

1. INTRODUCTION

Oldham Council requested that local voluntary sector infrastructure support agency, Action Together carry out an impartial stakeholder consultation on the current short breaks offer, taking into consideration the experiences of children, young people and families (including through representative groups such as Parent Carer Forums), voluntary and community sector providers and local Healthwatch.

Information from this consultation will, together with an audit of needs identified via EHC plans and support plans, contribute to future arrangements and the effectiveness of local joint working. Joint commissioning arrangements will be based on evidence about which services, support and interventions are an effective and efficient use of the local authority's resources. It should also identify services across education, health and social care that currently lend themselves to the use of Personal Budgets.

2 NATIONAL CONTEXT

Section 19 of the Children and Families Act 2014 makes clear that local authorities, in carrying out their functions under the Act in relation to disabled children and young people and those with special educational needs or disabilities (SEND), must have regard to:

- the views, wishes and feelings of the child or young person, and the child's parents
- the importance of the child or young person, and the child's parents, participating as fully as possible in decisions, and being provided with the information and support necessary to enable participation in those decisions
- the need to support the child or young person, and the child's parents, in order to facilitate the development of the child or young person and to help them achieve the best possible educational and other outcomes, preparing them effectively for adulthood

Local authorities must provide a range of short breaks for disabled children, young people and their families, and prepare a short breaks duty statement giving details of the local range of services and how they can be accessed, including any eligibility criteria (The Breaks for Carers of Disabled Children Regulations 2011). Local authorities must publish a short breaks statement on their website and review it on a regular basis, taking account of the needs of local parents and carers. The statement will therefore form a core part of the Local Offer.

Local authorities must publish a Local Offer, setting out in one place information about provision they expect to be available across education, health and social care for children and young people in their area who have SEN or are disabled, including those who do not have Education, Health and Care (EHC) plans. In setting out what they 'expect to be available', local authorities should include provision which they believe will actually be available.

2.1 The Local Offer

The Local Offer has two key purposes:

- To provide clear, comprehensive, accessible and up-to-date information about the available provision and how to access it, and
- To make provision more responsive to local needs and aspirations by directly involving disabled children and those with SEN and their parents, and disabled young people and those with SEN, and service providers in its development and review

The Local Offer must include provision in the local authority's area. It must also include provision outside the local area that the local authority expects is likely to be used by children and young people with SEND for whom they are responsible and disabled children and young people. The Local Offer should cover:

- support available to all children and young people with SEN or disabilities from universal services such as schools and GPs
- targeted services for children and young people with SEN or disabilities who require additional short-term support over and above that provided routinely as part of universal services
- specialist services for children and young people with SEN or disabilities who require specialised, longer term support
- Local authorities must involve children with SEN or disabilities and their parents and young people with SEN or disabilities in:
 - planning the content of the Local Offer
 - deciding how to publish the Local Offer
 - reviewing the Local Offer, including by enabling them to make comments about it

2.2 Short Breaks

Local authorities must provide a range of short breaks for disabled children, young people and their families, and prepare a short breaks duty statement giving details of the local range of services and how they can be accessed, including any eligibility criteria (The Breaks for Carers of Disabled Children Regulations 2011).

For children and young people under 18 this includes residential short breaks and services provided to children arising from their SEN but unrelated to a disability. This should include any provision secured through a social care direct payment.

Short Breaks provide children and young people with disabilities an opportunity to spend time away from their parents, relaxing with friends, having fun and an opportunity to achieve identified outcomes. They provide families with a 'break' from their caring responsibilities and give parents a chance to unwind, rest or spend time with their other children.

2.3 Personal budgets

The Children and Families Act 2014 requires local authorities to offer families Personal Budgets where an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) or Social Care support plan is in place. Where a child or young person is in receipt of an EHCP or Social Care support plan, the parent, carer or young person may request the option of a Personal Budget, but are not compelled to do so.

The Local Offer should always be explored before a request for an EHC needs assessment is made, because it forms part of a gradual response to meeting any additional needs of children and young people and helps to inform any request for an EHC needs assessment. In addition many of these services will continue to be available to support the child, young person and the family if an EHCP is issued, or a Social Care support plan is required.

A Personal Budget is an amount of money identified by the local authority to deliver provision set out in an EHC plan where the parent or young person needs help above that provided by universal or targeted services. A Personal Budget is not all the resources that are available to support a child or young person, but is the 'cashable' amount which can be used flexibly, as a direct payment, by the family or young person to support the additional needs of the child or young person.

3 LOCAL CONTEXT

Local authorities are required to co-produce and keep the local offer and short breaks under review. We are now 12 months in to the current commissioning and personal budget arrangements and it is timely to consult on how the offer, as it currently stands, has met the needs of children, young people and families. The process of reviewing and developing the Local Offer will help Oldham Council and its partners to improve provision.

NB: this is not about a reduction in the current resource but is to ensure the local offer is an effective and efficient use of resource.

Short Breaks in Oldham include:

- A range of sessional group or individual activity;

- Commissioned residential short breaks
- In house residential short breaks at Gemini House residential unit in which there are collaborative arrangements in place with Rochdale council.
- Children and young people are eligible for Short Breaks if they:
- Are resident in Oldham
- Have an Education, Health and Care plan or Statement of Special Educational Needs; or
- Receives (DLA) Disability Living Allowance or at 16yrs receives Personal Independence Payments (PIP); or
- Is diagnosed with a disability as set out in the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) and Equality Act 2010
- Are assessed as needing a short break but do not have a diagnosis

This may include a physical or learning disability, or a hearing or visual impairment. It includes children with Autism and Aspergers Syndrome and children who may have challenging behaviour as a result of their learning disability. It also includes children who have complex needs and who may have palliative, life limiting or a life-threatening condition.

4. STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

In March and April 2017 Action Together conducted a Stakeholder engagement with the following groups:

- Those accessing the existing short break provision (i.e. centrally commissioned services)
- Those currently receiving personal budgets
- The providers of current services
- The users of brokerage services
- Those engaging with Oldham's SEND Parent Carer forum

4.1 Methodology:

Action Together used the following methodology to conduct the stakeholder engagement:

- Online and paper questionnaires for families (parents and carers)
- Online and paper questionnaires for young people
- Online and paper questionnaires for providers
- Focus groups for parents and carers of existing services users of commissioned services
- Focus groups for those receiving personal budgets
- Individual consultation interviews for providers of services
- Individual telephone consultation interviews for parents and carers

The methodology was used to gather experiences and views of the outlined stakeholders along the following key lines of inquiry:

For Service users and their families:

- Does the current Short Breaks offer meet your needs
- Are there any gaps in the short breaks offer that would better support your needs
- How do you use your PB now?
- What are the difficulties you find in using a PB?
- Are you clear about how it should be spent?
- Are the services out there for you to buy with your PB?
- Do you feel your PB meets your needs?
- What other provision would you like to be able to access?
- What works well for you?
- What do you think are gaps in provision?
- Are you happy managing a personal budget or would you prefer a service delivered that your child could engage in?

- What type of provision would you prefer (list i.e. outreach service, overnight provision, group based service, ASD specialist service, weekends, evenings etc.)

For service providers:

- What generally works and what does not?
- What issues do you have in getting children/young people to access your service?
- Do you feel the right families are accessing your services?
- What could be done better?
- Do you have any service evaluation you could share with us both from families and service users themselves?

The engagement took place across March and April, 2017. An online survey was distributed electronically and in hard copy to parents and carers, children and young people and providers. The survey was distributed via the current short breaks providers, a link to the digital survey was hosted on the Local Offer and Action Together website, and was circulated 4 times to over 1000 families who are members of the parent carer forum. Action Together held an engagement table at the parent and carer forum’s annual conference, and conducted 4 focus groups with parents and carers of children who either access short breaks and / or have a personal budget.

Barrier Breakers engaged their members and supported them to complete the survey.

Action Together followed up with 34 parents who contacted following a letter being sent to them about the engagement from the Local Authority.

Current short breaks providers were invited to attend an individual providers consultation interview, of which 5 attended and a digital survey was circulated to providers, 5 of whom completed the survey.

In all 216 individuals completed the survey, 50 of which were children and young people and 166 parents and carers. 38 parents and carers participated in focus groups.

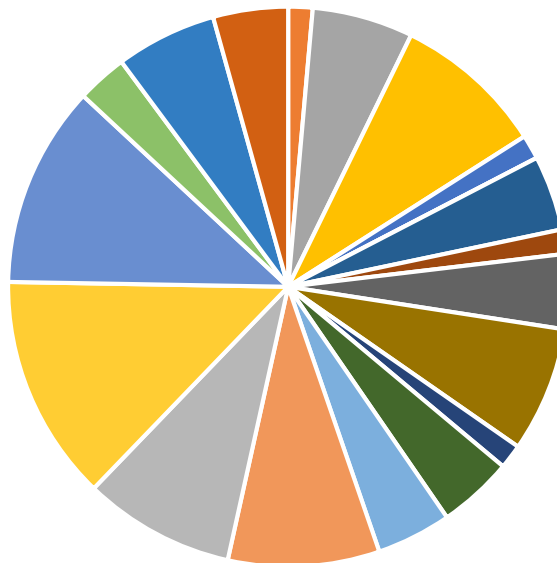
I am:		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
A child or young person	23.6%	50
A parent or carer	76.4%	166
<i>answered question</i>		216
<i>skipped question</i>		

We were able to engage with a good representation of families living across the Borough of Oldham, the table below details the communities where the participants live:

Please tell us which council ward you live in from the drop down list below:		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Alexandra	0.0%	0
Chadderton Central	1.4%	2
Chadderton North	5.8%	8
Chadderton South	8.7%	12
Coldhurst	1.4%	2
Crompton	0.0%	0

Failsworth East	4.3%	6
Failsworth West	1.4%	2
Hollinwood	4.3%	6
Medlock Vale	7.2%	10
Royton North	1.4%	2
Royton South	4.3%	6
Saddleworth North	4.3%	6
Saddleworth South	8.7%	12
Saddleworth West and Lees	8.7%	12
Shaw	13.0%	18
St James	11.6%	16
St Marys	2.9%	4
Waterhead	5.8%	8
Werneth	4.3%	6
Other (please specify)		0
answered question		138
skipped question		78

Please tell us which council ward you live in from the drop down list below:



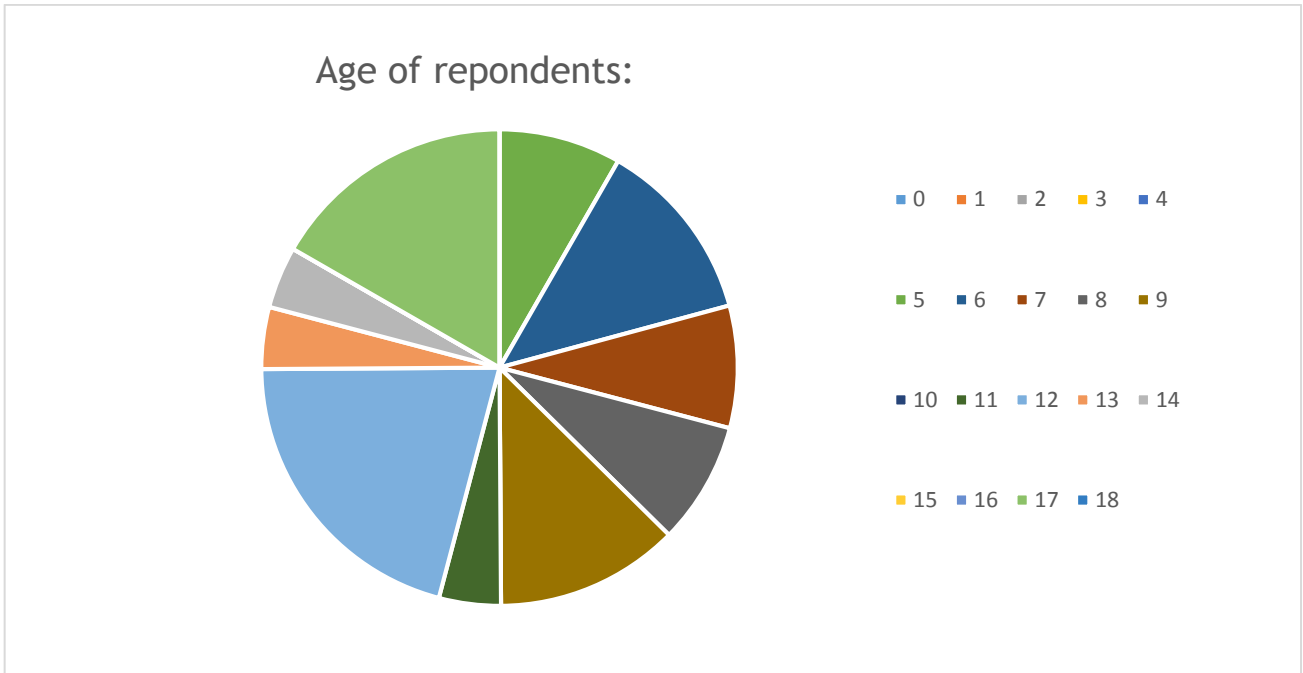
- Alexandra
- Chadderton Central
- Chadderton North
- Chadderton South
- Coldhurst
- Crompton
- Failsworth East
- Failsworth West
- Hollinwood
- Medlock Vale
- Royton North
- Royton South
- Saddleworth North
- Saddleworth South
- Saddleworth West and Lees
- Shaw
- St James
- St Marys
- Waterhead
- Werneth

5. KEY FINDINGS

The results of the consultation will be presented around the questions from the survey and additional detail from focus groups will be given alongside the survey feedback, with the most relevant question pertaining to the feedback.

5.1 Children and Young Peoples Responses:

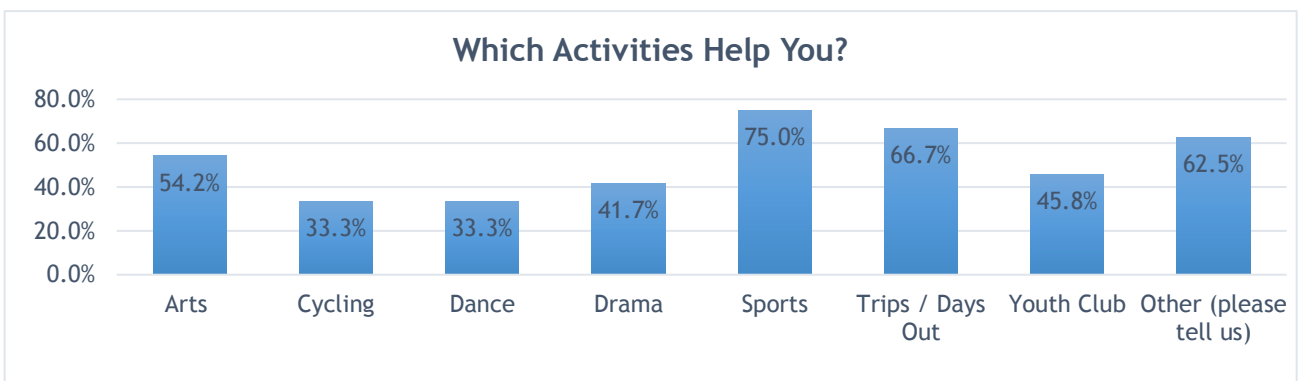
Q1 How old are you?



Q2 Do you access a short breaks activity now?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
yes	87.0%	40
no	13.0%	6
i don't know	0.0%	0
answered question		46
skipped question		4

Q3 What types of activities do you think help you? (Please choose as many as you like)



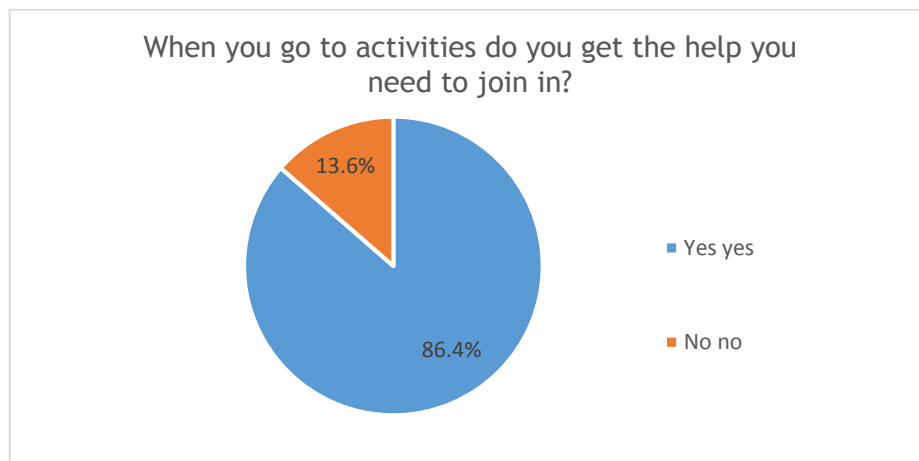
The responses from the 'other' category (responses have been thematically grouped) include:

- Computer Club
- Being around animals
- Cooking
- Swimming
- Making friends
- More things to go to that are for me / are suitable for my needs

Q4 What other activities or things would support you, that you don't do now?

- Computer Club
- Horse riding
- Golf
- Swimming
- More youth clubs
- School holiday club that's inclusive
- Cycling
- More sports - not just in holidays but after school and weekends too
- Ice Skating
- Art
- Football
- Cooking and washing Up
- Dance
- Park activities
- Arts and crafts
- Group residential activities
- Films and cinema clubs
- More chances to make friends

Q5 When you go to activities do you get the help you need to join in?



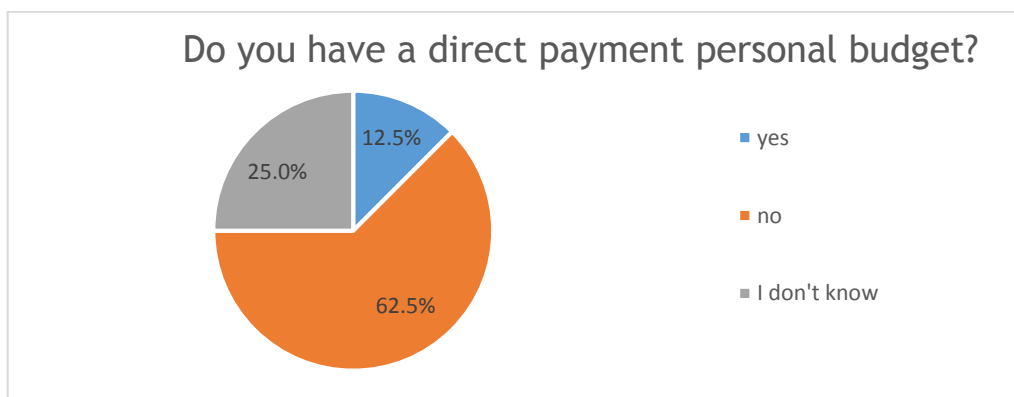
Q6 How would you rate your short breaks activities?

Answer Options	Very Bad	Bad	Ok	Good	Excellent	Rating Average	Response Count
	0	0	6	10	24	4.45	40
<i>answered question</i>							40
<i>skipped question</i>							10

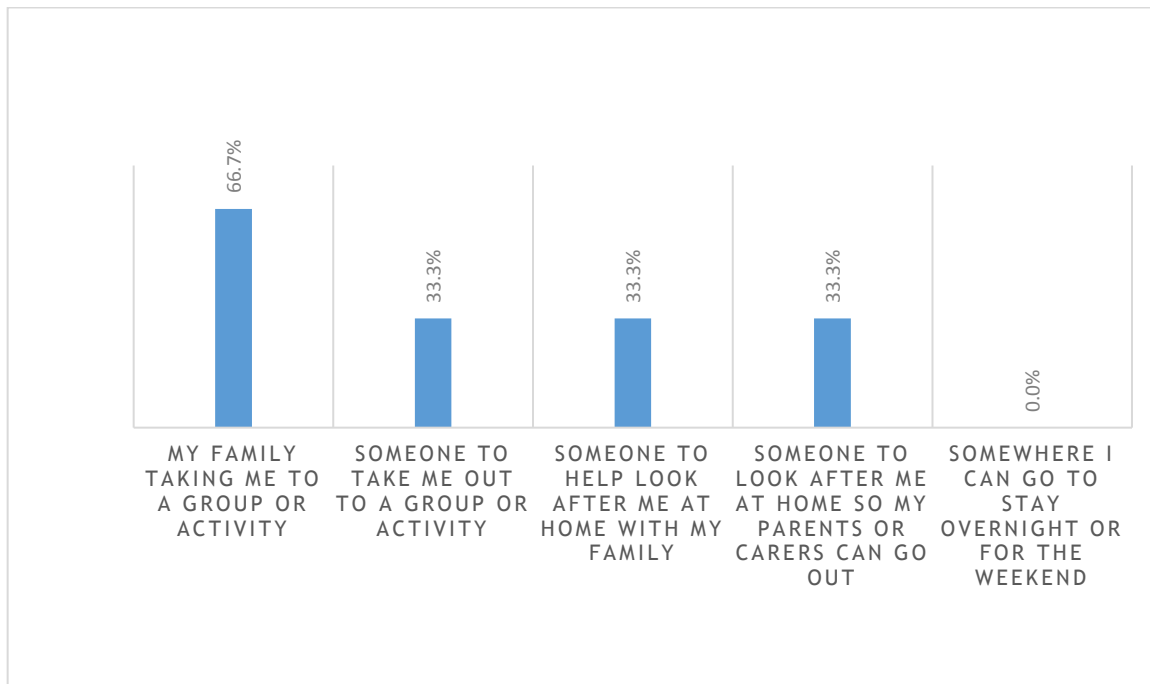
Q7 Please tell us why you gave it that score?

- I love swimming it makes me feel free
- Love it!
- Starfish swimming - great staff and brilliantly organised in a short time. My little boys confidence has grown immensely.
- Because I like playing loads of games at sports works and coaches are great
- I get to meet new people
- Great support for my son time given and clear directions in a safe and enjoyable environment. He has developed an important life skill as a result of the dedication from the staff. He is developing relationships within his group.
- At Starfish the activities are excellent. Because I feel like has come a long way since doing this.
- I can go cycling and swimming with my brother and sister. Everyone helps me.
- Starfish is inclusive and very experienced in helping and supporting children with varying needs.
- I have lots of friends there and I have a good time
- I gave the score a good because it helps me start making new friends and also help me with my disability problems
- I have fun
- Likes meeting people and being included
- I can now ride a bike without falling off
- Everyone is nice to me
- I like doing things like everyone else
- my sister can come with me
- I have met people who are like me and they can understand me
- The people there know how to help me

Q8 Do you have a personal budget?



Q9 What type of things do you and your family spend your direct payment personal budget on?



Q10 What else do you think you need spend your direct payment personal budget on that you think would help you and your family?

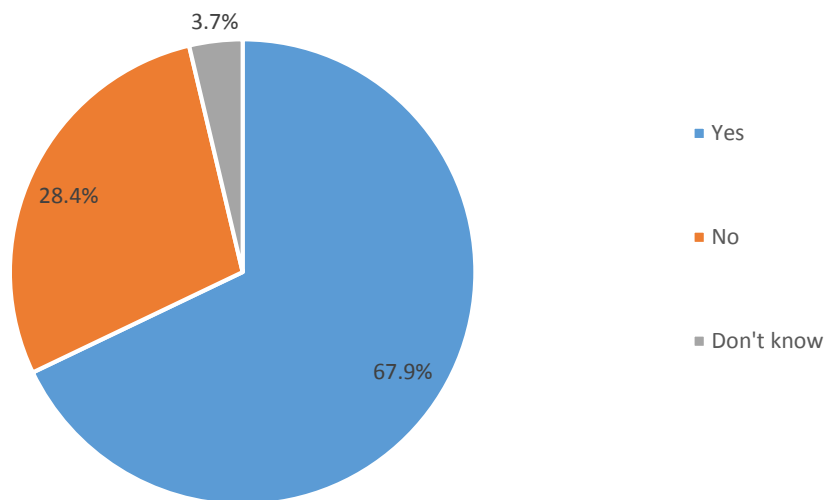
- Swimming
- Getting DVDS
- Time doing activities with PA instead of family
- Going to watch the football
- Weekend away with my family
- Weekend away from my family with other people my age
- Comics
- Going to see films
- Doing things with my friends
- Bowling
- Getting the tram into Manchester to go shopping

5.2 Parent’s and Carer’s Responses:

Q11 Does your child, or the child or young person you care for, attend short breaks activities or provision?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	67.9%	110
No	28.4%	46
Don't know	3.7%	6
<i>answered question</i>		162
<i>skipped question</i>		0

Does your child, or the child or young person you care for, attend short breaks activities or provision?



Q12 Which short breaks activities or provision does your child attend?

- Starfish Swimming
- AYC
- Forrest School
- Sports works
- Cads
- Ability wheelz
- Mahdlo
- Cerebral palsy football club (once a fortnight)
- Aromatherapy
- Cherish but this has just been cancelled
- Barrier Breakers
- There is nothing in the short breaks to meet my child needs

Q13 Do the short breaks activities and provision that are available in Oldham meet your child's and your families needs? (Please tell us how they do or if they don't please explain why they don't)

Meets my needs

- Yes to the ones that i attend, not sure what else is available
- yes, a variety of sports and activities
- yes, great for manipulation of limbs and extremities and strengthening muscles and co -ordination.

Doesn't meet my needs

- Weekends are not met as Cherish has been stopped.
- No, the only one I can find is starfish
- Not aware of any others. to be honest, didn't realise swimming was until Nichola told me.

- Yes, my child is very active and likes to attend the sports clubs rather than arts and crafts.
- yes, my children like it and need it.
- helping with exercise and socialising with other children
- Yes, gives him the chance to meet new children and do activities which are suitable for him.
- yes, swimming meets my child's needs but the short breaks offer is limited.
- Sports Works help my daughter with physical exercise and they help her to meet new people and make friends
- yes, absolutely. Very inclusive provision. child really enjoys swimming and positive sense of achievement
- Yes. My son has come on loads. He loves being in the water
- starfish and ability at Mahdlo are great, learning skills and confidence and independence. being with similar children and with staff who understand her and being challenged.
- swimming and cycling are great as they cater for the whole family, really inclusive activity that we can all do together.
- My son has more confidence since attending the sessions. He has lots of energy. The sport is good and a safe way he can burn off energy
- Yes it really helps during the holidays . My child looks forward to going in and doesn't get frustrated at home throughout the breaks.
- My child is too young for most activities
- I don't really know what's available
- No! we can't access due to lack of funds we don't receive payment.
- No my council doesn't provide these services
- Not for our circumstances no - my child has complex needs and there is only swimming that can cater for him.
- Don't know of any available
- None of them are local to us enough so we have to drive everywhere - no break for us.
- Partly but there is limited choice and availability
- Although he enjoys being with younger children, it would be nice if there were a few more kids his age group (13-15)
- No - lack of variety and poor signposting to current provision
- Not the non assessed groups / activities other than Ability Wheelz' so applied for a PB last year and got one
- Don't know any not been told.

- Yes they do now my son has his personal budget and we have a social worker that has gone through it with us.
- For a more child centred provision we have a personal budget and have accessed Independent Options to provide 1-1 input to enable our son to
- access mainstream leisure / social activities and learn life skills etc.
- Gives our family time out and spend some quality time together and also gives the child with the additional needs to spend time with young people like themselves so they don't feel isolated and gives the young person some independence and fun
- Yes - As we have two children and the funding helps my sons needs to be able to attend the swimming lessons and meet new people otherwise he would miss out as it would be too expensive.
- Starfish is an excellent service that I would recommend.
- There isn't enough variety, and waiting lists are too long
- They are great ways for our son to expand his horizons and social skills. Due to the times and travel requirements they are in no way a break for us as parents. They are in fact the complete opposite.
- My child's carer has to go with my child
- Not really - when you look at what is available in other areas, Oldham has a poor range of activities in comparison
- No only the family trips where we get support
- We could do with more peer group activities for young adults. Things like a cinema club would be good.
- Our daughter is now 17. it is harder to find things that meet her age and her interests
- No as they are not on at times that I can take my child and my child cant access without a carer as she is vulnerable.
- Not really as services seem to be disappearing
- Wasn't aware of any short breaks activities.
- For now, this we think will change as our child gets older

Additional Insights from focus groups

- *“Yes it really helps during the holidays - my child looks forward to going in and doesn't get throughout the breaks. We have found the sessions ran by the sports works team extremely helpful during the*

holidays. The staff are very friendly, professional and hands on. My child feels comfortable and safe around them and we as parents feel at ease. The fact that the sessions are open to children with learning disabilities show they are similar to one another so there are no concerns such as bullying etc. My child clearly enjoys going in and looks forward to the sessions. He seems a lot happier during the holidays as the sessions really help break up the weeks, making things manageable as a family. While my child is attending sports works, we can do things my other children enjoy, which normally isn't possible. That way everyone is happy and can enjoy the school holidays. I also get a lot done around the house which I normally struggle to do when he is at home as he requires a lot of attention. Because these sessions run twice a week it gives us a healthy balance so we still have enough time as a whole family. Frustration levels are low thanks to these sessions and the holidays are something we no longer dread. I really hope you continue to run these sessions as we are benefitting so much from them as a family. They are very important to us.”

- “AYC has been vital in ensuring that our son had access to a social activity that was tailored to his needs and had staff adequately trained to understand autism. However it is quite far away to travel which means we only get about an hours respite while he is there due to travel time and the fact the club is now only 2 hours long. Cherish UK were initially fantastic in providing a good 5 hours respite for us and our son enjoyed the wide variety of activities however the staffing and supervision of the children was poor and I have spoken to Cherish UK about this. In general I would make sure that there was a greater offer of providers and activities as even the sports activities are always football orientated.”
- “No that is why we do not currently access any shorts breaks provision and have been unable to do so. The only provision that may have been suitable was the Autism Youth Club however in 7 years our young person had never risen to the top of the waiting list so we gave up. There is a fundamental issue in that the amount of Short Breaks provision is insufficient to meet the needs of even 10% of families who should be able to access these services freely.”
- “I have an autistic little boy. It’s really difficult to keep him at home during holiday time, because at home there’s not enough activities for him and I am always worried that he will hurt my younger son, I can’t leave them in the same room together. He gets really upset. I was really worried about him. then one day I found about this sports works club from my friend. It’s really helpful for the children who need special support and for their parents.”
- “Due to my children being fostered, no information is shared. I don't understand this form as no one has ever explained any of this to me. Given that the children are local children and fostered via the LA and not an agency, I would have thought more information would be shared and co-production encouraged so my children can benefit and access services they deserve and need.”
- “You have to be assertive and use your voice. You get passed around a lot, its even more difficult for parents with learning disabilities or language difficulties. Things aren't explained at all. Short Breaks? Is the title wrong? It means nothing to parents. It costs £900 a year to go to AYC - when school is shut there is no session - but no refund to the personal budget. Parents don't know if they have a budget or what it is! Can't go to activities because you are having PA time. Lack of integrated work (social worker, broker, health etc)”
- “Sports Work is a life saver. Gives a break away from parents, but not enough and I find it difficult. Schools need to be more pro - active. Nothing is posted or advertised at school, there is no after school short break provision.”

- *“There is a huge lack of advertising and information. There is no real advertising for groups/activities which is a real shame. We started using starfish, whom in turn passed our details onto Sports Works as they believed my daughter would benefit from it. Without advertising, people will not know about the service from groups like Sports Works.”*
- *“We use AYC, ability wheelz, and starfish, and find them very well run and extremely useful in helping our autistic son develop. Their locations mean we have to travel there and wait for him, or make multiple trips - this is not a break for us. We don't mind this as it helps our child and that is what we want. By definition though, this is not a short break for us as parents.”*

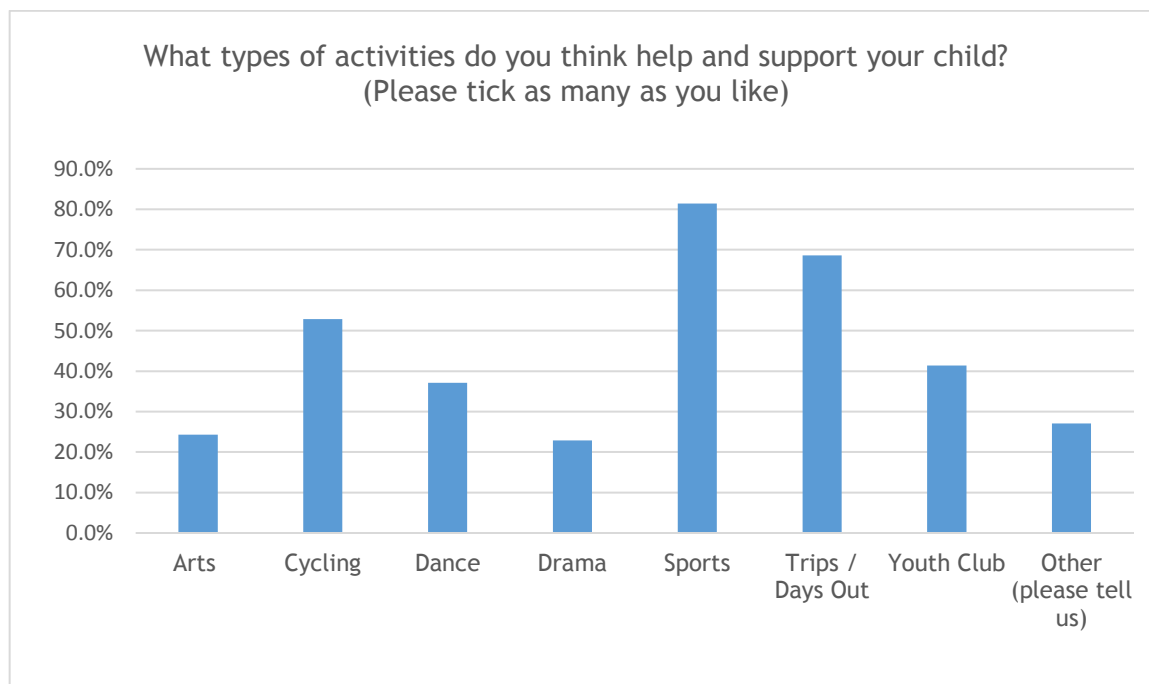
Q13 What do you think is missing from the short breaks offer in Oldham?

- Computers
- More activities that promote social inclusion
- More opportunities for more children to attend activities
- A wider range of activities across the board
- More days should be available during the summer holidays, more outside activities.
- We need more specialist services, weekend provision, evening provision.
- After school activities just for children with complex needs.
- I wish more short breaks were available for children with complex special needs.
- Group based activities and specialist services - these sessions should be open to children with similar disabilities and specially trained staff,
- ADHD groups - more youth club provision for children with disabilities,
- Disability dance groups especially dance groups for boys.
- Some short breaks i.e. youth clubs have waiting lists and are for children with specific disabilities would like to see these opened up to a variety of disabilities
- Not enough provision for children with complex needs
- It is difficult to get onto all available activities as there is generally a waiting list.
- Not much caters for children that are under 8 who need one to one support due to health reasons
- information to the carers or meeting to see what is available.
- Horse riding
- Limited options due to restriction of direct payment.
- Music therapy
- Aromatherapy
- Animal activities
- Wildlife and countryside activities.
- Group activities with specialist services to support my son to develop life learning skills/social skills
- Help to pay for holidays eg Haven or Butlin's
- Any activities would be good and help - group based special services.
- Gymnastics
- Trampolining
- Drama
- School holidays clubs
- Sensory Rooms / Sensory activities, there is a big gap around sensory provision

Additional Insights from focus groups

- “Things are limited for children with cerebral palsy. In my opinion, services are limited to meet my child’s need. The only services I use for my child is starfish swimming as they have always been able to meet my child’s needs and also helped me. giving me information about other things available.”

Q14 What types of activities do you think help and support your child?

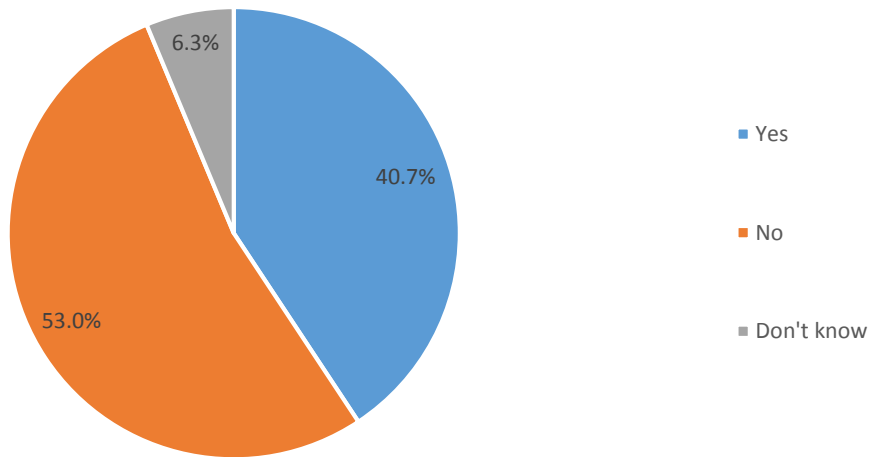


The ‘other’ responses included:

- Music/ Karaoke
- group work
- I would prefer more clubs where children with disabilities can go to meet friends, feel safe and comfortable being themselves!
- Deaf support for families is during working hours or based considerable distance away at times impossible to attend i.e 4:30 during working days.
- Swimming
- Anything suitable for a child with mobility issues and one to one
- horse riding
- sensory rooms to be available during holiday time
- horse riding
- learning to cycle

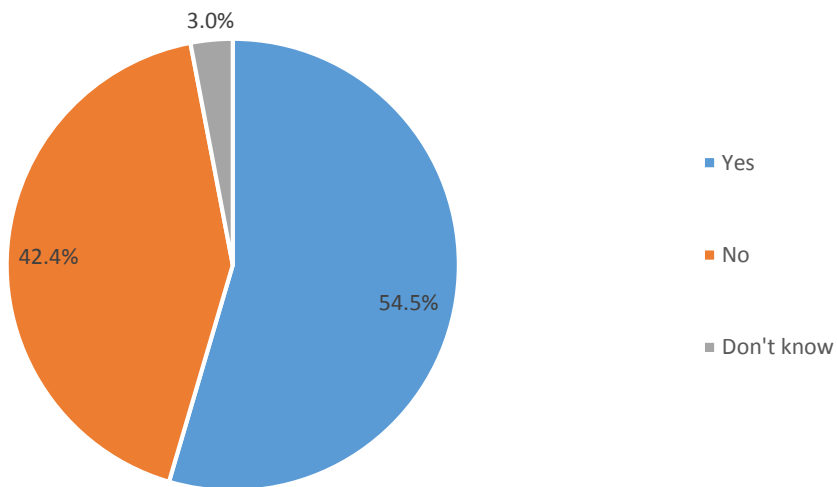
Q15 Does your child, or the child or young person you care for, receive a direct payment personal budget?

Does your child, or the child or young person you care for, receive a direct payment personal budget?



Q16 Do you feel you understand how your child's personal budget can be spent?

Do you feel you understand how your child's direct payment personal budget can be spent?



Additional insights from focus groups:

“I don't know what personal budgets are? There is no support around to tell you what is available, and what might help your child.”

Q17 How do you currently use your child's direct payment personal budget?

Answer Options	%	Count
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Care at home - includes sitting or care attendant schemes, which provide someone to sit with or 'mind' my child.	6.1%	4
Day care away from home - includes nurseries, playgroups, out of school and weekend clubs and, during school holidays, access to play schemes.	24.2%	16
Overnight short breaks - includes an overnight sitting or nursing service.	12.1%	8
Residential breaks - includes residential homes, special units in hospitals and hospices.	4.5%	3
Getting help with my child's personal care, for example bathing, dressing or eating, or help looking after them overnight	6.1%	4
Help for my child to use social or leisure facilities	97.0%	64
Help with household tasks to free up my time to look after my child	0.0%	0
Someone to accompany my child on holiday	6.1%	4
Other (please give us details)		32
answered question		66
skipped question		0

Q18 Do you feel your child's direct payment personal budget meets your child and families needs?

Meets our needs

- Yes, now I know more about it. looking into getting a personal assistant over the holiday periods . looking to assess young carers for one of my sons.
- Yes it helps, but there needs to be more activities on offer where my son who has the personal budget, can go ans and spend more time doing activities with his brother.
- Yes it's been really helpful - very good outcomes

Doesn't meet out needs

- At the moment no, still in process and its taking a long time
- No - too little too late also the process employed by OMBC is different to other local authorities plus the application process is poorly managed
- No because whilst we and our young person know what would meet his needs, it is like pulling teeth getting support plans and budgets approved. Also the principle of contact the Social Worker for approval if budgets need to be reallocated or changed would be a fine concept if anyone actually got back to you. Also the process talks about 'Minor' changes and 'Major' changes yet doesn't define them so when I take decision because outcomes are being lost waiting for someone... ANYONE... to ring back we are then chastised like criminals for 'Misappropriating funds'. This needs looking at as this area of support is failing families like ours massively.

- It has made a real difference. We are seeing positive outcomes in terms of our son's growing confidence when he is out and about, his willingness to take more responsibility when out and about and he is feeling more grown up by spending time away from us. We also get a break for 2-3 hours a week.
- Yes, as everything has been accepted and granted what we wanted for additional help.
- Yes it is excellent and has been a valuable part of our lives
- Yes but planning for transition to adult budgets should start earlier
- Feel the information given is not always correct. And they very much want everyone to employ a carer to look after the child or have residential stayover rather than have specific activities payed for.
- I feel the council are now changing the goalposts and dictating more than when on pathfinder.
- Sometimes I feel that the council expect alot from parents in plans and audits, meetings about the breaks and I do question whether the amount of time doing this defeats the help we are getting with a short break. I think sometimes professionals forget how invasive it is having assessments and a the questions they ask of us !
- Unsure at this early stage
- No - My child has been allocated a budget since summer last year but to date he has not received a payment.

Q19 Do you feel the right services are out there for you to buy with your child's direct payment personal budget?

Yes I do

- Yes, but there could be more
- Yes with the right and help and support
- Yes if you go outside what your council offers
- I would like to try services where he meets other local children. Sports works has been brilliant for this and AYC Youth club we would like to see more of this.

No I don't

- No, services are very limited and hard to find.
- unsure at moment
- No there isnt enough things to do or services to buy, there is a shortage of pa's.
- Not ideal when you consider a back drop of a supply base that needs to be developed and established so that access is easy and cost effective
- No they are limited. We've had set backs in terms of PAs leaving/ turnover of staff at independent options. Not enough options re accessing PAs in general - no data base of PAs etc. But all is okay at the moment and in recent times, my daughter is at

Independent Options and they have been really helpful and we have more stability now.

- They are limited - we had to wait a while to get the right PA allocated and there is the strong likelihood of turnover in staff / changes in staff to contend with. The alternative being for us to directly employ someone but this would take a large chunk of the budget.
- Yes however it would seem that people in the council know what my daughter needs better than she does... despite never meeting her in most cases. Therefore access to services is restricted by what others feel she needs... Not centred around my daughter and not meeting her outcomes.
- It would be better if there was a bigger variety of activities to suit different young people's needs.
- The services are there but not receiving the budget means he cannot access the support he needs.
- Feel like we are past from pillar to post and we need more info and marketing about what is out there for support or groups.

Q20 What are the difficulties you find in using a direct payment personal budget?

- Finding suitable services
- Using a broker
- Not enough hours for what child needs
- Having to deal with silo and each provider, having to contact/book and dealing with OMBC for payment
- We have a Broker now, it would be too much for us without the broker
- Support from the council team is poor at best they are more focused on completing their process with little or no thought for the experience of the family
- Limited choice re finding a PA as outlined above and if employing someone directly this takes a big chunk out of the PB
- None
- Finding the right pa who understand ur child and it's just not a wage and they give the child choices and not led and said in what the child is doing
- There should be safer residential places or clubs for disable kids
- Being told wrong information by the social team. Constantly being spoke down to regarding them Being told they are all going to change and made more difficult to get

- In our case, our last contact from our young persons social worker was in November 2015 when the case was handed over from their predecessor. My young person has not seen a social worker since. There was a glimmer of hope when we received notice that the case was moving to the new transitions worker in September 2016 who made contact and said they would be arranging visit... Guess what still waiting.
- Oldham Council Payments
- Time that is expected of me to sort things out. Lack of information and clarity I. E. Where to get crb for pa's etc
- None - we have time and ability to manage this
- Managing the budget to precise figures per 4 week period. It was changed from monthly to 4 weekly with almost no notice.
- Finding a PA
- Not having received the funds since allocated last year.
- None at the moment as this has only just been granted at panel.

Q21 What works well for you around direct payment and personal budget?

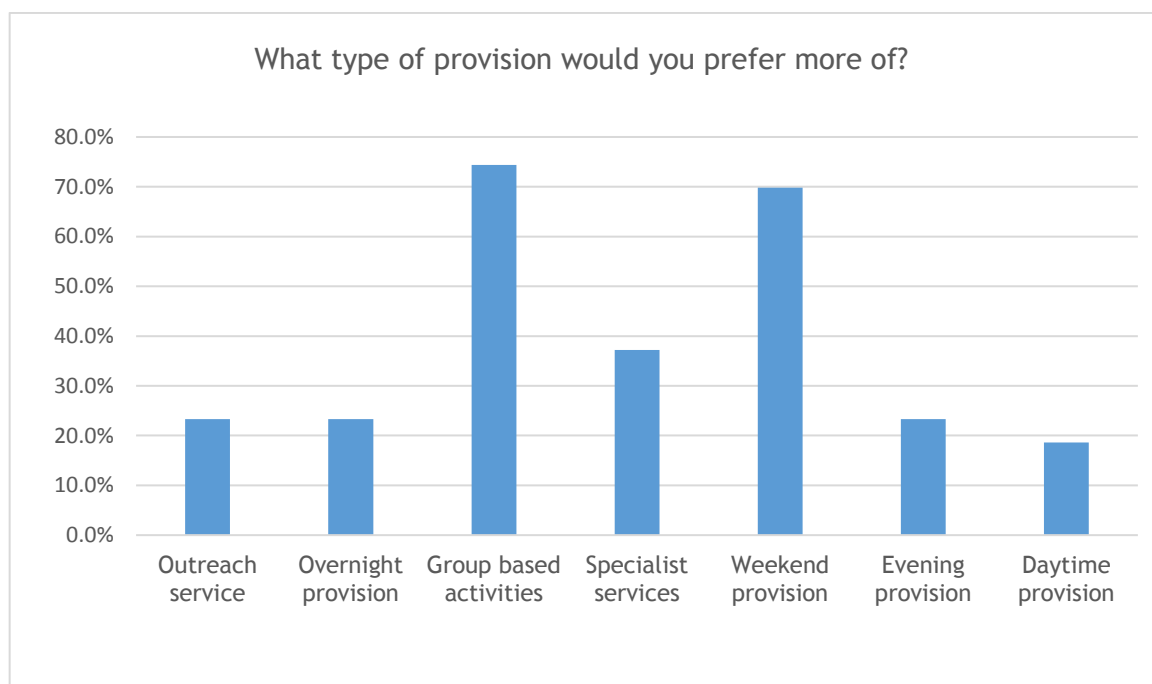
- being able to choose what is best for our child
- starfish swimming cerebral palsy football
- swimming paid for
- it is good how the money just comes out of one account.
- Effective interaction with my broker and flexibility in service delivery - we get what we need when we need it
- Personal choice, able to be more bespoke to meet individual need.
- Having a clear idea of what the budget is for and what we are trying to achieve. then within this context, making choices - being the ones who decide.
- I can choose the Carers and the hours
- Keeping it simple and paying for specific activities that have worked for us. Where I know the staff are trained and experienced to look after the child.
- Our Young person has accessed some experiences to support independence however overall it is the biggest nightmare ever to manage and I would not recommend this to anyone.
- Having a choice and choosing what is needed rather than what is available.
- I love being able to save for holiday periods and the flexibility it gives me.
- flexibility
- gives us flexibility to decide when to use the hours and what activities to do.
- Too early to answer
- Nothing!
- Being able to take our younger boy and bond with him and time for ourselves.

Q22 What other provision would support your child's needs that you could buy with your child's personal budget that is not currently available?

- Evening activities
- Horse riding
- Sensory rooms

- Horse riding, sensory rooms and activities, animal activities like a donkey sanctuary.
- Extended the AYC offer to be more age appropriate also reach out to the other local authorities for best practice sharing and joint commissioning of services plus closer links to the child education provision
- I think our support plan covers what we need and it specifies / ring fences some of the budget for one off activities and the possibility of accessing providers outside of the Local Offer
- at the moment - none
- All day or night stay
- Everything. There is no access to appropriate independence activities in Oldham. There is no support for transitions work and whilst services are good in Short Breaks they just don't have the capacity, therefore we are having to purchase services from private providers with a budget and manage a whole financial system when Short Breaks are support to support an ordinary life... Not create a 2nd job!
- I dislike the word provision it adds to my child's life being different. it depends on need.
- local support group for young adults
- Joint activities as it feels like we have to do solo activities
- Difficult to comment when unable to access any of the available services.

Q23 What type of provision would you prefer more of?

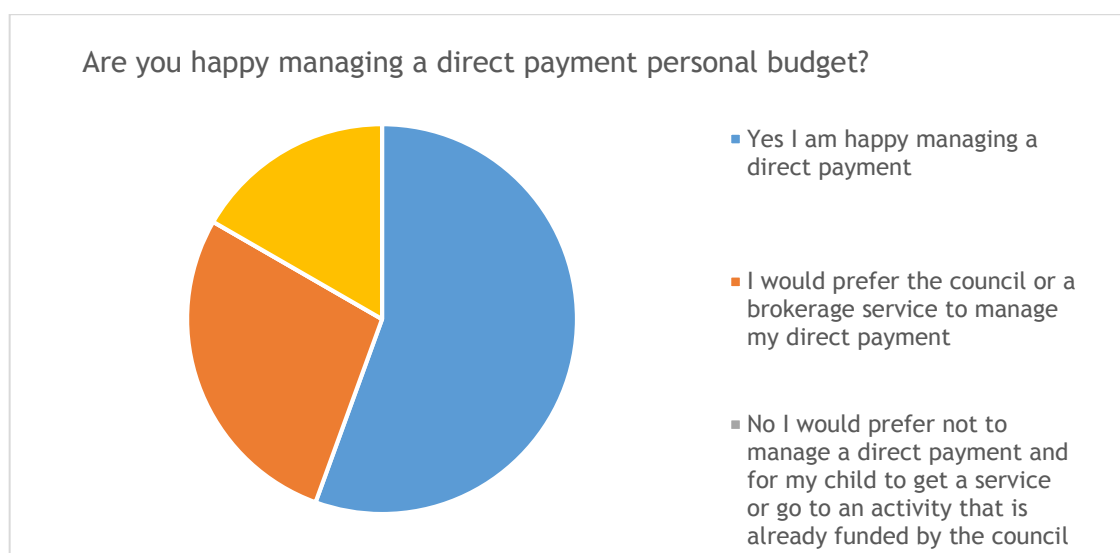


Responses in the 'other' category include:

- A varied availability of services run by people who are trained and understand our child
- Activities to do at weekend for his age (5)
- Our child doesn't receive sleep well so another night would help Specialised services made available eg swimming
- access to provision not easy due to demand and lack of providers

- AYC operates two hours a week and closes on bank holidays - improve offer to be more like Mahdlo's hours and flexibility
- Holiday activity's
- Holidays respite More help at home Help at weekends where my child can go and I know she is safe
- Social Workers and Family Workers to support Personal Budgets processes. I think you mean 'Activities'
- To choose like any other family and buy with the budget what is needed not what the council think we need. Individual like my child!
- Holiday provision - We have a pa but sometimes I think it gives an unrealistic inclusion for a boy 13 to go out with a pa I would like more things where he could join in with other people.
- Activities that would develop friendship groups
- Would welcome social activities to support my child at weekends and during the evenings.

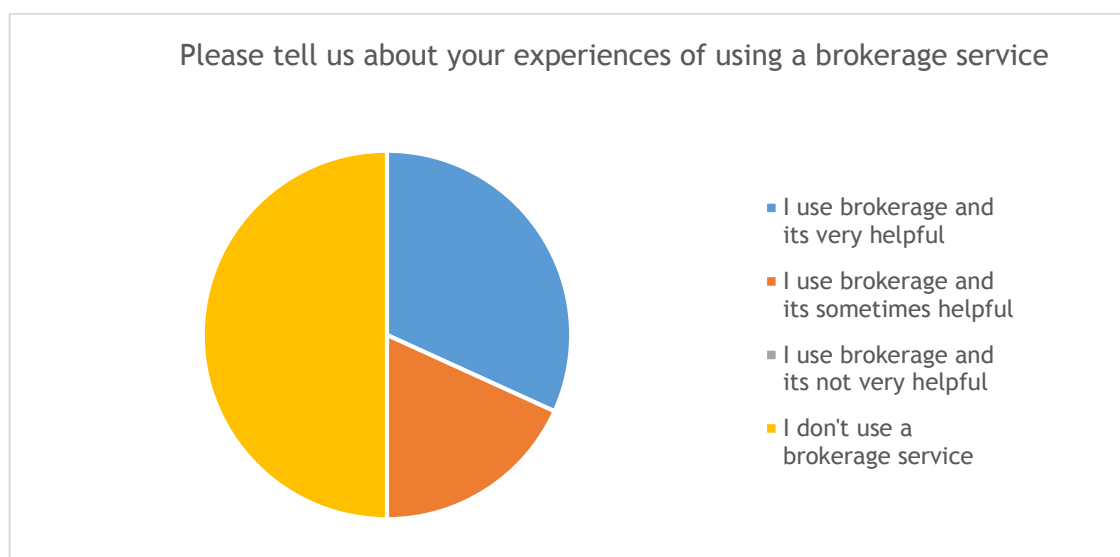
Q24 Are you happy managing a direct payment personal budget?



Additional Insights from focus groups

- *“We do not want to take on a personal budget. We have enough things to deal with without taking on the role of accountants. We believe that the council should remain as the service provider be hat directly or by subcontract and we as parents should concentrate on providing the best for our children in difficult and challenging circumstances.”*

Q25 Please tell us about your experiences of using a brokerage service



Q26 Is there anything else you would like to tell us about your experiences of the Oldham short breaks offer or around direct payments personal budgets?

- This is far too limited an offer for our children that is getting smaller. Our children need added support but shouldn't have to wait unreasonable amounts of time to access these. I.e. Sport Works - only during the holiday. Why not evenings and weekends? Children without disabilities have a wide and varied activities they can access outside of school. Why are our children different? Why does our child have very little choice of activity just because he doesn't have the understanding of an able bodied child? He is no different to any other child. He doesn't want to spend 24/7 time with his parents. He wants his independence.
- enjoys swimming personal budget - applying for has been long and frustrating. All new to us and no one seems to know anything
- I am told that things will be paid from OMBC direct then found that they are not actually paying it eg was told that ability wheelz membership fee and session fees would be paid direct from OMBC but only membership is paid so still have to pay £3 for each session (as required) at ability wheelz
- Find it very complicated when you look at first. It was better when a social worker finally explained it for us to understand better what you are entitles to, i think there should be more available for children like my son.
- Yes better management of the funds would result in increased service capacity for our children
- The Local offer on the councils website lists the providers but it does not explicitly say which ones families can access without having to be assessed / need a PB to afford. It should clearly state where costs are involved and which services you can access without having to be assessed.
- I think a lot of training needs to go into staff so they can give out correct information. We need to reiterate that they are meant to be personal to the individual and family so one does not fit all. Maybe a support meeting or course or an information event would be useful to families.

- Nobody has listened to views of families so far so maybe this will be an opportunity to do so. I remember completing a similar consultation about 3 years ago and it's got worse not better.
- I would have liked a list of what short breaks are available in Oldham as I can't find up to date numbers or what is available.
- There are no short breaks available for us since there is no provision for a child with the severity of needs as our son has them. Therefore we have no access to short breaks or personal budget.
- I object to having to return money not spent within a specified period. there is very little support for managing the budget if you want control over it unless you use a broker, which takes away the flexibility that a budget offers.
- Too short term, things get cancelled before they get chance to establish. Poor promotion of services, it gets left to word of mouth
- I don't know about the personal budget - if we're eligible or not.
- It does not work if you do not get the budget allocated to you.
- I think it's complicated how it all works and how my child can access other things on offer - seems limited. I would like school holiday provision that is inclusive.

5.3 Provider Feedback

Q1 Please tell us about how you work with children and young people with additional needs and disabilities

Please tell us about how you work with children and young people with additional needs and disabilities (tick all that apply)		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
A provider of short breaks day provision (activities) in Oldham	100.0%	5
A provider of short breaks residential provision in Oldham	20.0%	1
A provider of services through direct payment personal budgets in Oldham	40.0%	2
A provider of brokerage services in Oldham	0.0%	0
A health care professional working with children and young people with additional needs and disabilities in Oldham	0.0%	0
A social care professional working with children and young people with additional needs and disabilities in Oldham	0.0%	0
An education professional working with children and young people with additional needs and disabilities in Oldham	20.0%	1
Other (please specify)		2
answered question		5
skipped question		0

Q2 What do you think currently works well around short breaks and direct payment personal budgets?

- I like the idea of families having more control over choosing the provider and the type of support their children receive.
- Providers are well established in the area and understand the needs of families in Oldham.

- No specific feedback of what is working well. All new to me as new provider and families seem confused.
- The diversity of the offer is good.
- The providers work well together in support of families interests.
- Supports a range of local providers and provision.

Q3 What do you think doesn't work well currently?

- Although I have never seen any problems occurring around personal budgets I do worry about some families taking this responsibility on without the support of a broker.
- Not enough knowledge from all professionals and families with regards to PBs and entitlement. Families are still unaware of what is available to them.
- I've had families unable to attend the sessions as not enough in their budget. They have wanted to fund themselves but been told that they can't. Most don't know whether they have a budget so all need to be checked before attending a session. Many saying they wish they didn't have a personal budget as it's stopping them accessing leisure activities
- Top slicing of budgets which providers then have to invoice for as there is no communication about who's budgets have been top sliced and this is increasing administrative time of services who often do not have capacity or funding included in the commission for this.
- What is also not working well is the short-term commission of services. Children or young people just get to know a service and then it is up for re-tender with some decommissioned without parental or young people consultation.
 - Individuals who do not have social workers do not get personal budgets or do not know about them,

Q4 What do you think could be done better?

- When people take on the responsibility of having a PB I think there should be an initial period when they are fully supported to understand how the system works until they are fully able to deal with this themselves.
- Co Production working is still an ongoing project.
- More info for parents around PBs and consistency for families when implementing them. A more varied local offer so the need for PBs could be reduced.
- Sorry don't understand the process enough. I'm confused so I know how the parents must feel
- Need to reduce the admin expectation or allow for realistic increase in costs through tendering process.
- Need to move to a 3 year commission.
- Need to reduce the repetitive reporting and move to a quarterly monitoring form as with other contracts.
- Need to standardise outcome and delivery measures so that all services can use the monitoring, are measure equally etc.
- Need to look at capacity that services can provide. If Personal budgets are going to reduce, then the offer needs to increase. With current capacity across short breaks catering for less than 10% of those children and young people with disabilities, its hard to see without a radical shake up how parents and carers will be convinced to opt for Short Breaks rather than Personal Budgets
- Providers should be given more information to pass on to parents or carers.

Q5 What issues do you have in getting children and young people to access your service? (If you don't directly provide a service, in your experience what are the barriers to children and young people accessing short breaks and support through direct payment personal budgets?)

- If families do not understand fully how to use the PB I believe this would be the a major barrier.
- This isn't really an area we struggle with.
- Poor advertising of services in general. Most of my parents have contacted me through word of mouth from other parents. Most not aware of the info on council website or couldn't find it.
- Some schools don't seem to promote when you drop flyers off.
- None. Our services are oversubscribed.
- Ability Wheelz could be open 5 days but funding doesn't permit.
- Short Breaks Trips could deliver for 500 not 290 per annum and a programme developed for all school holidays not just the summer, but again funding is prescribed at a level which is too low to allow any development of this offer.
- I am a provider who offers day service to people with additional needs but have difficulty in getting my information to them.

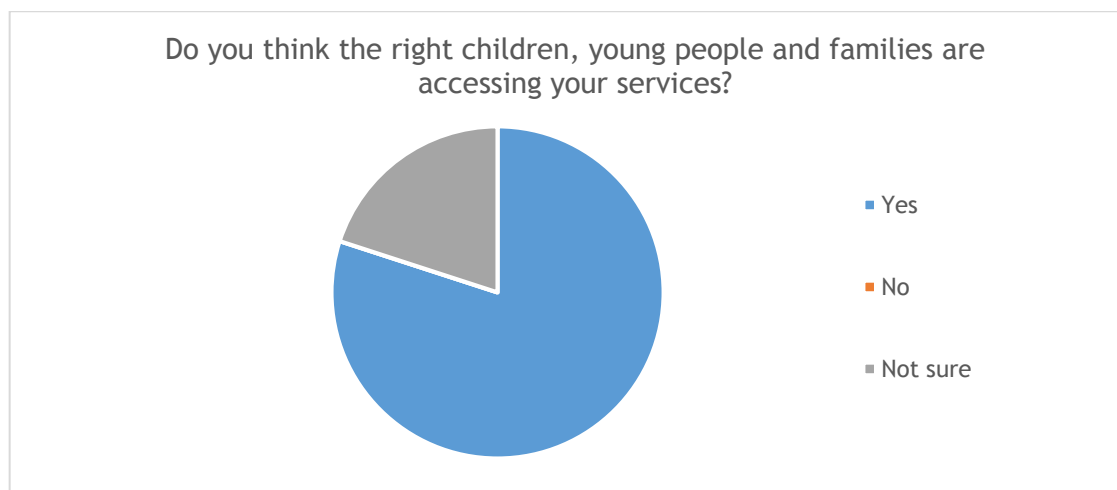
Additional insights from focus groups and provider interviews

- Case study: A family's social worker said that their child couldn't access a Short Break activity as there was not enough money in their personal budget. The provider spent hours on the phone to sort it out.

Q6 What solutions do you think would help overcome these issues?

- Provide ongoing education, training and support around the use of PB.
- Easy access to information on the council website.
- Information days at the schools, especially the special schools. Social workers have helped me promote my services and I've had referrals that way
- Simply need to re-invest in short breaks sufficiently t have a solid offer. This is the only way to improve outcomes and reduce Personal Budgets.
- more networking information events.

Q7 Do you think the right children, young people and families are accessing your services?



- We have a strict criteria on the type of referrals that we receive so would not take anybody on who fell outside this range. Although all of the young people we support have some form of LD or ASD I am surprised that we do not receive more referrals from children and families with more complex needs.
- Children access our service with a variety of different abilities and additional needs. We accommodate every child and their individual needs.
- Children and young people are accessing services as outlined in monitoring. This could be increased through more appropriate funding and the offer extended as outlined above.

Q8 Do you have any suggestions on how we can ensure the right families get the right services to support their needs?

- Better advertising of services at schools, drop ins, POINT
- Using the Local Offer. All agencies to promote.
- More consistency in the offer will improve awareness and having 3 year contracts will enable better knowledge across all practitioners and families. Otherwise it's unclear what exists from one year to the next and therefore deters use.
- hold more information days at the weekend.

Q9 Is there anything else you would like to tell us about your experience of short breaks and direct payment personal budgets?

- It's been difficult to explain some of the questions from parents as not experienced enough to discuss this with them.
- Found it frustrating where families haven't come to the sessions as too expensive for them when they have a budget compared to all the families who attend my Rochdale sessions
- Personal budgets are too onerous for many families. It is difficult to know who has or has not got a personal budget and therefore what payments providers should be reclaiming in what way from Oldham LA. Providers are often left out of pocket because of this which is not in the spirit of partnership working.
- In terms of Short Breaks, it needs to be articulated that the demise is directly linked to previous service funding cuts. This was articulated by providers and parents alike and those predictions are now being borne out.
- We need to collectively support the delivery of a good offer so that Oldham families have the right support at the right time from good quality providers. This is the only way that the reliance on Personal Budgets and Statutory interventions will be improved (Invest to Save!)
- Most of my service users do not have a social worker or have had an assessment for short breaks. some do not know they are able to access this assessment.

6. KEY THEMES

Following the engagement, we have drawn out the key themes from the findings as follows:

1. The current Short Breaks activities are good quality and are valued by families and children and young people

2. There is not enough variety in the short breaks offer currently, and not enough capacity for the numbers of young people who would benefit from them
3. Key gaps in the offer includes, school holiday daytime activities, animal based activities (including horse riding) outdoor activities, group work / social activities, sensory activities, provision for young children and young people with complex needs, weekend activities and activities that are age and stage appropriate for 15-18 yr olds
4. There is an issue around how families access information about what short breaks are available
5. The Local Offer website doesn't give families enough detailed information about what is on offer and is difficult to find and navigate through
6. Schools would be the ideal place for parents to get information about what is available, and whilst some families feel that the special schools are good at giving this information, most families felt that they could do more to provide families with information about the offer.
7. The families of children and young people in mainstream schools get little if any information from school about short breaks activities, and they feel this should be improved.
8. There is a lack of clarity about who is eligible for short breaks and if particular short breaks activities are assessed or non-assessed.
9. There is a lack of clarity about the process for being assessed for a personal budget, and families who have been through the process feel that there is a lack of understanding from professionals, and so they don't feel clear about the process.
10. Families feel that there are inconsistencies across professionals about what a personal budget can be spent on, and that it depends on who your social worker is, as to what you are able to use your budget for.
11. On the whole families like the flexibility and control over a personal budget and feel that it better meets the needs of their children, however there are a number of process issues which make it challenging.
12. Families who use brokerage services in the main feel that this supports them and is in many cases the only way that they could manage the budget, many families reported that they felt that it was unfair that this service was paid for from their child's budget, and that it meant that their child had less support than their needs required.
13. Families feel that there is not the range of services that they would like to buy with their budget.
14. There seems to be an issue around recruitment and retention of PA's. Many families reported difficulties in finding and keeping a pa.
15. Families feel like the information and support to parents about personal budgets and short breaks is lacking and inconsistent, and they would like a resource that helps them understand the language around it, the assessment and the process.