

Short Break Services Statement

South Gloucestershire

For families with children and young people who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities





Our Vision

– ‘a break for you’

What are short breaks?

Short breaks are activities for children and young people, usually away from home, that enable them to have fun and time with their peers, while at the same time giving a break to parents from their caring role.

They can be for the whole family together as well as for children and young people away from their family carers and range from a few hours' activities to longer times.

Our Short Break Offer:

Disabled children have opportunities to meet other children, to have fun and to take part in everyday activities outside their family home.

Parents, carers and siblings have some time free from their caring responsibilities.

Short Break Services should:

Enable parents and carers to

Feel supported and to experience reduced levels of stress due to caring

Have clear information on their entitlement and know what is available to them

Be confident their child is having a positive experience

Have a range of services from which they are able to make choices

Have trust in the short break provider, and to know that carers are trained, skilled and understand their child's needs.

Enable disabled children and young people to

Enjoy the experience and try new things

Share fun times

Have an opportunity to be with or make friends

Take part in activities which help their development

Have some choice and control over what they do

Know what to expect and to feel safe

Be able to have time with their parents that is not taken up with caring issues

Know that their brother or sister is enjoying their short break

Be able to have their friends to visit

Be able to do homework, or other activities or just have some time for themselves.

Be able to join their brother and sister for some short break activities

1 **Background**

– ‘what has happened so far?’

- 1.1 The 2008 – 11 national programme, ‘Aiming High for Disabled Children: Better Support for Families’ (AHDC), focused on increasing short breaks for disabled children and their families within the context of improving services overall. This was because disabled children had told them that they wanted more things to do and places to go to, and the priority for parents was to have breaks from caring.
- 1.2 South Gloucestershire Disabled Children’s Strategy had already identified the importance of short breaks in enabling the five Every Child Matters Outcome areas to be achieved for disabled children and their families. The five outcome areas are Be Healthy, Stay Safe, Enjoy and Achieve, Make a Positive Contribution, Achieve Economic Well Being. The Council’s strategy and the AHDC programme were implemented in conjunction with each other, as each impacted on the other.
- 1.3 South Gloucestershire’s Department for Children and Young People commissioned an increased range of short break services, including weekend activities for young people, after-school clubs and activities during all holidays, not only in the summer. Many children and young people received more than one type of break. Breaks ranged from a couple of hours at a weekend to longer activities in the holidays and family weekends away.
- 1.4 Children who were not in touch with the specialist social care service or who did not meet the threshold criteria for this service were able to access a range of breaks without a prior assessment. We wanted high quality as well as more breaks and to make sure that the children and young people had a good time and were cared for safely.
- 1.5 Capital projects have contributed to ensuring that environments used for short breaks are accessible and that there is a long term impact on accessibility for disabled young people and their families.
- 1.6 There are now fully accessible changing rooms in Bradley Stoke and Longwell Green Leisure Centres together with an accessible soft play area at the Bradley Stoke Centre. Youth Centres at Winterbourne and Kingswood have accessible changing areas including ceiling tracking and hoists. The adaptations have promoted a partnership with the Youth Service for the youth centres to be used as venues for holiday playschemes.





- 1.7 Scott Park in Patchway has been developed as a specialist inclusive play area with a fully accessible toilet and changing area which meets Mencap 'Changing Places' standards. A contribution has also been made to the voluntary sector Hop Skip and Jump Centre in the east of the authority.
- 1.8 The Parents' Reference Group for the Disabled Children Strategy merged with Our Voice Matters, the parent led forum for parents of children with additional needs, so as to form one organisation representing parents. We have used feedback from parents and young people to inform the short break development.

2 **What have parents and young people told us?**

- 2.1 Parents and young people said that they wanted more breaks in the holidays, after school and at weekends and that they wanted the same opportunities for family life as others.
- 2.2 As the AHDC programme came to an end parents described how the breaks have contributed to supporting them in their caring role and to enabling children and young people to have enjoyable experiences which promote their learning and development.
- 2.3 **Parents told us that the activity enabled the**

'whole family to have a break... having not had a holiday for some five years now.' 'We actually managed a bike ride together as a family for the first time ever!'

and benefited siblings

'... (brother of disabled child) often feels excluded because we always have to meet... (disabled child) needs but it was not the case at the weekend at all.'

as well as giving a good time to their disabled child and helping their development

'he seems to be more grown up , more communicative and notices more outdoor things. He definitely slept well!... the forest is an ideal setting.'

'I was happy to leave... in the capable hands of the playscheme staff. I knew he was safe and well cared for.'

'He was keen to tell me all about what he had been doing.'

'He is now 'given... confidence to go off for the day and try new things.'

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'what you do is so valuable to us as a family. ...This gives us time to do things with our other 2 children that (disabled child) won't tolerate.'

'our other children have benefited from more quality time with us'

'(child) is always happy when he goes to ... (the activity) and it's good for us that he accepts someone else looking after him.'

2.4 They have also told us that they would like some activities to be longer, particularly in the evenings or daytime at a weekend, and they would like more family days out. Some would also like more activities for children with specific impairments eg Asperger's Syndrome, or older children with physical impairments, and to include children with emotional and developmental traumas, and more information about what they can access.

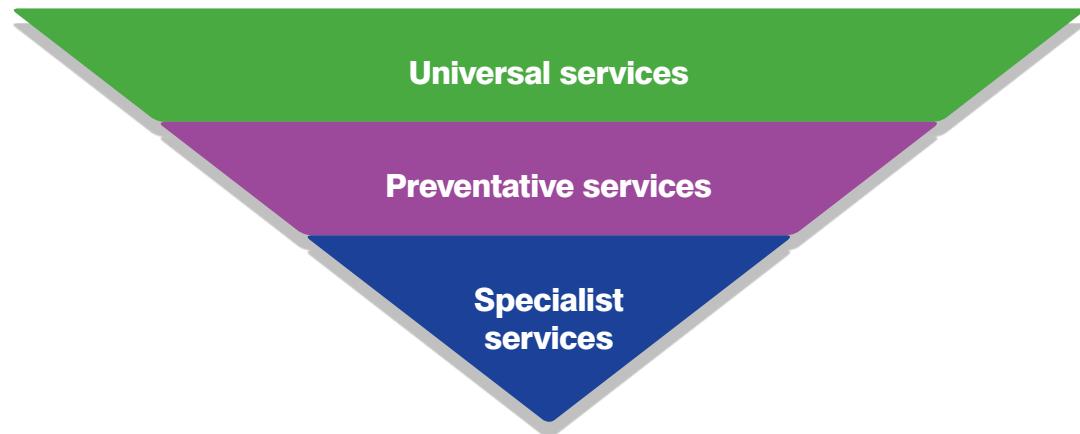
3 What is happening now as a result?

3.1 Short breaks will continue to be offered to contribute to the Council's preventative and early intervention strategy and support for vulnerable groups, in particular for the following groups of disabled children:

- Children and young people with autistic spectrum conditions or social communication difficulties, particularly associated with other impairments such as challenging behaviour and learning difficulties
- Children and young people with complex health needs, often associated with other physical, cognitive or sensory impairments
- Children and young people with mobility impairments and moving and handling needs
- Children and young people with severe learning difficulties, often with associated challenging behaviour
- Disabled young people in adolescence who require services that are age appropriate
- Young people who are supported by the locality integrated working teams and who may have emotional or mental health difficulties arising from trauma or early experiences.

4 Universal, preventative or specialist services?

4.1 The diagram on the next page shows the types of services that are offered ; they have been coloured coded so that they can be easily identified in the document. The actual services are described in more detail in appendix 2.



Universal services

4.2 These are services available to all children and young people, such as education or general practitioner services. They include activities at youth centres, sports and leisure centres, youth clubs and after-school clubs and Sure Start Children's Centres offered to all children.

Universal services will be the first point of contact for many families; we will work to promote inclusion and support universal services to meet the needs of disabled children and young people.

Disabled children will not need an assessment to access universal services, apart from any criteria operated by each organisation.

5 Preventative or extra support services

5.1 We recognise that families may have additional needs if they are bringing up a disabled child and that the children and young people may need extra support, either short or long term, to be able to take part in activities. Preventative services aim to offer support to prevent difficulties building up and to encourage children and young people to try new things.

Short break preventative services are specifically for disabled children and their families, and may be provided for different age or impairment groups. Access is not necessarily dependent on a formal assessment of need although each service may operate its own criteria. Some services will be available for children assessed as needing a short break through the multi-agency integrated assessment process.

5.2 Key user groups will be children attending specialist schools or resource bases, who are known to inclusion services or who are recognised as having an autistic spectrum condition, particularly with associated challenging behaviour or learning difficulties, those with sensory and/or physical impairments.

5.3 Short breaks will also be available through staff who work in the two locality hubs covering South Gloucestershire: Kingswood and Patchway. Staff will be working together in integrated teams to provide services for children, young people and their parents.



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5.4 A common pathway to address needs at an early stage is being developed for all children who are referred to the integrated teams; this will address how different levels of service can be accessed depending on need, using screening, which will involve some elements of, or the whole, Common Assessment Framework (CAF) process. The aim is to offer earlier interventions to prevent difficulties escalating and to increase the likelihood of positive outcomes for children and their families.

6 Specialist Services

- 6.1 These are available to children and families who are assessed as needing a specialist service from the council's Child Health and Disability Team or the NHS. They are provided to children and families with the most complex needs and include services in or away from the child's home and could be with family carers or with individual support workers to use community facilities.
- 6.2 Some families choose to obtain their own services through a direct payment which enables them to employ their own carers, contract with an agency for the care or purchase a break from a provider. Direct payments are a specialist service provided following an assessment of need; the Council has a contract with a support service to provide advice to families to set up the payment and take on employment responsibilities.
- 6.3 Specialist palliative care health services for children and young people with life limiting or life threatening conditions are commissioned by NHS South Gloucestershire. These include short breaks at children's hospices as well as an overnight service in the child's own home. NHS South Gloucestershire also contributes to a short break service in the family home for children with palliative care needs; the service operates its own referral criteria and can be contacted by parents directly.

7 Mix and match

- 7.1 Many children will access a mixture of services, some specialist provided through an assessment and some accessed through preventative activities commissioned from voluntary or independent sector groups. Some children will be able to access universal short break services with or without inclusion support. However, where there is high demand, preventative activities which are funded to offer short breaks may prioritise children who do not receive specialist services; this is to ensure that breaks reach a wide range of children and are distributed to as many as possible.

8 Promoting transition to adulthood

Young people who are preparing to leave school and take the next steps for their adult life are supported with age appropriate short breaks through universal services such as the Youth Service or targeted groups which arrange activities for teenagers.

9 How is eligibility decided?

9.1 **Specialist services** are allocated in accordance with the council's policy on eligibility for services – this is described in appendix 1.

Preventative services are accessed either directly by families who meet the criteria for that service, or through the common pathway and integrated assessment model being introduced in the localities.

10 How will short breaks improve outcomes?

- 10.1 Short breaks aim to support parents in their caring role and reduce levels of stress due to the demands of caring.
- 10.2 They aim to support disabled children and young people to make friends, develop and learn through fun and play activities, and to promote their social, communication and independence skills.
- 10.3 Disabled young people will be supported to develop self-confidence and a sense of achievement through the offer of extra curricular activities where they learn new interests and try out new creative activities.
- 10.4 When disabled young people are preparing to leave school and make the transition to adulthood they will be supported to express their wishes and make choices through age-appropriate activities
- 10.5 Short breaks will provide opportunities for families to spend some relaxing time together and for parents and siblings to get to know other families with similar experiences, in order to reduce isolation and share fun time.
- 10.6 Children with very complex health needs and/or life limiting conditions will be offered opportunities for short breaks which are appropriate for their needs.
- 10.7 Parents of children with autistic spectrum conditions will be offered the opportunity to take part in a range of courses about parenting children with ASD or Asperger's Syndrome.

11 How has the Short Break Services Statement been prepared?

- 11.1 The services included in this statement have been developed after feedback from families and young people about what they needed and what worked for them, and from discussions with staff and service providers.
- 11.2 The statement has been distributed through Our Voice Matters, the parent-led Forum for parents of children with additional needs and we will continue to work with them to seek feedback from families.

12 How will the programme be managed and reviewed?

- 12.1 Commissioned services will be asked to request regular feedback from users, so that we will learn from parents and young people what has worked best for them. We will continue to collect data on the population of disabled children in the local authority; the feedback and information from the data analysis will contribute to future service development.
- 12.2 Where possible we will continue to commission services this year to meet identified gaps, possibly to run pilot projects to check whether the new schemes do support the young people and their families. Training for universal services to support them to offer places to disabled children will also be followed up.
- 12.3 The programme will be overseen by the multi-agency Disabled Children's Strategy Group which has parent representatives from Our Voice Matters. The Strategy Group reports to the multi-agency Children's Trust Board.
- 12.4 The programme will be reviewed each autumn and will be aligned with the Annual Report on Services for Children with Learning Difficulties and Disabilities which goes to council members.

13 Where will information be available?

- 13.1 Information will be on the following websites: South Gloucestershire Council www.southglos.gov.uk search short breaks. This has a list of provider organisations and activities and a summary of the full statement.

Our Voice Matters, the South Gloucestershire Forum for parents of children with additional needs, www.ourvoicematters.org.uk

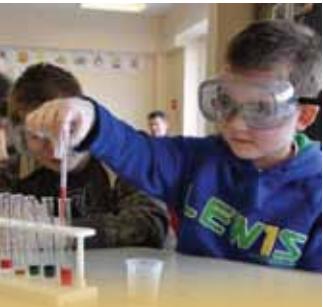
The Network for families of disabled children in South Gloucestershire
www.southglos.gov.uk/thenetwork

The Yellow Book, a guide for parents and carers of children with additional needs who live in South Gloucestershire, contains general information about services for disabled children and is sent when parents register their child on The Network or can be downloaded on www.southglos.gov.uk/yellowbook

The Children and Young People Information Service can be contacted
tel: **01454 868008** email: cis@southglos.gov.uk



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Appendix 1

– Eligibility

1 The Preventative Offer

Services which are not dependent on a specialist assessment:

- 1.1 We will continue to offer some short break services to children and their families without a formal assessment except for criteria operated by the provider, so that children do not have to be in touch with the specialist social care service or meet threshold criteria to be able to access all short breaks.
- 1.2 Some breaks are offered to the child or young person separately from their family; others are family days where the whole family can have some time together. Some are on a 'first come, first served' basis while some may only be available to members of a particular organisation eg the local National Autistic Society branch or parent led groups, or to children and young people with a particular impairment.
- 1.3 We would like such targeted short breaks to be available as fairly as possible without involving families in an onerous system to determine their level of need. Parents who access a short break without a professional assessment may be asked for evidence of their child's impairment by the short break provider, or whether they are using other services.
- 1.4 This is to be sure that the providers are reaching the groups for which they are funded, and that children who are not receiving any specialist breaks are able to access the service. In the case of high demand they may be prioritised for the targeted services.
- 1.5 Services are also dependent on the number of children individual organisations can cater for; this is governed by a variety of factors, not just the capacity of the organisation, but by optimum group sizes to ensure children are cared for safely, or by the type of activity or size of venue. More information on the maximum numbers for any particular activity is given in appendix 2.
- 1.6 The aims are, where possible, to support parents to continue to care for their children and have some time to themselves through a short break which does not depend upon the outcome of an assessment, while ensuring that their children are having fun and opportunities for play and new experiences.
- 1.7 However the range and amount of such breaks is governed by the availability of resources; in times of financial restraint targeted resources may not be as freely available on a 'first come, first served' basis, and services may be focused on those who meet the criteria for a specialist assessment, or who are assessed through the integrated teams in the localities.



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2 The Locality Offer – Integrated Teams in Kingswood and Patchway Hubs

Services offered as the result of a locality assessment

- 2.1 Practitioners in the integrated working teams will be able to use allocated amounts of funding to support families to have a time limited short break such as taking part in a particular activity or sports sessions or using community facilities. Services will be determined following an assessment of need.
- 2.2 Eligibility criteria are currently under development through the common pathway work in the localities but eligible groups are likely to include:

Children with a long term impairment which is likely to have a significant impact on their ability to carry out day to day tasks.

Children with physical impairments, autistic spectrum disorders, learning difficulties or sensory impairments, speech, language and communication difficulties, mental health difficulties or other health conditions which result in long term vulnerabilities

Pre-school children where there is significant developmental delay which seems likely to be long term.

3 The Specialist Offer

Short breaks offered as the result of a specialist assessment:

- 3.1 Specialist short breaks will be available from the Child Health and Disability social care service following a specialist assessment of need.

When undertaking a specialist assessment the social care service takes into account:

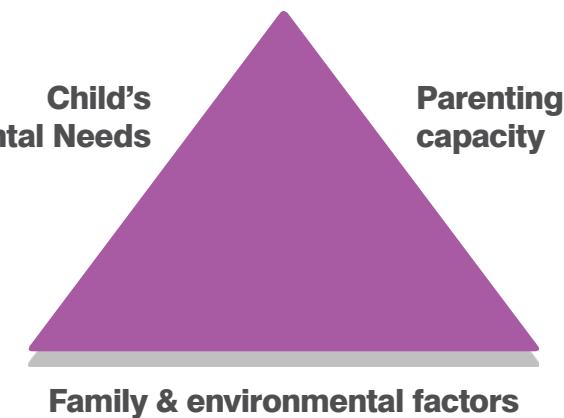
- the impact the child's impairment has on the family
- the child's level of need arising from his/her condition
- and/or whether services are needed in order to promote the child's safety and well being in the family.

The team supports families where:

- the child has a substantial and long lasting/permanent impairment, or a life-limiting/life-threatening condition
and
- there is a significant impact on the child or family's life, including a risk to parental resilience
and
- the child's or family's needs cannot be met without support from a specialist social care disability service



3.2 Assessments are based on a framework which, in conjunction with the child and family and other agencies involved, looks at:



and recommends whether services are needed or not. The outcomes the services are intended to meet are also described. A plan for how the services will be provided is then drawn up.

Appendix 2

– The types of services available

1 Preventative Services

Daytime or weekend activities:

Holiday playschemes, weekend or evening activities offered without an assessment, generally accessed by contacting the organisation concerned. These are preventative services, designed for disabled children and usually not available to others, except for sessions for the whole family including brothers and sisters.

Holiday playschemes in youth centre venues for children aged 4.5 to 18 years organised by Children's Playlink. They provide a variety of fun and creative activities and aim to offer two days a week to each participating child in the summer and one day a week in the shorter holidays up to a maximum of 120 children in any week.

Holiday and Saturday play sessions have been commissioned from Hop Skip and Jump Play and Support Centre, primarily for younger children, under 12 yrs, with complex needs; maximum numbers are three children per session reaching approximately 30 children. The Centre also offers a range of other activities during term times and after school.

The local branch of the National Autistic Society offers a weekly drop-in session at Hop Skip and Jump in the holidays to families with children with autistic spectrum conditions – as this is a drop-in session numbers are unlimited.

An outdoor playscheme in the summer and Easter holidays is organised by the council's Inclusion Support Early Years team for 20 pre-school children with severe communication needs or autism spectrum disorder who are in touch with the service.

Saturday activities for approximately 40 children with autistic spectrum conditions are available through the local branch of the National Autistic Society, with a family bowling session for

approximately 8-12 children. Spectrum Respite, a private organisation, offer monthly weekend activities on a rota basis to 24 teenagers with autism or Asperger's Syndrome who attend mainstream school Resource Bases.

Other groups such as Fusion Dance or the young people's Consultation Group also offer activities during holidays, including the Woodside Centre for children with dual sensory impairments.

Special Friends, a parent-led organisation offer holiday and weekend activities for a membership of approximately 65 families, offer weekend family activities and the opportunity for a family weekend away.

Clubs and groups:

The Youth Service run targeted youth clubs in three centres for young people aged 14 and over, including residential activities and support to their members to produce a brochure and film about the clubs. The Service is also providing one to one support to young people with physical impairments to access mainstream clubs.

After school activities have been offered for pupils attending some Resource Bases or Special Schools, and it is hoped to develop these further during the autumn and spring terms.

The National Autistic Society run a weekly youth club for young people with Autism and Asperger's Syndrome and a new parent-led evening group is starting at Hop Skip and Jump for families with young people aged 7 – 16 yrs with Asperger's Syndrome or autistic spectrum disorder, aiming to reach approximately 20 members.

The Buddy Scheme organised by Children's Playlink offers one to one support for up to 30 children and young people at any one time, to support them to attend after school or holiday clubs or other groups, depending on the interests of the individual children and young people.

Disability Sports sessions are available at the Wise Campus in Filton or The Grange School and Sports College in Warmley. Sessions at The Grange are open to siblings as well as disabled young people, while the sessions at the Wise Campus are inclusive, available to all young people.

The Young People's Transition and Consultation Group, organised by KIDS SouthWest, provides an opportunity for young people to meet to discuss their hopes and fears, as do the Youth Service targeted clubs.

We are currently exploring the possibility of a transition group in the holidays for young people with ASD or Asperger's Syndrome.

2 Specialist Services

Individualised packages of specialist support are offered, depending on the outcome of the specialist assessment. The packages may include the option for parents to purchase their own support through a direct payment, or receive services directly provided by the local authority. These may be inclusion workers to support children to access community facilities, a sitting service in the child's home, practical assistance with the child's care, links with families who offer a short break in their own homes or palliative care short break services for children with life limiting and life threatening conditions. For those children or young people and their families assessed as having a high level of need there is an overnight residential short break service jointly commissioned between the local authority and NHS South Gloucestershire.



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If you would like this information in a different format, for example:
Braille, audio tape, large print, computer disk, BSL or community languages, please contact:
01454 868009