

Aiming High for Disabled Children survey results

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1 Introduction

Around 1,500 questionnaires were sent out to the families of disabled children using services across West Sussex. In addition, an online version was available to complete on the West Sussex County Council website. A total of 296 paper questionnaires were returned; a further five were completed online, giving a total of 301 questionnaires.

The questionnaires were for 311 children as ten of the 301 families responding had two children with disabilities.

Note: Throughout the report any discrepancies in percentages are due to rounding.

2 Background

2.1 Age of children

The children's ages ranged from between three to 19 years old. The average age was 11½ years.

2.2 Disability

A range of disabilities was reported. The most common disability was autism, which was reported by 109 parents.

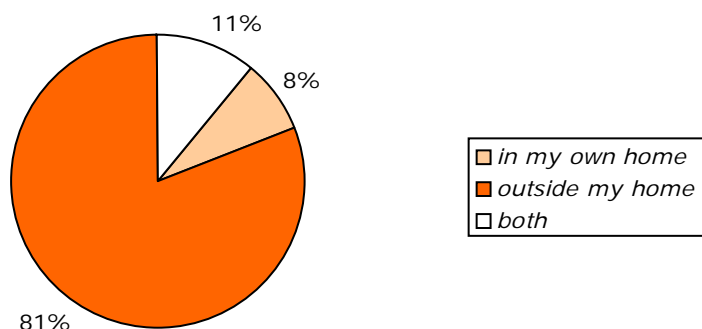
2.3 Where respondents live

Respondents reported living in 35 locations across West Sussex. The highest proportions lived in Crawley (45), Horsham (41), Worthing (37) and Chichester (33).

3 Features of short breaks services that parents would most like to have

3.1 Where respondents would prefer short breaks services

The majority of parents said they would prefer short breaks to be provided in the community as illustrated in the chart below.



3.2 The length of shorts breaks

Most parents (41%) favoured the 3-5 hours option for a short break. However, around a quarter said they wanted more than one option.

Length of break	Percentage
1-2 hours	11
3-5 hours	41
Overnight	22
3-5 hours and overnight	16
1-2 hours and 3-5 hours	3
All options	6

3.3 Most popular short breaks activities

Parents were offered a list of short break activities from which to choose the three they would most like to have access to. A total of 296 parents gave their three preferred options. Some parents (62) used the opportunity to state more than three.

Parents would most like to have access to holiday play schemes (166 cases) followed by weekend fun clubs (152 cases). They were least likely to want have access to someone to come into their homes to provide help (30 cases).

Short break activity	Number
After school fun clubs	97
Weekend fun clubs	152
Youth club	60
Holiday play scheme	166
A range of overnight short breaks away from home	113
Daytime breaks away from home	116
A buddy scheme to enable teenagers to access community activities	95
Sitting service	59
Someone coming into the home to give help	30
Money to help buy the service you want (Direct Payments)	80
Other activity – as described by respondent	10

4 Short breaks services received

4.1 Whether or not the child is receiving a short breaks service

A total of 104 parents said their children received a short breaks service (35%); 65% said they did not.

4.2 If the child is receiving a service, which is the most important?

A range of individual responses was reported by 101 parents to this open-ended question. More than half (52%) indicated that a service/respite outside their home was the most important; 6% reported respite in the home in form of a sitting service and a further 8% said

respite, but were unclear as to whether this was at home or elsewhere. Direct Payments was mentioned by 7%.

Others specified the service that was most important to them: Springboard was reported by 6%; 6% reported a youth or other club; 5% reported an after school or school-based club and 4% said a play scheme. The rest of the parents reported more than one service.

4.3 How is this service rated?

Parents were asked to rate the service that was most important to them. More than three-quarters (77%) rated this service as very good, whilst 19% said it was good and 4% average.

4.4 How could this service be improved?

Parents were asked an open-ended question to gain their views on how the service that was most important to them might be improved. A total of 62 parents gave their ideas for improvement. Generally these were specific to the service they were commenting about. However, the table below broadly categorises their ideas for improvement.

Most indicated that they would wish to see the service extended with either more days/nights or more/longer hours.

Improvement to service	Number
More days/nights	17
More/longer hours	7
More local	5
Better quality/better trained staff	5
More staff	4
Easier to access	4
More regular	4
More places	3
More flexible	3
Trips outside the home	3

One or two respondents gave various other ideas for improvement. These included: more specific skills for staff (1); feedback from unit on what's happened during the day (1); more similar facilities (1); general improvements (2); available on all school holidays (1); for children with similar ages/abilities/interests (2); more reliable (1); provide money for outings (1); better personal care for children (1); more regular staff (2); provision of transport (2); better communication with parents (1); more/more interesting activities for the children (2); foster care (in parents' house) (1).

5 New short breaks service

5.1 Features of a new short breaks service

Parents were asked an open-ended question about the features they would like to see in a new short breaks service. A total of 201 parents gave their ideas about this.

More than half mentioned that this should include a variety of activities and around a quarter thought that some kind of overnight respite would be part of the service. Parents' categorised responses are shown in the following table.

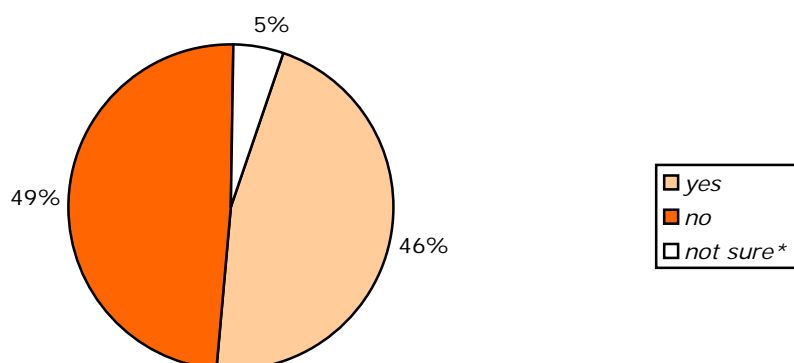
Features of a new service	Number
Activities (eg sports, fun activities, etc)	112
Overnight stays/respite	46
Trips out (eg cinema, theme parks, events, etc)	34
Activities to encourage socialising	26
Activities during the holidays/holiday play schemes	24
Activities to help develop the child's skills	22
Activities for children of similar ages/abilities	17
Skilled/trained staff	10
Activities involving members of the family (parents/siblings)	9
Appropriate environment/building	9
Local service	8
After school activities/clubs	8
Buddy scheme	7

Other respondents proposed the following ideas: 1 to 1/individual care (5); sitting service (5); provision of transport (4); emergency service (3); disabled and able bodied children doing things together (3).

6 Accessibility of activities in West Sussex

6.1 Are there activities in West Sussex that children would like to take part in, but are unable to?

A total of 128 of the 278 (46%) parents responding to this question said there were services that their children were unable to take part in. Some parents reported being unaware of what might be available (5%).



* Parents reporting being unaware/unsure of services that might be available.

6.2 The activities in West Sussex that children would like to take part in, but are unable to

Parents reported a total of 51 specific activities that their children were unable to attend. The general theme was that physical activities were those that children were unable to take part in.

Most frequently mentioned activities that children were unable to attend	Number
Swimming	30
Football	12
Trampolining	12
Horse riding	11
Dance club/classes	11
Youth club	11
Scouts/cubs/brownies/guides	10
Play schemes/holiday clubs	9
After school clubs	9
Theatre/drama club/classes	7
Gymnastics	6
Sports club	6
Martial arts	6

6.3 Reasons for preventing children from accessing activities

Although 128 parents said their child was unable to take part in a particular activity (see section 6.1), 184 took the opportunity of responding to this question. The most frequently reported reason for not being able to access services was that the staff were not properly trained. This was reported by nearly a half of all parents responding (48%). Of lesser concern was the accessibility of the building, probably reflecting the range of non-physical disabilities of those responding to the survey. This is shown in the table below.

Reasons preventing children from attending the activity	Percentage
Cost too much	39
Too far to travel	40
Inconvenient times	39
Not able to get there	23
Not permitted by the organiser	17
Building not accessible	6
Staff not properly trained	48
Lack of equipment	14

Some parents reported other reasons not listed in the questionnaire. These included: the need for 1 to 1 care/carer (10 cases); the child's ability to take part in the activity (8 cases); not enough support/staff (7 cases); lack of facilities (5 cases); child's lack of confidence (5 cases); activity full/waiting list (4 cases); activity unsuitable for specific disabilities (4 cases).

7 Parental involvement in developing/learning about services

7.1 Number of people wishing to take part in a parent/carer group to help develop services

A total of 76 parents (25%) indicated that they might like to be involved in a parent/carer group to contribute to the development of short breaks in West Sussex.

7.2 Parents wishing to keep updated about AHDC project

A total of 263 parents (87%) said they would like to be kept informed about the AHDC project.

7.3 How parents would prefer to be kept updated

Most parents said they would like to be kept updated via a newsletter through the post (131 parents) followed by an email newsletter (96 parents).

Medium	Number
Newsletter by post	131
Newsletter by email	96
Information on website	19
Website and email	7
Email and post	6
Through schools	2