

## APPENDIX A

### Short Breaks Review and Commissioning Approach document:

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#### Executive Summary

**Purpose** This document outlines the plan for improving the London Borough of Havering's Short Breaks offer for parents, carers, and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND). The proposed plan aims to implement a robust commissioning approach starting on 01 October 2026, based on the findings of a comprehensive service review. The review included feedback from families, carers, officers, and data from the Children with Disabilities (CWD) team and contract monitoring.

**Introduction** The London Borough of Havering, in collaboration with parent groups and partners, has conducted a thorough review of its Short Breaks offer for children and young people with SEND. This review addresses increasing demand, evolving family needs, and the requirement to align with statutory obligations and local strategic priorities. The goal is to ensure that Short Breaks are accessible, inclusive, and effective in supporting both children and their carers.

**Background & Legislation** Local Authorities are mandated to provide Short Breaks designed to offer positive experiences, foster friendships, and develop confidence, independence, social, and emotional skills. These breaks support the personal development of children and young people with SEND while providing a respite for their primary carers.

**Feedback from Parents and Young People** Consultations with parents and carers revealed ongoing concerns about access, variety, and communication regarding the Short Breaks offer. Parents requested more inclusive and diverse activities, better communication, and improved accessibility. There is also a strong demand for overnight respite services and support for older children and young adults.

**Demography and Needs** The increasing population of children with SEND in Havering highlights the need for communication- and sensory-friendly services. Data indicates that 71% of children with Education Health Care Plans (EHCPs) accessed Short Breaks, showing strong uptake but also room for growth.

**Gap Analysis** The review identified gaps in the current Short Breaks offer, leading to spot purchasing to fill these gaps. Spot purchasing addresses unplanned needs but lacks consistency and oversight.

**Current Short Breaks Offer** The current Short Breaks contract, in place since April 2017, has supported children and young people with SEND. However, parents report issues with access and consistency. The review found that a significant portion of the budget was being spot purchased, indicating higher demand for diverse activities.

**Financial Overview** The review uncovered significant overspending against the short breaks budget, with additional expenditure occurring through spot purchasing and direct payment arrangements with un-commissioned providers.

**Recommendations** The document recommends setting up interim commissioning arrangements, developing a flexible Open Framework, and improving user communications. The Open Framework will enable local providers and voluntary Small, Medium Enterprises to express their interest in specific elements of the Short Breaks offer. This approach aims to provide greater opportunities and flexibility for both providers and parents, encouraging innovation and developing a diverse provider market.