



**WOKINGHAM
BOROUGH COUNCIL**

Short Breaks Statement
2020 - 2021

UNCLASSIFIED

Document Control Information

Title: Short Breaks Statement 2020 - 2021

Date: May 2021 (V1.2)

Review date: December 2021

Version: 1.2

Classification: Unclassified

Owner: Kelli Scott, Interim Service Manager, Children with Disabilities and Early Help, Wokingham Borough Council

Version	Date	Description
Version 1	03.12.20	Short Breaks Statement 2020-2021
Version 1.1	17.03.21	Link fixed for Short Break (Direct) Payment Guide (Pages 17, 18 and 21)
Version 1.2	11.05.21	Reference to Equality Act 2010 corrected on page 6.

Contents

Introduction	4
Our values and principles of working.....	5
What is a Short Breaks Statement?	5
What are short breaks?	6
Our levels of short break support	9
Our range of short breaks provision	10
How do I apply for short breaks?.....	11
What if I disagree with the decision about the support I am entitled to receive?	13
Decision making process flowchart	15
Frequently Asked Questions.....	16
Responding to your feedback: “You Said... We Did...”	25
Our plans for 2020/2021	25
Designing this statement together	26
Useful contacts and further sources of information	27
Summary of contact details.....	29
The Public Sector Equality Duty.....	30

Introduction

Welcome to Wokingham's Short Breaks Statement.

This Statement has been co-produced by Wokingham Borough Council, SEND Voices Wokingham and SENDIASS.

It has been designed to provide an overview of the following:

- What a short break is.
- Who can have a short break.
- The types of short break services that are available.
- How you can access a short break.
- What Direct Payments are and what you can spend them on.
- Contact information for useful services.
- What to do if you are unhappy or wish to complain about a short break.
- How your views have shaped the Short Breaks Statement and provision, including our *"You Said, We Did"* summary, and our actions for 2020/2021.
- How often we update the Statement and how you can contribute to this process.
- How you can get involved and find out more.
- How we work together with parents and carers (via SEND Voices Wokingham), children and young people and our partners to ensure that the range of short breaks services meets the needs of those that use them.

We hope that you find the information useful. If you wish to feedback your views on this statement please contact the Short Break Service or Children with Disabilities Team on 0118 974 6881 or 0118 974 6890 or email us at ShortBreaksCo-ordinator@wokingham.gov.uk or cwdduty@wokingham.gov.uk

We publish this Short Breaks Statement on the Wokingham Borough Local Offer.

www.wokingham.gov.uk/lo



Our values and principles of working

This Short Breaks Statement is written in line with Wokingham Borough Council's vision for Children's Services:

"A Borough where all of our children and young people feel safe and are safe, are well cared for, emotionally healthy, resilient and achieve their potential, regardless of background."

What is a Short Breaks Statement?

The Children and Young Person's Act requires local authorities to provide short breaks that are designed to assist individuals who provide care for children with disabilities. In addition to this, the *Short Breaks for Carers of Disabled Children Regulations 2011* require each local authority to produce a **Short Breaks Statement**. The purpose of this statement is to ensure that children and young people and their families can know what services are available to them locally, the eligibility criteria for accessing them, and to understand how such services are designed to meet their needs.

This Statement is therefore a guide to the types of short breaks on offer at Wokingham Borough Council, and also includes important information about Direct Payments (money you can receive from the council to buy short break services) and what you can use a Direct Payment for.

Every local authority has to provide a statement and work with and listen to the views of children and young people with disabilities and their families to ensure that a good range of short breaks is available.

Background

This information is for families living in Wokingham Borough who have a child with a disability who is under the age of 18.

Our aim is to ensure that children and young people with disabilities and their families have the support they need and are able to enjoy inclusive activities. We recognise that all families are different, and that they will need different levels of support and different types of short breaks depending on the age and specific needs of their child.

Our Vision

Wokingham Borough Council is committed to supporting disabled children and young people in many ways, including by improving their access to short breaks. As part of our continued commitment to disabled children and young people and their families, we provide a range of short breaks services, from inclusive universal services through to specialist provision. These are designed to meet the varying needs of children and young people, including those who have:

- Severe learning difficulties or behaviour which challenges;

- Challenging behaviour which is associated with other impairments;
- Complex health care needs and/or require palliative care and/or who have associated impairments and/or have specialist equipment needs.

We aim to ensure that:

- Short breaks are reliable, regular and personalised to best meet need.
- We engage with a range of children and young people with disabilities and parent/carers in a range of circumstances.
- Children and young people with disabilities and their families are engaged in the design of local short breaks services.
- We work in partnership with providers to ensure a good range of activities for disabled children and young people and that providers have the support they need including training and workforce development.
- Short breaks can build on and be offered by universal services.
- We work in partnership with health services to understand the range of short breaks services.
- Short breaks promote greater levels of confidence for young people moving towards adult life.
- That those who use short breaks have the chance to shape the development of services.
- We demonstrate how the views of children, young people with disabilities and parent/carers influence the range and type of short break activity.

What are short breaks?

Short breaks provide children and young people with disabilities the opportunity to spend time away from their parents and carers, relaxing and having fun with their friends. They also provide families with a break from their caring responsibilities and give parents and carers a chance to unwind, spend time with their other children or undertake leisure or training activities. Short break activities are offered during daytimes, evenings, weekends, overnight and during school holidays

Who is a short break for?

The Equality Act 2010 tells us that a person has a disability if they have a *'physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long term adverse effect on his / her ability to carry out normal day to day activities'*. Short breaks are intended for children and young people who have such an impairment.

How can short breaks help my child and my family?

A short break can support your child by enabling them to:

- Take part in fun activities that interest them
- Develop feelings of independence and gain more confidence

- Spend time with their friends - and make new ones
- Achieve personal goals and learn new skills
- Be as independent as possible

A short break can support you by enabling you to:

- Have some “you time”
- Spend time with your other children or together as a family
- Feel confident your child is having fun with skilled carers who understand their needs.
- To feel supported as a parent and carer

Who can have a short break?

Short break services should enable children and young people with disabilities to be able to participate in family and community life, enjoy themselves with friends and be supported to make decisions about their lives.

Children and young people will be considered for our Short Breaks service if they:

- Are aged between 0 and their 18th Birthday;
- Live in the Wokingham Borough;
- Have a recognised disability - that is, a physical or mental impairment, which has a substantial and long-term effect on their ability to carry out day-to-day activities; and
- As the result of their disability, they require support to participate fully in leisure or recreation activities.

This may include:

- A physical disability.
- A learning disability.
- A hearing impairment.
- A visual impairment.
- A communication disorder e.g. Autism.
- Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) (where a child is unable to access any other type of mainstream provision, even with support).
- A consciousness disorder e.g. epilepsy.*
- Children who have palliative care or a life-limiting or a life-threatening condition.*
- A mental health condition.*

* Where children or young people do not meet the Children and Young People’s Continuing Care assessment for children with complex health care needs criteria, and are therefore not able to access short break support from health services.

The needs of the child or young person should usually be expected to last for **more than 12 months** and have a **substantial effect** upon their lives in more than one of the following areas:

- Physical ability
- Communication and understanding
- Awareness of risk and danger
- Behaviour
- Independence

Simply having a disability does not mean that your child will receive a short break from Wokingham Borough Council. Eligibility for a short break is determined via assessment, and Wokingham will look to support as many children as possible to access universal services if they are able to do so.

What happens when my child reaches adulthood?

Not all young people will be eligible for support from Adult Services once they become an adult. This is because there are differences between the legislative frameworks for children's and adults' social care.

If your child is likely to be eligible for support from Adult Services once they are 18, your child's Short Breaks Co-ordinator/Social Worker will discuss the transition process with you and your child.

These discussions usually start when your child is aged 14, to enable you to know in advance if your child is likely to need or receive support on reaching adulthood.

The Care Act 2014 sets out a national eligibility criteria for adults who have care and support needs. Typically, an adult may be eligible for Adult Services if he or she has needs;

- *Arising from a physical, mental health impairment or illness and the adult is unable to achieve two or more outcomes which will have a significant impact on the adult's wellbeing, such as;*
- *Managing and maintaining nutrition, personal hygiene, and clothing, developing or maintaining family or other personal relationships, home environment, accessing in and engaging in work, caring for a child. (This list is not exhaustive, the Short Breaks Service will discuss your child's need and help you to determine if your child is likely to be eligible for support from Adult Services).*

If your child does not need and is unlikely to receive support from Adult Services, your Short Breaks Co-ordinator/Social Worker will discuss this with you to consider how everyone can work together to enable your child be as independent as possible. As part of this, they may discuss how your child may be able to access support from other community resources.

Our levels of short break support

	1. Services for all Universal or community services which are available to all children/young people and parents/carers who need low-level support	2. Targeted Services via the 'Local Offer' Services for children/young people and parents/carers who require some support A targeted offer could be a Short Break Direct Payment or services	3. Specialist Services Services for children/young people and parents/carers who require high-level support via a specialist package of care
Children / Young Person's Development Needs	The child/young person has some additional needs because of their disability but this doesn't prevent them from generally making friends and accessing local services and activities such as the youth club and leisure centre.	The child/young person has additional needs because of their disability and needs some support to help them make friends and access some local services and activities. Sometimes they might need specific activities designed for their needs. We will take into account other relevant assessments to inform eligibility.	The child/young person has significant and/or multiple needs because of their disability which prevents them from making friends and/or accessing local services and activities without high levels of support It is highly likely that the child/young person attends a special school to have their high level of educational needs met. Children and young people will have an Education Health Care Plan.
Parent/ Carers Caring Needs	The parents/carers sometimes might need help but they know where to go to get it using resources available to them, such as grandparents, neighbours, wider family or the community	The parents/carers need additional help to meet the child/young person's needs.	The parents/carers need significant and regular ongoing support to meet the child/young person's needs.
Parent / Carers Personal Needs	The child/young person's needs are impacting on the parents/carers personal or social life but the parent/carer is able to cope with this.	The child/young person's needs are met but at a significant cost to the parents/carers physical / emotional health and leisure time.	Neither the child/young person's nor the parents/ carers needs are being met and there is a serious risk of family breakdown.
Siblings' Needs	The child/young person's brother/s or sister/s can access opportunities but they are sometimes restricted	The child/young person's brother/s or sister/s personal and social lives are significantly restricted.	The child/young person's brother/s or sister/s essential needs are not being met.
Environment	The place where the child/young person lives and the places they go to are safe and generally meet their needs with reasonable adjustment	The place where the child/young person lives and the places they go to may need some changes to ensure they are safe and can better meet their needs.	The place where the child/young person lives and the places they go to are often unsafe or unsuitable and need adapting; this limits their choices.
Who Pays the cost?	Families routinely pay the cost of the service	Families routinely pay no more that they would for a child without a disability in a mainstream setting	Costs vary considerably depending on the child's needs and the settings used. WBC pays the cost of the service.

Our range of short breaks provision

There are a number of ways that short breaks services can be provided. Services can be offered directly by Wokingham Borough Council, but can also be provided by those on our Preferred Provider List (a list of local organisations that we have vetted to ensure that they have experience in providing the service, with adequate staff, skills and knowledge), or by other private and voluntary organisations.

The range of our short break services includes:

- Day-time care in the homes of children and young people with disabilities or support in the community.
- Overnight care within the home.
- Overnight care within an overnight short break provision or short breaks fostering.
- Educational or leisure type activities for children with disabilities outside their homes, but not formal education.
- Services available to assist parents/carers in the evenings, at weekends and during the school holidays.

These services are provided in accordance with the *Breaks for Carers of Disabled Children Regulations 2011*.

Many services can be accessed directly without the need for an assessment for short break payments. As good practice, these services will work with you to meet your child or young person's individual needs.

We also recognise and support the fact that many children will want to attend activities that are not specifically designed for those with disabilities, preferring instead to attend the same activities as their friends or siblings.

We aim to be clear and impartial so that we can promote the health, safety and wellbeing of children and young people with disabilities.

Where can I get more information?

Details of clubs and activities within the short break programme can be found on Wokingham Borough Council's Local Offer: www.wokingham.gov.uk/lo



Please note that you will need to pay the standard cost for your child to attend the activity.

How do I apply for short breaks?

If your child meets the eligibility criteria and you wish to access funding towards short break support then our Short Breaks and Early Help Team for Children with Disabilities will carry out an assessment.

To try to simplify the assessment process, we ask families to start with a self-referral. A copy of the Self-Referral Form can be downloaded from the short breaks section of the Local Offer; www.wokingham.gov.uk/lo

As well as providing us with some basic details, the self-referral form will help us gain a better picture of your child's needs, the support you feel you need and the outcomes you are hoping to achieve by making this referral.

Our Short Break Co-ordinator can be contacted on (0118) 974 6881 / (0118) 974 6890 to help with any aspect of completing the self-referral.

Completed self-referral forms should be sent to triage@wokingham.gov.uk

Once a referral has been received by the Short Break and Early Help Team, a decision will be made about the best way to support your child and family. In order to make this decision a Short Break Co-ordinator may contact you to find out some further details. For more information on how we make these decisions, please see our [Decision making process flowchart](#) on page 15.

This process has four potential outcomes:

1. If not eligible for Short Breaks from Wokingham Borough Council, you will be offered advice and signposting to services that are available on the Local Offer via the Short Break Co-ordinator or Children with Additional Needs (CAN) Network Co-ordinator.
2. If eligible, a Short Break Co-ordinator will make contact with you to organise for an Early Help Assessment for Children with Disabilities to take place.
3. Where there are complex needs/circumstances that meet threshold for assessment under Section 17 of the Children's Act 1989, the referral will be passed to a Social Worker.¹
4. Where it is felt that another service would be best placed to meet your child's needs, (for example, sleep support from our FIRST team, Autism support from our ASSIST service, or ADHD support or parenting support from the Early Help team) with your

¹ Some children with disabilities have very complex needs which can have a significant impact on family life and adequate support may not be in place. Social Workers who are experienced in working with disabled children are best placed to work with their families to determine what support is required, coordinate and involve other agencies in this activity and monitor the effectiveness of the provision. Children and young people who access overnight short breaks outside of the home, either at an overnight short break provision or in a short breaks fostering provision, will be allocated a Social Worker due to the complexity of need this denotes. The care plan and provision will be reviewed within the Child in Need framework.

consent the referral will be passed to the relevant Wokingham Borough Council team for consideration.

We will contact you to discuss the outcome of the referral within 5 working days.

Not all children and families will be eligible for or need the same level or type of short break; some will need more than others because of the impact of their child's disability. Some may need more support because of their individual family circumstances. Recognising that families may have similar needs but manage these in different ways, our assessments seek to gain a full picture of the child and family, taking into account the child or young person's development, the family circumstances and any relevant environmental factors.

When assessing the level of need our assessment will consider:

- Your child's needs and abilities, including focussing on what your child can do and what they enjoy doing.
- The severity of your child's disability, and how it affects your child, you and your family.
- If you have more than one child with a disability.
- The number of other children or caring responsibilities you may have.
- If you or a partner have a disability.
- The level of support within your social and wider family and friends' network.
- If your child is in care or looked after by Wokingham Borough Council.
- If your child has been adopted by you. You do not have to tell us this information, however, if you do choose to tell us we can ensure that you know about other services and activities that could support your child.
- If there are concerns about a child or young person's safety.
- Your personal financial circumstances.

The outcome of this assessment will be shared with you and will identify an appropriate level of support in line with our eligibility criteria and the [Our levels of Short Breaks Support Table](#) on page 9.

Interventions

Wokingham Borough Council is keen to make a distinction between a 'short break' and care/support interventions. Whilst eligible children and families should have access to a range of short breaks, these will differ from services provided as an intervention for care and support, which would meet a statutory need following an assessment.

These two types of service can be defined as follows:

- **A short break is designed to enable a break from caring and/or provide a social opportunity for the child or young person with a disability.**

- **An *intervention* is ongoing work and/or a service provided as a result of an assessment, which you will need to enable your family to function and/or meet the basic needs of your child or young person.**

If your child is supported by a Child in Need plan or Child Protection Plan, any short breaks allocated will be determined according to the presenting needs, taking into consideration the short break eligibility.

What happens if my child is not eligible for short breaks?

If you are not eligible for short breaks from Wokingham Borough Council, or you think that you have a higher level of need than our assessment has determined, we will ensure that our decision is clearly explained to you. In most cases where a child has a disability, even if it is not substantial, there will be services available at the Universal level via the Local Offer which they can engage with. You do not require input from the Short Breaks and Early Help Team for your child to be able to access these, although our Short Break Co-ordinators can offer initial advice and signposting. Further support with this can be obtained from the CAN Network Co-ordinator, who can be contacted via (0118) 974 6897 or by email: can.network@wokingham.gov.uk

Children, young people and their families may be eligible for direct work or support around wider needs such as sleep, behaviour or autism, even if they are not eligible for short breaks. If this is the case we will discuss this with you and provide further information.

If you are not eligible for short breaks from Wokingham Borough Council, the service will inform you of this in writing.

Decisions regarding eligibility are not applied mechanistically and will take account of individual familial needs. In unusual or exceptional circumstances, there will be scope for discretionary provision of funding or services that do not fit the standard decision making process.

In the case of an inappropriate referral where the child/family are not eligible for any short break services, we will explain to the family the reason for this and try to direct them to the appropriate support services.

What if I disagree with the decision about the support I am entitled to receive?

If you feel that the needs matrix has not been applied fairly, or that important factors have not been taken into account, please contact the Short Break Co-ordinator in the first instance. The Short Break Co-ordinator will work through your queries with you, and if warranted will arrange for a review of the decision. This may lead to a re-assessment of your needs.

If you still remain dissatisfied, you can request a meeting with a Manager, or you can complain in writing to:

Short Breaks Statement 2020 - 2021

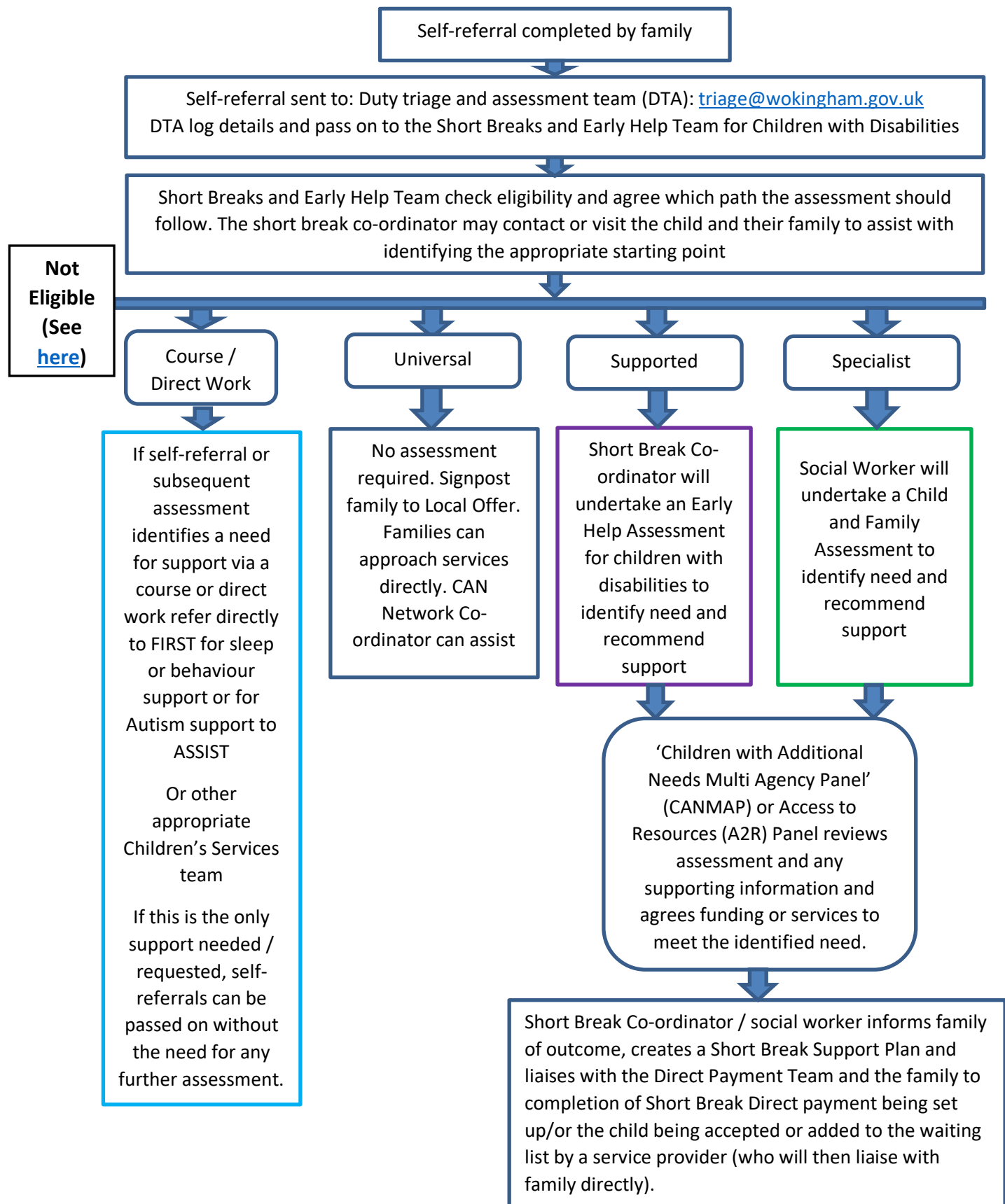
Wokingham Borough Council, Customer Service Team
Governance & Democratic Services
Shute End
Wokingham
RG40 1WH

Tel: (0118) 979 0877

Email: customerservice@wokingham.gov.uk

It is important to note that if your needs change at any time, you are able to re-refer for a short break.

Decision making process flowchart



Frequently Asked Questions

What can I spend Short Breaks Direct Payments on?

Direct Payments allow parents or carers to arrange care and services themselves, instead of receiving them directly from a local authority. You can use Direct Payments to buy services from an organisation that provides care, such as a private agency, a voluntary organisation or a nursery. Some people use Direct Payments to enable their child(ren) to:

- Access organised group activities.
- Access a variety of sports or clubs.
- Pay for a worker to support their child to attend day trips/activities.
- Directly employ a Personal Assistant. If you choose this option you will need to ensure that you employ someone carefully and in line with employment law.

Are there any items that I cannot use the Direct Payment for?

The funding **cannot** be used to supplement your income; for example the funding **cannot** be used to contribute towards your mortgage or rent and **cannot** be used to pay for day-to-day household items such as a vacuum cleaner, nor can they be used to enter into a loan or hire purchase agreement.

The funding also **cannot** be used to pay for childcare costs to enable you to go to work. If you need help to pay for the cost of childcare to enable you to work you can access help and information at:

<https://www.gov.uk/help-with-childcare-costs>

In addition Direct Payments **cannot** be used for:

- Alcohol, medicines, cigarettes and tobacco products including e-cigarettes and vaping
- Gambling
- Anything illegal
- Food, however, if you employ a carer to support your child to attend an activity the carer can claim reasonable expenses if you agree this with them. This would be funded from your Direct Payment.
- Routine transport
- Long term residential/nursing care
- Household bills and utilities
- Clothes
- Aids and equipment that should be provided by the NHS
- Toiletries or holiday supplies such as post cards, cameras, towels, souvenirs etc.
- Arrangements to look after your pets
- Duty-free goods
- Gifts

- Personal items
- Any unsafe activities
- Council services

This list is not exhaustive. If you have a query about what you can use a Direct Payment for please contact the Short Break Service or download our Short Break (Direct) Payment Guide.²

What is a Short Breaks Support Plan and how does it work?

The assessment that has been agreed with you will have identified outcomes that the provision of Short Break Direct Payments or services will be designed to help meet.

The Short Break Co-ordinator (or Social Worker) will work with you to develop a bespoke Short Break Support Plan which will articulate how these outcomes will be met.

Where a service has been identified to meet one or more of these outcomes, this will simply be listed against the relevant outcome(s).

Where a Short Break Direct Payment has been provided to meet a need, the Short Break Co-ordinator (or Social Worker) will work with you to arrive at an agreed way in which the funding will be used to meet the outcome.

The intention of the Short Break Support Plan is not to limit flexibility and choice but to ensure that at any given point in time both the family and Children's Services are clear and in agreement about how the Short Break Direct Payment should be used.

Consequently this document can be updated at any point to reflect a change in the way the funding is to be used. In some instances where the change is not significant, this may be possible through agreement with the Short Break Co-ordinator (or Social Worker). For cases which involve more significant changes being proposed, especially those where there is a need to alter the level of funding, a review will be arranged to discuss the changes.

Where the change can be agreed without a change in the level of funding, this will be done by a Manager within the team. Where a change in the level of funding is required, the recommendation of the review will be presented to the appropriate resource panel for consideration. Following the meeting the family will be informed of the outcome.

How much do short breaks cost?

Parent/Carers are expected to contribute towards the costs they might have to pay for activities or services that their child would attend if they did not have a disability (unless on income related benefits). Funding in the form of a Short Break Direct Payment should be used to pay for any increase in the cost of the activity or service, resulting from the additional support that is necessary to make the activity or service accessible and inclusive.

² To access this guide, please click the ***Read our short breaks direct payment guide*** icon at the foot of our *Short breaks and respite care services* [website](#).

Likewise, Short Break Direct Payments may help to pay for services that would not routinely be required for a child of a similar age without a disability. For example, a child of an age and maturity who might otherwise be left at home on their own for short periods, without requiring a sitting service, or similarly adult supervision in the community.

In short, the funding should be used to enable parents/carers to take a break from the additional tasks of caring for a child with disabilities.

How do I pay for short breaks?

The funds to purchase this support will be provided through a pre-paid card - the Wokingham Card - which can be used to purchase short breaks support from any provider that accepts MasterCard payments. Your Wokingham Card can be used to make transactions and BACS payments (e.g. Direct Debits). You will be able to top up your card from your own finances, including via online banking.

Before you get your card you will first be asked to sign an agreement setting out the terms and conditions of the card. Your short breaks funds will normally be credited to your card each month, although smaller amounts may be given as a lump sum to make them of more use.

If you think that using a short breaks payment card will be difficult for you then you should discuss this with whoever is assessing or reviewing your support needs, as we can help to co-ordinate the Short Break Direct Payments for you.

Where can I find out more information about how to use Short Break Direct Payments?

Further details about Short Break Direct Payments, where to get support with recruitment, using the Wokingham Card, payroll, insurance etc. can be found in our Short Break (Direct) Payment Guide which can be downloaded from the Local Offer³.

Should you decide that the Wokingham Card (direct payment account) is not the best option for you, there are other ways that the Council can support you. These include a managed account option, where the payroll company manage your account and you submit timesheets. Alternatively, the Council can pay invoices directly where support is offered via an agency or organisation.

These options can be discussed with the Short Break and Early Help Team, who can be contacted by phone (0118 9746881) or email (ShortBreaksCo-ordinator@wokingham.gov.uk) or via your child's Social Worker.

³To access this guide, please click the ***Read our short breaks direct payment guide*** icon at the foot of our *Short breaks and respite care services* [website](#).

Examples of how to use a Direct Payment

Annie is aged 13 with a visual impairment affecting both eyes. Annie loves to be outside and loves sporting activities, but needs help to be able to access activities safely. Annie's parents are keen for Annie to be able to live her life to the full, and promote her independence, particularly in running as this is something that Annie excels at.

Annie's Mother's friend is a member of the local running group, she has agreed to run with Annie at the local park that has a running track. Annie's parents have researched how to employ a Personal Assistant to take Annie to the track and run with her. The Direct Payment works really well as Annie is supported by someone she knows and trusts.

Barnie is 15 and has a significant learning disability, however, he is fiercely independent and likes to go to Youth Clubs to be with young people of his own age. Barnie's Father was keen to consider using the Direct Payment to employ a Personal Assistant to support Barnie to go to the Youth Club, but Barnie would not agree to this, saying that he is 15 and is grown up! Barnie's Father found a Youth Club that has additional staff members to support young people. This is paid for by a Direct Payment. Barnie attends regularly and is progressing his skills in playing pool.

Kacper is 7 and has mobility needs that affect his movement on a daily basis. Kacper requires aids to help him to walk and tires easily, however, he is always on the go and loves spending time with his friends. Kacper's parents feel able to take Kacper to activities as part of their family life. School holidays can be boring for Kacper as he does not get to see his school friends that much. In addition parents find it more difficult to support Kacper at activities whilst also trying to spend time with Kacper's siblings. Parents use a Direct Payment to access specialist play schemes during the summer.

Pablo is 10 years old and has autism. More recently Pablo has started to become much more anxious about going out of the home other than to school and seeks constant attention and comfort from his Mother. Pablo's Mother is a single parent, and is finding it hard to care for Pablo on her own. Pablo's Mother feels isolated and wants to be able to visit her friend on an evening. Pablo's Mother feels anxious about how Pablo will respond if he were to go to activities, therefore, she uses her Direct Payment to employ a Personal Assistant to care for Pablo on an evening in the family home.

What other benefits might be available to me and my family?

- **Disability Living Allowance (DLA) for Children.**

You may be eligible for DLA to help with the extra costs of looking after your child if they:

- Are under 16
- Have difficulties walking or need much more looking after than a child of the same age who does not have a disability.

There are eligibility criteria associated with DLA. You can view the criteria at; www.gov.uk/disability-living-allowance-children

- **Personal Independence Payment (PIP)**

If your child receives DLA then they will need to apply for a Personal Independence Payment (PIP) when they reach the age of 16. Personal Independence Payment can help with some of the extra costs if your child has long term ill-health or a disability. If you make an application on behalf of your child, your child will be assessed by a health professional to determine if they are eligible. You can view more information about this at; www.gov.uk/disability-living-allowance-children

How can I choose a short break provider?

In Wokingham we have a Preferred Provider List for short break services. This is a voluntary scheme that providers of short breaks can join. The providers on the list offer a variety of services, from sitting services, 1:1 support and clubs.

Preferred Provider List (PPL)

The providers on the Preferred Provider List have been vetted by Wokingham Borough Council to ensure that they have experience in providing the services that they offer, with sufficient staff, skills and knowledge.



They are required to have specific insurance, as well as policies and procedures in place to guide the actions of the individuals involved in the service - such as Safeguarding, Safer Recruitment and Health and Safety policies.

The providers will undergo annual checks so that parents and carers can be assured that the provision is suitable to remain on the preferred providers list.

You can book your short break directly with the provider. You can view the [Preferred Providers List](#) on the Local Offer.

Other organisations on the Local Offer

The Local Offer www.wokingham.gov.uk/lo also lists a large number of local organisations and services that you might choose to use. It is your choice about which type of provision you use in order to meet your child's needs. The Council monitors how and where payments are made in order to ensure that this meets your and your child's needs.



What are Personal Assistants?

Personal Assistants are workers that you either employ directly (with you becoming their employer) or through an agency. Personal Assistants routinely work both within the family home and/or taking children to community based activities.

Where this is included in your assessment you may choose to use a Personal Assistant. There are a number of local agencies who can provide a Personal Assistant. These can be found on the Local Offer www.wokingham.gov.uk/lo

Alternatively you may choose to employ someone directly. If choosing this route you must comply with all relevant employment laws and regulations. This means you must take responsibility for employee screening, such as employee references and DBS checks. We can assist with the latter. Full details on your responsibilities can be found in the Direct Payment Agreement. You must provide the Council with a copy of any employment contract you enter into with a Personal Assistant.

Family members of persons living in the same household cannot be paid as a carer except in exceptional circumstances. If you want to employ a family member or someone who lives in your household, this has to be approved in advance by the Council.

There is lots of advice available and details on who to contact for support in our Short Break (Direct) Payment Guide⁴

What are overnight short breaks?

Some parents and carers of children with complex needs, will be offered overnight short breaks support. In most circumstances residential short breaks are provided through the Council's own short breaks facility at Bridges Resource Centre.

Alternatively, Family Based Short Breaks, where the child stays overnight with a short break carer and their family may also be an option.

Services that are provided directly by the Council - for example the Bridges Resource Centre, Family Based Short Break or Saturday Club - will be named in the Short Break Support Plan. Short Break Direct Payments cannot be used to pay for services provided directly by the Council, therefore no attempt should be made to pay the (up to) £5 voluntary contribution for Saturday Club or the £3.50 charge for overnight services at Bridges. Directly provided services will be taken into consideration in the decision making process in relation to additional requests for short breaks funding.

How often will my short break be reviewed?

⁴ To access this guide, please click the ***Read our short breaks direct payment guide*** icon at the foot of our Short breaks and respite care services [website](http://www.wokingham.gov.uk/lo).

Whilst you are welcome to ask for your short break needs to be reviewed at any time, we will hold a review at least annually to ensure that the short breaks are meeting the needs of your child, yourself and your family.

All new packages of support will be reviewed within three months of their start date, to ensure they are working effectively. A subsequent review will be held six months following and then annually moving forward. If there is a need to review more regularly, this will be discussed with you. You can also request a review at any time. Reviews will be conducted by a Short Break Coordinator or your child's Social Worker.

Where possible, we will tie the review process in with the review of your child's Education Health Care plan (EHCP) where this is applicable.

EHC plans will be updated with the amount of short break funding or directly provided service your child receives.

The EHC plan review can make recommendations that the amount and type of short break provision should be reconsidered if the needs of your child or family have changed. This may require reassessment, but decisions about alterations to the support will follow the same decision making process as all other requests for initial assessment (or reassessment) of short breaks.

A financial review of the Short Break Direct Payment will occur at both the 6 month mark and on the anniversary of the Short Break Direct Payment; this will be undertaken by the Direct Payment Team. This is a systems review of the accounts and does not involve a meeting. If there is a build-up of money in the account at the six month mark, they will notify the Short Break and Early Help Team or your Social Worker, who will then contact you to find out why the money has not been spent. If you are finding it difficult to spend the money, we will hold a review to explore this with you and look at different options.

If the funding is not surplus but has been saved for a specific purpose i.e. a summer play scheme, please inform us and the funding will not be reclaimed. If it emerges that the funding is surplus, arrangements will be made for this to be reclaimed so that it can be used to support other children and their families.

Likewise any unspent funding on the anniversary of the Short Break Direct Payment Team is routinely reclaimed. You will be written to in advance of the money being reclaimed. This may mean you need to advise us of any money that has been saved for a particular purpose.

For example, if the anniversary of the Direct Payment is July and you have been saving an amount each month to cover a more significant cost in the summer holidays, when you receive communication from the Direct Payment Team about reclaiming the funds in July, simply alert them to this and earmarked funds will not be reclaimed.

The Direct Payment Team also periodically monitor the accounts to ensure there is no inappropriate spend. Should inappropriate spending be discovered, the Short Break Coordinator (or Social Worker) will contact you to discuss this in the first instance. If the discussion determines that the spend was not appropriate, you will be expected to reimburse

the account. Whilst we hope that formulating clear Short Break Support Plans will prevent this from happening, if you are unsure about a spend please contact the Short break Co-ordinator, your Social Worker or Direct Payment Officer first.

Any technical issues to do with making payments or use of the Wokingham Card should be directed to the Direct Payment Team in the first instance.

Should your child be subject to any other type of plan i.e. a Child in Need, Child Protection or a Child in Care plan, the short breaks will be reviewed in line with the overall plan.

Who provides transport for accessing short breaks?

Parents and carers are routinely expected to transport their own children to and from short break activities. It may be the case that some providers offer transport as part of the activity, please check with them directly.

We are unable to fund transport for short break activities except in exceptional circumstances which is entirely discretionary.

Please contact the Short Break and Early Help Team for Children with Disabilities or your child's Social Worker for further discussion and advice if required on (0118) 974 6881 / (0118) 974 6890

What happens when my child is approaching adulthood?

At Wokingham Borough Council we believe that a young person's transition from Children's to Adult Services should be a positive experience, with the young person encouraged to make the most of the opportunities presented to them by adult life.

Young people usually begin their transition towards adulthood anywhere between the ages of 14 and 25. Young people with disabilities and additional needs may need advice and additional help during this time to enable them to be ready to enter the adult world.

If your child is approaching adulthood, and you would like to discuss their future needs, please contact one of the following:

If in receipt of short breaks contact the Short Break and Early Help Team
By phone: (0118) 9746881 or (0118) 974 6890 or via email: ShortBreaksCo-ordinator@wokingham.gov.uk

If they have a Social Worker contact them
By phone: (0118) 9746881 or (0118) 974 6890
By email: DctDuty@wokingham.gov.uk

Or if neither of the above apply,

If your child has an SEN case officer

By phone: 0118 974 6216

By email: sen@wokingham.gov.uk

Or

Contact the Transitions Team

By phone: (0118) 9746832

By email: TransitionsDuty@wokingham.gov.uk

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

If you experience any problems in accessing a short break activity, or problems while your child is attending, please discuss this with the activity provider in the first instance and ask for a copy of their complaints policy if needed.

If it is a safeguarding concern, then contact the Duty, Triage and Assessment Team, Wokingham Children's Services on **(0118) 908 8002**.

What is the Wokingham Borough Council CAN (Children with Additional Needs) Card?

The CAN Card is a key component of the [CAN \(Children with Additional needs\) Network](#). The CAN work is an information and support service for children and young people with additional needs and their families. The card is available to children and young people aged 0-25 who have a diagnosed additional need and acts as a proof of disability which is needed for any concessionary rates.

You can also register with the network to receive regular email contact about local activities and short breaks, or you can contact the network to ask for information on specific activities or organisations.

To find out more about the CAN Card, including where it is currently accepted, please visit our [CAN Network page](#).

CAN Network contact details:

- Email: CAN.network@wokingham.gov.uk
- Tel: 0118 974 6897
- Post: CAN Network, Woodley Airfield Centre, Hurricane Way, Woodley, RG5 4UX

Responding to your feedback: “You Said... We Did...”

SEND Voices Wokingham undertook a survey of parents and carers in the summer of 2019 about short break activity. A summary of the responses that they received is as follows:

Parents and Carers whom receive Short Break Direct Payments said....

- ✓ There was a good understanding of what short breaks are
- ✓ There was good information about how to apply for Short Break Payments
- ✓ It is important to have a range of accessible opportunities
- ✓ The Short Breaks Payment Card works really well
- ✓ The CAN network is a good source of information - use this more!
- ✓ People help me to sort out my short break

- ❖ Further work is required to improve the clarity and access of Short Breaks Services
- ❖ Some Preferred Provider Services are not being used
- ❖ There is limited awareness of the Preferred Provider Scheme
- ❖ More support for mainstream providers to ensure that services are accessible
- ❖ Finding a Personal Assistant can be difficult
- ❖ There should be more activities for teenagers
- ❖ Consider pop up activities in the holidays

In response to this feedback we:

- Co-produced this statement with SEND Voices Wokingham and providers on the Preferred Provider List
- Established a Short Breaks Steering Group to review the short break offer, including the range and type of short breaks provision

Our plans for 2020/2021

Based on what parents and carers have said we will also undertake the following activity in 2020/2021;

- Review our arrangements for the Preferred Provider List.
- Develop support for mainstream providers to support them in enabling services to be more accessible.
- Work together with providers and the voluntary and community sector to look at how we can increase the type of activities on offer.

- Work together with providers, including education providers and the voluntary and community sector to make Personal Assistants more available.
- Co-produce a children and young people's guide to short breaks.

Designing this statement together

We have worked with SEND Voices Wokingham and providers to co-design and produce this Statement. We are also working with children and young people to produce a children and young person's guide for short breaks.

We will also undertake a collaborative annual review of this statement.

Feedback

If you would like to feedback any information relating to the Local Offer you can do this by either:

- Emailing: info.families@wokingham.gov.uk
- Or by completing our Local Offer survey: www.wokingham.gov.uk/lo-survey

How can I get involved in influencing services?

SEND Voices Wokingham is the independent parent carer forum. It was set up to ensure that the families and carers of children and young people with Special Educational Needs and disabilities between 0-25 years of age in the Wokingham Borough, can have a voice and participate fully in the development of services.

SEND Voices Wokingham sends regular updates to its members detailing news, research updates, parental surveys (including surveys on short breaks in the Wokingham Borough), participation opportunities and training courses. This is supported by a website which provides information about organisations, factsheets and news articles.

SEND Voices Wokingham extends an invitation to all parents and carers of children and young people with disabilities and additional needs between 0-25 years of age in Wokingham Borough to get involved with their work. By doing this they are able to ensure that they represent a wide range of families from across the Borough when working together with decision makers. They are keen to hear from you about what is going well and what can be improved with any service provided for your child with additional needs.

Email: info@sendvoiceswokingham.org.uk

Website: www.sendvoiceswokingham.org.uk

Useful contacts and further sources of information

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

The Wokingham Borough Local Offer lists a number of local organisations and services that provide support to families.



Go to:

- www.wokingham.gov.uk/lo
- www.wokingham.gov.uk/lo-directory

Please read our website disclaimer: <http://www.wokingham.gov.uk/disclaimer/>

You can give us feedback on the Local Offer via our Local Offer survey:
www.wokingham.gov.uk/lo-survey

Under 5s

Short break activities are sometimes held for this age group by short break activity providers - these might be occasional activity days or a more regular provision.

www.wokingham.gov.uk/lo-directory

Where can I find out about suitable childcare?

The short breaks scheme is not designed to provide the childcare working parents might need. It is designed to give parents and carers a short break. Finding suitable childcare is important to working parents and you can find further information by searching the services directory:

www.wokingham.gov.uk/childcare

Children's Centres

Children's Centres aim to give every child the best possible start in life. They are places where any family with a child 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. To find your local children centre go to the families section of the council's website: www.wokingham.gov.uk/families

Help for children and young people with autism

The aim of the Wokingham Borough Council's [ASSIST](#) (Autistic Spectrum Service for Information Support and Training) family support service is to work in a proactive, supportive and preventative way with families and providers so that children and young people up to their 18th birthday with autism, living in the Wokingham Borough can be the best they can be. Their approach to intervention is holistic, creative and directed by the needs of the individual and those around him or her. The service provides information, support and training, especially supporting families' pre and post diagnosis offering the National Autistic Society Early Bird, Early Bird Plus, Healthy Minds and Teen Life programmes, plus many individual workshops and opportunities

Who to contact:

Contact Name: Pam Breslin

Contact Position: Manager of ASSIST

Telephone: 0118 908 8053

Email: assist@wokingham.gov.uk

Support with Sleep, Behaviour and other issues

The Family Intervention Resources and Support Team (FIRST) aims to provide targeted, time limited early help interventions that focus on addressing the bespoke needs of the child and family to reduce or resolve issues they are experiencing.

The aim is to work with children, families and other relevant people to increase knowledge and skills or by providing direct support, in order to build resilience within families. Thus helping to prevent difficulties from escalating, enabling children to remain at home and reducing the need for access to specialist short break settings

Who to contact:

Contact Name: Simone Hall

Contact Position: Assistant Manager of FIRST

Telephone: 01189695977

Email: CSBridgesResource@wokingham.gov.uk

Summary of contact details

For more information or if you would like this information in another language or format, such as Braille or large print please contact the Children with Disabilities or the Short Break and Early Help Teams.

Duty Triage and Assessment

By phone: (0118) 908 8002

By email: triage@wokingham.gov.uk

Direct Payments Officer

By phone: (0118) 974 6809

By email: DPWokinghamCard@Wokingham.gov.uk

Short Breaks and Early Help Team

By phone: (0118) 9746881 or (0118) 974 6890

By email: ShortBreaksCo-ordinator@wokingham.gov.uk

Children with Disabilities Team

By phone: (0118) 9746881 or (0118) 974 6890

By email: cwdduty@wokingham.gov.uk

ASSIST - Autism Spectrum Service for Information Support and Training

By phone: (0118) 908 8053

By email: assist@wokingham.gov.uk

Web: www.wokingham.gov.uk/lo

FIRST - Family Intervention Resources & Support Team

By phone: (0118) 969 5977

By email: CSBridgesResource@wokingham.gov.uk

CAN Network

By phone: (0118) 974 6897

By email: can.network@wokingham.gov.uk

Web: www.wokingham.gov.uk/lo

The Public Sector Equality Duty

This statement has been checked for its compliance with the Public Sector Equalities Duty under the Equalities Act 2010. If any individual or group should have reason to believe that it does not comply they are invited to write to the Service (address below) setting out why they feel the statement does not comply.

Short Break and Early Help Team
Wokingham Borough Council
Shute End
Wokingham
RG40 1BN

