**Introduction**

Lambeth Council wants to hear what you think about our short breaks service.

We have made some suggestions about short break activities for disabled children and young people. This includes how our services could change in 2019.

This survey is open until **Sunday 11 November 2018**.

Why are we asking for your thoughts?

Our short breaks contract expires on 31 March 2019.

We want to continue providing short breaks services that:

* More disabled children and young people can enjoy
* Are exciting and fun and provide more opportunities to learn new things
* Give parents and carers a good break
* Do not cost any more money

We need your help to decide what short breaks activities we should provide next. We want to hear particularly from:

* Disabled children and young people
* Their families and carers
* Organisations that provide short break activities

The final report will be ready later in 2018.

What are Short Breaks?

Lambeth Council provides different kinds of support for:

* Disabled children and young people
* Parents and carers

This support includes short break activities. These activities may take place during:

* the school holidays
* after school
* in the weekend

These activities can give parents and carers a break from caring.

They can also give disabled children and young people the chance to have fun, meet new friends, and learn new things.

From April 2017 to March 2018, 167 children and young people took part in a short break activity.

Short break activities include:

* play schemes and youth schemes
* dance programmes
* mentoring for young people
* activities for deaf children and young people
* different sports activities such as cycling, running, and basketball

Some children and young people with the highest and most complex needs first needed support from a social worker to take part in a short break activity.

Other disabled children and young people can come along to a short break activity if they:

* live in Lambeth
* are between 5-19 years old
* have proof of 2 moderate or 1 profound disability from a doctor

We want to spend our money on short break activities that children and young people and their families want.

We have spoken to parents of disabled children and young people and organisations that provide short break activities.

What they said helped us put together these 4 suggestions about short breaks activities in Lambeth.

Suggestion 1: We could stick with what we’ve got

We could provide short break activities the way we do now.

This would mean that:

* Disabled children and young people who take part in short break activities now can still take part in short break activities
* There may not be as many new types of short break activities
* Children, young people, and parents or carers already understand how to come along to a short breaks activity

Suggestion 2: We could provide more short break activities for more disabled children and young people

We could add more short break activities that disabled children and young people want to take part in.

This suggestion means that the council would fund short break activities that is important to families such as:

* Swimming
* Sensory play
* Arts and crafts
* Learning activities

In our survey we want you to tell us:

* What activities you like
* Where you would like to go to take part in these activities

However, this suggestion may cost the council more money than it has.

At the moment, parents and carers do not pay for our short break activities. And sometimes people do not turn up at a short break activity they booked.

This suggestion means that some families may be asked to pay for a short break activity in advance when they book the activity.

Families with disabled children and young people with the highest and most complex needs will not need to pay for short break activities.

This will mean:

* The council can afford to fund more short break activities
* Families will know when there is space for a short break activity they want
* Short break organisations can plan better short break activities

Suggestion 3: We could develop our direct payments offer

Direct payments is when someone receives money directly from the council to pay for support services. This might include support such as:

* help in the home

* transport
* support to take part in sport or leisure activities

Parents or carers of disabled children and young people mainly use the money to pay for carers who may help with bathing, dressing, or feeding children.

This suggestion will mean families can use their direct payments as they wish. For example, on:

* short break activities
* a carer to go along to a short break activity with the disabled child or young person
* a carer to come with the family to help look after the child on a holiday trip

This will mean:

* families need to manage money and care carefully
* families need to keep clear records
* short break providers need to allow carers to take part in activities with disabled child or young people

Suggestion 4: We could combine suggestions 2 and 3

We can see that both suggestions 2 and 3 would be valuable to families of disabled children and young people.

This suggestion will mean we provide more short break activities for disabled children and young people.

At the same time we will work on our direct payments offer so families can use this money for short break activities. This may take a longer time to develop.

This will mean:

* we may have more organisations who can provide short break activities
* families will have more choice on what they can use their direct payments on

How can I have my say?

You can have your say about our suggested changes to our short breaks activities by:

* Completing our online Easy-to-Read survey. Please go to <https://www.lambeth.gov.uk/consultations/have-your-say-on-lambeth-short-breaks-consultation>.
* If you would like a paper copy of:
  + This information booklet
  + The questionnaire
* Please call email engagement@lambeth.gov.uk
* You could also drop-in to our information events. For the full list of events please visit our website
* You do not need to book to come to any event. Just drop by.
* At these events you can find out more about short break activities. You can also:
  + speak to a Lambeth Council staff member
  + speak to a local parent of a child who uses short breaks activities
  + get a paper copy of the information booklet and survey
* We will also be:
  + consulting with disabled children and young people
  + organising a meeting for short break activity organisations
* You can have your say on the changes to short break activities from **Tuesday 04 September 2018**
* Until **Sunday 11 November 2018.**
* If we receive any feedback after **11 November 2018**, it will be not included in the final report.