



Leicestershire
SEND



**Leicestershire
County Council**



LEICESTERSHIRE CHILDREN & FAMILY SERVICES

CHILD AND FAMILY WELLBEING AND DISABLED CHILDREN'S SERVICE

SHORT BREAKS STATEMENT

20 November 2021 to 20 November 2022

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1. Introduction and Background

This information is for families living in Leicestershire who care for a child or young person aged up to 18 years with a disability. It includes information on the purpose of Short Breaks and the current range of Short Breaks available in Leicestershire and how to access them.

Our vision in Leicestershire for children with special educational needs and / or disabilities is the same as for all children and young people – for them to achieve well in their education, to be cared for in safe and supportive families, participate and be involved in their communities and lead happy, safe and fulfilled lives.

Short Breaks provide disabled children and young people with an opportunity to spend time away from their parents, relaxing and having fun with their peers. They provide families with a 'break' from their caring responsibilities, and also give parents and carers a chance to unwind, rest, spend time with their other children and give brothers and sisters an opportunity to enjoy family time too. Parents and carers may use their break time to enjoy a leisure activity or if they are studying, to support their studies. Examples of short breaks include holiday playschemes, family fun days, group activities and clubs, and services in the home.

Local authorities are required to publish a Short Breaks Services Statement so that families know what support is available, eligibility criteria and how the range of short breaks are designed to meet the needs of local families with disabled children.

2. Who is responsible?

The Lead Officer is Gareth Dakin, Head of Service Field Social Work , who reports to Sharon Cooke, Assistant Director of Targeted Early Help and Children's Social Care.

In Leicestershire, parents and carers are invited to be part of the 'Parent and Carer Forum' (now known as the Leicestershire SEND Hub), which takes a full role in co-production of services for children and young people with disabilities. There is a full commitment from Leicestershire County Council, the Leicestershire SEND Hub, children and young people and partner agencies to work together and share their expert knowledge and experience to keep Short Break services and the Short Breaks Statement under constant review.

Please note that this Short Breaks Statement was developed in partnership with the PCF prior to the establishment of the new Leicestershire SEND Hub. We will be working closely with the SEND Hub moving forwards.

During the next 12 months there are plans to review and update the Local Offer so that it will be easier for parents and carers to find out if they may be eligible for a short break and also to review how decisions are made about eligibility for higher



payments. The terms of reference for this work will be published alongside this document on the Local Offer web page.

Our aim in working together is that disabled children and their families have the information and support that they need to 'live ordinary family lives as a matter of course.'

This means that we are committed to:

- Co-design of services, achieved through listening to the views and experiences of disabled children, engaging with them and providing them with choices.
- Ensuring that disabled children and their families can take a full and active part in community life and use local services.
- Working with parents and carers as equal partners in the co-production and design of services so that these continue to develop and become increasingly responsive and inclusive.

This work supports us to meet the requirements of the Equality Act 2010.

3. The Leicestershire Short Breaks Offer

Only residents of Leicestershire are eligible for Short Breaks support from Leicestershire County Council.

We recognise that each child and family is unique and will have different levels of support from their wider family and friendship network. Children and families will use different types of short breaks depending on the age of the child and the child's interests. Some families may need more support because of their family circumstances, this may be for a short period of time or it may be for longer. In all cases we will seek to provide the level of support needed whilst being mindful of the need for the Council to use resources effectively.

4. Access and eligibility for Leicestershire Short Breaks

A child or young person must have a disability that has been formerly diagnosed, permanent or long term.

The Children Act 1989 Section 17 (11) the definition of children who are disabled:

- 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.

The Local Authority decision to provide a short break service under The Children Act 1989 Section 17 (6) or under Section 20 (4) should be informed by an assessment of the child's needs and should take account of parenting capacity and wider family and environmental factors, the wishes and feelings of the child and their parents and the



nature of the service to be provided. Most service users are disabled children and their families but non-disabled children in need may receive short breaks.

Siblings of disabled children can access services and support for 'Young Carers.'

Families can use the [online request for Service form](#) to self-refer to the Young Carer service within [Children and Family Wellbeing Service](#) at Leicestershire County Council, Universal Services and Inclusion.

Universal services, for example breakfast and after-school clubs, are important in ensuring disabled children and young people have fun and enjoy themselves with friends, just the same as other children and young people. These services are available to all young people in Leicestershire regardless of whether they have a disability or not and can include organisations such as Brownies, Scouts and Cadets. Genuine inclusion means services which are designed and equipped to enable disabled children and young people to enjoy the same activities and opportunities as non-disabled peers. More information can be found on the Local Offer.

We want to ensure that staff and volunteers in community-based organisations have the skills to support disabled children and young people to attend any club or activity of their choice, such as drama, dance, sport or any other activity. We will organise training to develop capacity and confidence in the skills and abilities of staff and volunteers to meet the additional needs of disabled children and young people ensuring that all our partners also meet the requirements of the Equality Act 2010. The Early Years Inclusion and Childcare Service are able to provide some grant funding to providers to enable them to run inclusive provision with appropriate staffing levels, this includes inclusive community playschemes.

You can find further information under [Community playschemes inclusive to children with SEND](#).

Many young people will have a mixture of specialist and inclusive short breaks. For example, a disabled young person may be supported by a Personal Assistant to attend a local club or activity. There are a growing number of open access community-based schemes, sessions, and clubs which are for disabled children – see the Local Offer and follow the Local Offer Facebook page for updates on what is available around the county.

Accessing additional services from the County Council

When a parent or an agency feels that a child's needs cannot be met by universal services alone a referral can be made for additional support. Referrals – whether from parents or from other agencies – are received by First Response Children's Duty, working with Triage Team in Children and Family Wellbeing Service. First Response is a social work-led service. All requests for support that are received are screened first of all for any safeguarding issues, i.e. where a child may be at risk of harm. Thresholds are applied to decide whether a request for support should be provided by a social work service or a targeted early help service.

The Children and Family Wellbeing Service (CFWS) will ask some key questions at the point of referral and these are likely to include: can the child attend a mainstream setting, is there an EHCP in place, what school is attended, how much support is needed at school, what are the needs of the child and of the family. Sometimes, families can be supported through information, signposting and advice. The service works closely with the Play and Leisure Inclusion officer in Early Learning and Inclusion Service where it has been identified that there are barriers for a child accessing mainstream services such as school breakfast clubs. Sometimes it is possible to identify funding for the club provider to employ additional staff to ensure the child can attend.

What Children and Family Wellbeing Service consider in Short Break Assessments:

Where it is apparent an assessment is needed CFWS will allocate a worker to undertake an assessment - this will be a holistic assessment of the needs of the whole family:

1. What the child enjoys and what interests them.
2. The child's needs, including what the child is unable to do that other children their age could reasonably be expected to do. We will explore things like mobility, self-care skills, communication needs as well as note any diagnosed conditions, or health assessments underway, what medication is taken and whether any emergency medications need to be administered.
3. We will look at the child's Education Health and Care Plan where there is one in place and consider the level of support they receive at school, i.e. whether 1-1 is always required.
4. We will talk to other professionals who know your child, for example school staff and health care professionals.
5. Whether the child's needs can be met by universal services or targeted open access services for children with additional needs.
6. What the impact of the child's needs are on the rest of the family, for example siblings and parents and carers.
7. Whether DLA, PIP and/or CHC are in place, and how these are used. We will support families to apply where we do not feel they are receiving the correct benefits and payments.
8. How a short break could benefit the child's wellbeing and enable them to achieve some independence from their family. We would want to think about for example what new skills they might learn through a short break.
9. What activities the child and family have already tried, what has worked well, and if activities have not gone well, why that might be.

Where our assessment suggests a short break may be needed, we will discuss with you either a commissioned break or direct payment, for a time-limited period and a decision will be made by the Short Breaks Panel (further detail on this below.).



Regular reviews of provision will be made – typically every 6-12 months. An example of a short break could be for a child to attend a club for a set number of hours after school or during school holidays, and at the same time providing support to the parents/carers to address some of the difficulties which may be making home life, and access to universal provision, more challenging.

This might include workshops on sleep or behaviour, as well as looking holistically at family life and needs such as housing, education, etc. Please note, the average time for completion of an assessment and consideration by panel is 3-4 months.

Summer Playschemes

Some families identify that they need additional help during the long summer holidays from schools, but not for the rest of the year. When we undertake assessments, we will always include consideration of the summer holiday period and build this into your year-round package of support. However, you can also request just to have summer support. We do not operate a specific deadline for families to apply for summer schemes but encourage families to complete a request for service form at any point in the year.

Social Work Assessments

If a decision is made by First Response Children's Duty that a social work assessment is required, the assessment will usually be undertaken by the Disabled Children's Service. This will typically be where the needs are more complex and/or a greater level of support is required by the family to keep the child safe. Social work assessments may recommend short breaks which are very similar or the same as those offered by CFWS but may also, in exceptional circumstances, include overnight respite. Overnight respite can only be assessed by a social worker, and it may be provided by either foster carers in their own home or a short residential overnight stay (Our current provider for this service is Praxis based in Glenfield.)

Overnight respite can only be assessed by a social worker, and it may be provided by either foster carers or a commissioned service (currently Praxis operating in Glenfield and Melton.)

'Stepping Down' from Social Care

Sometimes, families will initially receive support through the Disabled Children's Service and will have an allocated social worker who will work with the family to ensure the correct support is in place. When it is felt that the package of support is working well, we will look to transfer the case to Children and Family Wellbeing Service. What this means is that you will have an allocated Family Support Worker in CFWS who you can contact regarding any issues or if your circumstances change. They will undertake regular reviews with you every year, the frequency depending on the size of the package of support you have in place. As your child turns 14, they will aim to attend EHCP reviews wherever possible, to support thinking about your



child's transition to adulthood. If they are unable to attend in person, they will ensure they contribute written updates to the review process.

Decision-making

We aim to ensure equity and transparency in the allocation of resources to children, young people and their families with services that are needs led, fit assessed needs, and with provision that is routinely monitored and reviewed. Therefore, we have established the Short Breaks, Occupational Therapy and Family Support Panel which takes place on the first and third Wednesday of every month. It is specifically tasked to consider the needs of children and young people who require early help, targeted and specialist short breaks and family support, occupational therapy equipment and adaptations.

The panel considers the information provided in the assessment that has been completed by either a SEND Family Support Worker, Social Worker or Occupational Therapist. In reaching decisions the panel looks at the needs of the individual child alongside the resources the family has which help them to meet the child's needs.

We have a panel process to help us apply some consistent responses to the requests made. However, it should be noted that we do not currently operate a 'tariff' system whereby children are scored against specific criteria, as we always consider the ability of the family to support the child. **This means that children who appear to have the same level of need will not always get the same level of short breaks because we have also factored in our assessment the family's capacity to respond to all children in the household and their own needs.**

The Short Breaks, Occupational Therapy and Family Support Panel considers the following areas when making decisions about the level of support for children and families:

- Which universal, voluntary and community sector services are the child and family are using/can use?
- The disabled child's care, social and emotional development needs.
- The social and emotional development needs of the disabled child's siblings.
- The needs and capacity of parents/ carers.
- Family and environmental factors including:
 - More than one disabled child in the family
 - Social isolation
 - Availability of family and friends' networks.

5. Travel Assistance

Travel to and from short breaks is not automatically provided, however we know that some children and families require assistance to access short breaks. When travel assistance is requested an assessment of need will be made.

6. Transition to Adulthood



We want transition from childhood to adulthood 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. Developing positive activities for young people, allowing them to take part in local community activities is linked to our transition programme.

We want to ensure that short breaks address the 'transition' needs of young people moving from childhood to adulthood. Short Breaks should be developed to reflect the needs of teenagers, ensuring friendship and activity groups are supported to continue beyond the school years and extend independence and life skills, supporting the Preparing for Adulthood outcomes of:

- Employment
- Independent Living
- Friends, Relationships & Community
- Good health

We will help to achieve these outcomes by supporting young people to:

- manage risk, whilst keeping themselves safe in the community
- develop decision making skills
- manage money
- travel independently
- improve their social interaction skills through modelling by their peers
- lead ordinary lives, enjoying and contributing to everyday activities

When Short Breaks are requested for a young person aged 17 and a half years or over, it is expected that consultation would take place between Children and Adult Social Care and, it may be agreed that a joint assessment would be appropriate.

7. Consultation with parents and carers, children and young people

We are committed to working in partnership with parents and carers, children and young people. We aim to co-produce with the Parent Carer Forum to ensure our approach is the best fit to family needs and available resources. We will ensure that our short break services focus on improving the life chances of disabled children and their families through continuing to co-produce our Short Breaks with parents, carers, children and young people. We will therefore ensure our parent forums and children's consultation forums are supported and developed.

8. Measuring Impact

Our aim is that all the short breaks we provide make a positive difference to our children and young people. We will ask ourselves the questions about the outcomes that the services are designed to meet. We will continue to measure children's satisfaction, parental satisfaction and staff confidence and skill in meeting the needs of disabled children in a variety of short break settings. We will continue to monitor and record the views of children, parents, and staff so everybody feels involved and supported and to ensure we develop a cycle of continuous improvement. Any



changes we make in response to co-production with parents, carers and young people, will be publicised on the Local Offer web pages.

We will provide progress reports to the Leicestershire SEND & Inclusion Board, which has parent/carer representation, embedding the concept of 'disabled children are everybody's business', developing ownership and accountability at the highest level. We welcome feedback from children and families using the services. It can be in any form including photographs, emails, pictures, video's, letters. The Leicestershire Local Offer aims to provide information about available services for children and young people with special educational needs and / or disabilities and their families in one place. It includes leisure and activity providers, health and care services, education providers and support groups.

The Local Offer is web- based as well as being available in other formats upon request. It contains information across Education, Health and Social Care together with activities and events for children/young people aged 0-25yrs that have SEND. The Local Offer will continue to be reviewed and up-dated based on feedback received. We want to encourage everyone to use the feedback form on the website, to help inform the Local Authority of any gaps in services and to help shape and inform future decisions about service provision. When issues arise we always try to resolve these immediately by talking with the people involved.

9. Final comments

Our aim remains to provide families with the best possible support at the right time, and to use expert knowledge of parents and carers, children and young people to help us develop and improve all our services.

In order to develop the Short Break offer for Leicestershire families during 2021-22, we will:

- Work with the Parent Carer Forum and an external partner (Newton Europe) to undertake a full review of short breaks, the range of support available and the extent to which parents/carers and young people feel able to access support.
- Continue to collect information about providers of short break services and share this information through future short break statements, in commissioning arrangements and the local offer website.
- Ensure commissioned services are delivered to a good quality and standard which meets needs through regular feedback and monitoring.

Thanks to all the children, young people and parents/carers who continue to help improve and develop the Leicestershire Short Break services.



This Short Breaks Statement will remain valid for a period of 12 months until 31 December 2022.

Current list of approved Leicestershire County Council Short Break Play and Leisure Providers:

- FTM Dance
- Glebe House
- Goldhill
- The Endorphins Group
- SENSE
- Woodleigh Health

There are other providers within Leicestershire however they have not applied to join the Leicestershire County Council Framework at this point in time.

View further information about the range of [Short Breaks available in Leicestershire](#).

Useful Contacts - Local Authority

- Leicestershire County Council, general enquiries, Telephone: 0116 232 3232
- First Response Children's Duty, Telephone: 0116 305 0005
- [The Local Offer](#)
- [SENDIASS](#), Telephone: 0116 305 5614

Health

- NHS Direct, Telephone: 111
- Leicester Royal Infirmary, Telephone: 0300 303 1573

Other Organisations

Leicestershire Parent Carer Forum, www.leicestershirepcf.org.uk

Appendix I – Examples of Short Breaks

Case Studies

Jack is 8 years old and is diagnosed with autism. He has some communication difficulties but can follow simple instructions. He enjoys attending school where he is in a specialist unit and receives some 1-1 support throughout the day. Jack can struggle with transitions, for example the handover from mum into school in the morning, as well as moving between different activities. However, he is responding well to visual prompts and strategies which alert him to what is happening next. Jack lives with his mum and dad, and has 1 younger sibling age 3, and 1 older sibling age 10. Dad works and is out of the home from 8am to 6pm. Grandma lives locally and can occasionally help out with childcare and babysitting. The family has a strong routine in place which helps provide a consistent environment for Jack and most of the time the family manages well. Jack participates in a local special needs football club and plays football with them every Saturday morning, he loves running and being outdoors. However, in the school holidays the club does not run, and having all three children at home for the 6 weeks can be a source of stress for mum. Dad always books some leave, but to enable Jack's siblings to have some time doing activities that Jack might find challenging, the family have asked for a commissioned summer play scheme. This was agreed by panel and Jack now enjoys one session per week with a specialist provider, for 5 weeks of the holiday.

Mia is 16 years old and lives with her mum and older sister. She has cerebral palsy and mild learning difficulty, and is a full time wheelchair user. Mia is unable to undertake self-care tasks without a lot of support, for example she needs help to wash and dress and is unable to wash her own hair. Mia has a significant difficulty with speech but is highly effective at using assistive technology to get her voice heard. Mia's family have previously had support to adapt the family home to Mia's needs, however in recent months she is expressing to her family that she is embarrassed that they must bathe her and dress her. In addition, Mia is frustrated that she does not get any opportunity other than at school, to spend time away from her family. She really wants to be able to spend time at the weekend with her friends outside of the family home. The Panel agreed to support Mia with 4 hours of domiciliary care during the week – this will enable her to have independent support to complete personal care tasks. In addition, the panel agreed to four hours of direct payments every two weeks. This will enable the family to employ a PA who can take Mia out on a Saturday to meet her friends, and work with Mia on developing independence skills, such as going into shops and cafes using her communication device to interact with others.

Mo is 9 years old and has autism, adhd and moderate learning difficulty. He lives with mum, dad, nana, and a 14 year old brother. Mo used to have a commissioned play scheme for summer holidays, but last year due to Covid the family elected to use the Summer Direct Payment Card. The family use the card to buy membership at a local attraction and so are able to benefit from days out together through the holiday which they otherwise wouldn't be able to afford. They've decided to have the card again this year.

Sally is 13. She has profound learning disabilities, is tube fed and requires oxygen. Sally is non-verbal and is entirely dependent for all of her care needs. She lives with her mum in the family home which has been adapted with a wet room and ceiling hoists so that mum is able to manage Sally's care needs with the additional support of domiciliary care workers who come into the home for 45 minutes in the morning and one hour at night every day, to help get Sally up ready in the morning and ready for bed in the evening. On a Saturday morning Sally goes to a commissioned service for 4 hours. Sally's mum is struggling with her own health needs – she is waiting for surgery on her knee which is scheduled for 4 months' time, and also struggles with depression and anxiety. She worries a lot about care for Sally and although she feels confident about the carers who come in, she has never been apart from Sally overnight. She is feeling really worried about her upcoming operation as she knows she will be in hospital for at least 4 nights and then is likely to need additional help for a further 6 weeks. To help both Sally and her mum prepare for time away from each other, overnight respite has been agreed twice per month in the run up to the surgery, and then Sally will be placed in the respite service while her mum is in hospital. Additional support will be provided while mum is in her recovery period.