

## Family Voice Calderdale & Unique Ways response to the Calderdale Council Cabinet's Consultation Budget 2022/2023 to 2024/2025

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### 1 Executive Summary

Family Voice Calderdale is a project of Unique Ways, a small local charity that supports families with disabled children across Calderdale. Family Voice Calderdale is the Parent Carer Forum for Calderdale. Parent Carer Forums are groups of parents and carers of children & young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and there is one in every Local Authority in England. Our aim is to ensure that services in Calderdale meet the needs of disabled children and their families. We also belong to the National Network of Parent Carer Forums (NNPCF).

- Family Voice Calderdale aims to ensure that Parent Carers have a voice in shaping services for children & young people with additional needs in Calderdale.
- Family Voice Calderdale aims to seek and represent the views of the collective voice of Parent Carers in Calderdale.
- Family Voice Calderdale aims to make sure that Parent Carers and their families in Calderdale receive the support they need when they need it.

Family Voice Calderdale conducted a survey of its members on the proposals within the budget consultation which would directly affect the family life of children and young people with SEND and their families in Calderdale. In the main, for our members, this relates to the proposed cut of £100,00 from the discretionary element of Inclusion Funding. The three main outcomes for our survey was to:

- 1) Ensure our Parent Carer members knew that the consultation was taking place.
- 2) Capture their Voice on any specific aspects of the proposals which would directly affect their family life in Calderdale (in the main, for our members this relates to the proposed cut of £100,00 from the discretionary element of inclusion funding).
- 3) Feedback the findings as a collective response on behalf of our Parent Carer members, whilst also providing the Local Authority with verbatim responses.

## **2 Methodology / Timeframes**

Family Voice Calderdale undertook a consultation on behalf of the membership of Unique Ways in the form of a simple 5 question survey.

The questions we asked were:

- 1) Were you aware of the proposed changes to cut the discretionary service to support childcare provision in wrap around childcare, out of school and holiday provision?
- 2) Do you understand what the proposed cuts may mean for you and other families with SEND in Calderdale?
- 3) Does your child or young person with SEND currently access wrap around childcare, out of school or a holiday provision that is supported by inclusion funding?
- 4) What effect will these changes have on you and your family?
- 5) Any other comments?

The survey was emailed to our membership of c. 900 contacts as well as posted across our Social Media platforms. The survey only had a short window of opportunity (one weekend) to respond to, being live from Friday 28<sup>th</sup> January – Tuesday 1<sup>st</sup> February 2022.

We received 40 responses during this time and three further comments were emailed to us on Wednesday 2<sup>nd</sup> February as Parent Carers were unable to respond sooner. We have included these comments separately as below.

## **3 Survey Responses**

***Attached Survey Responses, Verbatim direct from Parent Carer Members.***

*PLEASE SEE APPENDIX A*

***Additional responses received (Wednesday 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2022)***

*"I am not happy about the inclusion funding cuts. I watched the Children and Young People's Scrutiny Committee last week and would really challenge the assertion by Julie Jenkins that the impact will be minimal. She said work patterns have changed because of the pandemic and now parents are working from home and able to do the school run, settle their children doing homework and go back to work. Really, children with SEND are that low maintenance? Are all parents of children with SEND really working from home forever? My partner is already back in the office and has been for some time. Please don't make assumptions about people's lives like this. It shows a clear lack of understanding and compassion, these erroneous sweeping statements are not helpful and clearly don't resemble the real lives of many families who have CYP with SEND in Calderdale".*

*"Nowhere in the impact assessment does it say how many children are currently benefiting from inclusion funding, transparency and context is helpful for Parent Carers, surely it's relevant to include this?"*

*"They do have a legal responsibility to secure childcare sufficient for all parents who wish to work, including provision for disabled children. It says so in their own impact assessment - (Pg. 51 of consultation, section 5 – The Childcare Act (2006)). So, my question is, without inclusion funding how will that happen?"*

## 4 Areas of concern identified by Unique Ways and Family Voice Calderdale

### ***Supporting Social Care (Proposal Page 3)***

The most important responsibility placed on our Council is to provide or organise care, support and community services to the most vulnerable children and adults to enable them to lead the fullest lives possible as part of our community.

### ***Targeted Help for Those Who Need it (Proposal Page 3)***

The pandemic has highlighted the many inequalities that exist in society, as well as seeing a dramatic increase in the number of families who need extra help and support.

### **RESPONSE:**

The proposals to cut £100,000 of inclusion funding means that this consultation will be perceived as discriminatory because it will be families with disabled children who are impacted upon most.

### ***Council Tax Increases (Proposal Page 4)***

*The proposed budget assumes a Council Tax increase of 1.99% in line with the limit applied by Government and an additional 1% Social Care Precept to help fund and protect social care services to vulnerable adults and children.*

### **RESPONSE:**

The proposed cut of £100,000 per year represents only 0.04% of the annual gross expenditure in the budget for each of the three years. The £100,000 also represents only 0.28% of spending within the children and young people's budget.

Will there be an increase in the short breaks budget to support families needing wrap around and school holiday support, and will families be permitted to use this to fill the childcare gap?  
Short breaks are supposed to be to allow children to access activities, not for childcare per se.

### **SAVINGS OPTION 2022/23 – 2024/25 BUDGET PROCESS - Children and Young People's Service**

***(Proposal Page 50 & 51)***

#### ***Why is this savings proposal being putting forward/what is the rationale behind it?***

The proposal is to reduce the inclusion funding to the settings that offer childcare for times when children are out of school, at either end of the day and during the holidays.

**Secondly family patterns of work and childcare are changing due to the pandemic.**

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Whilst holiday provision requirement has started to increase back to previous levels, the need for wraparound childcare has reduced with more parents working from home. They are working flexibly, can collect children from school and work on their computers whilst children do homework.

### RESPONSE:

Using generalist sweeping comments like this are not helpful within a consultation proposal and are indeed invalid. This argument does not stand up. Yes, many families were working from home adhering to the government guidance at that point in time and this could have been the case when the proposals were drafted.

The impact of the pandemic is a constant and hopefully we are moving out of the most restrictive measures. Current government advice is to return to your place of work, removing wrap around and school holiday provision will stop parents been able to return to their workplace. Also, those children who require the Inclusion funding will most likely be unable to work from home while looking after children. We are hopeful we are in the later stages of the pandemic, so using the pandemic as an argument for the next 3 years is not proportionate.

Children and young people with SEND often need attention, guidance and encouragement for them to engage with activities. An assumption that they can be left to it is not valid.

### ***Thirdly this would bring us in line with the rest of West Yorkshire's offer to parents:***

- Kirklees Council 0 – 2s where parents/carers are working; 3- & 4-years old's where work commitment exceed the 30-hour free entitlement; Eligible 2, 3 & 4 years of age.
- Bradford Council 2, 3 & 4 years of age.
- Leeds Council 2, 3 & 4 years of age.
- Wakefield Council 3 - 4 years of age.

### RESPONSE:

This consultation regarding funding cuts relates to Calderdale, not other areas. It shouldn't matter what another LA's is doing. It lacks compassion to read comparisons in consultation documents.

Other areas may also be providing funding in different forms to ensure accessibility/ equity of childcare access (just not calling it inclusion funding). This information is not provided.

Calderdale's current vision is to be the "best borough in the North" and should therefore strive to support families over and above what another local LA may be doing or not. . Calderdale's focus should be Calderdale, this type of comparison to help validate the cuts to funding which supports disabled children and their families is not helpful and does not fit the culture, tone and indeed values of Calderdale as an area where we live and work. It certainly feels out of touch and a world away from 'Vision 2024'.

***Major risks, impact on service users/ partners and the Council's agreed priorities (Growing the Economy, Reducing Inequalities and Building a Sustainable Future) that have been identified. Please include here any effect this proposal may have on relevant performance measures.***

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Section 6 specifically requires Local Authorities to secure childcare provision for disabled children, in this context, childcare must be 'sufficient' in terms of the number of places, affordability, and appropriateness.

This proposal could impact on the availability of wrap around childcare and holiday provision now and in the future.

### ***How can the effects of any impact identified in 5) be reduced?***

The base budget for the wrap around childcare, out of school and holiday provision for children aged 0 – 18 yrs. are £160k. A saving of £100k would retain a discretionary budget of £60k to support providers where sufficiency was likely to become an issue in a geographical area – which is what happens now with mainstream provision. There is access to a discretionary 15% of the Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) funding through central government for children with special needs. The criteria are for children on free school meals but for the last two rounds we have been granted permission from the Government to use this funding for SEN holiday activities.

### **RESPONSE:**

Calderdale has a requirement to secure childcare provision for disabled children that must be sufficient in terms of the number of places, affordability and appropriateness. The rationale behind these savings will not leave a sufficient childcare provision for disabled children in Calderdale.

The rationale sites access to a discretionary 15% of the Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) funding from central government. Is this guaranteed to be approved every year going forward to support the proposed budgets?

Healthy Holidays (HH) is funded to 2025 only. Our understanding is the provision is for activities and food, not childcare as such. Does this mean that it can be spent to fill a childcare gap? Also, there is no capital funding within HH for changes to buildings or equipment, should the need arise to support a young person accessing a setting.

We know from experience that these settings are often not able to support children and young people with disabilities effectively. They also only offer these services in a minimal number of settings, and not within a setting that requires the support for a child in a setting they are familiar with.

This approach is not person centred i.e. it does not put the needs of the child/young person with SEND at the heart of decisions regarding their care. These families are either in the main, unable to access any provision at all, or, shoe-horned into a service which does not meet the needs of the CYP. Nor is continuity of provision likely, given that this relies on special permission from central government,

## **5 Recommendations for action**

### ***Timescales***

The timescales for responding to a consultation of this importance were extremely tight for all Calderdale residents, however, we feel this was especially difficult for our members (the target audience affected by the decision to reduce the discretionary element of inclusion funding).

“The budget proposals were presented by the Leader of the Council at a Cabinet meeting on Monday 17 January 2022, marking the start of a 28-day public consultation.

The proposals will be finalised by the Cabinet on Monday 14 February 2022 and the budget will be agreed at the Annual Budget Council meeting on Monday 28 February 2022”.

Most of our Parent Carer Members were unaware of the proposed cut in inclusion funding until they received our survey (Friday 28<sup>th</sup> January), even although this cut will impact upon many of them directly.

Families with disabled children and young people obviously led very busy sometimes chaotic lives and the Local Authority Budget may not be front of mind for many of them. Even although it comes around every year or two, it will not be in their immediate thoughts.

It is a 67-page document and the online consultation requires you to give a view on each proposal. Parent Carers are very unlikely to have time for that.

Furthermore, Unique Ways were only able to first view the proposals via the link sent within ‘The News Thread’ newsletter issued from the Council’s Comms. Dept on Friday 28<sup>th</sup> January. If we had not got this out to our Members on the same day and gave them the weekend to take part in our own survey, many families with disabled children in Calderdale would be in the dark regarding the proposal to remove the discretionary element of inclusion funding.

### ***Impact Assessment – transparency***

The Impact Assessment document which could have been utilised to help readers understand the rationale for the proposals lacked vital information which would have enabled this process e.g. it does not state how many children are receiving inclusion funding and how much this equates to. We feel it would have been relevant to include this.

### ***How the consultation was conducted – lack of co-production and timeline for responses (see above)***

This budget proposal and consultation process has been a missed opportunity to help families understand what is currently funded. From our own small survey responses, it is clear there is a lack of knowledge and understanding from some Parent Carers e.g. (Q 3- indicates that nearly 25% of those that responded to this question don’t know if they currently access inclusion funding or not). Parent Carers do have the time to trawl through the annual accounts of the Council to find out this information for themselves, it would have been helpful to set the proposal out in context e.g. the real situation at the moment and costs involved otherwise it just looks as though this has been an easy way to save £100,000 as it is a discretionary element and not statutory.

## 6 Summary

In summary, The Cabinet budget proposals are not equitable and lack flexibility. The proposal could be perceived to be discriminatory.

It is a cause for concern that Unique Ways/Family Voice Calderdale were not approached as a partner to help with the proposal document as a piece of stand-alone co-production in its own right. If the proposal had been co-produced, it would have landed better.

Unfortunately, this is the second occasion where this has happened within a short period of time e.g. we were not involved in the recent Calderdale Council Post 16 Transport Policy 2022-2023 Consultation. Again, we did conduct our own survey of our Members and submitted a response on their behalf on 14th January 2022. We had to ask Transport Dept to confirm receipt (which they did), but we've still not had a response to our Members feedback.

Calderdale has a 'Charter for Co-Production'. This Charter itself was a co-produced piece of work and involved valuable input from Officers within the Council and the CCG. It is understood and appreciated that there will have been a significant change in staff and staffing levels in the Local Authority throughout the pandemic and not all Officers will be aware of the Calderdale Charter for Co-Production, however, we feel it is imperative that those in leadership roles have the Charter front and centre of all decisions which could possibly affect Parent Carers and their families in Calderdale.

This Charter was produced to help our Local Authority, CCG and other professionals to work in partnership. By not utilising the model of co-production, the good governance of the Charter and involving Family Voice Calderdale and Unique Ways up front (before any written proposals were published), these Cabinet budget proposals have been viewed as being "kept under the radar" and "hidden".

Finally, families with disabled children understand the word statutory, it means minimal, it does not have to mean only, that is the whole point of discretionary funds. This is not a robust and balanced budget.

Family Voice Calderdale and Unique Ways are viewed in the highest regard by Executives of the Local Authority and seen as a trusted partner, especially in terms of co-production. Indeed, the work of Family Voice Calderdale and Unique Ways was singled out for recognition within the Ofsted CQC Report following the joint SEND inspection of 2019. Family Voice Calderdale and Unique Ways would welcome further discussion or opportunities to support consultations with families with disabled children across Calderdale on issues affecting their lives.



**Pete Ruse**  
Chair, Family Voice Calderdale

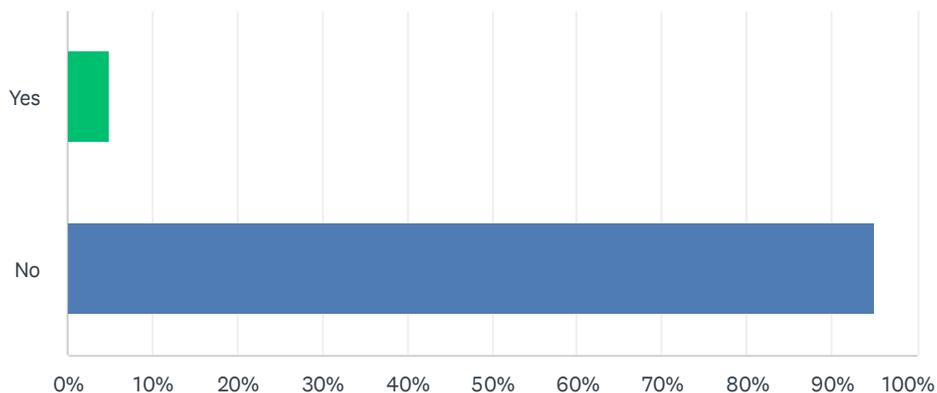
**Shona Walsh**  
Chief Executive Officer, Unique Ways



8<sup>th</sup> February 2022

### Q1 Were you aware of the proposed changes to cut the discretionary service to support childcare provision in wrap around childcare, out of school and holiday provision.

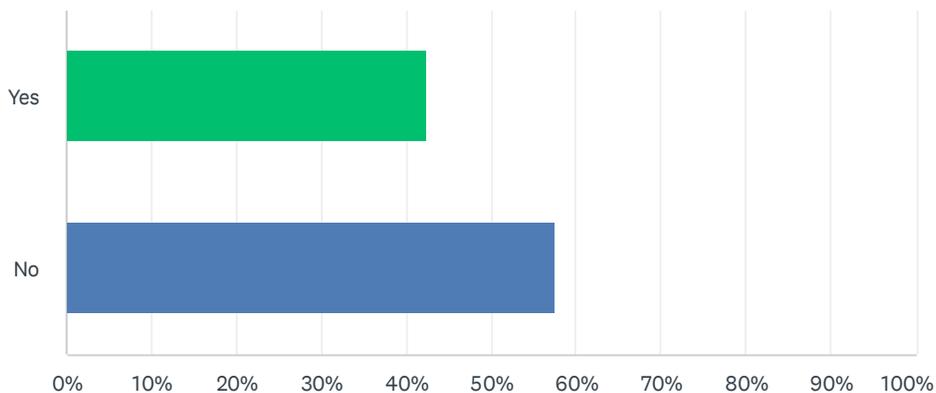
Answered: 40 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	5.00%	2
No	95.00%	38
TOTAL		40

## Q2 Do you understand what the proposed cuts may mean for you and other families with SEND in Calderdale?

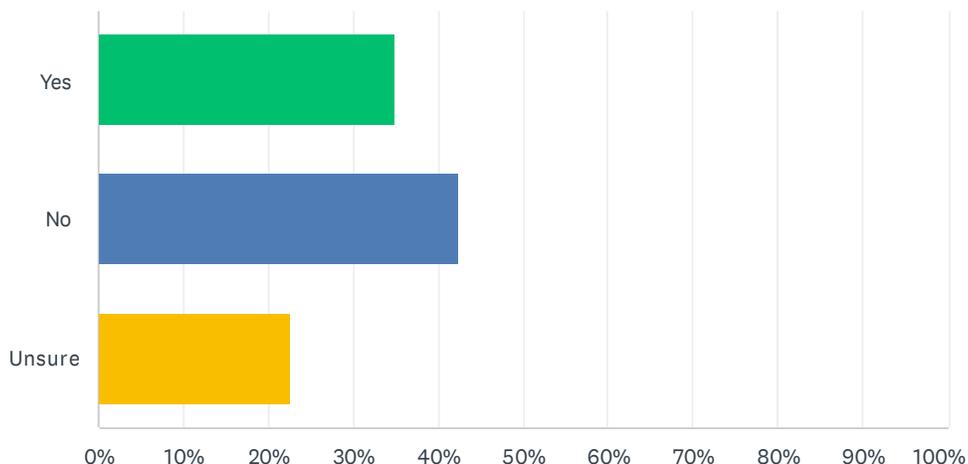
Answered: 40 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	42.50%	17
No	57.50%	23
TOTAL		40

### Q3 Does your child or young person with SEND currently access wrap around childcare, out of school or a holiday provision that is supported by Inclusion Funding?

Answered: 40 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	35.00%	14
No	42.50%	17
Unsure	22.50%	9
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>40</b>

## Q4 What effect will these changes have on you and your family?

Answered: 40 Skipped: 0

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	Our child will not have the support they need to attend their out of school club. Without this it is impossible to have the right ratio to net our child's needs. This will mean that we have to give up work which will impact on finance and mental health	2/1/2022 10:00 PM
2	If my provider can't support my child because they don't have funding to pay for extra staff and my child can't go then I won't be able to work and my child will be excluded from accessing after school club or holiday care with their friends. The out of school care and holiday club gives my child a chance to play and have fun with their friends and others not in they classroom. If the provider charges the difference it won't be possible for me to afford it. I think there is some other funding I might get but it won't be enough to cover the full costs I don't think.	2/1/2022 9:54 PM
3	It means I can not go to work, other childcare is not suitable.	2/1/2022 4:58 PM
4	My daughter receives inclusion funding for a 1:1 with in a school nursery	2/1/2022 4:05 PM
5	No changes but changes for a lot off families	2/1/2022 3:48 PM
6	When I require this i will not be able to work	2/1/2022 2:42 PM
7	after school and holiday provision and the fact that his parents would not be able to stay in there employment	2/1/2022 1:21 PM
8	I am not sure whether we use inclusion funding now but we did when my little boy was in nursery and it was very important to his development that he cold have access to this	2/1/2022 12:44 PM
9	none currently	2/1/2022 12:15 PM
10	I work in the sector and feel this cut will have a massive impact on the children who need to access our service.	2/1/2022 12:02 PM
11	Poor mental health and isolation	2/1/2022 12:02 PM
12	Nothing personally, my son is 19 and at college.	2/1/2022 11:24 AM
13	.	2/1/2022 10:55 AM
14	A massive effect. I won't be able to pay the extra needed.	2/1/2022 10:53 AM
15	My twins did access this fine until my childcare provider decided it was not cost effective enough to employ someone to support my disabled children in the holidays. Any further cuts to inclusion funding will be the final nail in the coffin, meaning parents of disabled children will no longer be able to access any out of school care, shutting them out of the job market completely.	2/1/2022 10:33 AM
16	Not sure	2/1/2022 10:17 AM
17	My FASD and drug affected adopted son is now 15 and failing to engage fully in school and pastoral activities at a really crucial end of school stage. Activities he can participate in esp sport are a wonderful diversion and keep him fit. Every day we have to deal with things like stealing lying, non attendance, vaping and now drinking alcohol. We have no social worker due to shortages. Families like ours are just not getting support and it will lead to family breakdown.	2/1/2022 10:10 AM
18	It will have a massive effect on my daughter due to her needs requires that time at school especially during the longer school holidays. It will also mean I am unable to work.	2/1/2022 10:10 AM
19	Was not aware of it but would be interested in finding out more	2/1/2022 10:01 AM
20	My child not having that support in the provision during the holidays. For my child to have	1/29/2022 8:57 PM

Proposed cuts to Inclusion Funding (previously Disabled Children's Access to Childcare (DCATCH) funding)

	consistent routine through term time and holidays	
21	Less support & help for children with SEN.	1/29/2022 8:44 PM
22	Make us feel leaving our child is unsafe	1/29/2022 4:41 PM
23	none	1/29/2022 1:48 PM
24	Mentally and provision	1/29/2022 9:29 AM
25	We will not be directly affected but we believe in fairness for all children now and in the future, these services are extremely important, children's services and disabled families should not be in line for cuts, they are marginalised enough	1/28/2022 8:31 PM
26	My son did attend wrap around care which had extra funding. He wouldn't have been able to go with out it.	1/28/2022 6:51 PM
27	I am unsure but was hoping to access specialist childcare in the near future	1/28/2022 5:25 PM
28	Na	1/28/2022 5:18 PM
29	Reduced options for childcare	1/28/2022 4:37 PM
30	We previously accessed inclusion funding for my disabled son to attend holiday care. This opportunity would have otherwise been denied to him as he needed constant 1:1 support. It meant he could continue to have all important routine and structure outside of school which is essential to his mental well-being. We no longer access inclusion funding, as now he is a teenager there is no suitable holiday care available. School holidays are now a nightmare as my son experiences extreme anxiety with the lack of routine. This puts him and myself at risk of serious harm. He has had to be prescribed antipsychotic medication for school holidays which to be honest does not work. All he really needs is a daily routine with structured activities. The local authority is now having to pay for an agency to support him during school holidays at the cost of nearly £40 per hour. If the sufficiency team ensured there was sufficient care for disabled children up to 18 then we would apply for inclusion funding. This would better meet his needs, and be more cost effective/better value spending of local authority funds.	1/28/2022 4:28 PM
31	Great effect, I haven't got any other support. Nobody at home can care for him besides myself. Obviously he's got no sense of danger and if there isn't enough support to support him in nursery the hours he's there for it will have effect on his safety as he's very dependent on an adult. Before myself getting grips with everything the services are cutting down. How does that help a parent or family who is already struggling, as this is my first child with SEN intervention.	1/28/2022 2:36 PM
32	My child's needs won't be met	1/28/2022 2:35 PM
33	My child accesses this funding as a way in which we can maintain a routine for him during the holidays. This routine is vital for him to function	1/28/2022 2:09 PM
34	My sons development would be massively impacted. This would ruin his care	1/28/2022 1:54 PM
35	I'm not sure as I don't know if we currently benefit from this funding. Wraparound care is essential to our family so I can work.	1/28/2022 1:45 PM
36	If there is no funding it will make finding any providers even harder than it already is. There are no specialist provisions as it is. So to take this support away from mainstream will mean no childcare	1/28/2022 1:21 PM
37	Support at college	1/28/2022 1:13 PM
38	None. My child is high school age	1/28/2022 1:03 PM
39	I think the proposed cuts will be highly damaging. The support is already minimal and the fact we are both full time working parents means we are financially disadvantaged by the use of wrap around care and the adequate care of our child. The cost is almost three times the amount it costs the family of a child with no additional needs. It feels as if we are being forced out of work and the attitude towards working parents is appalling	1/28/2022 12:09 PM
40	Not applicable	1/28/2022 11:59 AM

## Q5 Any other comments..

Answered: 22 Skipped: 18

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	I'm interested in knowing why this appears to be the only saving from the children's ans young people's budget. Is the this really the ONLY place they can cut costs from. And will saving 100k from supporting disabled children really make a saving or will it mean the costs pop up somewhere else. Also there isn't a very good explanation of the changes this means for families and children on the budget papers	2/1/2022 9:54 PM
2	I would like to know more about the proposed cuts to inclusion funding	2/1/2022 4:05 PM
3	Cutting SEND funding when waiting lists etc are at the longest ever means service users and family's are been kept out in the dark without the needed support and funding	2/1/2022 2:42 PM
4	without support for parents of disabled children, you are limiting and affecting the whole family's mental health and wellbeing. not all parents of disabled are at home parents, some d try to work for the whole families wellbeing	2/1/2022 1:21 PM
5	this will affect many other families that are stretched already. I am against it being cut.	2/1/2022 12:15 PM
6	If funding is cut, respite is cut. Respite is vital for parent and child. When I was in getting respite for my eldest son, it helped keep me sane and able to carry on in that caring role.	2/1/2022 11:24 AM
7	Thank goodness that Unique Ways is there to let us know!	2/1/2022 10:17 AM
8	I am not confident our adoptive family will stay together and I'm afraid the cost to local government will be huge.	2/1/2022 10:10 AM
9	This funding is important for provisions to have to support the needs of not only my child, but other peoples children. Children with additional needs need this funding to support their needs being met and allowing provisions to have extra staff to support, resources to be bought to meet the needs of children and for the staff to be able to attend training. Inclusion funding is so important and should not be cut.	1/29/2022 8:57 PM
10	I think this is ludicrous. With the minimal funding as it is, lots of children & families will have even less support & help with their children. Children need this funding to have the best start in life & this is being taken away from them. Shame on the council.	1/29/2022 8:44 PM
11	It's going to effect the well being of the child	1/29/2022 9:29 AM
12	There should be no cuts to children's services and disabled children have been subject to too many cuts and freezes	1/28/2022 8:31 PM
13	A child with a disability has to have an equal chance as a child without a disability. Cutting funding for disabled children is breaking the law as you are not allowing the extra support they need to attend main stream setting.	1/28/2022 6:51 PM
14	There's so little for the SEND community as it is. We really need more services for our family's not less	1/28/2022 5:25 PM
15	They will effect loads of families that rely on this funding. Not fair that yet again funding gets cut from an already struggling area.	1/28/2022 5:18 PM
16	This is a very short sighted proposal that will cost the local authority more in terms of demand for short breaks provision in the long run.	1/28/2022 4:28 PM
17	N/a	1/28/2022 2:36 PM
18	Not inclusive for child care	1/28/2022 2:35 PM
19	This is unfair to those that need the support the most.	1/28/2022 1:54 PM
20	No	1/28/2022 1:45 PM

Proposed cuts to Inclusion Funding (previously Disabled Children's Access to Childcare (DCATCH) funding)

21	Has the Council budget consultation been sent to parents or is it hidden in the overall consultation? SEND families for not have time to be wading through lots of admin	1/28/2022 1:03 PM
22	I am already stressed and upset about the lack of support for working parents of children with additional needs and this compounds that. With even further reduction in support we may eventually reach a crisis point and that is so so unfair when all we are trying to do is our best.	1/28/2022 12:09 PM