Walsall Short Breaks
Service Statement
‘Better together for children’  
2015-2016
# Index

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Walsall Short Break Service Statement

Introduction

Welcome to our Walsall Short Break 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 Break Services are available to them?
- How to access the range of Short Break Services?
- How the Short Breaks are designed to meet their needs?

The Short Break Guidance (2010) requires, every local authority has a legal duty to provide a range of short breaks to families, which should be documented in a Short Breaks Service statement and available in the Local Offer material. 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 Section 17(11) of the Children Act 1989, 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”. Although the statue remains, this language, of course, is now very outdated.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”.

This statement will be reviewed annually

Review date: January 2016 - Version 1
What is a Short Break?

Walsall Council considers 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 and 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

From April 2014 to April 2015, we envisage that Short Breaks activities will provide approximately 9035 individual child places on short breaks (4570 individual play
scheme places and 4525 individual term-time) occasions for disabled children and young people. This number has increased over the past twelve months. The chart (below) shows the range of Short Breaks currently being accessed by children and young people in 2014 – 2015.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Holiday Play Schemes</th>
<th>Type of Service</th>
<th>Capacity</th>
<th>14/15 Cost</th>
<th>Client Usage %</th>
<th>Groups p/year</th>
<th>Total short breaks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FSQ</td>
<td>Play Scheme</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>£40,320</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>360</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Castle School</td>
<td>Play Scheme age 7-18</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>£15,000</td>
<td>85%</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>1000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goscope Centre</td>
<td>Play Scheme</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>£18,000</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>550</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positively Special</td>
<td>Family Fun Days</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>£4,000</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>350</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RFA</td>
<td>Play Scheme</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>£47,174</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>560</td>
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<tr>
<td>Leisure Services</td>
<td>Play Scheme age 8-18</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>£72,000</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>1100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My Place</td>
<td>Play Scheme age 5-18</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>£20,000</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NHS Makaton</td>
<td>Play Scheme age 0-4 / 5-7</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>£9,000</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>250</td>
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</table>

Summary: 286 places p/w £225,494 p/a 94% 275 groups p/a 4570 places p/y

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term-Time Short Breaks</th>
<th>Type of Service</th>
<th>Capacity</th>
<th>14/15 Cost</th>
<th>Usage %</th>
<th>Groups p/year</th>
<th>Total short breaks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FSQ</td>
<td>Saturday Group Oakwood (2 groups)</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>57,000</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>480</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>After-School Group</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>46,800</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>1560</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1. Wood Green</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Jane Lane</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sibling Group</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>6,000</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>240</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barnardos</td>
<td>(12-17) Saturday Group</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>15,388</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>432</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yewtree</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RFA</td>
<td>Saturday Group</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>20,736</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>480</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1. Goscope Centre</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. St. Luke morning</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4. St. Luke evening</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Thursday / Friday Group</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>50,778</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>1092</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>St. Luke’s Church</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sibling Group</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>8,400</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>240</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Summary: 92 places p/w £205,102 p/a 85% 258 groups p/a 4524 places p/y

This statement will be reviewed annually
Who can get Short Breaks?

Eligibility Criteria are used to make sure 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

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.

Universal Services

Universal short break services are community services available for all disabled children. These services are not always provided by the council but often by other community organisations. There often can be a charge to the child for this activity.

Universal Services include:

- Play schemes
- After School Clubs
- Children’s Centres, Youth Centres
- Brownies, Scouts, Football Coaching other community activities
Targeted Services – (Early Help)

Some children/young people will need and benefit from services that are specifically designed to meet the needs of the more complex or 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 with an Early Help assessment or passport.

Targeted Services include:-

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

Specialist Services – (Social Care)

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. This will require a social work assessment after having met the eligibility criteria used by the Children with Disabilities Social Work Team.

Specialist Short Break Services include:

- Personal Assistants (via a direct payment or commissioned from a care agency)
- After-school Clubs
- Weekend Social Clubs
- A range of leisure / social activities over the school holidays
• Family-based care (Family Link short break fostering support)
• Bluebell's Residential children’s home operated by the council

Because these services are very specialist, and are for children with the most complex needs, a social work assessment is always provided, completed by the Children with Disabilities Team. Outcomes (what needs to be achieved) will be agreed, and a Child in Need Plan (CIN) would be plan drawn up with the family to achieve those outcomes.

Consultation

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

Every year we consult with 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 take place on a regular basis. It is also our priority to make sure that under-represented groups of people are consulted and these include ethnic minorities, young carers, fathers and disabled parents.

Short Breaks Consultation June - July 2014

We Asked
Short Breaks are activities for children and young people with disabilities to give them a fun, enjoyable experience, whilst offering a break for their carers / parents and families. Between 30th June 2014 and 25th July 2014 we invited parents and carers to respond to a survey about short breaks for disabled children and young people in Walsall. The survey was developed by Walsall Children’s Commissioning
Team and published on the Walsall Families Information Service website. We asked for your views about service delivery: what works, what is missing and how we can ensure that we deliver the services that best support families in Walsall.

You said
42 of you replied to the survey. 27 out of 42 (64%) rated the short breaks service as “good” or “very good” while 11 of 42 (26%) rated as “OK”. 30 out of 42 reported that their children (71%) were “very happy” or “happy” with SB services.

While many of you told us how much you value the support which you receive, of the 42 responses to the question “to what extent does the Short Breaks Service meet your child’s needs? 24 out of 42 (57% of) respondents felt there were still gaps in the level and range of service available in Walsall for disabled children and young people.

You suggested that the service could be improved through;
- More activities to meet the needs of children and young people with more complex needs;
- Making the Short Break booking system simpler;
- Providing a transport service – even if partially funded;
- Providing more sport and dance activities, as well as providing access to swimming lessons and sports teams;
- Better communication with schools and parent/carers;
- More weekend choice.
- More information regarding Direct Payments

In answer to the question “Generally speaking how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the following aspects of the Short Breaks Service
10

This statement will be reviewed annually

- 88% or 37 respondents stated that they were “fairly satisfied” or “very satisfied” with “Standard of care provided”.
- 90% or 38 respondents were “fairly satisfied” or “very satisfied” with “Competence of the short breaks staff”.
- 26 out of 42 (62%) were “fairly satisfied” or “very satisfied” with “Range of breaks and activities available”, and 36 out of 42 (86%) were “fairly satisfied” or “very satisfied” with “The level of trust you feel you can place in the short breaks staff”.

We did

We have taken your views on board and have fed them into a review of how we deliver short breaks in Walsall in the future, including how families will be assessed, how resources will be allocated and which services we will commission in 2015/16 in the context of the current budget pressures that all local authorities are facing. During the coming year we will continue to seek feedback from Children and Parent Support Groups, monitor the quality of our short break providers and include parents in the creation and tendering of new services.

Parent carers:

- My Child enjoys the socialising with other children, sailing, tri biking, climbing, rope walking and archery.
  Parent of child who attended Aldridge Airport
Children/Young People:

We are committed to:

- Continuing to work in partnership with the Parent Participation group that meets at Bluebells and also the Family Voice Walsall group to better understand the changing needs of disabled children and their families in Walsall and to inform our decision-making 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.

I always have a lot of confidence leaving my child at Mary Elliot Holiday Club as I know he is very well looked after and they meet his needs. I particularly like the fact that he can go swimming while attending this scheme.

Mum of child who attended Mary Elliot Holiday Club.

This statement will be reviewed annually  
Review date: January 2016 - Version 1
Measuring Impact

How we measure Impact:

- We will ensure that our Short Break 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 Break Services are outcome focused and monitor our providers to make sure the breaks they provide actually have an impact on your development and social growth.

- 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 provider skills and staff competencies.

- We will continue to consult with all stakeholders to ensure the best outcomes are achieved.
1 - Universal Case Study

Both of my children were diagnosed just after their 2\textsuperscript{nd} 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 EHC / Ed. Statement process.

Through the Child Development Centre, Cody and Jesse received a speech and language assessment to help with our school applications. All the services involved with our family were pulled together and we received support from a Family Support Worker from Leighswood Children's Centre.

Recently Cody and Jesse have started working with an Occupational Therapist for their sensory needs and a clinical physiologist for some behavioural issues.

Because of the children's were so young, we were cautious of accessing Short Breaks. This changed as they got older and now it has been incredibly helpful that they can access a few schemes during half terms and summer breaks which we purchase ourselves with our DLA benefit. 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 try not to take up too many short break days / hours so other children can benefit from the same as us.

I'm now a member of a support group 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

We 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. The current one we have been using for the last year - which my son really loves and 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 found he was too difficult for them to manage and resulted in me being called to collect him on a few occasions. But I persevered with another try with a new scheme. 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 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. 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'.

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 Bluebells residential unit 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.

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 his adult residential breaks we hope he will receive in future.

We also receive a Direct Payment 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. I use my carers in many ways such as helping on day trips out during school holidays, hospital appointments and babysitting.

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 the benefits of direct payments.

Our whole family depends on Short Break Services. The break from caring that we have means 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.
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 are a Personal Budget / Direct Payments?

Direct payments are cash payments made by the local authority to an individual who has been assessed by a social worker and is eligible for such support. A direct payment is paid directly to you to purchase and arrange your own care and support, instead of the Council arranging it for you.

A Personal Budget is meant to help your child live as independently as possible and give you more choice and control.

For queries relating to eligibility to receive a personal budget / direct payment, please contact the Children with Disabilities Team on 01922 654634.

How do I get a Direct Payment?

You will be involved in a Core Assessment to determine:
- How your child needs support
- What their aspirations and outcomes (goals) are

How can a Direct Payment help me?

A direct payment can give your child more independence along with greater flexibility, choice and control over the support your child receives, which means:
- You get to say who cares for your child, how you like things to be done, and what times of day you want support provided.
- You get to decide where and when your child is supported.

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.

Future reviews, your views, please contact either:

The Family information Service
Education Development Centre
Pelsall Lane
Rushall
Walsall
WS4 1NG
01922 686527

www.mywalsall.org/fis

Jas Kaur
Short Breaks Development Officer
Zone 2D
2nd Floor
Civic Centre
Darwall Street
Walsall
WS1 1DQ

Tel: 01922 655723
Email: KaurJas@walsall.gov.uk
Facebook: Shortbreaks Walsall