



SHORT BREAKS STATEMENT



PLYMOUTH
CITY COUNCIL

A guide for parents and carers of children and young people with disabilities

ABOUT OUR STATEMENT

This information is for families living in Plymouth who have a child with a disability aged between 0-18 years. It includes information on the purpose of the Short Breaks Statement and the current range of short break services available in Plymouth.

- All local authorities must have a 'Short Breaks Duty Statement' for carers that sets out:
- Details of the local range of services that are available for disabled children and young people and their families
- How the services have responded to the needs of local carers
- How services will be accessed including any criteria against which eligibility for services will be assessed

Our Short Breaks statement was developed in partnership with parents, carers, providers and children and young people. This updated version has been created with these partners to ensure it remains relevant to them.

Background

A short break can be two hours, overnight or longer depending on the circumstances and needs of the disabled child and their family. It can be time spent away from the home, in the community, or in the home with or without the main carer. There should be choice and flexibility for families and the disabled child should enjoy their time spent in a break.

Short breaks should be of a high quality and with different options available, from an evening out with friends to go to a football match, youth clubs to an overnight stay.

Disabled children, young people and their families should:

- feel and report that they are well supported
- are able to have a well needed break on a regular basis, if required

The priority groups for short breaks are:

- children with a diagnosis of Autistic Spectrum Disorder coupled with challenging behaviour
- children with complex health needs
- disabled young people aged 14 to 19

The following groups help to plan what short breaks are

available in Plymouth:

Parent Reference Group

The Parent Reference Group provides an opportunity for parents of disabled children to be involved in planning, monitoring, and evaluating the short break services ensuring that their views influence the planning of all services for disabled children. The group links to the Parent & Family Forum and other elements of the parent participation strategy for the city.

Parents/carers can find out how to get involved in the Parent/Carer Reference Group by contacting Plymouth Parent Partnership on 01752 258933 or visiting www.plymouthparentpartnership.org.uk

Aiming High Strategic Oversight Group

The group provides a forum for partners where work plans can be developed along with a shared framework and implementation plan for Aiming High for Disabled Children. The group provides expertise, advice, guidance and support to specific working groups in order to meet the objectives, outcomes and milestones laid out in the Aiming High for Disabled Children Commissioning Plan. The Strategic Oversight Group also supports, monitors and challenges the work of the groups that report to it in order to be able to produce positive outcomes for children and their families.

Consultation

Aiming High for Disabled Children has brought about a transformation of services for disabled children and their families by increasing the range and quality of services available. Key to this has been a positive change in the design of services through the influence and active participation of well-informed parents/carers and disabled children.

Increased transparency, particularly around the eligibility criteria for services, and more easily available information has empowered families and supported them in developing their understanding of what services they can expect and how to access them.

Children and young people

Those planning short break services in Plymouth have the needs and wishes of children and young people at heart. The views of children and young people are gathered on the services that they access and those they'd like on an on-going basis through formal and informal consultations. Young people have told us that they want short breaks to include better access to universal services such as youth clubs and leisure activities so time away from their families is fun and with friends and brothers and sisters.

Here is some of the feedback received from children and young people following their short break:

“Having being told I have ASD it has been a lot to take in. But today I felt accepted, appreciated and that I'm OK. At school I often don't feel that around my peers.....”

“I feel safe and look forward to Dodge ball and Nerf, I like that the coaches are always happy”

“I'm glad it's in the same building each time, I feel comfortable and like all the sports”



Families

Parent's views have been at the heart of the vision for the development of short break options to ensure that services can support disabled children in ways that suit them and their families.

The Plymouth Parent Reference Group which is facilitated by Plymouth Parent Partnership is the formal route through which commissioners, service providers, and all statutory groups consult with parents/carers of disabled children living in Plymouth. When consulted parents said that this was their preferred method of consultation to avoid having to attend many meetings with commissioners and others.

The Forum ensures that membership of the CHIDS parent/carer reference group is representative of a range of views from families of young children and young people with a disability. Views have also been sought through a number of discussion meetings chaired by a local MP.

Here is some of the feedback received from parents and carers following a short break:

“Short Breaks allow families to have a rest and a break from normal routine. Which is great as long as you can leave your child with suitably trained carers. They need a break from us too.”

“something to look forward to and somewhere to go to do his own thing”

“it's more than just summer activities, he loved the whole day. Just being with other like-minded people and the workers are great, kind and encouraging. It was amazing!”.

“This summer has just been so good for (name omitted), every time I came to pick him up he was always chatting and laughing with the other children. It's such a big thing for him to meet other kids and make new friends”.

“He is starting to open up more and be more enthusiastic about sport rather than his game console, these sessions are certainly having a positive influence socially and with his confidence” - from a parent.

Voluntary and Community Sector

Consultation with providers, specifically those from the voluntary and community sector, has been undertaken both formally and informally. A Provider Forum for providers of short break services for disabled children and young people was established in 2009. The Forum provides regular opportunities to share best practice and to feedback to commissioners.

Plymouth Children's Trust has representation from the voluntary and community sector on both the Board and the Executive. There is a well-established VCS Forum which provides a venue for commissioners of services to engage with the sector on a number of levels.

Here is some feedback from providers:

"It is great to be delivering a program of activities that seem so well received by both parents/carers and the young people themselves. We are proud to be part of this service and do all we can to ensure that what we deliver is of the highest standard. Feedback from both parents/carers and young people is always great and really re-enforces our belief in the power of youth work for ALL young people"

"I would like to say that as a provider we find delivering short break activities to be extremely worthwhile.... to be accessible to a wide and varied audience where we can provide a range of activities to children and young people across the city."

Eligibility

The Aiming High for Disabled Children transformation agenda required local authorities to increase the numbers of families eligible for short breaks and improve the experience and range of services for children with disabilities and complex health needs and their families by being as comprehensive and flexible as possible.

The range of short breaks available to families of disabled children has grown and includes many opportunities for disabled children and young people to take part in a wide range of activities that other children can experience.

Access to specialist services is through the Short Break Resource Panel following an assessment of need. The assessment carried out will depend on the individual level of need.

As part of the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) process the Single Point of Contact (SPOC) service has been established to offer earlier interventions for children with disabilities to prevent problems escalating and to increase the likelihood of a positive outcome for children and their families. The SPOC is the main route of access to multi-agency services within Plymouth's Integrated Disability Service (CHIDS) and Child Development Centre (CDC).

The Eligibility Framework is included in the statement as Appendix 2 and this describes how families are able to access short break services.

Short breaks

Short break services enable parents to continue caring for their disabled child at home and reduce family stress. Our local approach to providing short breaks in Plymouth is for short breaks and support services to reinforce the family in delivering care and support for their disabled children. Short breaks are an integral part of an early intervention strategy. Having a good level of provision that meets the needs of the families requiring support prevents crises arising later on.

Research shows that timeliness, reliability and regularity are key to families feeling able to continue coping. Having easier and speedier access to more and varied opportunities, means that families often need less support than if they have to wait for more specialist services.

Families now have a number of very different short break services from which to choose. These include:

Short breaks - universal services

Following extensive feedback from families an increasing number of short breaks services are now available to access directly without the need of a formal assessment. Following a self-assessment families are able to book through a brokerage service a short break holiday activity for their disabled child.

Plymouth Children's Trust is committed to ensuring disabled children can access positive experiences and families can get the support they need in universal services, such as Children's Centres, early years services, extended

services in schools, sport, youth and leisure services.

A programme of extensive workforce development has been established to support access to universal services for disabled children and young people. Inclusive training opportunities have provided a 'can do' approach and have given individual practitioners in mainstream provisions the opportunity to challenge barriers to inclusion that may still exist in some community groups who may not have worked with disabled children before.

Plymouth Children's Trust also offers disabled children individual support through the Inclusion Works service, which is delivered at three levels according to the needs of the individual child.

Short breaks – specialist services

Some disabled children are not able to access mainstream activities for a short break and so attend specialist services. The quality and range of specialist services has been transformed in recent years so families now have a choice of high quality residential, group activities and individual support.

A high percentage of the specialist holiday activities are open access which means that families can self-refer (do not have to go through a formal assessment process) to access them.

Plymouth Children's Trust also commissions a number of specialist and targeted short break services for disabled children with complex needs. They are provided for children with the most complex needs and include care support within and outside the home, overnight short breaks and access to family based carers. A full list of specialist short break services is attached in Appendix 1.

Some families choose to employ their own carers rather than access a service. Direct payments are used to fund these individual services, which provide parents/carers with more choice and flexibility over their short break. The Direct Payments service has been completely transformed over the last year and now better meets the needs of families who employ their own carer. The monitoring of payments has been simplified to be less onerous and the support service has been reconfigured to provide timely and appropriate support for families.

Transition to adult services

As part of the Aiming High for Disabled Children transformation programme there has been a focus on improving every aspect of the transition to adulthood for disabled young people and their families. This has raised the profile of transition across specialist and universal services to promote disabled young people having the same rights and opportunities as all young people. The aim has been for young people to report improvements in their experience of transition.

Grant funding is being used to support young people's participation, advocacy, person-centred approaches and piloting individualized budget for disabled young people over 16 years old. This has included an 'Appreciative Enquiry Event' with young people and their parent/carer. Services have been established to support families through the transition process.

These include :

- services to provide short break opportunities for Person Centred Planning with the disabled young person to encourage them to be actively engaged with decisions affecting their future. To achieve this goal the service uses creative activities to engage the young person in exploring their likes and dislikes and what their aspirations for the future might be.
- an independent advocacy service for disabled young people who are in transition to adult services. The Disability Advocacy Service works with, and on behalf of, disabled young people to ensure that their views, wishes and feelings are known; that they are included in decisions being made about them, and that children's rights, dignity and equality of opportunity are promoted at every opportunity.

Continuing improvement

Workforce development

- Training and professional development is offered to all staff and volunteers of providers throughout the Children's Trust delivering short breaks services for disabled young people. The standards used to quality assure training will be the Children's Workforce Development Council Training, Support and Development Standards for Short Breaks Carers.

- Training and development will be delivered through the workforce development portal and will be relevant to the market place and will be delivered to meet the identified needs needed to upskill the whole short break provider workforce to be able to deliver quality short breaks for disabled children.

Outcomes for families

- Short breaks delivered through activity-based clubs enable families to have breaks from the responsibilities of caring in ways that work for them and enable disabled children to enjoy ordinary life activities that their non-disabled peers can 'take for granted'.
- Disabled children, through accessing more universal services, are becoming more 'visible' and thus more present in their local communities. This enables non-disabled people to perceive them as part of the community and builds up mutual understanding and respect.

- All parents have a need to have some time for themselves. Short breaks make it possible for parents of disabled children to have that space and time which is so important to self-esteem and personal health and well-being.
- Regular and reliable short breaks can enable parents of disabled children to undertake training, leisure opportunities and self-care activities that are available widely to parents of all children. The responsibilities of caring for a disabled child can often prevent them from accessing these and this is inequitable.



APPENDIX I

Directory of Specialist Short Break Services

Domiciliary care /nursing and enabling services

These services are provided to support parents and carers to meet the needs of their child within the family home. The service is designed specifically around the needs of disabled children and young people and the overall aim is to support them in developing skills which will enable them to participate more fully in the community.

The features of the service may include the following, but are not be limited to:

- Personal care
- Short breaks for parents
- Short term care of siblings to allow parental care of child with disabilities
- Domiciliary support – such as cooking, cleaning, ironing, shopping, etc. The demand for this type of support is likely to be limited

The supplier contributes towards the outcomes for each child as stated in the individual care plan and includes individual SMART targets.

The organisations who currently provide domiciliary and nursing care in Plymouth are:

- Sanctuary Homecare Ltd
- Allied HealthCare Ltd
- Rosta
- Scope
- Premier Care

Family based short breaks

- The Service has the dual function of providing an appropriate short break activity for the child or young person and a short break for the parent or carer. It also enables children and young people to experience an extended range of supportive relationships within a family based environment and will:
 - provide a regular break from caring for parents and carers
 - minimise the need for individual residential placements
 - provide parents and carers opportunities to spend time with their other children
 - enable the children and young people to achieve the outcomes stipulated in the individual care plan around independent living skills, socialisation, behaviour management, emotional development,
 - physical development;

The service is delivered through the in-house service and cost and volume providers

Specialist group based short break services

Adventure Breaks Service (Hamoaze House/Routeways)

Disabled children and young people may miss out on positive interaction with peers and the wider community as their social skills are often underdeveloped. This may lead to isolation from family members and the community, with children and young people becoming disengaged with learning, which can in turn significantly reduce their life opportunities and prevent them from achieving their full potential.

The holiday and weekend short break service is targeted to meet the needs of children and young people who have moderate to severe physical, learning disabilities or other additional needs. The service enables them to develop the personal and social skills that come from day to day interaction with their peers within community settings. The service also develops the confidence of children and young people through providing opportunities to take part in inclusive play, leisure and social activities.

Residential short break and overnight services

Downham House

The service provides a residential weekend and holiday short break service and an after school curriculum extension service for children and young people with the most complex care needs who are assessed as having severe learning disabilities and/or complex care needs including those on the Autistic Spectrum.

Downham House works in partnership with the child or young person and their parents/carers to support the objectives of the overall care plan and purpose of placement. Children and young people accessing the service are able to enjoy leisure, sport and play activities in a safe environment for themselves and others. Their emotional and physical health is promoted and their social skills are developed so that children and young people within this group are able to develop positive relationships with their peers, family and participate in the wider community.

Wood View Short Break Unit

This service has been developed to provide residential short breaks for children and young people and is targeted to meet the most complex care needs of those referred via the care planning/review process and agreed by resources panel against the eligibility criteria.

The individual outcomes for children and young people will be defined in the care plans, but in general they are able to enjoy the time that they spend in the residence and be facilitated to access leisure and social activities in a safe environment for themselves and others. They will experience supportive and therapeutic interventions, which they themselves identify as positive and their emotional and physical health is promoted. Carers and families are able to spend quality time and enjoy their short break in the knowledge that their child is well cared for.

Targeted/Specialist Holiday Activities

During the holidays a range of providers ran targeted or specialist activities of disabled children and young people.

Inclusion Works

This service provides inclusion support for disabled children and young people to access mainstream holiday play and activity schemes and leisure services for example: sports or uniformed groups. Individual support is offered to families in a number of ways depending on the assessed support needs of the individual disabled child or young person. In this way the Inclusion Works Service supports the development of choice for families at the same time as developing the confidence of families for their disabled child to access mainstream holiday and leisure activities.

TR2

Are providing a series of workshops on drama and the visual arts. The drama group focuses on basic drama games and skills. In order to aid communication a variety of theatre techniques are used depending on the needs of the young people. This might include physical, vocal, mask work and dance/movement with music. The Visual Arts group will also spend time learning basic visual arts techniques such as printing, painting and mask making which will form an exhibition at the end of the project.

Plymouth Youth Sailing

A series of half day sessions for up to 6 children and young people on each session split into 2 age groups. If the young people attend more than one session they will be awarded certificates using the Royal Yachting Association schemes. Plymouth Youth Sailing hold a number of accredited awards for quality and safety Royal Yachting Association Recognised training centre status and are inspected every year for quality and safety.

Plymouth Argyle Trust

The sessions create an opportunity for young people to participate in a fun, action-packed multi-sports course, as well as interact with their local football club.

The course is a mix between practical sports sessions, as

well as exciting workshops with different professionals working within a football club including the head grounds man and Argyle chef. Each practical session is delivered towards a fun and challenging ethos, giving the young people the chance to enjoy themselves, make new friends and an opportunity to feel part of a team. The coaching sessions are delivered by professional Plymouth Argyle coaches; ensuring high-quality provisions will be made accessible.

Diggin It in the Park

Multi-activity programme designed to provide short breaks for parents/carers of Children and Young People on the Autistic Spectrum Condition with accompanying challenging behaviour. The activities are based around the theme of Horticulture and Bush craft, with some offsite outdoor education activities. These activities provide opportunities to socialise, have fun, build confidence/self esteem and allow families to experience a short break from their caring role; confident in the knowledge that their children are growing and learning. The programme is delivered by a highly qualified and experienced team.

Horizons Children's Sailing

The course is run in Hawk 20 open keelboats, these are world renowned boats suitable for young people whatever their age, experience or mobility to become active participants in the sailing activity. A days sailing allows them (if they wish) to take part in all aspects of making the boat work, hoisting and controlling sails and steering etc. These boats are the staple workhorse of Disability (RYA Sailability) sailing schools across the UK. Horizons are a Royal Yachting Association (RYA) Registered Teaching Centre authorised to issue sailing certificates for young people that take part in the National Sailing and Sailability Sailing Schemes. The course is run by an experienced RYA Senior Instructor supported by RYA Instructors and RYA Assistant Instructor.

The Beckly Centre Ltd

Children and Young People (CYP) participate in a multi-activity informal mix of social and community activities such as cinema, swimming, going to the park, sports along with general recreational interests such as music, computer, cooking and crafts, with emphasis on leisure and fun. Throughout there are linked themes that encourage the

acquisition of life skills for example: first aid, personal safety awareness, using public transport and healthy life styles. The project operates using a mix of venues and resources including the Beckly Centre as available through Routeways.

Scope

This holiday activity offers children and young people the opportunity to take part in beach activities days during the summer holidays. The day involves meeting at the Scope resource centre and travelling to Donderry where the day is based around the community hall, the Coastal Zone, close to the beach and green areas. Scope Inclusion is trained to support a wide range of disabled children including ASC and ADHD, PD and sensory impairment.

Wheelfever - Creative Dance Holiday Activities for Disabled children and young people.

The Creative Dance Holiday Activities provides approximately fifteen disabled children and young people three-hour creative dance sessions at WoodView Dance Studio. The sessions offer a fun and creative dance experience through imaginary tasks and games. Feedback, from participants and parents of previous holiday dance activities, have been consistently positive, with recurring comments about how much fun they are and how they encourage confidence, develop physical awareness and improve the ability to express ideas and aspirations.

The lead dance practitioner is experienced and skilled with working with disabled children and young people and will take over all responsibility for the sessions. A dance support worker will be employed to ensure participants are able to engage within the sessions. To enable the children and young people to attend independently and to ensure parents can enjoy the short break, we employ two trained care/inclusion workers to support personal care needs.

YMCA

The programme of activities is predominantly sport and activity focused but includes sessions of fun games, music and dance. In addition to sports hall usage, included in the cost of facility hire is the use of one classroom each day for the young people to use as a quite 'time out' space. Supervised activities in this space include arts and crafts, films and use of computers.

Plymouth YMCA is in discussions with Stepping Stones to Nature to jointly facilitate outdoor activities including nature walks, forestry skills and adventurous play through the Ham woods area that is currently being re-developed

Plymouth Music Zone

Plymouth Music Zone offer experiences for disabled children and young people to attend workshops aimed at delivering a mixture of multi-sensory and instrumental based creative music making here at our facility in Devonport working with up to ten participants per one and a half hour session. All staff working with these groups are enhanced CRB checked and fully qualified and trained to work with young people from a variety of backgrounds including young people with complex health needs, autism and those who are registered disabled.

All of the young people involved will have direct access to innovative activities that engage and raise aspirations, increase confidence and self-esteem, enhance communication skills and ability to work as part of a group. The workshops also support the improvement of their emotional well being and develop motor-skills and cognitive skills and very importantly enable them to have fun.

Hamoaze House

A range of activities delivered on and off site providing opportunities for Children and Young People to build confidence, self worth and self esteem. These activities provide specific focus on continuous development of pro-social skills, including conflict resolution, problem solving and working as part of a team. Above all Children and Young People on the activities have fun and enjoy a range of experiences that they will cherish. The programme is delivered by a highly qualified and experienced team. The activities include: Climbing, Canoeing, Moorland Walking, Forest Schools, Trampolining, Skittles, Gymnasium, Football, Badminton, Fishing, Swimming, etc.

No Limits

The No limits activities are focused on young people aged between 12 and 18. The No Limits team value the opportunity for young people to socialise with their peers, and the subsequent benefits of this which include improved self esteem and social interaction skills.

APPENDIX 2

Eligibility Criteria

The Short Break Eligibility Framework

The Short Break Eligibility Framework is designed to clarify:

- How Plymouth Children's Services identify needs of children who are disabled and their families using different types of assessment to access a range of short breaks opportunities.
- How decisions are taken as to what type of support may be available for the child and the family using the information from the assessment
- Types of Short Break Services Available

The Short Break Eligibility Framework was written to demonstrate how it is the needs of the child and the family that decide what services are to be provided. To understand the needs of the child and the family an assessment is required.

The type of assessment and the services that are provided are linked to the needs of the child and the family. The child's diagnosis or type of impairment is not used to decide what services are offered but will be considered in the assessment

Assessment is the gathering of information about what is happening and making a judgement as to what is required. Assessment is not something only undertaken by professionals. Parents frequently undertake an assessment of their circumstances and look for solutions to meet their needs. For example, the parents may feel that they could do with a night out and they arrange a babysitter. This is an assessment of their circumstances by the parent, but it does not require recording on a file

If the child or the family who are aware of their circumstances are unable to find a solution to meet their needs within their family network they may approach friends or professionals to help them. The assessment becomes more and more complex as the child or family identify many needs dictate families cannot meet those needs they may require professional input and possible services to help them meet any appropriately identified needs.

Here in Plymouth there are three different levels of assessment:

- Self assessment
- CAF/ Professional Assessment
- Child in Need assessment

These are dependent on level of need and the type of service that is needed. Plymouth Children's Services maintain a principle of undertaking the right amount of information gathering so that a timely decision can be taken around what is needed and the child and family have the minimum of intrusion and disruption in their lives.

Although there are different levels of assessment available which we consider to be a positive option for families, we acknowledge that , a disabled child is identified as a "child in need" in section 17 (5)of the Children Act 1989. Therefore a "child in need " assessment can be requested for a disabled child. This assessment would incorporate the consideration of access to short breaks.

The Short Break Eligibility Framework has been written to show in an open and transparent way how Plymouth Children's Services are fair in how decisions are taken and services allocated.

The Short Break Eligibility Framework was written by the Aiming High Short Breaks Project Board and Plymouth Children's Services as part of achieving the full service offer for Aiming High Short Break Transformation. We have worked in partnership with parent / carers nominated by the Parent Reference Group to help to develop the framework.

The Short Break Framework Eligibility does not conflict with our statutory responsibilities.

The Short Break Eligibility Framework

How needs are identified	How outcomes are agreed	Type of service	Staff training	Communication to families
Services that are available to everyone or “Universal Services”_ No eligibility criteria required				
Assessment type: Informal self assessment	Parent / Child	Extended services such as youth clubs, Scouts, swimming, Guides, drama clubs, sports and leisure		Leaflets, newspapers, websites, other promotions
Eligibility (1) Services for people who need additional to universal services or “Targeted/Preventative Service”				
Assessment type: Self assessment Common assessment framework	Parent / Child, Lead Professional Keyworker, Locality Team - Team Around the Child	Extended services such as Home support, domiciliary care, some direct payment, sessional support, childcare, befrienders various, other	Policy guidance, team meetings, briefing sheets, screening tool	Consultation, newsletters, website, local parent groups
Eligibility Criteria (2) Services for people who need additional to targeted/preventative services or “Specialist Services”				
Assessment type: Initial, core assessment	Mainstream, Child Care Teams	Home support, domiciliary care enablers, family based short breaks, befrienders, direct payment, overnights, sessional support, various other	Policy guidance assessment framework, team meetings, briefing sheets	Consultation, newsletters, parent council accessible notes, website, local parent groups, workshops, discussions with lead professional,



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