

Furious councillors forced to approve closure of holiday hub

Furious Edinburgh councillors have approved a closure of a holiday hub site after being told a lack of staff gives them no other options.

The Braidburn holiday hub will see its provision by Edinburgh Council end before the summer, which will see some families excluded by the scheme due to the unique resources it has.

Carolyn Samson, a member of parent advocacy group REPAIR, said: "Does this council intend to put us through this again in 2026?"

"When this closure goes ahead, a chunk of families will be cut out. This is a scandal."

Parents recently spoke out with outrage after they were told by council officers early this month that councillors had decided to close the site.

In reality, officers had made the decision, and councillors had never approved it – something the council admitted last week

SNP councillors had lodged an amendment calling for the city to keep running the holiday hub, which provides holiday respite care for and relaxation with a very high level of support need.

But shortly before councillors voted on whether to support

this, a council officer told the motion's forwarder, SNP councillor Euan Hyslop, that because officers recommended the closure on health and safety grounds that councillors could not vote to keep the site open.

Council officers are now exploring whether other providers could take over the site – but due to the six month registration time for a new responsible person for the venue, this would have to come after the summer.

Officers have said that they do not have enough staff to run both the holiday hub and the Seaview summer respite service – an argument Samson says could be solved by better management.

She said: “Through mismanagement of Holiday Hubs, they are left between a rock and a hard place.

“You can't cut respite care. It's not fair to put us in this position.”

Cathy Haywood, the officer ultimately responsible for managing the holiday hubs, attended deputations by families of pupils who used the holiday hubs earlier in the day.

But she went home sick before the closure was debated, being replaced by another officer.

Councillor Joan Griffiths, Education, Children and Families Convener said: “Our priority for the upcoming summer holidays was to allocate Holiday Hub places and to confirm and communicate this to families as soon as we could.

“We know how much families need and value this vital support so updating them and offering peace of mind has been our key focus.”

By Joseph Sullivan Local Democracy Reporter