

Date: 26 August 2008

Our Ref: Kemlo

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Chair, Parent/Carer Voice

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Dear Jeanette,

### **Budget pressures – carer's breaks services**

We are experiencing some budget pressures this year with our provision of carers breaks services, and I am writing to keep you and Parent/Carer voice colleagues informed at the earliest opportunity of the emerging picture and how we intend to manage it.

The numbers of families in receipt of a carers break service continues to rise but the rate of increase is somewhat greater than planned. At the start of the year it was agreed with DCC and PCT that we could spend an additional £400,000 on carers breaks services this year given that more funding was being made available in 2009/10 as part of the Aiming High for Disabled Children initiative.

When reviewing our spend to date at the end of July, it was clear that we are at risk of exceeding this £400,000 uplift, which is not acceptable to either DCC or the PCT. However, it was also clear that our systems for recording the financial commitments for over 2000 families were not fully bedded down and there was some potential uncertainty about the likely year-end position.

The last thing we all want is for us to do nothing now and then find later in the year that the spend is exceeding the agreed limit such that we have to make service reductions. I am therefore putting in place the following actions with immediate effect:

- a. to tighten up our systems and processes for recording and reviewing our commitments on carers breaks services
- b. to audit all 2000 plus commitments to ensure that the information recorded is accurate and up to date
- c. to defer any new service requests until this audit process has been completed other than for those which are agreed by area managers as high priority
- d. to review the position towards the end of October in light of the audit outcomes

I am hopeful that these actions will be sufficient for us to maintain financial balance this year without significant disruption to families. I anticipate that the audit will result in us

having to revisit aspects of the Fair Access to Carer's Breaks scheme, and we will obviously involve parents/carers fully as the picture becomes clearer.

I would be grateful if you could forward this letter to the locality chairs and development workers and ask them to contact their local joint agency services area manager or myself should they require more information.

I will write again in due course with an update on the audit and some thoughts about how to involve parents/carers in the future development of the Fair Access scheme.

With best wishes,

Yours sincerely

**Miles Haggood**  
**Assistant Director of Integrated Children's & Family Services**  
**Devon Primary Care Trust/Devon County Council**