

UPDATE ON LEISURE AND SPORTS ACTIVITIES AVAILABLE FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE WITH A DISABILITY OR SPECIFIC NEED IN STOCKPORT

Report of the Director of Children's Services

1. INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 We know from speaking to children, young people and families across Stockport with a disability or specific need (SEND) that they want to be more active. This is reinforced by national surveys carried out by Sport England. Indeed, their latest Active Lives Children and Young People Survey (Academic Year 2019-2020) indicates that there is;

‘... little difference in activity levels between those with and without a disability or long-term health condition.’ (Sport England, January 2021)

- 1.2 This is testament to the determination of children, young people and families to be active but also in stark contrast to findings for adults, where;

‘Activity is less common for disabled people or those with a long-term health condition (47%) than those without (67%)’ (Sport England, October 2020)

- 1.3 Furthermore, there are no reportable differences regardless of the number of impairments a child has (Sport England, January 2021), whereas for adults, activity levels decrease sharply the more impairments an individual has – just 39% of adults with three or more impairments are active (Sport England, October 2020).

- 1.4 This report provides an update on recent and planned support for SEND children, young people and families to access leisure and sports provision. It also outlines the developmental support to enable SEND families to be more active within their daily routines

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Despite the comparable levels of activity for all children and young people, whether they have a specific need or not, SEND families in Stockport tell us that access to formal activity across Stockport can be challenging.

- 2.2 Parent/carers tell us that:

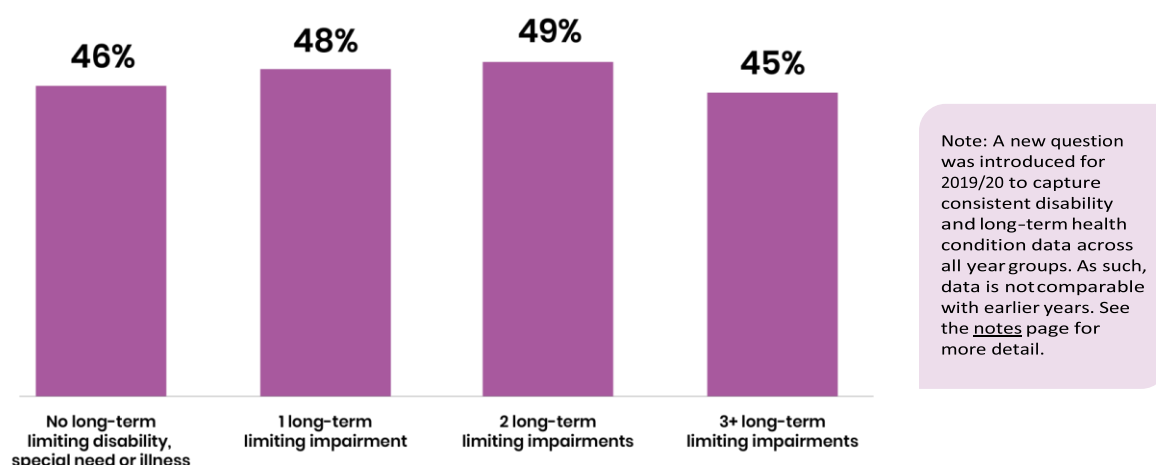
- For their child or young person who has additional needs to learn to swim in Stockport, it is twice the cost to that of a child without a disability. Availability, accessibility and affordability are the main barriers why 152 parent/carers surveyed have not been able to get their child swimming.
- During lockdown, SEND parents reported the difficulties they have had accessing environments safely with their child or young person outside of the home. Cycling is a real issue for parents, with complex systems in identifying what cycle is best for the needs of their child, knowing where to go to purchase one and how or where to access funding for a bike.

- In a survey conducted with 102 parent/carers who have SEND children, when asked about cycling and activity centres;
 - 82% of respondents said that they would use cycling facilities designed specifically with and for disabled people to improve their health.
 - 66% of respondents say they would engage with cycling activities that are casual recreational rides and organised casual rides.
 - 79% of respondents say that they never go cycling with other cyclists, and 17 % only occasionally.
 - 68% of respondents say that they never commute to school, college or work cycling.

(Survey conducted on behalf of Stockport's Active Communities Strategy by the Seashell Trust during 2020)

2.3 Furthermore, although activity levels for SEND children and young people are comparable with all children and young people, less than half of all children and young people are achieving the minimum levels of daily activity recommended by the four UK Chief Medical Officers – that being at least 60 minutes of moderate-vigorous activity per day.

2.4 Active (an average of 60+ minutes a day)



(Sport England, 2021)

3. SUPPORT IN STOCKPORT

- 3.1 Before considering some of the dedicated support on offer in Stockport, it is important to put the provision of bespoke activities into the context that all activities offered by providers, no matter whether public, private or voluntary, should be inclusive for all children and young people. Indeed, any Ofsted registered childcare provision, including sports and activity clubs, would need to offer inclusive provision.
- 3.2 Covid restrictions have had a significant impact on providers of activities for children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), with a number unable to operate due to the impact on staffing or lack of available venues.

- 3.3 A successful summer holiday childcare offer was co-ordinated and made available in most localities in Stockport, including provision for SEND families. Parents were signposted through the usual channels and contacted directly by the holiday clubs. The offer was advertised on www.stockport.gov.uk/childcare and via the various council and school social media channels. Activities were provided in partnership with the Seashell Trust's CADS (Children's Able and Disabled Sports) team, Virtual CADS, More Play More Often (MPMO) and the Museums Service.
- 3.4 For the last two weeks of the summer holiday, Seashell CADS team delivered 8 x 3-hour CADS sessions to 17 children and young people in partnership with Stockport Council's Short Breaks team for families at point of crisis and needing respite. Each individual had four sessions over this period. Seashell staff provided 1:1 support and a range of activities including tennis, athletics, animal therapy, arts and crafts. The sessions were well received by staff and the children and families that engaged in the activities.
- 3.5 In addition, the Seashell Trust delivered a virtual CADS programme with an Olympic theme with participants being entered into age specific teams. There were a range of activity cards, challenges and YouTube led activities. 186 families within the Seashell Closed Facebook group had access to resources and 30 families received an inclusive kit bag that came complete with activity cards, challenge cards and YouTube video led sessions using the equipment.
- 3.6 MPMO worked in partnership with Short Breaks and the Sense Team to provide five one to one support places each day for children to access the service via their own play worker and five places each day for children with additional needs who do not require their own play worker and attend the scheme unsupported. In total, MPMO provided 50 part-funded places each week during the summer holidays.
- 3.7 The Museum's Service offered sessions free of charge at the Air Raid Shelters and Bramhall Hall for SEND and low-income families. In total 20 people attended the free sessions.
- 3.8 The October half-term also included a rich mixture of activities from a wider range of providers due to the lighter restrictions in place at the time. Many of the places available were fully booked including the CADS programme and MPMO, which extended its offer to accommodate additional need. Bramhall Hall and the Air Raid Shelters offered 192 free sessions for SEND family groups of 6, with most of these taken up. Supportability Wheelers also offered 48 sessions.
- 3.9 The holiday planning group has since welcomed representation from the PACTS (Parent's and Carers Together Stockport) group to further develop and co-design the SEND offer for future provision. This will link closely with the Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) programme, an initiative developed and funded by the Department for Education launching in Stockport in February 2021, which will co-ordinate provision for Easter, summer and Christmas. The HAF programme will develop a comprehensive offer of enriching holiday activities and food across the Borough, incorporating SEND provision as a core part of the offer.
- 3.10 To build a clearer picture of SEND engagement across the wider provision, steps are sensitively being put in place to capture SEND information during the registration process with partners, for example, Life Leisure. Whilst some

mainstream activities are open to children and young people of all abilities, it is intended to ensure that the offer is as inclusive as possible with explicit reference to suitability for the varying needs. This will help to ensure that families are aware of the activities which may be available that would possibly be overlooked by families of children with additional needs.

- 3.11 In addition, throughout the last year of varying Covid-19 restrictions, the Stockport SHAPES Alliance (Schools Health, Activity, Physical Education and Sport) has created and sent to all schools simple school-based festivals, with differentiated activities for SEND pupils, covering a range of National Curriculum activity areas. From September 2020, SHAPES have created a variety of virtual differentiated festivals for school to use to enable SEND pupils to access and engage according to their need.
- 3.12 A specific 'SEND Festival' for the SEND Week of Action gave children a pack of activity cards and a poster to take home and keep, so that they could do the festival at home with their families - schools also got a poster and a pack so that they could repeat these activities with their SEND children in school. 312 families received packs.
- 3.13 Since Christmas there has been an increased focus on more activities for children to engage with at home, including a January Activity Challenge, a week-long home challenge for Children's Mental Health Week, some multi skills activities to engage with at home and a Half Term Bingo Challenge – all differentiated for inclusive access.
- 3.14 In addition there has been other support for children still attending school, as well as the annual BE INSPIRED Family Challenge and cross curricular competitions that always attract entries from Stockport's special schools.

4. FURTHER DEVELOPMENT

- 4.1 As well as continuing the further development of activities for SEND children and young people to access, whether that be bespoke or inclusive provision through mainstream activities, a specific programme of work within the Local Pilot Programme work stream of the Active Communities Strategy is focussed on supporting SEND families to **be active** as part of daily routine.
- 4.2 An illustration of this work can be seen through the development of a training course working with SEND families to enable parents/carers to be the 'activity activator' for their child in the home and within daily routines. The methodology provides multi-faceted support via equipment bags, 'live' broadcasts, activity cards, YouTube channels and a 'coach in the room' experience to stimulate activity in the home between parent/carer and child.
- 4.3 The early impact of this work is best communicated through the participant voice;

Nicola's Story <https://vimeo.com/488046570/43ac5e87cc>

Rebecca's Story <https://vimeo.com/488681692/045d496d2a>

- 4.4 Work has now begun to deliver a pilot training programme for personal assistants supporting families to build more physical activity into their support.
- 4.5 Physical education, sport and physical activity not only support the health and wellbeing of individuals but also the wider Preparing for Adulthood core outcomes.
- 4.6 The benefits of being physically active to both our physical and mental wellbeing are well documented, but the wider benefits are also widely understood. Examples would include the opportunities available to develop leadership, organisational, problem-solving and communication skills – all clearly valuable assets for future employment opportunities. The opportunity for social interaction, making friends and developing relationships all support and enhance self-confidence and self-efficacy to help facilitate independent living.

5. CONCLUSIONS

- 5.1 Children and young people with SEND want to be active and are as active as other children and young people but, as is the case with all children and young people, the majority do not meet the Chief Medical Officers' minimum levels of activity each day to support their health and wellbeing in the long term.
- 5.2 SEND families tell us that accessing activity on a daily basis is challenging, expensive and can be a barrier to engagement.
- 5.3 Demand is currently outstripping supply.
- 5.4 The provision of bespoke activities alongside an inclusive mainstream offer plays a fundamental role in both engaging and supporting children and young people in positive activities that not only provide a broad educational and social experience and promote a healthy lifestyle, but also provides important childcare and respite options for parents/carers.
- 5.5 Alongside the provision of formal opportunities, it is important to also continue to provide support and resource to enable families to be active together as part of their daily routine, as evidence tells us that children growing up as part of an active, engaged family become active, engaged adults.
- 5.6 The proposed transition of Stockport Sports Trust (Life Leisure) to a Council owned Community Interest Company provides an opportunity to address some of the challenges around access and opportunity to engage in sport and physical activity, including swimming.

6 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 6.1 Ensure that the proposed Community Interest Company (CIC) contract specification clearly addresses the access and opportunity needs of children and young people with SEND
- 6.2 Use the establishment of the proposed CIC to embed a programme of work experience and apprenticeship placements for children and young people with SEND

- 6.3 Develop a workforce development professional training programme to support providers (including the CIC) to better meet the needs of SEND families to provide a higher quality experience within the improved offer
- 6.4 Better use the Local Offer infrastructure to facilitate a more comprehensive access information pathway for SEND families
- 6.5 The Committee is asked to note and endorse the ongoing support to children and young people with SEND, and their families, to be more active and therefore also contribute to the wider Preparing for Adulthood core outcomes.
- 6.6 The Committee is also asked to endorse the proposed recommendations to both further improve the access to, and experience of, engagement and participation for children and young people with SEND

BACKGROUND PAPERS

There are none

Anyone wishing to inspect the above background papers or requiring further information should contact Russ Boaler on telephone number Tel: 0161 474 3941 or alternatively email russ.boaler@stockport.gov.uk