



St.Helens  
Council

**NHS**

Halton and St Helens

# Short Breaks Duty Statement



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# The Breaks for Carers of Disabled Children Regulations 2011

This Draft Statement sets out how the Council will seek to meet the Short Breaks duty as set out in the Breaks for Carers of Disabled Children Regulations 2011, which came into force on 1 April 2011. This section of the statement summarises paragraph 6(1)(c) of Schedule 2 to the Children Act 1989 which requires local authorities to provide services designed to give breaks for carers of disabled children. A copy of The Breaks for Carers of Disabled Children Regulations 2011 is attached for detailed reference.

[http://www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si2010/draft/ukdsi\\_9780111503850\\_en\\_1](http://www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si2010/draft/ukdsi_9780111503850_en_1)

## The Statement

The Regulations requires the Council 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 short breaks is designed to meet the local needs of families with disabled children. In particular it requires Councils to publish the statement on the web site by October 2011 and to keep the Statement under review and consult with parents on its production and revision.

## Duties

In providing services the Council will have regard to the needs of those carers :

- who would be unable to continue to provide care
- and those needing support to do so more effectively to:
  - (i) undertake education, training or any regular leisure activity,
  - (ii) meet the needs of other children in the family more effectively, or
  - (iii) carry out day to day tasks which they must perform in order to run their home.

## Types of provision:

In seeking to meet these duties the Council will seek to provide a range of services sufficient to meet the needs of carers to care, or care more effectively, including:

- Day care in the child's own home and elsewhere;
- Overnight care in the child's own home and elsewhere;
- Educational or leisure activities for children outside their own homes;
- Services in the evenings, at weekends and during school holidays.

## How our statement was prepared

In St.Helens this Statement has been prepared by the Children's Integrated Disability Service, which seeks to work in partnership with the Listen 4 Change parent forums, young people and professionals from social care, health, education and the voluntary sector.

### Who is responsible?

The lead officer responsible for preparing this statement is Clive Groves – Head of the Children` s Integrated Disability Service - who reports to Chris Williams Senior Assistant Director. Any queries on the process for producing the statement should be addressed to [clivegroves@sthelens.gov.uk](mailto:clivegroves@sthelens.gov.uk)

### Publication and Review

The Regulations require the Council to keep the Statement under review. It is proposed that this Statement will be reviewed and a revised statement will be produced for April 2012. The statement reflects consultation undertaken with parents and young people during the Aiming High programme. (See What You Have Told Us So Far also the web site) Together with feedback from parents in a further short consultation undertaken to clarify the shape and purpose of this Statement. However we want to ensure that families have a chance to comment on the statement so wider consultation led by our parent forums and young people and supported by professionals will take place during the autumn to ensure that the local priorities are developed further and agreed actions met.

Parents, disabled children and young people will continue to be fully involved in this process – helping us decide who should deliver our short breaks in St.Helens. We are committed to ensuring that Listen 4 Change are equal partners in the design of our services. We want Parents and young people to help us monitor the quality of all of our short breaks and help decide what we change and what we keep.

The Short Breaks Service Statement will be published on the Local Authority website. All professionals/ practitioners working with disabled children will have access to the statement to ensure optimum communication. In addition it will be available in all of our Special schools, and copies will also be given to the SENCOs in all of St Helen`s schools. We will circulate copies via the Listen 4 Change Forum and Additional Needs service database

# St.Helens' Vision for short break support

Our vision in St.Helens is to provide disabled children and young people, with opportunities and experiences that achieve positive outcomes for them. It is our aim that short breaks will contribute to keeping disabled children safe and healthy, enabling them to enjoy new activities, make friends, and have new learning opportunities, as well as preparing teenagers for adulthood. By providing disabled children and young people with such opportunities, it is our aim to support parents in their role as primary carers and give them breaks to assist them to look after themselves and their wider family.

## Principles

Children are children first and foremost. It is the support that you receive in life, which makes the difference in terms of what you experience and achieve in your life. Working together we will:

- Work to help develop young people's independence, personal and social development, friendships and opportunities to have fun, and be included in their communities;
- Listen to children and young people and do all we can to enable them to share their views and ideas;
- Develop a person centred approach, whereby children, young people and families are central to assessment and planning process and are supported in making decisions about their lives;
- Work to ensure that parents and carers become equal partners in making decisions about service development and priorities; working together to "improve your quality of life";
- Look to support the quality of family life and aim to prevent family crisis through the provision of the right level of support at the right time;
- Seek to be fair, clear and equitable;
- Provide specialist short break services to meet the short break needs of those children with most critical needs;
- Be culturally sensitive and sensitive to individuals' and families' needs associated with gender, race, religion, sexual orientation, age and disability;
- Will support children with complex health needs to ensure they have the same opportunities as all disabled children;
- We will challenge negative attitudes and prejudices towards disabled children wherever we find them in wider society;
- Recognise that short breaks are just one component of support for disabled children and their families.

## What is a disability?

We use the Disability Discrimination Act definition of disability to ensure that we meet the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Acts 1995 and 2005 and Equality Act 2010.

*"a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long term adverse effect on his/her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities."*

Disabled children and young people often cannot do many of the things that most children their age can do. For instance they may need additional help and support to complete daily tasks and routines. They may need more support socially in order to spend time with friends, or going out to youth clubs or groups. Or have someone to be with them to help them stay healthy or to make sure they remain safe when they go out. However it is fundamental that it is not lost sight of that childhood should be fun and a time of nurturance and positive expectation.

## Who might be provided with a service?

This Statement is for children and young people with disabilities aged 0-18.

In St.Helens services will be aimed at those disabled children and young people whose support needs and desired outcomes cannot be met by universal and local, or targeted services.

Sometimes this group is described as 'severely disabled children' and nationally is judged to be approximately 1.2% of the children's population. Thus there are potentially 525 disabled children in St.Helens who may benefit from short breaks. 578 of 1156 families who receive DLA receive higher rate payments

The number of children and families receiving support from the Children with Disability social care team currently being 231, increased from 175 in 2008.These children and young people will have significant impairments and high levels of support needs, mainly but not exclusively being:

- children and young people with Autistic Spectrum Condition who are likely to also have other impairments, such as severe learning disabilities or have challenging behaviour;
- children and young people with complex health needs or life limiting conditions;
- children and young people with moving and handling needs that will require equipment and adaptations;
- children and young people where challenging behaviour is linked to other impairments e.g. severe learning disability or Asperger's syndrome for instance;
- a severe and enduring communication disorder or a significant sensory impairment.

We have published a Parent 's Guide to Short Breaks, which is available on the web site alongside this document. This identifies what Short Breaks are and how they may help you and what type of support you may be eligible for.

## Short Breaks service outcomes

We are seeking to achieve the following outcomes:

1. Reduction of the stress level in families caring for a child/young person with disabilities.
2. Reduction in the number of requests for residential or out of borough placements from families caring for a child with severe disabilities or complex health needs.
3. An increase in the opportunities for inclusive community social interaction for the target group of Children/Young people with Disabilities.
4. An improvement in the life chances of children/young people with disabilities in being healthy, staying safe, enjoying and achieving, making a positive contribution and in their social and economic well being.
5. An improvement in a young person's level of life skills including independence skills, social skills, self - esteem and emotional well being.
6. Enhancing the capacity and opportunity for young people to communicate their views and choices and be involved in decision making about the service they receive.
7. An improvement in the resilience of families caring for a child with a disability.
8. Enhanced parenting skills appropriate to the needs of the child/young person with a disability, and recognition of their role as expert in the care of their child.
9. An increase in parents/carers being appropriately supported in meeting the needs of their family, delivered by working with key professionals to deliver an effective services linked to education, school and other care plans for the young person.

# The Current Position on Short Breaks in St.Helens

## Early intervention and prevention

The delivery of a “Think Family” approach in St.Helens will ensure that young children with disability and additional needs are identified as early as possible. This leading to early intervention, supporting children and families as soon as their needs are identified using the St.Helens’ ‘Team Around the Child’ approach to ensure full parental involvement in the development of plans to meet their identified needs. The ‘Lead Professional’ will ensure that children’s and family’s needs are kept under review, with a view to providing additional support at times of stress and transition, and checking out parent satisfaction with the services provided.

If more children with complex needs are to be supported to live at home with their families, parenting and good multi agency support are imperative to build family resilience in coping with the challenges of children and young people with autism, sleep disturbance, complex health needs and challenging behaviours. This should go hand in hand with regular, high quality short breaks to enable parents to recharge their batteries and give appropriate attention to their own and their other children’s needs. We know that disabled children do best when they and their families are enabled to lead as ordinary lives as possible, and regular and reliable short breaks, make a significant difference in their ability to cope. Parents need to feel confident that they are being listened to when they experience difficulties. Differences in the psychological resources that parents bring to caring for their children form a part of this picture; the accessibility, effectiveness and acceptability of the support provided also contribute.

## Personalisation and equipping young people for independence in adult life

Direct Payments and Personal budgets are there to enable disabled people to manage their own care, choose how they lead their own lives and control the services they need. It follows that services should focus on being “person-centred”, rather than expecting people to accept “one size fits all” forms of service. Evidence is growing that self-directed care can make more effective use of resources, with less “waste”, greater flexibility, and with lower unit costs. This direction helps policy shift disabled children and young people in three ways:

- Many parents who use carer support services benefit from being in control of those services;
- Some parents also receive support from adult services in their own right;
- Equipping young people with the skills and mindset to achieve their potential for independence as young adults must start long before the transition to adult services.

The take-up of direct payments by parent-carers of disabled children and young people in St.Helens has grown over recent years as parents receive good support from the Direct Payments Support Service. We want to encourage further growth in direct payments, as this both supports greater personalisation and is cost effective. This Strategy links with the Transition Planning by the Children` s Trust and Adult Services in the commissioning of services for young adults.

## Financial sustainability

The implementation of this Statement depends on managing the pressures of demand for services and financial constraints for the Council and PCT. There are rising numbers of children with more complex health needs and ASD specifically. The Government funding for short breaks is not ring fenced and this Statement comes at a time of major reductions in Council funding. In developing the Statement we are seeking a collaborative approach with parents and young people. The risk is otherwise that we commission services that do not meet people `s needs and fail to target resources to those most in need. In essence meeting the needs of disabled young people is a three-way responsibility between universal services for all children, specialist disability services and parents. For this programme to achieve the right balance will involve:

- ensuring joint commissioning by the Council and PCT in close partnership with parents;
- removing barriers to universal services for disabled children and young people, to provide

more child-centred outcomes;

- considering how to take children and families with lower levels of need out of assessment processes in order for them to still access support;
- equity of arrangements whereby parents who can afford to do so, contribute to the cost of services, with a consistent approach to parental contributions for activity costs;
- providing transport to breaks only where there are significant barriers to people being able to access breaks;
- a continued shift of resources from residential short breaks services to home and community based support;
- working with providers to improve value for money and securing new Short Breaks services from a range of providers, in keeping with good commissioning practice.

The business case is simple in that if a family caring for a child with high care needs breaks down, it is not uncommon for placement costs to exceed £150,000 per year.

## Parental Feedback on Services

The Listen 4 Change Forum continues to be the main focus for parental consultation. It has been offered support by the Council via the Carers Centre over the last 2 years, and has been supported to draw down central Government funding to support consultation activity. Listen 4 Change has a well developed Steering Group and the Council and PCT are committed to support closer working. Parents from the Forum were consulted during Aiming High to determine key priorities at that time. Several parents also attended the Steering Group over the later part of the Programme to contribute to service developments.

Recently we have sought to re- commission a number of our services, Home Care support, community- based outreach, specialist outreach and play scheme provision, looking to provide for a 2 year contract. Parents have joined meetings to tell prospective providers of what parents in St.Helens expect from new services and in decision - making in Tender interview Panels. We will require the new short break service providers, to seek the views of parents on the quality of the service and make this information available to service commissioners at contract monitoring meetings. We want the new providers to work with parents and young people on how the service is designed and delivered.

Listen 4 Change Steering Group will be joining a new Parent Partnership Steering Group, to provide opportunity for parents to meet with key professionals. The new Group will, besides overseeing the Parent Partnership Service, will provide opportunity to establish a shared agenda for reviewing service development.

## Service Priorities

- Ensure parents and carers have clear and accurate information on access to services and any eligibility criteria which may be in place;
- Identify opportunities to simplify access to services and minimise assessments (taking account of the Green Paper on SEN and Disability);
- Build upon our work with Listen 4 Change to ensure parent and that children `s views are taken into account in the design and delivery of services and that together we improve feedback on what we can do;
- Work with parents in line with personalisation to enable families who want to take control of their own support arrangements to be able to do so.

**The following actions are proposed to achieve improved outcomes in 2011–2013:**

1. Develop a communication strategy for dissemination of information regarding short breaks and other services for parents, young people, practitioners and professionals.
2. Publish the Parents Guide to provide clear information on eligibility and access to services.
3. Review information on the Children's Disability Services and Family Information Services website and investigate text mail.
4. Establish a New Parent Partnership Steering Group to provide a forum for ensuring improved participation and feedback.
5. Continue involvement with Listen 4 Change and parents in reviewing the Short Breaks Duty Statement and development of this action plan.
6. Continue to involve parents in decision making regarding the commissioning of services, and in particular regarding holiday play scheme provision.
7. Respond to the relevant areas of the Green Paper on Special Educational Need, which may impact on the delivery of short breaks, including the use of personal budgets and unified assessments across health, education and social care.
8. Ensure that all young people will be offered the opportunity for a personal budget if they move into adult social care services.
9. Provide parents and staff within transition services with the opportunity to attend training in person centred planning.
10. Publish the Multi-agency Transitions Strategy, Protocols and Pathways.
11. Publish new Direct Payments Guide and Increase promotional activity to confirm the benefits of Direct Payments.
12. Monitor activity which supports parents in their recruitment of personal assistants.
13. To undertake a Service Review of Children with Disabilities Service with a view to developing a Family Support team in line with the Council's Think Family approach.
14. To produce a new Workforce Development plan for disabled children.

# The Range of Services available

## Specialist services

Some families are likely to need higher levels of support, sometimes longer-term and sometimes just during a difficult period for a few weeks or months. St.Helens want to ensure that the most vulnerable families have access to the help they need, and that this is available equally irrespective of where they live, their impairment or race or religion. These services are to help disabled children, young people and their families who are assessed to require a higher level of support to maintain an ordinary family life and enjoy positive activities. Specialist services are accessed via a formal assessment which will consider the impact of the child `s disability on family life. The Services offered will reflect the assessed needs of the child and family and be confirmed by the Children with Disabilities Panel, which seeks to ensure needs are being met effectively, that support is provided in a consistent and equitable fashion. In an emergency, services may be considered while an assessment is underway.

Current provision include:

- Home based support - which may provide support with personal care, and or other family needs – including a sitting services so parents can go out for the evening;
- Community Outreach support – via an agency which may support young people either on a one to one basis or as part of a group;
- Direct Payments – to structure your own support within the guidance provided for this service. This includes payroll, administrative and employment services.

For children with the most complex needs it may also include access to:

- Short Breaks Carers – where the child or young person stays overnight with the carers in their own home, who are trained to provide highly individualised and child centred support;
- Abbeyford Short Breaks unit – which is available for children age 7-17 for children with Severe learning disabilities;
- For children with more complex health needs this may include joint funded support which could include night sitting or over night support in the family home.

Within the new services being commissioned we are seeking to strengthen provision for young people with the most complex needs, by providing a more bespoke service.

In relation to Abbeyford we will work to raise the Ofsted rating of the service from satisfactory to good and outstanding, develop service standards in partnership with parents and ensure that it continues to deliver value for money.

The Short Breaks Carer service has been expanded during the last 2 years and now has 15 carers offering support to 21 families. At this time there are waiting lists as this is a popular service. This service remains a key priority in that it provides individualised support, which allows an overnight break to families with a consistent carer who can spend more time with the young person. OFSTED rate this service as between Outstanding and Good, and we are ambitious to continue our investment in the support service and training offered.

## The St.Helens “Local Offer”/Targeted Services

Within Aiming High programme Councils were encouraged to develop a local offer: of services, which can be made available to families without a formal social care services assessment. In St.Helens if we are to locally formalise a local offer we will need to undertake further development work to establish the level of support and how this is accessed.

## Targeted Services

St.Helens Council believes that using universal and local services (including libraries, leisure centres, youth clubs and playgrounds) is important so as many disabled children and young

people as possible are able to use these services, and therefore seeks to provide:

- Access to information, advice and signposting via Family Information Service;
- Inclusion support, which helps a range of early years settings to include disabled children through the provision of advice, training and support;
- 15 hours Early Years Education for 3 and 4 year olds is being provided – with additional support provided on a needs basis beyond this to support access to mainstream school;
- A range of Parenting programmes to support parents where a child's behaviour may be challenging;
- Specialist services will continue to provide training for youth service, play services and Children 's Centre staff.

## Transport

Transport to activities for some parents is essential given other demands in their lives and can operate as a significant barrier. It is acknowledged that for some children transport is essential, and is confirmed by a clear assessment of need. In these circumstances the Council may provide support with the need for transport.

## Capital

Within Aiming High capital work has been completed in Youth services buildings at Grange Valley, Windlehurst and Derbyshire to provide accessible Changing Places. Funding has been made available to improve facilities at Abbeyford including bathrooms with new hoists and shower beds, and a minibus. Lansbury Bridge have received significant funding to improve outdoor play areas for use within the school day and for after school and weekend groups.

## Transition

We want transition from children's to adult's services to be an exciting and optimistic time for young people. We want to support them as they become young adults and take their place in the world. St.Helens Council and its partners are in the process of finalising its Transitions Strategy. Children and Adult Services share a commitment to ensuring short breaks support is provided in a person centred manner, and will work together to ensure services are seamless by ensuring information to support the effective commissioning of services post 18 is provided.

## Other Specialist Services

Within the Children with Disabilities Service a number of parenting programmes are being supported. These include programmes such as Early Bird Plus and Sleep programmes.

## Information on Services

Whilst the Children with Disability Services web site has been substantially improved, there remains work to ensure that information is maintained. The Parent Partnership web site is in the process of being reviewed too.

## Workforce Development

Remains a continued priority for the Council and its partners to ensure that staff working with disabled children in any and all types of services should receive appropriate training.



St. Helens Council

**Contact Centre**, Wesley House, Corporation Street  
St.Helens WA10 1HF

**Tel:** 01744 676789

**Minicom:** 01744 671671

**Fax:** 01744 676895

**Email:** [contactcentre@sthelens.gov.uk](mailto:contactcentre@sthelens.gov.uk)

→ [www.sthelens.gov.uk](http://www.sthelens.gov.uk)



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