

# ROCHDALE MBC SHORT BREAK STATEMENT

Revised September 2012

## Introduction

Since 1<sup>st</sup> April 2011 there has been a duty on local authorities to provide breaks from caring for families of children with disabilities.

The 'Breaks for Carers of Disabled Children' regulation requires Rochdale MBC to publish a 'Short Breaks Statement' for carers in the area so that families know:

- The range of short breaks available
- How these services can be accessed
- How the services will meet the needs of families with children with disabilities
- The criteria for eligibility

The underlying aims of the regulations are:

- To provide opportunities for children with disabilities to enjoy themselves and fulfil their potential
- To enhance the abilities of carers to care more effectively

## What do the Regulations state?

The regulations state that:

The local authority must provide a service to carers of children with disabilities in order to allow them to continue to care more effectively and so that they may undertake education, training, leisure activities and/or day-to-day tasks.

They also say that the local authority must offer a range of short breaks in the evenings, at weekends and during holidays, including; day time care in or outside the child's home and educational and leisure activities.

Furthermore, the regulations say 'In preparing and revising their statement the local authority must have regard to the views of carers in their area and the statement must be publicised and kept under review'.

### What is a short break?

A short break can be as brief as half an hour or as long as a few days or even a week. It depends on the needs and preferences of the child and their family. A short break can be during the day or evening or overnight, at weekends or mid-week. Most short breaks take place in community settings whilst a small number are in a residential setting or the family home of an approved carer. Some examples are:

- Befriending Schemes
- Play schemes and Youth clubs
- Aromatherapy sessions
- Swimming lessons
- Short 'holidays'
- Circus skills
- Sporting activities
- Day trip

Just like activities and clubs for non-disabled children, transport is *not* provided to and from short breaks and only in very exceptional circumstances would we consider a request to support a child to access a short break. We would however encourage the use of community transport provision such as Ring and Ride or support a young person to access transport independence training.

### Who can access a short break?

Children and young people with disabilities are eligible for a short break if they are aged 0 to 19 years and have a physical and/or learning disability and/or an associated life-limiting condition which has a substantial and long term effect on their ability to access facilities and activities.

In order to access more specialised short break support, children with very complex needs may require an assessment of need to be undertaken by the Children with disabilities Social work Team. To meet the eligibility criteria for an assessment the child/young person must be:

- Resident in Rochdale Borough
- Have a statement of educational needs **or**
- Receive disability living allowance (DLA) **or**
- Diagnosed with a disability as set out in the disability discrimination act (DDA).

On completion of the assessment of need the Social Worker will present their conclusions and recommendations for short break support to a multi-disciplinary Resource Panel made up of representatives from Social Care, Health, Education and the Parent's Forum. It is the Resource Panel's job to approve the Social Worker's recommendations and/or make alternative suggestions which will support the disabled child and their family. The following short break provision can *only* be accessed following an assessment of need:

- A short break in a residential unit that employs appropriately trained and experienced staff and is able to provide overnight care with waking night staff

- An Outreach service which is able to work with children and families experiencing difficulties and can offer a speedy response to a family in crisis
- A Carer's service that assists families at home with the personal care of the child/young person
- Family-based overnight short breaks with approved Foster Carers.
- A Direct Payment. This is a sum of money allocated to the family which allows them to pay for a service of their choice or employ a personal assistant to support their child.

These are in addition to those services that can be accessed by self-referral (see our menu "Rochdale Short Break Provision for Children and Young People with Disabilities")

### How do we know what to provide in Rochdale?

In 2010, parents, carers, children and young people in Rochdale were consulted on their use of short break activities and this information was used in the formulation of Rochdale's original Short Break Statement, published in September 2011.

In December 2011, the children with disabilities Service in conjunction with a member of the Rochdale Parent Forum carried out an evaluation of the existing short break provision. They found that most Providers could demonstrate good evidence of satisfied service users, increasing use of their provision, value for money and flexibility and adaptability to need. However there were clearly some gaps in the existing provision such as activities for children aged 4 to 8 years, weekend breaks and day trips.

With this in mind, the children with disabilities service invited applications to provide short breaks for 2012/13 and received 60 applications from existing and new Providers from a varied

range of small and large, local and national organisations. After very careful consideration, 27 of these were awarded a contract and the majority of these short breaks are now in operation on a self-referral basis. That means that there is no need to go through a social worker in order to access these short breaks. (Link to 2012/13 Short Break Provision self-referral menu.) Amongst the new provision is:-

- Duke of Edinburgh bronze programme
- Weekend and mid-week breaks in a coastal caravan
- Holiday and Saturday playschemes for 5 - 16 years
- Mystery camping weekends
- Bollywood nights
- Arts Club
- Youth Forum

In October this year we shall again be evaluating all the short break provision and then in January 2013 inviting applications to provide short breaks for the period 2013 to 2015. Before that time, service users will have been consulted with regarding their opinions of the activities they have been accessing and Parents views will have been sought about this short break statement.

### What is our Local Offer?

There are 3 categories of services provided in Rochdale.

**1) Universal Services** - these are available to all children, young people and their carers. They are things like parks, leisure centres, play provisions etc and information is available from Rochdale Family Information Service

**2) Services for those who require some support** - these are Short Breaks that can be easily accessed by contacting the

service provider directly. You will find a comprehensive list in the Short Break self-referral matrix.

**3) Services for children and young people who require a lot of support** - These are specialist services that can only be accessed by contacting the Children with Disabilities Social Work Team who may undertake an assessment of need to ascertain the correct level of support required by a disabled child/young person and their family

### **Ongoing Consultation and Feedback**

Rochdale MBC will continue to listen to the views of children and families to ensure that short break provisions are age and culturally appropriate and meet their needs. Our Service Providers are required to supply regular data and evidence of outcomes of their short break services. In conjunction with the Parent's Forum and the Children with disabilities Partnership Board, the Short Breaks Statement will be regularly reviewed to ensure that it is an accurate reflection of the choices and views of Rochdale children and families. If any gaps in service are identified the children with disabilities Service will endeavour to address them as quickly as is feasible, contact Glen Olalla on 01706 925900 in the first instance. The next formal and detailed review of short break provision is scheduled to take place between October 2012 and January 2013. This will inform the commissioning process for the next two financial years.

### **In Summary**

Children and young people with a disability who live in the borough of Rochdale may require extra assistance to access play, leisure and social opportunities such as sports facilities, play areas, parks, youth clubs, leisure complexes and community facilities that are open to all.

Rochdale offers a wide and varied range of specialist services that support children with disabilities to enjoy the same or similar leisure and sports activities as non-disabled children. The aim is to ensure that children and young people with disabilities aged 0 to 19 years of age are appropriately supported to have fun and enjoyment without or with their parents/carers.

### **And finally**

We will ensure that our Short Break Statement is regularly revised and published on Rochdale MBC's website. Through our parent partnerships we will ensure that all families with a child with a disability have access to a copy. In addition it will be available in all of our special schools.

**September 2012**