TOGETHER FOR CHILDREN on Behalf of SUNDERLAND CITY COUNCIL

SHORT BREAKS STATEMENT FOR DISABLED CHILDREN 2018.

Introduction and context

Short breaks for disabled children are now well recognised to be a vital service which help families with disabled children to lead ‘ordinary lives’. The importance of short breaks was reflected first through significant investment under the Aiming High for Disabled Children programme and then through the introduction of new legislation, in particular the Breaks for Carers of Disabled Children Regulations 2011.

The Sunderland Short Breaks statement is a document developed for parents and carers of disabled children and young people (0-18) living in Sunderland. The Children Act 1989 and the Breaks for Carers of Disabled Children Regulations 2011 place a duty on local authorities to provide breaks for carers of children with special educational needs or disabilities. This is 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. 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.

The main pieces of legislation that underpin the Council’s duties for Disabled Children and their families are the 1989 and 2004 Children Acts, Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000 and the Carers and Disabled Children’s Act 2000 and the Service must ensure that they satisfy the duties contained within these key pieces of legislation and any other relevant legislation, where appropriate.

Services must also be delivered in accordance with the Disability Discrimination Acts 1995 and 2005 (DDA) and Special Education Needs and Disability Act 2001 (SEND).

Overview of Legal Duties

Legal duties in relation to short breaks include both duties owed to individual children and families in relation to assessment and care planning and wider commissioning obligations on local authorities. The ‘Short Breaks for Disabled Children - A legal guide for local authorities’ covers the key statutory duties found within the following legislation:

Together for Children Short Break Statement – January 2018. Date of review: June 2018
• Children Act 1989 (amended by Children’s Act 2004) and Short Breaks for Carers of Disabled Children 2011
• Short Breaks: Statutory Guidance on how to Safeguard the Welfare of Disabled Children 2010
• Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1970 (‘CSDPA 1970’)
• Children Act 2004
• Children and Families Act 2014
• Equality Act 2010
• NHS Act 2006 (as amended by the Health and Social Care Act 2012)
• Care Act 2014 (in relation to transition to adult social care)

Publication and review

The Short Breaks Statement is published on the Together for Children website and as part of Sunderland’s Local Offer. Together for Children’s Commissioning Team is responsible for reviewing the statement annually in consultation with parents, carers, disabled children and young people and partners in Sunderland.

What is a short break?

Short breaks are positive activities for children and young people that enable them to socialise and enjoy their free time whilst also giving parents and carers a break from their caring role. Short breaks are available for eligible children up to 18 years old. They can be a family activity or can be offered on an individual basis. In Sunderland, a short break is part of a continuum of services which support the wellbeing of disabled children and young people aged 0-18 and their families. 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 their 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.
How do we think Short break Services will make things better for children, young people and their families in Sunderland?

Our aim is to provide high quality, reliable and varied short breaks for children with disabilities and their families. We consider 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 specialised 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 - allowing young people 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 breaks services.
- Improve the quality of care given at home.
- Enable carers to spend quality time with siblings.

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

Together for Children Short Break Statement – January 2018. Date of review: June 2018
Consultation and planning

To ensure that Sunderland has a wide range of short breaks available for families, a consultation exercise has been undertaken with families (both those using short breaks and those not currently accessing the provision). Evidence collected from this consultation will inform the shaping and provision of short breaks in April 2018 and be used to ensure that future short break provision reflects the needs of the child or young person and their family.

Families told us:

- ‘It helped him to make friends outside of school and gave him something to do outside of the home’.
- ‘Both clubs help to build and boost her confidence and self-esteem’.
- ‘My son has fun, learns skills and socialises with friends, keeps fit, increases his confidence and has time away from his family like any other 12 year old would but safely’.
- ‘Excellent facilities and staff in an environment that meets our daughter’s needs i.e. relaxed’.
- ‘Familiar staff that we can trust both our children with’.
- ‘It gives our son a chance to socialise in a safe environment’
- ‘My daughter gets to meet other children and also gets to do various activities such as swimming, cookery and crafts’.

Families also told us what was not working well, this includes:

- ‘We have never used short break services as we haven’t been made aware of them, if I knew I think they would have been very helpful’.
- ‘No one has ever told us about short breaks’.
- ‘Financial cuts that jeopardise these vital services that are much needed and appreciated by disabled children and their families. These are a lifeline to us’.
- ‘The Local Offer seems to be almost non-existent, it is not advertised and social workers don’t have any knowledge of local facilities’.

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 access, will help transform the lives of disabled children and their families
- Ensure that families and young people are aware of the services available and the eligibility criteria
- 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.

Together for Children Commissioning Duties

Short breaks for disabled children can be provided by a wide range of organisations, including private and voluntary sector organisations. Sunderland have adopted a tiered approach, with targeted and specialist short breaks provided to supplement the universal services available to all children and families. Details of all short break services in every local area must be published as part of the Local Offer. Together for Children’s Commissioning Team has a vital role in ensuring that sufficient and appropriate short breaks are commissioned in their local area.

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 Sunderland. We expect all our short breaks to:

- be high quality
- represent good value for money
- 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. We are always looking to improve short breaks to ensure quality services for families living in Sunderland, and to do this, as part of our quality assurance and monitoring we will continue to involve disabled children and their families through regular consultations. We seek advice and guidance from children and their families when commissioning new short break activities to ensure the most appropriate short break services are provided. We will require all short break service providers to involve their service users in planning, reviewing and evaluating the services they deliver and report back to Together for Children’s Commissioning Team regularly.

Together for Children Short Break Statement – January 2018. Date of review: June 2018
Eligibility

Most disabled children and young people will be able to access the same 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 and young people. Information about the services, activities and support available can be found in Sunderland’s Local Offer via the Sunderland Community Hub.

For disabled children and young people who require additional support, and for those whose family need more breaks from caring, a range of solutions may be available following an assessment to determine eligibility. An assessment with the disabled child or young person and their family will determine eligibility to receive additional support to meet identified outcomes. The process of developing a care and support plan will identify how outcomes can be achieved and the support required; short breaks are part of a strategy of prevention, to enable families to get help at an early stage.

Although all ‘disabled’ children are entitled to some form of assessment, short breaks only have to be provided where one of the relevant statutory duties applies. Other than in relation to residential short breaks, the key duty is in section 2(4) of the Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1970. This requires short breaks to be provided where an assessment shows that they are ‘necessary’ to meet the child’s needs. In deciding what is ‘necessary’, local authorities can take account of their own resources. It is likely that local authorities can also take account of the resources otherwise available to families.

We work closely with colleagues in Health to ensure disabled children with complex health needs have access to short break services. Health professionals in Sunderland have a good track record of supporting short breaks service providers by providing training, nursing support and advice on specialist equipment and this will continue.

Transport

We know that some families do not have access to a car and therefore struggle to take their disabled child to short break activities, and not all families receive the mobility component of Disability Living Allowance to help with transport costs. Due to this, we understand that some families would like transport to and from short breaks services to be provided by Together for Children. In Sunderland we have prioritised the provision of short breaks and so will only provide transport in very exceptional circumstances. Some short break providers may be able to offer their own transport to and from their service; however they may charge families to use it.
Personal Budgets and Direct Payments

A personal budget is a pot of funding given to individuals after an assessment which should be enough to meet their assessed needs. It can either be taken as a direct payment (while still choosing how your care needs are met and by whom) or leaving Together for Children with the responsibility to buy the services on the child/family’s behalf. Families can also choose to go with a combination of the two. To receive a personal budget and/or direct payment, the child/young person will need to undergo a ‘child in need assessment’ or a Community Care assessment, (if the young person has reached 18), to determine eligibility.

Some families choose to buy their own support via direct payments and personal budgets. This means that instead of getting services directly from Together for Children, they get money to buy the support they need. A direct payment enables individuals to be able to buy their own support. It may make up part or all of a care plan and can be used as part of a personal budget. There is no fixed list as to what you can get with a direct payment. Some families use direct payments to employ someone to help out at home while others have bought overnight short breaks for their child.

Transition to adulthood

We recognise that for any disabled young person and their family, preparing for adulthood is a challenging time and that good transition planning during this period is essential. As a young person is preparing for adulthood, a request for a transition assessment can be made; this will determine eligibility for support from adult social care services when a young person turns 18. Planning for short breaks once the young person becomes an adult will take place as part of developing an Education, Health and Care plan if the young person has one, or as part of a Social Care and Support plan if they are no longer in education. It is essential that there is a positive transition to adult services for every disabled young person. New legal requirements are intended to ensure that no young person faces a ‘cliff edge’ and loses their children’s services at 18 without the necessary decisions having been taken for their future care and support. For those young people who are not eligible to receive support from Adult Social Care services, Sunderland’s Local Offer provides information and guidance in regard to the range of services and opportunities available to disabled young people and adults across the city.

Challenges

Sunderland as with other parts on the country, face severe financial challenges. We need to balance our statutory duty; the needs of the families of Sunderland, quality services and good value for money. We need to work smarter in how we deliver our short break services and we will work in partnership with providers in how best to deliver our short break services.

Together for Children Short Break Statement – January 2018. Date of review: June 2018
What are Together for Children’s plans for the future?

During 2014 the government implemented significant reforms in how disabled children and those with special educational needs (SEN) receive services through education, health and social care. The main changes include the replacement of Statements of Special Educational Need (SSEN’s) with Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCP’s) to provide better, more 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 is updated regularly and includes details concerning short breaks.

Education, health and social care continue to work together with parents to implement the SEND reforms in Sunderland. As part of these reforms 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 high quality and that they provide best value for Together for Children.

This short breaks statement will be reviewed and updated at least annually.

Further Information

Information about what short break services are available and how to access them will be made available to families in a range of formats including through Sunderland’s Local Offer.

Where can you get information on these services?

Sunderland City Council and Together for Children publish 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.
Overview of short break services in Sunderland

Universal and Targeted Services:

Universal and targeted are terms applied to services available for children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)

Universal Services

These are services which all families can expect to access without needing any extra SEND resources. Universal services are expected to make reasonable adjustments to accommodate children/young people with SEND. Universal services include: Youth clubs, emergency support and all universal services (search for services in Sunderland’s Local Offer).

Targeted services

Targeted services are for children and young people with additional needs over and above what is available to them through universal services who may need provision that is specifically designed to meet their needs. You may not need an assessment to access these services but to be eligible for these services a child must fit into one or more of these criteria:

- Children and young people with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) or those whose challenging behavior is associated with other impairments such as severe learning disabilities
- Children and young people with complex health needs including those with life limiting conditions, and/or those who require palliative care, and those children and young people having multiple impairments or profound and multiple disabilities (PMLD).

Targeted short break services include:

- Youth clubs
- Holiday activities and play schemes
- Weekend activities
- Family short breaks at Whitley Bay holiday park

Blue Watch Youth Centre

The programme provides Short Breaks which give disabled children and young people the opportunity to have an enjoyable experience with or without their parents or carers. It provides parents and carers with a break from their responsibilities.

Activities are available and appropriate to service users from priority groups. Personal, social and cultural needs are at the forefront of programme content with the centre carefully considering the
needs of the service users via approved referral routes and delivers activities that are related to need and age encourage wider participation that involves other groups, friends and family.

Activities include swimming, bowling, snow tubing, accessible riding as well as indoor activities such as pool, table tennis, games and issue based workshops.

Lambton Street Youth Centre

Lambton Street Youth Centre was founded in 1901. The centre on Hylton Road Playing Fields, offers a wide range of sporting activities and facilities for a variety of groups within the community.

The Centre provides a base for staff and volunteers to deliver a wide range of activities which aim to meet the needs of the young people attending the youth club.

The diversity and range of rooms and facilities at the centre, enables the project to offer a safe place for many different activities and groups such as football, arts crafts, dance, pool and much more.

Sunderland North Community Business Centre

Delivering services in Downhill, Houghton Le Spring and Washington, the programme includes recreational, physical and leisure activities.

A typical session includes - soft play, play parachute, TV/DVD, games console, arts & crafts, cooking activity, board games, outdoor play, musical instruments, bikes, and role play resources.

A healthy snack/juice is also provided.

Specialist services

If further support is required, a National Assessment Framework Initial or Core Assessment undertaken within the Children’s Disability Service may identify the need for specialist short breaks. Specialist short break services include:

- Leisure Link workers who will support a disabled child or young person to access leisure activities at home and/or in the community
- Overnight short breaks, which can be in a residential centre, family or activity centre
- Direct payments, which provide families with funding to arrange their own short break services; support is available to help in managing the direct payment

Together for Children Short Break Statement – January 2018. Date of review: June 2018
Sea View Road:

Sea View Road provides planned overnight short breaks for children and young people. The home is situated in its own grounds with play areas and gardens. Sea view Road has 7 bedrooms, including bedrooms and bathrooms with hoists if needed.

Sea View Road has a number of communal areas including a large lounge, a dining room, a cinema room and a games room as well as a large rear garden with play area which includes play equipment for wheelchair use.

Criteria for access

Sea View Road is for children and young people with a physical or learning disability, complex health needs or communication difficulties, who may present as challenging behaviours. The service is for young people between the ages of 8 years and 17 years 11 months.

This service can be accessed following an assessment through the Children with Disabilities team.

Sunderland Care and Support – Grace House:

Grace House is an Ofsted registered service which offers specialist, high quality planned short breaks, for up to eight children and young people aged between 5 years and 17 years 11 months, who have a complex physical disability, learning disability and complex health needs and who may have a life-limiting condition. Opportunities are available for children and young people to enjoy time away from home whilst continuing to be cared for by trained staff. It also enables parents and families to take a break from their caring role.

Portage

Grace House also works with Sunderland Portage Service and nurses from the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit to provide play, learning and support for families with children under age 5 who have complex disabilities, health needs and life limiting conditions. This group use Grace House’s Sensory Room on a Monday morning during term time. If you are interested contact: janine.morris@schools.sunderland.gov.uk.

Sensory Room

The purpose made multi-sensory room was designed and equipped by Spacekraft and contains a range of light and sound equipment and toys to gently stimulate and relax. The Grace House sensory room is available for bookings during term time only, Monday to Friday between 10am and 5pm. Grace House is designed for children with a disability and health needs, who will always be given priority when booking and can utilise the room for free. However, other disabled children as well as non-disabled children aged 18 months and under can utilise the sensory room at a cost.

Together for Children Short Break Statement – January 2018. Date of review: June 2018
Criteria for access

Grace House is for children and young people 5 to 17 years and 11 months who have a complex disability, health need and life limiting condition.

This service can be accessed following an assessment through the Children with Disabilities team.
Key Contacts

**Together for Children’s Children with Disabilities Team:** 0191 561 3125.

**Grace House:** 0191 597 9191.

**Sunderland North Community Business Centre:** Wendy Cook - 0191 5373231. [wendycook@communityopportunities.co.uk](mailto:wendycook@communityopportunities.co.uk).

**ASCENT:** Grace Banks - 0191 553 6050. [gbanks@ascenttrust.org](mailto:gbanks@ascenttrust.org). / Shelley Baxter - 0191 553 6000. [sbaxter@ascenttrust.org](mailto:wbaxter@ascenttrust.org).

**BLUE WATCH:** Steven Rylance - 0191 521 4060. [bwyc.main@gmail.com](mailto:bwyc.main@gmail.com).

**Sunderland Carers Centre:** 0191 549 3768. [contactus@sunderlandcarers.co.uk](mailto:contactus@sunderlandcarers.co.uk).

**Sunderland Local Offer:** [https://www.sunderlandservicedirectory.co.uk/kb5/sunderland/directory/localoffer.page](https://www.sunderlandservicedirectory.co.uk/kb5/sunderland/directory/localoffer.page).

**Lambton Street:** Kevin Howard - 0191 567 5227. [kevin.howard@lambtonstreetyouthcentre.com](mailto:kevin.howard@lambtonstreetyouthcentre.com)
Appendix 1

Tier 1
Short Breaks to meet assessed needs.

Tier 2. The Local Offer

Tier 3. Child achieving expected outcomes
A QUICK GUIDE TO SHORT BREAKS IN SUNDERLAND

Mainstream Activities

You can access mainstream activities yourself for your child/young person to take part with other non-disabled peers. Through the child/young person accessing these regular activities, a break from caring is provided. You can work with activity leads to agree if they can effectively meet your child/young person’s needs.

The Local Offer

The Local Offer in Sunderland sets out a range of activities for children and young people with SEN/D. This could include a mix of activities with non-disabled and disabled peers. You can access the activity directly with the provider and agree if they can meet your child/young person’s needs.


Date of review: June 2018
Short Breaks to meet assessed needs

- Short Breaks to meet assessed needs – these are delivered during the day and can be accessed through an identified need for a short break through a social work assessment. Referrals to these providers are made through social care staff.
- Short breaks for children with complex needs that are identified through a social work assessment. These provide intensive and specialist breaks which include direct payments, domiciliary care and over-night provision.