

SHEFFIELD CITY COUNCIL

INDIVIDUAL CABINET MEMBER DECISION RECORD

The following decision was taken on 26 July 2018 by the Cabinet Member for Children and Families.

Date notified to all members: Friday 27 July 2018

The end of the call-in period is 4:00 pm on Thursday 2 August 2018

Unless called-in, the decision can be implemented from Friday 3 August 2018

1. TITLE

Short Breaks Consultation Implementation Phase

2. DECISION TAKEN

That the Cabinet Member authorises the Executive Director for People Services to implement the changes to eligibility for Short Breaks Grants and Daytime Activities as set out in Section 1.9 of the report.

3. Reasons For Decision

Sheffield City Council is committed to supporting disabled children and their families through a range of services, and wants to maintain where possible the preventative support to families to help them lead their lives.

At the same time, the increasing and ongoing pressure on public finances mean the council has to make difficult decisions as fairly and reasonably as possible.

The proposals set out in the report have been consulted on with families and will make the processes for Short Breaks Grant and SNIPs clubs fairer, ensuring help is given to families who need it most.

We have assessed the level of impact - the number of families affected, in what ways they are affected and the financial implications to them – and propose that the recommendations herein are reasonable and practical. Where any individual family is significantly affected by any changes we will work with them to address this through other service provision if appropriate.

4. Alternatives Considered And Rejected

One option considered was to end the Council's Short Breaks Grant programme altogether. The Council has no statutory duty to provide a Short Breaks Grant. However, early consultation with parents and families suggested that a large number of families access the Short Breaks Grant and no other service from the Council. It therefore acts as a preventative support to help families maintain their caring responsibilities. This option was therefore rejected.

Another option considered was not to make any changes to the eligibility, age limit, or income threshold for accessing the grant, but just to reduce the overall grant amount from £400 to £200. Again, early consultation suggested this option, whilst relatively simple and easy to implement, is a 'one size fits all' approach. The option was therefore rejected in favour of the final proposals, which are fairer and will target the council's resources to help those that need it most.

When considering the income eligibility, the original proposal was to exempt families on benefits, which would have meant an income threshold of around £16,000 per year. However, early consultation led us to conclude that a higher threshold was necessary to account for the fact that families with disabled children often have higher outgoings and costs, as well as the fact that many families can be working but still struggling on a low income. The £21,000 threshold also aligns with the support the council gives to families for school transport.

5. **Any Interest Declared or Dispensation Granted**

None

6. **Respective Director Responsible for Implementation**

Executive Director, People Services

7. **Relevant Scrutiny Committee If Decision Called In**

Children, Young People and Family Support Scrutiny Committee