



Short Breaks Service Statement

for families with Disabled Children

May 2016

Introduction

Welcome to the Gateshead Short Breaks Statement. The aim of this statement is to provide parents and carers with information about:

- How we design short break services to meet the needs of disabled children and young people aged 0-17 years in Gateshead and their parents/carers
- The range of short breaks available in Gateshead
- Who is eligible to receive short breaks and how to access them

This revised statement replaces the first "Short Breaks Services Statement for families with Disabled Children" which was published in 2011.

It has been prepared in consultation with disabled children and young people and parents/carers to ensure that we are buying the sort of short breaks services that families have told us they need. It supports the commissioning framework within Gateshead's Care, Wellbeing & Learning which sets out to ensure quality, value for money and continuous improvement in the delivery of services. It is also consistent with our vision "for all families with disabled children in Gateshead to be supported to live ordinary family lives as a matter of course".



Background

As part of the Government's ambition to improve outcomes for disabled children and their families and to give children, young people and their parents greater control and choice in decisions, all local authorities are now required by law to provide a range of short breaks to meet the needs of disabled children, young people and their parents/ carers and to produce a short breaks statement. This is set out in the Breaks for Carers of Disabled Children Regulations 2011 (or Short Breaks Regulations 2011) which require local authorities to do three things:

- To ensure that, when making short break provision, they have regard to the needs of different types of carers, not just those who would be unable to continue to provide care without a break;
- To provide a range of short breaks, as appropriate, during the day, night at weekends and during the school holidays; and
- To provide parents with a short breaks services statement detailing the range of available breaks and any eligibility criteria attached to them.

The statement has been reviewed at a time of great change in the way public services are designed, commissioned and delivered. It acknowledges the changes within local government, including reduced funding and the changes in the health service following the abolition of Primary Care Trusts and the transfer of commissioning activity to Clinical Commissioning Groups from April 2013.

We are committed to continuing the legacy of the Aiming High for Disabled Children Programme which tasked local authorities to improve and increase the short break services available to disabled children and young people within their areas. Gateshead has also been a SEND Pathfinder, one of a small number of local authorities working with parents and carers to test out proposals set out in the government's green paper 'Support and Aspiration: a new approach to special educational needs and disability'. A number of these proposals have since been implemented through the introduction of legislation set out in Part 3 of the Children and Families Act 2014: Children and Young People in England with Special Educational Needs or Disabilities.

What is a short break?

A short break is a break or time away from a caring role, which used to be called 'respite' and forms part of a range of services which support children with additional needs and their families. A short break gives disabled children and young people experiences away from their main carers and also gives parents and carers a valuable break from their caring responsibilities. A break from a caring role can include activities which last a few hours, a day, an evening, overnight, a weekend or for longer. They can take place in or away from the family home and can include supporting a family to take a short break together.

Our vision

Our vision is for all families with disabled children in Gateshead to be supported to live ordinary family lives as a matter of course. Every family is different, but every family has the right to a decent quality of life. Central to achieving this vision is the transformation of short break services; developing a menu of provision in partnership with families and other stakeholders to meet the needs of all disabled children and young people, including those whom 'traditional' short break services may struggle to accommodate.

Who should be considered for access to breaks from caring?

Short break services are provided to enhance the ability of parents to care for their disabled child and any other children they may have. In Gateshead, depending on the type of short break requested, an assessment is usually carried out before a short break is provided.

The assessment is usually carried out by a social worker or key worker and it carefully considers the needs of the child and family, the family's circumstances and whether a short break would have a positive impact on the family. It should be noted that eligibility for short breaks is not based on the severity of a child's disability or impairment alone, although we recognise that caring for children with profound and multiple disabilities, complex health needs and challenging behaviour may be particularly demanding for families.

Information about the types of short breaks that may be available to you, eligibility criteria and how to apply are explained further on in the statement.

Gateshead's guiding principles for short breaks:

- A Short Break service should provide positive experiences for children by promoting friendships and by encouraging social activities, new experiences and supportive relationships with carers.
- A Short Break service should ensure that provision is available on a planned and regular basis and at the times when families and children need breaks – this should include evenings, weekends and during school holidays, and have the capacity to respond to urgent care requirements.
- A Short Break service should be reliable, so that carers can plan around the breaks provided.
- A Short Break service is also consistent with the needs of the carer to have a break from the caring role.
- A Short Break service should provide culturally appropriate provision that meets the racial, cultural, linguistic and religious needs of children and their families.
- A Short Break service should promote information about available provision to the public, including details of eligibility, threshold criteria and routes to accessing the service. Providers should work in partnership with the Council to promote and publicise services.

How we design services to meet the needs of disabled children and their parents/carers

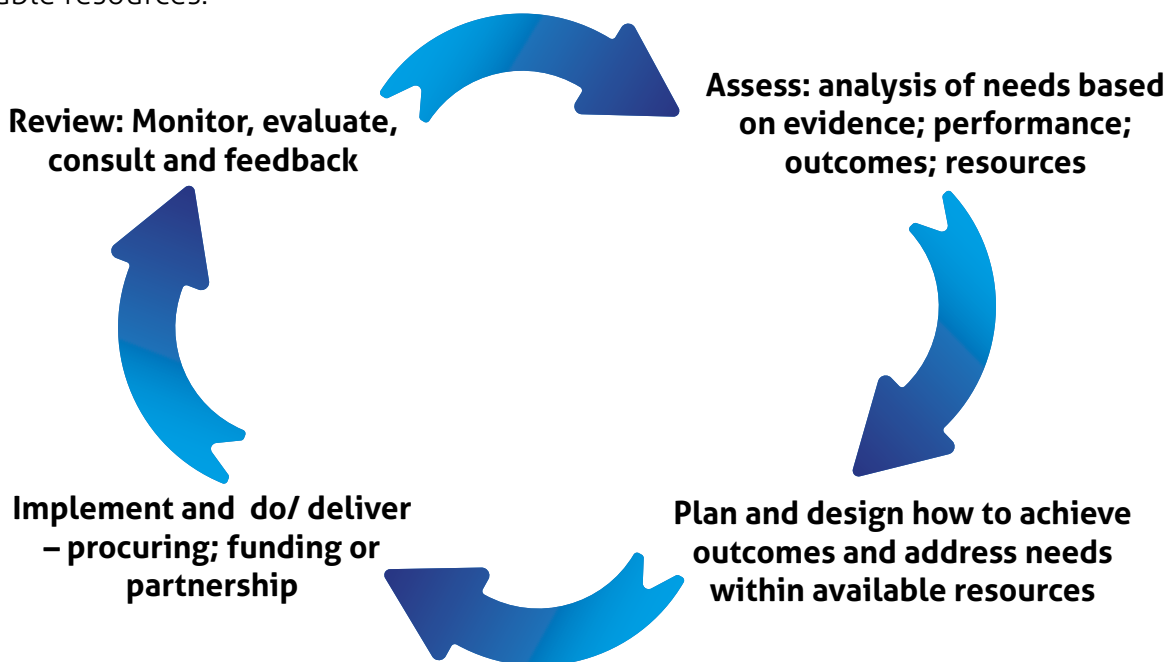
No single source of information gives us comprehensive data about the needs of disabled children. While it is difficult to determine the number of disabled children in Gateshead, there are several sources of information which help us gain a more accurate picture to enable us to plan and provide appropriate services.

Some facts and figures

In Gateshead there are 40,137 children and young people aged 0-17 years (Mid-Year Population Estimates for Local Authorities 2014).

- There are 811 children who are members of the Gateshead Network of children with disabilities (Network database January 2015)
- 360 out of the 1890 children (19%) classified as Children in Need, receiving social care support from Gateshead children's services, have a disability. (Care First Social Care database January 2016)
- 198 children currently receive social care support from the Disabled Children Team (Care First Social Care database January 2016)
- 4,179 pupils are registered as having SEND (SEN Support and Statement/EHC Plan) (School Census January 2016)
- 982 children and young people aged 0-25 have a Statement of SEN/EHC Plan (SEN2 Return Data; January 2016)
- 530 children and young people are taught in special schools in Gateshead (School Census; January 2016)

The 'commissioning cycle' is the process we use to identify the needs of disabled children in Gateshead, set priorities and purchase and evaluate appropriate services within our available resources.



Our short breaks programme is subject to regular review and involves consultation with families and stakeholders via questionnaires, forums and regular and ongoing feedback through meetings and information we receive from service providers.

We have recently developed a commissioning framework which is changing the way short breaks are provided to create more personalised support for families and to ensure that a clear commissioning approach is followed.

We carried out consultation with disabled children and parents/carers on short breaks services in the summer of 2013 and subsequently we consulted on the draft short breaks statement during August-September 2015. Young people and their parents/carers told us about their experiences, what works for them, what's missing and what could be better. This evidence is fed into our "commissioning cycle," helping us to understand and make decisions on how we can develop short breaks services to ensure that they meet the needs of our local disabled children and their families.

"I get to spend time with his sister, doing activities of her choice for a change."

"It's a life saver for me; I don't know how I would cope without this support."

"It would be better if young people had continuity in the staff that work with them."

"I trust them fully to keep him safe, we've even had a holiday ourselves when he was with them."

"I would like more feedback on what my son is doing."

"It's fun being with other young people."

"My gran has a chance to recharge her batteries when I'm here. This means she is able to care for me. I get on really well with the staff."

"It's like having a sleep over, just like my sister does."

"I climbed up and abseiled from the top!"

"The staff are fun."

The way we design short breaks services and influence future commissioning plans is also shaped by other needs assessments including the "Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Assessment" and the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment which looks at the main health, social and well-being needs of local residents. The Economic Assessment, Child Poverty Needs Assessment and Safer Gateshead Strategic Assessment also help to inform our approach.

The Disabled Children and Young People's Forum ensures that we hear the voice of the child and parents and carers in the shaping of services.

Parents in Power (a voluntary organisation run by parents/carers for parents/carers of a child with special needs, learning difficulties or a disability) is a key partner in the development of services and represents the voice of parents on many strategic groups, engagement sessions and via their own events and activities.

Tel: 0191 490 0198

Email: enquiries@parentsinpower.co.uk

Web: www.parentsinpower.btck.co.uk <http://twitter.com/parentsinpower>

Short Break Services in Gateshead

A wide range of short breaks services are available in Gateshead. The type of short break that someone may be eligible to receive depends on the child's assessed needs, the needs of a parent or carer and family circumstances.

Where individualised and specialist services are needed, we use service providers who are experienced in working with disabled children and make sure that each child gets the level of staff support they need to have a safe and enjoyable experience.

Although not exhaustive, some examples of the types of short breaks we offer are outlined in the following list:

- Family support and individual one to one support in the home and in the community e.g. sitting service, help with a child's personal care or complex health needs, help with housework, cooking or during mealtimes and providing an 'extra pair of hands' on shopping trips or by escorting a child to a social group/activity.
- Leisure activities e.g. discounted or free access to swimming pools and leisure centres, Max cards - discounted entry to a range of visitor attractions
- Holiday schemes e.g. Active Kidz and the specialist holiday scheme for children with autism
- Out of School clubs e.g. social and group activities outside of school hours
- Specialist Overnight Short Breaks

To find specific information about short break services available in Gateshead, you can access Gateshead's 'Local Offer', an online information resource which highlights the services and support available for children and young people with a special educational need or disability at <http://www.gateshead.gov.uk/localoffer> The short break services can be found by clicking on 'Social Care (including short breaks)' in Gateshead's Local Offer service directory.

How to apply for a short break service

Not all children and families will need the same level of support and short breaks. Some will need more than others because of the nature of their child's disability and its severity while some families may need more support because of their individual family circumstances. We therefore usually need to assess your child and family to ensure that we provide the right level of support and short breaks at the right time.

Not all services require an assessment to be carried out and can be accessed directly by families. These are called 'Universal Services'.

Universal Services

These short break services are available to all families where there are **low support needs** as part of our "minimum offer". This is called "universal" provision and might include youth clubs, leisure centres, holiday schemes or you can obtain the Gateshead Leisure and Max cards which provide free or reduced cost entry to swimming pools, leisure centres and visitor attractions throughout Gateshead. Families can access these services themselves and there is no need for an assessment. Contact the Referral and Assessment Team on 0191 4332653 to find out more about Universal short break services available for disabled children and their families.

There are also services that are described as 'Targeted' or 'Specialised' that do require an assessment to be undertaken.

To begin the process you can contact the Duty Social Worker of the **Referral and Assessment Team, 0191 433 2653**, at the Civic Centre, and they will take some basic information about your child and your family. Based on the information you provide, the duty social worker will determine which assessment process is the most appropriate for your circumstances and you may be referred for an assessment for a targeted or specialist short break to be undertaken.

Targeted Services

These are services available to children/young people with some support needs but who may not meet the threshold for specialist social care support. In this case, the family may be referred for a CAF (common assessment framework) assessment. This type of assessment is undertaken by a member of a team (sometimes called a lead practitioner – for example, a family intervention team worker, health visitor, teacher, children's centre worker), with the support of any other practitioner who may be working with your child/family.

Following assessment, a plan is drawn up outlining the support needed, which will include short breaks. CAF plans are reviewed regularly to check what progress is being made and to decide whether less or more support may be needed. Examples of targeted short break services might include an out of school club place, home care support or childminding services.



Specialist short break services


These are highly specialised or bespoke services which are available to children/young people and carers with high support needs or circumstances. They can only be accessed as a result of a Child In Need (CIN) assessment which will be carried out by a social worker from the Disabled Children's Team.

The Social Worker has 45 days to complete the CIN assessment which will look carefully at the child's development needs, the parents'/carers' specific needs, any parenting issues and the wider family circumstances and environment. They will also gather relevant information from other professionals involved with your child, such as a Doctor, Community Nurse, Occupational Therapist or Teacher.

The assessment is written into a support plan which outlines the services and short breaks that may be appropriate to be provided and how this will meet the child's/families' needs. The assessment and plan needs to be approved by a panel before the short break is provided.

All plans are reviewed regularly to make sure they respond to the changing needs of the child and family. Examples of a specialist short breaks package may include overnight stays within a residential or foster placement, palliative care or one to one support.

The diagram below summarises the type of short break services provided in Gateshead and how they are accessed based on the level of assessed need.

Specialist short break services	
<p>High level of need</p> 	<p>Specialist Short Break Services</p> <p>How is it accessed?</p> <p>Child in Need (CIN) assessment or Continuing Care assessment</p>
	<p>Type of short break service</p> <p>Grove House, home from home scheme, community outreach support, specialist holiday scheme for children with autism, St Oswald's overnight stay, Palliative care</p>
	<p>Targeted short break services</p> <p>How is it accessed?</p> <p>Common Assessment Framework (CAF) assessment, Family Service Plan or Child in Need (CIN) assessment</p>
	<p>Type of short break service</p> <p>Community outreach support, home care and support, parenting and crisis support, out of school club places</p>
	<p>Preventative short break services</p> <p>How is it accessed?</p> <p>Common Assessment Framework (CAF) assessment or Family Service Plan</p>
	<p>Type of short break service</p> <p>Community resources worker</p>
<p>Low level of need</p>	<p>Universal short break services</p> <p>How is it accessed?</p> <p>Membership of Network of Children with Disabilities (preferred but not essential)</p>
	<p>Type of short break service</p> <p>Max cards, youth clubs, Active Kidz holiday scheme, emergency support and all universal services (search for services in Gateshead's Local Offer)</p>

Personal Budgets and Direct Payments

A personal budget is a pot of funding given to individuals after an assessment which should be enough to meet the assessed needs. It can either be taken as a direct payment (while still choosing how your care needs are met and by whom) or leaving the Council with the responsibility to buy the services on the child/family's behalf. Families can also choose to go with a combination of the two. To receive a personal budget and/or direct payment, the child/young person will need to undergo a "child in need assessment" or a Community Care assessment, (if the young person has reached 18), to determine eligibility.

Some families choose to buy their own support via direct payments and personal budgets. This means that instead of getting services directly from Gateshead Council, they get money to buy the support they need. A direct payment enables individuals to be able to buy their own support. It may make up part or all of a care plan and can be used as part of a personal budget. There is no fixed list as to what you can get with a direct payment. Some families use direct payments to employ someone to help out at home while others have bought overnight short breaks for their child.

More information

For more detailed information about short breaks and the eligibility criteria for accessing short break services, you can contact:

Gateshead Council's Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Team

Tel: 0191 433 3619

Email: senteam@gateshead.gov.uk

Address: SEND Team, Gateshead Council, Care, Wellbeing and Learning,
Civic Centre, Gateshead NE8 1HH

To find out more about the support and services available to children and young people with SEND and their families go to Gateshead's Local Offer, www.gateshead.gov.uk/localoffer



