

## SHORT BREAKS STATEMENT

A guide for parents and carers of children and young people with disabilities (updated September 2019)



The Short Breaks Statement gives parents and carers of children and young people with disabilities aged 0–18 living in the city information about short breaks and how to access them.

We define disability in accordance with the Equality Act 2010 as:

“Having a physical or mental impairment that has a ‘substantial’ and ‘long-term’ negative effect on your ability to do normal daily activities.”

This statement gives you information about:

- What is available?
- Who can use the service?
- How to access services?
- How short breaks can meet the needs of disabled children and young people and their families?

Section 25 of the Children and Young Persons Act 2008 requires every local authority to provide services designed to assist individuals who provide care for children with disabilities to continue to do so, or to do so more effectively by providing them with breaks from caring.

### DEFINITION OF DISABILITY

The Equality Act 2010 defines disability as when a person “*has a physical or mental impairment, and the impairment has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-day activities*”

Children and young people are eligible for short breaks when they have a profound and complex physical or mental impairment, which has a substantial and long term effect on their ability to carry out day-to-day activities.

Where the assessment identifies that specialist services are required, the local authority has a duty to provide services designed to:

- Maximise life opportunities and participation of children and young people with disabilities;
- Give children and young people with disabilities the opportunity to lead lives which ensure they reach their potential.

## OUTCOMES AND IMPACT OF SHORT BREAKS

### What have we achieved so far?

- Children and young people with disabilities are able to access a wide range of short breaks that enable them to enjoy ordinary life activities through activity-based clubs or individual packages of care and support which enable families to have breaks from the responsibilities of caring in ways that work for them
- Children and young people with disabilities are becoming more 'visible' and thus more present in their local communities through accessing universal services and activities. This enables non-disabled people to recognise and understand their role in the community and this builds up mutual understanding and respect.
- We have strong participation groups that represent the views of children, young people and parents/carers. The groups have seats on all SEND strategic boards and co-design services for disabled children.
- Short Breaks make it possible for parents and carers of children and young people with disabilities to have that space and time which is so important to self-esteem and personal health and well-being.
- Regular and reliable short breaks enable parents and carers to undertake training, leisure opportunities and self-care activities that are available widely to parents of all children and enables them to develop their self-esteem, self-confidence and maintain their own health and well-being.

## CONTINUING IMPROVEMENT

### What still needs to be done?

- To achieve sustainability of Short Breaks, redesign work needs to continue on the inclusion/ short break services to ensure there is capacity within the market to provide value for money and high quality Short Breaks for families.
- We need to improve the access to universal services for children and young people with disabilities. This will be achieved through improvements to the communication of the Local Offer.
- We need to continue to ensure that the voice of children and young people and their parents is heard in the SEND Integration processes and all service design and governance structures.
- A review of the choices available to families for Short Breaks needs to be carried out with all stakeholders to ensure that the range continues to meet the needs of families

## WHAT HAVE FAMILIES TOLD US?

Here is some of the feedback received from parents and carers following a Short Break:

### Routeways

“My autistic son loves his time there {Routeways}, I trust the staff there implicitly, he feels accepted and part of the group, it benefits him greatly, cannot thank them enough for all the work they do”

“Fabulous supportive staff my son cannot wait for sessions here he is developing friendships and learning new skills.”

“Great resource with lovely staff and always a warm welcome 😊”

“they are fantastic with him and they take the children on many trips, he always comes back full of smiles, you all do a brilliant job. We get chance to spend quality time with his sister, would recommend any parent of children with extra needs to allow them spend time at this great place with these hard working volunteers.”

### Wood View Short Break Service

“As a family, we are extremely happy with our child’s transition to respite at Wood View. We’ve been guided right from the very beginning of the process and kept informed step by step.”

“Overall we are extremely happy, and I’m sure our child is too. We look forward to him spending more quality time at Wood View for daytrips etc. and seeing his confidence grow outside of the family home.”

### Comments from families who attend the Family Sports days

“This allows us as a family to enjoy activities together. Most clubs are only for the gifted children. This allows us to join in and celebrate what our children can do as a family”

“Fantastic day for whole family with good variety of sport. Fun and laughter had by all.”

## INFORMATION ADVICE AND GUIDANCE

General information about Short Breaks can be found on the [Plymouth SEND Local Offer](#).

The Local Offer provides information about the local clubs, groups and activities available in Plymouth.

Where the level of need associated with the child or young person’s disability, or the impact of the disability on family life means that an individual assessment of need is indicated, referral can be made through Plymouth Children’s Gateway Service. The Gateway has been established to provide an early help response for families to ensure problems don’t escalate and to increase positive outcomes for the children and their families.

When you speak to one of the Gateway team they will ask you some questions about you, your family, and the impact your child's disability has on your family's life. They will also ask you to give your consent to share this information so that the best help can be found for you.

The information that you provide will be used to make a referral to the Short Breaks Team who will then contact you to talk about the numerous options for short breaks across the city.

Anyone can refer to the Gateway by either ringing 01752 668000 or by emailing [gateway@plymouth.gov.uk](mailto:gateway@plymouth.gov.uk). This could be a parent/carer, a family member or someone who is already working with the family.

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The information that you provide will be used to make a referral to the short breaks team who will then contact you to talk about the numerous options for short breaks across the city.

[Plymouth Information, Advice & Support for SEND](#) (PIAS) provides the information, advice and support service, relating to Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), for young people, parents and carers within the Plymouth Local Authority area

[Plymouth Information, Advice and Support for SEND](#) can be contacted by email at [pias@plymouth.gov.uk](mailto:pias@plymouth.gov.uk) or call 01752 258933/0800 953 1131

## WHAT ARE SHORT BREAKS?

Short Breaks are activities that give children and young people with disabilities or additional needs a chance to:

- have fun and try new things
- make friends and join activities
- gain confidence and independence
- children and young people can enjoy a change of scene and a break from the home environment.

They also give their families and carers a break from the demands of caring for their child. This means parents and carers can have time to:

- spend with each other
- spend individual time with their other children
- relax

Short Breaks promote the health, safety and well-being of children and young people with disabilities. They should be fair and equitable and provide the right level of support at the right time and offer activities outside their family home.

A Short Break vary from two hours, a day activity, overnight or longer depending on the circumstances and needs of the child or young person, 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 child or young person should enjoy their time spent in the Short 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 or youth club to an overnight stay.

Children and young people with disabilities, and their families should:-

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

Plymouth's approach to providing Short Breaks is for services to bolster the family in caring and supporting their children. 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. Short Breaks are an integral part of an early help for SEND strategy; providing a good level of provision that meets the needs of the families requiring support prevents crises arising later on.

Families have a wide variety of very different Short Break services from which to choose depending on their presenting or assessed need.

## RANGE OF SHORT BREAKS

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

### Universal

Universal services, for example extended school activities and youth clubs, are important in ensuring children and young people with disabilities have fun and enjoy themselves with friends, just the same as other children and young people.

Plymouth Children's Partnership is committed to ensuring children with disabilities can access positive experiences and families can get the support they need in universal services, such as Children's Centres, early year's services, extended services in schools, sport, youth and leisure services. Children and young people with disabilities will not need an assessment to access universal services, apart from any criteria operated by each organisation.

We will continue to work to promote inclusion and support universal services to meet the needs of children and young people with disabilities

### Targeted

We recognise that families may have additional needs when they are raising a child with disability, and that the children and young people may need extra support, either short or long term, to be able to take part in activities. Targeted services aim to offer support to encourage children and young people to try new activities in a safe environment.

Short break targeted services are specifically for disabled children and access is not necessarily dependent on a formal assessment. Key user groups will be children attending special schools or

support centres, who are known to inclusion services or who are recognised as having an autistic spectrum condition, particularly with associated challenging behaviour or learning difficulties, those with sensory and/or physical impairments.

### Specialist

Some children and young people with disabilities are not able to access mainstream activities for a Short Break and therefore 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 for their child. Specialist services are available to children and families where the child's assessment and parent carer assessment identifies this as the appropriate support to meet assessed needs. These services are provided to children and families with the most complex needs and include services in or away from the child's home and could be with family based carers or residential services.

### Family /sports fun days

Provide inclusive opportunities for children and young people with disabilities, and the whole family, to enjoy some time together taking part in a variety of sporting/fun activities

### School holiday breaks

Offer a range of opportunities for children and young people with disabilities throughout the holidays. These include, football coaching, sailing and adventure activities.

### Group based activities

There are a number of providers of specialist group activities for children and young people with disabilities. Each service has its own criteria and the support levels are much higher in order to be able to support access to the community.

### Specialist youth clubs

Provide a weekly youth club for young disabled people to meet, socialise and consider youth issues in a supported environment.

### Overnight breaks

Sometimes families need to have an overnight break from their caring role and short breaks are offered in either of our residential Short Break children's homes as well as family based overnight short breaks delivered by specialist foster carers in and around Plymouth

Direct Payments  
Personal Budgets

Some families choose to obtain their own services through a direct payment which enables them to provide a Short Break for the family in a variety of ways including employing their own carers. The Council has a contract with a support service to provide advice to families to set up the payment and take on employment responsibilities.

## HOW CAN FAMILIES ACCESS A SHORT BREAK?

In Plymouth we recognise that caring for a child or young person with a disability places additional burdens on your caring responsibilities. All parents and children should have the opportunity to have a break and need to know what services are available according to their level of need. Our eligibility for services is based on being fair and open and treating everyone equally. We are committed to making sure children and young people with disabilities are able to enjoy opportunities which promote their wellbeing and development. We also want to make sure that we are able to help families access the right level of support at the right time.

Direct Access

Families can 'directly access' many of the activities and groups available across the city without the need for a full assessment from the local authority. Families can contact our Short Breaks brokerage service, which is delivered by [Routeways](#), who will support you to find either a mainstream activity or an activity that provides extra support for your disabled child. If your child needs additional support to attend a holiday activity then the brokerage service will talk to the organiser of the activity and arrange extra funding for up to ten days of holiday activities without the need for a full assessment.

If these direct access activities are not able to provide the level of support needed for your child then a full short breaks assessment can be requested through Plymouth Children's Gateway Service.

Assessment of Need

When it is indicated that more support is needed for a family than the direct access short breaks can provide, an assessment of needs can be carried out by the local authority. An assessment is the gathering of information about what is happening and making a judgement as to what support is required. The type of assessment carried out will depend on the individual level of need and can include a Child in Need assessment and a Parent Carer assessment.

Short Breaks Assessment (Early Help)

Most of the city's children and young people with disabilities do not require an assessment from a social worker to determine the level of short break they need. In Plymouth these assessments are

carried out by the Short Breaks Team. This involves a member of the team visiting you to discuss short breaks and establishing with you what support is best to meet the needs of you and your family.

### Single Assessment (Children's Social Care)

A Single Assessment is an in-depth assessment from a social worker which addresses the central or most important aspects of the needs of a child and the capacity of his or her parents or carers to respond appropriately to these needs within the wider family and community context.

### Parent/Carer Assessment

The aim of a Parent/Carer's assessment is to give you a chance to tell social services about the things that could make looking after your child easier for you. This assessment focuses on you as a parent and your needs. It will also consider your wellbeing, including health and safety issues, and important commitments like relationships and employment. This assessment will be taken into account when deciding what, if any, services to provide to support the child and the family.

Following assessment, if there is a need for an individual care package and specialist services, a request is submitted to the Disabled Children's Resource Panel. This is a group of professionals from various services that support children including health and social care professionals. This multi-agency approach ensures that a balanced decision can be made when deciding how public monies are spent. Plans are reviewed on a regular basis with the family to ensure that they continue to be appropriate to the assessed need.

## PREPARING FOR ADULTHOOD

At all levels of provision, we want services to support young people with disabilities as they prepare for adulthood. As children get older and become young adults, it is important that they are provided with opportunities to take more control over their lives and become directly involved with choices. They should be supported to make decisions for themselves wherever possible. Universal, Targeted and Specialist Services should provide opportunities for young people with disabilities to develop their independence and life skills, including decision-making skills and how to manage risk.

Preparing for adulthood means preparing for:

- Higher education and/or employment
- Independent living
- Participation in society
- Being as healthy as possible.

We want the transition to adulthood to be an exciting and optimistic time for young people. We want to support them as they become young adults and take their place in the world. More information about Preparing for Adulthood can be found on the SEND Local Offer here:

<https://www.plymouthonlinedirectory.com/plymouthlocaloffer/adulthood>

With regard to Short Breaks, young people who are preparing to leave school and take the next steps towards their adult life are supported with age appropriate short breaks across universal, targeted and specialist services.

All young people who are assessed as eligible to be supported under the Care Act 2014 and meet the threshold for services from Adult Care, are likely to be assessed for an individual budget.

Services have been established to support families through the transition process.

These include:-

- Short Break services to provide opportunities for Person Centred Planning with the 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](#), delivered by the Highbury Trust 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.

### Review of the Short Break Statement

We review this Short Breaks Statement annually. We do this by consulting with our partners and schools, Parents, Carers and young people.

The updated Short Breaks Statement is approved by the SEND Strategic Group before publication on the SEND Local Offer.

We welcome feedback on the Short Breaks Statement at any time, and feedback is considered in the annual review. You can do this by completing a comment/feedback form on the [Local Offer](#)