

Short Breaks for disabled children and their families Statement

Introduction

Welcome to Solihull Council's Short Breaks Statement. It was first published in October 2011 following wide consultation with parents/carers and children and young people. This version was updated in April 2013.

The aim of this document is to provide parents and carers with information about:

- 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

How has the statement been updated?

Between November 2012 and February 2013 parents and carers attended workshops and responded to questionnaires to review the Short Breaks Statement. The workshop in February reviewed short breaks against the 10 Early Support principles (see appendix 1).

Parents and carers told us they want clearer information about:

- how they can get a short break
- eligibility criteria
- entitlement to short breaks

We have updated the statement to reflect this feedback.

At the workshop parents also said they wanted to feel confident that people running short breaks have "the same skills in caring that I have developed."

All of these points are being addressed as part of the work to deliver the objectives agreed in the Solihull's Strategy for Children and Young People (0 – 25) with Special Needs and Disabilities (see appendix 1). Once the eligibility criteria and short break entitlement is more clearly defined this short breaks statement will be updated again.

Legal context

Section 25 of the Children and Young Persons Act 2008 requires every local authority to provide services designed to assist individuals who provide care for disabled children to continue to do so, or to do so more effectively by providing them with breaks from caring. Regulations relating to this duty, which came into force on 1 April 2011, 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 families with disabled children in their area.

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, play-schemes or clubs; attending nurseries or playgroups; staying in a residential home or staying with another family (Family Link); 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 breaks 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 also provide short breaks for young people up to their 25th birthday.

Some short breaks are open to any child or young person; 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 in Solihull but with funding from their own authority. This is an option families may choose if they have a direct payment or personal budget and the service can accommodate their child.

What short breaks are available for children and young people in Solihull?

Inclusive community services

"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" **Solihull parent**

"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".

Young person living in Solihull

Solihull Council believes that access to universal services (leisure centres, libraries, playgrounds, theatres and youth clubs for example) is very important for disabled children and their families, and that as many children and young people as possible should be able to use these services.

There is a wide range of short breaks services on offer. These are available from children's centres, extended services in special 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 Solihull Life Opportunities (SoLO), helps disabled children to access leisure activities in universal leisure services. You can apply directly to the provider to access these services. Further information and application forms are also available from the Family Information Service. Contact details are on the last page of the statement.

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. SoLO provide play-schemes, youth clubs and day trips at the weekend, after school and in the holidays. You can apply directly to the provider to access these services; further information and application forms are also available from the Family Information Service.

Feedback from parent about Totally Arts (term time short break provided by SoLO)

X gets an awful lot out of Totally Arts. Being involved in this project allows him to express himself in a supportive group which understands his special needs and tailors its programme to cater for children such as X.

In the company of his own peers he has the confidence to try things he may not otherwise attempt and this bring out a more engaging side to him. He obviously feels very comfortable in the environment that Totally Arts creates. He particularly enjoys working towards and taking part in the shows that are put on from time to time. The sessions also provide some time for us as parents to spend time with other members of the family.

Overnight Breaks

Overnight breaks are for families that need a longer break where the child or young person spends the night away from home. Families may choose a direct payment and opt to employ a personal assistant who could support them to take their child on a family break. To access this service a social work or health assessment is required. Overnight short breaks are provided in a number of ways:

- Lyndon House caters for children aged 0-16 years that have a learning disability with a significant health care need who are registered with a Solihull GP.
- Family Link provides family based care through short-term foster carers who look after disabled children and young people in their own home. This is usually for one weekend a month, but the amount of support depends on the needs of each individual child or young person and their family circumstances.
- Residential short breaks – overnight breaks with other disabled children and young people in a residential unit. A range of providers are available, depending on what families choose to meet the needs of their child or young person.
- Acorns Hospice provides overnight and daytime breaks for children with life limiting conditions.
- Direct payments in lieu of a social care service will be offered to families if they prefer. This will ensure that they have choice and control over the best way to meet the needs of their child or young person and their family. This can include employing a personal assistant to support them having a short break.

Direct Payments

Direct payments can be offered in place of a service from social care or the Early Help and Early Support Service, following an assessment of need. Direct payments give parents/carers choice and control of the services that meet the needs of their disabled child or young person and family. Direct payments can be managed directly by parents/carers or via a managed account on their behalf.

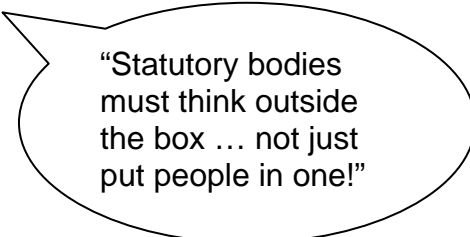
How do we publicise the Short Breaks Statement?

We will ensure our Short Breaks 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 (SENCOs) in all of Solihull's schools.

Next steps

We will continue to review and develop this statement. Our next review takes place in April 2014. In the meantime please tell us what you think about our Short Breaks Statement and short breaks services. Contact the Family Information Service on 0800 389 8667 with your feedback to help us improve.



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

Further Information about short breaks

Contact Solihull Family Information Service for more information about short breaks, including 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 sends out regular updates with information and support for parents of disabled children and young people. To receive these updates join the Parents' Network by emailing your name and contact details to parentsnetwork@solihull.gov.uk or fill in a registration form at www.solihull.gov.uk/parentsnetwork.

Useful contacts

Early Help and Early Support Service tel: 0121 788 4334

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.

Signpost Inclusion is a Community Interest Company www.signpostinclusion.org.uk or email on info@signpostinclusion.org.uk

Appendix 1

Solihull's Short Breaks Statement is prepared alongside Solihull's Strategy for Children and Young People (0 – 25) with Special Needs and Disabilities - "A full part in community life" 2011 – 2014. This Strategy is about ensuring that support for special needs and disabled children and young people and their families is designed around their needs, co-ordinated, and makes the best use of resources available. In particular this strategy sets out to develop a more personalised response to the needs of children and young people with special needs and disabilities, giving families more choice and control, and helping them to live fulfilling lives and be as independent as possible. This strategy is founded on the 10 Early Support principles.

Early Support - The Ten Principles

1. The uniqueness of children, young people and families is valued and provided for.
2. An integrated assessment, planning and review process is provided in partnership with children, young people and families.
3. Service delivery is holistic, co-ordinated, seamless and supported by key working.
4. Continuity of care is maintained through different stages of a child's life and through preparation for adulthood.
5. Children and young people's learning and development is monitored and promoted.
6. Children, young people and families are able to make informed choices.
7. Children, young people and families are able to live ordinary lives.
8. Children, young people and families are involved in shaping, developing and evaluating the services they use.
9. Multi- agency working practices and systems are integrated.
10. Children, young people and families can be confident the people working with them have appropriate training, skills, knowledge and experience.