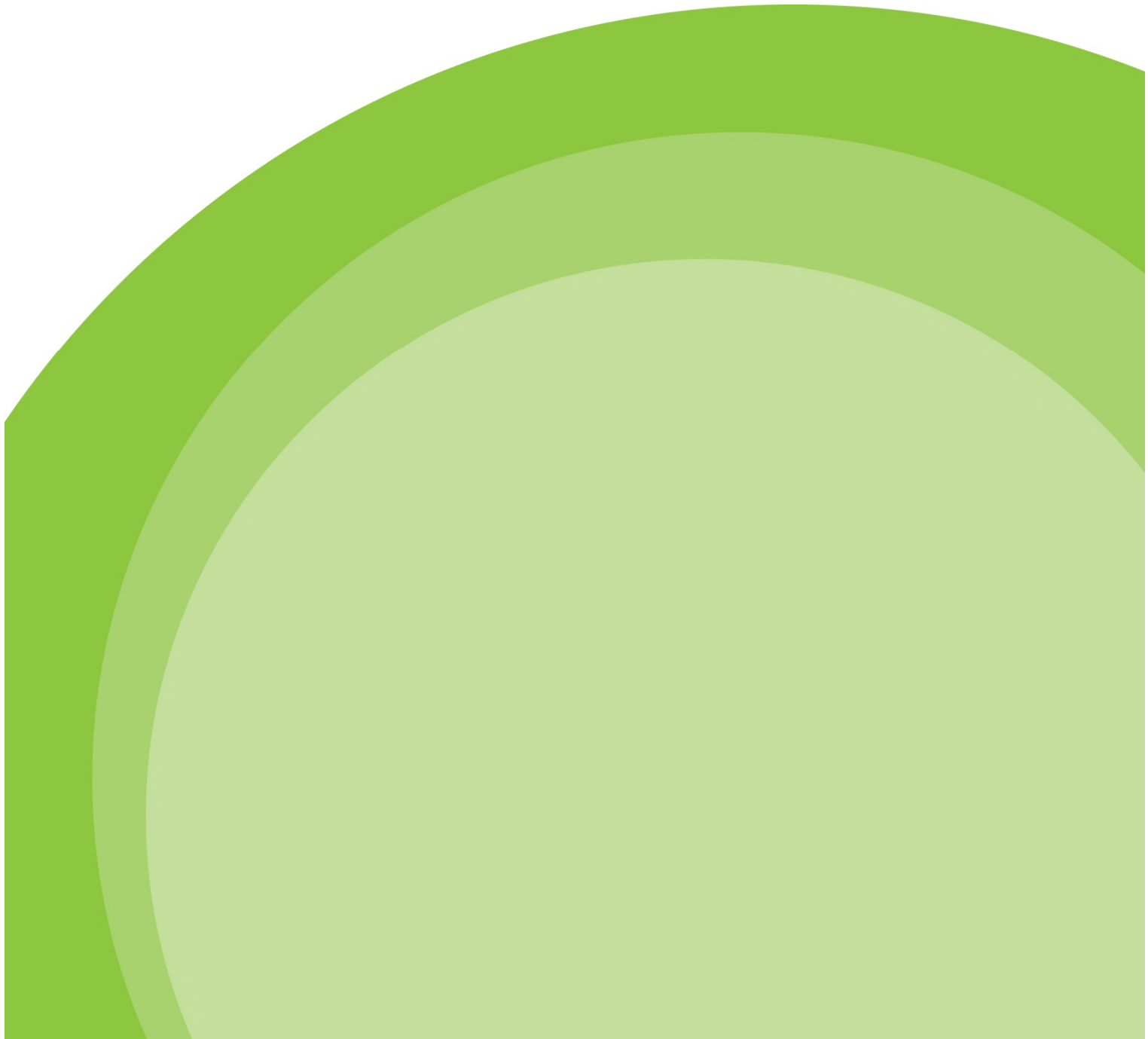




Consultation Document

Consultation on the redesign of Short Break Services for
Children and Teenagers with disabilities



Consultation on the Redesign of Short Break Services for Children and Teenagers

This document is designed to support service users and members of the wider community to give feedback to the Council on:

- Its proposals to redesign short break services.
- How future short break services should be redesigned.

In terms of background, the document explains **why** the Council is proposing change, **what** the changes are and **how** they should be developed.

What are Short Break Services?

Short breaks are opportunities for children and young people with disabilities to spend time away from their primary carers, and provide opportunities for their parents and carers to have a break from caring responsibilities. In Central Bedfordshire, Short Breaks can include day, evening, overnight, weekend or holiday activities that take place within the home of the child or young person, in the home of an approved carer, a residential or a community setting. Short breaks come in many different forms and can be anything from a couple of hours to days – the length and type of break will depend on the needs of the child and their family.

Why is the Council proposing changes?

Local authorities across the country are looking to find ways to save money.

This is essential because the amount of money provided to local Councils from Central Government has greatly reduced over recent years and in future the (£10.5m) grant funding that the Council currently receives each year will disappear altogether by 2019/20.

So, the Council needs to find new ways of working to make sure services to the most vulnerable are protected.

What are the plans for Short Break Services for children and teenagers?

The way short break services operate now

The Council currently supports young people with disabilities (between the ages of eight and eighteen) and their families with short break services.

These are provided in partnership with a range of voluntary organisations, including:

- Autism Bedfordshire
- Bedford and District Cerebral Palsy Society

- Families United Network
- Special Needs Out of School Club

The proposals for change

The Council's annual budget for services for children with disabilities is £4m and it is proposing to make savings to this budget of £158k each year.

£68k of these savings would be made by reducing the amount of funding it provides to voluntary organisations and to work with them, parents and carers, to find new and more cost effective ways of supporting children and young people with disabilities and their families.

The Council also proposes to reduce funding (of £90k each year) for Occupational Therapy Services and Disabled Facilities Grant.

The proposed changes would see a new approach to assessing who would be eligible to receive specialist support, so that services for children and families in greatest need would be protected.

For those children and families who may have lower levels of need, the Council proposes to redesign services in partnership with parents, service users and other organisations. The sort of services that could be redesigned would include short breaks being developed at Universal Services such as the Council's Libraries, Leisure Centres and Swimming Pools as well as other services accessible to the public. As part of these proposals parents could be asked to contribute to the costs of these services.

How would the Council approach introducing these changes?

If the Council decides to progress with its proposed changes, it is committed to work with parents and carers to redesign these services.

The Special Needs Action Panel (SNAP) is an independent group of parent carers whose role is to ensure the voice of families of children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities 0-25 years is heard. SNAP has been working with Central Bedfordshire Council in preparing for this consultation.

Focus Groups with parent carers were held in June 2016 resulted in a feedback report entitled "A Review of Short Breaks within Children's Services" and has been used as the basis for the consultation and key questions about how changes might be introduced.

Having your say on these changes:

We want to hear your views on the proposals for change and how you would want them to be introduced.

You can have your say by filling in the questionnaire. Your answers will be kept anonymous and used only to inform the Council's decision making about whether to progress with the changes and how to do so.

If you have any queries or would like to talk to someone about the local short break offer please contact Ken.harvey@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk



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Contact us...

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