

Aiming High Consultation 2021

Social and leisure activities for children and young people with disabilities

Swindon Borough Council working with Swindon SEND Families Voice

The Aiming High Team provide opportunities for children and young people with disabilities to enjoy social and leisure activities outside of school hours, whilst giving parents and carers a short break from caring. This is sometimes called 'short breaks'. Aiming High is for children and young people with disabilities up to their 18th birthday.

All local authorities must have a Short Breaks Statement to explain the range of short break services provided in the area, any criteria and how services are designed to meet the needs of carers. Swindon's Short Breaks Statement is due for review. We have been working with Swindon SEND Families Voice to review the Aiming High service. Now we want to make sure you have the chance to give your views.

The consultation will run from Tuesday 13th April to Tuesday 11th May 2021.

Have your say:

You can submit your views online: www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/aiminghigh/ or complete a response form (email aiminghigh@swindon.gov.uk or call 01793 464080 for a response form if needed).

You can also sign up for a virtual session – an informal opportunity to hear more about the proposals, ask questions and share your views:

- **Monday 26th April 2021, 7.30pm to 8.30pm**
- **Wednesday 28th April 2021, 10.00am to 11am**

Please book a space by Thursday 22nd April:

Email aiminghigh@swindon.gov.uk or call 01793 464080

PROPOSAL 1:

Changes to the Aiming High criteria and a yearly service update for all children

What happens now?

Aiming High is part of the wider short breaks support available for children and young people with disabilities in Swindon. Children who meet the Aiming High criteria are eligible to receive the Aiming High Local Offer; up to 80 hours of short breaks support per year (1.5 hours per week, to use flexibly). Not all children with disabilities will require Aiming High support in order to access activities, and some children will need more support than Aiming High can provide.

The table below outlines the different levels of support available, to ensure a fair, transparent and proportionate response. We understand that children and families may move between these levels depending on their circumstances.

	Level 1. Mainstream and targeted activities	Level 2. Aiming High Local Offer	Level 3. Social Care response
Support offered:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social and leisure activities available to all children, young people and families • Targeted activities for children with disabilities • Aiming High information, advice and regular newsletter 	Support to access a short break activity, up to a maximum of 80 hours per year (1.5 hours per week, to use flexibly): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aiming High Specialist Groups • Direct Payments • Inclusion Funding • Uplands Enterprise Trust (UET) Short Breaks 	Individual package of support, based on the outcome of an assessment by a Social Worker
Assessment:	No assessment required, contact services directly.	Aiming High referral: www.swindon.gov.uk/aiminghighshortbreaks	Statutory social care assessment
Criteria:	No set criteria; services may be for specific age groups or types of need. Staff may require advice or awareness-raising	See page 3.	See Appendix 1 <i>This criteria is currently under review</i>

There is a high demand for Aiming High services. Currently, once a child is receiving a service from Aiming High, this may continue indefinitely up to the child's 18th birthday (although some children do move on where it becomes apparent that they are able to, or wish to do so). This means we have very long waiting

lists for our Aiming High specialist groups (well over a year in some cases), because there is very little turnover. The Covid-19 pandemic has made this even more challenging, due to strict measures relating to group sizes and bubbles.

We know that some children currently receiving Aiming High support attend (or could attend) other social and leisure activities without Aiming High support. Meanwhile, some children on the waiting list are unable to access any other social or leisure activity, due to their disability.

What is proposed?

We have worked with Swindon SEND Families Voice to look at how the Aiming High criteria could be changed to ensure we are supporting those most in need. The proposed changes are outlined below:

Level 2. Aiming High Local Offer	
Current criteria:	Proposed criteria:
<p>Child/ family meet all of the following criteria:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Child/ young person is a Swindon resident aged from 0 to 18th birthday and has a disability as defined by the Equality Act 2010.* 2. Child/ young person is unable to attend any other social or leisure activity without a parent/ carer staying. 3. Specially trained/ qualified staff are required to safely meet the child’s needs – or the child requires a higher staff ratio – and we are unable to identify a setting with staff sufficiently trained/confident to meet those needs. 4. Parent/carer requires breaks from caring in order to continue to provide care or to enable them to provide care more effectively. 	<p>Child/ family meet all of the following criteria:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Child/ young person is a Swindon resident aged from 0 to 18th birthday and has a disability as defined by the Equality Act 2010.* 2. Child/ young person is unable to attend any regular social or leisure activity without ongoing additional support from specially trained/ qualified staff or a parent/ carer. (This does not include parents choosing to stay for reassurance / convenience.) Aiming High may need to contact other professionals / services working with the child in order to better understand the child’s needs. 3. All children receiving support through Aiming High will have a Yearly Service Update to review their support and re-check eligibility. 4. Child/ young person is not open to the Disabled Children Team (social care). If a child is open to the Disabled Children Team, a statutory assessment is completed to assess needs and identify support on an individual basis. This supersedes the Aiming High Local Offer. (This is what already happens, but it is added here for clarity.)

* You are disabled under the Equality Act 2010 if you have a physical or mental impairment that has a ‘substantial’ and ‘long-term’ negative effect on your ability to do normal daily activities. ‘Substantial’ is more than minor or trivial and ‘long-term’ means 12 months or more.

The proposed changes would mean that children would only be eligible for Aiming High support if they cannot access any social or leisure activity **without ongoing additional support from specially trained / qualified staff or a parent or carer**. There would also be a **yearly service update** for all children, to discuss how they are getting on and whether they still meet the criteria for Aiming High support.

This proposal aims to help manage demand and waiting lists as fairly as possible. We expect that many children would continue to meet the Aiming High criteria and continue to receive a service. Where children are able to move on to other activities (or already attend other activities), we would arrange for their Aiming High support to stop, creating space for another child on the waiting list. We understand that this would have an impact on those affected, but feel this step is needed in order to balance the needs of all children needing support. Good communication will be key, to enable families to plan for the change. Aiming High would continue to provide information and advice to all families of children with disabilities.

**Please tell us what you think.
Go to Question 1 on the Response Form**

PROPOSAL 2:

Price increase

What happens now?

- Parents / carers currently pay a charge of **£2.50 per hour** towards Aiming High groups and UET support (maximum £10 total for Aiming High holiday or Saturday groups). Sibling reductions apply. This price has not changed since April 2016.

What is proposed?

- It is proposed that the price would increase to **£3.00 per hour** (maximum £12 total for Aiming High holiday or Saturday groups). Sibling reductions would continue to apply.
- This change would affect all users of the service (current users and new referrals).
- During previous consultations, a significant number of families and service providers have fed back that there should be a cost for services, comparable with (but not more than) equivalent services for non-disabled children.
- We believe that £3 per hour remains reasonable when compared to the costs for similar services and the cost of activities for non-disabled children. Some examples below:
 - UET Short Breaks (specialist service) = £8 per hour (1:3 ratio) / £20 per hour (1:1 ratio)
 - Big Adventure Club holiday care (mainstream) = £2.70 - £3.14 per hour
 - Rascals Holiday Club (mainstream) = £2.11 per hour
 - Draycott (mainstream) Multi-Sports Camp = £2.67 - £2.80 per hour
- This change would generate approximately **£3,000** additional income per year. All income would be invested back into the service to help make Aiming High more sustainable.

**Please tell us what you think.
Go to Question 2 on the Response Form**

PROPOSAL 3: Transport charge

What happens now?

- Parents and carers are expected to transport their children to and from short break activities. Consideration is only given to providing transport in exceptional circumstances. When transport is provided, there is currently **no charge** to the family.

What is proposed?

- It is proposed that we implement a charge for transport of **£3 per session** (to cover the journey there and back). Transport would still only be provided in exceptional circumstances.
- This change would affect all users of the service (current users and new referrals).
- We believe that £3 per session is a reasonable cost for transport.
- This change would generate approximately **£1,000** additional income per year. All income would be invested back into the service to help make Aiming High more sustainable.

**Please tell us what you think.
Go to Question 3 on the Response Form**

PROPOSAL 4:

Charge for direct payments

What are direct payments?

If a family know someone who is able to take on the role of 1:1 worker to support their child, Aiming High can provide the funding and support to enable the family to employ them. The family would need to identify a worker (Aiming High are unable to provide the worker).

What happens now?

- There is currently a charge of £2.50 per hour for Aiming High group services, with a proposed increase to £3 per hour (see proposal 2 above). However, families who choose direct payments **do not pay a charge**. Aiming High fund the full cost of the worker (and other costs such as payroll and insurance), but the parent / carer then has to pay for any activity costs for the child and worker.
- Some people have told us that this could be seen as unfair, because families choosing direct payments do not have to pay a charge, whilst families accessing other Aiming High services do. However, families receiving direct payments do still need to pay for any activity costs. We would like your views on this issue.

Should the Aiming High hourly charge apply to direct payments as well?

- If this went ahead, Aiming High would deduct the hourly charge from the direct payment budget before it is paid to the parent/ carer. They would then have to top up their funding as their charge.
- The charge would **not** affect families who receive direct payments through the Disabled Children's Team (social care).
- Based on our work with Swindon SEND Families Voice, it was felt that the charge (if implemented) should only apply to **new** Aiming High direct payments (set up after this consultation is completed). This is because of the potential impact on existing direct payment recipients. However, this also raised concerns about fairness, with new families paying a charge that current families do not. We would like your views on this.
- Based on the proposed new charge of £3.00 per hour, this would mean an annual saving of approximately **£5,000** (a standard Aiming High direct payment would reduce by £240). This saving would be invested back into the service.

Please tell us what you think.
Go to Question 4 on the Response Form

PROPOSAL 5:

Small grants for children on long waiting lists

What happens now?

When families are referred to Aiming High, we work with them to determine the type of support that would be most suitable (inclusion funding, UET funding, direct payments or Aiming High groups). Some of these options can be put in place fairly quickly. However, Aiming High specialist groups have very long waiting lists, over a year in some cases. We work with families to try to identify alternative support in the interim, but there is not always a suitable option that meets the child's individual circumstances. This means that some children remain on waiting lists for a long time, with no support. (We are looking at how we can better manage our waiting lists – see proposal 1 above).

What is proposed?

- It is proposed that we offer a **one-off grant of £150** for children on the Aiming High waiting list in the following circumstances:
 - The child has been on the waiting list for at least **9 months**, *and*
 - The child is not receiving any other interim service in the meantime, *and*
 - We do not expect them to start receiving a service in the next **3 months**.
- The grant would be for the parent / carer to use towards equipment, toys or technology they wish to purchase to support the development, play and stimulation of their child.
- Based on previous years, we estimate that this would cost between **£6,000 - £10,000** annually (40-65 children).

**Please tell us what you think.
Go to Question 5 on the Response Form**

PROPOSAL 6:

Updated Short Breaks Statement

All local authorities must have a Short Breaks Statement, under the Breaks for Carers of Disabled Children Regulations 2011. The Statement must tell families about the range of short break services available, any criteria and how the services meet the needs of carers.

Swindon's current Short Breaks Statement is available online:

www.swindon.gov.uk/downloads/file/5177/swindon_short_break_statement_2016

or from the Aiming High Team: 01793 464080 or aiminghigh@swindon.gov.uk.

We will use the findings from this consultation to update our Short Breaks Statement, working in partnership with Swindon SEND Families Voice.

We would like to know any feedback, comments or suggestions you have about how to ensure this Statement is as useful as possible for families of children and young people with disabilities in Swindon.

**Please tell us what you think.
Go to Question 6 on the Response Form**

Thank you for taking the time to give us your views.

**If you require this information in large print or another format,
please contact Customer Services on 01793 445500.**

Appendix 1: Current Criteria for Disabled Children's Team

This criteria is currently under review

Children receiving Social Work support from the Disabled Children's team will:

- Fall into level 3 category of need as defined by the LSCB threshold document:
https://safeguardingpartnership.swindon.gov.uk/info/3/workers_and_volunteers/10/workers_and_volunteers/19
- Have a **diagnosed** disability, and this disability meets the Equality Act definition of disability:
<https://www.gov.uk/definition-of-disability-under-equality-act-2010>

Whilst eligibility decision are based on individual need and professional judgement, including to what extent the impairment impacts the child and the lives of those who live with and care for them, it is likely that the disabled child or young person will fit into one or more of the following definitions:

- A significant, permanent and enduring physical disability requiring a high level of care (i.e. fully dependant on carers for all elements of care or requiring a very high level of supervision and prompting to ensure basic care needs are met).
or
- A diagnosed learning disability/global development delay, affecting multiple areas of development. The Department of Health definition of learning disability/global development delay is: that an individual has a **significant impairment of intelligence** along with a **significant impairment of social functioning** and that both of these impairments were acquired **before adulthood**.
or
- A severe and enduring communication disorder, with very little communication or significantly delayed processing skills.
or
- Autism with a significant learning disability/global development delay and may also have challenging behaviour. The Department of Health definition of learning disability/global development delay is: that an individual has a **significant impairment of intelligence** along with a **significant impairment of social functioning** and that both of these impairments were acquired **before adulthood**.
or
- A significant sensory impairment with mobility significantly restricted without special provision.

The Disabled Children's Team will work with the whole sibling group, when a disabled child has been identified, and will work with families when the reason for referral is not due to the disability.