

Review and Redesign of Lancashire's Short Break Service: Summary of responses to the consultation questionnaires for parents and carers (September to October 2020) and short break providers (November 2020)

Features of the proposed new short break offer

The differences between the current Lancashire Break Time offer and the proposed new Break Time offer that was the subject of the consultation are outlined below:

Current offer – Lancashire Break Time	Proposed new offer - Break Time
Lancashire Break Time provides group activities which provide a short break for parents and carers.	Break Time activities provide an opportunity for a short break for parents, carers, families and children and young people through children and young people being part of a group activity.
<p>Eligibility criteria for Lancashire Break Time</p> <p>A child or young person must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • be living with an unpaid carer; • be aged between 4 to 18 years; • living in Lancashire, excluding Blackburn with Darwen and Blackpool; • find it difficult to access universal services due to sensory issues, learning difficulties and/or physical mobility problems; • not be in receipt of an assessed social care outreach package. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children will be able to access Break Time from the start of the academic year (September) in which they turn age 5 to the end of the academic year in which they turn 18 (July) • Children will have special educational needs and/or disabilities and be unable to access universal services and activities. • Children will live in Lancashire (excluding Blackburn with Darwen and Blackpool council areas) • A child is eligible to attend Break Time if: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Parents or carers are in receipt of child benefit for a child - Parents or carers receive a carers allowance for a child • Children are not eligible to attend Break Time if: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - They are looked after children and live with their parents, in a foster family or in a children's home

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - They have had a social care assessment and receive Day Time or Night Time short breaks following this, through a Child's Plan (social care plan of support). - They attend a residential school or receive short breaks as part of school support to families
<p>Children are able to access as many Lancashire Break Time activities and groups as they wish (subject to availability)</p>	<p>Children will be able to access a Break Time activities and groups of between 10 and 50 hours a year.</p> <p>The Short Break review identified that more than 60% of children attended fewer than 50 hours of Lancashire Break Time activities.</p> <p>Families will be able to purchase additional hours of Break Time activities if they want to access more than the maximum offer of 50 hours and this will form part of the new commissioning arrangements.</p> <p>If families do not feel the Break Time offer meets their needs then they can request a social care assessment of need.</p>
<p>There is a minimum parental contribution of £1 per hour towards Lancashire Break Time activities (paid directly to the activity provider) in addition to the cost of specific trips/activities.</p>	<p>It is proposed that the minimum parent carer contribution to Break Time activities is increased from £1 to £2 per hour, paid directly to the provider.</p> <p>The minimum parent carer contribution would be in addition to any specific costs of activities, entrance fees or transport to or as part of Break Time activities. These costs would not be funded through Break Time funding (currently the costs of specific trips, activities and transport costs are not provided as part of funding to providers).</p>

<p>Activities are arranged directly by parents and carers with individual providers who have a contract with Lancashire County Council to provide Lancashire Break Time activities.</p>	<p>Families will apply to Lancashire County Council for Break Time hours once a year by a set date.</p> <p>Families can choose which provider/providers they wish their child to attend activities and groups with, though how many providers can be chosen may need to be limited to enable providers to effectively deliver these.</p> <p>Break Time funding will be given directly to the provider/providers in advance, giving an increased level of financial security for providers which will support them to plan ahead and invest in arrangements, staffing and training. This will also help families to plan ahead.</p>
<p>No clear, transparent, consistent system of allocating places on Lancashire Break Time activities and groups. Providers have their own processes for allocating places.</p>	<p>It is proposed that applications and the allocation of a Break Time offer will be prioritised for children with an education, health and care plan by date order of application. This will enable children with the greatest levels of need and who are least likely to be able to access universal services and activities to be supported through Break Time.</p>

Responses

The majority of respondents were from households with children/young people in their household of primary age (43%) or secondary school age (48%). 33% of responses were from people who were currently using Lancashire's short break service, 28% were from people who had previously used it but were not currently using the service and 29% were from people who had not used the service before.

Respondents were provided with statements highlighting the key aspects of the proposal and were asked how strongly they agreed or disagreed with each statement and to provide why they felt that way for each statement:

1. The proposed age range for access to Break Time activities is 5 to 18 years old. A child would be able to attend from the start of the academic year (September) in which they turn age 5 to the end of the academic year in which they turn 18 (July).

	Parents and carers (%)	Providers (%)
Strongly agree	36	44
Tend to agree	33	16
Neither agree or disagree	13	8
Tend to disagree	9	16
Strongly disagree	4	16
Don't know	4	-

2. It is proposed that a child can attend a minimum of 10 hours and a maximum of 50 hours of activities or groups per year as part of the Break Time Offer.

	Parents and carers (%)	Providers (%)
Strongly agree	16	17
Tend to agree	15	4
Neither agree or disagree	17	4
Tend to disagree	17	29
Strongly disagree	28	46
Don't know	7	-

The questionnaire for parents and carers also asked an additional question and the feedback from 63 respondents was:

If you disagree with the proposal what do you think the maximum number of hours a year should be?	
Number of hours	Respondents (%)
Up to 60	2
Up to 70	2
Up to 80	3
Up to 90	2
Up to 100	22
More than 100	59
Don't know	11

3. It is proposed that the minimum parent/carers contribution towards Break Time activities and groups is increased from £1 per hour to £2 per hour.		
	Parents and carers (%)	Providers (%)
Strongly agree	28	29
Tend to agree	32	29
Neither agree or disagree	19	25
Tend to disagree	10	13
Strongly disagree	7	4
Don't know	3	-

4. It is proposed that the costs of specific Break Time activities, entrance fees and transport should be paid by parents/carers and not through Break Time funding.		
	Parents and carers (%)	Providers (%)
Strongly agree	12	29
Tend to agree	19	25
Neither agree or disagree	26	13
Tend to disagree	14	8
Strongly disagree	23	21
Don't know	7	4

5. It is proposed that children with a plan of care and support following a social care assessment will be able to access Break Time activities and groups through Break Time Plus. These children would not be funded by Break Time funding.		
	Parents and carers (%)	Providers (%)
Strongly agree	12	44
Tend to agree	17	26
Neither agree or disagree	29	4
Tend to disagree	7	9
Strongly disagree	17	17
Don't know	17	-

6. It is proposed that that the allocation of a Break Time Offer is prioritised for children with an education, health and care plan by date order of application.		
	Parents and carers (%)	Providers (%)
Strongly agree	17	17
Tend to agree	23	25
Neither agree or disagree	16	21
Tend to disagree	18	17
Strongly disagree	18	13
Don't know	8	8