



# Central Bedfordshire Short Breaks Statement

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**Protected**

## **Introduction.**

Central Bedfordshire Council has a responsibility to provide a range of short break services designed to assist individuals who provide care for children with disabilities to continue to do so.

This Statement applies to disabled children aged 0-18 who live in Central Bedfordshire and their families. The Statement will be reviewed annually by the Local Authority and disabled children and their parents and carers to ensure their needs are being met.

The document will give you information about:

- Who can access short breaks;
- The range of short breaks currently available;
- How the short breaks service will meet the needs of disabled children and young people and their families in Central Bedfordshire.

## **Definition of Short Break Services.**

Short breaks are opportunities for children and young people with disabilities to spend time away from their primary carers, and provide opportunities for their parents and carers to have a break from caring responsibilities, thereby contributing to their personal and social development.

In Central Bedfordshire short breaks can include day, evening, overnight, weekend or holiday activities that take place within the home of the child or young person, in the home of an approved carer, a residential or a community setting.

Central Bedfordshire also provides Direct Payments which families and carers can use instead of a short breaks service to set up their own short break. Direct payments can be provided for part or all of a personal budget.

## **Legal Context**

The Equality Act 2010 defines disability as either physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long term adverse effect on the ability to carry out normal day to day activities.

This may include physical or learning disability, a hearing or visual impairment

The Breaks for Carers of Disabled Children Regulations 2011 require local authorities to:

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- Ensure that, when making Short Break provision, they have regard to the needs of different types of carers, not just those who would be unable to provide care without a break

- Provide a range of breaks: during the day, night, at weekends and during school holidays
- Produce a Short Breaks statement.

For the purposes of the Central Bedfordshire Council Short Breaks Statement the context is as follows:

Section 17 (11) of the Children Act 1989 states that a child is disabled if they are:

'blind, deaf or dumb or suffers from mental disorder of any kind or are substantially and permanently handicapped by illness, injury or congenital deformity, or other such disability as may be prescribed

There is full information on the legal background in the Equality Impact Statement Appendix C

## **Our Aims and Vision**

Central Bedfordshire Council is committed to a shared vision across education, health and social care services.

The Overarching Principles are:

- Co-production, working with parents/carers and young people to be a responsive service
- Early intervention and high aspirations for all children and young people
- Preparing for adulthood

## **Consultation - What has happened so far?**

The Statement has been informed by partnership consultation events:

- December 2016- March 2017. The Council consulted on the design of short break services and there were 1613 visits to the website during this time demonstrating the level of interest and reach of the campaign. In total some 118 Central Bedfordshire residents participated in the consultation by completing the survey. The key areas of feedback were: Families told us that they wanted to have support which offered them the opportunity for much needed rest, friendships and continuity of support.

Children and young people want to access opportunities which enable them to build confidence, develop friendships, learn social and life skills and have fun.

The full report on the consultation is available in Appendix A

- March 2017 SNAP (Special Needs Action Panel) conducted a survey which is available in Appendix B

## **Transport**

We are aware that transport can be a barrier to accessing short breaks. We will continue to support local groups to become more accessible so that families spend less time travelling to their short breaks. The Central Bedfordshire Home to School Short Breaks Transport Policy is currently under review.

## **Transition**

Central Bedfordshire will work towards developing positive activities for young people including facilitating them to take part in local community activities linked to the transition programme. The Children with Disabilities Service will work closely with the Preparing for Adulthood Team to ensure that short breaks address the transition needs of young people moving from children's to adult's services and will work with partners to develop short break support that reflects the changing needs of teenagers and young adults.

## **How do I find out about short breaks?**

There are different ways to find out about Short Breaks:

- Families and carers can phone the Team Duty Desk on 0300 300 8314. They will also be able to give information about who is the best person to speak to for more specialised Short Breaks. The Central Bedfordshire Council Website, Children with Disabilities page has information on Short Breaks
- There is a fact sheet for parents and carers available on the website or by phoning the Team Duty Desk on 0300 300 8314.
- A professional who works with your family – eg social worker, family support worker, community nurse will be able to support you to access information
- The Local Offer - <http://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/children/sen-disability/local-offer/overview.aspx>
- Ask another parent! Parents tell us that speaking to each other is one of the best ways of finding out about available opportunities.

## **Access to Short Breaks.**

Broadly, in order for children to be eligible for a service from the specialist Children with Disabilities Team they must:

Be aged under 18 years old and live within Central Bedfordshire

Have a permanent and substantial diagnosed disability from one or more of the following categories

- Severe or profound learning disabilities
- Severe or profound physical disabilities
- Visual Disability
- Hearing Disability
- Significant or profound sensory disabilities
- Multiple disabilities which together severely impact on quality of life
- Complex long term health needs
- Severe or profound social and communication difficulties related to disability

Children with the following disabilities would not be eligible for services from the Children with Disabilities Team unless they also have a diagnosed disability as outlined above:

- Emotional and behavioural disorders
- Mental Health Difficulties
- Medical conditions that are not permanent
- If the presenting problem is not related to the child with a disability (eg another family member)

Attached is a copy of our Threshold Criteria which gives clear information on who can access services at different levels of ability.

The Children with Disabilities Duty Team can be contacted on 0300 300 8314.

## **The Way Forward**

A new model of Short Breaks delivery will be phased in over the next 3 years (2017-2020).

The agreed model is a 4 tiered approach which provides information and advice, universal, targeted/early help and specialist support. The model will promote local, affordable, aspirational and personalised services.

As part of our short break Local Offer the Council are committed to seek to increase availability, frequency in Universal and Targeted Universal Services

Information and advice (Level 1) will be given to families to support them in navigating the complex pathway through the range of support and services available to them. The SEND Local Offer will be key in supporting this and will be available to all families with a child with SEND.

The universal offer (Level 2) will be enhanced to be accessible by services such as leisure, libraries, countryside parks and activities. This would ensure that all disabled children have

the opportunity to access positive local activities in a safe environment. This will be available to all young people but with a focus on supporting those in the area special schools and specialist units.

The targeted early help offer (Level 3) would ensure that disabled children and teenagers who are eligible for services from the Children with Disabilities Team but only require a lower level of support access targeted services. They may need to be supported by people with specialist knowledge but could also access universal provision with support where appropriate. They may do this with the support of a direct payment or personal budget. This could all be accessed via an Early Help Assessment within the children with Disabilities Services.

The specialist offer (Level 4) would be via a social work assessment, or joint assessment with health colleagues where required for those children presenting with the highest level of need. The social work service would seek to support families to care for this group of often very challenging children in their own homes with overnight or specialist short breaks where needed. This group of children and young people will currently be at the stage in their lives where access to level 2 and 3 would present a high level of risk to the child or others. Level 4 will include specialist interventions for families who are experiencing high level of challenges from their children in their own home.

It is envisaged that the majority of children with disabilities will access provision at level 2 and 3. This will reduce the bureaucracy currently experienced by families who will have fewer assessments, meetings and decision making processes in seeking support and give them further control of their situation.

The review and monitoring of assessments and allocated provision will be robust to ensure that children are being allocated services which meet their needs.

The model will be supported, where assessed as appropriate, by a personal budget or direct payment which will promote choice and control in accessing short break provision. It is recognised that this change may impact on Voluntary Organisations who to date have relied on local authority grants to support bids for match funding. The Council are working with the Voluntary Sector to determine their role in this proposed model and offer families the choice and control required through a personalised approach.

The model will also enable the targeted use of resources for children with disabilities whilst improving access to information and advice universal provision and specialist services.

The above model will promote the transparency and clarity that parents have said they require from the services.

### **Equality Impact Statement**

The Equality Impact Statement is available in Appendix C

The Short Breaks Statement will be reviewed in December 2020 following the completion of the 3 year Transformation of Short Breaks Services.