



**Support for your family
for children and young people with
disabilities and additional needs**

**Short Breaks
Statement 2019-2020**

www.hants.gov.uk/shortbreaks

Dear parents and carers, children and young people

As Executive Member for Children's Services and Young People, I am very pleased to introduce the refreshed Hampshire County Council's Short Breaks Statement 2019-2020. The statement explains how our short breaks and social care support services for children and young people with disabilities and additional needs are organised and how you can access them.

This statement was originally created in 2012 and involved a great deal of input from local parents and carers of disabled children; with sections being written by representatives from Hampshire Parent Carer Network, who have also been involved in reviewing and updating this version of the statement.

This Short Breaks Service Statement has been updated following my Decision Day in July 2018 where my predecessor Cllr Mans, approved changes to Short Break Activities Programme for children with disabilities. The changes meant that the Short Break Activities Programme was able to maintain an effective programme, within a reduced budget, providing good quality breaks for parents and carers of disabled children, while providing fun and educational opportunities for the children and young people receiving them.

The Hampshire Local Offer: <https://fish.hants.gov.uk/localoffer> outlines all services and support available to children and young people aged 0-25 years with disabilities or special educational needs, including Short Break Activities, education, health, social care and leisure services.

I hope you will find the following information helpful and useful.

Yours faithfully

Councillor Patricia Stallard

Hampshire County Council Executive Lead Member for Children's Services and Young People

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Introduction and summary

What is a short break?

Short Break Activities are fun or educational activities for children and young people with disabilities and additional needs which allow their parents or carers to take a 'short break' from caring. Short Break Activities can be accessed at the weekend, during the school holidays and at youth clubs. A Short Break Activity could provide respite opportunities to enable parents and carers to take part in training, leisure activities, day to day tasks, or education. Overnight respite and care support may be available for families with the most complex needs, if appropriate following a social care assessment.

What is a short breaks service statement?

This statement is a guide to the services offered by Hampshire County Council. This statement tells you what Short Breaks are available to support your family and how to find suitable services. Every local authority must provide a statement and listen and respond to parent and carers views.

Who is a short break for?

The Equality Act 2010 tells us a disability is *'a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on a person's ability to carry out normal day to day activities'*. We refer to 'additional needs' in this statement as some parents and carers and young people prefer this term. Short breaks are only intended for children and young people who have an impairment. There is other support available from Children's Services and other organisations for children and young people with additional needs resulting from abuse or trauma for example, but who do not have a 'disability'.

How can short breaks help me and my family?

For your child or young person:

- to take part in exciting activities that interest them
- to develop feelings of independence and become more confident
- to spend time with their friends – and make new ones
- to achieve personal goals and learn new skills
- inclusion.

For you:

- to reduce feelings of stress and allow "you" time
- to spend time with your other children
- to feel confident your child is having fun – with skilled carers who understand their needs.

Short Break Activity Programme

Who is it for? (Eligibility criteria)

Our Short Break Activities programme is open to ALL children and young people who:

- have a disability and additional needs and require support to participate fully in leisure or recreation activities
- are under 18 years old
- live in the Hampshire County Council area (excluding Portsmouth, Southampton and Isle of Wight).

We want to enable children and young people with disabilities and additional needs to join in with safe, entertaining and interesting activities, whilst giving their parents or full-time carers an opportunity to have a short break from caring. The current Short Break Activities Programme consists of a range of activities to suit your family's needs and the things that your child or young person likes to do.

- Specialist playschemes and activities – run specifically for children and young people with moderate or complex needs.
- Support to attend mainstream activities, playschemes clubs and groups. (See pages 7-8)
- Community buddy scheme. (See page 8)
- Exception Funding that takes into account those grant applications that may not fall into the Short Break priorities of having a break at the weekend, during school holidays or at youth clubs.

We are working with, and fund, a range of voluntary organisations and special schools to provide short breaks, including activity providers (arts, sports clubs etc.), holiday and weekend playschemes and youth clubs. Any activity provider that meets the Short Break priorities can apply for funding to include your child in their programme of activities. The priorities have been identified by families as;

- having a break within the school holiday periods; including; half-terms, Easter, Christmas and summer holiday periods;
- having a break via Youth Clubs;
- having a break that's available on weekends;

Most activity providers will ask how they can support your child to enjoy an activity safely and happily – some families have used a 'book about me' or a [communication passport](#) to provide this information, which is available to download from the Leisure and Play section on the [Hampshire Local Offer](#).

“He has gained confidence in working with others and dealing with new situations and people. These sessions are important to D as he continues to grow his skills, his adaptability & he really enjoys them. He's so proud of his work and proudly displays them in his room and enjoys looking at them! He really enjoys coming” - Summer Playscheme 2019

How can I access Short Breaks activities?

You should book directly with Short Break activity and playscheme providers. You will need to present a valid Gateway Card to the provider either at the point of booking or when you arrive at the activity/playscheme. Your card will either be scanned, or the long card number will be recorded.

The Gateway Card is free and will give you access to activities, playschemes and buddy schemes available through our Short Break Activities Programme.

To register for a Gateway Card visit:

<http://www.hants.gov.uk/socialcareandhealth/childrenandfamilies/specialneeds/shortbreaks/gatewaycard> where you will find further information about how to apply and the supporting documentation you will need.

You can find details of short break activities within the leisure and play section of the Hampshire Local Offer: <http://fish.hants.gov.uk/hampshiregateway>

You will pay a standard activity cost for your child to attend the Short Break Activity. On booking the activity you may be asked to either pay the full cost or a partial amount, with the balance to be paid in full on the day of the activity. Please check with the activity provider on their payment policy.

The Community Buddy Scheme charges an hourly (subsidised) rate, plus the cost of the activity and travel (see page 8 Community Buddy Scheme).

We are aware that financial difficulties can be an issue for many families, so we have asked all activity providers to consider this when applying for their short breaks grant. If cost is a barrier to you attending an activity, please discuss directly with your activity provider about paying a concession rate. Please note that eligibility criteria will [apply](#).

When your Gateway Card is scanned, or the long number is recorded this data will come back to our central database. Information collated via scanning/ uploading Gateway Card numbers and project reports completed by Short Break activity providers helps us to evaluate our short breaks provision and informs the decision-making process for grants and commissioned services.

Did you know? Over 2,500 children and young people with disabilities have applied for a Gateway Card to access Short Break Activities.

How will my data be used?

For information about how Hampshire County Council will use any personal information that you supply please refer to the [Privacy Statement](#).

Mainstream playschemes/activities

You may wish for your child or young person to attend mainstream activities within local organisations, such as dance groups, sports clubs etc. Your child or young person may need some additional support to do this. Mainstream providers can apply for Short Breaks funding to pay for the additional support your child needs to attend that activity.

Please note that this excludes swimming providers and any activities where a parent/carer is required to stay.

You will be expected to pay for the standard advertised cost for your child to attend the activity or playscheme, and funding from the short breaks programme will pay for the additional support that they may need, if a grant application by the provider is approved.

We hope that this allows many more children to be included by local activity providers, allowing them to attend enjoyable and exciting activities. We have seen that a little bit of extra support can make a huge difference to enable children and young people with disabilities and additional needs to be included in mainstream activities.

Activity providers can find all the information they need about applying for funding at www.hants.gov.uk/shortbreaksfunding.

Provider organisations can register and publish details of their services or activities on the Hampshire Local Offer: https://fish.hants.gov.uk/kb5/hampshire/directory/sign_in.page

“A child that attends out 1:1 holiday provision started our club being tube fed as he had stopped eating, all through summer and October holidays he joined in with our mainstream holiday club in snack time and cooking activities. I feel attending the holiday club definitely contributed to his progress and we hope with more sessions the child will continue to take baby step in the right direction” – Mainstream Holiday Club Provider October 2019

How can I feel confident that mainstream activity providers can adequately support my child or young person?

We encourage mainstream activity providers to apply for funding and discuss what training and support that they need. We have found that most activity providers want to be inclusive for all children, they just need some extra support to gain the confidence to be able to do this. Activity providers are encouraged to talk and work together with families to create positive inclusion in their activities. They can find out about learning and development opportunities at:

<http://www.hants.gov.uk/socialcareandhealth/childrenandfamilies/specialneeds/shortbreaks/learningdevelopment>

There is a lot of useful information about your child's right to be included at:

<https://councilfordisabledchildren.org.uk/help-resources/resources/my-rights-your-responsibility-leaflets>

We have three boys from the same family (one who is a new addition to our club as he has just turned 4yrs old), for the first time the mother is able to have a little time to herself during the holidays to spend with her older child. All three boys require 1-1 support but are flourishing within our setting and one of the boys is just starting to form friendships with other children who attend our setting, something he has struggled to do in the past. - Mainstream Holiday Club Provider October 2019

Community Buddy Scheme

A Community Buddy is a person who enables children and young people with a disability and additional needs to access activities in the community. A Community Buddy is like a friend going along to a chosen activity which gives a greater sense of independence as well as giving time away from home.

A Community Buddy is a volunteer or paid member of staff who prior to being approved for the scheme has been interviewed, checked through the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) and fully trained. When you enquire about a buddy, the provider will organise a pre-visit from a co-ordinator where you can discuss your requirements and talk about suitable buddy matches - this consultation is free of charge. The co-ordinator will work with you to help you to choose the right buddy based upon your child's individual needs.

You can then decide together with your child or young person how you would like to use the time. The Community Buddy will provide the support needed to do this, whether the chosen activity is shopping, bowling, going to the cinema or just taking a walk in the park.

The scheme is open to children and young people aged 7 and above who have a Gateway Card and can be used after school, at weekends, in the holidays, for a few hours at a time, or for a whole day - it is entirely up to you.

The Community Buddy Scheme charges an hourly (subsidised) rate, plus the cost of the activity and travel.

For further information on community buddies scheme go to our website

<https://fish.hants.gov.uk/communitybuddies>

Did you know? An average of 60 children and young people were supported by a buddy in 2018-19

My son has never been the sporty type and tended to restrict himself to playing on his computer or watching TV. It is only through the buddy scheme that he now gets out of the house on a regular basis and is really enjoying it. A great idea, thank you. Keep up the good work - well done for the buddy's scheme! – Parent feedback on the Buddy Scheme 2019

How do we decide what activities are funded by the Short Break Activities Programme?

We have worked closely with parent/carer representatives and other key stakeholders to decide what the priorities should be for local areas and commissioned services on that basis.

The priorities have been identified by families as:

- having a break within the school holiday periods; including; half-terms, Easter, Christmas and summer holiday periods;
- having a break via Youth Clubs;
- having a break that's available on weekends.

What if I have a problem with a short break activity?

If you experience any problems in accessing a Short Break Activity, or problems while your child is attending, please discuss this with the activity provider or buddy provider in the first instance and ask for a copy of their complaints policy if needed. If you remain unhappy, or you need some support to address the problem, please contact us on **01962 846399** or email shortbreaks@hants.gov.uk.

Specialist services from social care

Who are specialist services from social care for?

Although Short Break Activities offer a range of activities to children and young people with disabilities and additional needs (see details of the short breaks programme on pages 6 -12), we know that there are families that need more support.

Specialist services from social care are targeted at families with the most complex needs, offering an individual support package (also called a 'child in need plan') to meet those needs. A social worker will assess your child to see if they are eligible for specialist services.

You can find out more about the **eligibility criteria** and factors that may inform or influence an assessment here:

<https://www.hants.gov.uk/socialcareandhealth/childrenandfamilies/specialneeds/shortbreaks/specialistservices>

How do we access specialist services from social care?

To see what help might be needed from social care, you are able to request an assessment of your disabled child's needs at any time. This assessment should take into account the whole family's needs including parents, carer's and siblings.

The assessment is a way of recording the information gathered by talking with you, your child and other people involved with your family. You will be fully involved, and you will be able to write your own comments on the assessment too. The social worker will need to discuss your family's needs with their managers to agree the plan that is required to support you and any services that they hope to offer.

To request help and support or to ask for an assessment from Children's Services, email childrens.services@hants.gov.uk or phone 0300 555 1384.

Please note: Emails are dealt with during normal office hours Monday to Friday.

At all other times, if you require a more urgent response, call the above telephone number.

What if I disagree with your decision about eligibility for specialist services following an assessment?

You should be given a copy of the eligibility criteria along with the decision.

If you feel it has not been applied fairly, or that important factors were not taken into account during the assessment, you can follow the [mediation process](#). You can also find more information about why children may not be eligible for access to specialist services:

<https://www.hants.gov.uk/socialcareandhealth/childrenandfamilies/specialneeds/shortbreaks/specialistservices/noteligible>

If you still remain dissatisfied, you can complain in writing to: Children's Services Department Complaints Team, Elizabeth II Court East, Winchester SO23 8UG or email childrens.services.complaints@hants.gov.uk

What types of support may be given?

Each family's situation is unique. Staff will spend time with your family to understand your individual needs and to consider what services would be most suitable to support both the child or young person with disabilities and additional needs as well as you as their parent or carer. Social workers can arrange suitable support from other professionals and frequently have a co-ordinating role to make sure all the different parts of the child's plan work well together. Some children and young people with very complex health needs will have funding support from health organisations too.

The types of services that might be considered include:

- **Care Support**

This is an individual worker employed by a care support provider, who comes into your home to support the family. This might be to assist with personal care, or to support your child to do something outside of the home. Some children and young people will need experienced support workers or two support workers at the same time. Sometimes staff can stay in your home and support your child while you go out.

- **Direct payments**

This is where a young person or the parent or carer of a child or young person with disabilities is given a direct payment to purchase their own service, instead of the Local Authority arranging that service on their behalf. Some parents who are using direct payments find they have more control over the services they receive and find that the care provided can be more convenient and flexible. To be able to access this service your child will need to have had a social work assessment and meet the eligibility criteria for a specialist service. The parent or carer can use the direct payment to employ a carer(s) directly to care for their child. Parents and carers will need to keep a record of what is spent and will be supported to set up the payroll and employment factors of this arrangement.

More help and advice is available from

www.enhamtrust.org.uk/Pages/Category/direct-payments or telephone 01264 345862

- **Personal Budget**

Personal budgets help families to personalise the support they require in ways that work best for them. Care support and direct payments can form part of the personal budget, following an assessment of needs and to achieve the specific outcomes for the child.

Since the Children and Families Act 2014 families can request a personal budget for children or young people for whom the local authority maintains an Education Health & Care (EHC) plan or has decided to make an EHC plan. [Personal budgets](#) are an allocation of funding following an assessment which should meet identified needs in terms of personal outcomes. A parent or carer or the young person can either receive their personal budget as a direct payment, leave it to be managed by their local authority or have a combination of direct payment and commissioned support. Any personal budget allocated will be reflected within section J of the EHC plan.

Further information can also be found here: <https://fish.hants.gov.uk/personalbudgets>

“Staff have accommodated all the things we’ve asked and made us feel secure in the care they’ll give our son” – Parent Feedback, Overnight Respite October 2019

- **What about an overnight break?**

A small number of families need the opportunity to have a break overnight. This resource is targeted at families where:

- the child regularly does not sleep through the night and needs supervision to stay safe
- the child has complex health needs that regularly need attention during the night
- the child’s support needs are so intensive that the parents/carers need a longer break.

The overnight break can take place at a range of locations, including within a family home, or with trained foster carers in their home (Specialist Respite care), or at a residential unit (run by the County Council or by another provider).

Any place that provides overnight short breaks has to be registered and checked thoroughly, and social workers will discuss this further with you if they feel that this is a service that your family needs.

How do we access overnight short breaks?

The need for an overnight short break would be identified as a result of a social care assessment, following which the social worker will request this service from a county-wide panel. This ensures that we are offering services fairly across the whole county.

The panel would expect to see that your family is being offered all other suitable services that might help before overnight short breaks are requested.

“Rainbow Corner is an outstanding facility which met all of our needs & far exceeded our expectations. From the minute we arrived we were made to feel safe, welcomed & important. All the staff were extremely professional & reassuring, our confidence was restored very quickly in an extremely stressful time, staff took the time to get to know us as a family & were so lovely from the start with G. There is a relaxed, family atmosphere, staff are clearly happy in their jobs & A is a wonderful manager with eyes & ears everywhere & an excellent relationship with the children. Our experience was just superb & positive in every way.” – Parent Feedback, Overnight Respite September 2019

DID YOU KNOW...

Four teams of social workers, along with occupational therapists, support over 700 children and young people with disabilities with the most complex needs in Hampshire.

How do families get the help they need before they reach crisis point?

Short Break Activities in themselves are intended to be preventative by giving parents and carers a break that enables them to continue in their caring role. The Short Break Activities Programme in Hampshire has been specifically designed to provide early support and intervention, ensuring wherever possible that families receive enough support so that they do not reach crisis point.

Other useful information

SENDIASS

Hampshire SENDIASS is an impartial Special Educational Needs and Disability Information, Advice and Support Service (SENDIASS) that aims to make a positive and lasting difference for children and young people with special educational needs and/or disability (SEND) and their parents and carers. They do this by providing timely confidential, impartial information, advice and support through online resources for **parents and carers**, **children and young people** and **practitioners**; at events and workshops; via a helpline service and through individual casework.

Children under five years old

What if my child is not yet at school?

You can find out about activities and services for under-five's in your local area **<http://fish.hants.gov.uk/hampshiregateway>**

Where can I find out about suitable childcare?

The Short Break Activities Programme is designed to give parents and carers a short break rather than regular childcare. However, we appreciate that finding suitable childcare is important to working parents. To search for local childcare and early years education services visit:

<https://fish.hants.gov.uk/kb5/hampshire/directory/family.page?familychannel=1>

The Government's website **<https://www.childcarechoices.gov.uk/>** provides details of a range of support available to meet childcare costs.

Early Help

In Hampshire, Early Help is offered by a range of services and agencies, including Hampshire County Council's Family Support Service (FSS) and the Supporting Families Programme (SFP).

The Family Support Service aims to enable children at risk of poor outcomes to achieve educationally, socially and physically by supporting parents and carers to build their skills and resilience. By enabling parents to more effectively meet their children's developmental needs and by offering support as needs arise, difficulties can be prevented from escalating into something more complex, requiring statutory intervention.

To find out more about the work of the Family Support Service and the support available visit:

<https://www.hants.gov.uk/socialcareandhealth/childrenandfamilies/familysupportservice/aboutus>

For further assistance call **0300 555 1384** or email childrens.services@hants.gov.uk.

Transition (moving from Children's Services to Adult social care)

How do short breaks support transition?

Transition is the time when young people are moving from childhood into adulthood, between 14 and 25 years old. This is the time when young people are preparing to leave school and take the next steps in their adult life. For young people with disabilities and additional needs more support may be needed during this time to enable them to reach their full potential.

The team in Hampshire County Council which supports people between Children's Services and Adult social care is called Independent Futures. For further information on support during transition, and the transition process, visit:

<https://www.hants.gov.uk/socialcareandhealth/adultsocialcare/transition-to-adult>

We aim to provide a range of age-appropriate Short Break Activities for teenagers. Information about these activities can be found in the [Leisure and Play - Hampshire Gateway](#) section of the [Hampshire Local Offer](#) / <https://fish.hants.gov.uk/localoffer>

How can I get involved in influencing services?

Hampshire Parent Carer Network (HPCN) www.hpcn.org.uk is an independent, parent-led group set up to ensure that the families and carers of children and young people with disabilities and additional needs can participate fully in the development of services within Hampshire. They would be keen to hear from you if you would like to have your voice heard, or if you feel able to represent other parents and carers when decisions are being made about the support and services provided:

<https://www.facebook.com/HampshireParentCarerNetwork>

How has this Short Breaks statement been prepared and reviewed?

For this most recent update we consulted HPCN parent representatives, key service staff and providers to refresh the information and ensure it is still relevant and accurate. The updated statement will be promoted through HPCN and the Hampshire Local Offer.

Participation in future reviews of this statement

This statement will be checked annually to ensure it remains a good reflection of current services. We will notify parents and carers of opportunities to get involved in influencing and planning services via Hampshire Parent Carer Network.

We would love to include more quotes and short stories from children and young people about their short break experiences in future statements. If you have anything that you would like to include please contact the short breaks team: shortbreaks@hants.gov.uk

Contact us

For more information, or if you would like this information in another language or format, such as Braille or large print:

Telephone: **01962 846399**

Email: shortbreaks@hants.gov.uk

Website: www.hants.gov.uk/shortbreaks

All names have been changed in this document to protect the identity of the child/young person and their family. However, all quotes used are from parents and carers in Hampshire.