

Short Breaks Statement 2015/16

Our Vision for Children with Disabilities

In Devon we will all work together to design and offer services and support that enable young people to:

- Be independent: not because they can do everything for themselves, but to have control over their lives and how they live them
- Live where they choose and with people they choose (or no one!)
- Have meaningful and worthwhile 'work' - be it paid employment, their own business or any activity that supports them to
- Contribute to their community life**and**....
-have leisure interests, hobbies and things to do that will enhance their life skills, their creativity and be fun ...and for my leisure interests to be in ordinary places in and with their community
- Have the opportunity to learn, and to keep learning
- Have the information and support they need to make positive informed choice and decisions about their lives
- Be and feel safe - at home and in their community
- Have a network of meaningful friendships and relationships
- Be truly seen as individuals and respected and celebrated for who they are
- Be and stay healthy

andfor us as their families to be supported to be stable and resilient – and spend good quality family time together, as well as feeling confident about their support in the future.

To achieve this will require both communities and a more targeted workforce that have the values, attitudes and skills to offer great support.

Purpose of the Statement

This Statement will form the basis of our plans for short break services for the year 2015/16 and beyond.

The way in which health and social care services are delivered to children with disabilities and their families has recently undergone significant change both at national and local levels. Since 2011 a number of legislative and policy changes along side the outcome of external inspections have driven the need for re-designing services and reviewing practice and procedures.

These changes have also come at a time where increasing demographics, both in numbers and complexity of need, is placing significant demands on health and social care services for children with disabilities.

In particular there is specific focus on families taking greater choice and control over the design and in many instances direct purchasing of services and support. This requires a different conversation with families, putting their child at the heart of planning; identifying strengths and interests and looking at their existing support networks, local community services and different approaches to ensuring children and young people can achieve greater inclusion in community life. Local Authorities should therefore only provide the more targeted and specialised services, whilst supporting access to the things that allow children to have great lives alongside their peers, which will ultimately achieve the best possible outcomes.

Publishing and reviewing the Statement

Devon County Council will consult on the draft of the Short Breaks Statement with as many parents and carers as possible, via the various forums, including Devon Parent Carer Voice. Once it has been consulted upon and any amendments made we will publish this Statement on:

- Devon County Council website Local Offer pages
- Devon Parent Carers Voice website
- The Children's Alliance website

We will also send a copy to all of Devon's special schools and to Special Educational Needs Co-ordinators (SENCOs) in all of our mainstream schools.

We will ensure that this statement is reviewed on an annual basis in partnership with our parent carer forums and through the wider 'conversation events'.

We will use this ongoing consultation to make changes and improvements to ensure that short breaks continue to reflect the needs of all the different families living in Devon who have a child with an additional need.

What is a Short Breaks Statement?

Paragraph 6 of Schedule 2 in *The Children Act 1989* requires local authorities to provide a short breaks service designed to assist individuals who provide care for disabled children. This duty and *The Breaks for Carers of Disabled Children Regulations 2011* came into force on 1 April 2011. The regulations require each local authority to produce a short breaks services statement so that families know;

- The eligibility criteria for accessing short breaks
- What services are available,
- How the range of short breaks is designed to meet the local needs of families with disabled children.

Short breaks should provide a positive activity for disabled children and young people while giving their parents the benefit of a 'break' from their caring responsibilities. Short breaks can be for an hour or two, a whole day or sometimes a longer period, either in the community or by using overnight provision.

Families in Devon recognise that sometimes short breaks allow them to do something positive with their child in an environment where they are well supported, so don't always have to be provided as something separate from each other.

Families involvement in planning short breaks, with greater choice and control is what works best for families and we hope our approach to short breaks for families reflects this. It is our vision that families of disabled children are supported to live ordinary lives with access to universal services and the same rights as other families.

However, in order to manage the increasing demographics and respond effectively to the national and local drivers for change, Devon needs to think radically about how to manage demand and commission services differently. A 2 year transformation programme is currently underway to look at how services will need to be prioritised, commissioned, designed and delivered in an integrated way to support children with disabilities and their families in accessing short breaks that truly meet their needs and achieves the best possible outcomes. The overarching objectives of this are;

Objectives:

- To support families to take greater choice and control over the planning of short breaks by firstly looking at the child's interests and in turn what could be provided for within existing networks or local services
- To fully understand the current needs and demand for services provided to children with disabilities.
- Commission good quality, fun and stimulating activities that allow disabled children to enjoy their break, increase families well-being and allow them to lead great lives.
- Reduce the reliance on overnight residential short breaks and increase the availability and options available to disabled children, young people and their families including family based care and community based services.
- Ensure that universal, targeted and specialist services are appropriately targeted at those that need them most.

Accessing Short Breaks

Our aim is to work with each family to:

- recognise their individual strengths and support needs
- identify the level of support they require for short breaks
- identify the services and support that best meet their needs.

We recognise that some families may need a higher level of support due to the complexity of their needs and the impact of caring. Some families will need to have services above the eligible level of short breaks – this could include shared care arrangements which support the maximum inclusion for a child within their own family environment, with the level of support required to maintain this. This may be for a limited period of time to overcome a short term difficulty or for a longer period depending on the individual circumstances. These services are provided under Part III of *The Children Act 1989*.

We will work with Devon Integrated Children's Services Teams, specialist child assessment centres, mainstream schools, special schools and Devon's specialist information services to ensure that the support offered to families is where they need it, when they need it.

We are committed to:

- continuing to listen to disabled children and their families and act on their views about services they use by providing them with choices which suit their individual needs
- ensuring all disabled children and their families are supported to take part in, and enjoy, local community life wherever possible so that they feel part of their communities using local services such as local childcare, leisure centres and other community services open to all
- continuing to work in partnership with parents and carers, including them in aspects of our work including decision making. We will work together to ensure that all improvements in service delivery make a real difference to children and young peoples lives.

Devon is currently reviewing its eligibility criteria for Short Breaks.

However, currently in order to receive a service from the Children with Disabilities team and be eligible for a *specialist* short breaks assessment, your child must:

- be under 18 years of age and live within the Devon boundary
and
- be assessed as having 2 or more functional needs qualifying at a difficulty level of moderate or above under the DSCB Threshold tool
and
- a diagnosis evidenced by a relevant registered medical officer
and

If your child is eligible then you will be considered for an integrated assessment of need, including an assessment for short breaks.

To see if you are entitled to short breaks funding contact the Devon SPA (Single Point of Access)

Email: vcl.devonspa@nhs.net

Tel: 0330 0245 321 (8am to 5pm)

Web: devon.integratedchildrensservices.co.uk

Allocations and support above short breaks funding

We know that there will always be some families who require a higher level of support due to their child's needs or their own family circumstances. For these families we will still offer Short Breaks assessments, but may allocate additional resources which will be determined on an individual basis. We will always work with families to identify the level of support.

When we undertake assessment of need we will discuss:

- the severity of the child's disability and how it impacts on their life and the family
- the number of other children or caring responsibilities there may be
- if any other member of the family has a disability
- the amount of support available within the social and family network
- if the child is in Devon County Council care or is adopted
- whether there are concerns about a child or young person's safety.

Travel

Devon is a large county and transport is an issue for many families regardless of having a disabled child. However we know that for some families transport is a barrier to accessing short breaks. We also know that transport is expensive to pay for and can be very time-consuming to use. We will work with our parent forums to make sure that any support for transport given to families is fair and is arranged in a way that minimises the cost. Transport cost will be considered as part of the short breaks funding and in discussion with managers some families may use part of their funding to pay for proportionate transport cost

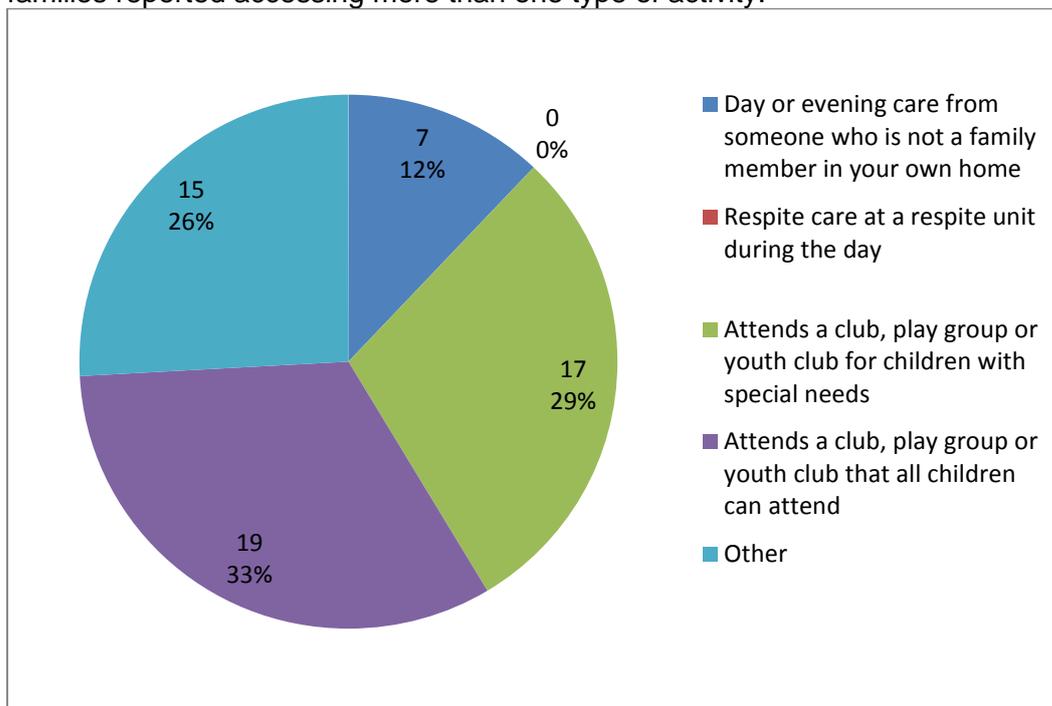
What Families Have Told us?

Through Devon Parent Carer Voice we hold regular conversation and consultation events to gain feedback and views on the things that need to change for families with children with disabilities. In February 2015 we held 3 events across the county where short breaks were specifically consulted on; a snap shot of what families told us is below:

Firstly families told us that the single most important thing to them was:

- Love and support from family members
- Breaks - help! Relaxing very difficult.
- Access to advice and support
- Access to specialist services
- Short breaks, better info on 'baby sitting' in own home without having to self employ as a parent (i.e. to use direct payments on ASC aware providers/workers).
- Appropriate education. Inclusion and acceptance within society. More childcare options for children with special needs.
- For son to have "normal" social relationships, be able to communicate needs, and feel he fits in, can contribute and reach potential.
- Events the whole family can access together
- Socialising and support with other deaf families
- Would like short break but expensive in term time.
- Time with other siblings to do things "name" can't cope with. Support networks to have respite care/money to choose how to provide childcare for our family.
- Helping daughter with social interactions and coping with her behavioural issues.
- Groups where parents can stay but child is looked after

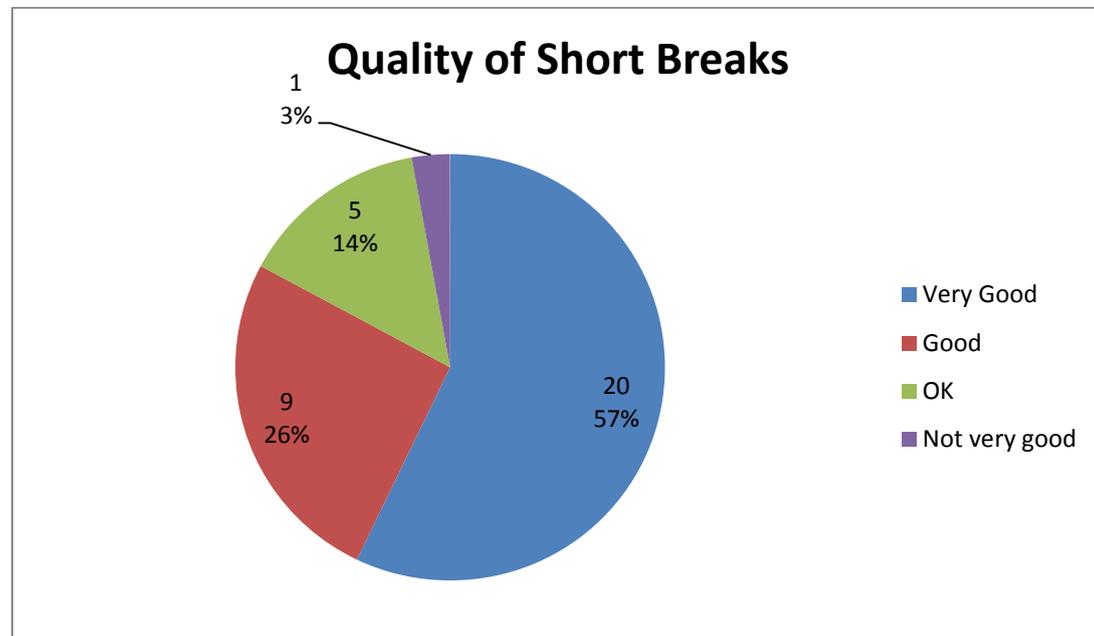
Families were asked what short break activities their child/children with additional needs currently accesses, 42 families reported accessing short break activities, some families reported accessing more than one type of activity.



Families who reported using “other” short breaks provided the following feedback

- Respite at someone else’s home using direct payments.
- N.D forum social events WITH US.
- Starts from home- walking, cycling or music.
- After school club, swimming lessons for neurotypicals, dodgeball.
- Days out with NDFA and ADHD
- Respite overnight
- Dog training with mum watching twice a week.
- Equine therapy group
- Respite care in carers home
- Diabetes UK Care event
- Enabling service
- Enablers who take him swimming and for travel training
- Asperations Occasional Respite
- Every other Saturday Orchard Club

35 families provided feedback regarding the quality of the short breaks they accessed.



Families were asked if there were any activities or groups in their local community that their child would like to use, but was unable to

24 families reported there were activities or groups in their local community that their child would like to use, but was unable to. The following reasons were recorded.

- We live too far from Barnstaple and Exeter where most groups are - there is nothing for additional needs near us.
- Difficulties with concentration and being in a larger group.
- Need someone to go with him so I can have a break.
- Football, because of his CP
- Tarka Tennis Special Needs Club needs more support. More sports clubs with trained special needs coaches needed.
- Needs 1-1 which is too expensive
- Poor inclusivity. Children asked to leave/not return after session
- Difficulty with commitments due to younger siblings.
- Lack of clubs suitable in the Ivybridge area.
- Would need enabler
- Unsure what activities/groups local area has to offer
- We have no respite and really suffer. Tried to get direct payments, got a verbal "no" but nothing in writing and no help.
- Cycling club - he had to be able to self-propel
- Swimming lessons - not able to accommodate his needs.
- Because parent would have to attend too.
- Transport - no car.
- Been on waiting lists for months
- Waiting for the health and Ed plan and D. Payments
- Funding for 1-1 support withdrawn from Torbay Council - can't attend without it.
- Behaviour
- Swimming, because of distance and time.

Recorded information for post code, age range, primary need, payment method and type of Overnight Short Break are listed below;

Support for families

Services available to families

In Devon there is a significant amount of provision available, however we are aware that this needs developing in some specific geographical areas/target groups.

Current provision includes;

We offer all families our **DISCplus** specialist information service for children with additional needs. This service is available during core working hours to provide a comprehensive contact point for families through email and a telephone helpdesk. This service includes information about access to short break providers, special educational needs services and Integrated Children's Services including therapy services. Information is also available about voluntary organisations which can support families, including details of grant providers families can apply to. The service also supports families to refer to our **Quids for Kids** benefits check service run by Devon Citizen's Advice Bureau. **DISCplus local information co-ordinators** - Helpline number **0845 155 1013** or email discplus@devon.gov.uk

For younger children, **Childrens Centres/Health Visitors** have a function to provide information and advice on special education needs services. Families should be able to directly access their local childrens centre for advice, information and signposting.

Family Information Service - The Devon Family Information Service holds a wide range of information about children's services and registered childcare including childminders, crèches, holiday schemes, nurseries, out of school clubs and pre-schools. **DISC** also has a family information directory which includes information on a range of activities for children and young people with additional needs and disabilities, including sport, days out, holidays, and parent and toddler groups. Visit: www.devon.gov.uk/disc for more information.

Quids for Kids is now run by Devon CAB and offers parents with children with disabilities support to maximise their benefits take up. Its available to all families across Devon and provides 1-2-1 support. Quids for Kids can be access either on line or via the helpline www.cabdevon.org.uk **0300 5000 404**

Devon Parent Carer Voice is set up to support and signpost parents with children with disabilities. They offer you an opportunity to find out what is going on in Devon and enable you to have your views heard on the things that matter to you. <https://www.devonparentcarersvoice.org>

Overnight Short Breaks – Devon have a range of providers who can offer overnight short breaks, both from foster carers through our **Action for Children** contract or from residential provision through either **Virgin Care** or **The Robins**. This type of provision can be sourced from families Short Break Allocation and can form a regular part of the care plan.

Devon can also access a range of family support services and enabling provision to support families, including **Virgin Care**.

Devon also funds a range of small, usually parent led organisations via the **Small Grants Scheme**. These organisations range from football and sporting clubs to use of the Calvert Trust and afterschool clubs. All of which are available for children with disabilities. The funding commences in April and from June Devon County Council will begin to publish the successful organisations on both its own website and on the Parent Carer Voice website. These services are either accessed directly or through your Social Workers

Families are also able to access provision through **Orchard House Saturday Club**. This provision is based in Newton Abbot and offers a community based break for children on a fortnightly basis. The club run activities including craft, music etc as well as day trips and opportunities for children to socialise and spend time with their families whilst being supported. Referrals for these services are made through a Social Worker or directly if using direct payments

The Future

Devon County Council is looking to further develop its market for Short Breaks Provision and we will be consulting with parents to look at what else needs to be developed and how this needs to be delivered to better meet your needs. Ultimately we want to provide families with more choice.

We are also aware that for many families these services will be unique and bespoke to them and their local community. In the future, we want to be putting families at the heart of decision making about short breaks and identify what support is needed to access mainstream activities, rather than using services which isolate children from their local community.