

Aiming High

Aiming High for Disabled Children in Sunderland Information Update

Issue 1 October 2008

Sunderland City Council has recently been selected by the Government to be a pathfinder in the Aiming High for Disabled Children programme which will transform services for disabled children and young people and their families.

How will we do this?

- giving more families the type of short breaks they want
- giving families better information about the support they can get
- being open and upfront about which children and young people can use each service
- really listening to what disabled children and young people and their families want and acting on this.

To make this happen, a lot of new funding has been provided over the next 3 years. In 2008-09 we have nearly £300,000 and in 2009-10 and 2010-11 we will have almost £1 million per year.

As a pathfinder, Sunderland will be expected to lead the way in developing the services and ways of working that families want and that work best.

What are short breaks?

Short breaks give disabled children and young people the chance to spend time away from their main carer. It is a time when they can enjoy play and leisure activities and build new relationships. Short breaks also give their main carer a chance to recharge their batteries. A short break can take place during the day, in the evening, at the weekend or overnight, and can happen in the child's home, in an approved carer's home, or in a residential or community setting.

How is Aiming High being managed in Sunderland?

The Aiming High Project Board has been set up to make sure that the funding is used in the right way, and to ensure that everyone who works with disabled



Pictured L-R the Aiming High Project Team Donna Knowles, Karen Parry, Lesley Baxter and Jayne Aitken

children and young people, including parents and carers have a say in the way the money is spent. Members of the Board come from:

- Sunderland Parent Carer Council
- The Council's Children's Services
- Sunderland Teaching Primary Care Trust
- City Hospitals NHS Trust
- Sunderland Carers' Centre
- Health, Housing and Adult Services

The Aiming High Project Team has been set up to implement the Aiming High programme. The team consists of

- Programme Manager: Karen Parry will work with disabled children and young people, their families and colleagues to make sure the Aiming High programme is implemented successfully

- Information Officer: Lesley Baxter will provide disabled children and young people and their families with the information that they need, in a range of formats so that it is available to everyone
- Information Analyst: Jayne Aitken will collect and analyse information about the number of children accessing different types of short breaks, to help us understand if disabled children's needs are being met
- Business Support Assistant: Donna Knowles will provide administrative and financial support to the Project Board and Project Team



Are disabled children and young people and their families involved?

The Aiming High Project Board intends to employ a Participation Officer to support disabled children and young people to get involved in the planning and decision making for Aiming High. This post will be advertised later this year.

As part of the Aiming High programme, the government has committed £5 million over the next three years to support parent involvement in deciding how services are designed and delivered. An announcement about the parent participation grants programme has just been made.

In Sunderland we are fully committed to involving parents and carers in the Aiming High programme. During March this year four meetings were held in different parts of the city to inform parents and carers about the Aiming High pathfinder, and to find out what sorts of short breaks they may want in the future.

This will be followed up at the annual Parent Carer Forum on 9th October, where parents and carers will have the opportunity to discuss the sorts of activities that should be available for their disabled children after school, at the weekend and during school holidays. We will use this information to commission short break services for the next two years.

What have we done so far?

Some Aiming High funding has been used to increase short break provision during the summer holidays and make it free to parents

- Summer play schemes offered more children and young people places, ran for more weeks and for longer hours than ever before
- The ISIS project, HYPP junior provision, Houghall Farm, Usworth sixth form college and Blue Watch Youth Project all ran activities over the summer holidays funded by Aiming High

“Parent carers are feeling optimistic and welcome the Aiming High proposals for short breaks.”

Sunderland Parent Carer Forum

What do we plan to do?

In the coming months we will be doing lots of consultation with disabled children and young people and their families to get their views on different ways to improve short break services in Sunderland. Based on the consultation we have done so far, some of the things we are planning to do this year include

- Setting up an Aiming High Participation Fund. This will be used to quickly and easily resolve any problems that are preventing a child having a short break, such as needing a piece of equipment, staff training or transport
- Commissioning a wide range of activities for disabled children and young people to do after school, at the weekend and in school holidays
- Building a second sitting room and pavilion at Sea View Road West to create the space for children and young people to have day care there
- A consultation event with deaf children to find out what short break activities they would like

How can I get involved in the Aiming High programme?

We want to involve disabled children and young people and their families in the Aiming High Programme and want to make it as easy as possible for people to get involved.

Over the coming months we will be talking to lots of people to find out what types of short breaks they want, as well as when and where they want them to take place.

We already have the contact details of many families with disabled children and young people, but if you want to be involved and are worried we do not have your details, please contact us and let us know how you would like to be contacted - this could be by phone, by post, by email or by text message.

Then we will stay in touch regularly and inform you of all the opportunities to have your say.

“The summer activities were great. I enjoyed all of it especially the biking and the challenge of the Waskerly Way and the canoeing as I was unsure of what to do or what it was about.”

Phillipa Warren

How can I keep up to date with what is happening?

It is easy to stay informed about what is happening in the Aiming High programme:

- Log on to www.sncwd.org.uk for the latest news
- Join the Network for Disabled Children to receive copies of this update and other information
- Sign up for the monthly Real Issues bulletin- you can receive this by post or e-mail
- Contact Lesley Baxter or Donna Knowles for more information about all of these



It is easy to contact us

The Aiming High Project Board can be contacted via Donna Knowles, Business Support Assistant at Gilpin House, Blind Lane, Houghton-le-Spring DH4 5HX. Tel: 0191 566 2190 or e-mail donna.knowles@sunderland.gov.uk

The Parent Carer Council can be contacted at 47 Thornton Court, Glebe, Washington NE38 7QW. Tel: 0191 417 5322. E-mail spcc.office@yahoo.co.uk or visit www.freewebs.com/swcpcc/

The Aiming High Project Team can be contacted as follows:

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The Project Team are based at Gilpin House, Blind Lane, Houghton-le-Spring DH4 5HX

There is also lots of information about Aiming High for Disabled Children on the Every Child Matters website www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/socialcare/ahdc/



This information can be made available in large print, Braille, audio and other languages. Please contact Donna Knowles on 0191 566 2190 or email donna.knowles@sunderland.gov.uk for help.

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