



# Halton's Short Breaks Statement

Halton Local Offer



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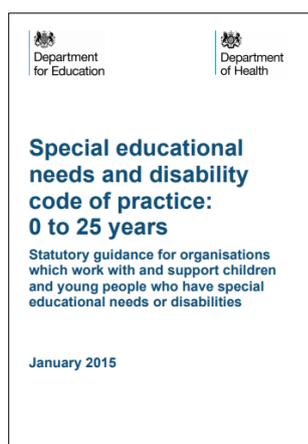
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## What is a Short Break Statement?



The Breaks for Carers of Disabled Children Regulations April 2011 introduced the requirement for all Local Authorities to produce a Short Breaks Statement about the services available to disabled children, their families and how they could access them.

The Statement must be reviewed to ensure that the information is amended when services change or new ones are developed.



The Children and Families Act 2014, Special Educational Needs and/or Disability (SEND) Reforms introduced changes to improve services for children and young people with SEND from ages 0-25. As part of the new changes, all Local Authorities had to establish a Local Offer to inform children, young people and their families about services locally available.



[Halton's Local Offer](#) is a user-friendly website providing information, support and advice in themed sections for children, young people, their parents/carers and professionals.

Information which supports this Halton Short Breaks Statement can be found on Halton's Local Offer [Leisure](#) and [Children's Services](#) sections.

We hope you find the information useful, if you have any queries about Short Breaks please contact the **Disabled Children Service** by email: [DCS@halton.gov.uk](mailto:DCS@halton.gov.uk) or Tel: 0151 424 4686.

## Halton's Vision for Short Breaks

Halton's Children's Trust has produced the Halton Children, Young People and Families Plan (CYPFP) 2018-2021 which highlights the aims and values for all children and young people living in Halton. It states that:

*'Our ambition is to build stronger, safer communities which are able to support the development and learning of children and young people so they grow up feeling safe, secure, happy and healthy, ready to be Halton's present and Halton's future.'*

It sets out 3 main areas for improvement for the next 3 years. These are:



To access the CYPFP please click [Halton's Children, Young People and Families Plan 2018-2021](#)

In Halton, we have developed a Vision for Short Breaks in partnership with young people, parents and carers and other agencies.

*"Halton's vision is to extend the quantity and quality of Short Breaks to ensure that disabled children, young people and their families have a choice of services, increased access to inclusive services and opportunities towards independence. We will continue to develop engagement with families and young people towards the provision of flexible and responsive services that are child and family focused, and led."*

We established the principle that, in Halton, we understand that families of disabled children want to lead ordinary lives. They want to provide the best care and opportunities for their children to feel safe, and to be healthy and happy.

We are continuing to develop our range of services in line with the 3 priorities in the CYPFP and we hope this will help families of disabled children lead a more 'ordinary' family life within their communities.

We are committed to:

- Supporting disabled children and families to take part in local community life;
- Providing clear information for families about support, services and how to access them;
- Providing choices for disabled children and their families to help them make decisions that can best improve their daily lives;
- Listening to the views of disabled children and families so we can continue to improve the quality of their lives;
- Working in partnership with disabled children and families to ensure their involvement in decision making, regarding the development of support services;
- Supporting disabled young people to become more independent through a smooth transition into adulthood;
- Providing services that enable families of disabled children to have an improved quality of life within their communities.

## What is a Short Break?

Local authorities must provide Short Breaks services for carers of disabled children to enable them to continue to care for their disabled child and to participate in everyday activities. In particular they must provide a range of:



- Day time care in the homes of disabled children or elsewhere;
- Overnight care in the homes of disabled children or elsewhere;
- Educational or recreational activities for disabled children outside their homes.



These services must be available in the evenings, at weekends and during school holidays. They must be regular and reliable but local authorities should offer experimental and innovative options to families. Carers' breaks are to be used as a preventative measure and should not just be available to a few families in crisis.

Local authorities are required to take into account the needs of those families whose children have profound and multiple impairments, and families faced with continuing demands for parental care and attention, for example because of their child's complex health needs or behavioural difficulties.

Provision must be culturally and age appropriate and fit for purpose so that certain groups are not disadvantaged in accessing Short Breaks. Those children with profound and multiple disabilities are likely to require specialist provision which must be available within the range of Short Breaks services on offer to families.

Since 2011, we have regularly consulted with families and disabled young people to review Halton's Short Breaks provision and used the information supplied to assist in the development of those services and the commissioning of all Short Breaks contracts.

## Who is eligible for a Short Break?

Children and young people aged 0–18 years whose daily lives are substantially affected by one or more of the following diagnosed conditions:

- A hearing impairment;
- A visual impairment;
- A learning disability;
- A physical disability;
- A chronic/life threatening physical illness;
- A communication disorder (including autism);
- A consciousness disorder (e.g. epilepsy);
- A mental health condition.



Their condition should usually be expected to last for **more than 12 months** and have a **substantial effect** upon the child in more than one of the following areas:

- Physical ability;
- Communication and understanding;
- Awareness of risk and danger;
- Behaviour;
- Independence.

We understand that children and young people may also be disadvantaged because of other factors, such as their environment; other people's attitudes; poverty and social exclusion. However, these factors alone do not entitle them to be considered for Short Breaks services.

Each child and family will have different needs and the impact of the child's disability needs to be considered against what would usually be expected for any child of the same age. Their family's circumstances will also be different and so it is important to assess how their situation impacts upon their ability to lead an ordinary life within the community. Halton's Short Breaks assessment process is explained in more detail in the section called 'How can families get a Short Break?'

## Halton's Short Breaks Offer

Halton Borough Council offers a range of Short Breaks and support services for disabled children and their families in conjunction with private and voluntary providers who receive Council funding to deliver services on their behalf. In effect, we offer a continuum of support that is based on the level of need the child and family requires. This can range from lowest levels of support, for example signposting to the more complex levels of need which would require a higher level of support.

In Halton, local community services are available to all children whether they have a disability or not and can be accessed directly without any formal assessment. These include Children Centre activities, Youth Provision, drama groups, sports activities, uniformed organisations and faith groups. See Halton's [Local Offer](#) for details.

We have developed a range of Short Break services that are available to disabled children and their families without the need for additional assessments. Your child might already have one or more of the following:

- An EHC Plan;
- Individual support at school for 15 hours or more.

If this is the case then you could be eligible for Short Breaks and you can access these services without any formal assessment:

- Teenage group activities;
- Family events;
- Disabled sports activities;
- Accessible youth activities;
- Themed group projects.

## Short Breaks Offer Additional Information

Some of the services are free of charge however, you may be required to provide a small sum of money to cover resources and refreshments for the group sessions.

You will usually be required to transport your child to an activity and pick them up afterwards. In certain circumstances transport might be offered to a child for a specific activity if an assessment establishes that it is appropriate to fund all or part of the transport costs.

Similarly, parents may be asked to provide a packed lunch, spending money for some trips or a contribution to certain activities which may be for longer outings or special occasions.

More details can be found of the services provided in the Halton Short Break Services Guide. Other additional activities that may be organised throughout the year can be found on [Halton's Local Offer Leisure section](#).

## Short Break Services Provided by Health Services

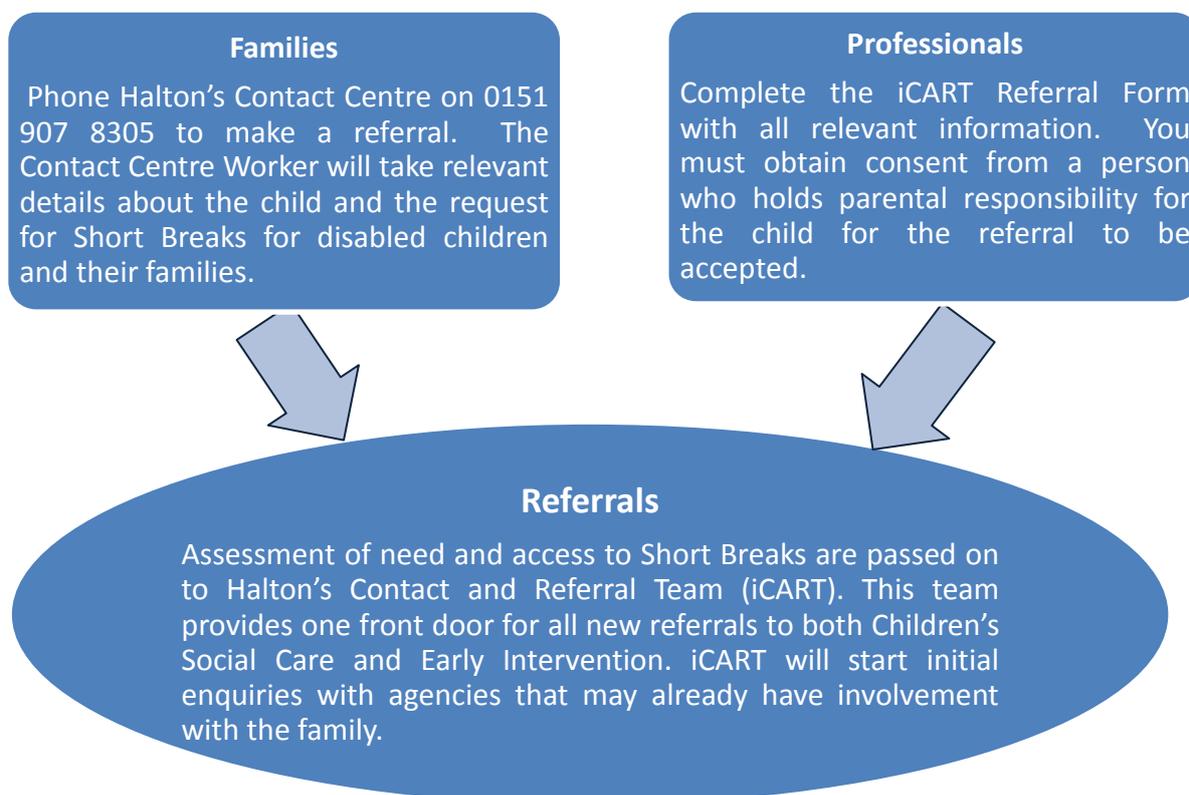
Provision for Short Breaks for children and young people with complex health needs is provided in a number of ways across Halton from Health Services. This is usually in collaboration with colleagues from other services and, in some cases, delivered through joint funded packages of care agreed at by Senior Managers in Health and Children's Social Care.

### How can families get a Short Break?

Families can access Short Break services via Halton's model of Early Intervention and support. It is called 'Team Around the Family' (TAF). The aim of the model is to ensure that appropriate help and support is offered to families as soon as additional needs are identified. By offering support to the whole family at an early stage, we can help prevent further difficulties arising in the future and more specialist interventions becoming necessary.

The Disabled Children's Service is part of 'Team Around the Family', which also includes other services such as parenting support and Children Centre provision. The service continues to benefit from staff with specialist knowledge around disability, but they work closely with the staff in Halton's Locality Teams to share their knowledge and experiences with colleagues who also provide Early Intervention for some families of disabled children. All these professionals provide a whole family approach rather than just focussing on the needs of the disabled child.

### What is Halton's referral process?



## Assessment, Planning and Review of Short Break Services

iCART will decide the level of need for each referral using [Halton's Level of Need Framework](#). If they decide it meets:

- Levels 1 or 2 they will pass the information to the Disabled Children Service (DCS). The team's Practice Manager and Senior Family Worker will check that the child's needs meet the eligibility criteria for Short Breaks. If so they will consider if it is appropriate to signpost the family to the community based activities or whether further assessment is required at Level 2 and the case will be allocated to one of the Family workers in the team.
- Level 3 and there are no safeguarding concerns, they will pass the information on to the Social Worker in the Disabled Children Service who will complete an assessment to identify the level of support required and the most suitable services required to meet the child's assessed needs.

### UNIVERSAL and LEVEL 1

#### **NO ADDITIONAL ASSESSMENT REQUIRED LOCAL COMMUNITY SERVICES**

Some families just need access to information about local activities and inclusive services in their community. At this level of need, the Disabled Children Service can provide relevant information and signpost families to appropriate services. If necessary they can make contact with the service provider to facilitate a smooth entry into the activity.

### LEVEL 1 and LEVEL 2

#### **CAF/EHC Assessment LOCAL COMMUNITY SERVICES + CONTRACTED SERVICES**

- The DCS Family Worker will use the information from existing CAF/EHC assessments to discuss the child's needs and provide advice on appropriate short breaks via contracted services and the option of a Community Activity Personal budget. They will engage with the current planning and review process i.e. CAF/EHC.
- The agency that is providing the contracted short break service will complete an individual plan to ensure that the child's needs are met when attending the group.
- The DCS will monitor the plan through the providers' quarterly contract reviews to show the positive outcomes for the child and family. If the agency or the family has concerns about the suitability of the service they can refer back to DCS to consider appropriate alternative services.
- If the family opt for a Community Activity Personal Budget instead of contracted services the DCS Family Worker will complete Halton's Resource Allocation System (RAS) using the CAF/EHC Plan Assessment information and the RAS Guidance Notes. (RAS is a points system used to say how many hours of service might benefit the family and the type of services appropriate to meet the child's needs.) See Halton's Local Offer for further information.
- If a CAP budget is agreed then the DCS worker will complete a Short Breaks Plan to coordinate and manage the short breaks service and monitor the funds administered to the family.

## LEVEL 2

### **CAF/EHC ASSESSMENT INDIVIDUAL SUPPORT + ANY OF ABOVE**

- If the CAF/EHC assessment indicates that a child may need a more specialised service with individual support the DCS Family Worker will complete Halton's Resource Allocation System (RAS) using the CAF/EHC Plan Assessment information and the RAS Guidance Notes. See Halton's Local Offer for further information.
- This service provided may be via agency support, a commissioned service or an Individual Support Personal Budget.
- The DCS Family Worker will set up a Short Breaks Plan to co-ordinate and review the service to ensure it is meeting the needs of the child and family. This will be included in the CAF/EHC reviewing process.

## LEVEL 3

### **SOCIAL CARE SINGLE ASSESSMENT OVERNIGHT CARE + ANY OF ABOVE**

Disabled children with more complex needs or those living in more difficult family circumstances may require a higher level of support. In these cases, the Social Worker will complete a Single Assessment of the child's needs and include consideration of the appropriateness of Short Breaks as part of the package of support for the family. Short Breaks will be reviewed as part of the Social Care Plan.

If the family circumstances change and a Social Worker is no longer required, but the child is still accessing a Short Breaks service then the Social Care Plan will end and the support will be managed at Level 2 as above.

## Short Break Contracts

New contracts were awarded in 2019, to continue Halton's programme of Short Breaks delivery. Following a tendering process a range of Short Breaks services were commissioned:

- Specialist group activities for family and children/ young people;
- Inclusive Play services;
- Consultation for disabled young people.

Young people and parent/carers attended consultation sessions to inform the decision making.

The new contracts were awarded to two small local providers and one larger private provider all with experience of delivering Short Breaks:

- Group Activities – Core Assets Children's Services
- Play Services – Halton Play Council
- Consultation with Young People – Halton Speak Out

Halton has also commissioned 5 organisations using small grants to deliver small group activities to supplement the larger contracted services. They are easily accessible and details can be found in Short Breaks Services Guide.

In cases where it has been identified that a disabled child/young person requires individual support to access a Short Break, Halton has access to a range of care agencies to provide this support. The DCS worker will work with the family to commission a bespoke service to meet the child/young person's needs. An individual contract will be drawn up and reviewed by the worker and family as part of the review of the child's CAF or Short Break plan.

## Family Events

Halton Disabled Children Service (DCS) organise various family events throughout the year, usually during school holidays. They are available for all families of disabled children living in Halton and provide an opportunity for all the family to have fun and get to know other disabled children and their families.



These are publicised on the Local Offer where you can also find information about previous events in [Case Studies](#) section. These activities have been very popular and as demand is high you will need to book with the DCS team if you wish to attend one of the events.

## How can families find information about Short Breaks?



Activities/services that are recognised as being accessible for disabled children, young people and families will have the Aiming High logo displayed on their flyers, posters. Information on activities can be found on [Halton's Local Offer Leisure](#) section.

## Personal Budgets for Short Breaks



Some families might prefer to arrange their own service for greater flexibility and choice of activities that may be suited to their child and family's needs.

The budget is provided **instead** of a service delivered via Halton Borough Council contracted Short Breaks services **not in addition to those services.**

The process for accessing a Personal Budget is, initially, the same as any other Short Breaks service and is explained in the section – Assessment, Planning and Review of Short Breaks.

Halton currently has 2 types of Personal budget available for Short Breaks, these are:

- A Community Activity Budget which can be used to purchase different activities in the community for your child to access;
- An Individual Support Budget which can be used to employ a Personal Assistant to support your child either in the home or outside in the community.

If the Lead Professional for your family is a Social Worker, they will complete a Single Assessment. This will establish the level of support that is appropriate for your child and family which will include consideration for short breaks services. They will discuss appropriate services which may include a Personal Budget.



**Short Breaks Support Allocation Document**



This Allocation tool provides a simple way of identifying the amount of support a disabled child or young person may require to enjoy a short break experience. It should be completed using the information from the child's assessment i.e. EHC/CAF/Continuing Care Assessment etc. and the Profile document together with discussions with the child/young person and those closest to them.

It is not intended that this will provide a detailed description of the child's needs as this should already be available within their latest multi-agency assessment (CAF, EHC, CIN)

This document looks at the following areas of the child or young person's life and their family's circumstances.

1. CHILD OR YOUNG PERSON'S DEVELOPMENTAL NEEDS
2. FAMILY FACTORS

Once completed it will produce an Indicative score that will represent the level of support that the child / young person is likely to need to enable them to have a positive, fun experience with a short break service in the community.

If the Lead Professional is a Family Worker from the Disabled Children Service, the number of hours of short breaks service is established by the completion of a Resource Allocation System (RAS).

The worker will use the information from your child's assessment of their needs i.e. EHC/CAF to identify the number of hours of short breaks support available to your child and family each week. This is then linked to a maximum allocation of funds to be made available to provide a short breaks service.

The RAS system, RAS Guidance Notes and relevant documents can be found on [Halton's Local Offer Leisure](#) section under 'Short Breaks'.

Each child that receives a Short Break via a Personal Budget will have an individual plan which will be reviewed and amended when required.



**Short Breaks Support Allocation Document Guidance**



This document aims to guide professionals when they complete the Support Allocation Document by providing a set of standards for each level of support for each section. This will help to provide a consistent approach to establishing children's support needs that is equitable and transparent.

The Support Allocation table sets out the types of service available at each level of support that are most likely to deliver the outcomes for the child and their family as identified within their support plan.

## Personal Budgets for Short Breaks: Where can I find more information?

Halton Borough Council's Personal Budget Policy can be found on [Halton's Local Offer Education, Health & Care Plan](#) under 'Education, Health & Care (EHC) Plan'.

The Short Breaks and Personal Budgets Guidance can be found on [Halton's Local Offer Leisure](#) section under 'Short Breaks'.

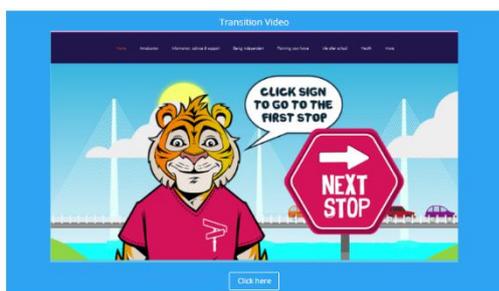
## Transition and Preparing for Adulthood



Transition is the process that occurs when young people move from Children's Services to Adult services.

This usually happens when young people reach their 18th birthday but the Transition process begins when young people are 13 years plus.

Transition (Preparation for Adulthood) is usually started at school review meetings when young people start to make plans about what they want to do in the future for when they leave school.



More information can be found on [Halton's Local Offer Preparing for Adulthood \(PfA\)](#) section.

Check out the Transition video produced by Halton Borough Council and young people from Halton Bright Sparks.

## Transition in Short Break Services

The Breaks for Carers of Disabled Children Regulations 2011 states that Short Break services should be provided, appropriate to the age and needs of disabled children.

Whilst some services are available for children from aged 0-18 years, others are for specific ages.



- Children Centre sessions are for those children aged 4-8 years;
- Play services are for those children aged 5 to 12 years;
- Youth services are for those children and young people over the age of 10 through to 25 years.

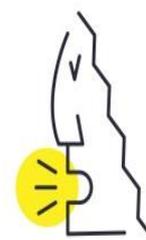
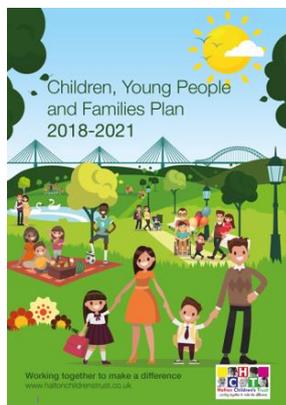


It is important that children are supported during transition from one service to another; that the young person and family are aware of the choices available to them; and that they are fully involved in the plan to move on.

Service providers will review the child's needs and work with staff in Children Services, the young person and their family to agree how this should happen. They are also involved in the transition planning when young people move on from children's activities to activities within adult services when the young person reaches their 18th birthday.

## Consultation and Participation

Consultation and participation are key elements to the development of family-centred services, having a positive impact on disabled children and their families. We have developed a number of mechanisms which we use to gather information from young people and carers.



RAISE YOUR VOICE

This feedback helps to develop strategies, policies, wider Council plans and service provision, for example, Halton Children, Young People and Families Plan.

## Short Breaks Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities Privacy Notice?

Halton Borough Council collects and is responsible for collecting and holding certain personal information about you/your child in order to carry out its duties under The Breaks for Carers of Disabled Children Regulations 2011.

Halton Borough Council collects and is responsible for collecting and holding certain personal information about you/your child in order to carry out its duties under the Children and Families Act 2014 for children and young people with Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities (SEND).

Information collected will be securely stored on the Management Information System used by the Council. We have appropriate security measures in place to prevent personal information from being accidentally lost, or used or accessed in an unauthorised way.

We limit access to personal information to those who have a genuine business need to know it. Those processing your child's information will do so only in an authorised manner and are subject to a duty of confidentiality.



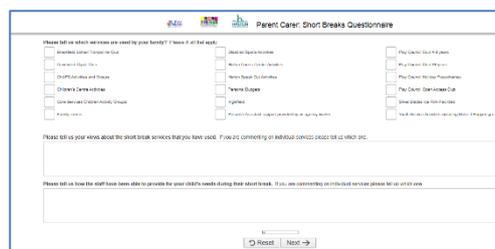
Further details can be found in the Privacy Notice on [Halton's Local Offer Education, Health & Care Plan](#) under 'SEND Privacy Notice'.

## How Do We Gather Your Feedback?

We use a number of ways to gather your feedback, this includes:



Online questionnaire for children/young people about Short Breaks



Online questionnaire for parents/carers about Short Breaks

These questionnaires can be found on [Halton's Local Offer Leisure section](#) under 'Short Breaks'. These tell us about your experiences of Short Break services and ideas about any gaps in services to help us to commission and develop new services.



Bright Sparks consultation and participation group help us to seek views, feedback and help us to review our Short Breaks services.



Families can talk to any of the staff delivering the Short Breaks services to share their views or concerns about the services they use. Workers routinely gain families views when discussing the assessments, Short Breaks plans and reviews.



Staff from Disabled Children Service attend Halton SEND Carers Forum, Support Groups and information events at a range of locations across the Borough to advise on Short Breaks Services.



Disabled Children Services organise regular Coffee Mornings and Evening Sessions for parents/carers of disabled children to share information about services and gain feedback from families that enable them to develop future services.

## Consultation and Participation Groups - Overview



**Halton SEND Carers Forum** aims to be a voice to inform service providers of the needs of disabled children and their families.

It facilitates two-way communication between parent, carers, families and services used by children and young people with Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities (SEND) in Halton.

The Forum provides feedback on services, offer constructive challenge to current services, input into decision making and planning for future service provision. The Forum believes that by working co-operatively with local service providers parents and carers can contribute to improvements in the services delivered for children and young people with SEND by:

- Through regular communication with parent and carers, ensuring they are able to decide whether to be involved in a piece of work/consultation;
- Ensuring a diverse forum membership and representation of diverse views from SEND children, young people and parent/carers from all backgrounds and sectors of the community;
- Promoting a reputation and image of the Halton SEND Carer's Forum which reflects its aims and values.

More information can be found on [Halton SEND Carer's Forum website](#) and the [Forum Facebook](#)

**Bright Sparks** is a consultation and participation group that supports young people with SEND to give their views on services in Halton that are provided to support them. The group is supported by a local self-advocacy group Halton Speak Out.



Bright Sparks also help with the plan new services and strategies for example, Halton Children, Young People and Families Plan.

If an organisation wants to find out what young people think about their service, they can contact the [Bright Sparks](#) at Halton Speak Out to hear views/ideas and talk to other young people with disabilities.

Bright Sparks also facilitate a [kite mark project](#) that support children and young people with additional needs to check out venues and facilities in Halton. If these meet the standards for the kite mark they will be given the Bright Sparks Kite Mark Award.

The [Bright Sparks Short Breaks Video](#) is available as an accessible version of this Short Breaks Statement.

## Monitor and Review of the Statement

We monitor the quality of the services through our contract evaluation system. We will also work with our providers to respond to comments and suggestions from families regarding future service development.

Short Breaks Online Questionnaires can be found on [Halton's Local Offer Leisure section](#) under 'Short Breaks' for parent/carers and children/young people to share their views, ideas, suggestions for further improvement or help us to identify any gaps in services to help us to commission and develop new services.

Both Bright Sparks work with Halton Borough Council and partner agencies to influence the development of Short Breaks services in Halton. Young people are always welcome involvement from new members who wish to play a key role in influencing the future shape of services in Halton.

The Team Around the Family Services welcome contact from families to hear your views, staff will continue to meet and speak with families at information events, coffee mornings and consultation sessions. They will also collect views from individual young people and carers through their direct involvement with them throughout the year.



This statement has been updated to reflect changes in service delivery. It takes into account the views of families of disabled children, parent/carer groups, disabled young people and service providers. We welcome comments about this Statement and any suggestions on what would make it more useful for families.

Lastly, we would like to thank all the people who have contributed to this statement, particularly Bright Sparks and Halton families that have kindly allowed us to use their photos in this Short Breaks Statement and the professionals who have supplied us with information about the services they provide.