Short Breaks Service Statement for families with disabled children in Buckinghamshire

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Contents

1. Why have a short breaks service statement................. 3

2. What we want to achieve from short breaks................. 4

3. Consultation and participation.................................. 6

4. Types of short break................................................. 8

5. How to access short breaks....................................... 10

6. The three levels of short break services ......................12

7. Activity fees .......................................................... 16

8. Direct payments........................................................ 16

9. Preparing for adulthood............................................. 17

10. Finding the right short break...................................... 18

11. Monitoring and review ..............................................18

12. Useful links and contacts......................................... 19
1. Why we have a short break service statement

We are committed to supporting the best outcomes for children (0-19 year) with disabilities and their families. One way we do this is by providing high quality short break services.

It is important that parents and carers understand how short breaks can support them. This service statement sets out the range of short breaks available to families living in Buckinghamshire. It forms part of our legal duty to help carers.

The Council and Buckinghamshire Clinical Commissioning Group work together to provide short breaks.

What are short break services?

Short breaks help disabled children and young people to stay in their own homes. They range from activities that anyone can join to specialist overnight residential services. They are not just a break from the daily routine. They also help to improve wellbeing and much more.

Disabled children and young people have the opportunity to:
- Make new friends
- Learn new skills
- Develop independence
- Relax, have fun and reduce loneliness

Parents, carers and families have the opportunity to:
- Take a break from their caring responsibilities
- Rest, unwind and spend time with other family members
- Provide the right support at the right time
- Build their family resilience

What the law says

Disabled children and their families have the same human rights as people without a disability.

The law says that we must provide services to help carers continue their caring role or to provide care more effectively. It also says we must:
- provide a range of appropriate breaks during the day, night, weekends and school holidays
- provide parents with information which tells them about the range of
breaks and any eligibility criteria. This is called a ‘Service Statement’

The Breaks for Carers of Disabled Children Regulations 2011 will tell you more about our legal duties.

What a service statement does

The service statement contains information about short breaks. It tells you:
- what types of short break services are available in Buckinghamshire
- who can use the each type of service
- how we decide who has priority for services
- why we think short break services are important

“Caring for our disabled child is exhausting. It puts a huge strain on our whole family. Even a few hours of respite gives the rest of the family vital time together. It helps us to be better parents to our disabled child.”
2. What we want to achieve from short breaks

This is what we want to hear people saying about our short break services.

**Children and young people will say that:**
- I have different options available to me in choosing the type, location and time of short break that I would like to do
- The short break has helped me to become more independent by teaching me skills that can help me in school, building relationships, travelling independently and using own money
- My experience of the short break is positive because my voice was listened to and I helped to influence planning and the way the service was designed
- My short breaks are helping me to reach my full potential by developing new friendships, skills, self-confidence and links to other activities
- Short breaks have focused on my strengths and what I could do rather than my difficulties or disabilities.

**Parents and carers will say that:**
- I am well informed about what short breaks are available and how to access them
- There is choice across the type, time and location of the short breaks available
- I receive clear communication from providers to inform my family’s choices
- I feel more resilient and able to deal with caring responsibilities because my child attends a short break
- I can access support before I reach crisis point.
- My child receives a quality short break and they are being cared for by trained, professional staff in a safe environment.

**Local Authority and Clinical Commissioning Group:**
- The Local Authority is meeting its statutory duties in relation to the provision of short breaks
- Our short breaks offer provides support which is of high quality, value for money and allows us to make the best use of available resources
- We have good evidence that our short breaks offer is achieving positive outcomes for children and families.
3. Consultation and Participation

Children and young people with disabilities, their parents and carers have helped us to decide how to provide short breaks.

Below are some of the ways we involve service users and their families.

- When they use commissioned short breaks service, children and young people are involved in setting and reviewing their goals. They also choose activities they would like to do.
- Parents and carers are asked for regular feedback on short breaks services.
- FACT Bucks run a Parent Advisory Group (PAG). The PAG provides a place to share good practice. As well as listen to and discuss the issues that service providers and families may face.
- Our Short Breaks Strategy and Service Statement were developed with children, young people their parents and carers.
- The views of children, young people, parents and carers are included in the specifications for commissioned services.

"Overnight residential care has been a huge help to my family.”

This is what parents and carers have told us about short breaks:

- We (children, young people and their families) rely on short breaks.
- We really value the time a short break gives us.
Short breaks have a good effect on our health
It is important to have a range of local short breaks on offer. This includes good provision through school holidays
It is important staff have the right training to meet the needs of my child
To prevent crisis short breaks need to be available at the right time
Access to short breaks should be fair and transparent

This is what children and young people have told us about short breaks

- Making new friends through short breaks is really important
- It is good to learn new skills and try new things
- Change can sometimes be difficult to manage

“It is good to learn new skills and try new things.”
4. Types of Short Break

Every year about 640 disabled children and young people in our area use targeted and specialist short breaks.

In addition over 350 disabled children use services offered by universal providers

Each family is unique, their needs vary and can change. We offer a wide range of short breaks for disabled children and young people. Not all of these have financial assistance from the Council or Clinical Commissioning Group.

Short breaks are offered by voluntary, independent and statutory providers. These can meet the different needs of disabled children, young people and their families.

The table on the next page gives an overview of the types of short break services we have developed in Buckinghamshire.

“Day time short breaks are great. They provide an opportunity for us to spend time with our other son or do chores like supermarket shopping… “
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Types of short break services</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Community based groups and activities</td>
<td>These are outside of school hours and at weekends e.g. Brownies, martial arts and after school activities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School holiday activities</td>
<td>School holiday short breaks offering fun opportunities during the holiday periods.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Direct payments / personal budgets</td>
<td>These can be used in a variety of ways to get support that meets the needs of disabled children, young people and their families.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specialist youth groups</td>
<td>Weekly clubs for young disabled young people to meet, socialise, have fun in a supported environment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family short breaks</td>
<td>Breaks which take place in the family home including domiciliary care.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overnight breaks</td>
<td>Residential units or fostering placement service offering overnight breaks.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5. How to access Short Breaks

Children and young people are eligible for short breaks if they have:
- a physical or mental impairment and
- it has a substantial long term effect on their ability to carry out day-to-day activities.

This may include:
- a physical or learning disability
- a hearing or visual impairment.

It does include children:
- with autism
- who may have challenging behaviour as a result of their learning disability
- who have complex needs and who may have palliative, life-limiting or a life-threatening condition.

How we allocate short breaks

We think it is important to allocate short breaks in a fair way. Not all children and families will need the same level of short breaks. Some families will need more than others because of:
- the impact of their child’s disability
- their individual family circumstances.

Just as every child and their family is different, we want to provide different levels of short break support.

Because needs change over time. Families who access specialist short breaks will have their provision reviewed regularly. This is to make sure it continues to meet their needs.

Families who are using universal services or targeted short breaks will have regular opportunities to discuss their short breaks. This will be with the
provider, someone from the Council or other professionals who are working with the family. This is to help to make sure that the child’s need are being met. It will also help ensure that the right outcomes are being achieved from short breaks.

“Providing social opportunities is extremely important for most disabled children, so group activities and experiences are vital.”
6. The three levels of short breaks

- Universal short breaks

These are everyday community services that anyone can use without an assessment.

Examples of universal services include: youth clubs; after school activities; uniformed groups (i.e. Cubs, Brownies); leisure centres; day nurseries; childminders and activity-based groups.

Wherever possible, universal activities should be accessible to disabled children and young people. They should form part of a child’s valuable experiences as they grow up.

Information about universal services is available as part of our Local Offer. This can be found on the Buckinghamshire Family Information Service website (www.bucksfamilyinfo.org).

To support access to universal services, we will:

- Work with service providers to make sure they publish good quality information. This should include information about accessibility and how they will support access for disabled children
- Provide parent led disability awareness and inclusion training. This will be available to any universal service provider
- Support families to enable access to universal services. This may be through giving them information. It may also be through additional support where assessment has said this is needed
- Continue to provide the Childcare & Early Education Brokerage Service. This supports families who wish to use childcare as a Short Breaks Service. They help them to find high quality, up-to-date information and support to access suitable provision.

- Targeted short breaks

These are specific short break activities for disabled children. Referrals can be made by professionals working with the family. Families can also refer themselves.

Targeted short breaks are not always funded or commissioned by the Council. They may be provided in the evenings, weekends and school holidays.
These services are for disabled children and young people who cannot access universal services without needing additional support. (As defined by the Disability Discrimination Act 2010).

For targeted short breaks provided by the Council, an assessment will be done to see what level of short break support is needed.

Targeted services will work with families to ensure they understand and can meet the individual needs of their child.

- **Specialist short breaks**

  These are designed to meet the need of an individual child and their carers following a social care assessment (Child and Family Assessment).

  Specialist short breaks are highly specialised or bespoke services. They are available to children, young people and carers with multiple, complex needs – who are managing in challenging circumstances. They can be daytime or overnight services, or a service paid for by direct payment.

  The assessment will be carried out by a Social Worker. The assessment will look carefully at:
  
  - the child’s needs
  - the parents’ or carers’ specific needs
  - any parenting issues
  - the wider family circumstances
  - the environment.

  The Social Worker will also gather relevant information from other professionals involved with your child, such as a doctor, Community Nurse, Occupational Therapist or teacher.

  The assessment is written into a support plan which outlines the services and short breaks that may be appropriate to be provided and how this will meet the child’s/families’ needs.

  All plans are reviewed regularly to make sure they respond to the changing needs of the child and family.
Eligibility criteria for targeted and specialist short breaks

The following outcomes are taken into consideration in the assessment for targeted and specialist short breaks.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What outcomes are considered</th>
<th>How is need assessed?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Physical and Emotional Wellbeing of the child:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• To be fit and healthy (physical health including personal care, drinking and eating)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• To be relaxed and happy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• To be able to travel safely and use public transport/private transport (children over 11)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• To be able to communicate well</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The professional undertaking the assessment will consider how much support is needed to achieve each of the outcomes.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• No additional support</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Some support</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Lots of support</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Exceptional support</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This will determine which level of short breaks are needed.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• No additional support or some support is needed: targeted short breaks will usually be offered.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Lots of support is needed: a mix of targeted and specialist short breaks will be considered.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Exceptional support is required: specialist short breaks will be offered.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Once the level of need has been assessed, professionals will work with families. They will look at the different short break options on offer for that level.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The assessment will be reviewed regularly. This means that if your level of need changes, we can make changes to your short breaks.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Environmental Factors</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• To join in with activities with other children (children over 5)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• To learn the skills I need to be as confident and independent as I can be (children over 5)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• To have a circle of friends</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Keeping Children Safe</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• To be safe at home with immediate family</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• To be safe in their community</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Family Life</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• There is time for everyone in the family to enjoy life and pursue the things that matter to them.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Parent/Carers get a good night’s sleep. Parents/Carers get the support they need from friends, neighbours and extended family. Which regularly provides them with short breaks.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Universal</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Search for short breaks at all levels on the Local Offer:</strong></td>
<td><strong><a href="http://www.bucksfamilyinfo.org">www.bucksfamilyinfo.org</a></strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Access</strong></td>
<td>• No assessment needed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Family makes self-referral</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Services can be contacted directly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Family may be signposted or supported to access services by other professionals they are working with as part of the Buckinghamshire Early Help offer.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Examples</strong></td>
<td>• Cubs, Brownies, Cadets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• After school or leisure clubs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Family activity days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Group based activity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cost</strong></td>
<td>• Families pay any cost of the service.</td>
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<td></td>
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</table>
7. Activity fees

Families are asked to pay activity fees for targeted and specialist short breaks commissioned by the Council and Clinical Commissioning Group.

Activity fees help providers to offer a wider range of trips and activities and to maintain their equipment.

Activities fees should not be higher than the cost of any child accessing the activity in a mainstream setting.

Children and young people should not be disadvantaged by a low income.

Reduced fees are available for families who receive the following benefits:

- Income Support
- Income-based Jobseeker’s Allowance
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance
- Pension Credit Guarantee Credit
- Working tax credit
- Child Tax Credit
- Universal Credit
- Housing Benefit

Reduced rates are also available where families are not receiving benefits but their combined income is less than the benefits cap.
8. Direct payments and personal budgets

Depending on the needs of your child, you may be eligible for direct payments or personal budgets.

These could help you to buy your own short beaks. They can offer flexibility, choice and control around support for your child and family.

- For children with an Education Health and Care (EHC) Plan, personal budgets can be allocated to support the outcomes in the plan. The option of a Personal Budget and what you can use it for will be discussed with you by a Local Authority Officer during the drafting of the EHC Plan and at the Annual Review.

- Children who are eligible for NHS Continuing Care funding have the right to a personal health budget. This can be used to provide support and resources to meet an individual’s health and wellbeing needs.

- If your child has had a Child and Family Assessment which has identified eligible need. Direct payments may be an option for you. Families often use this to employ a carer or personal assistant who can look after their child. This can either be at home or out and about.

For further information talk to your child’s Social Worker or Family Worker. You can also visit: [www.bucksfamilyinfo.org](http://www.bucksfamilyinfo.org)
9. Preparing for adulthood

Leaving school and moving into adulthood can be a challenging time. Not just for the young person but for their parents too.

Families may need advice from a range of people to make sure that changes are go well as possible.

Every young person with an Education, Health and Care Plan should have a transition review. This should take place when they are in Year 9.

A Transition Plan will tell you what the young person (and others involved in their life) wants to happen in the future. It will also set out how this will happen.

Transition planning should address questions concerning:

- a young person
- their family
- the school
- professionals supporting them.

Short breaks and respite should be considered as part of transition planning. This is so that everyone knows about and can plan for any change.

Further information on preparing for adulthood can be found on the Local Offer: www.bucksfamilyinfo.org
10. How to find the right short breaks

Search the Local Offer
- You can search for universal services and targeted short breaks on our Local Offer: [www.bucksfamilyinfo.org](http://www.bucksfamilyinfo.org)
- You can make direct contact with universal services or targeted short breaks providers. The service provider should talk to you about your child’s needs.

Talk to professionals
- You can use existing meetings or assessments to talk about short breaks – for example your child’s Special Education Needs Annual Review, a meeting with your child’s Social Worker, Family Worker or another professional.
- You can also make direct contact with your child’s Social Worker, Family Worker or other professional outside of these meetings to talk about short breaks.

The needs of your child and your family can change. It is important to talk to someone if you feel that the short breaks you get are no longer meeting your needs or if your family is finding it difficult to cope.

11. Monitoring and review

We will keep our short breaks offer under review. This is to ensure it is meeting need and achieving the right outcomes for children and their families. This includes:
- Regular monitoring and review of all short breaks services commissioned by the Council and Clinical Commissioning Group
- Engagement with disabled children, young people, their families and professionals working with disabled children to hear their views and experiences of short breaks
- Work with our parent / carer forum FACT Bucks
- Regular review of the local short breaks offer and eligibility criteria
12. Useful links and contacts

Buckinghamshire Family Information Service

Buckinghamshire Family Information Service (BFIS) provides information and support for children, young people and families in Buckinghamshire.
- Tel: 01296 383065.
- Email: familyinfo@buckscc.gov.uk
- Web: www.bucksfamilyinfo.org
- Twitter: @bucks_FIS

The Local Offer for SEND

The Local Offer is part of BFIS. It provides information about what is available in Buckinghamshire for children and young people aged 0-25 with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). This includes information about different types of short breaks.
- Web: www.bucksfamilyinfo.org

PinPoint Register

PinPoint is the Disabled Children's Register for Buckinghamshire. It is aimed at parents or carers of disabled children and young people. This is a secure, voluntary database. It captures information about children and young people who have special educational needs and disabilities aged 0-19 years and live in Buckinghamshire (or are the responsibility of the Local Authority). The information (such as types of disabilities, ages and locations) helps to plan, monitor and develop facilities and services for disabled children and their families.

It is free to register. All information is used anonymously. Currently you can choose to receive a free Max Card when you sign up. This gives you discounts on family days out. We encourage as many people as possible to join. This is so that we can get a clear picture of the need for services in Buckinghamshire. The information is also important for Adult Services to support disabled young people in their transition to adulthood.
How to Register

1) Register for a free account on the BFIS website by going to www.bucksfamilyinfo.org
2) Once signed in, click on 'My account' in the top menu bar
3) Click on 'Disabled Children's Register'
4) Add a new record for each young person that you want to join the register
5) You will be given the option to get a Max Card when completing your child’s registration.

SENDIAS

The Special Educational Needs and Disability Information Service (SENDIAS) supports families with disabled children. It offers accurate, up to date and impartial resources about the law on special educational needs and disability. This covers:

- Education, health and social care
- National and local policy
- The Local Offer
- Your rights and choices
- Your opportunities to participate
- Where you can find help and advice
- How you can access this support

- Web: www.buckscc.gov.uk/services/education/bucks-send-ias-service/

FACT Bucks

FACT Bucks, short for Families and Carers Together in Buckinghamshire, is a group of parents and professionals who meet to discuss real issues that affect children and young people with additional needs and disabilities in Buckinghamshire.

FACT Bucks is for parents or carers of a child or young person with additional needs who live in Buckinghamshire. FACT Bucks can offer the following:

- A chance to improve the services and support for children and young people with learning difficulties and disabilities in Buckinghamshire
• The chance to share experiences with parents of children with additional needs
• A voice to help ensure children with additional needs are fully included in society. That they have access to the support and facilities necessary to sustain and improve their well being
• The opportunity to meet directly with decision-makers. As well as those providing and delivering services in Buckinghamshire.

Web: www.factbucks.org.uk/
Email: admin@factbucks.org.uk