



Support for your family

For children and young people with disabilities and additional needs

Short breaks
service
statement

www.hants.gov.uk/shortbreaks



Hampshire
County Council



NHS
Hampshire

Dear parents and carers, children and young people

I am very pleased to have the chance to write to you all to introduce Hampshire County Council's Short Breaks Service Statement. It details how short breaks and support services for children and young people with disabilities and additional needs are organised, and how they can be accessed by you and your family.

We know that families can find it very confusing to try and understand the range of services available, how to access them, and who they are for. Parents and carers are busy juggling the demands of family life and the extra support that their children with disabilities need, so they really do need clear and timely information.

I am particularly pleased that the writing of this statement has been led by parents and carers in Hampshire. You are, after all, best placed to know what information you need and how we should set out this information in a way that you can use. Along with the County Council staff involved, I am very appreciative of the time and work put in to this statement by parents and carers from Hampshire Parent/Carer Network and Parent Voice.

I believe that this statement reflects the fact that our services are continually striving to improve and are always responding to what families are telling us. We may not always get it right, but we have set out in this document many ways for families to tell us how we are doing, which will, in turn, help us to improve. Please continue to tell us and work with us to achieve the best outcomes for children and young people in Hampshire.

Yours faithfully

Councillor Roy Perry

Hampshire County Council's Executive Lead Member for Children's Services



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 Quick links for further information.

Introduction and summary

What is a short break?

Short breaks are fun or educational activities for children and young people with disabilities and additional needs - allowing their parents or carers to take a 'short break' from caring. Short break activities are offered during daytimes, evenings, weekends and school holidays. Short breaks provide parents and carers with the opportunity to take part in training, leisure activities, day-to-day tasks, or education.

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 has to provide a statement and listen and respond to parent and carers views.

Who is a short break for?

The Disability Discrimination Act 2005 tells us a disability is 'a person with *'a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long term adverse effect on his 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
- Develop feelings of independence and get more confidence
- Spend time with their friends – and make new ones
- Achieve personal goals and learn new skills

For you:

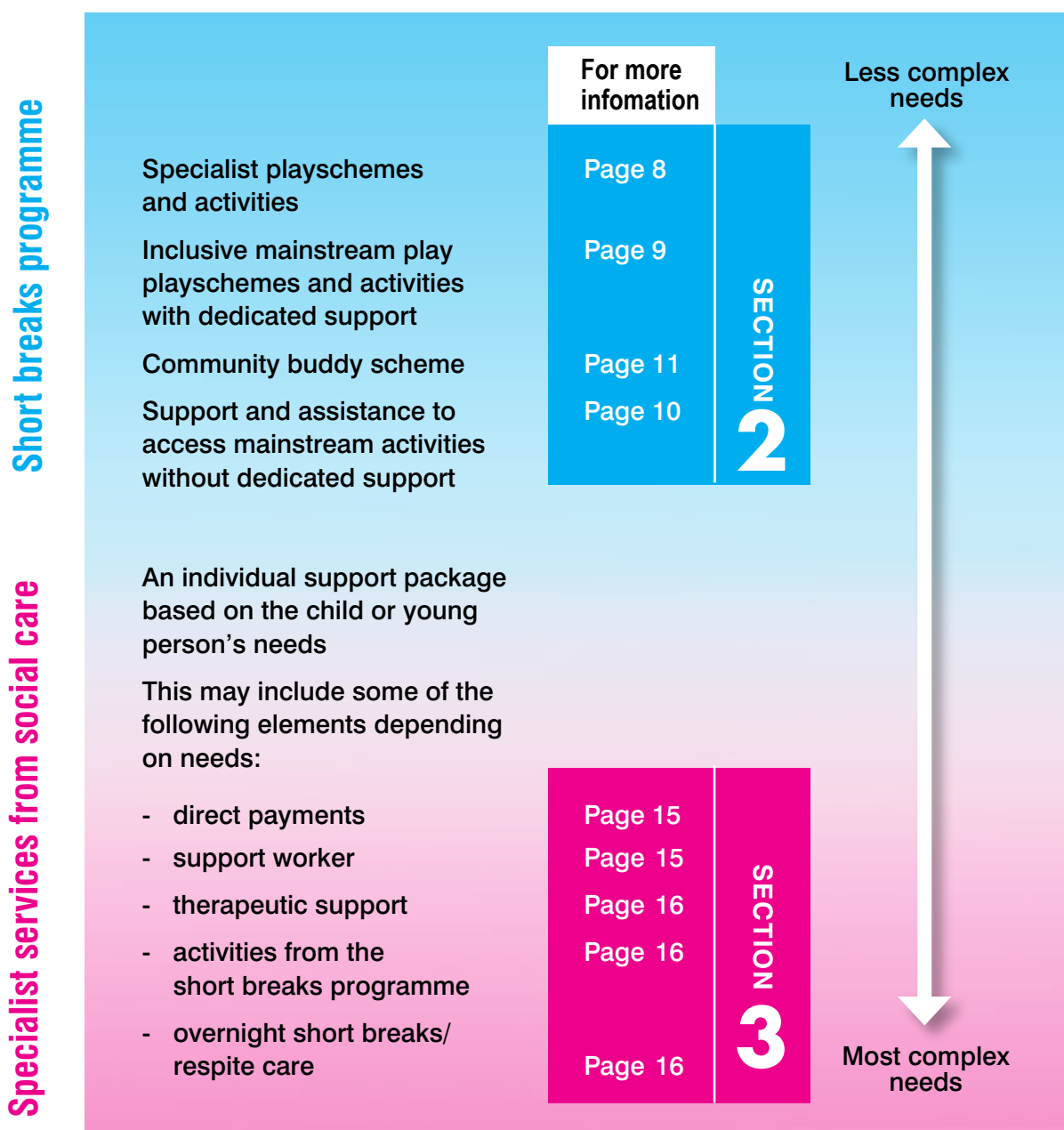
- Reduce feelings of stress and allow "you" time
- Spend time with your other children or together as a family
- Meet and get to know other families who share similar experiences
- Feel confident your child is having fun – with skilled carers who understand their needs

This statement (also see the diagram below)

Section 2 (coloured blue) tells you about short breaks activities that are open to all children and young people with disabilities and additional needs, and how to find and access playschemes and clubs. You can get a shorter leaflet about this from shortbreaks@hants.gov.uk, or phone **01962 846399**.

Section 3 (coloured pink) tells you about how to get an assessment from social work teams if you need other support, such as more help at home or an overnight short break. You can get more information about this at www.hants.gov.uk/contact-cs or by phoning **0845 603 5620**.

Section 4 (coloured purple) tells you some other information that might be useful about services for children and young people with disabilities and additional needs, and more information about short breaks in Hampshire



Please note: *Your child's and/or family's needs might change and so different services may be appropriate at different times.*

Short breaks programme

Who is this for? (eligibility criteria)

Our short breaks programme is open to ALL children and young people who:

- have a disability and additional needs and may require support to participate fully in leisure or recreation activities
- are between 0 to 19 years old
- live in Hampshire and/or attend a school in Hampshire (excluding Portsmouth, Southampton and Isle of Wight as they have similar schemes).



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.

There is no limit to the number of short breaks activities your child can participate in, and you can mix and match 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. (see page 8)
- Support to attend mainstream activities, playschemes clubs and groups. (see page 9)
- Community buddy scheme. (see page 11)

We have an ongoing commitment to increase the range and choice of activities within our short breaks programme. We are working with, and fund, a range of voluntary organisations to provide short breaks, including activity providers (arts, outdoor and leisure centres, sports clubs etc), organisations and special schools who provide school, holiday and weekend playschemes, and local family support groups. Any activity provider you choose can apply for funding to include your child in their programme of activities.

“Due to the support provided by short breaks my son has been able to access a variety of activities from bush-craft, to football and fishing club. The natures of his disabilities are that he requires close supervision and visual aids. The funding has been used to support him to access a variety of mainstream and specialist activities.”

We are working with activity providers to develop their skills, confidence and knowledge of working with children and young people with disabilities and additional needs. 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 'passport' to provide this information, which are available to download from the short breaks section on the Parent Voice website.



Please visit:

www.parentvoice.info

How can I access short breaks programme activities?

You can book places at an activity or playscheme directly with the activity provider. To help with the booking process we have introduced the Gateway Card scheme which is used to identify that your child or young person has a disability and additional needs and requires support. The Gateway Card is free and will give you access to activities, playschemes and buddy schemes available through our short breaks programme.

You will still need to pay the standard cost for your child to attend the activity. The Gateway Card scheme will help the activity provider to apply for funding to cover the additional costs that may be required to allow your child to participate fully.

Your personal details will be stored centrally by the short breaks team which means that you do not need to complete funding forms for every activity provider; you simply have to present your Gateway Card at the time of booking. The information stored on the Gateway Card database is only for the short breaks team's use – your personal record will not be accessible by any other teams or third parties.

i To register for a Gateway Card visit:
www.hants.gov.uk/gatewaycard

DID YOU KNOW...

That over 3,300 children and young people with disabilities now hold a Gateway Card?



Next steps:

Evaluating our provision and planning future services

Information collated via the Gateway Card scheme about the use of short breaks activities will help us to evaluate our provision and plan future services.



“ Thank you for sorting Jessica’s swimming lessons. She had 10 lessons and managed to achieve a great many successes - gaining eight badges up to 800m. She was quite rightly very very proud of herself and I was thrilled with the confidence it gave her. She had one-to-one lessons and would NEVER have been able to achieve anything like this in a large group lesson; she was not able to cope with the waiting around it involved.

The Short Breaks team have also helped Jessica to attend the Mad Science club and Jessica has astonished us with the amount of facts she has sucked up!!

With the extra support at Brownies and now Guides Jessica has had the consistency of one person that she can turn to in a club without constantly interrupting the group leader, which is great!

Jessica also attends Interact, a specialist drama group run by Stagecoach (who are also supported by a short breaks grant). Jessica has two sisters who also have additional needs and they have attended group activities for children with disabilities at Calshot Outdoors Centre together, but so far the other girls can usually join mainstream activities without additional support.

Jessica has great activities which also provide a break for her and I have been able to leave her at venues without either having to sit outside in the car or wait with bated breath at the other end of the phone. ”

Where do I go to find out more information about activities available in my local area?

Hampshire Gateway publication

Hampshire Gateway is an annual publication that is automatically issued to all Gateway Card holders who have consented to receiving news and updates. It is packed full of information on the short breaks activity providers in each local area. Every term you will be sent an update about events and activities that are running and how you can access these. These updates are sent before the school holidays to allow you to plan ahead.

Hampshire Gateway website

The Hampshire Gateway website is packed full of places to go and things to do! It is possible to search for an activity provider or a specific activity – and for every entry there is information about where they are, what they offer, their contact details and access information. It is also possible to search based on distance from a specific postcode. New activities are added weekly.

Hampshire Gateway has been designed and created through consultation with parents and has been developed in partnership with Parent Voice and Pavilion on the Park.

i Hampshire Gateway website:
www.hampshiregateway.info

i If you have any problems accessing any of the activities listed on the website or in the publications, your local Parent Voice bridging worker (see page 10 bridging workers) who will be happy to help: call **023 8072 1206** or visit **www.hampshiregateway.info**

“ Thanks for providing your help, support and opportunities. I have met new friends for myself and my son where I attended activities advertised by yourselves. This has helped as I am a single parent and was feeling very isolated. ”

Specialist playschemes/activities

Disabled children and young people with moderate or complex needs often require higher levels of support, staff with specialist knowledge or training (such as use of feeding pumps, administering medication or lifting techniques) or specific resources or equipment (such as hoists or changing tables) to join in certain activities. It is our aim to ensure that the child or young person's disability or support requirements are not a barrier to them accessing the activities they would like to take part in.

We work with a wide range of organisations and activity providers across Hampshire to ensure that there are playschemes and activities on offer that are suitable for children and young people with the most complex needs, allowing them to take part in a wide range of interesting and exciting activities.

Some of these schemes are run by specialist activity providers, some are run at local special schools, and some of the schemes may be run for particular disability groups. All these schemes are open to all Gateway Card holders (see page 6). Some of the activities are also for siblings too, as we understand the difficulties of having children at two different activities at the same time. This also provides the opportunity for disabled and non-disabled children to enjoy activities together.

“ We have used short breaks on quite a few occasions. I have four sons and they all love adventurous, outdoor activities. Short breaks has enabled my son who has severe cerebral palsy finally to be able to join in with his brothers doing skiing, rock climbing, zip wires, cycling, sailing and more and he loves it! We have been to sessions at Calshot and QE2 Activity Centre to name a few.

It has been fantastic for me to see all my children having fun and spending time with each other. We are really looking forward to booking more activities this year and without short breaks this would not be possible due to my son's physical limitations. ”

DID YOU KNOW...

That Hampshire now has over 40 specialist play schemes and activities just for children and young people with disabilities and more complex needs, supported by short breaks funding?

“ I think Avon Tyrrell is so amazing and I think other children should go too. I love the activities and getting my Platinum Awards!!!

My favourite activities are archery, fishing, high ropes, abseiling, swimming, night walks, face painting and arts and crafts. I wish I could do it everyday! ”
- nine year old girl.



“ My son has attended Disability Challengers for the past few years, he is severely disabled and therefore has to have one-to-one care during his time there. Challengers give me the confidence to leave him knowing he is being well looked after. He is non verbal and has little understanding of his environment but when he arrives at Challengers his little face always breaks into a smile!

Disability Challengers has a huge impact on our family it means that I can spend quality time with my 10 year old twins, watch them play sport, take them out to places we can't go with Anthony! More importantly I sometimes have a break, some time to myself and a recharging of the batteries! ”

Mainstream playschemes/activities

We understand that not all children and young people need or want to attend specialist playschemes or activities specifically designed for children and young people with disabilities and additional needs.

Some children and young people, would prefer to attend activities with their friends from school or local area, or with their siblings. Some providers apply for funding which allows them to allocate fully supported places to children and young people with disabilities and additional needs. The provider will work with you to cater for your child's individual requirements, they will ensure that they get to know your child and the support that they need to take part in the activity, giving you peace of mind that your child is in safe hands.

You may also wish for your child or young person to attend mainstream activities within local organisations, such as Scouts or Guides, or a local swimming club, where the provider feels that they need some additional support to be able to welcome your child to the activity. In this instance, the provider can apply for specific funding to pay for the additional individual support your child needs to attend that activity. Any activity provider can apply for this funding, so you are not restricted at all as to which activities your child can attend.

You will be expected to pay for the standard 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.

We hope that this allows many more children to be included by local providers, allowing them to attend enjoyable and exciting activities with their friends and siblings. 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

DID YOU KNOW...

That almost 200 children and young people received support to access a mainstream leisure activity through Hampshire's Support for Individuals short breaks scheme in 2011-12?

“ I love it, thank you ” - **seven year old girl** about the activities days at Gordon Brown Outdoors Centre in North Hampshire.

Support for mainstream activity providers

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

Our Recreation, Activities and Inclusion Officer and the short breaks team have been working hard to encourage and educate activity providers; including offering a resource pack about inclusion, holding a number of inspiring conferences about including children with disabilities and additional needs, and organising training on requested subjects. We are going to continue to encourage mainstream activity providers, and talk with them more about the training and support that they need. We have found that most activity providers want to do a good job and include your child, 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.

Bridging workers

The short breaks programme also funds Parent Voice to provide bridging workers. Bridging workers work with local mainstream activity providers, parents and carers, and children and young people with disabilities and additional needs. They support and promote inclusion with a view to increasing the range and number of recreation and leisure opportunities available to children and young people with disabilities and additional needs, and to improve the quality of these provisions.

As part of their role they will look to build relationships, break down barriers and assist with developing positive solutions and outcomes for all. They are also supporting leisure centres by helping them to set up activity buddy schemes and recruit suitable activity buddies for these.

i Bridging workers are employed within every district of Hampshire – for more information visit www.hampshiregateway.info or call 023 8072 1206.

i There is a lot of useful information about your child's right to be included at: www.councilfordisabledchildren.org.uk/resources/cdcs-resources/my-rights-your-responsibility

“ The short breaks programme has given my daughter the same choices as her friends. She has been able to access local activities, build friendships and develop new skills. I have been able to relax knowing that she has the support that she needs and the service provider has the skills they need to make their sessions fully inclusive. She has been able to try new activities that we may not have considered in the past, and this has led onto new interests and increased confidence. ”

What are the costs involved for accessing the short breaks programme?

Families are expected to pay the costs that would normally apply to a child or young person doing a particular activity – however the short breaks programme will provide funding for any additional support that is required to enable your child to participate in that activity. The community buddy scheme costs £5 per hour, plus the cost of the activity and travel (see page 11 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 reduced charge.

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, Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) checked 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 to 19 years old 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 as there is no limit on the number of hours you can use.

The scheme is subsidised by the short breaks programme, and for parents and carers there is a standard charge of £5 per hour, plus the cost of the activity and travel.



DID YOU KNOW...

The community buddies have a range of experience in supporting different disabilities and there are currently 100 children and young people using the community buddy scheme.

“ Thank-you for the buddy scheme - my son has no friends and never leaves the house without me, but he got to do a trip with a buddy. ”

“ Keep up the good work - well done for the buddy's scheme! ”

“ 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. ”



For further information on community buddies scheme go to our website: www.hants.gov.uk/communitybuddies

How do we decide what activities are funded by the short breaks programme?

Funding to support individual children, and activities costing less than £5,000 in total, are discussed at a regular panel which includes Parent Voice representatives, the short breaks team and other Hampshire County Council colleagues, who make the decision.

For funding over £5,000, a larger panel is held with Hampshire Parent/Carer Network and Parent Voice representatives. They will make recommendations about funding to Hampshire County Council's Executive Lead Member for Children's Services who will decide at a formal Decision Day.

DID YOU KNOW...

In 2012-13, Hampshire County Council continued to provide the same amount of funding as the previous year for short breaks.

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

If you experience any problems in accessing a short breaks 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 the Short Breaks team: call **01962 846399** or email **shortbreaks@hants.gov.uk**. You can also get help from Parent Voice: call **02380 721206** or email **parentvoice@roseroad.org.uk**.

Next steps:

Making grants decisions more local

Whilst we have benefitted from strong parent representation on our funding panels we would like to make our decision-making about short break activities much more local. In 2012, we are trialling pilot schemes in a small number of areas where short breaks grants will be recommended by parent-led local panels. Following this scheme's evaluation we hope to be able to extend this across Hampshire.

“ My favourite things were Avon Tyrrell, craft building in the rain, and I also liked Milestones museum and the lego. It was all awesome! - 12 year old boy. ”



Specialist services from social care

Who are specialist services from social care for?

Although we have increased our number and variety of short breaks that are on offer to children and young people with disabilities and additional needs (see details of the short breaks programme on pages 5 -12), we know that there are families that need more support.

This might be because of a change in the family's capacity to support their child, or because the child or young person's needs have become greater. These increases in need might be sudden and unexpected, or they may happen over a period of time. However this situation arises, some families will be able to continue with their own resources and with informal support from friends, relatives and local support groups. Some families may find that they do not have this support available to them and that they need more help from the County Council.

This type of service is targeted at families with the most complex needs, offering an individual support package (also called a 'child in need plan') to meet those needs. To ensure that we can provide these specialist support services to the families that need them, when they need them, we have worked with local parents and carers to develop our 'eligibility criteria' that we use to assess the needs of each child and their family.

Eligibility criteria

What is the eligibility criteria for accessing services for children and young people with complex needs?

You may be eligible for **specialist services from social care** if your child requires substantial additional support as a result of their disability and additional needs in order to achieve their age appropriate potential – and this support cannot be provided within your family.

Examples of when you may be eligible include when:

- specialist equipment is required to be mobile
- support is required to be able to undertake all basic self care functions (that are age appropriate)
- your child or young person requires constant supervision throughout the day and for prolonged periods at night (when no longer age appropriate)
- as a result of their disability your child or young person's behaviour proves a serious risk to themselves and/or others. This includes self-harm
- without support their ability to communicate severely affects their personal safety, i.e. they are non-verbal
- they have a profound and multiple learning disability, severe learning disability, or autism with challenging behaviour, which results in a significant risk of self-harm or harm to others.

How do we access specialist services from social care?

To see what help might be needed from social care, a social worker will need to talk with you in order to complete an assessment. This could be a social worker from one of the main children's teams, or they might be from the specialist disabled children's teams depending on your child's needs. It is important to note that while many short breaks activities are available without any assessment (see page 6 How can I access short breaks programme activities?), 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, but you also have the right to request a separate assessment of your own needs as a carer if required.

The assessment is just 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 they want to put in place to support you and any services that they hope to offer.

i To request help and support or to ask for an assessment from Children's Services, please call **0845 603 5620** or email **childrens.services@hants.gov.uk**

Please note: Emails are dealt with during normal office hours Monday to Friday. At all other times 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 should ask the social worker who assessed your child for a review of the decision. This will mean that another team manager will review the decision to see whether the criteria have been consistently applied. You will receive a letter confirming the reviewing manager's decision within 21 days of your request.

After this, should you still feel the decision is wrong, you may request a face-to-face meeting with a service manager from Children's Services to discuss the decision.

i 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**

If you would like more information on the mediation process visit:
www.hants.gov.uk/mediation-process.pdf

How are social workers in the Disabled Children's team different from other Children's Services social workers?

Most Children's Services social workers get involved usually when there is a safeguarding concern about the care a child is receiving and a concern has been raised that a child may come to some harm.

Social workers in the Disabled Children's teams in Hampshire do work with children in these kinds of situations too, with the aim of working with the family to ensure all children and young people with disabilities and additional needs are safe and well looked after.

However, the social workers in the Disabled Children's teams have a much wider role than other social workers. They frequently support families where there are no such concerns - just a need for extra support due to the impact of disability on the family.

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, and you as their parent or carer. The aim is, wherever possible, to help parents and carers to be able to support their child or young person at home. The needs of siblings will also be considered when planning what might help the family.

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.

“ As a family we've always used the local specialist holiday playscheme, and with some extra support my son Mohammed had also been to Scouts. Mohammed has a physical disability, a severe learning disability and communication difficulties so if people don't get it right he can become quite challenging, but the short breaks work well as the people now know him really well.

As he has become bigger and stronger we were finding it much harder to manage at home, and when our youngest daughter was having some problems with bullying we found it hard to give her the time she needed. I was really very reluctant to contact a social worker, but once it was explained that we would be able to agree Mohammed's support together, I felt much more comfortable with the idea.

The social worker gave us some help and guidance on supporting Mohammed and put us in touch with the young carer's worker for our daughter. They were also able to refer us to other services – and we saw the team occupational therapist who arranged for alterations to be made to our home to make things easier.

Mohammed is 16 and we now have direct payments - which we use to employ a support worker. His support worker understands his needs – and allows us to spend some quality time with our daughter, which is just great! That bit of extra support means we all manage a bit better. We regularly review the plan together to make sure that it is still working for everyone – especially Mohammed.”

The types of services that might be considered include:

Direct payments

This is where the parent/carer of a child or young person with disabilities and additional needs 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. The parent and carer can choose to buy services from an organisation that provides care, e.g. a private agency, from a voluntary organisation or a nursery, or they can choose to employ a carer(s) directly. Parents and carers need to keep a record of what is spent.



More help and advice is available from www.enham.org.uk or www.enham.org.uk/pages/direct_payments-hampshire-566.html
Telephone: **01264 345862** or email: direct-payments@enham.org.uk

A support worker

This is an individual worker employed by an agency, who comes into your home to support the family. This might be to assist with personal care, to help with domestic tasks, 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.

Therapeutic support

Many therapies come via the health service or school (for example speech therapy and physiotherapy). However, some children have other therapies as part of their social care support package, e.g. music therapy.

Activities from the short breaks programme

All the short breaks activities and support available to any family without a social care assessment (described in section 2) can of course continue, and should still be a part of the overall plan of support for the family.

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.

Overnight short breaks are one of the most costly services provided to families, so we need to ensure that this service is available to the people who need it most, when they need it. This is not just based upon the needs that a particular condition presents but also the wider needs of parents and carers, and their families as a whole.

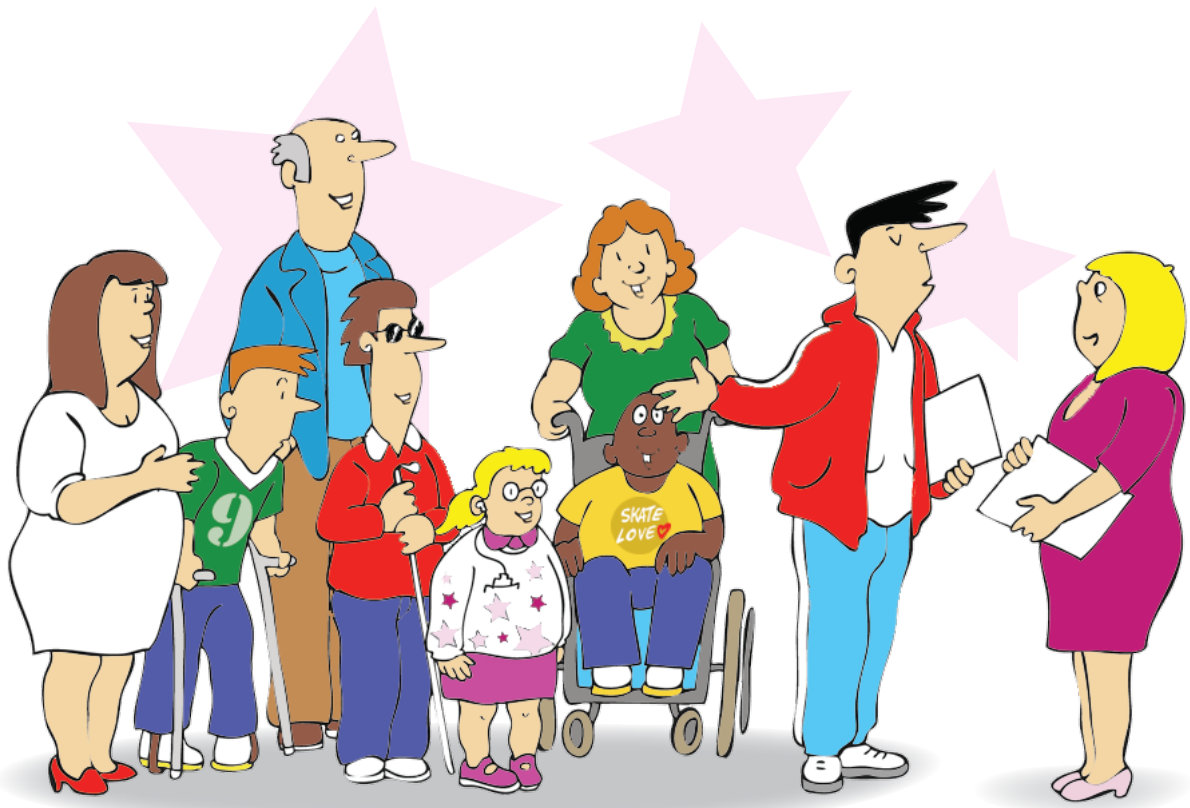
The overnight break can take place at a range of locations, including within a family home, or with trained foster carers in their home (a foster or Family Link placement), or at a residential unit (run by the County Council or by another provider).

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.

“ Emily has always been a poor sleeper since she was a baby, but the other children were the same and I thought she would grow out of it. Her health is really complicated and I now have to check her several times during the night to make sure her blood sugar levels are OK and re-position her in bed. We are looking into any monitors or gadgets that might help with this, but in the meantime, as I am a single mum, it's up to me to keep a close eye and sometimes it is easier just to doze in the chair in her room beside her! This obviously has an effect on my health and on what I can do with the other children. The youngest needs my time of course but so do the older two with homework and wanting to do some fun things in the holiday.

Emily is now 11 and I have already used the buddy scheme to take Emily for a few trips out in the school holidays. Because I can get low with my depression, my social worker arranged a support worker to come and help me with managing all the practical tasks at home at those times. The lack of sleep takes its toll on everything though and we now have 24 nights a year at a specialist foster placement called a family link, which is usually in the school holidays and weekends.

I helped the carers learn about what Emily needs before she stayed there and I feel confident in them now. Having the stays planned out means I can catch up on sleep and feel refreshed enough to do some trips out with the other children. We have reviews with the social worker and other people involved making sure everyone is happy with the plan. ”



How do we access overnight short breaks?

This is recommended by an assessment, as described before, following which the social worker will request this service from a county-wide panel. This is to ensure 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.

DID YOU KNOW...

Four teams of social workers, along with occupational therapists support just under 1,000 children and young people with disabilities with the most complex needs in Hampshire?

What is a personal budget?

Personal budgets were introduced in England in 2008 for adult care services. The Government are now looking at making them available to some children with disabilities by April 2014. Personal budgets are an allocation of funding following an assessment which should meet identified needs in terms of service provision. The parent/carer or the young person can either receive their personal budget as a direct payment, left as a lump sum with their local authority or as a combination of being a direct payment/council controlled.

In Hampshire, we are starting a small pilot in 2012 to see how we can make this work for social care support packages. We are appreciative of these families helping us with this new way of working that will bring more choice and control to families.

Some local authorities have chosen to give parents and carers personal budgets to buy their own short breaks activities (see page 8 Specialist playschemes/activities, page 9 Mainstream playschemes/activities and page 11 the Community buddy scheme that you do not need an assessment for). However, parents in Hampshire have told us that our short breaks services are currently flexible enough and offer a wide range of support that meets their needs. If you have any feedback about this, we would be happy to hear from you.

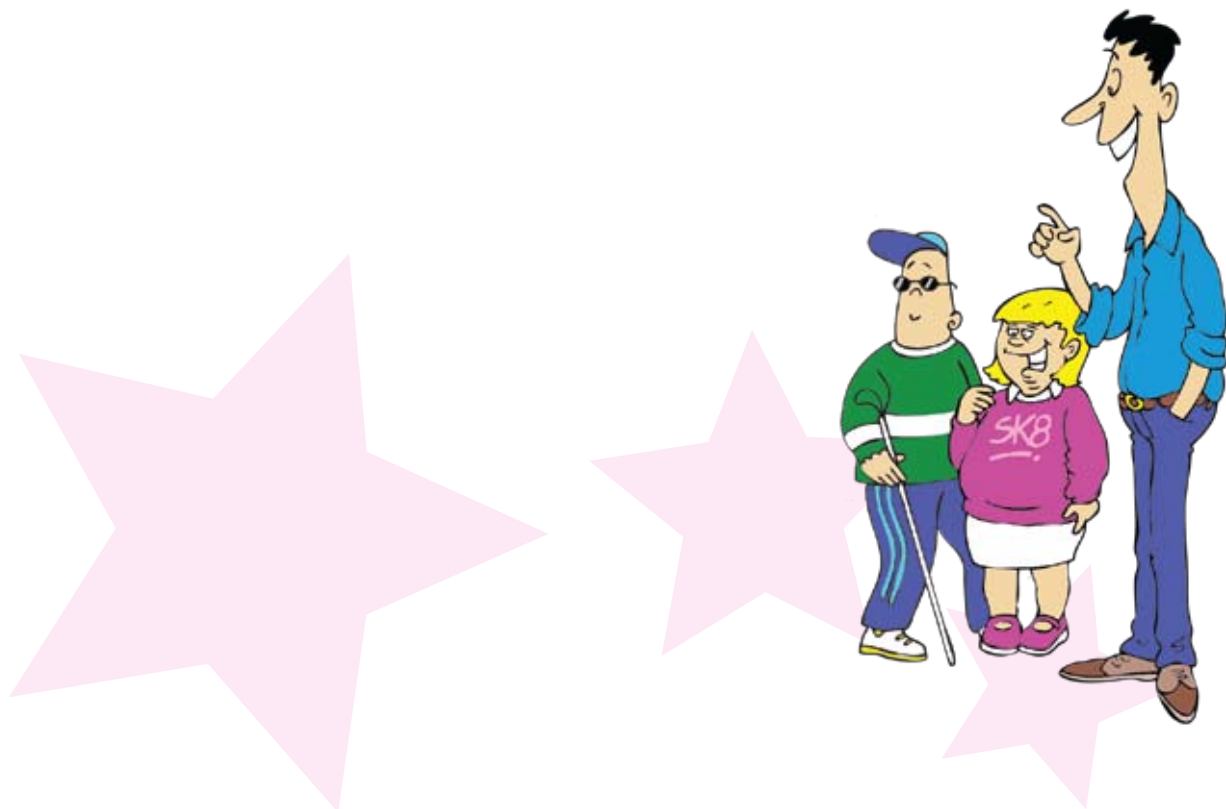
What are you doing to ensure families get the help they need before they reach crisis point?

Short breaks activities that are open to any family are intended to be preventative by giving parents and carers a break that enables them to continue in their caring role.

Next steps:

Prevention and helping families earlier

Some families have told us that they would like Children's Services to do more to work in a preventative way. Our resources and staffing are set and we do not expect to be allocated more money for new teams, but we may be able to change the way we currently do things. We would welcome your comments about this.



Other useful information

For children under five years old

What if my child is not yet at school?

Short breaks activities are sometimes held just for this age group, these might be occasional activity days or a more regular provision. Short breaks activity providers and support groups may also offer activities for this age group. We recommend that you contact your Parent Voice bridging worker (see page 10) to find out about activities and services for under five's in your local area. Many parents of younger children use our Support for Individuals grants to help them join in a local mainstream activity (see page 9).

Children's centres

Children's centres aim to give every child the best possible start in life. They are places where all families with children under the age of five can easily access a range of different services to support them, including information and advice, drop-in sessions, access to early education and childcare services and more. Children's centres also offer services specifically suited to children with disabilities and additional needs. These services vary by area, so please contact your local centre to see what would be available to you.



To find out more about children's centres, visit:
www.hants.gov.uk/familypages

Childcare

Where can I find out about suitable childcare?

The short breaks programme is not designed to provide all the childcare working parents might need, as it is designed to give parents and carers a short break rather than childcare. However, we appreciate that finding suitable childcare is important to working parents, so you may find the below information useful.

Hampshire Childcare and Family Information Team (Cfit)

Hampshire Cfit is a free, confidential and impartial service for parents and carers, and provides information and guidance on childcare, early years education and related services in Hampshire for children and young people aged 0 -19. Cfit offers a childcare brokerage service to parents and carers who have been unsuccessful in securing childcare or early education services, or need help taking the first steps. Our outreach workers offer one-to-one support and guidance.



To find out more information, visit:
www.hants.gov.uk/cis call **0845 603 5620**
or email childrens.services@hants.gov.uk


Transition (moving from Children's to Adult Services)


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 transition from Children's to Adult Services should be a positive experience and a time of opportunity for young people, and we want to support them as they become young adults.

We aim to provide a range of age appropriate short break activities for teenagers, and are continually working with activity providers to develop new and exciting initiatives for this age group. Information about these activities can be found in the Hampshire Gateway publication or visit www.hampshiregateway.info

 For further information on support during transition, and the transition process, visit: www.hants.gov.uk/transition

 To contact Adult Services, please call on **0845 603 5630** or email adult.services@hants.gov.uk

Transport

Do you provide transport for short breaks?


Parents and carers are encouraged and expected to transport their children to and from short breaks activities. We do understand, however, that transport can be a real difficulty in a large county like Hampshire. We have worked with some short breaks activity providers so that they can sometimes offer transport as part of the activity, but this is the exception. Unfortunately we had to make the decision that generally we cannot fund transport for short breaks activities, as otherwise the funding for the activities would be very quickly used up by a very small number of children and young people, and we would have far fewer activities available.

To try to minimise transport issues, during the coming year we will be working with local providers to encourage more local activities in all areas across Hampshire to reduce the need for transport as much as possible. We do have to consider transport and ensure it is not a barrier to short breaks as far as is possible.

Next steps:

Ongoing review

We work hard to create a balance between the activities offered and ensuring that as many families as possible can access these. If you are having significant issues with

 transport to access short breaks, please contact Parent Voice, who will continue to gather information about this issue across Hampshire.

Email parentvoice@roseroad.org.uk or call **023 8072 1206**

Where can I find out more about what other support is available for my family?

Parent Voice provides a single point of contact for information and advice to parents and carers of children and young people with disabilities and additional needs aged between 0 to 19 years in Hampshire.

Parent Voice sends a weekly update to its members detailing news, research updates, parental surveys, participation opportunities and training courses. This is supported by a website which provides signposts to useful organisations, factsheets and news articles www.parentvoice.info In every district in Hampshire, Parent Voice also has a dedicated:

- bridging worker who will work with local activity providers, parents and disabled young people to support and promote recreation and leisure opportunities, by building relationships, breaking down barriers and developing positive solutions.
- parent participation worker who provides local information and advice tailored to your individual needs.

Parent Voice is working together with the Hampshire Parent/Carer Network to give you a real opportunity to develop and shape services in Hampshire.

You can become a member of Parent Voice if you are the parent or carer of a child or young person with disabilities and additional needs living in Hampshire.

i If you would like to become a member of Parent Voice, you can register online at www.parentvoice.info email parentvoice@roseroad.org.uk or call **02380 721206**.

DID YOU KNOW...

The Parent Voice weekly newsletter gets sent out to 2,600 people each week.



How can I get involved in influencing services?

The Hampshire Parent/Carer Network (HPCN) www.hpcn.org.uk is a 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. HPCN would like to invite all parents and carers of children and young people with disabilities and additional needs to get involved with the Network, to ensure that they are able to represent a wide range of families from across the region when working together with decision makers. 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.

The Network aims to have two representatives from each of the district council areas in Hampshire. In addition to this they aim to represent the full range of disabilities, including learning disability, physical disability and complex needs, across all ability ranges from high functioning to profound, with representation of families with children attending special schools, mainstream schools and those in mixed placements.

i If you would like to be involved with the Network, or simply to be consulted on and provide feedback on key issues within Hampshire please email: info@hpcn.org.uk or call **023 8072 1206**.



How has Hampshire's current short breaks programme been developed

The national story so far...

1989

The Children Act 1989 provides a clear definition of a disabled child and the roles of their parents and carers. It also recognises the pressures placed upon carers and the need for regular breaks to enable them to continue caring.

2006

Parents inform Parliamentary hearings that the biggest cause of unhappiness is the lack of short break provision.

2008

Consultations with parents and carers reveal that children and young people with disabilities and additional needs want greater choice in their short breaks and to be able to access local leisure facilities. Parents and carers just want a break from caring and to feel confident that services are meeting their family's needs.

Section 25 of the Children and Young Persons Act requires local authorities to offer short breaks provision – giving guidance on the type of services that should be offered. The 'Aiming High for Disabled Children' is launched, focusing upon increasing and improving short breaks provision.

2011

Aiming High Programme ends (March) and The Breaks for Carers of Disabled Children Regulations come in to effect, making it a legal duty for local authorities to provide short breaks (April). On 1 October 2011 a short breaks service statement must be published which includes the range of services available, any eligibility criteria and how these services have been developed to meet the needs of parents and carers. It is recognised that these statements will need to be reviewed regularly in order to ensure that services are meeting the needs of the people these are being provided to and for. This should be done through consultation and collaboration with local parents.

We are committed to equality of opportunity, and therefore we will treat everyone with respect, regardless of race, disability, gender, age, religion or sexual orientation.



As part of this commitment we signed the 'Every Disabled Child Matters' Charter in December 2011: www.edcm.org.uk/media/8152/lacharter2011.pdf.

The local story so far...

2007

December 2007 the short breaks provision in Hampshire was audited.

“Going for respite allows our daughter to have a life away from home which is important for her social development. It provides a light at the end of the tunnel when it all seems too much to cope with”

This view was shared by many parents and carers in Hampshire. However these audits also revealed:

- wide variations in days allocated to children with the same disability
- parents didn't feel in control of designing packages
- access to universal services was poorly developed and access to play schemes and childcare arrangements was variable
- mainstream/leisure activities staff knowledge on disability issues needed improvement
- transport was a major issue.

2008

A series of parent consultation events are held across Hampshire, highlighting the need for a better information service and for more support.

“Even when we become eligible for a service, there were not enough carers around who could work with children with challenging behaviours.”

“Direct access to things, like childminding, rather than having to go through social services just to get the same service that every other parent can arrange themselves”

“Youth clubs, leisure centres, swing parks; none of these places can really say they include disabled children.”

“The (eligibility) criteria should be simple and understandable – not mumbo jumbo.”

2009

Parent Voice is created to provide better information and to help parents to participate in services.

2010

A county-wide directory of short breaks providers is launched (replacing a number of smaller directories)

Parent Voice forum was set up (now know as Hampshire Parent/Carer Network (HPCN))

2011

After discussion with parents and working closely with Parent Voice the eligibility criteria for the majority of short breaks were removed and the Gateway Card was introduced.

2012

Bridging workers service was set up to support families and providers to support and promote inclusion for children and young people in leisure activities.

“ A few years ago the only activity my son could access was one to one private swimming lessons which cost a fortune. Now after a course of supported swimming lessons he is able to attend any session he chooses as he is such a confident swimmer. We had to travel outside of our area to access trampolining, but now we have a choice of local activities – just like non-disabled children, which is fab! ”

“ A few years ago my son was restricted to only attending holiday schemes run through the special school. Thanks to short breaks he now has a much wider range of things to do and has regularly attended swimming lessons and trampolining which he has really enjoyed. The support we have received through short breaks that has enabled him to do the things he loves has been invaluable. ”

DID YOU KNOW...

Since Hampshire's short breaks programme began in April 2011, we have awarded over 600 grants to organisations providing a short break for children and young people with disabilities

Next steps:

The Special Educational Needs Green Paper and Pathfinder project

In 2011, the Department for Education issued a Green Paper for consultation about special educational needs (SEN) and disabilities.

The Department for Education invited local authorities to apply to be pathfinders for the Green Paper, which means that they would pilot or test some of the ideas within it. Hampshire was part of a successful joint application with other local authorities (known as the South East Seven/SE7) to be a pathfinder.

The main changes being piloted are a single education, health and care plan for children aged 0 – 25, the use of personal budgets, and a “local offer” which gives clear information on what is available from health, social care and education to support families with disabled children, including any eligibility criteria.

In May 2012, the Government issued a ‘Progress and Next Steps’ document which sets out the timescales for implementation of the ideas in the Green Paper. The draft provisions relating to SEN were published in September 2012 in ‘Draft legislation on reform of provision for children and young people with special educational needs’.



For further information visit: www.se7pathfinder.co.uk and www.sendpathfinder.co.uk



For more information on what's happening within Hampshire, visit www.hants.gov.uk/se7sendpathfinder

How has this short breaks service statement been prepared?

A task group was set up to review and rewrite the 2011 short breaks service statement. The task group was asked to prepare a new statement that parents could use to quickly and easily find out about the range of services that are available to meet their child's individual needs and how to access them. This group consisted of representatives from the County Council, as well as parent and carer representatives from Parent Voice and Hampshire Parent/Carer Network (HPCN).

The existing statement was evaluated and areas for improvement were identified. The task group also reviewed statements from other local authorities to see what parents liked and did not like, so that we could use the best ideas to help develop this new statement.

The task group worked collaboratively to write the new statement, with the majority of the text being written by parents and carers to ensure that it was written in a style and tone that other parents and carers could easily understand, and to ensure that it included all of the information that parents and carers would need to know.

The initial draft went to a wider group of staff and parent representatives, then it was available for public consultation on the County Council's website for 12 weeks until 28 September 2012. We also made the following groups aware of the consultation:

- parents and carers - via Hampshire Parent/Carer Network, Parent Voice members, and all known parent-led support groups
- children and young people
- providers of short breaks activities and other care support providers
- colleagues in health, education, and Children's Services

A colour paper copy was available to anyone who contacted the short breaks team to request this. The final version is also available as a colour paper copy.

The consultation responses were reviewed by the task group, and where possible incorporated into the final version published in December 2012. Thank you to everyone who responded. We hope that you like the work we have done, however we also know that there is always room for improvement.

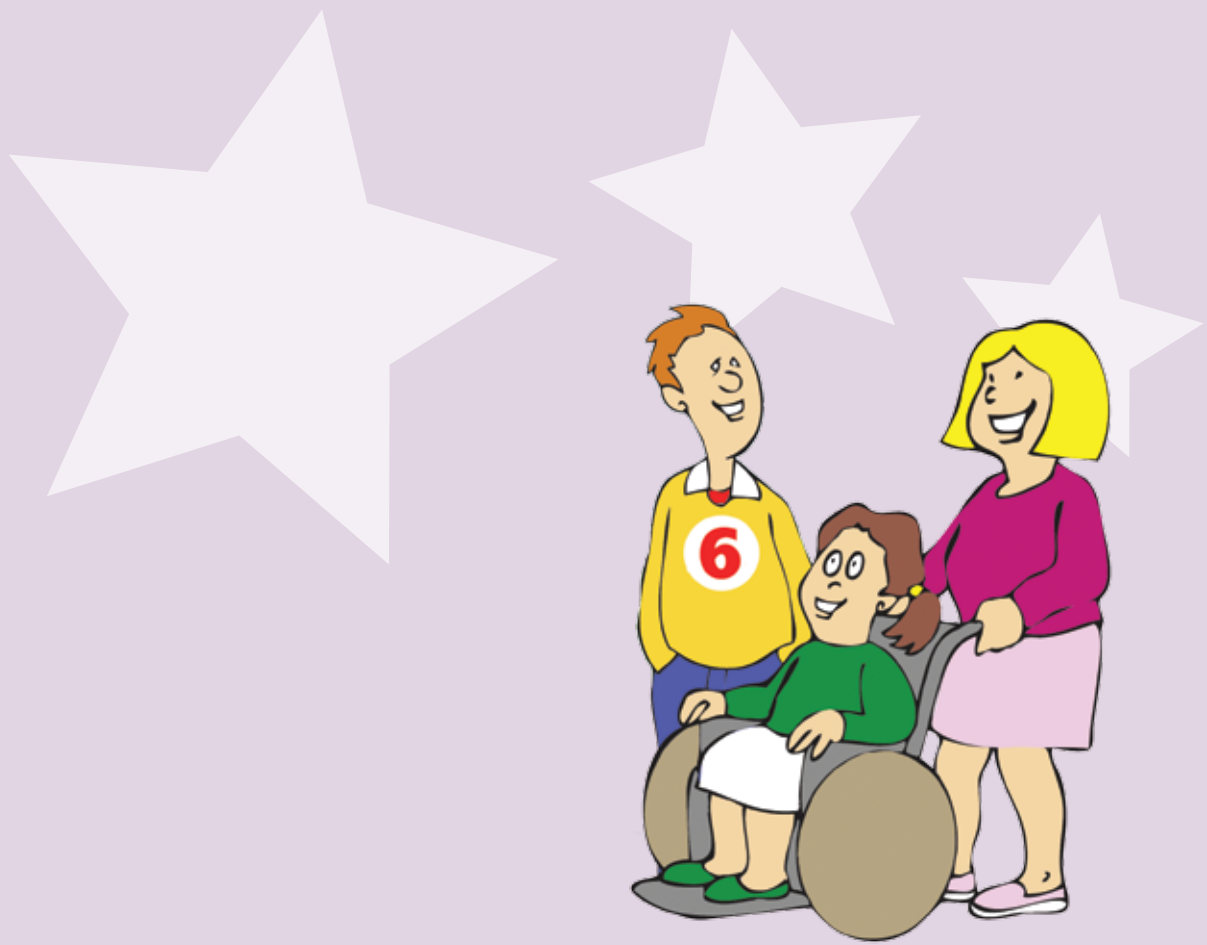
Next steps:

Participation in future reviews of this statement

This statement will be checked annually to ensure it remains a good reflection of current services. We are likely to make changes to the statement as our services develop, and will notify parents and carers of opportunities to get involved and timescales via Hampshire Parent/Carer Network and Parent Voice.

We will be reviewing how we involve children and young people and making a plan to improve on this. 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.

