

NORTH LINCOLNSHIRE COUNCIL

PEOPLE CABINET MEMBER

SHORT BREAKS FOR DISABLED CHILDREN INFORMATION STATEMENT 2013

1. OBJECT AND KEY POINTS IN THIS REPORT

- 1.1 This report seeks approval to publish an updated Short Breaks for Disabled Children Information Statement for January 2013 as required by regulation.
- 1.2 The proposed Short Breaks for Disabled Children Information Statement 2013 reaffirms the existing commitment that all children in North Lincolnshire with a disability have access to a Short Break. The revised statement takes account of the views of service users.

2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 2.1 North Lincolnshire Council's original Short Breaks' Statement was published in October 2011. This statement is now due a refresh in light of changes to legislation, lessons learned in providing Short Breaks and feedback from service users. As with the existing statement, the proposed Short Breaks for Disabled Children Information Statement 2013 ensures that all children in North Lincolnshire with a disability have access to a Short Break.
- 2.2 The 'Breaks for Carers of Disabled Children Regulations 2011' came into force on the 1st April 2012. These regulations placed new statutory duties upon all local authorities (LAs). These are:
 - 1) **Duty to make provision**, under which a local authority must:
 - a) have regard to the needs of those carers who would be unable to provide care unless breaks from caring were given to them
 - b) have regard to the needs of those carers who would be able to provide care for their disabled child more effectively if breaks were given to them to allow them to -
 - I. undertake education, training or any regular leisure activity,
 - II. meet the needs of other children in the family more effectively, or
 - III. carry out day- to-day tasks which they must perform in order to run their household.

In performing this duty the regulations specify, so far as is reasonably practicable, that a range of services be provided that is sufficient to assist carers to continue to provide care or, to do so more effectively, these include:

- a) day-time care in the homes of disabled children or elsewhere,
- b) overnight care in the homes of disabled children or elsewhere,
- c) education or leisure activities for disabled children outside their homes, and
- d) services that are available to assist carers in the evenings, at weekends and during school holidays.

2) **Duty to provide a Short Break Services' Statement**

This is a detailed 'statement' to inform carers in the area of the range of short break services available and outlines how these services can be accessed including how any eligibility for the services will be assessed. The statement must be prepared in consultation with local carers of disabled children, be kept under review and be revised, as appropriate, to maintain sufficiency.

2.3 Access and Eligibility

The North Lincolnshire Framework for Access and Eligibility ensures fair and equitable access to Short Breaks. The access framework was developed in consultation with the Parents' Involvement and Participation Group (PIP) and provides a tiered approach to assessment and allocation of provision. It is a four tier model that enables the use of specialist assessment resources to be utilised proportionately according to the complexity of need. It incorporates a local minimum allocation of short break hours without the need for assessment.

Eligibility requires that the child has a disability and is resident in North Lincolnshire. Parent / carers are asked to register their child for short breaks with the Short Breaks and Provisions Team as a first point of contact.

The needs of Children 0-5 pre statutory school age are embedded within Early Support and access and assessment are encompassed within individual children's Early Support Plans.

The access framework has been reviewed and amended to make clearer the Local Authority's duty to assess the needs of disabled children and their families.

2.4 North Lincolnshire Council has continued its commitment to services for disabled children. We have been able to meet our statutory duties in full and this investment has had a major impact upon outcomes for parents, children and young people. The overall number of children registered for short breaks at any one time remains approximately 400.

- 2.5 A steering group made up of parents / carers, PIP group representatives, providers and the short breaks team oversees the development of the locality-based short breaks. This has ensured that the voice of parents, children and young people continues to be heard.

The proposed Short Breaks for Disabled Children Information Statement takes account of this consultation, including:

- making available more provision for 5-8 year olds
- developing the youth hub for older young people
- developing access to 1:1 workers for children who struggle with set group activities or those with more profound disabilities, including access to universal activities such as the open access Positive Activities for Youth and Leisure Services.

The steering group also monitors the safety and effectiveness of the activities and has particularly focused upon take-up of the service and value for money.

3 OPTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

- 3.1 To publish the revised Short Break Services' Statement on the North Lincolnshire Council website in accordance with council publishing requirements.

4. ANALYSIS OF OPTIONS

- 4.1 The 'Breaks for Carers of Disabled Children Regulations' require the Local Authority to review and publish its Short Break Services' Statement annually. This would ensure the council's continued compliance with the statutory requirement of the 'Breaks for Carers of Disabled Children Regulations' and ensure information is available to parents / carers, short break providers and partner agencies.
- 4.2 Failing to review and publish a revised Short Break Services' Statement will contravene the requirements of the 'Breaks for Carers of Disabled Children Regulations'.

5. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (FINANCIAL, STAFFING, PROPERTY, IT)

- 5.1 Variations to the service specifications of commissioned short break services will be made to ensure value for money and to respond to the needs of service users.
- 5.2 The service will be provided for from the current budget and that identified for 2013/14.

6. **OTHER IMPLICATIONS (STATUTORY, ENVIRONMENTAL, DIVERSITY, SECTION 17 - CRIME AND DISORDER, RISK AND OTHER)**

6.1 North Lincolnshire's statutory duties are met and parents / carers, short break providers can readily access the statement.

7. **OUTCOMES OF CONSULTATION**

7.1 There is ongoing consultation with all key stakeholders (including parents, carers, disabled children and young people) the outcomes of which are incorporated into the revised statement.

8. **RECOMMENDATIONS**

8.1 To publish the refreshed Short Breaks for Disabled Children Information Statement 2013 in line with regulations.

DIRECTOR OF PEOPLE

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Background Papers used in the preparation of this report: Regulations (as outlined), Access and Eligibility Framework.

North Lincolnshire Council Short Breaks for Disabled Children

Information Statement 2013-2014

Safe, Supported, Transformed

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1. Introduction and background

This statement is for families living in the North Lincolnshire area who have a disabled child aged 0 to 18 years. 'The Breaks for Carers of Disabled Children Regulations 2011' placed a statutory duty on councils to prepare and publish a 'statement' to inform parents / carers of the range of short break services available. It has to include how eligibility for these services will be assessed and how they can be accessed. The original statement was published in October 2011. The statement has been reviewed in consultation with local parents / carers of disabled children and other partners. It has been updated taking into account their views and will continue to be reviewed and revised on an annual basis.

The North Lincolnshire Parents' Involvement and Participation Group (PIP) has worked very closely with North Lincolnshire Council in the development of short break provision and their continued input has informed this statement.

2. What are short breaks?

A 'short break' is a valuable break from caring for a parent / carer of a disabled child or young person. It is also an opportunity for a disabled child or young person to take part in fun activities. Short breaks can take a variety of forms, including the provision of day, evening, overnight and weekend activities. Short breaks can take place in the child's own home, in a community setting, the home of an approved carer, or in a residential setting. Short breaks can help contribute to the child and young person's social inclusion and personal development.

3. Our vision

North Lincolnshire Council has four strategic priorities:

- delivering excellence in customer service
- making our communities safe and stronger
- regenerating our area and increasing prosperity
- providing value for tax payers' money

Within the People Directorate this means:

- working to safeguard children and vulnerable adults
- promoting the raising of educational achievement, standards of care and quality of provision
- promoting health and wellbeing, improving life chances for individuals, families and carers

Short break provision in North Lincolnshire supports these strategic priorities by ensuring that:

- **disabled children have the same opportunities to develop and fulfill their potential as all other children;**
- **disabled children have the same opportunity to enjoy fun, meaningful**

experiences independently of their primary carers, thereby contributing to their social development and social inclusion

- **families with disabled children will get the support they need, when they need it;**

- **universal children's services will be more genuinely inclusive of disabled children including those with complex needs**

- **parents / carers and families will have a valuable break from their caring responsibilities**

4. Who is responsible for this statement?

North Lincolnshire Council.

5. How will the short breaks statement be published?

North Lincolnshire Council's short break statement will be published on:

- North Lincolnshire Council Website - www.northlincs.gov.uk
- North Lincolnshire PIP Forum website - www.northlincspipforum.co.uk
- Family Information Service - the statement will be available in hard copy format where required.

6. Breaks for carers of disabled children regulations (summary)

A copy of the *Breaks for Carers of Disabled Children Regulations 2011* is available for detailed reference via the following link:

www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2011/707/made

In order to meet the requirements of the Regulations, councils must have regard to the needs of carers in respect of their capacity to care for, or continue to care for, their disabled child and must provide a range of services designed to meet this need.

A Short Break Services Statement must be prepared and published annually, outlining how this is to be achieved. The Statement must be kept under review and revised, as appropriate (Section 5 of the Regulations).

Duty to make a provision (section 3)

Councils must take into account the needs of carers who would:

- Be unable to continue caring for their disabled child unless breaks from caring were given;

Or

- Be able to give more effective care, if breaks were given to allow them to, for example, attend educational classes or training, or regular leisure activities or meet the needs of other children in the family, or carry out necessary day-to-day tasks in the household.

Types of services that must be provided (section 4)

Councils must, so far as is reasonably practicable, provide a range of services sufficient to meet the needs of carers to care or to care more effectively, including:

- Day-time care in the child's own home and elsewhere;
- Overnight care in the child's own home and elsewhere;
- Educational or leisure activities for disabled children outside of their own homes;
- Services in the evenings, at the weekends and during school holidays.

7. Short breaks in North Lincolnshire

The consultation and participation of parents / carers through the PIP Group and the ongoing feedback of disabled children and young people has continued to strengthen the development of our Short Break Services. We have also taken note of key messages in national research reports about 'what works' in short breaks. The overall number of children registered for short breaks remains approximately 400.

7.1 Progress on Actions 2012-13: You Said, We Did!

We have continued to work closely with parents, children and young people in the design and shape of services.

What parents / carers said -

- Activities being available during the day and evenings during holidays;
- Activities for disabled children as close to home as possible;
- Support with transport for those who need it;
- Venues that are safe with clearly identifiable staff and outside space for children;
- Individual 1:1 support to enable children to access universal / community activities, or to have a short break at home;
- Activities for the children with more severe and challenging disabilities;
- Additional 'Playscheme' opportunity, for disabled children with complex needs.
- Activities specifically for young people 15yrs-18yrs.

What disabled children and young people said -

Disabled children and young people have continued to express that they would like to do activities on an individual basis and in groups to include:

- Music, singing, drama, dance and circus skills;
- Trampoline and bowling;
- Cycling;
- Fishing;
- Horse riding;
- More sporting activity;
- Swimming.

What we did:

Locality based short breaks.

We re-commissioned a range of short breaks to meet the diverse range of needs and ages of disabled children and young people. This included short break activities across North Lincolnshire so that children and young people can take part in an activity as close to home as possible. We extended the times that short breaks are available to offer improved flexibility and choice.

We put into place a steering group made up of PIP Group representatives, providers and the short breaks team to oversee the development of the locality based short breaks - ensuring that the voice of parents children and young people is heard. There has been a particular focus upon encouraging 5-8 year olds and young people 15 years upwards to take part in short break activities. Foresight, our commissioned provider, has been active in developing a youth hub for this older group of young people. The steering group also monitors the safety and effectiveness of the activities particularly focusing upon take-up of the service and its value for money.

Some of the activities include:

- Bowling;
- Wii;
- Music and drama;
- Reading together and craft activities;
- Adapted cycle hire;
- Indoor adventure / play (slides, soft areas, balls etc).

Through our Sport, Leisure and Culture Services, the following activities have been developed:

- Special Needs Playmates' Swimming Session (SNAPS);
- Children at Play CAP Club;
- Multi Sports Club for young people aged 16+;
- Fishing Club;
- Sporting Activities - football, golf, trampolining and wheelchair basketball.

Individualised short breaks.

This has been an area of significant growth and we have continued to work with a range of providers to expand the availability of 1:1 workers for individualised short breaks. This service tends to encompass those children who struggle with set group

activities or those with more profound disabilities who need additional care and attention.

Listening to what parents told us we have redesigned the service from Penderel's Trust. This is an agency that provides support to parents who choose to use a 'Direct Payment' to purchase short breaks.

'Butterflies' fostering provision.

We have continued to build capacity in the 'Butterflies' fostering short breaks scheme. Drawing on the expertise of the fostering service and that of other local authorities we have been exploring the best way to develop a scheme for those with learning disabilities and challenging behaviours.

Play-Scheme for Children with Complex Needs.

This year, at parents' request, what had been the summer play-scheme for children with complex needs was rolled out over the two main school holidays Easter and summer. Our local primary special school provided the setting on both occasions enabling continuity for the children. Health care training and daily oversight of the children's health care needs was provided through the Community Paediatric Nursing Team. The summer play-scheme had an Olympic theme and the enthusiasm of the children and young people at the closing ceremony was an excellent indicator of its success.

Small grant projects.

We have supported, through small grants, a number of specific projects to which disabled children and young people have direct access. These have included: swimming water confidence sessions, a youth club for young people with autism and football for disabled children and young people including football for the deaf.

7.2 Feedback from Parents / Carers and Young People

Feedback from parents / carers and young people is routinely collected in respect of the activities that they attend. Additionally, families and young people are asked for feedback as they move on into adult life. Some of the comments received include:

The best thing about short breaks is:

- "Increasing confidence and self-esteem. My son is now more active and responds very well in college, attendance is high and he has settled in well with new friends."
- "She is safe and well looked after, we get a welcome break."

The biggest difference it's made to us is:

- "Gives me chance to spend time with sibling who sometimes misses out as family are always trying to meet my disabled daughter's needs."
- "My son has high functioning autism and due to previous planned disastrous activities, I was very nervous about sending him to these activities. After the first session, my son was totally at ease, the worker had good skills and had an obvious ability to bring the best out in children."

- “Using Direct Payments to employ a carer has allowed our daughter to become more independent and meant we could leave her safe and secure with somebody who has now become a friend, rather than a worker.”

What would have happened without short breaks?

- “I wouldn’t have had quality time with sibling therefore family life would be more stressed.”

- “Our son would not have made the new friends.”

Short breaks would be even better if:

- “Session times could be more flexible.”
- “Siblings being able to attend.”
- “Travel could be provided.”

7.3 Range of short break services available in North Lincolnshire

The short break services available in North Lincolnshire meet the requirements of the the ‘Breaks for Carers of Disabled Children Regulations 2011’. These are:

1) Day-time care in the homes of disabled children or elsewhere (S.4 (2) a):

- **Day care** is care that takes place on any day of the week and can include evenings but not overnight stays. Care is provided in the **carer’s home** and may include activities outside the home. Carers are either approved as foster carers or, for children under eight, are registered child-minders.

- **Sitting** is care that takes place in the **child’s own home** on any day of the week. The sitter would be employed by a registered agency or by the parent(s) through Direct Payments. Alternatively, for children under the age of eight, the sitter may be a registered child-minder. The main focus of care is within the child’s own home but the sitter may also support the child in community-based activities.

2) Overnight care in the homes of disabled children or elsewhere (S.4 (2) b):

- **Overnight sitting** is the same thing as sitting (defined above) **but** includes overnight care. Parents may or may not be present.

- **The Cygnets** short breaks home provides overnight short breaks to children with a learning difficulty and complex needs aged five to eighteen years.

- **The ‘Butterflies’ short break foster scheme** provides overnight short breaks to disabled children, whose needs can be best met from more individual care within a family based setting aged 0 to 18 years.

3) Educational or leisure activities for disabled children outside their homes (S.4 (2) c):

- **Social befriending** is a one to one relationship that specifically enables a child or young person's access to community or leisure activities.
- **Community-based short breaks** - Each locality area in North Lincolnshire has a range of group-based activities and opportunities for disabled children and young people e.g. out of school clubs, sport and leisure services and youth clubs. Disabled children and young people can attend these with or without support along with non-disabled children for a short break.
- **Locality-based specialist short breaks** - Foresight offer group-based activities for children across North Lincolnshire, specifically for disabled children.
- **Play-scheme for disabled children** - This is a holiday play-scheme during the Easter and summer holiday period . It is for disabled children with complex needs aged five to eighteen years and who are unable to make use of group based activities even with the use of additional support.

4) Services available to assist carers in the evenings, at weekends and during the school holidays (S.4 (2) d):

The schedule of short breaks includes activities across a range of times, including in the evenings, at weekends and during the school holidays.

8. How do I get a short break?

To be eligible for short break services the child or young person must have a disability (as defined by the Children Act 1989) and live in North Lincolnshire.

Additional specific criteria applies for the following:

Specialist overnight short breaks - to meet the criteria for overnight short breaks disabled children and young people are assessed as having additional needs which impact on the family causing sleep deprivation for family members and / or high levels of family stress.

Play-Scheme for Children with Complex Needs – to meet the criteria for the play scheme children and young people must:

- Be age 5-18 years.
- Be attending a school / facility for children with special educational needs.
- Be unable to benefit from short break activities in the community without additional support.

Access to 'short breaks' is via the short breaks and external provisions' team (section 10, p.11 for contact details). Parent / carers are asked to register their child for short breaks with this team as a first point of contact.

A member of the short breaks team will then contact you to discuss your needs and to make sure you have information about the short break services available to you.

In order to be consistent in how we make the services available to you we have developed a 'North Lincolnshire Short Breaks Framework.' This enables us to take a tiered approach to assessment for and allocation of short break services.

At the first level we have introduced a 'local minimum offer'. This is an allocation of short break hours without the need for any assessment.

If a parent / carer considers that they need a higher level of service an assessment of the child and families' needs will be undertaken. An assessment at this level would be through an identified professional involved as a result of the child's disability. We call this a 'common assessment'. The Team Leader from the short breaks team will make sure you are kept involved in what is happening and that you are allocated an appropriate level of short breaks following the assessment.

Disabled children and young people with more complex needs, or those children living in more complex situations, may require a higher level of short breaks and more specialist support to meet their needs. This will be achieved through an assessment by a children's specialist disability Social Worker.

Children's individual allocation of short breaks will be reviewed at regular intervals and parents can request that their needs are reassessed at any time.

The framework for short breaks takes account of the following key principles:

- That universal and mainstream provision (services we all use) are accessible to all disabled children and their families whilst acknowledging that some children will always need specialist support / services.
- That need arises from a combination of barriers to accessing universal and mainstream provision and family and environmental factors.
- That levels of need can change and that children, young people and their families can move up and down through the levels of support.
- That for some families a short break will be part of a package of services that enables their needs to be met.
- That there is full acknowledgement of the child / young person's and family's views / preferences in assessing and designing their individual package of short break care and support.

9. Actions for 2013-2014

The regular oversight of the steering group for locality short breaks and the input of the PIP group enable us to have a focus on what works well and areas for development.

The following have been identified as areas for development during the coming year:

- Meeting the needs of disabled children with complex health needs in each area of short breaks - including access to training and equipment.
- Progressing development of the Cygnets short break home to deliver overnight short breaks for children with more complex health needs.
- Establishing short break fostering for those children with learning disabilities and complex behaviours.
- Continuing review of the current short break arrangements to maximize take-up and ensure all services are value for money.
- Implementing the short break 'offer' in the context of the special educational needs and disability (SEND) national proposals contained in the Children and Families' Bill, including: 1) Single Assessment, 2) Single Education, Health and Care Plans, 3) Local 'Offer' development and publication and 4) Personal Budgets.

10. Key contacts

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