

Decision Pathway – Report



PURPOSE: Key decision

MEETING: Cabinet

DATE: 07 February 2023

TITLE	Short Breaks Innovation Fund Bid		
Ward(s)	All		
Author: Gail Rogers	Job title: Head of Service Children’s Commissioning		
Cabinet lead: Cllr Asher Craig - Cabinet Member for Children, Education & Equalities	Executive Director lead: Abi Gbago Executive Director Children and Families		
Proposal origin: BCC Staff			
Decision maker: Cabinet Member Decision forum: Cabinet			
Purpose of Report: Approval to accept and spend £740,847 grant funding from the DfE Short Breaks Innovation Fund. This funding will deliver a 12-month “bridging” service for young people with Social Communication Interaction Need or Autism who are socially self-isolating following a negative cycle of anxiety management. The service would support these young people in engaging outside of the home and accessing a much-needed Short Break for themselves and their families, via 1-1 support and commissioned groups.			
Evidence Base:			
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Through data analysis and parent/carer engagement work, we have identified that there is a significant cohort of children and young people with Social Communication Interaction Need or Autism who are socially self-isolating following a negative cycle of anxiety management. These young people are withdrawing themselves from situations and environments that cause anxiety. Their parent/carers tell us that they are unable to register these young people for Short Breaks as they will not leave their home, and we are aware that the COVID Pandemic has compounded and exacerbated these young people’s fears. We have collected data that shows there are 129 CYP with autism, or on the pathway, who are missing education of which a significant proportion is because of underlying anxiety. 2. We recognise that a gap in our current Short Breaks offer is a “bridging” service that would support these young people in engaging outside of the home and accessing a much-needed Short Break for themselves and their families. We submitted a successful bid to the DfE Short Breaks Innovation fund which will enable us to set up this service. 3. This proposed service was designed with parent carers of children, who currently present with self-isolating behaviours through four workshops. The coproduction of this bid and new service responds to an area for further development highlighted in the recent SEND Joint Local Area Ofsted re-inspection. 4. We would look to break this cycle by slowly building positive trusting relationships with 4 experienced in-house engagement workers. The workers will identify an area of special interest or an activity that is going to positively expand the children and young people’s experiences, whilst building resilience in managing and experiencing anxiety. To provide holistic and seamless services, we will appoint 2 Wellbeing Practitioners who will work alongside the Engagement Workers and will be able to provide therapeutic interventions to those in need. They will be employed on 12-month fixed term contracts in line with the project length. 5. This will be coupled with externally commissioned, grant funded specialist neurodiverse youth groups with a 			

focus on wellbeing support which will enable the young person's journey to engage with the wider community, their peers, and Short Breaks.

6. The role of Engagement Workers would not duplicate any other roles that are currently funded in Bristol e.g., Autism Keyworkers or Family Support Workers as this new role would be specifically focused on providing ongoing support to children and young people to access Short Breaks.
7. It is our aspiration and expectation that our early intervention will reduce the demand on a range of services including Alternative Learning Provision, Hospital Education Service, residential education placements, CAMHS and stop escalation to Tier 4 bed and hospital admissions. CAMHS Tier 4 are specialised services that provide assessment and treatment for children and young people with emotional, behavioural or mental health difficulties. In 2021/22, 85 Bristol children presented to hospital with significant mental health distress. There were 85 Approved Mental Health Professional (AMPH) referrals, with 45 detained under S2 or 3 of the Mental Health Act. Analysis of seven children shows they are predominantly female and have diagnosis/investigation for autism.
8. The service will be made up of 1 x Clinical Psychologist supervising 4 x Engagement Workers and 2 x Wellbeing Practitioners. These staff will be recruited by Bristol City Council on fixed term contracts running for the duration of the contract. In addition, three providers will be grant funded to deliver specialist neurodiverse youth groups. Providers were asked to submit proposals to Bristol City Council as part of the bid process which have been assessed and put forward to the DfE by the Strategic Commissioning Team in consultation with Bristol Autism Team.
9. The project will run for 12 months in line with funding, there will be an opportunity to bid for a further 12 months funding in Autumn 2023.
10. This is a specific piece of work that is time-limited for the duration of the DfE grant due to current budget pressures. All staff will be employed on fixed-term contracts to ensure the project remains within budget. The programme length will be clearly communicated to providers, parent-carers and young people using the service. The aim of the service will be to transition those young people into our existing services at the end of the project so that young people are not left without support when funding for the project ceases.

Cabinet Member / Officer Recommendations

That Cabinet:

1. Authorise the Executive Director People, in consultation with Cabinet Member for Children, Education & Equalities to take all steps required to accept £740,847 grant funding from the DfE Short Breaks Innovation Fund, and enter into grant agreements for the implementation of the project as outlined in this report.
2. Authorise the Executive Director People in consultation with the Cabinet member for Children, Education & Equalities to submit further funding bids and if successful to accept and spend the funding (which may be over the key decision threshold) to extend the project in future funding rounds during 23/24 as outlined in this report.

Corporate Strategy alignment:

1. CYP2 – Supported to thrive – Children and young people will be supported to thrive, by engaging them to access 1-1 support and specialist provision to help reduce isolation and anxiety and provide both them and their parent/carers with a short break.

City Benefits:

1. The service will benefit the city by reducing demand on other, higher cost, service such as Alternative Learning Provision, Hospital Education Service, residential education placements, CAMHS and stop escalation to Tier 4 bed and hospital admissions.

Consultation Details:

1. In putting the bid together, we ran four parent/carer focus groups codesign sessions.
2. The bid was written in consultation with the Bristol Autism Team and Disabled Children's Service.
3. Providers were engaged and submitted proposals for the group activities which formed part of the bid.

Background Documents: Children and Families Act 2014

Revenue Cost	£740,847	Source of Revenue Funding	Grant Funding - DfE Short Breaks Innovation Fund
Capital Cost	£N/A	Source of Capital Funding	N/A
One off cost <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Ongoing cost <input type="checkbox"/>	Saving Proposal <input type="checkbox"/>	Income generation proposal <input type="checkbox"/>

Required information to be completed by Financial/Legal/ICT/ HR partners:

1. Finance Advice: This report seeks approval to accept and spend £740,847 grant funding from the DfE Short Breaks Innovation Fund. The Short Breaks Innovation Fund has been set up to provide funding to projects over three financial years (2022-2025) of c£30 million. This is year two of the Fund and local authorities can bid up to £1million to fund short break initiatives. There will be a further opportunity to bid in year three 2024/25. As with all bids, it may not be successful.

The aim of the Short Breaks Innovation Fund is to test novel approaches to integrated delivery of short breaks and support services for disabled children and young people and their families.

Finance have reviewed the bid and can confirm that it addresses the bid criteria and grant conditions, provides a clear breakdown of planned revenue costs and a contingency budget for unforeseen circumstances (including inflation and pay pressures).

As set out in the bid, the expectation is that through this new early intervention, demand will reduce for a range of services including Alternative Learning Provision, Hospital Education Service, residential education placements, CAMHs and stop escalation to Tier 4 bed and hospital admissions. If this is successful, the service will help contribute to a reduction in spend and will reduce demand on High Needs Block (cumulative deficit £44m) and other children's service spending. These benefits will need to be tracked and monitored to evidence this as proof of concept.

There will also need to be a planned exit strategy to ensure the sustainability of the proposed service or how needs will continue to be met once the funding ceases.

Finance Business Partner: Denise Hunt 1/12/2022

2. Legal Advice: The submission of bids for grant funding raises no particular legal issues. Provided the agreement is a grant agreement and not a contract for services, it will not need to be procured in compliance with the Public Contracts Regulations 2015. Client officers will need to seek legal assistance to ensure the agreement is a grant agreement.

Legal Team Leader: Husinara Jones Team Leader 01/12/22

3. Implications on IT: I can see no implications on IT in regard to this activity.

IT Team Leader: Alex Simpson, Senior Solution Architect 2/12/22

4. HR Advice: The report is seeking approval to accept £740,847 grant funding from the DfE Short Breaks Innovation Fund, and to spend it to set up a service, to be hosted by BCC, to support young people and their families being able to access a short break.

The service will be made up of 1 x Clinical Psychologist supervising 4 x Engagement Workers and 2 x Wellbeing Practitioners, (add in TBC Grading). The Employees will be employed by Bristol City Council on fixed term contracts running for the duration of the contract, currently one year, with a possible further 12 month extension. If that were

the case then an exit strategy regarding possible redundancy payments if they gain two years employment will need to be factored into the costs. These opportunities could be open to secondment and development opportunities for current staff within the council or redeployment for displaced staff. All Bristol City Council HR Policies will be followed.

HR Partner: Lorna Laing, HR Business Partner 07/12/2022

EDM Sign-off	Hugh Evans	7/12/22
Cabinet Member sign-off	Cllr Asher Crag	12/12/22
For Key Decisions - Mayor's Office sign-off	Mayor's Office	13/01/23

Appendix A – Further essential background / detail on the proposal	NO
Appendix B – Details of consultation carried out - internal and external	NO
Appendix C – Summary of any engagement with scrutiny	NO
Appendix D – Risk assessment	NO
Appendix E – Equalities screening / impact assessment of proposal	NO
Appendix F – Eco-impact screening/ impact assessment of proposal	NO
Appendix G – Financial Advice	NO
Appendix H – Legal Advice	NO
Appendix I – Exempt Information	No
Appendix J – HR advice	NO
Appendix K – ICT	NO
Appendix L – Procurement	NO