



**BIRMINGHAM  
CHILDREN'S TRUST**

# **Short Breaks Statement**

## **2023-24**

Short Breaks are services that provide support for the carers of disabled children and also allow young people to spend time away from their families and have fun, develop skills and make friends. Short Breaks support delivery of our vision and commitment to children and families

### **Our vision for disabled children's services in Birmingham is that:**

***“Every child and young person with additional and special educational needs or disability will have a great life in their local community, with the same life opportunities as those available for the wider population. We want them to fulfil their potential and to move successfully into adulthood”***

### **Our key principles are:**

- **Outcome focused** – a clear focus on outcomes including well-being and participation in meaningful life activities such as employment
- **Person centered** – via placing the child and young person at the centre of our process and providing them with a voice, personal budget and co-production
- **Asset based approach** - building on strengths in children, young people, families, schools and local communities
- **Promoting independence** - via access to information using our local offer, encouraging self-help and self-sustaining support
- **Building resilience** - to withstand and adapt to challenges via early intervention, capacity building, peer support and trading
- **Complete care for the most vulnerable** – via coordinated teams around the child to maximise living well in the community
- **Collaborative approach** – supported by relationships, partnerships and multi-agency learning and development across the workforce

## BACKGROUND

Paragraph 6(1) c of Schedule 2 to the Children Act 1989 requires local authorities to provide services to assist carers of disabled children to continue to be able to do this or do so more effectively by giving them breaks from caring.

“*The Breaks for Carers of Disabled Children*” Regulations 2011 came into effect in April 2011. This places a duty on local authorities to have regard to the needs of carers who:

- would be unable to continue to care for their disabled child without a short break or would be able to care more effectively if breaks are given,
- need to look after other children of the family more effectively
- or to take part in training education
- or to carry out day to day tasks in running the household.

The range of services to be provided must include:

- day-time care in the homes of disabled children or elsewhere
- overnight care in the homes of disabled children or elsewhere
- educational or leisure activities for disabled children outside their homes, and
- services available to assist carers in the evenings, at weekends and during the school holidays.

The Regulations also require each local authority to produce a *Short Breaks Services Statement* so that families know what services are available, the eligibility criteria for these services, and how the range of services is designed to meet the needs of carers of disabled children in their area.

## RIGHT HELP RIGHT TIME

Children and families are supported most effectively and efficiently when services and information sharing are planned and delivered in a co-ordinated way. The vision across Birmingham is to deliver the right service to the right child at the right time, supported by flexible and responsive services. The *Right Help Right Time* framework provides everyone with clear advice about what to do and how to respond if a child and their family need extra help. Underpinning it is our determination to put the child at the centre of what we do. Our aspiration is for Birmingham to be a city where all professionals across the system put the voice of the child at the centre of their planning, decision-making and service delivery. Further information can be found using the link below

[Right Help, Right Time - Birmingham Safeguarding Children Partnership \(lscpbirmingham.org.uk\)](http://lscpbirmingham.org.uk)

## What are Short Breaks?

Short Breaks are essential in supporting enablement for disabled children, to develop skills for independence and supporting children and families to create and manage their own short breaks.

We know that Short Breaks benefit both disabled children and their parents. Children benefit from new interests, relationships and activities, while parents can catch up with 'everyday activities' (sleep, cleaning, shopping), attend to their physical and psychological wellbeing, and maintain and develop social networks.

Short Breaks can be from a few hours to a few days. They can take place in the child or young person's own home, the home of an approved carer, a residential or a community setting. This could include, for example, taking part in a universal activity for all children (e.g. after-school club) or participating in a specialist service for children with complex need (e.g. specialist holiday scheme)

## What we know about families' needs

Birmingham has a population of 310,300 children and young people aged 0-19 based on 2011 census figures. A high proportion of these children have special educational needs and disabilities.

- Currently there are approximately 47000 children aged 0-25yrs with some form of additional need or disability
- The SEND population is predicted to rise by approximately 10% in line with population growth by 2021
- 91% have their needs met in mainstream schools and by universal care and health services
- The largest primary need for those with statements is for Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) which continued to rise from 13% in 2005 to 24.3% in 2012, and projected to rise further each year over the next 5 years
- The number of children with profound and multiple disabilities has increased by 3% since 2005. (from 1.1% to 4% in 2012) and like ASD is projected to increase

## Key messages from consultation with families

Throughout the consultations conducted with disabled children, young people and their families there has been a consistent message of what we should consider when planning and commissioning short break services. This includes:

- ✓ Provision of services in the local area
- ✓ Activities covering all the school holidays, including half-term holidays
- ✓ Weekend activities
- ✓ After school and evening activities
- ✓ Outdoor play space
- ✓ Opportunities for disabled children and young people to develop friendships
- ✓ Opportunities to take part in inclusive activities with non-disabled children
- ✓ Support through outreach workers or befrienders to enable disabled young people to access social and physical activities.
- ✓ A flexible range of residential Short Breaks
- ✓ Family-based provision allowing parents and siblings to take part in activities as a family with their disabled child such as supported day trips, weekend breaks and holidays
- ✓ Confidence that disabled children's needs will be met by appropriately trained staff in all settings
- ✓ Flexible services and timely support to meet changing family needs
- ✓ Support for siblings and young carers
- ✓ There is a high demand for Short Breaks services for carers of children with autism and challenging behaviour as well as for children with severe disabilities and complex needs

## So what do we offer?

Birmingham Childrens Trust can offer residential short breaks as part of their disabled children's residential services. These provide children with a range of fun activities and social experiences.

Warwick House in Acocks Green and Charles House in West Heath provide short breaks for children with a range of learning disabilities including Autism; they may also display associated challenging behaviour and have health conditions that need management and support. The children also receive support with emotional wellbeing, keeping healthy and managing their behaviour through a range of fun, socially inclusive activities.

Edgewood Road in Hawksley provides short breaks for children with a disability and additional nursing needs which can range from children on growth hormones, tracheotomy care, suctioning, diabetes and stoma care. The children also receive support with emotional well-being, health and social needs.

The Trust also commissions community-based services for up to 3,000 children and their carers. This supports children for whom short breaks is a preventative service, as well as for those with substantial and complex needs.

To ensure that as many children access short breaks as possible and to maximise the limited available resource, Birmingham Children's Trust has commissioned short breaks using a model that offers individual children a minimum of 100 hours. Providers monitor the number of hours provided to individuals to enable as many young people as possible can access their services.

*For more details of the services available, please see the next page...*

## Range of Short Breaks and how to access them

Short Breaks in Birmingham consist of the following:

- Home Support Services (including Direct Payments)
- Overnight Short Breaks
- Out of school activities – during the holidays, after school and at weekends

Open access community-based play and leisure activities are delivered by the providers shown below. No social work assessment is required for families to access these services

- **Dens of Equality**
- **Midland Mencap**
- **Resources for Autism**
- **Sutton Coldfield YMCA**

A key element of the Trust's Short Breaks offer for children with additional needs is a brokerage service to help families access those holiday schemes and weekend clubs which are part of the community-based services

This brokerage is delivered by Midland Mencap and further details are available by calling them on **0121 442 2944** and asking to speak to the Short Breaks Project Worker

or by emailing [shortbreaks@midlandmencap.org.uk](mailto:shortbreaks@midlandmencap.org.uk)

The Trust can also offer a range of services that are only available via direct referral following assessment by the Trust's Children with Disabilities Team

- **Residential Services** – in one of our homes
- **Home Support** – from one of our contracted providers
- **Fostering People** – Overnight short Breaks\*
- **Barnados** – Intensive family support\*

## Eligibility Criteria and Thresholds

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### **Why do we need Eligibility Criteria and Thresholds?**

*We want all carers of disabled children to get the support and services they need to lead fulfilling lives, and we know that in order to achieve this we have to be clear about how services are provided and accessed*

*Universal services have a role in meeting the needs of disabled children; children who have additional needs or face additional barriers which inhibit and prevent their inclusion in society*

*The basic needs of disabled children are no different from those of any other child*

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These criteria are necessary because some carers of disabled children require a social care service and these services have to be prioritised for those with highest levels of need. Social care services are services other than health or education provided to disabled children and their carers which are:

- Additional to the universal services which **all** children benefit from – e.g. schools, nurseries, playgroups, childcare, healthcare etc.
- Additional to the targeted services which **some** children benefit from e.g. behaviour support, family support etc. which may be arranged by professionals in universal settings or through the Common Assessment Framework (fCAF).

The criteria is used by the Children with Disabilities Service to prioritise specialist resources for those with the highest needs. They work in partnership with families, schools and other agencies such as health and the voluntary sector to ensure that the best use is made of all local and available resources. Our decisions are underpinned by the following principles:

- To focus on the assessed needs and outcomes for the child, in the context of their home and family circumstances
- The need to be fair, clear and equitable.
- To support access to inclusive mainstream services where this is appropriate.
- To provide reliable, timely information about services to enable families to make choices
- To provide access to specialist services where this is needed.
- To reduce the need for additional assessments
- To ensure best value for money.

## Direct Payments

Families have a choice about the Short Breaks Services they receive. A personalised service via a Direct Payment is one way of receiving a Short Breaks service. It is accessed following an assessment of needs. Direct Payments offer families flexibility, choice and control and can be used for example, to employ a Personal Assistant. Parent/carers directly manage the recruitment and invoicing arrangements, however, where required support can be provided through a support organisation

For more information on Direct Payments [click here](#)  
or contact the Children with Disabilities Service on 0121 303 1888

## Transport

Transport is not routinely provided to access short breaks. Parent/carers are expected to transport their child to and from Short Breaks. If this is not possible, and it would be detrimental to the child or family not to receive their short break, consideration may be given to providing funded transport

## Charges

Parent/carers have told us that they are willing to pay a reasonable cost for their Short Breaks activities. Providers have told us a higher value is placed on those services where parent/carers make a financial contribution and they are less likely to cancel or not send their child. Both parents and providers agree that no activity should cost more because of a child's needs

## Access to Childcare for Pre-school children

Birmingham's Childcare Sufficiency Assessment (2011) found that there is sufficient childcare in Birmingham to meet the needs of disabled children. Many childcare providers have places available for disabled children but these are not being taken by families. All children aged 3-4 years have an entitlement to 15 hours of free childcare. From September 2014 the local authority began to provide 15 hours a week of free childcare for the most disadvantaged 2-year-olds

Birmingham Early Years and Childcare service can provide working parents and parents who are studying or training to return to work, with information about choosing registered childcare. This includes child-minders, nurseries, breakfast clubs and after-school clubs

The Family Information Service and the Early Years and Childcare team can help find childcare for parents of school age children as well

For a list of registered childcare settings including child-minders and nurseries  
contact the Family Information Service on 0121 303 1888

## Preparation for adult life

We want the transition from children's to adults' services to be an exciting and optimistic time for young people. We want to support them as they become young adults and take their place in the world. We want to ensure that Short Breaks address the 'transition' needs of young people moving from children's to adults' services. For example, young people have told us that they want to continue to spend time with their school friends once they are 18 and not lose contact

## Outcomes: Monitoring and Measuring Impact

We work with all our Short Breaks providers to ensure they develop positive activities for young people that allows them to take part in local community activities and reflect their needs as teenagers, ensuring friendship and activity groups are supported to continue beyond the school years. They also provide opportunities for them to extend their independence and life skills including:

- learning how to manage risk, whilst keeping themselves safe in the community
- developing decision making skills
- learning aspects of money
- learning to travel independently
- improving their social interaction skills through modelling by their peers
- leading ordinary lives enjoying and contributing to everyday activities

We ensure that our short break services focus on improving life opportunities and outcomes for both those caring for disabled children and the children themselves, through continuing to develop our participation strategy with disabled children, young people and their carer's.

We know that the views of families and disabled children are essential to support positive outcomes, so we continue to monitor and review the views of disabled children, parents and providers so that everybody feels involved and included. This assists us with developing a cycle of continual improvement

We hope you have found this information useful  
For our *One minute guide to social care* please [click here](#)