

Walsall Short Breaks Service Statement 'Better together for children'







Index

Page 4	Introduction to Short Breaks
Page 5	What is a Short Break?
Page 6-7	Delivery of Short Breaks in Walsall
Page 8-9	Consultation
Page 10	Measuring Impact
Page 11	Universal Case Study
Page 12	Targeted Case Study
Page 13	Specialist Case Study
Page 14	Walsall Council Parent Participation Charter
Page 15-18	Direct Payments

Walsall Short Breaks Service Statement

Introduction

Welcome to Walsall Short Breaks Service statement. This statement has been designed with parents and the local authority to give parents of (disabled children aged 0 – 18) living within Walsall, the following information:-

- What short Breaks Services are available to them?
- How to access the range of Short Breaks services?
- How the Short Breaks are designed to meet their needs?

Under the Breaks for Carers Regulations, every local authority has a legal duty to provide short breaks to families, which should be documented in a Short Breaks Service statement. This is so families can find out what is available.

This statement has been prepared working in partnership with parents/carers of disabled children in Walsall.

What do we mean by disabled?

In the Regulations, the word “disabled” has the meaning given in Section 17(11) of the Children Act 1989. That is, that a child is disabled “if he is blind, deaf or dumb or suffers from mental disorder of any kind or is substantially and permanently handicapped by illness, injury or congenital deformity or such other disability as may be prescribed”. The language, of course, is now very outdated. The more recent Equality Act 2010 says “a person has a disability if they have a physical or mental impairment and the impairment has a substantial and long term adverse effect on their ability to perform normal day to day activities”.

What is a Short Break?

The Regulations define a short break as:

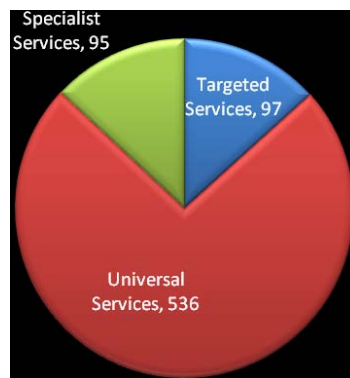
- Day-time care in the homes of disabled children or elsewhere
- Overnight care in the homes of disabled children or elsewhere
- Educational or leisure activities for disabled children outside their homes, and
- Services available to assist carers in the evenings, at weekends and during the school holidays.

Short Breaks provide disabled children and young people with an opportunity to spend time away from their parents or primary carers, relaxing and having fun with their friends. This enables them to experience the same range of activities and environments as non-disabled children and young people. In addition Short Breaks provide parents/carers with a “break” from their caring responsibilities, giving them a chance to rest, spend time with partners and other children. Short Breaks can include day, evening, overnight, weekend and holiday activities. Making Short Breaks possible can range from supporting children and young people to join children’s activities and services in their communities, to providing specialist services, or a mixture of both.

Our aim is to ensure that families with disabled children have the support they need to live ordinary lives as a matter of course.

Delivery of Short Breaks in Walsall

In Walsall we currently provide Short Breaks activities and approximately 728 occasions for disabled children and young people. This number has increased over the past twelve months. The Pie Chart (below) shows the range of Short Breaks accessed by children and young people in 2012 – 2013. We know that there are more families with disabled children who need Short Breaks and we are continuing to work to increase the availability of breaks.



Who can get Short Breaks?

Eligibility Criteria are used to make sure that services are allocated fairly. Children and young people are eligible for our Short Breaks if they:

- Are aged between 0-18
- Live in Walsall
- Meet the definition of disabled - overleaf

We recognise that the needs for each family may vary. Some families may need more support because of their individual circumstances. Children and young people with complex needs may require much more support to have a short break. We will work with parents and young people to make sure that there are a range of short break provision for those with complex needs; to do this an assessment may be necessary.

Universal Services

Universal short break services are available for all children who have a diagnosis of a disability. This can range from child to child and depends on what your child or young person is able to access. The range of services on offer here can be Youth Centres, Children Centres, and Football Clubs. Disabled Children will not need an assessment to access universal services.

Universal Services include:

- Play schemes
- After School Clubs
- Football Coaching
- Brownies, Scouts, other community activities

Targeted Services

Some children/young people will need and benefit from services that are specifically designed to meet the needs of disabled children. These may be provided through local clubs or activities, and intended mainly or wholly for disabled children and young people. Your child can access many targeted services without an assessment. We support these providers in the same way that we support providers of children's activities.

Targeted Services include:-

- Specialist Play schemes
- Short Breaks Sessional Worker
- Family Support Services
- Early Help Assessments

Specialist Services

Specialist short break services are available for children and young people who have very complex needs requiring more support than is available from community clubs and activities or from targeted services.

Specialist services include:

- Personal Assistants (these can be funded via a direct payment made to you/your child or provided by an agency who will invoice Walsall Council direct)
- Family based care (Family Link, Contract Carers and a range of foster care options)
- Residential children's homes

Because these services are very specialist, and are for children with the most complex needs, an assessment is always provided, completed by the Children with Disabilities Team. Outcomes (what needs to change) will be agreed, and a support plan drawn up with the family to achieve those outcomes.

See pages 11, 12, & 13 for case studies

Consultation

What disabled children and young people and their families in Walsall have told us:

What is needed in short breaks?

We will continue to consult with local parents and children/young people to make sure we develop services that meet their needs and are of a high quality. A wide range of consultations with parents, carers and young people are undertaken on a regular basis. It is our priority to make sure that under- represented groups of people are consulted and these include ethnic minorities, fathers and disabled parents.

Parent carers:



Children/Young People:



We are committed to:

- Continuing to work in partnership with Family Voice Walsall and our parent participation meetings. To understand the changing needs of disabled children and their families in Walsall and to make decisions about the priorities for the budgets available for Short Breaks.
- Continuing to work with the Voluntary and Community Sector and other independent providers to develop creative ways of providing Short Breaks and to understand the barriers to inclusion.
- Continuing to listen to young people and parents/carers to understand and address the gaps in local service provision.
- Monitoring the use of the whole range of Short Breaks and listening to the views of children, families and providers about how successful these services and activities are in meeting their needs.

Measuring Impact

How we measure Impact:

- We will ensure that our short breaks services focus on improving life opportunities and outcomes for disabled children and their families, through continuing to develop our participation strategy with service users.
- We will ensure that our Short Breaks services are outcome focused. To enable future success we will continue to work in partnership with parents/carers, children and young people.
- To ensure we have a constant cycle of service improvement, we will continue to monitor and record the views of children, parents and staff to ensure that everyone feels involved and supported.
- We will continue to monitor and evaluate data.
- We will continue to consult with all stakeholders to ensure the best outcomes are achieved.
- We will continue to gather useful data to help plan services.

1 - Universal Case Study

Both of my children were diagnosed just after their 2nd birthday as autistic with significant associated learning difficulties. We were given an enormous amount of support professionally just after the diagnosis by a Specialist Health Visitor and an Early Years Advisor. Both of these professionals supported us in trying to find a suitable nursery placement for the children and in the transition from nursery to Special School, after helping us through the Statementing process. Through the CDC Cody and Jesse received a speech and language assessment to help with our school applications and we also worked through the multi agency process, where all the services involved with our family were pulled together, so we received support from other services such as a Family Support Worker from Leighswood Childrens Centre. Recently Cody and Jesse have started working with an Occupational Therapist for their sensory needs and we have also had help from a clinical physiologist for some behavioural issues.

Because of the children's ages they were unable to access the Short Breaks provided originally. This changed recently and it has been incredibly helpful that they can now access a few schemes during half terms and summer breaks. We are so pleased that they are now catered for by schemes appropriate for their ages and the level of their disabilities. The children are very happy and in turn we can relax for those few hours knowing they are being looked after so well. As we don't have alternative care for the children those few hours are precious to us during the holidays, as it gives us relief from the pressures and stresses of continual care.

We also applied for the One off Carers Payments to help us re train while the children are at school, so we can prepare for the future. Though we haven't need a social worker for a long period of time we did contact the Children's Disabilities Team to support us when my husband went into hospital, where we looked into the possibility of receiving direct payments for that short amount of time so that we could have the additional help of a carer in the home while my husband was away.

I'm now a member of many support groups and Parent Participation meetings in Walsall to help shape the services available. It can seem daunting for parents to find out everything available to them and even more stressful to try and access the services, but you can get a lot of help if you ask for it.

2 - Targeted Case Study

I have been using Short Breaks for around 2 years - My Son attends play schemes run during the school holidays; we have used 2 different schemes up to yet. The current one we have been using for the last year - which my Son really loves, the staff are fantastic, he had his own 1 to 1 buddy and they know how to deal with him.

One of the major concerns I had with using Short Breaks, which is why I didn't use it from the beginning, is that as my Son has huge control and behaviour issues I was worried that the staff at these schemes could not deal with my Son's issues properly.

The first scheme I tried, assured me they could, - which went well at first, but after a few holidays it became apparent that he was too difficult for them to manage and resulted in me being called to collect him on a few occasions. I decided that the hassle was not worth the break I was intended to get, so stopped using this provider.

For a few months there were no schemes that were suitable for us, until a year ago a new scheme came on board, which I decided to give a go. What a great choice that was! I was contacted by the organiser prior to the club starting to offer some sessions and to make arrangements for an initial home visit.

I was visited approximately a week later by someone at the scheme who explained how the scheme was run and had a lengthy chat about my child, making sure they had as much information about him before the club commenced. I was very impressed by this level of commitment; I have never had anything like this from the previous scheme we had used. I was particularly impressed due to the fact that my child has a little known condition and they took it upon themselves to research the condition and strategies to support him.

The children were all assigned 1-1 'buddies' and where possible the same buddy was used for the whole time. This again is something that wasn't done at other schemes. For my child and many others this has been a wonderful development, as his anxiety has been far less by not having to change staff every day! My anxiety has been removed, as I was confident in his 'buddy' and didn't have to explain his problems to a different person every day.

Each child was allocated a diary and it was filled in daily, including lots of photographs to give parents a good idea of what the children had been doing, again something else not offered on any other schemes.

The range of activities available was fantastic; the children never had time to get fed up. All children were rewarded at the end of the scheme with an awards ceremony and certificate celebrating their achievements during the scheme.

Overall my experience of the Scheme has been wonderful. It was very well planned, well run and so much more compared to the other schemes we have previously used. It is only run for half a day, but I knew he was safe and happy there; it really did give me a break from my caring responsibilities.

3 - Specialist Services Case Study

My son has been receiving short break services from the authority since he was quite young and the benefit to the whole family has been tremendous.

My son goes to residential respite several nights a month, which gives the family a break from caring. We can actually get a whole night's sleep and have a break from changing continence pads, have our meals when we want them, do activities and go to events that we normally couldn't do when we have our son with us. We can even go away for short holidays and go trekking, which is impossible to do with my son. I miss my son while he is in respite but we really need the breaks. My son also benefits as it gives him some independence away from home and prepares him for residential college when he leaves school.

We also receive a Direct Payment which means we are given money to employ our own carers. Employing our own carers gives us flexibility over when we have our care, and best of all it's always the same carers that our son gets to know. Our carers are almost like part of the family and love working with my son. This is a completely different experience to the alternative of agency carers. In my experience carers from agencies are often different ones each time and some have very little experience. It was very daunting at first to set up the Direct Payment and to become an employer responsible for paying salary, holiday pay, contracts, health and safety, etc, but the support agency helped with everything including finding carers and running the payroll. It wasn't long before I got the hang of it and I found that the benefits of direct payments far outweigh the negatives. I use my carers in many ways such as helping on day trips out during school holidays, hospital appointments and babysitting.

During school holidays my son attends some of the Short Break play schemes. These schemes mean that my son can do enjoyable activities that meet his needs and level of understanding. It would be very difficult to include him into mainstream activities for teenagers without disabilities, as my son really only likes pre-school activities. My son also gets the chance to develop his social skills and I hope he will eventually find a friend. My family also benefit because we get a break from caring.

Our whole family depends on Short Break services. The breaks from caring that we have means that we are able to cope with caring for my son. It also means we are actually able to do some things that families with children without disabilities do as a matter of course, but for us would otherwise be impossible.

Walsall Council Parent Participation Charter

This parent participation charter sets out some principles for working together, better together for disabled children and young people in Walsall.

- Parent/Carer Forum is instrumental in developing and reviewing services in our area and promoting choice and control for parents.
- Parents/Carers have a right to information which is easy for everybody to understand.
- Parents/Carers should be asked their views and given feedback about services which affect them or their children.
- Parents/Carers need to know what they can and cannot influence.
- To enable parents/carers to attend and participate in a parent friendly manner. The 'think parent first' principle will be adopted when arranging events.
- Parents/Carers should be valued and treated with respect and honesty, and everyone should be given an equal chance to participate.
- Consultation will take place in a variety of ways including mail, email, text and social media sites to enable the widest possible participation.

What is a Direct Payment?

Direct payments are cash payments made by the local authority to an individual who has been assessed as needing children's services. Since April 2003 local authorities have had a legal duty to offer Direct Payments if the person is willing and able to manage them, with or without assistance, and if they are eligible, given all of their circumstances.

A direct payment is the sum of money that Walsall Council will pay directly to you, so you can buy and arrange your own care and support, instead of the Council arranging it for you.

Direct payments are part of the Government's Personalisation agenda, which puts you central to the support you receive, helping you and your child live as independently as possible and giving you more choice and control.

For queries relating to managing your direct payment account, contact the lead professional.

How do I get a Direct Payment?

You will be involved in an **outcomes assessment** to determine:

- How you need support
- What your outcomes (goals) are

Please note, processes and eligibility are different for children.

Once the Council agrees to provide support, a **support plan** will be drawn up with you, and you will be informed of the plan that has been agreed. If the council has agreed to provide support following an assessment you can request to receive a Direct Payment so that you can arrange your own care and support rather than the Council arranging this for you.

A direct payment can be made to almost everyone eligible, regardless of age or the kind of help needed. For more information on eligibility please contact Aaron Bradbury on 01922 655723.

How can a Direct Payment help me?

A direct payment can give you more **independence** along with greater **flexibility, choice** and **control** over the support you receive, which means:

- You get to say who helps you, how you like things to be done, and what times of day you want support provided.
- You get to decide where and when you need or want to go out.
- You make the choices concerning necessary equipment and adaptations; from picking a stair lift to suit your decor, to choosing your own builder to fit a special shower room, it's up to you, and if you want more than the standard model, you can supplement the Council's funding to buy whatever you like.

Who can get Direct Payments?

In the vast majority of cases it is expected that councils will have a duty to make direct payments to people with eligible needs. Direct payments **must** be made to individuals who are eligible to receive them and who want them. This may include;

- A person has been assessed as having eligible needs, including disabled children aged 16 or 17, provided that the person is able to consent to the making of the payments either to themselves or to their nominee.
- a person with eligible needs that does not have the capacity to consent to the making of direct payments, the payments can be made to an appointed suitable person who will manage the payments on their behalf.
- disabled children aged under 16 or for children under 16 for whom a disabled person has parental responsibility, direct payments can be made to (and with the consent of) a person with parental responsibility, usually a parent.

What can I buy with a Direct Payment?

There is no 'set' list of things you can buy with your direct payment, as this is individual to you. However you will need to agree your support plan with the person or team assessing you, eg social worker, broker, occupational therapist, community psychiatric nurse, etc.

You can be imaginative and creative in what you buy with your direct payment and how it is arranged, but any support must help meet your outcomes and needs in a safe and legal way. You must also make sure that anybody agreeing to or employed to support you does not abuse their position in any way.

Examples of things you can use your direct payment to buy:

- Care and support from a personal assistant
- Support from a care agency
- A short break
- A sitting service
- Equipment or adaptations
- Leisure or community based activities

Direct Payments can NOT be spent on

- Employing someone without DBS and CPR checks or references.
- Any services already provided by the council e.g. residential services where these are agreed as the most appropriate way to meet the assessed needs.
- Any services where the responsible authority is not satisfied that the welfare of the child in respect of whom the service is needed will be safeguarded and promoted, by securing the provision by means of a direct payment

What should I do when I receive a Direct Payment?

You may:

- Need to open a separate bank account and keep some financial records, including receipts and invoices for evidence.
- Need to submit financial records and bank statements.
- Have employer responsibilities; including wages, tax, rotas and timesheets, if employing your own personal assistants.

Will receiving a Direct Payment affect my finances?

A **direct payment is not a welfare benefit**, so it will not affect any benefits or pensions you receive. You will have a financial assessment, and should you be asked for a contribution, it will be the same whether you receive a direct payment or have services arranged for you.

People eligible for social care who are not subject to a financial assessment are:

- Careers
- Parents who receive direct payments on behalf of a child
- People subject to section 117 of the Mental Health Act 1995 (although some flat rate charges maybe applicable)
- Parents of disabled and non disabled children

How much financial support will I receive?

The local authority must give you a Direct Payment in an amount that is sufficient for you to purchase services that have been agreed to meet your child's assessed needs. If you are using a Direct Payment for a Personal Assistant to provide care for your child. Walsall has agreed a standard hourly rate as outlined below.

£8.22 PER HOUR - This is the standard amount we expect to be sufficient to employ a personal assistant for most disabled children in receipt of a direct payment. It is expected that the personal assistant will have received basic training/information to be competent to deliver this care.

It is anticipated for this amount of money the personal assistant will undertake general caring duties such as feeding, personal care, escorting to activities, implementing agreed behaviour management strategies, etc. If the personal assistant is required to undertake specific clinical tasks they will receive the below;

£10.79 PER HOUR – This is the higher rate amount we would agree if the child's assessment evidences the need for a personal assistant with specific skills and experience and/or if the child requires a high level of care and clinical tasks on a regular basis.

These hourly amounts reflect the hourly rates across Children's Services within Walsall.

What support will I get to manage my Direct Payment?

If you are using a direct payment to employ someone, your lead professional can refer you to an agency who will help you as an employer.

Additional Information

We would like to thank all parents and professionals who were involved in creating this short breaks service statement.

Short breaks service statement was signed off at the heads of service meeting on 12/11/2013

Future reviews, your views, please contact:

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