

Edinburgh Council to stop running a holiday hub site after Easter holidays

Edinburgh Council is set to stop running a holiday hub site after the Easter holidays are finished, leaving its future at risk unless a private contractor steps in.

The holiday hub at Braidburn school was started up during Covid, but a council report says its operation by council staff is unsustainable.

The other holiday hub sites in the city are run by private contractors, with the council exploring options for one to take over operation of the Braidburn site for the summer period.

Denise McGee-Dewar, a member of the REPAIR group which represents the parents of additional support needs (ASN) students, told the Local Democracy Reporting Service: "There is only so much they can expand the provision at other sites.

"It means that families are potentially going to have to travel further. Transport used to be provided, so now parents are going to have to make their own way there.

"If it's public transport, it's not always very easy to access the provision at other places. It makes a very short day for the parents in terms of the time they have to work or do other things."

The staff at the Braidburn holiday hub are seconded from the Seaview scheme, which provides similar respite care for families of ASN pupils.

But a council report says that staff are stretched out covering both schemes, warning that if Braidburn continues to run then the Seaview scheme could have to be closed for the summer.

SNP group leader Councillor Simita Kumar said: "Holiday Hubs have been a vital lifeline for children with additional support needs, and SNP colleagues have consistently advocated for their continuation.

"We are deeply disappointed to hear that parents were informed of the closure of Braidburn Holiday Hubs – this is not a decision made by the committee.

"We have raised our concerns with council officers and remain committed to fighting for the retention of these essential services, ensuring that families receive the support they need."

The SNP's budget motion included extra funding for the Holiday Hubs scheme in their budget proposal, but this was not selected for the final budget passed last month.

Labour councillor Joan Griffiths, chair of the Education, Children and Families committee, said: "What has become clear is that in recent years this essential school holiday support has expanded beyond the point at which it is sustainable in the long-term.

"Our priority for summer 2025 has been on ensuring that allocated places were confirmed at the earliest opportunity for families, within the provision that we had secured and confirmed.

"In addition, in Summer 2025 a total of 192 extra spaces will

be offered to children with complex and profound additional support needs.”

“Our conversations with trusted providers are ongoing to look at if there is a way forward for a holiday hub at Braidburn school, with our key priority to offer a safe environment to children who require school holiday support.

“If we are unable to secure a provider to take over the running of a holiday hub at Braidburn school, we will support these children and their families to access other hub provision in the school holidays.”

By Joseph Sullivan Local Democracy Reporter