

Statement - Short Break Services



Short Breaks Outcome:

“All children with disabilities in Telford & Wrekin to be given the choice to access appropriate high quality short breaks to maximise their potential and improve the quality of life for them and their families” (OBA meeting with Parents July 2009)

Background

This statement has been prepared based upon a consultative approach to short breaks provision. A three year programme of development involving parents and carers, children & young people and stakeholders preceded the run up to the requirement to prepare this statement. That development process shaped the delivery of services, the workforce requirements; information and communication processes and products and range of provision to meet local identified need.

Section 25 of the Children and Young Persons Act 2008 requires local authorities to provide short breaks for families with disabled children. Regulations relating to this duty which came into force on 1 April 2011 require each local authority to produce a short breaks service statement so that families know what services are available, the eligibility criteria for these services and how the range of services is designed to meet the needs of families with disabled children in the Borough.

How we prepared this statement

This statement has been prepared with the support of the Aiming High Strategic Partnership Group which drives forward the strategic plans for disabled children across the partnerships in the Borough. The Council is committed to the short breaks programme as part of its co-operative approach of bringing together services and delivering services that matter to people and develop our community.

The lead officer responsible for preparing this statement is the Service Delivery Manager, Vulnerable People Commissioning (Family, Cohesion & Commissioning) who takes a lead in developing and commissioning short breaks on behalf of the Local Authority. The statement was subject to consultation and review with partners including the parents and carers forum. The statement is placed on the Council website, circulated to partners and families are made aware of how to access the Statement.

The “Support & Aspirations” Special Educational Needs & Disabilities Green Paper (SEND Reforms) requires local authorities to develop and publish a Local Offer into which this Statement will be incorporated.

How will we review this statement?

As required, this statement will be regularly monitored at the Aiming High Strategic Partnership Group (or its successor group) at which the disabled children’s parents’ forum “Parents Opening Doors” (PODs) is represented. A formal review of this statement took place over the summer of 2012 with partners including parents and carers. A second review took place in October 2013.

This Statement was reviewed with our key partners in PODS in October 2014 and it was decided that a formal review of the statement in line with a review of Short Breaks should take place at the same time given the level of change from the SEND Reforms. Work on this will commence in July 2015 and complete December 2015.

What are short breaks services?

Short Breaks is the term used for a range of services provided for families to give carers of disabled children a break from caring and for children to take part in fun activities and have new experiences away from home. This covers a wide range of provision from universal (open to all without the need for any assessment or specialist support) through to specialist (for example hospices and overnight residential care).

Definition of disability and access to short breaks services

The definition of disability that applies to the short breaks regulations is the definition of disability from the Children Act 1989 where a child is disabled if:

“he is blind, deaf or dumb or suffers from mental disorder of any kind or is substantially and permanently handicapped by illness, injury or congenital deformity or such other disability as may be prescribed”

Children and young people are eligible for short breaks if they have a physical or learning disability, a hearing or visual impairment. It includes children with autism and Asperger’s Syndrome and children who may have challenging behaviour as a result of their learning disability. It also includes children who have complex needs and who may have palliative, life limiting or a life- threatening conditions.

Each child is however a unique individual, with their own personality, needs and strengths and wishes and feelings. They are entitled to make the same choices as any other child. In addition family circumstances vary and we aim to ensure that short breaks provision to individual children reflects their particular needs.

We know from talking to disabled children that the one thing they want most is to be able to do the same things as their friends or non-disabled peers. In the development and consultation processes which resulted in the production of a strategy for short breaks we adopted the iCan2 brand for services commissioned with specific short break funding. iCan2 sums up our approach: all short breaks services aim to enable disabled children to choose and enjoy the activities they want to do just like anyone else. We aim to make

the full range of recreational activities both sport and arts and culture accessible to all children in Telford and Wrekin.

Principles

In Telford & Wrekin all families with a disabled child are able to receive support. Each child is an individual and family circumstances vary. Support will therefore be proportional to their needs. We aim to encourage children and parents and carers to express their needs as they see them to be.

Only when discussion is needed with professionals to decide the best form the support should take, will assessment processes be required. Choice and control is at the heart of Short Break services and we are committed to developing a wide range of activities so that children and young people can decide what they are interested in and parents can receive the most effective form of support to meet their needs. Short Break services are designed to promote a disabled child's development and be enjoyable and fun. In addition parents can enjoy a well-earned break.

Services will be:

- safe
- run and supported by suitably trained staff
- suitable for the child or young person
- influenced by young people themselves
- reliable

Range of provision

We know from what we have been told is that children want lots of activities to join in with like their siblings and peers and activities which are close to their homes and give them new opportunities and experiences. As a result a wide range of provision is available which is flexible and child centred and a flow chart has been compiled to identify how provision can be accessed. This flow chart can be accessed [here](#)

Full information about the range of activities for disabled children may be found in the regular ican2 newsletter; on the Ican2 website www.ican2.org.uk the Council website www.telford.gov.uk and from the disabled children's information officer who you can contact on 01952 385119 and are based at the information hub at Stepping Stones Centre, Malinslee, Telford. Information is also available on a range of services from Family Connect 01952 385385.

Level One - Universal provision

Many activities in the Borough are open to any child including disabled children for example sports and leisure activities, childminders, groups at children's centres, after school clubs etc. Any family can choose to access these services. Some children may not be able to access these services for a variety of reasons and we are committed to overcoming these barriers wherever resources allow. These may relate to the need for someone to accompany the child or the level of skill and training required for staff to care for the child safely.

Universal services

- After school clubs and holiday clubs
- Sports & leisure centres (a disability keyworker is designated for Council leisure centres)
http://www.telford.gov.uk/download/downloads/id/2990/leisure_centre_access
- Youth and community groups/clubs
- Early Intervention Service activities
- Nurseries (some of these have received specific training in relation to disabilities and have disability resources available)
- Childminders (some of these have been specifically trained to care for children with disabilities)
- Arthog and Arthog at Shortwood (outdoor activities and education)
<http://arthog.co.uk/>

Universal plus services

- Sports & leisure activities (computer clubs, sports activities, hydro pool sessions, swimming, sea scooters, specialist go karts and bikes, martial arts, skiing, bowling, Wii games)
- Kreative Kids (Taiko drumming, dance, stories, arts and sculpture, drama & creative movement, music)
- Club 17 (specialist youth club 11 – 25 yrs)
- Access to Activities (A2A) (Monthly Forum for Young People with a Disability **FYPD**, Monthly 16-25yrs activity group, Term Time After School Clubs at Haughton, Southall and The Bridge Schools and Holiday Activities including Day Trips, Play Activities and Family Cinema Outings)
- Sensory Inclusion Facilitator (visually impaired children)
- Dance

Parents and children have expressed difficulties in engaging well with some groups and activities for example football clubs and youth groups. Those difficulties are often due to a perceived lack of awareness of behavior issues which can impact upon the ability to effective engagement with the group/volunteers/co-ordinators. To support children to access community groups we have set up a small grants fund this year which is being offered to voluntary and charitable groups in the local community. This fund will be co-ordinated by the voluntary sector with a panel comprising parent representatives and Council officers and can be used to enable easier access to those groups through funding for training & equipment etc. The PODs Forum is also considering the development of a “passport” to provide universal activity co-ordinators have an awareness of the needs of their child with a disability and give parents the opportunity to share information with them.

Level Two - Additional support to enable access to activities

Where barriers exist the Short Breaks Programme offers support designed to overcome them. Additional support can be accessed through the Programme using the Common Assessment Framework to identify the need and the most suitable solution. As with any child where a need has been identified, the CAF may be supported by a Team Around the Child meeting (TAC). Advice may be given by the Disabled Children – Inclusion & Support Team at this stage. Support will be made available for a specific agreed period, and will be subject to monitoring and review arrangements. This is to ensure that provision reflects changing need. A Support Worker may for example be required only

for the period while a young person is getting used to a new activity and the provider learns how best to meet the young person's needs.

Additional support services:

- Support workers supplied via agencies
- Direct Payments
- Outreach service (Action for Children)
- Summer Playscheme (Bridge Special School)

Level Three - Specialist services

Some forms of provision require a higher level of assessment and this will be done whenever a Lead Professional or parents consider that the child's needs are more complex. A Social Worker in the Disabled Children Team will undertake an assessment using the Children Act 1989. This will take into account the needs of parents and other carers and balance these with an understanding of the best way to meet the child's needs. Overnight care in a Residential or Family-based setting will require this level of assessment to determine the type and level of care which is most appropriate. For children with high level health needs an assessment will be completed for specialist nursing home based respite care. Access to Hospice Care may also be considered for this group of children or those with a life limiting condition (no specialist assessment is required in this case).

Specialist services:

- [Children's Community Nursing Respite service.](#)
- Stars Overnight residential breaks (Action for Children)
- Mencap Overnight residential breaks
- Shared Care Service (support overnight or day care with approved foster carers)
- Independent residential short breaks provision (spot placements)
- Hope House Hospice & outreach www.hopehouse.org.uk
- Acorns Hospice www.acorns.org.uk

Assessment

The level of assessment will be proportional to the need and we will always use information already available rather than subject a family to repeated unnecessary information giving. We will always encourage parents to tell us what would be the most helpful form of support, and we will ensure that support is available at a time when it is most needed. When an assessment by a Social Worker or a Health Professional is needed, this will involve a meeting with the family and other professionals who know the child or young person. Providers of care may, for example need to learn how to look after the child correctly in relation to complex medical needs or manual handling.

Brokerage service

The children & young people's brokerage service will receive referrals from professionals in order to source appropriate provision. The outcomes in these referrals will have been identified through an assessment of need and take account of preferred choices.

Transport

Support may be offered towards transport where the assessment considers this will be necessary. Although the number of breaks will not be restricted from that offered in the Plan, the number of occasions when transport is provided may be limited and family members may be expected to arrange transport themselves beyond an agreed level but requests for transport will be considered where appropriate. It is acknowledged that the provision of transport may contribute greatly to the effectiveness of a Short Breaks service. For this reason transport will not be restricted where it is used to access residential overnight breaks.

Workforce development and safe recruitment

The workforce needs of individuals supporting children on short breaks have been identified and all service providers are expected to engage and participate in relevant training to safely and effectively manage and cater for the needs of all children. Where external services are commissioned under a contract, then the contract contains terms and conditions relating to the training and development needs of staff/volunteers and this is reviewed and monitored on a regular basis. Equally, safe recruitment procedures and policies are required to ensure the well being of children in the care of independent agencies and local authority. A workforce development strategy which includes training for carers of disabled children is in place at the Council and offers training opportunities which are also open to our contracted providers.

Equipment

Specialist equipment has been made available to numerous leisure and community centre and the Town Park in order to meet the needs of disabled children and young people. Investment in this equipment has enabled children to join in with activities that would previously have been inaccessible for example by the use of specialist ski equipment and toboggans, specialist bikes and wheelchairs, adapted minibuses and specialist canoes, dance mats and multi media equipment. Individuals using this equipment have expressed benefits such as:

“My son is now able to go down ski slope and toboggan with an instructor and loves every minute of it. We have also got him out of his wheelchair and is now peddling a go-kart on his own around the track and there was no way 6 months ago he would have been able to move a go-kart using his legs but now he can actually go round the track”.

Charges

Universal plus service have their own booking and charging procedures to fit their service offer these are on the Ican 2 website. All children and young people will be provided with a free flex card which enables them to access sports and leisure short breaks and other mainstream sports and leisure services /facilities at reduced rates. A

family may also choose to make arrangements themselves for transport above the level offered for which they would be expected to self fund. The subsidy charging arrangement can be found at: <http://www.ican2.org.uk/charges.html>

How do we consult with service users and review service provision?

Universal services can be accessed informally based entirely on the choice of the young person and family. Where additional support through the Short Breaks programme is provided, it is important to keep track of this. Monitoring involves a periodic discussion with the child, the family and the provider to ensure the service is still suitable, and that everyone is entirely happy. Some forms of service, for example overnight breaks involve more formal reviews as required by legislation. The purpose however is exactly the same. Reviews may mean the service continues in the same form, or can involve a change in the level or frequency or even a complete change to a different service. Reviews also enable a check on the quality of the service, because we insist that all types of short break are safe, reliable and involve high standards of practice.

The majority of short breaks services have been developed and informed by a commissioning strategy which analysed the numbers of children with disabilities in the Borough, the needs and wishes of families, carers assessments and gaps in provision. The short breaks programme and the services developed as part of the preceding three year development programme were subject to a service review which involved consultation with families and stakeholders via questionnaires, forums and regular and ongoing feedback through service providers and contract review data and meetings.

A young people's disability forum is supported to hear the voice of the child in the shaping of services and the parents forum PODs is a key partner in the development of services and represents the voice of parents on many strategic groups, engagement sessions and via their own forum events and activities. Contact: www.podstelford.org

Complaints

Because we are committed to working in partnership with families to enable high levels of choice of service, we hope that there will usually be high levels of satisfaction. Complaints will however be investigated promptly and openly, and may involve the provider's own system to dealing with complaints. We encourage families to help us to design the right services and we will consult the Parents' Forum (PODS) about these matters. We want our Short Breaks Services to continue to improve and all comments, positive or negative will be used for this purpose.

In the event of any queries or comments in relation to this Statement please contact the Information Officer at ican2information@telford.gov.uk or call 01952 385119

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Telford & Wrekin
COUNCIL