

Meeting: Children's Trust

Date: 20 February 2012

Report Title: New Statutory Duties For Short-Term Breaks For Disabled Children And Young People

Report of: Head of Additional Needs and Disabilities

Purpose

To provide a briefing on the new statutory duties for short breaks for disabled children and young people.

Summary

Haringey has developed a Short Break Statement with effect from 1 April 2011, setting out the arrangements for the allocation of short breaks for children and young people with disabilities and their families.

Recommendations

To note the content of the report.

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1 Introduction and background

1.1 The Children & Young Person's Act 2008 made the provision of short breaks a statutory duty for all local authorities from 1 April 2011. The regulations cited in Paragraph 6 of Schedule 2 to the Children Act 1989 underpin every local authority's short break offer to disabled children and young people and their families.

1.2 Every local authority must provide services designed to assist carers in their area by giving them breaks from caring in accordance with these regulations.

1.3 All local authorities were required to publish a Short Break Duty Services Statement by 1 October 2011. The Short Break Services Statement must be kept under review. The Haringey Short Break Statement is available on

the Haringey website and has been circulated widely. (Attached at Appendix 1)

1.4 The Underlying principles of the provision are:

- Short breaks to be additional to universal provision;
- Short breaks should be preventative – not just a crisis intervention.
- Short breaks should support carers and provide benefits to children and young people.
- Short breaks should improve outcomes for disabled children, young people and their families.
- Short break services should consider siblings as part of a family assessment.
- Short breaks are personal to individual need.

2 Haringey's Short Break Service Statement

2.1 The Short Breaks Statement was drawn up in consultation with disabled children/young people and their parents/carers throughout the three years of the Aiming High programme. It sets out the services available and how they are accessed and allocated. The emphasis is on providing services where disabled children, young people and their families can have a short break when they need it and have a good time.

2.2 At present the following short breaks are available to disabled children:

Universal services:

- Holiday play schemes
- After school clubs
- Youth clubs
- Weekend play schemes
- Family Fun days

2.3 For children and families with additional support needs we can offer:

- Support to attend the short breaks services above
- Support to attend sport and leisure activities
- Support for young people to plan their own activities
- Training and specialist equipment for providers

2.4 For the small group of children, young people and their families/carers that need short breaks with additional, specialist care we offer:

- Specialist short breaks after school and in school holidays
- Inclusive activities after school and during holidays
- Specialist youth club for young people with autism
- Family Link service providing after school, weekend and overnight services

- Haslemere Centre providing after school clubs during the week, weekends and school holidays and overnight services midweek and weekends
- Befriending services
- Inclusive sports and drama activities
- Range of commissioned services from voluntary organisations.

2.5 In 2008 there were 188 children and young people receiving short breaks and this has now increased to 600. The number of providers has increased from eight in 2008 to 19 in 2012.

2.6 Haslemere Centre has been refurbished and this has resulted in a seven-day service for young people. The garden has been remodelled and new specialist garden equipment has been welcomed by all the service users. It is now the new base for Haringey Involve Parent/Carers' Forum which has further improved the signposting and information sharing role of the Forum.

2.6 The Short Break Service Statement is a formal recognition of the ongoing collaboration with children and young people, parents/carers, providers and professionals over the past three years. The statement was also the subject of discussion between neighbouring Local Authorities and a common framework for the statement was agreed which was then differentiated for each borough. This approach has been particularly helpful for agreeing eligibility, moderation and practically for families who move between boroughs.

The Duty has recognised the vulnerability of children and young with disabilities and their families. The outcomes of Aiming High programme has resulted the development of a core offer framework for children and young people with very complex needs who were previously unable to access services. This has improved families' resilience and their overall ability to manage family life.

2.7 Over the past three years there has been a reduction in the number of young people referred to residential schools as more support has been provided to families in their local community. There is a high level of satisfaction expressed by service users and their families. There has been an increase from 26 families in 2008 to 90 families in 2012 managing their own services through Direct Payments. This experience is now transferring to the development of individual budgets for young people with disabilities in transition to Adulthood and in preparation for Personalisation approach.

2.8 The Council will be commissioning services on new contracts from 2013 and planning is underway to ensure that the new contracts deliver what young people and parents/carers want and which address lessons learned to date. Parents/carers and young people are fully involved in the commissioning and procurement process, including determining the services, drawing up the specification, members of procurement panels etc. The Short Breaks statement will be a key driver in determining principles and outcomes required.

2.9 The commissioning strategy will need to take account of the learning from the Green Paper 'Support and Aspire' Pathfinders and support the implementation of the proposed single plan approach and increased control for parent/carers on determining and purchasing their services.

Appendix 1

HARINGEY SHORT BREAKS SERVICES STATEMENT

Short Breaks form one element of the support offered by Haringey to disabled children, young people and their families.

This statement provides a summary of:

- ☐ the range of short breaks we provide for disabled children and their families
- ☐ how the range of short breaks offered were selected and how the offer will be reviewed
- ☐ how to access short breaks
- ☐ how children and families can continue to contribute to planning and review of short break services.

This statement was developed in consultation with disabled children and young people, their parents/carers and organisations involved in arranging and providing short breaks for children and their families.

We welcome further contact from parents/carers of disabled children. Our contact details are:

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Introduction

Since 1 April 2011, we have a statutory duty under the Break for Carers of Disabled Children Regulations 2011 to *“Provide short breaks to those who care for disabled children when it would improve their ability to care for their disabled child, or when they could not continue to provide care without a short break.”*

‘Short breaks are provided to give disabled children and young people enjoyable and stimulating experiences which contribute to their social and personal development while also offering their parents, carers and families a break from their caring responsibilities.

These breaks can include day, evening, overnight and weekend activities and can take place in the child’s own home, in a community or residential setting.

They come in a range of formats and each one can last just a few hours to a few days, and occasionally longer, depending on the type of provision and the needs of the child and their family.’

(Short Breaks Implementation Guidance. DCSF, DoH 2008)

This Short Break Statement has been developed in consultation with families and partners in the statutory, voluntary and community sectors. It will be reviewed annually to ensure that it reflects changing need, the learning from the delivery of short breaks and changes arising from policy and practice developments.

Short breaks give children and young people the chance to do something they enjoy doing, away from their parents. They are also a chance for parents to have a short break from caring.

In consultation with disabled children/young people and their parents, we have tried to create a service where disabled children, young people and their families can have a short break when they need it and have a good time. Short breaks in are provided to disabled children without charge.

At present we offer the following short breaks to all disabled children

- ☐ Holiday play schemes
- ☐ After school clubs
- ☐ Youth clubs
- ☐ Weekend play schemes

Full details of these short breaks can be found on our website and from the Additional Needs and Disabilities Service.

For children and families with additional support needs we can offer

- ☐ Support to attend the short breaks services above
- ☐ Support to attend sport and leisure activities
- ☐ Support for young people to plan their own activities

For the small group of children, young people and their families/carers that need short breaks with extra, specialist care we offer

- ☐ A range of specialist short breaks after school and in school holidays
- ☐ Inclusive activities after school and during holidays
- ☐ Specialist youth club for young people with autism
- ☐ Family Link services providing day and overnight services;
- ☐ Haslemere Centre providing after school clubs during the week and weekends and overnight services midweek and weekends;
- ☐ Befriending services;
- ☐ Inclusive sports and drama activities;
- ☐ Specialist training and resources to increase access to activities.

How this range of short breaks was decided and how the arrangements will be reviewed

Before setting up these short break arrangements we talked to children, young people and their parents/carers about their experiences, needs and wishes. We did this at consultation events, family fun days, through Haringey Involve Parent Participation Forum as well as through questionnaires, review outcomes and meetings during 2008/9/10.

Parents told us what they wanted most was holiday provision, especially during the summer and so we have set up a range of funded short breaks for this time.

The Aiming High programme has enabled over 600 children and young people with disabilities to access holiday and after school activities. All Haringey special schools and Haringey Sixth Form Centre now provide activities out of school hours as well as a large number of mainstream schools.

Young people said they wanted opportunities to take part in the same activities as their non-disabled peers. This is why we are offering a range of activities including universal, specialist and inclusive schemes which seek to develop the young person's skills and interests while having fun. So far young people can take part in a wide range of sports activities, inclusive theatre group, craft, inclusive play schemes, visits and outings and residential experiences.

But we understand that people's views change and develop over time and so we are keeping the range of short breaks under review to make sure it continues to reflect what parents, children and young people tell us they want. We are pleased to receive regular feedback on services from our young people and this is used to inform our service planning and the range of services we offer.

For example we were told by young people that they wanted more activities at Haslemere Centre during the week and not just at weekends.

We have refurbished the building and now offer after school clubs every evening and have introduced a new overnight service mid week. We are also able to provide six weeks service in the summer. Young people also helped us choose a range of new equipment for the garden and well as IT resources.

We will continue to hold consultation events each term, in conjunction with Haringey Involve Parent Participation Forum and the Parent Partnership Service managed by Markfield.

These events will include sessions on:

- Positive Futures for children starting school;
- Secondary transfer process;
- planning transitions for 14+;
- Opportunities Fair in partnership with Tottenham Hotspur Foundation;
- Meet the professionals and
- targeted consultation on local and national policies.

How we have developed the short breaks we offer

Over the last two years we have done a lot of work to arrange more short breaks and increase the range of activities offered. We have provided extra training to a number of different groups of staff. For example we have provided training on a range of communication methods for staff in our mainstream play and youth services, as well as for targeted and specialist short breaks staff to allow disabled children to use these services. Services now work together better so that the short breaks offered are better coordinated. Family Link, Markfield and

Haslemere Services all work together to provide a range of inclusive activities, increasing their opportunities to enjoy themselves and share their experiences.

Team Work is a new activity set up by Parents/carers and staff at Haringey 6th

Form Centre and after school activities include Yoga, cycling and volunteering.

Parents tell us that they now feel there is better information available and our parent/carers events are increasingly well attended.

Benefits of short breaks

Providing short breaks to families has helped many families live a more 'ordinary' life eg having a holiday together, parents having some time to rest or spend with other children in the family and disabled children and young people taking part in many new activities which they have enjoyed. In some cases the support offered by the short break service has helped prevent family stress and breakdown.

Many families have also felt it has enabled them to become stronger and better able to manage. Parents tell us that the summer activities have been 'life savers' and they particularly value that they no longer feel they have to fight for services and that they can plan activities for themselves knowing that their young person is safe and having fun.

Accessing Short Breaks

We think it is important to share out the short breaks in a fair way. Some families will need more support than others because of their needs and circumstances.

Often families/carers could really enjoy a break as well as the children and young people themselves. A short break can help to reduce stress and isolation.

Every child and young person and their family is different, therefore we provide short breaks with three different levels of support that we call for different levels of need. Parents have told us that they consider this is fair and sensible.

Pathway 1 offers access to mainstream activities with support from the services providing the activity. Pathway 1 is open to all disabled children and young people in Haringey.

These activities include after school clubs; weekend and holiday play schemes and youth clubs.

Pathway 2 offers short breaks with support designed around a child or young person's particular needs, as well as the short breaks offered in Pathway 1.

For this pathway, one of the professionals involved with the child or young person will make an assessment of their needs. A meeting will also be arranged with the child, young person and family to discuss the kind of support they need and want.

This will help everyone decide what support would be most helpful. This Pathway may include mainstream activities as set out above and which has enhanced training, equipment and staffing.

Pathway 3 is designed for the small group of children, young people and their families/carers who need short breaks with extra, specialist care. Again this could be in a mainstream activity or another type of short break, including a specialist service.

We have set up a single point of entry process for provision for children and young people with and disabilities including complex health, care and educational needs. The weekly managers' meeting includes representatives from

Health, Social Care and Education who are able to make decisions about expenditure and the allocation of services.

This managers' meeting

- Provides a more understandable access to services for service users
- Provides an opportunity to look at all the child and young person's needs, and arrange individual single and joint informal and formal assessments;

- Reduces duplication and multiple referrals to other panels /services;
- Identifies a Key Worker and Team Around the Child Approach to coordinate planning and review progress
- Will consider outcomes of assessments, allocation of services, including short breaks and set review dates, taking into account whether services continue to meet the child and families needs;
- Identify all transition points for children and young people including to adulthood.

This process enables us to respond quickly to any changes in the child and/or family circumstances and to ensure co-ordination across services.

This pathway includes additional support to attend a wide range of activities, access to specialist after school and holiday breaks, befriending services, overnight and Family Link Short breaks.

How children and families can continue to contribute to planning and review of short break services

We plan to continue to develop our short break provision by providing more variety in what we offer and more choice for children/young people and their families. We want to make sure our short breaks get better and better.

We will continue to ask users what they think of services and will use that information to help make improvements.

We also plan to continue working with parents/carers through our Parents' Participation Forum Haringey Involve to understand what is wanted.

The Parents' Participation Forum has representatives on strategic planning groups so they are involved in decision-making at every stage as we continue to develop the short break 'offer'.

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We will also be continuing our work with disabled children and young people to ensure that they have opportunities to give their views and contribute to planning.

Please tell us what you think

We are always keen to hear your views and experiences. This is how we have developed our services so far and will continue to listen and learn. Please contact

Phil Di Leo, Head of Additional needs and Disabilities if you would like to more information, share your experiences or become more involved in developing our services for disabled children and young people.