



You Said We Did We are listening



How do you know we are listening?

We have developed the grant offer with Stockton Parent Carer Forum. Key members of the team who work on the grant from the Council meet regularly with the Chair/s of the Stockton Parent Carer Forum and together we develop the grant.

The survey that the SPCF sent out was co-produced with the members of the council who work on the grant and the feedback was considered carefully with SPCF when developing this next grant offer.

The grant offer is not stagnant, we review it together after every offer, we consider any feedback that comes to the council directly about the grant or via the SPCF.

The following are the things you asked us or told us about and suggested with our responses.

1. Some of you asked, 'can we still apply for equipment'?

Yes - 82 % of families said they would still like equipment to be available in this next grant offer. We have kept this option as part of the next grant period.

2. Some of you said that you would like to be able to attend some activities as a family group and include siblings in activities.

We thought this was a great suggestion and family tickets have been included as part of the grant offer.

3. Some of you said that it wasn't fair that the grant launched so early in the morning and would like to know that your grant application has been received.

We want to be as fair as we can and so have moved the grant launch time from 12am to 12 noon, we hope this is helpful and welcome your feedback when we review the grant offer next time. The email address that the grant goes to has an automatic received message now set up, so when we get your application you will get an automated message that lets you know we have it.

4. Some suggestions have been to use the grant for things like therapy, pull ups or furnishings and gardening things.

We considered these suggestions very carefully and came to the conclusion that these things were not a short break and so have not included them in the offer.

5. The funds were exhausted very quickly. We had a lot of comments about this and some of you said that you didn't want to wait a full year to apply again.

We are pleased to be able to share that the Council has invested a further 50k into the Short Breaks Grant budget this year. This means the grant will reach more families.

We have split the grant into 2, 6-month periods so if you miss the first period of the grant offer you still have a further opportunity to apply in the 2 period.

We have kept the max grant offer at £600 per 6-month period per application and have reviewed what it can be used for. We believe the combination of things that the grant can be spent on, give's families flexibility and that the money will reach more families.

6. You asked if the grant is available to families who have an assessed need or receive other services.

Families that have had a service provided as a result of a need being identified through a social workers assessment can still apply for a smaller amount. This is £75 in each 6-month period and can be used for a combination of things as outlined in the criteria.

7. Many of you said that your children would like to access a gym or go to a football match and wanted to know if this was an option available through the grant.

Yes, it is - We have had numerous requests from families wanting to buy memberships for the gym or a football season ticket. Therefore, we have included it in this grant offer under the Universal Activities Section. We did get some suggestions about the grant being spent on items such as clothes, we have not included this element except if it is for specialist items such as horse-riding boots.

8. We had a suggestion that the grant should be per family not per child, while others said it should be for each child and not per family.

We considered this carefully, however, came to the conclusion that every child is not the same and siblings don't always like doing the same thing, so to apply this criteria could disadvantage some children. So, we have not changed the criteria

9. Some of you said that It seemed unfair that families with children on the MAAT or ND pathway are able to apply as you said they may not even receive a diagnosis of Autism.

This is a difficult one, we know that many families with children who have not yet received a diagnosis of Autism, but are likely to, may struggle on by without services and we want to be able to support them. We also know that the families from this group who applied for the grant last time were in very small numbers. We are therefore not removing this criteria. Families on the pathway will still be able to apply.

However the criteria has been made clearer and states that children must have a diagnosis or be undergoing an assessment that will **likely** result in a diagnosis of Autism. An ADHD diagnosis or likely diagnosis alone doesn't meet the criteria.

We know from the last period that only 4 families with children on the pathway applied for the grant.