

Appendix B – DCATCH (HBP) Consultation Survey Method

1. A consultation was conducted with parents/carers currently accessing DCATCH (HBP) and also parents/carers forming part of the Nottinghamshire Parent Carer Forum (NPCF) network via the NCC online consultation hub from 5 November to 7 December 2018 regarding the following three options currently under consideration:
 - Immediate Service Withdrawal
 - Immediate Increase to Parental Contributions
 - Phased Service Withdrawal
2. The consultation provided a detailed overview of the proposals being consulted upon and an accompanying rationale as to why these options are being considered, the text seen by respondents is given below:

Nottinghamshire County Council is considering a set of proposals relating to the 'Disabled Children's Access to Child Care' (DCATCH) Home Based Packages (HBP) service these are:

- *Immediate closure of the service, financial support from the Council for DCATCH (HBP) being withdrawn from 1st April 2019.*
- *Increased parent/carer contributions to be more reflective of the national living wage, from 1st April 2019.*
- *Closure of the service from 1st April 2021, with an increase to parent/carer contributions to be more reflective of the national living wage from 1st April 2020.*

Prior to April 2018 the national living wage was set at £7.50 per hour, since DCATCH (HBP) is an individual service rather than a group based service, proposals for increasing parent/carer contributions would see the contribution rise from £3.50 per hour, to £7.50 per hour.

Where, upon increasing the parent/carer contribution, those receiving Direct Payments would see financial support cease, as the overheads associated with providing this support would exceed the amount of support provided.

We would like to know what you think about the proposed options, surrounding issues, and your priorities for the funding of our local services, so that Councillors can make an informed decision about funding DCATCH (HBP).

The survey should take no longer than ten minutes, all responses are anonymous and all survey submissions will be treated as confidential.

The results will be used to guide the decision making process and will be published on our consultation hub, if you provide a contact email when filling out the survey, this will be used to feedback the results of the survey and how these were used.

Background

Like most other local authorities, Nottinghamshire County Council is facing unprecedented financial pressures. Whilst it has made significant savings over several years there is still a budget gap of £54 million. In order to address the budget gap and continue to provide essential services to the greatest number of families, children and young people possible, it is necessary to review non-statutory services such as DCATCH (HBP).

DCATCH (HBP) was originally part of a pilot programme resulting from a central government initiative, which saw ten local authorities receive additional funding to reduce the barriers for participation in mainstream childcare for working parents of disabled children and young people. This pilot was not extended to authorities across the country and the Department for Education ended it in March 2011. However, Nottinghamshire County Council continued to fund the DCATCH

(HBP) service out of the discretionary budget. Additionally, some of the issues around participation that DCATCH sought to address are enforced through Equalities Act (2010), which places greater emphasis upon providers to make their services more accessible to people with protected characteristics, with disability being one of those characteristics.

It should also be noted that there are alternative sources of financial support with child care for working parents such as the Disability Living Allowance (DLA) for children and young people aged under 16, Personal Independence Payments (PIP) for young people aged 16-18, the disability element to child tax credit and help with child care costs for recipients of working tax credit.

The proposals being consulted upon differ in the amount of savings which could be achieved, but there is a potential to realise up to £265,000 savings to reduce the current funding gap and ease pressure on services reaching greater numbers of families, children and young people.

3. The questions asked as part of the consultation on the future of the DCATCH (HBP) service alongside the background information provided, to ensure that respondents had all the information available to them in order to make an informed response are given within table 1 as follows:

No	Background	Question	Answer
1		Do you currently live in Nottinghamshire?	Yes, No
2		Do you currently receive a DCATCH (HBP) package?	Yes, No
3	<p>DCATCH (HBP) is a discretionary service offered by NCC to working parents/carers of disabled children to reduce barriers to childcare affecting their ability to work, which resulted out of a Central Government pilot programme. This service while having a budget which has been consistently exceeded in recent years, serves fewer than 50 families across Nottinghamshire.</p> <p>The pilot programme was never rolled out across the country and central government funding for the pilot did not continue after March 2011.</p>	The first proposal is to consider stopping DCATCH payments from 1 April 2019 to focus resources on statutory services. To what extent do you agree or disagree with this proposal?	Strongly Agree, Agree, Neither agree nor disagree, Disagree, Strongly Disagree, Don't Know
		Any additional comments	Free Text
4	<p>The amount parents/carers had to pay was set at £3.50 per hour in 2008. Since DCATCH (HBP) is a service delivered to individual children within their own home the parent/carer contribution should be more reflective of the national living wage, which prior to April 2018 was set at £7.50 per hour.</p> <p>As such, provider services for disabled children which cost more than £7.50 per hour, will have the £7.50 covered by parents/carers with the excess cost covered by the Local Authority.</p>	The second proposal is to consider increasing contributions for DCATCH (HBP) from parents/carers to be more reflective of the national living wage (£7.50 per hour) from 1 April 2019 to reduce the cost of providing this service. To what extent do you agree or disagree with this proposal?	Strongly Agree, Agree, Neither agree nor disagree, Disagree, Strongly Disagree, Don't Know
		Any additional comments	Free Text
5	<p>Since DCATCH (HBP) is a service aimed at supporting working parents of disabled children so that they have fewer barriers to accessing the workplace, the third proposal recognises that parents/carers may not be able to make immediate changes with employers and will need more notice.</p> <p>This option provides a notice period of at least a year for all parents/carers, while taking action to address the budget as soon as possible.</p>	The third proposal is to consider closing the service from 1 April 2021 with an increase of parent/carer contributions to be more reflective of the national living wage from 1 April 2020. To what extent do you agree or disagree with this proposal	Strongly Agree, Agree, Neither agree nor disagree, Disagree, Strongly Disagree, Don't Know
		Any additional comments	Free Text
6		If the council changes the policy to either increase contributions from parents/carers or to cease DCATCH payments, how would that change things for you?	Free Text

7	DCATCH (HBP) was established as a service which would support working parents of disabled children to be able to participate in the working environment on equal terms with parents of children without disabilities by providing a top-up to the cost of care.	What support would you need if the council made changes to this policy?	Free Text
8		Is there anything else you would like to say about this policy or the options outlined?	Free Text

Table 1. Questions asked of respondents to the DCATCH (HBP) Consultation alongside background information required to make an informed response.

4. The consultation was hosted on the Nottinghamshire County Council consultation hub, links to the consultation were sent out to parents/carers who currently access DCATCH (HBP) on behalf of their child via email or letter at the start of the consultation period.
5. Furthermore, officers consulted with the Nottinghamshire Parent Carer Forum (NPCF) at one of their regular termly meetings on 9 November 2018, it was agreed that NPCF would cascade details of the consultation to their network in order to ensure wider participation in the consultation.
6. The consultation attracted 67 responses, where 21 responses were from parents/carers currently in receipt of DCATCH (HBP) and 46 responses were from the wider network of parents/carers of disabled children.
7. The response rate for the cohort in receipt of DCATCH (HBP) was 45.7%, where the NCC Marketing and Communications Team state that a response rate in excess of 10% represents what could be considered a decent response rate for a consultation exercise.
8. Full consultation response details can be seen within Appendix A.