

**Economy, Communities & Corporate**  
Geoff Hughes

Your Ref:  
Our Ref: FOI IAT 10102  
Please ask Christine Dallow  
for:  
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20 August 2015

Dear Madam,

**FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT REQUEST FOI IAT 10102**

Further to our previous correspondence, your request has now been considered and the council's response is set out below:

**Q1 What evidence do you have that the statement is accessible to families (i.e. unique visitors/ postal reach etc.)?**

A. Information about the statement is published online at:

[www.herefordshire.gov.uk/health-and-social-care/children-and-family-care/disabilities-and-special-needs](http://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/health-and-social-care/children-and-family-care/disabilities-and-special-needs).

Analysis of web traffic from 1 January 2015 to 31 July 2015 shows the following usage:

	<b>Users</b>	<b>Page views</b>	<b>Sessions</b>
<b>All Sessions</b>	632	1201	432
<b>New Users</b>	367	455	235
<b>Returning Users</b>	304	745	196

**Q2 How often do you review the Short breaks statement? When was the last time you revised it and for what reason?**

A. The short breaks statement was reviewed in 2013 following the completion of a commissioning exercise that delivered new short breaks services in Herefordshire. In addition to the main statement, the published programme of commissioned and non-commissioned short breaks is more frequently updated when there are any changes to service availability.

**Q3 How many children have been refused short breaks services because of eligibility criteria in the last twelve months? How many of these had an assessment?**

- A. Between 1 August 2014 and 31 July 2015, 21 children and young people were referred to the children with disabilities resources panel for a short breaks service. All had had an assessment. All but one of the referrals were approved and have received a short breaks service. Only one referral was declined by the panel as the request concerned support beyond age 18, which was picked up by adult services.

**Q4 How often do you consult families on the content of the short breaks statement? When did this last happen and how many families were involved?**

- A. In the nine months up to April 2013, parents, carers, children and young people were involved in discussions at special schools, special workshops, and individual conversations and through the Parent Carer Voice. We have not recorded the number of families involved. As a result of these focused conversations, a range of outcomes were arrived at that described what families wanted from their short breaks and respite care services. Three 'meet the commissioner' sessions were held in May 2013 to answer questions about the future shape of Herefordshire's short breaks offer. A parent representative was also involved in the evaluation of service proposals made by organisations to deliver short breaks under contract. The views gathered through these various engagement activities have helped to shape the local short breaks statement and programme of commissioned services.

**Q5 What evidence do you have that you deliver short breaks to children and young people as outlined in your statement?**

- A. The current range of commissioned short breaks is published online at:

[www.herefordshire.gov.uk/health-and-social-care/children-and-family-care/disabilities-and-special-needs](http://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/health-and-social-care/children-and-family-care/disabilities-and-special-needs)

which also links to additional information about universally available short breaks opportunities collated by our partner Herefordshire Carers Support at:

[www.herefordshirecarerssupport.org/short-breaks-and-activities/](http://www.herefordshirecarerssupport.org/short-breaks-and-activities/)

The joint commissioning exercise in 2012/2013 resulted in a number of new and expanded services, but not an award of a contract for overnight respite services. A subsequent service gap was identified following the early end of one short breaks contract in 2014. A plan has been agreed and is being implemented to operate a specialist overnight respite care service from 2016, which will help to fill this gap.

**Q6 How many children do you have records of that you consider to be currently eligible for short breaks?**

- A. The analysis of need at a population level is a continuous area of work. The 2011 census recorded that in Herefordshire:
- 418 children declared they had a long term health problem that limited their daily activity a lot (1% of 0-15 population)

- 617 children reported 'limited a little' (2% of 0-15 population)

The 2014 Herefordshire children's integrated needs assessment (ChINA) has taken evidence from a range of sources to begin to create a picture of local need, which can be accessed online at:

[www.herefordshire.gov.uk/media/1603753/Childrens\\_integrated\\_needs\\_assessment\\_report\\_2014.pdf](http://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/media/1603753/Childrens_integrated_needs_assessment_report_2014.pdf)

A further piece of work is due to be undertaken to analyse the needs of the children with disabilities population in Herefordshire to better inform strategic planning.

ChINA (2014) reported that the highest total number (5,219) of children with special education needs (SEN) was recorded in summer 2011. In summer 2015, the SEN population is estimated at 4,250. Around 85% of these children are adequately supported by their families and schools. The remaining 15% (c.600 children) have needs that require coordinated support from a range of agencies, including universally available short breaks opportunities.

Over 230 children are known to the council's children with disabilities team. The needs of most families will be met through family support services, direct payments or commissioned services. Approximately 80 children require short break support, around half of which require an overnight short break.

## **Q7 What evidence do you have these services meet need?**

A. Where possible, service providers seek to record the voice of the child:

- *B drew a circle around the smiley face.*
- *He's a lovely chap. He takes me out. I would like to keep him when I'm 18.*
- *J is friendly, she looks after me. I like going out with her because I can make new friends.*
- *He has a good sense of humour. One word: HAPPY!!!!*
- *T drew on the happy face.*
- *W drew a circle around the happy face.*
- *She is nice. I feel happy. I like the bus rides and Craffee Club.*
- *Yes P is fun to be with.*
- *Yes. I like walking with D. I also like to go bowling.*

Providers also collect feedback from families:

- *Quite a lot. It gives me a chance to spend time with her brother and also gives me time to do other things: catch up on sleep, nip into town shopping.*

- *Head clearing time. Stress reduction. For K it widens her horizons and decreases her dependency on me his Mum.*
- *You are providing an invaluable service to parents of disabled children. Without the play days I would really struggle to cope during holidays.*
- *Wonderful facility. B loves meeting everyone and having fun.*
- *The sessions have been a huge help particularly as we are unable to go on holiday due to Cs needs. The staff are lovely and I can relax knowing that C is well cared for,*
- *Parent reported to play worker that she had been able to spend time with her husband, play days are a 'godsend' and really helps her have family time.*
- *I LOVED EVERYTHING : )*
- *An excellent summer scheme.*
- *I could see her confidence grow every time she attended. Really brilliant - thank you so much. A world of difference. It's impossible otherwise. I'm able to do the washing, have a shower. I could not manage the school holidays without the support.*
- *He loves it. E takes him to lots of interesting places which he loves.*
- *It gives me a break and I also get time to spend with his brother.*
- *I'm just so pleased with what he is getting. I can see the change in him. He gets to do lots of activities with P. It gives me the chance to catch up.*
- *It's helped him gain independence away from home. It gives me a few hours to do things I can't do when he's around. It gives me more independence.*
- *It's given me a chance to breathe.*
- *It gives me breathing space and time to spend with his brother. He gets to see someone else other than me and his brother.*
- *It means he gets to do more activities than he can do with us. It also gives him the chance to interact with other children. It enables me to work longer hours which has a great impact on our family income.*
- *It's quality time for me and I get to spend time with his siblings. Being able to do normal things. It's also given him the chance to do normal things a teenager does.*
- *She really looks forward to F coming. She loves it. 10 out of 10. She says "Mum where's my clothes, F is coming today".*
- *We get to spend time with our other children. It's good for us to focus on them.*
- *He would have had to go into no 1 Ledbury Road to stay but he has been able to stay at home with all the family.*
- *It's good for him - he gets the socialisation with all his support workers.*

Where the council refers families to a provider for services following an assessment we are able to contact a sample of the families referred to gather their direct feedback:

- *Buddying support: Very pleased with the service and has no complaint to make about anyone who goes in to assist with child. They are all very good with him. Usually have the same set of carers.*
- *Have been receiving this service for quite a while now for child. Daughter is very restricted in what she can do and where the carers can take her during the sessions. They will go to the park or to some activity such as painting. She is being introduced to new Buddy's over a period as one of the regular ones left recently. Mum not too happy about having to pay mileage, but realise they have to for daughter to go out with the Buddy. Very pleased with it as it allows mum quality time with other child.*
- *Buddying started a while ago but with only 1:1 care. This wasn't enough so the family didn't use the service for quite a while and started looking into direct payments. The provider contacted the family and talked over what had happened. The sessions started up again in June with 2:1 care. Service is currently running very well. The Buddy's are well matched with an older male and a younger female carer. Child loves to be outside so finds it hard with the darker evenings and cold weather. Likes to go to Bodenham lakes, Dinmore woods, library. Planning to introduce him to swimming soon.*
- *Happy with the service. The Buddy can do things with him that mum can't do such as bowling. He goes to the Kraftee Club but has a very limited attention span so is hard work keeping him interested in things.*

If you are dissatisfied with the handling of your request, further information regarding our review procedure is available in the 'Internal Review Procedure for EIR and FOI requests' which is published on Herefordshire Council's website via the following link:

[www.herefordshire.gov.uk/government-citizens-and-rights/data-protection-and-freedom-of-information/data-protection](http://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/government-citizens-and-rights/data-protection-and-freedom-of-information/data-protection)

Further information is also available from the Information Commissioner at:

Information Commissioner's Office  
Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF  
Telephone: 01625 545 745 [www.ico.org.uk](http://www.ico.org.uk)

Yours sincerely,

*Christine Dallow*

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**INFORMATION ACCESS OFFICER**