South Tyneside Short Breaks Statement
February 2014

Introduction and context

The Children Act 1989 places a duty on local authorities to provide breaks from caring for carers of disabled children so as to support them to continue to care for their children at home and to allow them to do so more effectively. The Breaks for Carers of Disabled Children Regulations 2011 give more detail on how local authorities must fulfil their duty to provide breaks from caring, including a requirement to produce a Short Breaks Statement outlining the range of short break services available. This Short Breaks Statement is intended to inform local families about the services that are available, the eligibility criteria for accessing these services and how the range is designed to meet the local needs of families with disabled children.

How is the statement prepared?

In South Tyneside the original statement was produced in 2011, in consultation with our parent forums, young people and professionals from social care, health and education. It has been updated through consultation with our parent’s forum and young people views on short breaks. The lead officer responsible for preparing this statement is the Short Breaks Manager who reports to the Operational Manager, CADS and Mental Health.

What is a short break?

Short breaks are activities for children and young people, up to 18 yrs, usually away from home, that enables them to have fun and time together with their peers, while at the same time giving a break to parents and carers from their caring role. They can be for the whole family together as well as for children and young people away from their family carers and range from a few hours’ activities to longer breaks. Short breaks are provided to give:

- Disabled children and young people enjoyable experiences away from their primary carers, thereby contributing to their personal and social development and reducing social isolation;
- Parents and families a necessary and valuable break from caring responsibilities.

Local Authorities are required to secure as appropriate:

a. Provision of day time care for disabled children in both their own homes and elsewhere
b. Provision of overnight care for disabled children in both their own homes and elsewhere
c. Provision which will enable children to participate in educational and recreational activities
d. Emergency care, for example, due to illness in the family.
e.

Who do we think might need a short break service?

In South Tyneside we have a population of approximately 29,662 children and young people between the ages of 0 to 18 years. Guidance issued by the government as part of the Aiming High for Disabled Children Programme suggested that when we think about how many children might
need additional support we should use a figure of 1.2% of the child population. In South Tyneside this would mean that approximately 356 children and young people might need a short break service. Census data from 2011 indicates that the general numbers of children in South Tyneside will remain constant for a number of years.

In terms of reaching out to those children and young people who have an Ethnic Minority background, within the current population there are approximately 2076, or 7%, children and young people, and of this population 1.2%, approximately 25, who would meet the need for a short break service. All of our services are available to children and young people from these backgrounds, and the uptake is also monitored.

Information has been kept concerning short break services provided. Last year we provided short breaks covering the following areas:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Information Provided</th>
<th>April 2012-March 2013</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of children with a Direct Payment</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of children accessing overnight support</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total number of overnights provided</td>
<td>1595</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total number of hours of individual care provided</td>
<td>26442</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total number of hours of group support provided</td>
<td>15428</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total number of children with any type of short break service</td>
<td>461</td>
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**How do we think Short break Services will make things better for children, young people and their families?**

Our aim is to provide high quality, reliable and varied short breaks for children with disabilities and their families. We see this as being essential to the effectiveness of early intervention and preventative support, and our short break provision strives to achieve the following overarching outcomes:

- Reduced family breakdown and the number of families experiencing crisis.
- Strengthen family capacity to care effectively at home reducing the need for specialized and respite care.

Each short break provision has clear objectives that will contribute towards achieving the above outcomes including:

**Children and Young People**

- Have fun and enjoy learning new skills.
- Improve social interaction and develop positive relationships with peers.
- Develop positive relationships with adults outside the school and home environments.
• Reduce social isolation and associated mental health concerns.
• Improve wellbeing and physical health.
• Develop personally and socially, achieving greater independence and choice.
• Access positive experiences independently from their families.
• Reduce the poverty of expectation and ambition – young people are able to realise their potential.
• Build up a social routine and a network of social / peer support.
• Build confidence and ability to access further activities independently.

Parents and Carers

• Allow parents to recognise the abilities and capabilities of their children.
• Reduce the stress of caring for a child at home, minimising the need to access residential care and overnight short break services.
• Improve the quality of care given at home.
• Enable carers to spend quality time with siblings.

The Local authority also provides a young carers service that is able to respond to the needs of siblings of disabled children.

Which Short Break is right for you and your child?

The level of support you might need is determined by the impact of your child’s disability on the family, which is not pre-determined by the particular nature of the impairment or disability, or by the diagnosis of the child’s condition. The age range can be from 0 – 18 years.

Not all children will need the same level of support and short breaks; some will need more than others because of the nature of their child’s disability and its severity. Some families may need more support because of their individual family circumstances. This is why it may be necessary to assess your child and family to ensure we provide the right level of support and short breaks at the right time. The short break activities are divided into 3 areas:

1. Which activities can be accessed by all children and families locally?

Most disabled children will be able to access the same leisure activities provided by universal services as their non-disabled peers, without the need for an assessment. Service providers have a responsibility under the Equality Act 2010 to make reasonable adjustments to the way their services are provided in order to be inclusive to disabled children. Where it is not practical for a disabled child to use a universal service then we need to consider that situation and look towards specialist services for a specific group of children which will address that requirement. We intend to continue to pursue options for inclusion where ever possible and will liaise closely with our colleagues in universal services to do so.

Parents of disabled children can register with the Network of Children with Disabilities free of charge. The network helps support families of children with disabilities or additional needs by providing them with up to date information via newsletters or emails on short break services and other activities in South Tyneside and other areas. A number of the short breaks notified to members of the network can be accessed by direct application to the scheme manager who will
ensure that any eligibility criteria are met. Information about the network is available on the council website at [http://www.southtyneside.info/article/8455/Children-with-Disabilities-Network](http://www.southtyneside.info/article/8455/Children-with-Disabilities-Network) or by phone on 0191 4244416.

2. **What short breaks are available for children and families who require some additional support?**

- Variety of family orientated trips during summer school holidays. The trips offer respite for the whole family during what, for many, is a stressful time of the year.

- Family weekends at the Calvert Trust provision at Kielder, which provides a short break for the whole family in a unique provision that understands the needs of children with disabilities this reduces the stress and pressure on everyone.

- A variety of weekend and after school activities. The specialized after school clubs offer the chance for primary and secondary school pupils with disabilities and additional needs to enjoy and achieve with their peers outside the setting of the curriculum, as their peers without disabilities or additional needs do.

- The Sports and Play Teams, through the provision of the Holiday Activities Programme for the disabled children and young people, and ensuring that provision is in place in school holidays and after school. The holiday sport and play schemes provide vital breaks for both young people and their carers during periods of the school year that are known to be stressful.

- Activity residential weekends for children with ADHD and Autism These residential weekends give young people the chance to experience the same opportunities as their non disabled peers. For many, this is the first time they have been away from their carers overnight.

- Under ‘6’ holiday care groups Through direct consultation with parents a playgroup specifically designed to meet the needs of children 0-6 years old has been established. The group works in partnership with South Tyneside Children Centres.

A Common Assessment Framework (CAF) assessment is required for the following service:

- An Access Fund for young people to have additional 1-1 support to access universal services. The aim is to support children and young people with additional needs and disabilities to access activities outside school hours. Applications are be made by an appropriate professional, alongside a CAF, involved with the child or young person and be completed with their and their carers, views and consent. The funding is only available for short term support (10/12 weeks) to help overcome initial barriers to access. An important element of the application is to highlight how access will be sustainable beyond the scope of the fund.

3. **If previous levels of short breaks are not sufficient there may be services available following a social care assessment.**

Some families need a high level of support. This support might be needed to ensure that the child is kept safe and that the parents are able to continue caring for their child. For many families support is often needed in the longer term. Families who need a higher level of support, including overnight
short breaks need to be referred to the Children and Adults Disability Service for a social work assessment. Initial referrals are made to Child Referral and Assessment Team, 38 Laygate Place, South Shields, tel: 0191 4245010 and can be made either by a parent or a professional. Where appropriate a social worker will undertake an initial or core assessment, which will include information from other professionals who may be working with the child. This should also include the offer of a Carers Assessment at this point.

- The residential short break unit “Foxden” takes up to 4 young people at any one time aged 8 – 18, usually 2-3 nights at a time and possibly up to 2 weeks.

- Registered foster carers are able to provide overnight short breaks in a family setting. However the evidence locally is that there is currently a very small demand for this type of short break provision.

- Families are able to have 1-1 outreach support, to support them at home, or to take individual children out for a while.

- Other children with complex or life limiting conditions can be supported through provision in hospice type care, for example at St Oswald’s Hospice in Newcastle.

- Direct payments are available to families following an assessment to enable them to purchase the services that work best for them and employ staff for support that meets the assessed need.

- Individual Budgets, which specify the total funding available, are also available to young people with disabilities and their families, allowing them to manage their own care package needs, and to carry forward the service provision into adulthood without significant disruption.

We work closely with health professionals to ensure that any health needs continue to be met whilst children are participating in short breaks. This can include joint funding of short breaks for children with complex needs.

**How do we support the transition to adult services?**

The development of independence skills by disabled young people is inextricably linked with the role of short break services in aiding disabled young people live an ordinary life. The development of the Children and Adults with Disabilities Service (CADS) will continue to ensure that young people moving into adult life will be able to achieve a fulfilling and active life.

**How do we consult families about our Short Breaks Programme?**

Feedback from each Short Break provision, by parents and children and young people is used to monitor and develop each short break. The services that we provide are based upon the continued feedback of the services developed during the Aiming High programme from 2009 to 2011 and during the course of the Short Breaks programmes since then.
During 2013 families told us:

- Looking after a child with global development delay who dribbles and is doubly incontinent can make life and days long and hard. This welcome break eases stress.

- The break was so needed. My son's mind races a million miles an hour, leaving him and us exhausted. The peace and quiet of Calvert Trust allowed us to step back and breathe. We also loved how, just for once on a holiday, we didn't stand out to others.

- Having a disabled child is a 24/7 job. These play schemes allow us to do the normal day to day stuff with a lot less stress.

- In holiday time it can be unbearable. All routine has gone and accessing things for a child with disabilities is extremely hard. Without the group I feel safe in saying that the whole families’ mental health would suffer greatly.

- This would have a detrimental effect on the whole family ... it is vitally important to everyone’s wellbeing.

- He comes back from the group calmer and happier. I benefit from the break. It helps me feel less stressed and more able to cope.

- It’s lovely to have a couple of hours to get things done or to yourself. Getting the shopping done etc is far less stressful as she hates it, so it benefits us all if she doesn’t go.

During 2013 young people with disabilities and their families were asked about accessing mainstream services and they told us:

- My child needs help to access activities so they would need more helpers...they would need training

- Easy access...train staff for children with special needs, equipment suitable for all children

- Staff awareness of disability

- It would have an impact on stress especially as other mainstream activities are not accessible. His care would not be compromised.

- Special times of the day/night when children with disabilities/additional needs can attend so that they aren’t stared at and made to feel unwelcome

During 2013 young people have told us how they value the short breaks:

- taking part in various sports that I wouldn’t get to do otherwise

- Trying different activities and meeting new friends...being made to feel welcome

- Enjoy doing girls stuff with friends has helped with friendship groups
• *I love all of it; getting to know new people; seeing friends...*

What will we do as a result of the consultations?

• Ensure that families and young people have the same opportunities and experiences as non-disabled young people and their families.

• Ensure that services continue to work in collaboration to ensure that the needs of these young people are addressed.

• Ensure that services provided at a lower level of need can be cost effective in helping families to successfully bring up their children without requiring a high level of support.

• Ensure that mainstream services are able to support children with complex and additional needs, and that they take the necessary steps to prepare to work with those young people.

• Ensuring access to the range of activities and services that most people are able to, will help transform the lives of disabled children and their families

• Provide these services as part of the early intervention and preventative work to families who may otherwise need more intensive support.

• Continue to ensure that disabled young people, their families and carer’s are given the opportunity to have a say in the kinds of services we provide for them.

Transport

We recognise that transport and access to transport can be difficult for young people with disabilities and their families. When short break services are planned, care will be taken to minimise transport difficulties. Families will be supported to claim appropriate benefits and to have information concerning available local travel.

How we ensure the quality of our short break services?

We are committed to offering the highest quality services for all our disabled children and young people living in South Tyneside. We expect all our short breaks to:

• be high quality

• represent good value

• to meet the needs of local families

• enable disabled children to have new experiences and develop new skills.
We intend to ensure that we achieve best value for money through the monitoring and evaluation of all the projects and activities funded. Short breaks service is always looking to improve and provide new short breaks to ensure we reach out to all families living in South Tyneside, and to do this, as part of our quality assurance and monitoring we continue to involve disabled children and their families through regular consultations. We also seek advice and guidance from children and their families when setting up new short break activities in the hope that this ensures the most appropriate and best use of the short break services we provide. We also ask each provider to gain feedback from users of the service and to monitor uptake of services, and report back regularly by providing regular data.

What are our plans for the future?

During 2014 the government will be implementing significant reforms in how disabled children and those with special educational needs (SEN) receive services through education, health and social care. The mains changes include the replacement of Statements of Special Educational Need with Education, Health and Care Plans and having better coordinated assessments across education, health and social care. The intention is to give parents and young people more choice and to ensure that services are better focused on the needs of the child or young person. A ‘local offer’, detailing the services that are available and how to access them must be published by September 2014. This ‘local offer’ must include details concerning short break services.

Education, health and social care are working together with parents to decide how these reforms will be implemented in South Tyneside.

As part of these changes we will be looking again at the range of short break services that we provide to ensure that they meet the needs of parents, children and young people, that they are of the required quality and that they provide best value for the Council.

We will review and update this short break statement again during 2014.

Where can you get information on these services?

The Short Breaks Service publishes information about activities and events that are open to access by any family or disabled young person, subject to the policies of the provider, and any charge for service made by the provider. Please see website for information: http://www.southtyneside.info/cwd

The Short Breaks Service can provide assistance on the phone: Short Breaks Coordinator: 0191 4244390.

The Children and Adults Disability Service: 0191 4244403