



The Short Breaks for Disabled Children and their Families Statement (October 2011)

Introduction

Welcome to [Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council](#)'s first Short Breaks Statement. The aim of this document is to provide parents and carers with information on:

- what short breaks are and how they are designed to meet the needs of disabled children and families
- the current range of short break opportunities available in Solihull
- how to access short breaks and further information

The [Breaks for Carers of Disabled Children Regulations 2010](#) came into force on 01 April 2011. These regulations establish in law the local authority's duty to provide short breaks for disabled children and their parents and carers. The regulations also require the local authority to produce a Short Breaks Statement; the first one of these must be published by 01 October 2011 and must then be kept under regular review.

Solihull's Short Breaks Statement is being prepared alongside the refreshed Disabled Children's Strategy 2011 – 2013, "A full part in community life". The strategy outlines the objectives that Solihull will be working on in the coming year to improve integrated services for disabled children and young people aged 0 - 25.

What are short breaks?

Short Breaks enable parents and carers to have a break from their caring role, which may allow them to have a rest, catch up on day to day activities, spend time with other family members or take up other interests. The breaks can also benefit the rest of the family who might otherwise find it difficult to arrange care and time for themselves. Carers and young carers may also be entitled to an assessment of their needs in their own right under the [Carer's Recognition Act 1995](#).

Short Breaks provide fun and leisure activities for disabled children and young people outside of the school day and enable disabled children and young people to try new things, gain new experiences and have more opportunities both with and away from their families.

Short breaks are sometimes referred to as respite and there are many forms that these short breaks can take including taking part in sport, playschemes or clubs; attending nurseries or playgroups; staying in a residential home or having a shared care arrangement; or childminding and home based care.

Short breaks don't necessarily involve the disabled child or young person doing something separately from their family, and can be a specialist service for disabled children or an inclusive service for anyone.

Who Can Access Short Breaks?

Short Break services are available in Solihull for disabled children and young people who are ordinarily resident in Solihull and aged from birth up to their 19th birthday. Where possible we provide also Short Breaks for young people up to their 25th birthday.

Some Short Breaks are open to any child or young person but others are more specialist and require an assessment before they can be accessed. The Government has made it clear that services organised by the local authority should be targeted at those most in need. Whether we can provide the service depends on the level of need in the family, and the resources that are available. Certain services have criteria attached to them that mean they are not available for everyone

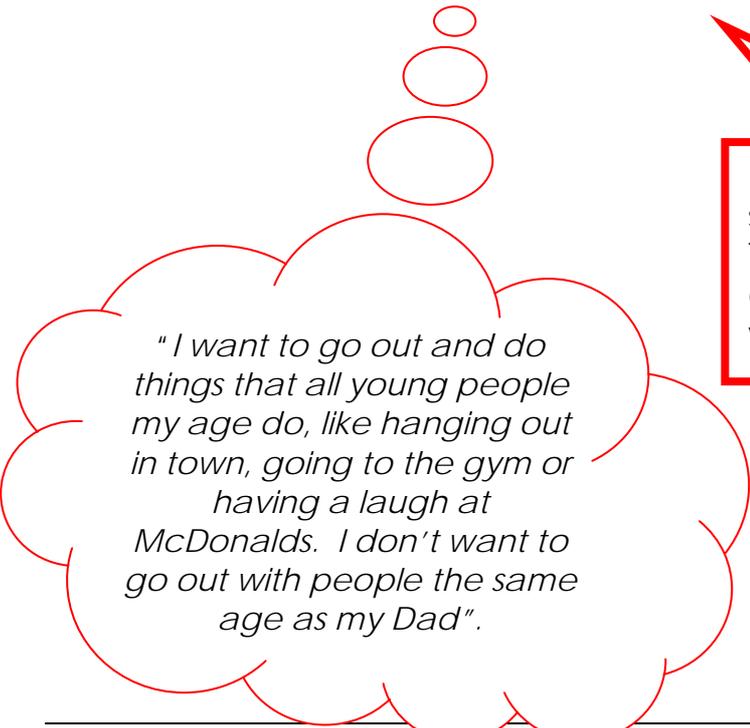
Each Local Authority area is required by law to provide short breaks for families that are ordinarily resident in their area. Where families want to access services in more than one Local Authority area or in an area in which they do not live, this should be by negotiation with the two Local Authorities. In principle families that are not resident in Solihull are entitled to ask for Short Break provision from their own authority or alternatively use short breaks funding from their own authority in Solihull.

What Short Breaks are available for children and young people in Solihull?

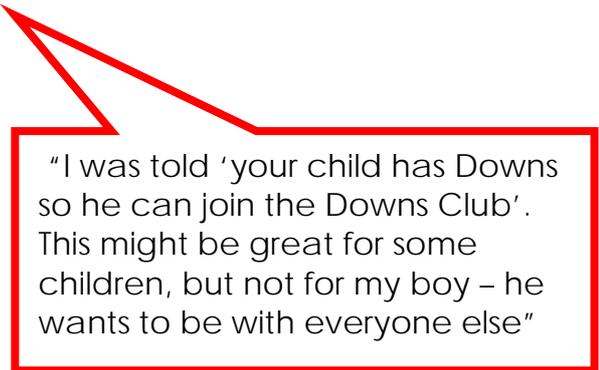
1. Inclusive community services

There are a wide range of services for disabled children and young people which provide a short break, available from children's centres, extended services in schools, leisure centres and many voluntary and community groups.

Additional support is available for disabled children to join in a group or activity, for example 'Access to all Areas', run by SOLO, helps disabled children who find it difficult to access leisure activities in universal leisure services.



"I want to go out and do things that all young people my age do, like hanging out in town, going to the gym or having a laugh at McDonalds. I don't want to go out with people the same age as my Dad".



"I was told 'your child has Downs so he can join the Downs Club'. This might be great for some children, but not for my boy - he wants to be with everyone else"

2. Day Care

Support is also available for disabled children and young people and their families at home or through daytime activities with other disabled children and young people. A 'sitting service' is provided by The Children's Society, and SOLO and KIDS Kites provide playschemes, youth clubs and day trips at the weekend, after school and in the holidays.

3. Overnight Breaks

Overnight breaks are for families that need a longer break where the child or young person spends the night away from their family. To access this service a social work or health assessment is required. This type of Short Break is provided by:

- Lyndon House, for children aged 0-16 years that have a learning disability with a significant health care need and have a Solihull GP.
- Family Link, who provide breaks with short-term foster carers for disabled children and young people. This is usually for one weekend a month.
- St Christopher's Shared Care (The Children's Society) who provide overnight breaks for children and young people aged between 5-18 years who have a significant physical disability, autistic spectrum disorder and/or challenging behaviour.
- Acorns Hospice, who provides overnight and day breaks for children with life limiting conditions.

Further Information

To find out more information about Short Breaks in Solihull contact the [Solihull Family Information Service](#). They can tell you about community based and specialist support available in Solihull for disabled children and young people.

Free phone: 0800 389 8667

Email: familyinfo@solihull.gov.uk

or visit www.solihull.gov.uk/familyinfo/additionalneeds.htm

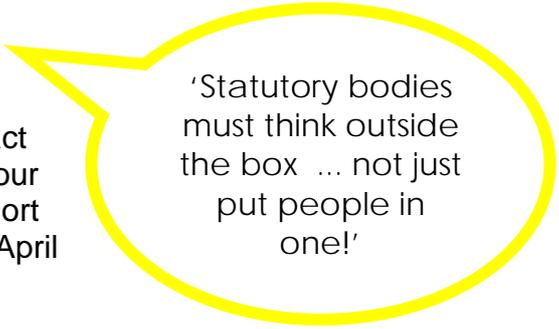
Solihull Family Information Service's Parent Network shares information for parents of disabled children and young people. To join the Parent's Network email your name and contact details to parentsnetwork@solihull.gov.uk or fill in a registration form at www.solihull.gov.uk/parentsnetwork.

Solihull CAN is a forum and support network for parents with disabled children and young people. To contact Solihull CAN visit www.solihullcan.org or email on info@solihullcan.org.

The Children's Society offers support and information to children and young people with a disability through the 'askability' web site www.askability.org.uk.

Next Steps

We want to hear your views on our Short Breaks Statement and the Short Breaks Services. Please contact the Family Information Service on 0800 389 8667 with your feedback to help us improve. We will be updating our Short Breaks Statement routinely, and the next review date is April 2012.



'Statutory bodies must think outside the box ... not just put people in one!'

Solihull Council with our partners (including parents, young people, schools and health services) have published a new strategy to give families of disabled children more control and choice of the support available to them, called "A full part in community life". This Strategy includes the development of a new 'personal budgets' approach which gives families a budget to spend on support for their disabled child. We have been testing this approach with Short Breaks funding over the past few months and will publish an evaluation early in 2012. For more information about the Strategy, or personal budgets please contact the Family Information Service.

We will ensure our Short Break Service Statement is available by:

- Publishing it on the Local Authority website;
- Sharing it with our parent partnerships;
- Sending families a copy through the Parents Network;
- Making it available in all of our Children's Centres;
- Sharing it with our Special schools, and in our Additionally Resourced Bases in mainstream schools;
- Sending a copy to the Special Educational Needs Coordinators in all of Solihull's schools.