

Report of Commissioning & Market Management Service

Report to Director of Children & Families

Date: 01/10/18



Subject: To undertake a competitive grants allocation process for the delivery of targeted short breaks for disabled children and young people for a period of twelve months from 01/04/19 to 31/03/20

Are specific electoral Wards affected? If relevant, name(s) of Ward(s):	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for Call-In?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? If relevant, Access to Information Procedure Rule number: Appendix number:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

Summary of main issues

1. This report seeks the approval of the Director of Children and Families to undertake a competitive grants allocation process for the delivery of targeted short breaks for disabled children and young people for twelve months from 1st April 2019 to 31st March 2020.
2. An annual grants process for targeted short breaks has been undertaken for a number of years and the decision to run a further grants round for 2019/20 will benefit children and young people with SEND and their families by helping to fund high quality and diverse targeted short breaks.
3. Funding recommendations will be based on a competitive grants process led by officers in Children and Families Commissioning Team with involvement from children's social work service, parents and carers and young people.
4. Successful providers will be monitored to ensure value for money and positive outcomes for families are delivered throughout the period of delivery.

5. The budget for targeted short breaks is £560,000 and the total of all grants will not exceed this amount.
6. Payment in advance is crucial to these organisations so that they can effectively manage budgets and cash flow to deliver the LCC commissioned service. Payments will be made on a half yearly basis in April and October. All providers will be subject to a financial checking process using the CreditSafe facility.
7. The Chief Officer (Financial Services) has been consulted as to the inclusion of payments in advance as part of the contract and is agreeable in these circumstances.

Recommendations

8. The Director of Children and Families is recommended to agree the implementation of a competitive grants allocation process for delivery of targeted short breaks services from 1st April 2019 to 31st March 2020. The decision will benefit children and young people with SEND and their families by funding high quality and diverse targeted short breaks. The total budget is £560,000.

1 Purpose of this report

- 1.1 This report seeks the approval of the Director of Children and Families to undertake a competitive grants allocation process for the delivery of targeted short breaks for disabled children and young people for twelve months from 1st April 2019 to 31st March 2020.

2 Background information

- 2.1 Children and Families Directorate currently has in place targeted short breaks services for children and young people with additional needs. In order to ensure continuity of targeted short breaks provision, Children & Families Directorate would like to continue with a competitive grants allocation process for delivery of services from April 19.
- 2.2 Since April 2015, the allocation process for targeted short breaks funding has been administered by Children's Commissioning and Market Management in partnership with parents and carers (via EPIC), children and young people, the voluntary sector, and the former Complex Needs Service. Applications are invited via YORtender ensuring the opportunity is visible to a wide range of prospective providers. The panel, Chaired by Commissioning and Market Management, scores applications according to identified priorities and makes funding recommendations to the budget holder for approval.
- 2.3 The purpose of this provision is to enable disabled children and young people who require targeted services to access a variety of short break activities in their locality both in term time and school holidays. This provision should:
- enable disabled children and young people to take part in positive, fun activities of their choosing and support their preparation for adulthood
 - give parent carers a valuable break from their caring responsibilities and help prevent family breakdown
- 2.4 Paragraph 6(1) (c) of the Children Act 1989 requires Local Authorities to provide services designed to assist carers of disabled children by giving them breaks from caring. This Duty came into force on 1st April 2011 and requires each Local Authority to:
- Offer short breaks as a preventative early intervention strategy;
 - Offer a range of short breaks services to parents/carers;
 - Publish a statement of those services to parents/carers and to regularly review the statement.
- 2.5 2018/19 targeted provision includes school holiday activity schemes, sports groups, youth clubs, residential weekends, dance groups and so on and it is envisaged the variety of schemes will continue.

3 Main issues

- 3.1 This service helps ensure Leeds City Council meets a statutory duty to provide short breaks to children/young people with SEND. A short breaks commissioning review has recently concluded with the remit of reviewing all short breaks services, from universal provision, targeted support and specialist short breaks. The Project Team included representation from parent/carer group EPIC and undertook a significant amount of consultation with all stakeholders including families, providers, and professionals.
- 3.2 The preferred option identified by the Project Team in terms of targeted support is to commission three area based lots for weekend and holiday play schemes through longer term contract arrangements whilst retaining a smaller grants pot for other targeted breaks that do not fall within this remit eg residential, evening youth clubs or more specialist activities.
- 3.3 Review findings and commissioning intentions were shared with current and prospective targeted short breaks providers at a stakeholder event in April 18. Feedback from stakeholders was positive however following this session the Project Team felt that providers may have difficulty sourcing staff and venues and organizing themselves to work together in consortia in time in order to bid for services starting April 19.
- 3.4 The Children and Families Commissioning Board has approved a plan to continue with a grant round for 19/20 but to plan for the new approach to be implemented from April 2020. The additional time will be spent working with Voluntary Action Leeds (VAL) to offer support around consortia building and a developing a tender process with a long lead-in time to enable a lengthy mobilisation period for the successful provider/s.
- 3.5 This is a demand-led service and families will refer directly to service providers. The provider has a duty to ensure referrals are appropriate, signpost where not and to manage any waiting list proactively. This will be measured on the quarterly performance return and discussed at the quarterly monitoring meeting.
- 3.6 Providers will be subject to a comprehensive contract management framework and a Commissioning Officer will undertake quarterly monitoring meetings reviewing performance and outcomes for children and young people.
- 3.7 Working towards strategic outcomes as detailed in the Children and Young People's Plan 2018-23 (see 4.3.1) will form part of the grant agreement signed by successful providers and individual outcomes will be monitored by a Commissioning Officer as part of the contract management framework.
- 3.8 In the 2018/19 grants process, just short of 55 thousand hours of short breaks were commissioned equating to almost 12 thousand short breaks places.

Consequences if the proposed action is not approved

- 3.9 If this decision is not approved, there is a risk that disabled children, young people and their families will lose much valued services. One of the primary aims of short breaks is to prevent family breakdown and should these services cease, families may be at increased risk of breaking down.

Advertising

- 3.8 The value of the contract will not exceed the OJEU threshold of £589,148 however it will be advertised on Yortender.

4 Corporate Considerations

4.1 Consultation and Engagement

- 4.1.1 Stakeholder consultation formed a significant part of the short breaks commissioning review. Children and young people, parents and carers, parents' participation groups and a wide range of professionals were consulted both face-to-face, online or during short breaks engagement sessions.
- 4.1.2 Service providers have been informed of the intention to continue with the current arrangements via a competitive grants process as described in this report.

4.2 Equality and Diversity / Cohesion and Integration

- 4.2.1 An Equality Impact Assessment has assessed there are no adverse implications for equality, diversity, cohesion and integration resulting from this decision. These services benefit children and young people with SEN and disabilities and their families.

4.3 Council policies and Best Council Plan

- 4.3.1 This fits with the Children and Young People's Plan 2018-2023 priorities to;
- Ensure that the most vulnerable are protected
 - Help children and parents to live in safe, supportive and loving families

4.4 Resources and value for money

- 4.4.1 This option represents best value for money because it secures vital services to enable disabled children and their families to access targeted short breaks with the aim of preventing family breakdown.
- 4.4.2 Payment will be made in two instalments to protect the interests of the Council, allowing the Council to withhold the second payment in case of unsatisfactory performance. This gives the Council the power of offset, whereby in the event of default on the grant, money owed to the Council can be offset against money owed by the council to the provider.
- 4.4.3 There is a budget of £560,000 in place to cover the value of this decision.

4.5 Legal Implications, Access to Information and Call In

- 4.5.1 The value of the contracts detailed within this report are above the level for key decisions as prescribed within the council's constitution and therefore this decision is subject to call-in. The decision was published on the List of Forthcoming Decisions on the 12th September 2018.

4.6 Risk Management

- 4.6.1 If this decision is not approved, there is a risk that disabled children, young people and their families will lose much valued services and that families may potentially be at increased risk of breaking down.
- 4.6.2 There is a risk of challenge from unsuccessful bidders which will be mitigated by undertaking a transparent procurement process including scoring applications by a panel.
- 4.6.3 There is a risk identified with payment in advance is should services not subsequently delivered. This risk is mitigated by paying in two instalments rather than all at once. Quarterly performance management will identify whether this funding is being spent correctly or not. Quarterly monitoring returns will include outcomes for disabled children and how many short breaks hours were delivered as a result.

5. Conclusions

- 5.1 The Director of Children & Families is recommended to note the contents of this report and approve the implementation of competitive grants process for targeted short breaks for disabled children.

6. Recommendations

6.1 The Director of Children and Families is recommended to agree the implementation of a competitive grants allocation process for delivery of targeted short breaks services from 1st April 2019 to 31st March 2020. The decision will benefit children and young people with SEND and their families by funding high quality and diverse targeted short breaks. The total budget is £560,000.

7. Background documents¹

7.1 None

¹ The background documents listed in this section are available to download from the Council's website, unless they contain confidential or exempt information. The list of background documents does not include published works.