings and identified an unmet need to provide breakfast and after school clubs that were accessible and affordable and which enabled parents to work.

Summer Play Schemes

Parents value summer schemes and groups that offer support during the summer period. There was a lack of awareness of the Aiming High funded summer play schemes. Summer holiday provision funded by Aiming High would not be affected by this change which parents found reassuring.

Consultation Questionnaires

There were a total of 227 responses gathered from the online and paper consultation, 34 of which were under the age of 24.

1. How strongly do you agree or disagree with the proposed interim arrangement?

75% of the respondents disagreed with the proposed interim arrangements, predominately opposing the ceasing of the grant provision and the reduction in 1:1 hours. Families commented that they valued the choice the grant provided, such as a family break or the ability to access support that they may not otherwise be able to. Some viewed that 80 hours of support a year were not enough; however, there was an understanding that a reduction in hours was a

preference to no support at all. 17% agreed with the proposed interim arrangements and expressed views that this would help prevent misuse of funding and redirect money into other support provision where there was better value for money.

2. How strongly do you agree or disagree with the proposal to provide support to children and young people who meet the appropriate new eligibility criteria?

55% of the respondents disagreed with the proposal to provide support based on new eligibility criteria and raised issues with the number of assessments they are already having to complete and stated concerns that the new criteria may not reflect the complexity of conditions. Even though only 30% agreed with this proposal there was a general appreciation that a criterion is an appropriate way to target resources.

3. How strongly do you agree or disagree with the draft proposed eligibility criteria?

48% agreed with the draft proposed eligibility criteria and considered them 'fair' and 'logical' and not unlike the original criteria they were familiar with. 30% disagreed and thought the criteria would be difficult to assess and emphasized the need to get the criteria right. Other comments were that the proposed criteria were exclusive or discriminatory to those children outside the criteria. 22% neither agreed nor disagreed with the proposed criteria and 33 respondents did not answer the question.

4. How strongly do you agree or disagree with the proposal to reduce group activities?

52% disagreed that group activities should be reduced; respondents felt that this would reduce choice of activities and age appropriate provision in each locality therefore negatively impacting on socialisation. 27% of the respondents agreed with this proposed reduction. 21% neither agreed nor disagreed with the proposal.

5. How strongly do you agree or disagree with the proposal to cease grants for disabled children summer play schemes?

Many responses referred to specific volunteer groups which provide summer play schemes as part of the group provision of Aiming High – there appears to have been an element of misunderstanding about what was funded through Aiming High and other play schemes that were available during the summer. 55% disagreed with ceasing summer play schemes as it was felt that this would contribute to further family stress during summer holidays. 25% neither agreed

nor disagreed. 20% agreed with some commenting that unused funds would justify ending the scheme and others considering the schemes to be inappropriate for many children's needs

6. How strongly do you agree or disagree with the proposal to continue the Aiming High activity weekends?

63% agreed with the proposal to continue the Aiming High Activity Weekends as this provided essential breaks for family carers and encouraged independence. 22% were unaware of the scheme or had not utilised this service and felt unable to comment. 15% disagreed and considered that the overnight breaks should be reduced in line with other elements of Aiming High.

7. Have you any suggestions on alternative ways of providing support to disabled children and young people?

There were a range of suggestions on alternative ways of providing support which included the following:

Various activities such as:

- roller skating
- swimming
- horse-riding

Views were shared regarding the range of group provision that could be offered from the importance of friendship groups to increasing access to sensory aids and specific groups such as a swim club or football club to provide a summer coaching scheme.

Suggestions for alternative ways of providing support included:

- utilisation of current facilities with increased assistance, thereby allowing inclusion to mainstream schools for after school clubs
- utilising current services such as foster carers for weekend breaks.
- a house with staff so families could stay away together.

Alternative solutions to fund reductions included:

- fund raising events
- schemes to encourage young or retired volunteers in the local area with opportunities for further training.



Aiming High Consultation Report

Derbyshire Parent Forum held forums where officers of Derbyshire County Council were invited to consult on the proposed changes to Aiming High; these were held from 10th November to 27th November 2014 with 69 parents attending forums, others provided feedback by other methods. This report is based on the information and views of parents.

Parents do appreciate the old system lacked some co-ordination, the application process was slow often resulting in a delay in receiving the service, however they are unanimous in their voice that Aiming High should not be facing funding cuts. Parents are aware of the bureaucracy surrounding applications and welcome changes which would make the system easier to understand and access, but not at the expense of reduced access. This year there were delays in receiving Aiming High due to untrained personnel. Parents are very concerned the proposals to use Multi Agency workers will make this a problem for 2015 again.

Eligibility criteria

Parents were concerned their teenage children do not always want short breaks with family members and stressed that this does not encourage independence. Teenagers may not want an older worker hanging around. The short breaks grant has been essential in enabling parents to procure support that meets the needs of their teenagers such as someone close to their own age and it allows their teenage child to experience more 'normal' social interaction. Parents want their children to access social experiences but know they are not always able to do this without support. There is concern that if a family member can help then they must do so, and this pressure on interrelationships is not good for the family. It is considered a disqualification under the proposal to have family support but this is beyond what is reasonably expected from family and friends. It could add additional strain to extended relationships - one reason why parents seek help from outside agencies in the first place.

The criteria is not clear. Parents feel that if they are asking for help then they are clearly stressed already and yet the Multi Agency Team (MAT) are going to judge if they are 'stressed' enough; a judgement parents feel is steeped in shame. It is not specific about what does and does not constitute a stressed parent, it is a subjective measure, conflicted by personal experience and is therefore open to misinterpretation. Parents want the MAT to spend time understanding the stresses and strains of parenting a child with disabilities and special educational needs before they make such judgements. While it is welcomed that a specific diagnosis is no longer needed, there were concerns raised that children without physical disabilities will be disadvantaged, especially those with good language skills who converse well.

Early Help Assessments

Parents are unconvinced that the MAT would be able to understand their family situations based on their previous experiences with this team. Parents don't have a problem with having an assessment if they are going to identify needs and provide needs led services. The assessments need to take into account the aspirations of both the child and family. They welcomed that when information was available through an EHC (education, health and social care) plan then this should be used instead

of an Early Help Assessment. They felt that reassessment was a costly exercise, when budgets could be used to provide practical support.

Parents are concerned they are going to have to retell information when they have more than one child accessing Aiming High. This is frustrating and should be unnecessary. Parents would like this to be recognised and all assessments completed in one visit on one form for all children. The MAT can then disseminate this into individual assessment sheets, if needed.

Parents were clear the MATs need training on disability before they carry out assessments. They don't want to wait weeks to get an assessment but feel the system will be flooded in April with those transferring from one-to-one and grant support so this is likely to occur. Parents reported a MAT closing a case as their child's disability was not sufficiently severe. Parents are questioning how these teams can make such judgements. There is concern that families will not seek out support due to having to deal with a MAT.

Parents were unconvinced that the change would actually save money given the MAT involvement.

Group Activities

Parents were concerned having only one provider per area which will give them no choice for group activities. They are also concerned that the remaining provider would be overrun with children. Some organisations sound very specialist such as Derbyshire Autism Support Group. This can lead to parents not being aware of the services they provide. If groups are going to tender with specialist names they need to ensure parents are aware that any child can attend, it's not just those with Autism as in this example. Parents were clear in their need for consistent and high quality care for their children. They highlighted the lack of suitable groups for their children to access.

Parents in South Derbyshire particularly felt they already had poor access to services in their area and these cuts would make the situation worse. Many parents had received agreement for support through Aiming High already but were unable to access it as the providers were full. With a move to one provider they didn't see this situation improving.

Some parents were not aware group activities could be used, as the form they completed only mentioned one-to-one support and grants. Now they are aware, they would consider group activities too. These need to be published more clearly so parents have access to this information.

One-to-one support

Parents want one-to-one support to continue. They understand the need for assessment, but don't support any cutting of hours. Every hour that is not given is one less hour of social interaction for a child. They reiterated how isolated their children are and how these activities encourage friendships. Parents welcome the opening up of the framework to allow them to access support quicker and based on the needs of their child.

Parents welcomed that if they were not happy with the service they were receiving they would be able to change providers, but would like a clear outline of how this would occur and the timescale to change.

Removal of the Short Breaks Grant

Parents understand that in some cases the grant has been abused, but those who are using the grant correctly to provide their child with social experiences and family respite have no problem in justifying this at any point in the year. They feel their honesty is being punished for those who use the grant for the wrong purpose.

There were several examples of where services had not been able to meet the needs of children due to the inconsistency of their staff. In these circumstances parents have used the grant to purchase their own support. Removing the grant would mean this support could not continue. Removal of the grant also means children are confined to disability services, as parents cannot purchase support to attend mainstream activities. This is not inclusive and is concerning to parents.

Some parents have used a combination of the grant and one-to-one support. These parents' circumstances are such that if the grant had not been available they could not have self-funded the activity. There is a financial pressure with one-to-one support that some parents would not be able to meet.

Summer play schemes

The justification for summer play scheme grants seemed to be clear but the consultation made no other justification for the reduced group or one-to-one service. Parents want a clear rationale for why services are proposed to be cut, especially when the impact is so vast. Simply saying there are millions to be saved by 2018 is not justification. Parents did feel that the summer play schemes were poorly advertised; they did not access them simply because of a lack of awareness. They are clear that summer holiday support is essential, and were reassured to know that schemes running during summer 2014 had not accessed grant support so must be funded differently and would not be affected by this change. They trust that this has been discussed with the summer play scheme providers and that group activities would involve some summer holiday groups which they could access.

Interim arrangements

Parents were not supportive of the interim arrangements. These arrangements cover nine weeks of school holiday at a reduced amount of hours. Given that holidays are a major stress inducer, parents will be left without the support they need, while children will be left with no social interaction. Parents are already penalised as they cannot access mainstream holiday clubs, the reduced hours means they will not be able to access specialist services either. Some parents use the hours to enable them to work during the holidays. Without it their employment will be under threat.

The short breaks grant is proposed to be totally disbanded from April, but parents will not be able to access one-to-one support until an Early Help Assessment has been carried out. They are therefore going to be left without services and support. This is especially important for those parents who use the grant to procure their own one-to-one support. Reducing the grant for the interim period would allow parents to have the assessment and continue to receive support.

Additionally, parents are concerned that if during the interim period they used all 35 hours, they are not guaranteed to be allocated 80 hours for the whole year. For example, if they were only allocated 40 hours, for the six remaining months they would only have five hours to use; this arrangement would not be suitable. Parents left without the support they need, especially during the summer holidays, could send parents into crisis more quickly.

Impact of Aiming High for parents and children

Parents have numerous examples to share of how Aiming High has benefited their children. One reported their child getting into trouble with the police but through the scheme behavioural improvements occurred. They stressed consistent support had been essential in this. In many cases the support has enabled families to focus some time on a sibling who otherwise would have been left out. With improvements in sibling behaviour occurring concurrently, this preventative measure for siblings intervenes before problems develop. Aiming High supports a child but its impact is seen across the whole family, from less stressed parents who are able to continue their caring role, to siblings who have had some time to develop as a unique individual. These are additional outcomes to those achieved by the child receiving Aiming High support. One parent reported how their child's experience of a day trip with Aiming High resulted in rich conversation which would not normally occur, while many described how their child had become more confident and independent, achievements which parents welcome. Parents frequently stated how Aiming High had changed their child's life, offering experiences they could not, relevant tasks that encourage independence in adulthood and social experiences they would not otherwise be able to access. Parents were disappointed that Aiming High is being targeted for cuts, and feel it is cruel to target these vulnerable children who are not able to speak up for themselves. They are sure if this support is taken away families will collapse. Families need you to be aware you are deciding on their future stability in offering or not offering services. This is disempowering.

A new system must have regard for parents' needs

They have a need for meaningful short breaks to allow them to continue in their caring role. Far from cutting hours, parents need to be able to access more hours and support that is tailored to their needs. Parents understand this can be difficult as some require longer days less frequently, such as day trip care, while others require shorter more frequent respite such as weekly youth groups. A new system must offer them flexibility to procure group care that is individual and meets the needs of both the child and family.

Parents state that by reducing the number of hours available, the child will have reduced social experiences; services used through the Aiming High offer is quite often the only social interaction their children experience. Parents report that they have tried to access mainstream social experiences but this results in stress and strain on both the child and the family which lasts much longer than the activity attended. Parents need, therefore, to be able to access suitable social experiences that meet the needs of their children. Aiming High offers good outcomes for social interaction which are valued by parents in their goal of raising socially-aware adults. This requires commissioning to be more child-centred. Parents want to be listened to when deciding the needs and outcomes for their child, and providers need to be sought that can do this, rather than the current prescriptive services that exist.

Parents would like to see more communication of services available; many have older children who were only just benefiting from accessing Aiming High as they hadn't been made aware of the scheme before. Many had heard about Aiming High through word of mouth and questioned why schools had not provided this information to them earlier. Given the awareness is so low, parents feel that cutting the budget now would mean less people become aware as services struggle to meet the demands of children already receiving Aiming High. Clear communication is needed to improve access to services, so parents know what they are accessing and what is available.

Parents are fearful that the good services they are currently using will be lost in any retendering process. These services know their children and they feel confident they are safe, understood and looked after whilst in their care. This means the break is a real break, not one full of worry that their child will be upset. Ensuring parental views are heard in this process is essential. They use these services, they know how their child reacts to going to these activities, and they know what their child likes. Parents want to ensure that this essential parental input is not lost in the procurement of cheaper services.

Parents would like to be able to source their own support and for it to be paid for as one-to-one support. They have experienced situations whereby the providers have been unable to provide consistent one-to-one supporters, causing traumatic social experiences for the child, and as a result parents have commissioned their own support using the short breaks grant. Such parents would like to be able to add individuals to the framework of providers to ensure the consistency of meeting their child's needs. If this was not possible, given the removal of the short break grants, their children would not have any social experiences and they would lose essential respite.

Conclusion

As there is very little data on the current Aiming High offer, parents feel that there will be no way of monitoring the impact of these proposed changes on themselves or their children. This risk is therefore uncalculated, and has a long-lasting and open-ended effect. Parents feel disempowered by the proposed cuts to Aiming High. It is asked that you seriously consider the impact of reducing respite care for parents of children with disability and special educational needs before you vote for this proposal. Parents feel that once this decision is made there will be little support for them to continue in their caring role, becoming costly to social care as families break down and parents are forced into crisis.

Aiming High Short Breaks Consultation:

Report compiled by Ruth Pownall and Richard Hale

24/06/2015

Young people who attended the settings on the nights of the consultation (67)

Due to the complexity of the needs of the young people who attend the settings, not all young people wished to complete a formal consultation paper.

All the completed official papers were delivered centrally to the Policy & Research team, but some settings said they needed more time for the young people to complete and return them and that they would return them themselves.

Any consumable resources used during the sessions were retained by the settings themselves as the Disability Inclusion Service was not asked, as part of their brief, to keep them.

All settings in bold are the settings that gave us the completed consultations which we returned to the Policy and Research team.

All the other settings completed the questions with us and then adapted the resources that we took to enable them to carry out the consultation but chose to return the forms to the address identified on the consultation itself.

The age of the youngest person taking part was 11 years.

Alfreton Park School wished to complete the consultation as part of their PHSE lesson without any support from the Inclusion Team. The school have told us that they have returned the forms to Matlock but could not identify if this was County Hall or John Hadfield House. This is being followed up with the school.

- Chesterfield - Hear and Now Club (12). Returned By Setting
- Chesterfield - Multi Space Club (12). Returned By Setting
- **Buxton – SAFE (5)**
- **Buxton – Buxton Volunteer Centre (2)**
- **South Derbyshire – In Club (9)**
- **South Derbyshire – Shout (2)**
- South Derbyshire – Youth Forum (7). Returned By Setting
- **Oyster (4)**
- **Bennerley Fields Special School (2)**
- **Stanton Vale Special School (2)**
- Umbrella (10) Returned By Setting

Forms Completed (26) that feed into the numbers below:-

Question 1: How strongly do you agree or disagree with the proposed interim arrangement?

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
0	2	4	3	16

Question 2: How strongly do you agree or disagree with the proposal to support children and young people who meet the appropriate new eligibility criteria?

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	1	7	6	9

Question 3: How strongly do you agree or disagree with the draft proposed eligibility criteria?

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
0	4	14	2	0

Question 4: How strongly do you agree or disagree with the proposal to reduce group activities?

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	3	3	11	5

Question 5

How strongly do you agree or disagree with the proposal to cease grants for disabled children summer play schemes?

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
0	0	4	9	9

Question 6

How strongly do you agree or disagree with the proposal to continue the Aiming High activity weekends?

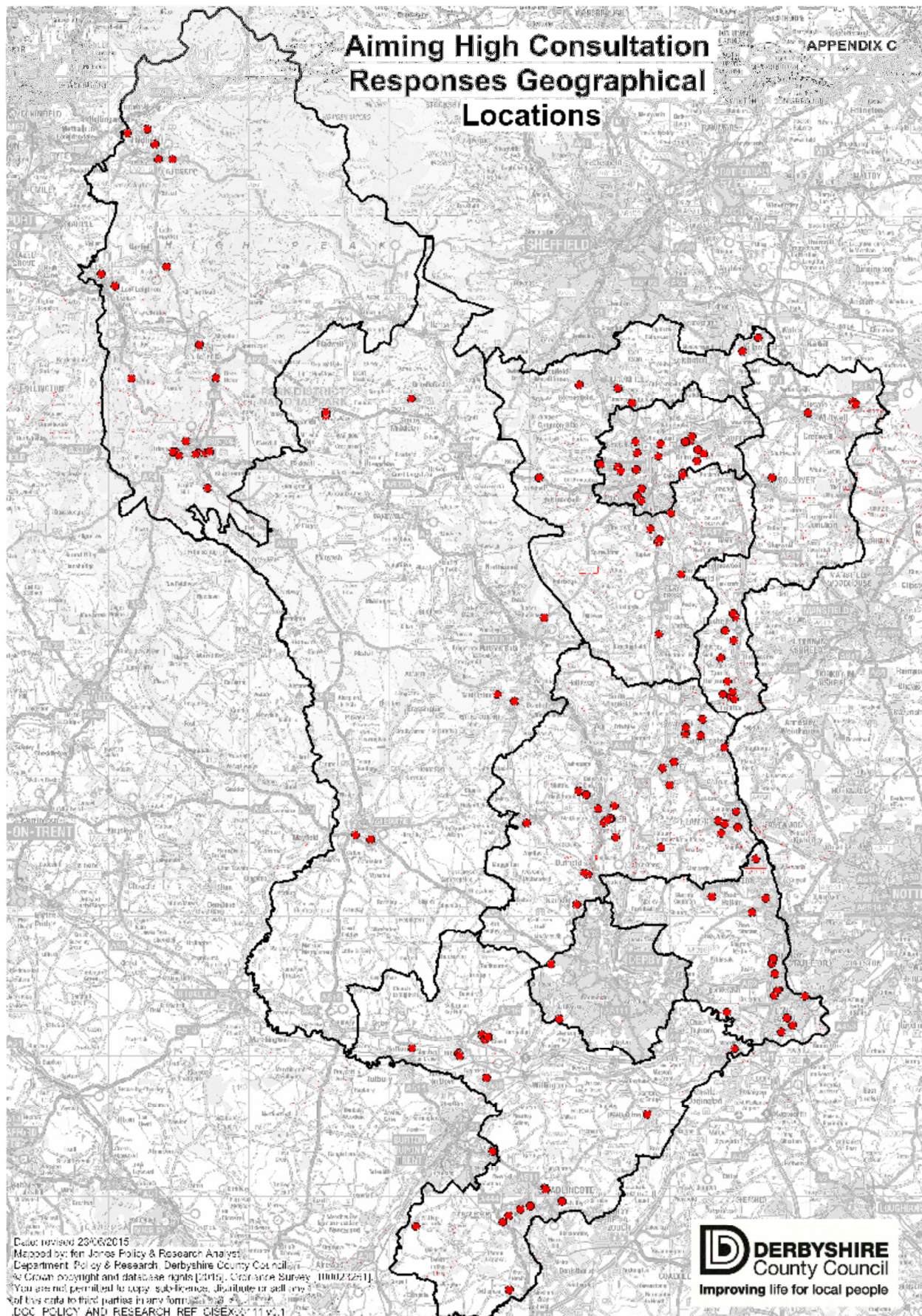
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
6	15	1	3	0

Question 7

Have you any suggestions on alternative ways of providing support for disabled children and young people?

- Raise Money
- Disability awareness days
- More people with disabilities to come to groups
- More Training
- No

APPENDIX C

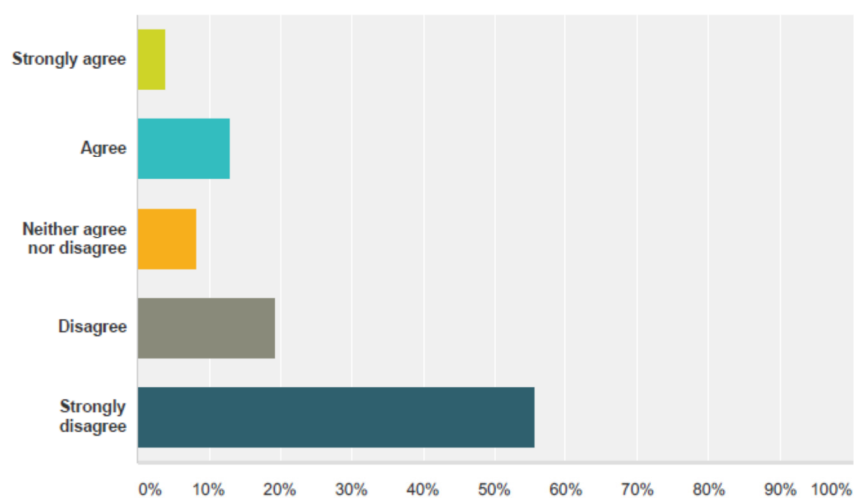


Date: 11/05/2015
 Prepared by: Jon James Policy & Research Analyst
 Department: Policy & Research, Derbyshire County Council
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 DCC POLICY AND RESEARCH REF 005626/11/05/1

Derbyshire Aiming High Consultation Response Summary Report

Q1 How strongly do you agree or disagree with the proposed interim arrangement?

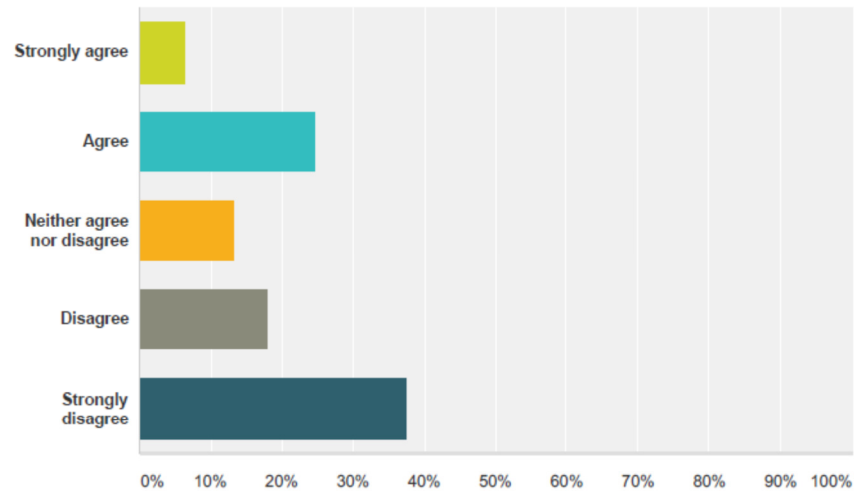
Answered: 223 Skipped: 4



Answer Choices	Responses	
Strongly agree	4.04%	9
Agree	13.00%	29
Neither agree nor disagree	8.07%	18
Disagree	19.28%	43
Strongly disagree	55.61%	124
Total		223

Q2 How strongly do you agree or disagree with the proposal to provide support to children and young people who meet the appropriate new eligibility criteria?

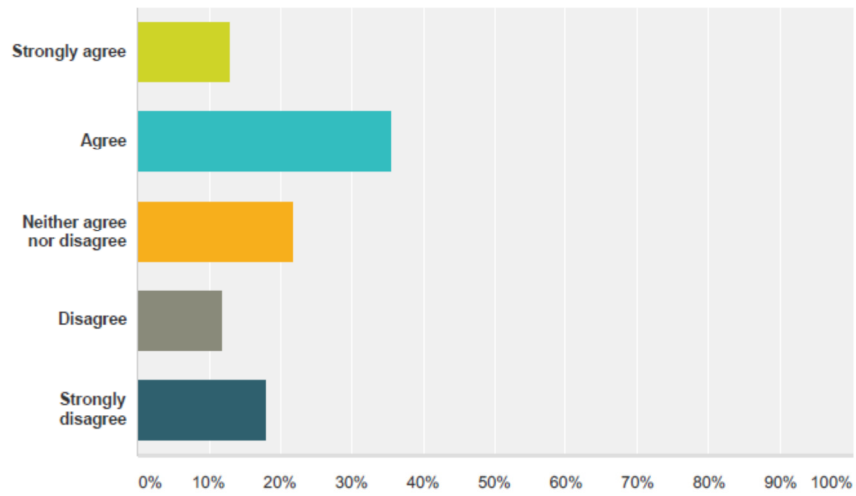
Answered: 216 Skipped: 11



Answer Choices	Responses	
Strongly agree	6.48%	14
Agree	24.54%	53
Neither agree nor disagree	13.43%	29
Disagree	18.06%	39
Strongly disagree	37.50%	81
Total		216

Q3 How strongly do you agree or disagree with the draft proposed eligibility criteria?

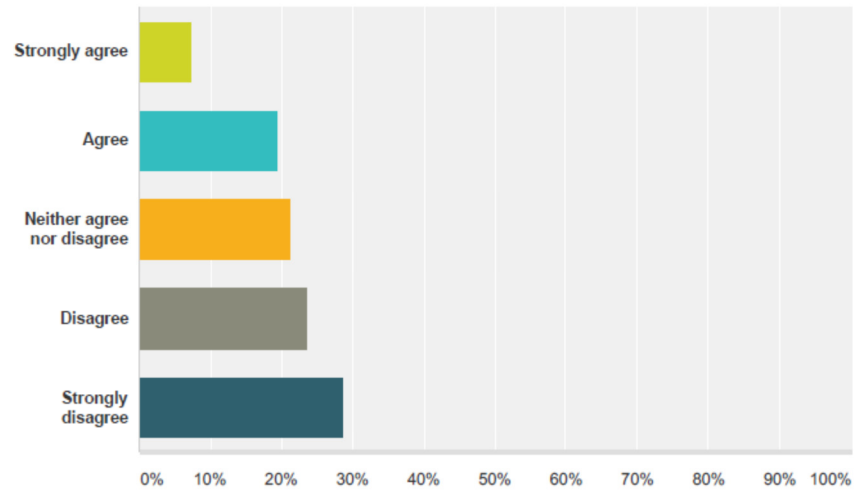
Answered: 194 Skipped: 33



Answer Choices	Responses	
Strongly agree	12.89%	25
Agree	35.57%	69
Neither agree nor disagree	21.65%	42
Disagree	11.86%	23
Strongly disagree	18.04%	35
Total		194

Q4 How strongly do you agree or disagree with the proposal to reduce group activities?

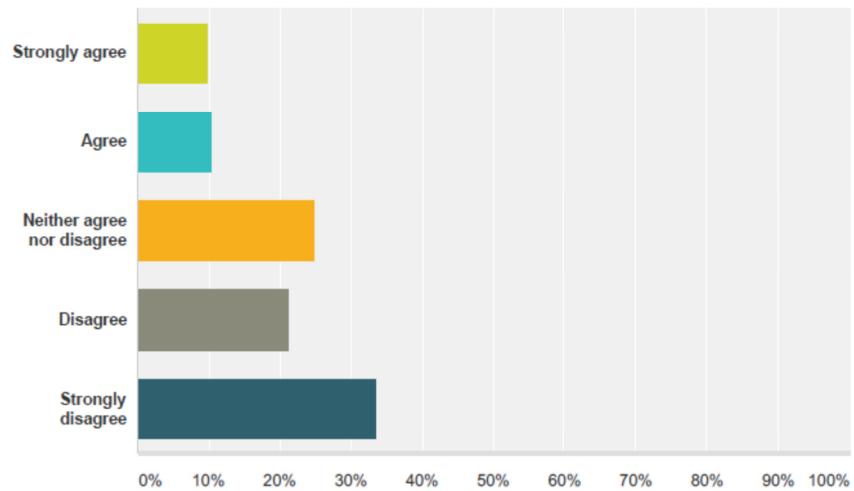
Answered: 207 Skipped: 20



Answer Choices	Responses	
Strongly agree	7.25%	15
Agree	19.32%	40
Neither agree nor disagree	21.26%	44
Disagree	23.67%	49
Strongly disagree	28.50%	59
Total		207

Q5 How strongly do you agree or disagree with the proposal to cease grants for disabled children summer play schemes?

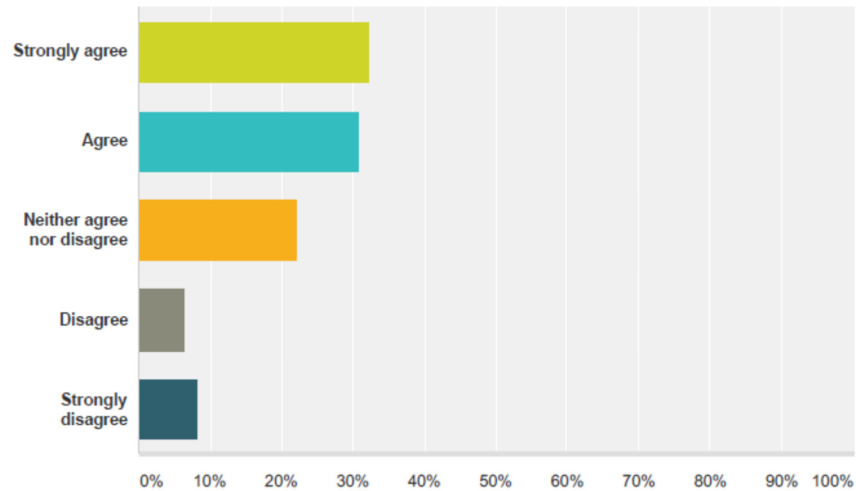
Answered: 202 Skipped: 25



Answer Choices	Responses	
Strongly agree	9.90%	20
Agree	10.40%	21
Neither agree nor disagree	24.75%	50
Disagree	21.29%	43
Strongly disagree	33.66%	68
Total		202

Q6 How strongly do you agree or disagree with the proposal to continue the Aiming High activity weekends?

Answered: 198 Skipped: 29



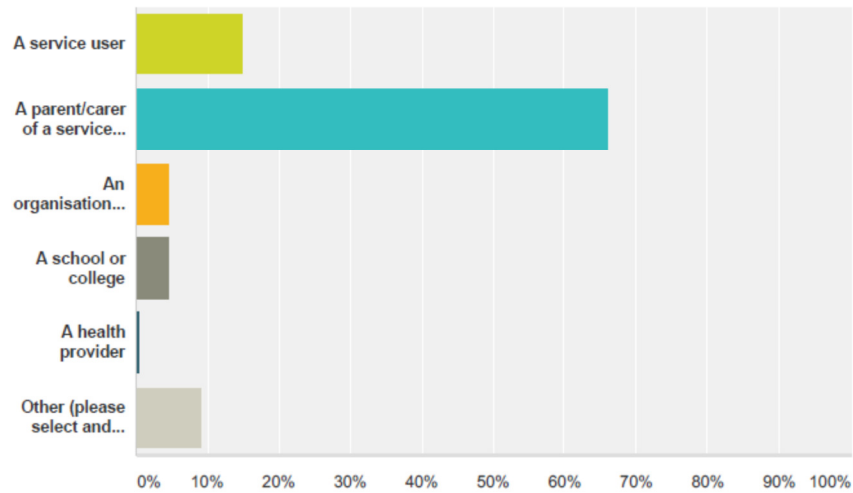
Answer Choices	Responses	
Strongly agree	32.32%	64
Agree	30.81%	61
Neither agree nor disagree	22.22%	44
Disagree	6.57%	13
Strongly disagree	8.08%	16
Total		198

Q7 Have you any suggestions on alternative ways of providing support to disabled children and young people?

Answered: 103 Skipped: 124

Q8 Are you answering this questionnaire as:

Answered: 195 Skipped: 32



Answer Choices	Responses	
A service user	14.87%	29
A parent/carer of a service user	66.15%	129
An organisation providing services for disabled children	4.62%	9
A school or college	4.62%	9
A health provider	0.51%	1
Other (please select and specify)	9.23%	18
Total		195

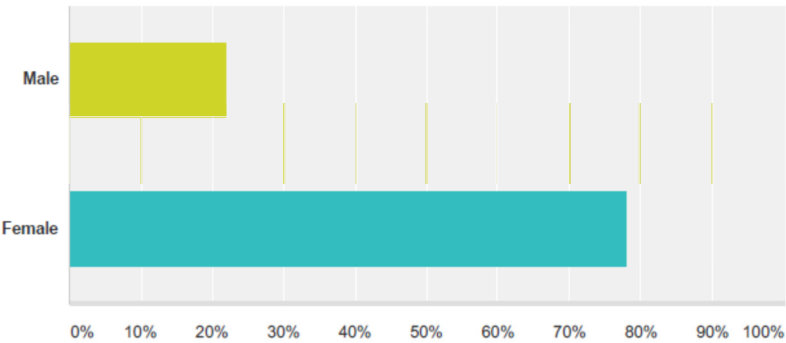
Q9 What is your home postcode?

Answered: 178 Skipped: 49

Answer Choices	Responses	
Name:	0.00%	0
Company:	0.00%	0
Address 1:	0.00%	0
Address 2:	0.00%	0
City/Town:	0.00%	0
State/Province:	0.00%	0
	100.00%	178
Country:	0.00%	0
Email Address:	0.00%	0
Phone Number:	0.00%	0

Q10 What is your gender?

Answered: 197 Skipped: 30



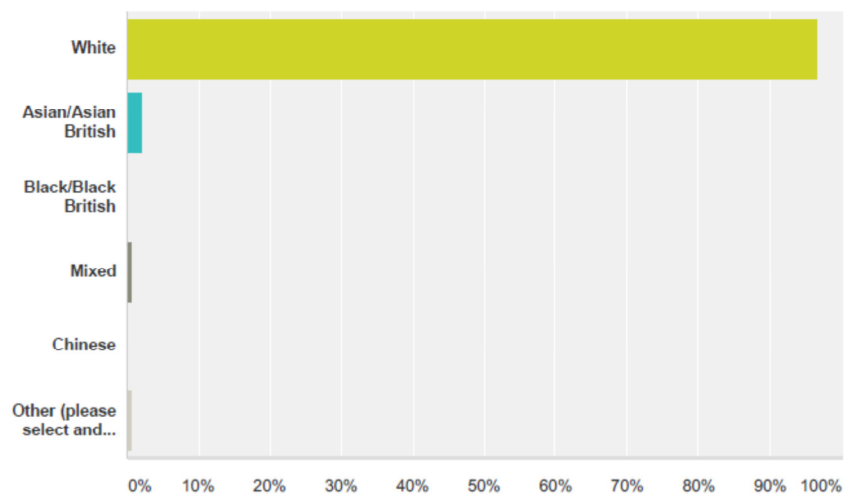
Answer Choices	Responses	
Male	21.83%	43
Female	78.17%	154
Total		197

Q11 What was your age last birthday?

Answered: 186 Skipped: 41

Q12 What is your ethnic group?

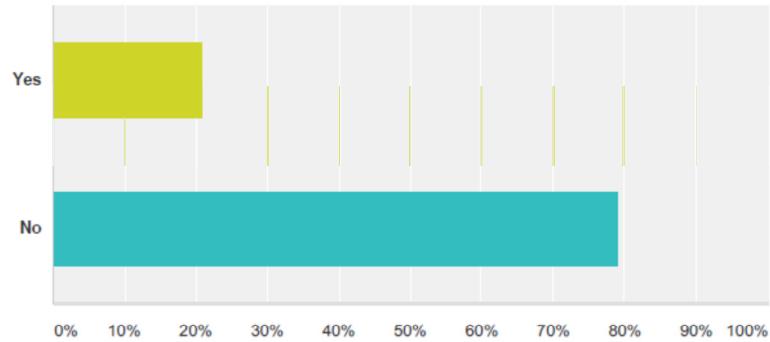
Answered: 184 Skipped: 43



Answer Choices	Responses	
White	96.74%	178
Asian/Asian British	2.17%	4
Black/Black British	0.00%	0
Mixed	0.54%	1
Chinese	0.00%	0
Other (please select and specify)	0.54%	1
Total		184

Q13 A disabled person is someone who has a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. Do you consider yourself to have a disability?

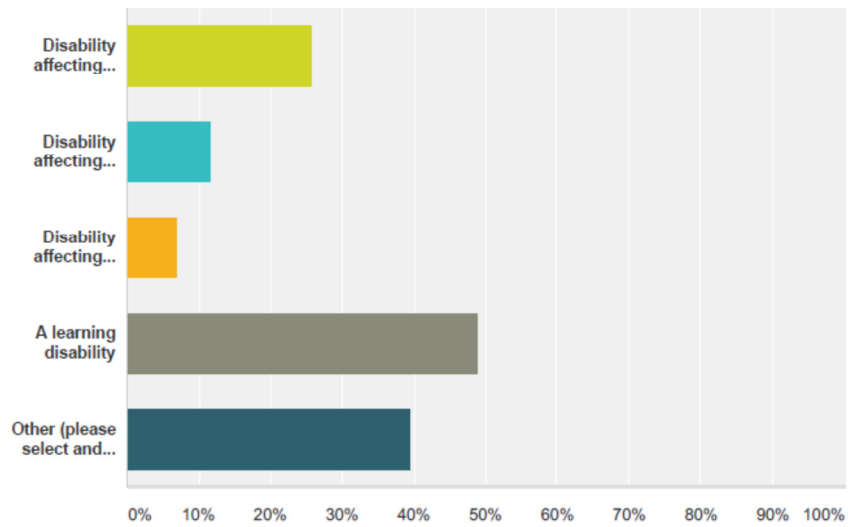
Answered: 191 Skipped: 36



Answer Choices	Responses	
Yes	20.94%	40
No	79.06%	151
Total		191

Q14 If you answered 'Yes', what type of disability do you have?

Answered: 43 Skipped: 184



Answer Choices	Responses	
Disability affecting mobility	25.58%	11
Disability affecting hearing	11.63%	5
Disability affecting vision	6.98%	3
A learning disability	48.84%	21
Other (please select and specify)	39.53%	17
Total Respondents: 43		

The Aiming High Derbyshire Offer Proposals

The proposals for one-to-one flexible support and short break grants:

To retain the current criteria to access flexible one-to-one support with a reduction in the maximum hours available from 80 to 40 per year and continue to offer the choice of a short break grant as an alternative to the one-to-one flexible support with a reduction in the maximum grant from £800 to £400 per year.

Option 1: Changes implemented for all families from 1st April 2016.

Option 2: Changes implemented for new applicants from 1st April 2016 and allowing existing service users to step down to a maximum of 60 hours/£600 in April 2016 and 40 hours/£400 in April 2017.

The tables below provide cost/savings comparisons based on the current number of users and an anticipated 15% growth in the number of users.

All of the figures assume that the current financial contribution of £40,000 per year from the Clinical Commissioning Groups continues at the same level.

Table 1: Anticipated costs and savings based on current number of service users

OPTION 1	Baseline budget	Predicted Spend 2016/17	Anticipated savings 2016/17	Anticipated savings 2017/18
Play Schemes	£35,000	£0	£35,000 ¹	£35,000 ¹
Groups	£300,000	£150,000	£150,000	£150,000
Flexible 1:1	£310,946	£181,125	£129,821	£129,821
Short Break Grant	£320,000	£187,800	£132,200	£132,200
Total	£965,946	£518,925	£447,021	£447,021

OPTION 2 Graduated reduction	Baseline budget	Predicted Spend 2016/17	Anticipated savings 2016/17	Anticipated savings 2017/18
Play Schemes	£35,000	£0	£35,000 ¹	£35,000 ¹
Groups	£300,000	£150,000	£150,000	£150,000
Flexible 1:1	£310,946	£215,625	£95,321	£129,821

¹ As there were no costs in 2014-15 and no budget included for 2015-16, this saving has already been accounted for. Therefore if this service were to cease permanently, there would be no impact on the current ongoing budget shortfall

Short Break Grant	£320,000	£265,200	£54,800	£132,200
Total	£965,946	£630,825	£335,121	£447,021

Table 2: Anticipated costs and savings with anticipated 15% growth in users.

OPTION 1	Baseline budget	Predicted Spend 2016/17	Anticipated savings 2016/17	Anticipated savings 2017/18
Play Schemes	£35,000	£0	£35,000 ¹	£35,000 ¹
Groups	£300,000	£150,000	£150,000	£150,000
Flexible 1:1	£310,946	£240,000	£70,946	£34,946
Short Break Grant	£320,000	£248,400	£71,600	£34,400
Total	£965,946	£638,400	£327,546	£254,346

OPTION 2 Graduated reduction	Baseline budget	Predicted Spend 2016/17	Anticipated savings 2016/17	Anticipated savings 2017/18
Play Schemes	£35,000	£0	£35,000 ¹	£35,000 ¹
Groups	£300,000	£150,000	£150,000	£150,000
Flexible 1:1	£310,946	£290,625	£20,321	£34,946
Short Break Grant	£320,000	£351,000	-£31,000	£34,400
Total	£965,946	£791,625	£174,321	£254,346