

Overview of Responses and Recommendations

Budget Proposals 16/17: Special Needs Advice and Counselling Service (SNACS)		Jane Seymour - Service Manager, SEN & Disabled Children's Team		19 January 2016 Version 2 (Exec)	
Proposal:	To remove the budget for this service.				
Total budget 15/16:	£10,000	Recommended officer saving 16/17:	£0		
Initial proposed saving 16/17:	£10,000 (100%)	Final recommendation to Executive 16/17:	To continue to fund this service at the current level.		
Nos of responses:	18 responses were received, five from organisations and 13 from individuals.				
Key issues raised:	The main emphasis of the responses was on the difficulties faced by parents of children with disabilities, the uniqueness of the SNACS service, lack of equivalent services and the risk to the emotional health of parents if the service is withdrawn, plus the knock on impact on children's wellbeing if parents are not coping.				
Equality issues:	The removal of the service will impact on parents of children with disabilities and may also impact, indirectly, on children with disabilities themselves. Parents who do not have a good support system through family and friends were considered to be more adversely affected than those who do.				
Suggestions for reducing the impact on service users:	Suggestion	Council response			
	Put more money in to Personal Budgets so parents can purchase their own counselling support.	This would have a cost implication on Social Care budgets.			
	Charge parents to access the service	This would result in an inequitable service as not all parents who need it would be able to afford to pay.			
	Deliver group sessions to reduce costs	This could be a more cost effective way of delivering support but would still have a resource implication.			
	Give training to GPs	GPs do not have the capacity to provide counselling.			
	Offer the service through Children's Centres	The service is delivered by qualified and registered counsellors. Children's Centres have family support workers who may be able to offer support, but they do not employ qualified counsellors. A counselling service could be offered through a Children's Centre but this would still have resource implications.			

NB: This overview and recommendation paper should be read in conjunction with the Summary of Responses and Verbatim Responses received in relation to this proposal, circulated electronically to all members alongside the agenda pack and published online on our [Consultation Portal](#).

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Alternative options for applying the saving in this area:	Suggestion	Council response	
	Charitable organisations could provide the service and WBC could support them to do so.	Funding a charity to deliver the service, rather than the existing provider, would be unlikely to deliver any savings as a charitable provider would still have to pay the "going rate" to qualified counsellors. However there may be scope for SNACS to acquire status as a charity or community interest company and become sustainable through fund raising.	
	Seek funding from the NHS	Highly unlikely to be successful given financial pressures in the NHS. One Health provider responded to the consultation and expressed concern that the withdrawal of this service would lead to more demands on NHS services which are already under pressure.	
	Seek funding from Public Health as a preventative service	This suggestion appears to be based on a misapprehension that Public Health is part of the NHS rather than the Council. In fact the service is funded from a Public Health budget.	
Suggestions for how others may help contribute:	One parent kindly offered to provide some parent to parent support. This parent will be contacted and put in touch with the local Parent Forum.		
Officer conclusion as a result of the responses:	This service has been highly valued by the parents who have accessed it. If it is no longer affordable by the Council, there may be an option for the service to set itself up as a charity or community interest company and become sustainable through fund raising.		
Officer recommendation as a result of responses:	Feedback has not uncovered any further issues which would prevent the council from proceeding with this proposal. However, given that the Public Health grant has been ring-fenced for a further two years it is recommended that this service continue to be funded at an annual sum of £10,000		

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