

Appendix 3: Targeted short breaks allowance scheme background

- 1 The scheme will be targeted at children who have already been assessed as having special educational needs (SEN) in bands D and E of the SEN tariff model, which helps to give an indication of a level of need without the requirement for further assessment.
- 2 There could be individual cases where families of children outside the target group are experiencing exceptional situations that could justify the approval of a targeted short breaks allowance. Therefore, the council will operate a '*special circumstances application*' process, with grant decisions to be made by the children with disabilities team.
- 3 The recommended providers for Tier 2 targeted daytime activities represent an increased menu of activities, providers and costs, from which disabled children and their families could choose to use their targeted short breaks allowance. Families can choose to use their approved allowance with one of the council's approved providers, or they may choose to make other arrangements that meet their needs for a short break.
- 4 The level of allowance will be £350 per child, per year (pro rata around financial years and up to 18th birthday). The fees to be charged by providers to the allowance will range from £6 to £20 per hour. Depending upon the activities that families choose to access, this means that a child and their family could benefit from 18 to 58 hours of activities per year. Approved providers will also seek a small contribution towards activity costs from families. Session durations vary between activity from 2 hours to 6 hours, meaning that families could access between 3 and 29 sessions per year, depending on their choice of provision. Some providers may also be able to offer additional sessions to families on a self-funded or provider-subsidised basis.
- 5 While the new scheme is intended to be fairer and more transparent than the previous block contract arrangement, there could be a perception of inequality among some families who have used the previous service. Of the 70 children recorded as accessing the previous service in 2015/16, only 47 had a special education need in any SEN banding. Of those 47, only 25 were in the targeted group of SEN bands D&E. Previous users of the service may continue to access activities and short breaks in several ways:
 - i. Families may wish to consider accessing tier 1 universal opportunities, which can be either self-funded or provider funded. Some tier 2 and 3 providers also offer tier 1 activities that are not commissioned by the council
 - ii. If any of the families of the 45 non-target children believe that they are experiencing special circumstances, they will be able to apply to the targeted short breaks allowance, which may result in an allowance being approved by the council's children with disabilities team. If necessary some families could be signposted towards a comprehensive social care assessment if it appears that their needs may actually require tier 3 specialist support
 - iii. For some families, an approved short breaks allowance may not match the level of support that they have previously become accustomed to. Should a family feel that the allowance is insufficient to meet their needs, they may seek a comprehensive social care assessment by the council's children with disabilities team
- 6 The council has contacted the families of children in the target group and of children who used the previous service in 2015/2016, to inform them of the changes and the options available to them.