

## Wakefield Council Short Breaks Statement (October 2011)

### Introduction

Welcome to Wakefield Council's Short Breaks Statement. The aim of this document is to provide parents and carers with information on:

- Short breaks;
- The range of short break opportunities available in Wakefield;
- Who can access short breaks;
- How to access short breaks; and
- How short breaks meet the needs of disabled children and families.

### What are Short Breaks?

Short breaks provide leisure activities and support services for disabled children and young people, outside of the school day. Short breaks are part of a range of services which support children in need and their families. They include the provision of day, evening, overnight and weekend activities for the child or young person, and can take place in the child's own home, the home of an approved carer, or in a residential or community setting. Short breaks enable parents and carers to have a break from their caring role, giving them time to have a rest, catch up on day-to-day activities, spend time with other family members or take up other interests.

### The range of short breaks in Wakefield

Wakefield Council has published detailed information on the range of short breaks available across the District on the Families Information Service website ([www.wakefieldfis.org.uk](http://www.wakefieldfis.org.uk)) for some time. Wakefield Council has also undertaken significant consultation with parents, carers, children and young people in relation to the range of short breaks provision offered across the district. This includes a detailed consultation exercise called "you said, we did" which engaged with parents to understand the issues that matters to them and detailed how these were being addressed by Wakefield Council and Wakefield District Primary Care Trust. The range of short breaks includes:

#### Get Started (Barnardo's)

The Get Started project is funded by Wakefield Council and is for disabled children and young people aged 5-19. The project supports children and young people to access mainstream leisure activities. The project helps to search for activities in the area in which the child / young person lives, supports other organisations within the local community to understand disability issues and provide an inclusive environment and provides short term support to children and young people in accessing a leisure activity or club.

#### Awake Mentoring

Awake is a project which recruits and trains volunteers who have experience of disability, and supports them in providing mentoring young people aged 14 years and above, who has a disability, learning difficulty or long term health condition to achieve their personal goals. Mentoring includes supporting young people around building confidence, accessing services, new hobbies or interested in training, voluntary work or employment.

#### Family Activities & Grant Scheme

The Family Activities and Grant Scheme provides parents with an opportunity to apply for a grant of £150 (or £200 where a child is of secondary school age). Grants can be used for family outings or payment for registered childcare/holiday schemes or support from registered domiciliary care agencies

### The Home Based Break Service

The Home Based Break Service provides a variety of short breaks in the community for eligible families (an assessment is undertaken to determine eligibility)

The service includes:

#### Family Link

Family Link is a service that provides safe care and support in a child/young person's own home or out in the community. This may be alongside or independent of parents/carers. Family Link is a service for children aged 0-18.

#### Leisure Link

Leisure Link provides disabled children (aged 8 - 18 years) short breaks 'out and about' in the community. These breaks help them pursue leisure interests, have fun, gain confidence, learn new skills and develop independence. The children and young people along with their families decide what kinds of activities they take part in; for example, swimming, bowling, cinema trips, visiting places of local interest, joining a young people's club or sports group, or just meeting up with friends.

#### Sitting Service

This service is open to any family caring for a child/young person aged 0-18, who has significant disabilities. The service is limited to a sitting service and children/young people will not be taken out for leisure activities. Each session lasts for a minimum of 3 hours to a maximum of 6 hours between 9am - 11pm (excluding public holidays) and is subject to availability.

#### Connect Placement

Connect Placement is a short break service for children with a significant disability (aged 0-18). The placement takes place within carers' own homes, with both day and overnight care available.

Wakefield Council and Wakefield District NHS also offer overnight short breaks to eligible children/young people and their families living in the Wakefield District (an assessment is undertaken to determine eligibility). These breaks are available at:

#### Wasdale Children's Resource Centre

Offers overnight short breaks for children and young people aged 5-17 with learning disability and/or a physical disability or sensory impairment.

#### Star House

Star House provides planned residential short breaks for up to seven children and young people aged 5-17 with learning disability, with a dual diagnosis of complex physical and / or sensory needs and / or challenging behaviour.

### **Who can access Short Breaks?**

Detailed information about eligibility criteria for short breaks is published in the Wakefield Council Short Breaks Access Guidance<sup>1</sup>. The document describes the services and support that are available to families caring for a disabled child.

#### Services that do not require an assessment

Some services / support are available without an assessment, for instance, where:

- The child / young person has a learning/physical disability or autism which means they sometimes or always need some support with personal care, behaviour, keeping safe,

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<sup>1</sup> See 'Related Downloads' at <http://www.wakefieldfis.org.uk/Disabled/Default.htm>

making friends and/or taking part in activities, and the parent /carer needs some support so that they can manage their caring role, have time with other children and have an 'ordinary' family life; **or**

- The child / young person has a substantial disability or complex needs which means they frequently need help with personal care, without help would be unable to make friends or could be a risk to themselves or others, and the parent / carer needs support to be able to manage their caring role and enjoy an 'ordinary' family life, to have a break from caring or to spend time with other family members.

#### Services that require an assessment

If a child needs more specialist support, a banding system provides a guide to the level of support that may be on offer:

##### Band 1

The child has a substantial disability or complex needs which means they frequently need help with:

- Personal cares: e.g. eating, dressing, going to the toilet, bathing, moving.
- Without help, they would be unable to make friends or could be a risk to themselves or others.
- Or the parent / carer needs support to manage their caring role and enjoy an 'ordinary' family life, to have a break from caring or to spend time with other family members.

##### Band 2

The child / young person meet Band 1 criteria, plus have one of more of the following:

- Requires active assistance to undertake the majority of personal care tasks, needs assistance with mobility or 'transfers';
- Requires close supervision in order to manage everyday risks;
- Displays unpredictable behaviour which requires close monitoring to ensure their safety or that of others;
- Has a medical condition which requires careful monitoring;
- Has complex health needs, for example enteral feeding;
- Or the parent/carer needs support to manage their caring role due to difficult family circumstances, they have their own physical or mental health needs, or have no family or friends to provide support.

##### Band 3

The child / young person meet Band 2 criteria, plus have one of more of the following:

- Needs frequent active assistance as a result of complex or challenging behaviour;
- Needs frequent active assistance as a result of complex health needs; or
- Or the parent / carer needs considerable support due to their own health needs, is experiencing a lack of sleep as they are frequently required to attend to the child during the night or that without support, they may no longer be able to continue their caring role.

**How to access short breaks**

Some short breaks and services for disabled children can be accessed without the need for an assessment, whilst others require assessment by a Social Worker.

For more information about how to access short breaks and eligibility, please contact:

- Wakefield Early Support, Advice, Information & Liaison (WESAIL) service (01924 379015)
- Social Care Direct (0845 8503 503)
- Wakefield Families Information Service (0800 587 8042)

**How short breaks meet the needs of disabled children and families**

Parents and carers, as well as children and young people are involved in the shaping of services in Wakefield; for instance, the Access Guidance for short breaks was developed in partnership with parents/carers of disabled children. Local service providers also undertake consultation activities with families and feed these back to the Local Authority. A Local Authority commissioner undertakes evaluation of services to ensure they are providing services which meet the needs of service users.

**Review**

This Short Breaks Statement will be regularly reviewed and revised as required.