

# SHORT BREAKS FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES IN MIDDLESBROUGH ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA Revised May 2017

## **What are eligibility criteria?**

Eligibility criteria help us decide whether a child, young person or family is able to have a service. Eligibility criteria should be easy to understand so that families and professionals know about the levels of service available and who is able to have those services.

## **Who might be provided with a service?**

Children and young people with disabilities aged 0-18 and their families are able to access short breaks, although not all short break services available are appropriate for the full age range.

## **What is a disability?**

There are many different definitions of disability but short break support is for those children and young people who cannot do many of the things that most children their age can do. This might be because they were born with a condition that has an effect on their lives or because they had an injury or illness that has a long-term effect. Usually they are children and young people who are likely to need ongoing support from services in adult life.

This would include children and young people with a disability who:

- Need more help and support than others of their age to do all the things that children and young people enjoy - this might include having interesting things to do, spending time with friends, or going out to youth clubs or groups.

- Need more help and support than others of their age to be safe - this might include having someone to be with them to help them stay healthy or to make sure they do not get hurt.

### **Why a short break service?**

Most families spend time together but often children and parents like to have some time to themselves to do the things they want to do - to take part in a particular activity or to just "chill out".

In most families this happens as part of daily family life - perhaps a friend offers to baby-sit or a child plays with friends. As children grow older, they do not need someone with them as much and parents can do things together. Young people spend time on their own and by the time they are 16 may have very independent lives.

For some families it is not that easy. The child may need additional support, which means that friends do not feel able to baby-sit. Children and young people may need someone with them all the time and parents may feel that they can never have a break. The child or young person might not spend the time away from parents that helps most young people to become more independent.

Many families enjoy a short break together - away from home and from their normal routines. They go out together, have days out, weekends away or perhaps take a longer break. This helps families enjoy being together and can make families stronger.

For some families this is more difficult - they may find it hard to go on outings with people who do not understand their difficulties or they may need additional help to care for their child while away from home or only be able to stay in certain types of accommodation.

Middlesbrough Short Break Service exists to help children and young people and their families have the sort of short break that other families take for granted.

### **Middlesbrough's Vision for short break support**

On December 1st 2008, Middlesbrough parents and professionals agreed the following vision for short break development in Middlesbrough.

"Disabled children, young people and their families are involved in developing a range of flexible, and easily accessible, high quality short break services and activities, enabling them to reach their full potential and maintain family stability - make it so!!!!!"

This vision will be reviewed and confirmed by the Joint Short Break Planning Group in 2018 as part of the Short Break Statement Review.

### **What short breaks are available?**

There are many different types of short break service and not all of them are right for every family. Some are available to many families; some are intended for those families who need most support. Short breaks are tailored to meet the needs of the child and their family.

Short breaks might include the following:

- The child or young person attending after school youth clubs, play schemes or activity groups that are available for all children.
- The family taking part in social events, activities or outings together.

- A support worker taking the child or young person out, or helping in the home - the worker may be employed directly by the family, or provided by the Council or by another agency.
- The child or young person spending time at specialist group or club or at a short break centre.

### **How do families get short breaks?**

This depends on how much support they need. Some families need only information and advice in order to find the short break they need. Other families may need a low, medium or high level of specialist support.

### **Families who need information and advice**

Some families with a child with a disability do not want nor need specialist short break support. Their child can attend youth clubs, groups or centres which can meet their needs - most services are now working towards being able to provide a service to all children.

These families are entitled to receive newsletters and information. They can join the texting service, which gives them information about events. The Family Information Service has information about sports and leisure activities for children and young people. They can also take part in days out and events that are organised for families who have a child with a disability in Middlesbrough.

There are no formal eligibility criteria for the above. Families can choose whether they access this information or whether they have copies of the newsletter delivered.

A range of information is available on the Middlesbrough Council Website, including the Family Information Service and the Local Offer. The Family Information Service can provide advice on childcare, finances, parenting and leisure activities. The Local Offer provides information and advice on the services available for young

people aged 0-25 with special educational needs and disabilities. Schools also can provide information about activities.

### **Family Information Service and Local Offer.**

**Address:**

Acklam Green Centre  
Stainsby Road  
Middlesbrough  
TS5 4JS

**Telephone:**

01642 354200

**Email:**

[childcare@middlesbrough.gov.uk](mailto:childcare@middlesbrough.gov.uk)

**Opening times:**

Monday - Thursday: 8.30am - 5.00pm  
Friday: 8.30am - 4.30pm

Information is also available on the Parents4Change website [www.parents4change.co.uk](http://www.parents4change.co.uk). Parents4Change is a group of parents/grandparents and carers in Middlesbrough influencing the development of local services for children with disabilities.

### **Families who need a low level of support**

Some families may feel that they cannot use the services described above and need some additional support. They may feel that they or their child need a specialist short break service.

Families who need a low level of support may include those where the young person's condition is well controlled, or the impact on the child is not substantial and does not make their needs very different to other children.

Families who need a low level of support can request a small budget of up to £2000 using the Direct Application Scheme to organise or purchase a short break service if they feel that:

- Their child or young person needs support to go out and do the things other children their age do.
- They need someone to help them in the home because their child needs additional help.
- They need assistance to go out as a family because their child's additional needs make it impossible for them to go out without support.

Families can decide themselves whether they need this service. They would need to complete a simple application form. Support can be offered if needed. They would need a letter of support from a doctor/paediatrician/community nurse, teacher or other professional who knows the child well. This professional would be asked to confirm that the child cannot do the things that children of their age would usually do because they:

- are blind or deaf
- have a learning disability
- have a physical disability
- have a social or communication difficulty
- have consciousness difficulty
- have a severe health problem

A Panel will look at the Direct Application. The family will receive a letter, either to confirm that a budget is agreed or to ask for further information. The budget can be held by the Council or by the family. It can be used to access a short break in a number of ways - for example the family might:

- use a direct payment to employ a support worker
- use the budget to buy a service from the Council or another agency
- Purchase a place in a group or club which suits the family's needs.

Families can contact the Short Break Facilitators on 01642 579169 who can help them complete the application and think about the best service for them.

### **Families who need a medium level of support**

Some families need more support. They may find caring for their child a challenge. They may find that they are not able to take part in all the usual things that families do. They may also have other family or health difficulties.

A professional working with a family can complete a CAF form and help the family to make a plan to set out how the help they need might be provided. (CAF stands for Common Assessment of Families and a CAF form is just a way of recording the information needed to help improve life for a family.)

Often a short break is just one of the services a family need and their plan might include accessing other support such as help with managing behaviour or sleep problems or the provision of equipment or adaptations.

A request can be made for a budget to support the family's plan. A RAS (Resource Allocation System) can be used to help decide the level of budget to be requested.

A Panel will look at the CAF and the plan. The family will receive a letter, either to confirm that a budget is agreed or to ask for further information.

The budget can be held by the Council or by the family, and can be used to access a short break in a number of ways - for example the family might:

- use a direct payment to employ a support worker

- use the budget to buy a service from the Council or another agency
- purchase a place in a specialist group or club
- purchase time in a specialist short break provision
- purchase other services or equipment

Alternatively, the family, or a professional working with them, can make a referral to the Children with Disabilities team and a worker will visit and undertake an assessment.

### **Families who need a high level of support**

Some families are in very difficult situations and need a high level of support. The support might be needed to ensure that the child is kept safe and that the parents are able to carry out their caring role. There may be a danger that, without this support, the child would not be able to stay with the family.

The family, or a professional working with the family, can make a referral to the Children with Disabilities Team. A social worker will undertake an assessment, which will include information from other professionals who may be working with the child.

When families require a high level of support, this is based on the assessed needs of the family. However, the following will be taken into account:

- Support should be provided in a way that provides an enjoyable experience to the child as well as providing a break for the family
- Support should not be provided at a level that leaves the child feeling confused about where they live or who is their main carer.

Short break services can include:



- A direct payment so families can employ a worker.
- The family being provided with a budget to support their plan.
- A worker being provided directly by the Council or an agency being paid to provide a service.
- The child attending a specialist group or club.
- The child attending a specialist centre for day or evening support.
- The child having overnight care away from the family home.
- A support package, in the home or elsewhere, for children who have a high level of unpredictable healthcare needs.

In these situations, short breaks will usually be only one element of a multi-agency plan that addresses the needs of the whole family.

Middlesbrough employs three Short Break Facilitators who are available to provide advice and support in connection with short break services - you can contact the Short Break Facilitators on the following number: 01642 579160.