

Review and redesign of Lancashire's short break offer – supplier consultation

Consultation report – 2021

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January 2021

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Contents

1.	Executive summary	3
	1.1 Key findings	3
2.	Introduction.....	5
3.	Methodology	6
	3.1 Limitations	7
4.	Main findings	8
	4.1 Respondents' views on the proposals	8
	4.2 Respondent's experience/interest in providing a service.	21
	Appendix 1 – respondent demographics	26

1. Executive summary

This report summarises the responses from suppliers to Lancashire County Council's consultation on the proposal to review and re-design Lancashire's Short Break Offer.

The consultation ran for three weeks between 8 November 2020 and 30 November 2020. A self-completion questionnaire was used to gather suppliers' feedback on the proposal using an online questionnaire.

A total of 24 suppliers responded to the online survey.

1.1 Key findings

1.1.1 Respondents' views on the proposals

- Two-thirds of suppliers (15) agree with the proposal that the 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 (July) in which they turn 18. Just under half of all suppliers strongly agree. One-third (8) disagree with the proposal.
- Three-quarters of suppliers disagree with the proposal 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, with just under a half strongly disagreeing. A fifth of suppliers do agree with the proposal.
- Over half of the suppliers agree that the proposed parent/carer contribution towards Break Time activities and groups is increased from £1 per hour to £2 per hour, with just under a third strongly agreeing.
- Respondents were asked about the proposal that costs of specific Break Time activities, entrance fees and transport, for example a trip to Alton Towers or the Zoo, should be paid by parents/carers and not through Break Time funding. Over a half of respondents agree with the proposal. However just under a third disagree with the proposal.
- Respondents were asked about the proposal 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 but through their social care package of support (eg Direct Payment or commissioned support). More than two-thirds of respondents agree with the proposal and a quarter disagree with the proposal.
- Half of respondents agree with the proposal to prioritise allocation of a Break Time offer for children with an education, health and care plan by date order of application. However, just under a third disagree with it.

1.1.2 Respondents' experience/interest in providing a service

- All respondents said they have experience of providing such a service or similar short break activities to children and young people with special education needs and disabilities (SEND).
- Given the proposed changes, the majority of respondents express an interest in providing short break services/activities to children and young people with SEND in Lancashire?
- Most respondents are interested in being involved with further dialogue on the short break project.

2. Introduction

This report summarises the responses from suppliers to Lancashire County Council's consultation on the proposal to review and re-design Lancashire's Short Break Offer.

Our current Short Break Offer for children with SEND

The Short Break Offer in Lancashire consists of activities and services that can be accessed by children with SEND and their families if children meet certain eligibility criteria. These activities and services can be accessed without a social care assessment of need. These include inclusive activities, groups and events specifically for children and young people with SEND which form part of the Early Help Offer; and Lancashire Break Time.

The Short Break Offer also includes support and services which can only be accessed through social care assessment of need.

Lancashire Break Time provides group activities which are aimed at providing a short break for parents and carers.

Day Time short breaks can be provided in the family home, in the community or in other places. Day Time short breaks may be funded through a personal budget (Direct Payments) or commissioned by Lancashire County Council from a short break provider.

Night Time short breaks can be provided in the family home, a specialist short break children's home, by foster carers or in the home of short break carers. Night Time short breaks may be funded through a personal budget (Direct Payments) or commissioned from a short break provider or carers

Proposed new Short Break Offer

It is proposed that our new Short Break Offer will provide **Break Time**, **Day Time** and **Night Time** short breaks alongside the Early Help Offer for children with SEND and other activities provided by various charities and organisations across Lancashire.

It is proposed that there will be no changes to how children and families access Day Time and Night Time short breaks.

Contracts for Break Time activities will be recommissioned and a different approach taken to improve how we meet needs, provide quality support, choice, value for money and a more consistent offer across the county.

The proposed changes to the Short Break Offer that form part of this consultation relate to the Short Break Offer that can be accessed without a social care assessment of need. This is currently called Lancashire Break Time. In the new offer it will be called **Break Time**.

Proposed Break Time Offer

It is proposed that the criteria and process for accessing **Break Time** activities is changed to make sure access to Break Time is fair, clear and transparent. The Short Break Review identified significant differences in the amount of hours some children were accessing across Lancashire. It also identified that some children who didn't fit the criteria were attending Lancashire Break Time.

Other information about the propose new short break offer

It is proposed that children who receive short breaks through a Child's Plan following a social care assessment may be able to access Break Time activities as part of their plan. This is because this may benefit them more than having support on a 1:1 basis with an adult. This would be funded through their plan and not through Break Time funding. It is proposed to call this Break Time Plus. How this would work would be explored with providers as part of the new commissioning arrangements

For young people aged 18, the Local Offer contains information about accessible and inclusive activities. Information about these can be found [here](#). If young people have had an adult social care assessment of need and receive support following this, short breaks may be provided as part of this

Timescales

The consultation ran for three weeks between 8 November 2020 and 30 November 2020.

A total of 24 suppliers responded to the on line survey.

3. Methodology

A self-completion questionnaire was used to gather suppliers feedback on the proposal using an on line questionnaire.

In the questionnaire, suppliers were provided the following statements, which highlight the key aspects of the proposal.

- 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).
- 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.
- It is proposed that the minimum parent/carer contribution towards Break Time activities and groups is increased from £1 per hour to £2 per hour.
- 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.
- 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.

- It is proposed that the allocation of a Break Time Offer is prioritised for children with an education, health and care plan by date order of application.

Suppliers were asked how strongly they agreed or disagreed with each statement and then asked to provide why they felt that way for each statement.

3.1 Limitations

The findings presented in this report cannot be assumed to be fully representative of the views of all suppliers of Lancashire's Short Break Services. They should only be taken as reflecting the views of suppliers who were made aware of the consultation and who, given the opportunity, willingly responded.

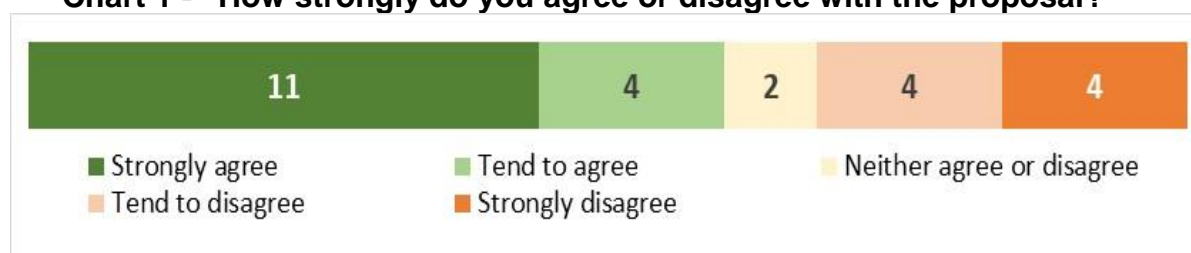
4. Main findings

4.1 Respondents' views on the proposals

Respondents were asked how strongly they agree or disagree with the proposal that the 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 (July) in which they turn 18.

Two-thirds of suppliers (15) agree with the proposal, with just under half of all suppliers strongly agreeing. One-third (8) disagree with the proposal.

Chart 1 - How strongly do you agree or disagree with the proposal?



Base: All respondents (24)

Respondents were then asked why they said that about the proposal.

Comments from suppliers who **agree** with proposed age range for Break Time activities.

This has always worked for us, although due to the nature of the facility and staff our minimum age is 8.
We provide a play scheme during the school holidays in a school building and I would find it difficult to provide age appropriate activities for those over 18.
This feels like a good age group to implement the short breaks service based on historical practises etc
I think it's vital that SEND pupils can access relevant provision to participate in fun activities outside of home. I also think parents often need this respite.
I think some flexibility with the ages is necessary in order to avoid some children missing out on activities altogether.
We believe that would be a good age range for the Break Time activities.
However all services would need to be Ofsted early years registered to meet the needs of the 4 year olds as well as the Under 8's

Comments from suppliers who **disagree** with proposed age range for Break Time activities.

The provision should include 2-4 year olds with SEND as they can also be challenging and parents would benefit for some respite.
I feel that the age bracket should be 5-25 years. This way short break activities can support young people for longer.

We run a play group for children with additional needs to be able to come in and give their parents a short break from the age of 3 years. This allows early intervention for these children to get the right assessment and ultimately the right school to move on to when they are 5 years. This has been a highly successful group but I can't get help from the shorts break scheme because the children are under 5 years by which time they are at school.
Think it could benefit many pre-school SEND children and so should be open from age 3?
What options will be available for children and young people outside of those age brackets? We've found that the parents and carers most desperate for support are those awaiting their child to start school.
As a provider this wouldn't work for the children/young person who attended our group and due to the needs of the children/ young people who attend our session we have very high staff ratio. This proposal will mean we won't have the funds to staff it.
SEND are not age dependent - children/young people's/adults' needs exist throughout their lifetime and families need appropriate, skilled, SEND services/activities to be available for them at any age
The previous age range was based on date of birth and not aligned with school academic years.

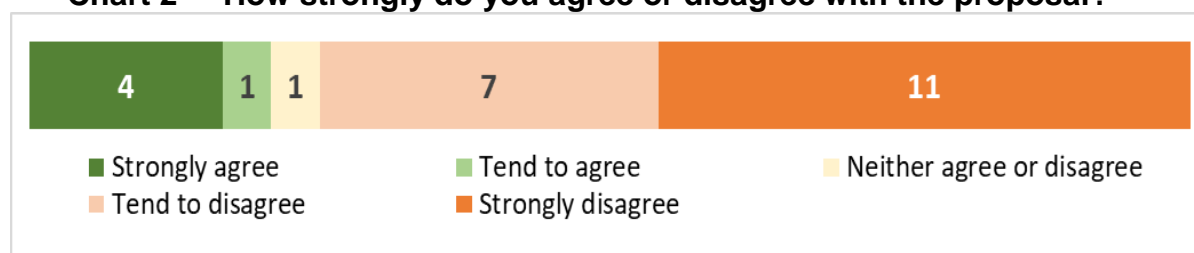
Comments from suppliers who **neither agree or disagree** with proposed age range for Break Time activities.

Each child / family has different needs. Some families may need support before the age of 5
As a provider we currently provide activities for children from the age of 6, I have no issue with children accessing from the age of 5 however I do think that separate sessions would be needed in the future for primary aged children and secondary aged young people. I think the new proposal provides clarity as to when young people are no longer eligible to access Break Time.

Respondents were then asked about the proposal 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.

Three-quarters of suppliers disagree with the proposed minimum and maximum hours, with just under a half strongly disagreeing. One-fifth of suppliers agree with the proposal.

Chart 2 - How strongly do you agree or disagree with the proposal?



Base: All respondents (24)

Respondents were then asked why they said that about the proposal.

Comments from suppliers who **agree** with proposal for annual minimum/maximum hours.

This sounds like a reasonable offer to families and the CYP themselves.
I think that is plenty.

Comments from suppliers who **disagree** with proposal for annual minimum/maximum hours.

Attendance should be led by the needs of the parents. Although I do agree that there should be a maximum limit to ensure that as many as possible can benefit from the provision
I understand that attendance may be a problem for some providers and they wish to share the opportunity equally. Attendance has not been an issue for our provision. Some children access the 3 hour sessions most weeks of the year. Our session delivery partner and their core values would have difficulty turning children away if they'd reached the maximum attendance and so probably continue to grant them access without claiming funding. This would not be the end of the world, but could cause confusion for monitoring purposes.
We tend to offer around 35 days per year during the holidays. 50 hours would equate to 10 days. Some parents need to access the provision for work commitments.
If a provider delivered an activity for 2 hrs per week x 38 weeks of the year (for example) then would we not receive funding for a young person after they have received 50 hours? It would be the provider that would lose finance. In many circumstances the families could not afford full cost recovery, and the providers could not turn children away. This model puts the providers at risk. Other LA's agree an annual figure that is paid to the provider for the delivery of a short break programme based on predicted cost and monitoring. This money is guaranteed and enables providers to (a) have sound financial planning (b) support as many

children as possible (c) use agreements to attract additional funding into cities/towns from regional and national sources.
I don't know why this has to be so prescriptive. Every child with additional needs and every family that includes 1 or more child(ren) with additional needs are different and living in different circumstances. Sometimes extra hours are needed in our holiday club due to totally unforeseen circumstances i.e. one year a mum of an additional needs child already accessing the club went in to labour early with her second child and due to circumstances needed extra sessions at the club for the child to attend the club - if that child has already had it's 50 hours we wouldn't get any help to supply these extra sessions from short breaks.
I think the short break offer should be individualised to meet the young person's needs. Some children/ families will require more support than others and this should maybe be reflected?
50 hours per year is less than 1 hr per week - I'd argue less than an hour a week is inadequate.
I strongly disagree with the hours proposed and believe that it does not provide equal opportunities for children and young people with disabilities, an issue I am extremely passionate about. Children with disabilities have rights enshrined in law. Article 30 of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities places a legal duty on the local authority to ensure that children with disabilities have equal access with other children to participation in play, recreation and leisure and sporting activities. For access to leisure activities to be equal for children with disabilities they should not be limited to 50 hours per year as their mainstream counterparts can access unlimited hours of out of school activities. For most of the children and young people we support LBT activities are the only social and leisure activities they access. The maximum proposal of 50 hours per year will not even provide families with 1 hour of respite per week. Currently our weekly sessions run for 2 hours for 39 weeks of the year, for a child to access these sessions on a weekly basis they would need 78 hours per year and this is without respite during the school holiday periods. Many of the children and young people who access our activities are on the Autistic Spectrum and require routine and consistency. If children have a different routine each week due to limited Break Time hours they will face increased distress and anxiety, are more likely to display episodes of behaviours that challenge and may simply not be able to cope with the constant change to their routines. This will place additional pressure on the family, parents and carer's mental health may suffer and it may have longer term cost implications for the council. In limiting the hours, I do not believe the council have considered the needs of the children and young people who access LBT activities or acted in their best interests. Experience of delivering activities for over 15 years has shown that many of the children who access our activities take weeks and sometimes even months to settle in a new setting. I am concerned that new referrals may not be granted enough hours for Activity Coordinators to settle new children in adequately again leading to increased anxiety for the child. In addition, only having 50 hours will equate to a family being able to access 10 sessions during school holiday periods when the children are off for approximately 65 days per year and this is without any weekly sessions. The limit to hours under the new proposal will mean that the children and young people we work with will not get the benefits of attending regular social activities such as reduced social isolation, making and sustaining friendships, gaining independence away from the family, improved social skills, learning life skills and the opportunity to build self-esteem

and self-confidence which leads to improved mental health and overall well-being. The council has claimed that 50 hours will meet the needs of most families, however I have looked at our attendance figures for 2019 and we provided activities for 98 children and young people, of those 60% attended for more than 50 hours. Of those who attended for less than 50 hours, 40% were new referrals part way through the year or turned 19 during the year. These figures illustrate that 50 hours per year is not going to be adequate for most of our families. From a financial point of view in 2019 we provided 8781.5 hours of activities at a cost of £98,264.99 to the council. Based on the new proposal, if each of the 98 children and young people were limited to 50 hours per year based on the current rate of £11.19 that would cost the council £54,831. This would be a loss of funding of £43,433.99. As a provider this has me deeply concerned about our ability to meet the costs of LBT delivery. I have highlighted many times that the funding provided is not adequate and I am continually seeking additional sources of funding, something I should not have to do as the council should be providing adequate funding for LBT provision. Under the new proposals we are likely to have less children at each session however many of the costs associated with delivery are not dependant on the number of children who attend. I am aware this proposal was put together months ago however I think we need to take into consideration the impact the COVID-19 pandemic is having on families. We have several families that have not accessed LBT activities since they returned in summer due to their child or member of the household being extremely clinically vulnerable and not wanting to risk social contact with others. At the end of the pandemic these families are going to be in desperate need of a break and the children and young people will need to re-engage in social activities to overcome any mental health issues the pandemic has caused. LBT funding will be crucial in supporting families in the future and will be vital for the children's mental health and well-being, therefore I urge the council to reconsider limiting the number of hours children can access. My final point is that the COVID-19 pandemic has forced us all to experience social isolation due to the restrictions that have been placed on our lives. I think we can all agree we hate the fact that we cannot see our friends and family and that we are unable to go out and socialise. The amount of people now suffering with mental health issues because of this has soared. The past few months have given us all a real insight as to what daily life is like for people with disabilities and the constant social isolation they face. Although the primary purpose of Break Time is to provide respite for parents, one of the most valuable aspects of the activities for both the children and young people and their families is the social opportunities they provide along with the benefits the children and young people get from attending. With this in mind I urge the council to reconsider limiting the hours to 50 due to the detrimental impact it will have.

Not sure why there has to be a minimum? - What happens if they don't attend? Maximum of 50 is less than 1 hr per week per year which is not a lot. If a provider can offer more than this where there is a need then why not? (Possibly increase parental contribution for additional hours?)

50 hours equates to 1 hour per week which is not enough support for some families. There should not be ceiling maximum limits as each SEND child is very individual as is their family community

We have a loyal group of participants that use and access our provision throughout the whole year. Within some periods, this could go over the 50 hours of provision within one quarter of the year. It would be a challenge to constantly recruit the

number of new participants to sustain the provision for a long period of time to ensure that the services that we offer would be able to carry on.
Individual circumstances differ so much, this maybe enough for some families
We feel that this would be detrimental to the relationships between staff and children and young people and our ability to meet their needs as effectively as we do now, only seeing children and young people for such limited hours we would struggle to gain the in depth knowledge we need of the child or young person and to be able to build trust with the family and young person. I have concerns about where the demand would fall for when these hours would be accessed, i.e if it would it all come for example within the summer holiday periods so having contracted experienced staff like we do currently where the groups are more evenly spread would prove difficult. We also feel it would be detrimental to the friendships that children and young people build within a more regular group session, if a child is limited to a maximum of 4 hrs per month then building confidence and developing social skills would be incredibly difficult.
50 hours per year would only allow a child or young person to access a 3 hour play scheme session once every 3 weeks. Lots of our attendees thrive on routine, of which this proposal offers no routine. A 3 hour respite break for parents or carers every 3 weeks is neither time for them to study, spend quality time with other family members, or time to carry out basic day to day tasks. By the time drop off and pick up, and travelling to the location, it's down to 2 hours of respite every 3 weeks. I know that the majority of our parents or carers accessing our service would buckle under the proposed revision to the service.
Most children will use this hours within 2 weeks of the summer holidays, leaving over a 100 days unable to attend a group.
Any mainstream/non-SEND child /young person has no limit of hours on their social activities - why should SEND be any different? There just aren't enough providers specialist enough to offer a quality service. Would there be a legal challenge of discrimination? Normal pre-school (and disabled children up to 16 years) funded support for working parents is shown on LCC website as up to 30 hours per month. Would that be equally appropriate?
This is extremely restrictive. This will not allow us to give families they need. This would mean at 50 hours a child would only have approx 16 sessions (3 Hours) ver the year.
Most families need a minimum of a weekly or fortnightly group especially during school holidays.

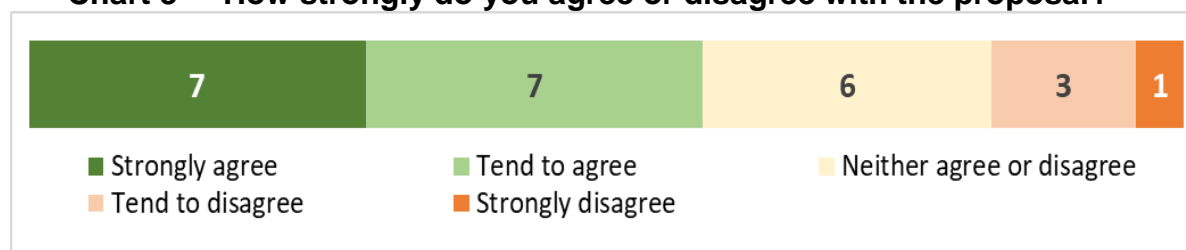
Comments from suppliers who **neither agree or disagree** with proposal for annual minimum/maximum hours.

It's difficult to put limits on accessing services, some families need more support than others and some families have less people they can rely on for care. Sessions could potentially have spaces available and we should be able to offer these to families where a child has already received 50 hours and run at maximum capacity rather than not offering it and running a quiet session.
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Respondents were then asked about the proposal that the minimum parent/carer contribution towards Break Time activities and groups is increased from £1 per hour to £2 per hour.

Over half of the suppliers agree with proposed parent/carer contribution, with just under a third strongly agreeing.

Chart 3 - How strongly do you agree or disagree with the proposal?



Base: All respondents (24)

Respondents were then asked why they said that about the proposal.

Comments from suppliers who **agree** with proposal to increase parent /carer contribution.

This represents value for money. Parent/carer contributions enable providers to develop services.
We charge parents more than this as the Short breaks money alone isn't enough to fund the places for additional needs in our club.
Families ultimately have shared responsibility with the LA to support their children, with rising costs for the LA and providers alike it seems sensible for all stakeholders to input their fair share.
There are high staffing costs in our provision, often 2:1 staffing to pupil ratios. This is due to the nature of the children that parents want to attend. It costs us far more than the grant we receive.
I wouldn't want children missing out due to a lack of money - it is these children who probably miss out on other activities.
We feel this increase would still be fair price for parents.

Comments from suppliers who **disagree** with proposal to increase parent /carer contribution.

We would need to consider this thoroughly with our delivery partner as their open sessions cost 50p per entry, to make it accessible to the most vulnerable children in the area. Before charging parents £6 per child, the implications of this would require investigation.
Although I understand the reason a charge is made, historically we have had difficulty getting this from some parents.
It's a 100 percent increase people can't afford.
Although providers may need and welcome the extra income - many families may struggle to find the extra money and their children's attendance at such provision

could be impacted - again discriminating against SEND children/young people.
Possible legal challenge?

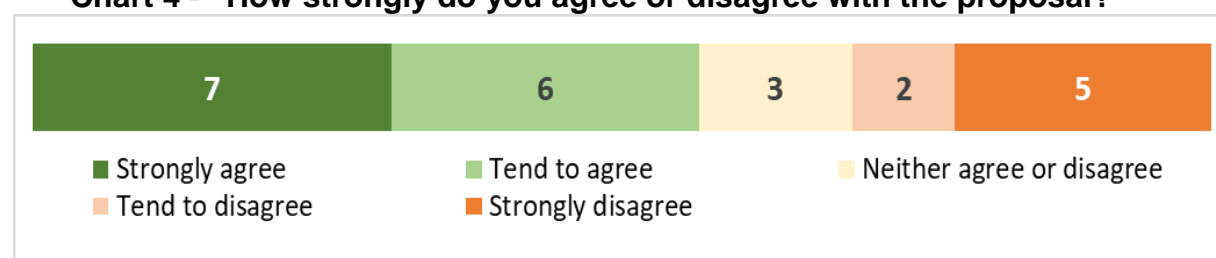
Comments from suppliers who **neither agree or disagree** with proposal to increase parent /carer contribution.

Could this be dependent on individual circumstances?
£2 will be difficult for some families to manage. Also, the administration costs associated with £2.00 per hour are likely to exceed the payment.
At present we charge £5 for weekly sessions and £15 for school holiday sessions, therefore the proposed increase will not have an impact on our families. I am concerned however that the increase will lead to a reduction in the hourly rate of funding provided by the council. As I have previously mentioned the level of funding is the biggest challenge we face in providing LBT activities.
Possibly in the future but not advised during Pandemic
We would be fine with the increase of the sessions from £1 to £2. We feel that the value of our services exceeds that price. However, we are happy to support parents and keep this at £1
We have our own charging policy for parents to access our service.

Respondents were then asked about the proposal that costs of specific Break Time activities, entrance fees and transport, for example a trip to Alton Towers or the Zoo, should be paid by parents/carers and not through Break Time funding.

Over a half of respondents agree with the proposal. However just under a third disagree with the proposal.

Chart 4 - How strongly do you agree or disagree with the proposal?



Base: All respondents (24)

Respondents were then asked why they said that about the proposal.

Comments from suppliers who **agree** with proposal for entrance fee and transport to be paid by parents/carers.

Special activities like this are beyond the remit of LBT funding so I agree that the additional costs should be met by parents/carers.

Entry fees should be funded by parents/carers however there needs to be enough Break Time activities available that don't incur such costs for those families that cannot afford to pay.
This reduces the burden on the LA and is in line with what other families would do if they were taking their children to an activity. It would be important that parents / carers are receiving the right benefits to help with this.
It does exclude some who don't have the financial resources to pay these costs.
They would pay this like any other parent taking their child out.
Again I would be concerned that the children who don't normally get this opportunity would be the ones to miss out again - could LBT give providers a budget for 'special cases' - criteria identified?
We have always done this as it wasn't permitted in the LBT funding rules to use LBT money for this.
This has worked well in the past for us, we have found trips always tend to be popular. I feel this would need to be balanced and in the past we have always offered a trip or in base option choice.
It's completely understandable for any additional costs to be met by parents and carers, and our parents and carers understand that.
We do that already.
as long as there is some continuity for parents in financial hardship or the service will create barriers to access.

Comments from suppliers who **disagree** with proposal for entrance fee and transport to be paid by parents/carers.

Whilst this would not be an issue for many parents those on a low income would be unable to access this provision
If a family cannot afford to pay for their child to go to Alton Towers will they miss out? Will they ever get a chance to go to Alton Towers? Maybe it should depend on individual circumstances.
Holiday programmes are important periods for young people, parents/carers. By not supporting entrance fees and transport the LA will limit opportunities for their children. Many young people rely on providers to widen their horizons and introduce them to new opportunities. Access to activities outside of Lancashire can enable longer periods of respite for parents/carers.
I believe that the council should be providing adequate funding for all aspects of service delivery. I also think the impact COVID-19 has had on families and the fact that many families are struggling to make ends meet should be considered. Many people have lost their jobs recently, have been furloughed or have missed out on the government's financial support package. I am concerned that families may miss out on Break Time activities due to financial hardship or financial constraints and this could have a severe detrimental affect on the family. This aspect of the proposal will hit the poorest families in our communities the hardest and these are generally the ones who require support the most.
This will alienate poorer families and restrict them - some of our families have more than one child accessing activities.

Punishment for our most vulnerable families, who can only afford trips like this thanks to Break Time.

It's a known fact that SEND is more prevalent in low income families who are far more likely to need such funds just to pay for food & basic home bills than spend on their children/young people on such trips.

Comments from suppliers who **neither agree or disagree** with proposal for entrance fee and transport to be paid by parents/carers.

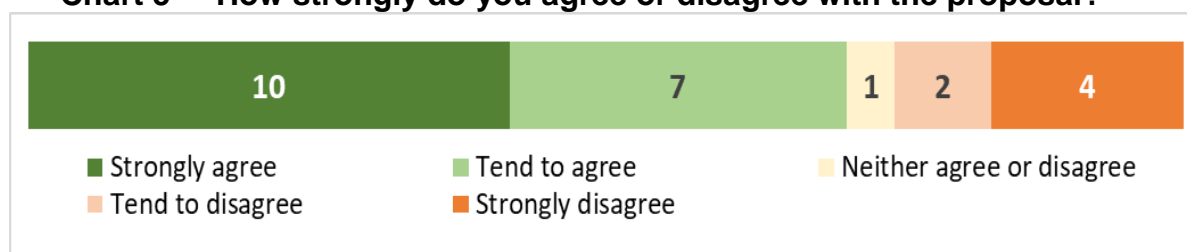
If parents cannot afford the trip will there be subsidised activities or would a child be excluded?

This is an area we feel could be discussed, and would much rather this than the lower allocation of hours.

Respondents were then asked about the proposal 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 but through their social care package of support (eg Direct Payment or commissioned support).

More than two-thirds of respondents agree with the proposal and a quarter disagree with the proposal.

Chart 5 - How strongly do you agree or disagree with the proposal?



Base: All respondents (24)

Respondents were then asked why they said that about the proposal.

Comments from suppliers who **agree** with proposal for access through Break Time Plus for certain children.

Agree, though systems need to be established to avoid confusion and make it easier for providers to maintain this requirement.

They don't need funding twice for the same activity

It is only right and fair that children with a plan of care and support can access the services and groups but this should not be instead of other disabled children who do not have such a package. The Short Breaks provision should prioritise the families that don't receive any help.

It would be important to have a clear definition of what the funding streams are being used for. This would help families and LA and also providers who would know what is accepted and what isn't and how it is paid for and the implications of this.

I strongly agree with this proposal as children with social care package have, under the current arrangement missed out on social activities with their peers. I think this will be a positive change and will meet the social needs of children with social care assessments. I would like more information on how this will work as it will impact the financial arrangements for delivering Break Time.

This would be something that we would like to explore more and feel that this is a really good suggestion.

It is important for children and young people on packages of care have the same access to activities and social interaction of those accessing Break Time.

Comments from suppliers who **disagree** with proposal for access through Break Time Plus for certain children.

Sounds like an overly complicated model that places more financial risk with the provider. Furthermore, this would be an administrative challenge for providers whom many of are small to medium size enterprises or charities.

It is right that children with an assessment should be able to use their direct payments to access the club. We have never turned down a child needing a space because they do or don't have an assessment (I just don't claim for those that do) - to my knowledge the direct payment hours don't go up during the holidays - our parents feel they need their direct hours and our club hours in order for them to do the best for their child, the other children within their family and their own mental well-being.

In my experience, these children are often extremely challenging and require 2:1 staffing. This reduces the offer to other children who are just below threshold but families desperately need something.

I can't express how much I thoroughly disagree with this proposal. A child who has access to 6 hours per week support through a social care direct payment plan, cannot access 30 hours of school holiday play scheme at school, that they're used to, for the sake of 6 hours care with a carer, that has taken the best part of 9 months to fight for. These children and young people, and their parents and carers are the most vulnerable in our society, and the proposed changes to LBT is already a huge concern to these highly vulnerable individuals.

How far does that money have to go already? And you are saying they have to use it for break time. Again punishing our most vulnerable!

Although it would be a welcome, positive change in providing greater activities available to SEND children/young people. Such a proposal would seriously impact on the number of activity hours that each child/young person could actually afford to take part in. Again reducing the hours children/young people actually receive from their support package.

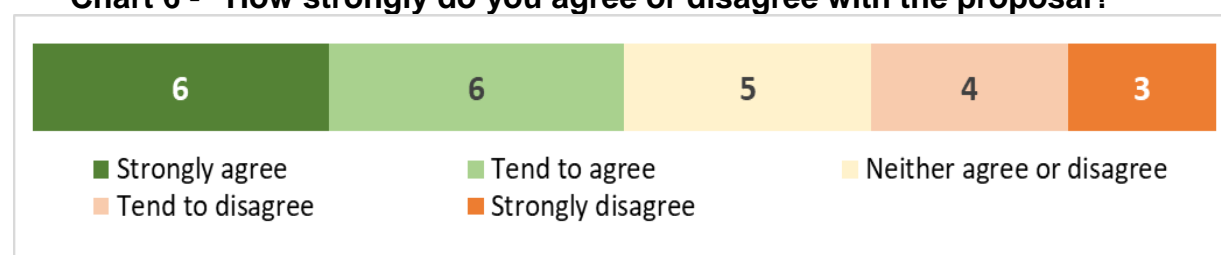
Comments from suppliers who **neither agree or disagree** with proposal for access through Break Time Plus for certain children.

Funding streams should be clear and equitable.
hours children/young people actually receive from their support package.

Respondents were then asked about the proposal that the allocation of a Break Time offer to be prioritised for children with an education, health and care plan by date order of application.

Half of respondents agree with the proposal to prioritise allocation. However, just under a third disagree with it.

Chart 6 - How strongly do you agree or disagree with the proposal?



Base: All respondents (24)

Respondents were then asked why they said that about the proposal.

Comments from suppliers who **agree** with proposal for prioritising allocation.

This will work providing Short Break application dates are well publicised to all.
--

Comments from suppliers who **disagree** with proposal for prioritising allocation.

I think it should go off individual circumstances and places be given to those more in need of the respite.
I think that everyone should be equally assessed for support. Although EHC would be in place for some, there are many CYP who don't have this for many reasons, some might be the delay in getting them done for example. There needs to be some reasoned thinking on how support is commissioned to those people who might go into crisis without the required support. CYP are an extremely vulnerable group and whilst EHC is easier to look at in terms of categorising, there would need to be some thought around others too.
It has always been my understanding that LBT was for children who had lower level support needs and could access group support. I feel that the eligibility criteria should remain as flexible as possible, especially in the current situation the nation finds itself in relating to the COVID-19 pandemic. I feel that Break Time activities should remain available for all children and young people who cannot access universal provision due to sensory issues, learning difficulties, physical mobility problems, etc. Over the last year we have also seen children with sever

social anxiety access our activities and I think the criteria should include mental health issues like anxiety due to the individual support these children require to access activities. The process of getting a diagnosis for a child can be extremely lengthy and I have heard many accounts from parents of how they have had to battle against the system. Add to this the backlog that is in place due to the COVID-19 pandemic and we may find that under the new proposal families may be left struggling for a couple of years without support whilst waiting for an EHC Plan. If allocation is prioritised for children with EHC plans we may also find that we are missing reaching other families for whom Break time activities could be a vital means and realistically their only means of support. Children are only eligible for an EHC plan if their support needs affect their education, however we currently have several children accessing who do not have an EHC plan but whose only social activity is through LBT. I feel a more holistic approach to a family's needs may be more appropriate going forward as we may have parents suffering with mental health issues for which Break Time activities are a lifeline. I also feel that families should be able to access Break Time activities at any point they realise their child or they as a primary carer would benefit from the service.

It is the children without an EHCP that need help the most, many don't get an ehcp because of not being academically behind but still have a lot of support needs

This looks like cost cutting. Any SEND child/ young person with or without an EHCP is entitled to a short break service.

This seems very complicated as we run a service that caters for all.

Comments from suppliers who **neither agree or disagree** with proposal for prioritising allocation.

We've never experienced queues for children to access the sessions. Once their registration and induction has been completed, they've been fine to book into sessions.

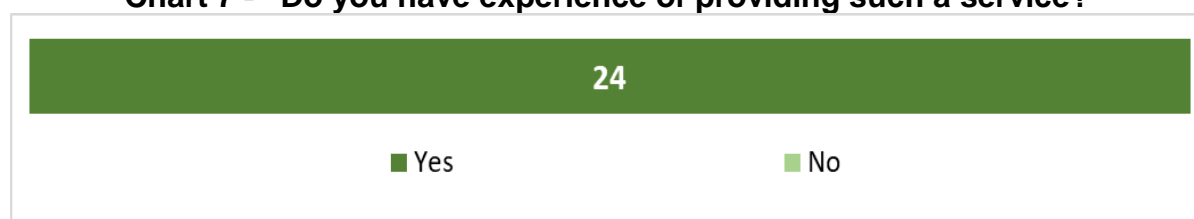
Some families will be more able to negotiate the application process than others. Potentially children with greater need may miss out on opportunities.

4.2 Respondent's experience/interest in providing a service.

Respondents were then asked if they have experience of providing such a service or similar short break activities to children and young people, with special education needs and disabilities.

All respondents are experienced in providing a short break service.

Chart 7 - Do you have experience of providing such a service?



Base: All respondents (24)

Respondents were then asked what they understood to be the main challenges to the delivery of short break services for children and young people. The following comments were made.

Funding and staffing especially with COVID-19.
Booking systems Communication with parents/carers.
The main problem I face is staffing the provision. The students that attend have EHCP's and require specialist care. If staff with the relevant knowledge/experience are not available it is very difficult. If staff were on more money they would be more likely to give up their time in the holidays. Also it is difficult when we get children from other schools as we don't know them personally, we are able to read the EHCP but I feel we need more personal information than this. We have had children attend in the past and the provision was not suitable for their needs at all.
Our biggest challenge is having consistent staffing that understand the complex needs. Making sure the group as a good blend. Getting feedback on a regular basis from young people and parents/guardians about what they enjoy.
Within Lancashire it is the amount of funding available and the commissioning model used.
Every short break service is different and requires different financial input. This became clear at the providers meetings I attended. Coupled with every family being different and having different needs that can vary so very much.
The difficulty has always been in securing qualified and experienced staff for the holiday periods and the level of funding awarded by Lancashire County Council.
Challenges are families and perhaps their expectations of what services can deliver. Money, often families are reluctant to contribute towards costs. The preferred provider scheme is inconsistent and social workers commission to who they know rather than what service would best meet the needs of CYP.
The groups need to be collated with similar ages/ abilities etc to allow for full inclusion in activities and to make them more person centred, or some children naturally get left out if the activity doesn't suit a wide range of needs?

Transport Location Reliability Content Skills base of staff
Location to deliver activities. Adequate numbers attending to make it financially viable.
Adequate funding and the ability to afford and retain qualified and experienced staff.
Staffing. Some support staff do not want to support the extremely challenging children at the end of a work day or weekend. They can often earn more with a private care provider. Environment - this must meet the needs of the pupils therefore we offer this within our school building. Finding staff to meet the complex needs of the pupils, ie. gastrostomy training etc. Transport - some families want their child to attend but cannot transport them home. They are often from areas not local to school therefore the costs of us providing this cannot be sustained. We therefore do not offer transport.
the Age should be to 19 as we have students that would like to access that our 19
Accessing appropriate venues for a group of children with a wide range of needs. Ensuring appropriate staffing. Having access to appropriate vehicles. Ensuring children turn up to sessions that could have been allocated to another child. Managing Behaviour and Health concerns.
Funding being based on attendance. Staffing ratios and having experienced staff. Pre booking activities before funding is available.
Covid has been the largest challenge for our groups.
Only being inform one or two holidays at a time that we have funding so can't plan ahead and book staff for the year.
Uncertainty of not having long term funding agreements and the difficulties with staff retention that this brings, not being able to plan ahead beyond a term at a time, short notice requests and short notice of confirmed funding. Children and young people booking onto session but not turning up on the day with all staff, plans etc in place. Finding appropriate low cost venues to operate out of, with adequate disabled changing facilities ie hoists and rise and fall beds, we currently have to take large and heavy equipment across the county. Ideally we would want to work in partnership with special schools, youth zone centers etc.
The major challenge is the constant threat of the removal of services. We don't know whether we have a future in providing the service for the children and young people, so we struggle to plan long term as a provider. Another struggle is providing support for those needing 1:1 support, from a funding aspect.
We can't have as many children attend as we would like and often have a waiting list.
Specialist, quality, local provision. Providers with an extensive, full knowledge of a wide variety of SEND. Appropriately trained, experienced staff. Flexibility in delivering an appropriate service that adapts and meets SEND needs. The whole service needs to be family orientated or will not be able to be accessed by the SEND children/young people even if appropriately funded.
Transport and ensuring access for some of our most vulnerable children and young people

Respondents were then informed that we understand that the ratio of staff to children/young people is an important consideration to ensure the safety and enjoyment of group activities. We welcomed feedback with regard to staffing ratios for group activities. The following responses were made.

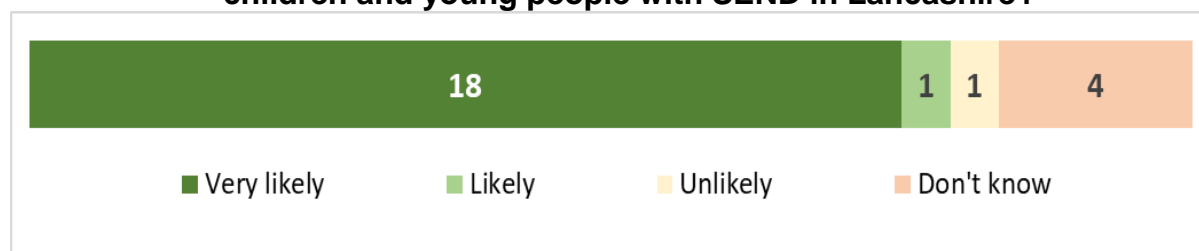
As a minimum should follow guidance from LCC Education Visits with the additional considerations for SEND
Due to the nature of the facility and activities that take place, we operate with 2 floating staff members on hand to react in the event of an incident involving an emergency or a child's emotional health.
For our provision to run safely and for the children to get the most out of the experience we need a very high staff to children ratio. Some children need at least 1-1 with extra staff on hand just in case they go into crisis/need emergency rescue medication or moving and handling.
At Inspire we work with ratio's 1:2 / 1:3
Ratios will always depend on specific activities and cohorts of young people.
Our holiday club has to be heavily staffed as the children are here all day in some circumstances. Manual handling, changing, personal care, medication giving, position changing, feeding etc... Our staff have to have breaks during the day too but cover has to be provided for all needs being catered for.
Staffing ratios have to depend on the level of care needed by the children. For children who are medically complex or who have challenging behaviour a staff ratio of 1:1 is often required. This also allows for staff breaks, toilet breaks and any unforeseen events.
It depends on the service users and their individual needs, some may be 1-1 for example and commissioning would need to reflect this. It would be useful to have meaningful conversations with people.
Each child needs individual assessments. There must be scope to allow some children the freedom of 1:3 and some maybe 2:1. Considering many of these children by default will need higher ratios for moving and handling or behavioural needs should be considered in the funding allocation.
Not all children enjoy or can participate wholly in group activities. Staffing levels 1:1 plus to meet individual need within the group Additional staff for specific activities eg coaches, instructors etc
Dependant on the children/young person's needs we have had staffing ratio of 1:1 up to 1:5.
Under the current LBT offer we are providing group support however many of the children who attend our activities require 1:1 support. At present I seek further funding to be able to provide this as it's the safest way of providing activities and it is particularly important when out on trip days. Group support is not adequate when dealing with behaviours that challenge. It can take up to four members of staff to deal with these incidents which then leaves the rest of the group short staffed. We have delivered with both group support and 1:1 support and the sessions always run smoother with less episodes of behaviours that challenge when 1:1 support is provided.
Very difficult to say - it is needs based. Some need 1:1 or 2:1, others might manage less support, ie. 1 staff to 3-4 pupils.
We have 4 staff to 12 pupils on each trip.

All children have a banding (not always appropriate) - perhaps these could be used to help identify ratios.
Staffing ratio for a group of SEND children is not the same as mainstream and depends on the cohort of children. For example we have some children who attend who can be supervised at one adult to 3 children. Others are one to one supervision. When we open up the clubs for booking we do not know who will apply. We could have 5 children needing 1-1 and 3 needing 1-3 supervision or vice versa.
We run at around a 5/1 ratio.
We staff on 2 to 5 basis then add students or volunteers if more support is needed.
On the whole our 1-3 ratio works very well for children accessing Lancashire Break Time, however where complex medical needs or moving and transferring is required this can present with challenges and more staff are required during personal care times or group outings. For children and young people on a assess package of care a higher level of supervision is needed.
This depends really on the children we have attending. Indoors, pre Covid, was 10 children to 3 staff. During Covid, outdoors, was 6 children to 4 staff. Some of our attendees require more intensive support than others to be able to safely attend our sessions.
We often have children who need 1:1 support, 2:1 and personnel care needs. We pride ourselves on only having experienced and qualified staff. This means our staff cost are high and as the funding just covers it now it will nowhere near cover it if the changes are made. High staff means the child/young person has the best time In a safe calm environment.
Having provided SEND activities for many years - correct staff ratios are vital to maintain safeguarding, health & safety risk mitigation and meeting all SEND needs. The better prepared and more numerous staff are on hand to run sessions smoothly - the more appropriate, fun, supportive a session can be delivered. At best - a one to one approach with new attendees to provide the best quality service which should be modelled to show best outcomes for those children/young people attending.
We staff according to the needs of the children who attend and also making sure we are keeping to the rules as stated by our Insurance. It could become a challenge if a child attends who is in a Mainstream setting with support under an EHCP, books to attend our setting under Lancashire Breaktime where will the funding come from to pay for additional support for that child.
If the groups will cater for children who may have occasional challenges then a minimum of 1:3 feels safe and appropriate.

Respondents were then asked that given the proposed changes, how likely they would be to express an interest in providing short break services/activities to children and young people with SEND in Lancashire.

Given the proposed changes, the majority of respondents express an interest in providing short break services.

Chart 8 - Given the proposed changes, how likely are you to express an interest in providing short break services/activities to children and young people with SEND in Lancashire?

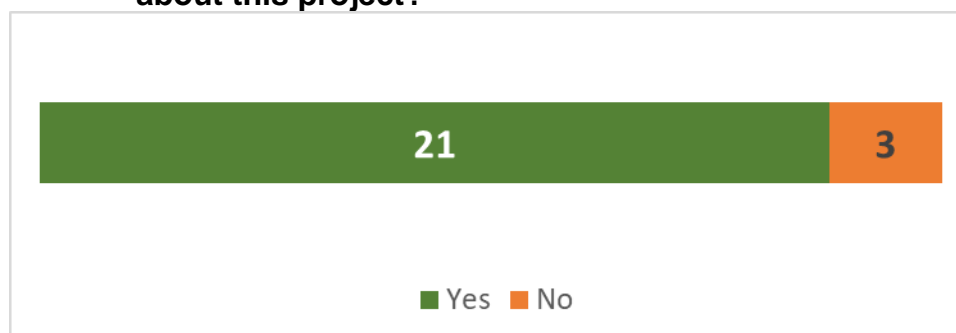


Base: All respondents (24)

Respondents were then asked would they/their organisation be interested in taking part in further dialogue about this project.

Most respondents are interested in being involved with further dialogue on the short break project.

Chart 9 - Would you be interested in taking part in further dialogue about this project?



Base: All respondents (24)

Appendix 1 – respondent details

Table 1 - Name of supplier's organisation

Tom Halstead	Chorley Council - Community Engagement Officer
Lyndsay Stevens	Extended services manager
Ryan Powell	Inspire Youth Zone Head of Youth Work
Elliott McKinnel	Programme Manager for Friends of Ridgewood Community High School.
Hilary Lees	Treasurer - Pear Tree Holiday Club
Lyndsay Fahey	Rainbow Hub (previously The Legacy Rainbow House) Interim CEO
John McBeth	Pendle Support -Director
Faye Mellor	GS Social Care Solutions Ltd, Nominated Individual
Tracey Morris	Lancashire County Council, Evergreen Lodge Registered Manager
John Rattigan	Crossroads Care East Lancashire Chief Executive Officer
Joanne Barnes	Play Inclusion Project
Nick Barrett	Holly Grove/Burnley Campus Social Enterprise
Fiona Gill	School Business Manager Morecambe Road School
Dave Maclean	Blackpool FC Community Trust
Julie Richmond	Piccadilly Support Services Assistant Manager
Cathy Trengove/ Lorraine Moody	Children's Service Manager / Team Manager
Klair Ward	It's SLIME for fun
Kirstie Lee	Slime for fun owner/club leader
Clare Mulderrig	Rosendale Rays Chairperson
Jane Halpin	Unique Kidz and Co Trustee Hannah Procter Head of Finance
Debbie Nolan-Plunkett	Barnardo's Assistant Director