

Buckinghamshire Children and Young People's Trust



Aiming High for Disabled Children

## Aiming High Programme – 2009/10 – 2010/11

### Project Evaluation Report Summary

## 1. Background to Aiming High for Disabled Children Programme

In 2007, the Government introduced the Aiming High for Disabled Children's Programme<sup>1</sup>, a wide programme of change for disabled children's services. The development of short breaks (previously known as respite) was a major component of this programme.

Short breaks are provided to give:

- Disabled children and young people enjoyable experiences away from their primary carers, thereby contributing to their personal and social development and reducing social isolation;
- Parents and families a necessary and valuable break from caring responsibilities.

Buckinghamshire County Council was awarded the following AHDC ring fenced grant amount to transform short breaks across the county by 31<sup>st</sup> March 2011:

	08/09	09/10	10/11
Revenue	£60,000 start up	£524,800	£1,693,000
Capital	None	£0	£584,400

N.B. £250,500 for capital was allocated for 09/10 but was clawed back under the new Coalition Government that had been elected.

The funding was ring fenced by Government and had to be used to meet a 'Full Service Offer', the key elements of which were:

- Offering a significantly greater volume and range of short break provision;
- Be based on a needs assessment of the local disabled child population, taking into account the voice of disabled children, young people and their families
- Use fair, understandable and transparent eligibility criteria that enable short breaks to be used as a preventative service and which do not restrict provision to those threatened by family breakdown or other points of crisis.
- Improve information for parents about short breaks.

It also set out specific groups of disabled children and young people who should not be disadvantaged in accessing short breaks:

A: Children and young people with Autistic Spectrum Disorder (who have severe learning disabilities or behaviour which is challenging) OR those children and young people whose challenging behaviour is associated with other impairments such as severe learning disabilities.

B: Children and Young People with complex health needs including this with disability and life limiting condition, and/or those who require palliative care and/or those with associated impairments such as cognitive or sensory impairments and/or have moving/handling needs and/or require special equipment/adaptations.

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<sup>1</sup> Aiming High for Disabled Children; Better support for families (DCSF/HMT May 2007)

## **2. Outcomes and Successes from the Programme**

### **Reaching Full Service Offer**

It was agreed Buckinghamshire had reached Full Service Offer as a result of the evidence submitted through the Laimp, Tracker and TDC quarterly progress questions/reviews. This was achieved 4 months ahead of the deadline.

### **Increase In Number of Disabled CYP Accessing Short Breaks And Volume Of Short Breaks Delivered**

- The numbers of children receiving a short break increased from 350 to 992 by the end of the programme. Therefore the number of children receiving short breaks overall increased by 183% since 2008 and by 76% since 2009/10
- The largest increase shown was in group based provision and family and individual provision. There was a strategic decision to grow these areas given that “overnights” was the major element of the original respite provision.
- For increase in hours of short breaks, group based provision was the area of largest increase due to the new commissioned holiday scheme, weekend activities (both Action for Children) and under 5’s pilot scheme (Barnardo’s).
  - The number of overnights overall increased by 8% since 2008 and by 0.9% since 2009/10.
  - The number of family based day hours increased by 26% since 2008 and by 10% since 2009/10.
  - The number of group based specialist day hours increased by 105% since 2008 and by 62% since 2009/10.
  - The number of group based universal day hours increased by 86% since 2008 and by 49% since 2009/10.

### **Numbers of Disabled CYP Becoming Looked After (LAC)**

Numbers of disabled CYP becoming LAC remained quite static during the programme against a general trend of increasing numbers of children generally becoming LAC following the ‘Baby P’ case.

### **Parents Questionnaire**

A questionnaire was completed by 61 parents/carers of disabled CYP at the end of the AHDC programme. Some of the outcomes that this has highlighted for the programme are that:

- 76% agreed or strongly agreed that the short breaks provided sufficient break to allow them to continue to care for their children or children in their care.
- 80% agreed or strongly agreed that the short break allowed them to meet the needs of other children in the family.
- 85% agreed or strongly agreed that the short break allowed them to carry out household tasks.

## Outcomes for Disabled CYP

Sample from key contracts:

- 73% of service users reported increased confidence and self-esteem of the child (Bucks Activity Project – holiday provision and targeted 1:1 service)
- 73% of parents agreed my child has shown an increase in confidence or self esteem (recipients of direct payments)
- 67% agree my child has developed or maintained friendships (recipients of direct payments)
- 83% agreed my child has shown an increase in confidence or self esteem (contract carer scheme)
- 88% of children/young people reported a positive impact on the development of their independence (All Ability Outdoor Education Programme)

## Outcomes for Families of Disabled CYP

Sample from key contracts:

- 81% of parents reported they feel more able to cope (Bucks Activity Project – holiday provision and targeted 1:1 service)
- 73% agree they are more able to cope with family life (recipients of direct payments)
- 67% agree they have an improved relationship with their child (recipients of direct payments)
- 67% reported they have an improved relationship with their child (contract carer scheme)

## Quote from Families:

- *“Come on with his walking.”*
- *“He's speaking a lot more now”*
- *“A lot more confident - used to cry when left, now perfectly happy.”*
- *“Generally a little bit more confident and has helped prepare him for nursery.”*
- *“1-1 system has helped with speech and language. Has calmed down a lot - behaviour has really improved.”*
- *“I was able to work uninterrupted, almost impossible in school holidays, last summer I took unpaid leave so I could manage.”*
- *“Thank you for providing a great opportunity for my son to socialize, partake in sports and most importantly gain some independence, especially as he is not at school at present.”*
- *“It has created a blossoming network of social opportunity as well as sporting”*
- *“She described the week as ‘absolutely brilliant’ and I appreciated the opportunity of coming to the presentation on Friday – it was uplifting. It is always difficult to find appropriate activities for her during the holidays where she will be understood, motivated, encouraged and kept safe.”*

## 3. Capital Programme 2010/11

Disabled children and young people in Buckinghamshire had told us they wanted:

- To take part in activities with their siblings and non disabled peers that build their confidence
- Access to a big range of exciting opportunities including challenging and exciting adventurous ones
- To be safe but not prevented from doing certain activities
- To access local facilities with their siblings, peers and non disabled peers
- To take part in more fun activities
- Access to services including equipment, transport facilities and local venues

Disabled young people were supported to take part in the funding allocation panels where decisions were taken to fund projects.

The programme awarded funding to improve access and facilities::

- Aylesbury Vale Community Trust Swan and Aqua Vale pools
- Buckingham Town Council – Chandos Park
- Booker Park Special School - sensory improvements to hydrotherapy pool
- Green Park Outdoor Centre - adventure equipment: tank garden, tub garden, pipe garden, wood xylophone garden, adventure equipment: zip wire, swing, climbing slope
- Chiltern District Council - Chesham Leisure Centre, Chesham Leisure Centre, Chalfont Leisure Centre
- Jardines Bowling Club - adapted balls, ramp and ball ramps
- Thomley Hall - Activity Centre and Longridge - outdoor activity centre
- Equipment to a range of contracted providers
- The Grove Residential Short Break Service - extension to increase access capacity to CYP with complex needs and develop a sensory room
- Specialist equipment across all the residential short break services

### **What Difference Is It Making?**

One example from the above capital programme is the work done at Chesham Leisure Centre:



Sensory equipment allows children and adults with special needs to explore and develop their senses and skills. The new sensory equipment was funded by Buckinghamshire Aiming High for Disabled Children Capital Grant and includes a sensory area with bubble tube, fibre optic obit tails and music which allows children to explore light, sound and movement.

## **4. Information for parents**

### **AHDC Website**

The AHDC website was developed and is currently hosted on the Children and Young People's Trust website. It can be accessed at:

[www.buckinghamshirepartnership.gov.uk/aiminghigh](http://www.buckinghamshirepartnership.gov.uk/aiminghigh)

## **Buckinghamshire Family Information Service**

The AHDC team has worked closely with BFIS to ensure that information from the programme has been available through BFIS as well as the AHDC website.

### **Newsletter**

An AHDC newsletter – ‘In the Picture’ was agreed and 5 editions were published during the programme. This was primarily an e- newsletter, though hard copies were printed in response to requests from some parents. These can still be accessed on the AHDC website.

### **Starting Point Directory**

A comprehensive parents’ directory was developed for the end of the programme, which contains information on benefits, education, social care, health, childcare, transitions, short breaks etc. It has now been circulated widely to parents, schools, GP surgeries, other health settings, child care and short break providers etc. and received very positive feedback about its content and usefulness.

### **AHDC Celebration Event**

An event to celebrate the success and end of the programme was held on the 17<sup>th</sup> February 2011. The event provided information to parents, provided a range of fun activities for disabled CYP and their siblings and was used to launch the ‘Starting Point Directory, which had just been published.



*“The drumming sounded fantastic but we didn’t manage to have a go as T was engrossed in her smoothie making! We as a family are going to benefit so much from all the advice. Didn’t know there was so much out there.”*

*“Our son has ASD, and limited communication, but was able to enjoy an archery session with full support and guidance. We all had great fun playing drums together too! The day was very informative and everyone involved was very helpful.”*

## **5. Pinpoint Database**

The Children Act 1989 requires all Social Services departments to keep a database of children with disabilities to help with planning and monitoring services. The Council’s previous Planning Database for Children with Disabilities was out of date so AHDC re-launched it as the AHDC Pinpoint Database.

Registration is voluntary on the AHDC Pinpoint Database and as well as wanting information to help plan services the database was used and continues to be used to distribute information of interest to families with disabled CYP; this is done in conjunction with BFIS.

Flyers and registration forms were printed and circulated widely and to date there are over 400 CYP registered on the database.

## 6. Workforce Development

The Buckinghamshire Aiming High & DCATCH Workforce Development plan successfully implemented a comprehensive range of solutions across all workforces and raised the profile of carers of disabled children across Children's Services.

It facilitated increased access to a variety of training modules aimed at short break carers and designed to support them to complete their Short Break Carer Standards. The training was recognised by Bucks New University as a suitable pathway to Higher Education options and also by TDC as an example of good practice to enable carers to access the Short Break Standards.

There has been an assessment of the impact of the training received once back in the workplace. Quotes form this: *"It has made me aware that the parents are the teachers, they have all of the knowledge about their child. So communication is the key for a good outcome."* and *"I feel more confident in dealing with negative behaviour."*

### Training Parents to be Trainers

To complement this training the programme also trained Parents to deliver inclusion training called "Open Minds, Open Doors" to universal services and childcare settings. This is has been extremely well received and has provided part-time flexible employment to 13 parent carers. Feedback from providers has shown that training provided by parents has a greater impact.

*"Helped me to understand a little bit more that children need a positive response around them and can be very aware of the negativity of others who are fearful."*

*"It was good to have parents providing information as they have more knowledge about how children and parents are treated and how this can be changed or improved."*

All of this has been backed up by the provision of "Child Specific" Training provided by Buckingham Healthcare NHS Trust (BHT) to short break settings can access the appropriate training to support the access of children and young people with complex health needs and/or complex moving and handling needs.

## 7. Disabled Children and Young People's Participation

Engaging CYP in tenders and capital allocation panels has had a significant impact for those involved by increasing confidence, skills and CV's of the YP involved.

As a result of the disability participation worker visiting a number of settings and talking to CYP, six disabled young people attended the August Youth Cabinet residential. The disabled young people felt really positive about the residential & said it was really nice to take part in an event that was not specifically for disabled young people, where they were able to mix with other young people & feel included instead of separated. At present, around 75 disabled young people have shown interest in joining the youth cabinets.

It has raised awareness of including disabled CYP in all mainstream participation projects and is expected to continue beyond the AHDC programme as it has become more embedded into the culture.

The types of work that was achieved through the Disabled CYP Participation Service during 2010/11 included:

- Residential short break consultation
- Supported disabled young people to attend residential participation events

- Involved in a number of training events aimed at raising awareness of the needs of disabled children and young people
- Involved in the delivery & joint planning of this event. Takeover Day 2010
- Supported family fun days

## **8. Parent Participation**

Parent Participation has been developed through the AHDC programme from a very low starting point compared with CYP participation, which was already generally well developed in Bucks.

Pockets of participation have happened successfully across specific projects within the AHDC programme e.g. a parent's advisory group for the re-commissioned residential overnight short breaks service has resulted in changes. Some good work has been done to engage with parents from the BME communities through one of the parent forums that have been established. 60% (28) of parents attending a participation day on 18/09/10 from BME groups, which was a real opportunity for them to learn more about local short break services as well as having the opportunity to discuss their needs. There have been two parent reps on the AHDC programme board.

Generally getting parent participation really embedded could be improved so that it takes place in a more structured and cohesive way.

The types of work that was achieved through the Parent Participation Service during 2010/11 included:

- Successfully launched the Parent Advisory Group for Respite Care
- Facilitated the Parent SEN Transport Focus Group
- Facilitated the Parent Transition Focus Group
- Supported FACT Bucks to set up their own bank account, and managed their own finances independently based on parental priorities.
- Ongoing involvement in the speech and language therapy service tender process including organising parental involvement and facilitating the presentation day.
- Supported parents in developing FACT Bucks as an independent organisation including facilitating a training day and an Outcomes session, with support from professionals including Community Impact Bucks.

## **9. Access to Universal Services**

A task group was set up to take forward the work of improving access to universal services. Membership was made up of a range of universal service providers, workforce development, EYCC, extended services, children's Centres, parent participation and representatives from the 4 district councils.

The group raised the profile of disabled CYP across universal services.

The group also supported the development of inclusion training/disability awareness training across its breadth of services.

Small grant funded projects were developed through this work such as the disability sports clubs.

As part of the work to improve access there is now an inclusion service to support disabled CYP 1:1 to attend universal services of their choice, either as a bridging support or as a more long term short break option. In addition to this the provider was asked to work in partnership across a range of universal services to improve access to disabled

CYP, through support, training and where necessary as appropriate to the requirements of the DDA constructive challenge.

## **10. Disabled Children's Access to Childcare (DCATCH)**

### **Pilot Project 2010 – 2011**

“Disabled children and their families should have access to the full range of childcare options that are open to other families”.

Buckinghamshire was awarded £119,149 to develop DCATCH: To embed sustainable systems and procedures to increase disabled children's access to childcare, thereby enabling parents to work or attend training to work.

The funding was used as follows:

- To support the work of the overall Child Care Sufficiency Assessment (demand survey and gap analysis)
- To support workforce training in the child care sector to support greater inclusion of disabled CYP
- To support the development of the 'Starting Point' Directory
- Publication of promotional literature/flyers for DCATCH
- To develop and embed child care brokerage to support DCATCH
- Incentivisation payments to child care settings to maximise inclusion of disabled CYP

## **11. Eligibility and Access to Short Breaks**

A draft document: Buckinghamshire Short Breaks Eligibility Criteria 2010/11 was drafted in consultation with parents and published on the AHDC website. As a result of the consultation with parents the Parent Participation service drafted a document: Time Out: Short Breaks Explained for Families in Buckinghamshire 2010/2011, which was also published on the AHDC website.

These documents set out how families could access short breaks in Buckinghamshire:

### **Moving Forward Short Breaks Duty**

From April 2011, local authorities will be under a duty to provide a short breaks service to carers of disabled children.

The regulations build on the rapid expansion of short breaks services which all local authorities have achieved through the Aiming High for Disabled Children programme.

The regulations require local authorities to

- Offer breaks as a preventive early intervention
- Offer a range of services for parents
- Publish a statement of those services to parents.