

Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council

Short Breaks Statement



1. What is a Short Breaks Statement?

The Short Breaks Statement is a guide to services offered by Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council (BCP Council). It tells parents and carers what types of short breaks are available to support children, young people and their families and how to find suitable services. It also sets out the eligibility criteria for services available for children, young people and their families.

The document is for families living in Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole (BCP) who have a child with a disability or additional need aged between 0 and 25 years and includes:

- the range of Short Breaks Services available
- how you can access them - eligibility criteria
- how the range of Short Breaks are designed to meet the needs of children, young people and their families.

This Short Breaks statement is available on the [Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole SEND Local Offer website](http://www.bcpCouncil.gov.uk/localoffer) - www.bcpCouncil.gov.uk/localoffer

This Short Breaks Statement will be reviewed annually and updated to reflect any changes to the information contained in this document.

2. Introduction and Background

This document defines the Short Breaks Services offered across the three areas of BCP, accessible to families who have a child with disabilities or a child with Special Educational Needs (SEND child or young person) aged between 0 and 25 and meeting the eligibility criteria below. The purpose of these services is two-fold:

- (a) to provide a regular opportunity for children and young people with SEND to spend time away from their parents, relaxing and having fun with friends; and accessing services in the community that provide them with opportunities for social integration in a similar way to their peers; and
- (b) to provide parents with a chance to unwind and catch-up with everyday activities (such as cleaning and shopping), attend to their physical and psychological well-being and that of their other children should they have any, and maintain and develop social networks. Parents are also able to have a break from their caring role, and access the support needed to manage any complex personal care provision required by their child or young person through domiciliary care.

Across BCP Council, Short Breaks Services are offered at three levels:

- **Universal Services**, accessible to all families across the BCP areas, including provision to enable children and young people with SEND to access them as well. For example, childcare, breakfast and after-school clubs, leisure services, faith groups and youth clubs.

- **Universal Plus Services**, providing specific support for children and young people with SEND who are not able to access Universal services or where Universal services catering for their needs are not available.
- **Specialist / Statutory Services**, that are particular to individuals with high levels of assessed needs.

Wherever possible, we try to enable disabled children and young people to access mainstream services, such as after school clubs, local play schemes, local youth service and local leisure facilities. We have good links with these services and can use our experience, skill and expertise to work with you and your child to enable this to happen. The philosophy behind our services is that they should help normalise families' lives and contribute to the health, wellbeing, growth, development, enjoyment, and achievement of the children and young people it serves. We seek to provide choice and make our services easy to access. Any assessment should be proportionate to the level of service required. We work closely with other agencies to provide a coordinated service.

3. Who is Responsible for Short Breaks in BCP Council?

The BCP Council lead officer responsible for this Statement is Service Director for Children and Young Peoples' Social Care who is committed to ensuring that:

- (a) children and young people with SEND are listened to and their views are reflected in the services offered.
- (b) children and young people with SEND and their families are supported to take part in and enjoy local community life, and that services are, wherever possible, local; and
- (c) parents and carers are supported to become equal partners in making decisions about service improvements and developments.

4. Who is Eligible for Short Breaks and how can you access them?

Children and young people with SEND who are resident within BCP Council are eligible for Short Break Services. Whilst BCP Council work to harmonise the legacy Poole and Bournemouth Short Breaks Offer, eligibility and access will vary according to your geographical area. For residents in Bournemouth or Christchurch with a child who meets the criteria for Universal Plus Services, you will be informed of the appropriate services and supported to access them by the social worker/lead worker undertaking your assessment. Please discuss your child's needs with them directly if you are unsure of accessible services. Poole residents, please contact the Short Breaks Team directly by emailing shortbreaks@bcpcouncil.gov.uk

A summary of the current Short Break Services provided can be found in section 10 of this document. We aim to be equitable and fair in the allocation of Short Break Services and offer services tailored to meet individual needs and circumstances of both the child or young person and their family. However, please bear with us as we harmonise our service across BCP.

If you are unsure about eligibility, then please contact or ask a professional to make the referral for you. If you have been turned down for a service and have evidence that would disagree with this decision/assessment, in the first instance you should contact the CHAD Team Manager. If this is not resolved, you can make a complaint as per the usual process which will be advised.

5. Universal Services are available to everyone

There is no assessment required for families seeking to use any of the universal services across BCP that provide appropriate support for children and young people with SEND. In offering specific universal services, it is our aim to provide proactive support to families so that children and young people with SEND can remain within their family's life, and to prevent family crisis from occurring.

- (a) For information about these services please go to the [Family Information Directory www.fid.bcpCouncil.gov.uk](http://www.fid.bcpCouncil.gov.uk) and the [Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole SEND Local Offer](#) and use the menu to search.
- (b) Alternatively, information about Short Breaks can be found [here](#).
- (c) Details of SEND capabilities are shown for providers. You can then contact the provider, confirm that they are able to support your child or young person, that they have a place and arrange a visit, for example.

Hard copies of information contained within the Family Information Directory and the SEND Local Offer are available from the Family Information Service who can be contacted on 01202 093131 or by email at familyinformation@bcpcouncil.gov.uk

6. Universal Plus Services are available following registration and an assessment

Whether you contact your social worker/lead professional or the Short Breaks team directly, you will need to register for a Short Breaks Service. For further information about Universal Plus services, please go to the [Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole SEND Local Offer](#). Alternatively, information about Short Breaks can be found [here](#). For contact details for registering with Short Breaks Services, please see Section 14.

7. Specialist/Statutory Services are available following detailed assessment:

This will be carried out by a team within statutory services. If there is a high level of need, both physical and learning, which meets the criteria for the Children's Health and Disabilities Team (CHAD) within Social Care, the assessment would be carried out by that team.

Examples of high levels of need:

- (a) a severe physical, learning, mental impairment or severe sensory impairment, such as a severe visual or hearing impairment, which has a substantial and long-term effect on their ability to carry out day-to-day activities.
- (b) autism and associated severe learning disabilities.
- (c) challenging behaviour as a result of their severe learning disability; or
- (d) complex needs, including life-long, life-limiting or a life-threatening condition.

The detailed assessment carried out will depend on individual circumstances and will be conducted by a social worker, who is identified initially or during the assessment process. The detailed assessment will identify if there is an assessed need. Your child will be offered a tailored package of support including Short Breaks. There are two ways to access Short Breaks services:

- (a) arrange your own support/self-refer to a service and receive a Direct Payment from BCP to help to cover the costs of this; or
- (b) for your allocated worker to support you in identifying a service that would meet your needs and help you apply for a place, or to self-refer to a provider. In most cases, the service is paid for or subsidised by BCP.

8. What are Direct Payments?

Direct Payments are where BCP provides a parent or carer with money that can then be used to pay for any identified assessed need within the child/young person's care plan or SEND Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) that would warrant specific funding.

They give you more flexibility and control to arrange support, such as paying someone to act as a personal assistant to provide respite in your own home, etc.

Note that the provision of Direct Payments for Universal Plus services is currently being considered. To receive direct payments for Statutory services, please discuss the option with your Lead Professional.

Direct payments require you to keep a record of all expenditure against money provided by BCP, which are then monitored by BCP on a regular basis.

9. Types of Short Break Services Available

Universal Services - These are generally childcare providers, before and after school clubs, leisure services and youth clubs that have the capability to support children and young people with SEND. Details can be found as part of the [Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole SEND Local Offer](#) and on the [Family Information Directory](#).

Universal Plus Services - BCP offers Short Break Services that are tailored to meet your child's specific needs and ensure your child is placed in appropriate groups with providers that have the capability to support them. Short breaks offered fall into two groups:

- (a) regular term-time activities
- (b) holiday activities

All children and young people eligible for Universal Plus services can also access Universal Services either independently or through their contacts with BCP.

10. Statutory Services

These services are more targeted and include:

- (a) regular support to care for your child at home.
- (b) access to local commissioned services providing day-care and overnight respite.
- (c) Shared Care where you build a relationship with another family who will provide day care and overnight breaks from time-to-time; and
- (d) residential overnight breaks.

Further information will be provided following your child's assessment by a BCP Social Worker.

11. What Other Support is Available?

The Children and Families Act 2014 introduced Education Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) which include the right to request a Personal Budget. A Personal Budget is an allocation of money to provide support for an eligible person to meet their identified needs. This support will be above and beyond that which can be provided through universal and targeted services. Personal Budgets are optional for the child's parent or the young person, but local authorities must provide information about organisations that may be able to provide advice and assistance to help parents and young people to make informed decisions about Personal Budgets.

BCP can offer assistance with transport to access short breaks where this is an assessed need for parents or carers. For example, where you need a personal assistant to safely transition a young person to an activity.

BCP offers a range of support services for young people with SEND transitioning to adulthood including short breaks to build confidence towards becoming independent. To

find out more, visit the [Preparing for Adulthood section](#) of the SEND Local Offer. Within this section, you'll find an [activities sub-section](#) which includes details of a range of things for young people to do, including information on Short Breaks.

12. How are Short Break Services reviewed and improved?

This Interim Short Breaks Service Statement reflects the wide range of Short Break Services across BCP and recognises the need to harmonise and develop a single coherent offer. Although a preliminary needs analysis has been carried out, there is still much work required to better understand where there are gaps in service provision and what services require improvement.

Over the next 6 months, this statement and the current Short Break Services provided will be reviewed and co-produced with children and young people with SEND and parents and carers. BCP will ensure the services are sufficiently resourced and integrated as part of the wider offer to children and young people with SEND.

The aim of the review is to ensure that:

- (a) services are age and ability appropriate.
- (b) services offer a wide range of activities providing choice and flexibility to children and their families.
- (c) staff are appropriately trained, are empathetic and understand the needs of children and young people and are able to build real relationships.
- (d) the needs of the whole family are considered.
- (e) children and families can provide feedback and are supported into making complaints where services have fallen below acceptable standards; and
- (f) all Services are safe for children to attend.

The Short Break Services offered by BCP will be altered from time to time to reflect changing needs and required improvements, and these changes, once consulted upon, will be reflected in updates to this Short Breaks Service Statement.

In addition, children and young people, together with their parents and/or carers will be encouraged to provide feedback to specific service providers, raise concerns with their BCP contacts, and complete annual surveys covering their experience of short breaks service in BCP. All of this information will be used as part of the short breaks review process.

13. How are the service outcomes measured?

At present, service outcomes are largely assessed through qualitative means: individual service satisfaction surveys and an overall SEND parents/carers satisfaction survey. Results from these surveys will be used to update the Short Breaks Needs Analysis.

In the future, BCP will look to collect quantitative information about capacity and demand, including unsatisfied demand, to assist in balancing priorities and allocating resources. This will include:

- (a) demographic details of individuals (age, needs, level of support)
- (b) services desired/requested, and services accessed.
- (c) frequency and duration of access; and
- (d) sources of funding for these services (e.g. self-funded and/or direct funded).

14. Who to contact?

Whilst we work to harmonise the Short Breaks Services, please contact the following, dependent on which geographical area you are resident within:

Poole residents: Short Breaks Team - Email: shortbreaks@bcpcouncil.gov.uk
Bournemouth & Christchurch residents: please contact your social worker or lead professional.

The **Children's First Response Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)** provides access to other services for children and families living in Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole.

If you have concerns about the safety or welfare of children and young people, if you require support in agreeing an Early Help offer, or if you want to know more about the services available to support children, young people and their families, or wish to make a referral or self-referral, please contact the team on:

01202 123334 (Monday to Thursday 8.30am to 5.15pm and Friday 8.30am to 4.45pm) or by email at childrensfirstresponse@bcpcouncil.gov.uk

Further information about the Children's First Response MASH can be found [here](#).

Also see the link to the Pan-Dorset Safeguarding Children Partnership website: <https://pdscp.co.uk/working-with-children/applying-thresholds-and-reporting-concerns/>

You may also find the following contacts useful if you require help accessing the Family Information Directory (FID) or the SEND Local Offer or need more general SEND advice and support:

- (a) BCP Council Family Information Service: familyinformation@bcpcouncil.gov.uk
- (b) Parent Carers Together: info@parentcarerstogether.org.uk
- (c) SEND Information Advice and Support Service : sendiass@bcpcouncil.gov.uk

15. Further Information

Details of the current guidance to Local Authorities is provided at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/short-breaks-for-carers-of-disabled-children>

Appendix 1

Legislation

The Children Act 1989 Section 17(1) places a general duty on Local Authorities to provide services to safeguard and promote the welfare of children within their area who are in need.

The definition of a 'child in need' under the Act is as follows: 'For the purposes of this Part, a child is disabled if he is blind, deaf or dumb or suffers from mental disorder of any kind or is substantially and permanently handicapped by illness, injury or congenital deformity or such other disability Introduction Disabled children in England and Wales can be eligible for services under a range of statutes (laws).

The main duties of Local Authority Children's Services Departments are to provide services to children and their families set out in Schedule 2 of the Act. A Local Authority must:

- identify children in need in its area and provide information about services.
- maintain a register of disabled children.
- provide services for disabled children which minimise the effect of their disabilities and gives them the opportunity to lead lives as normal as possible.
- provide for children living with their families the following:
 - a) advice, guidance and counselling.
 - b) occupational, social, cultural or recreational activities.
 - c) home help (which may include laundry facilities).
 - d) facilities for or assistance with travel to and from home, to take advantage of services.
 - e) assistance to enable child and family to have a holiday.

The Act also recognises that the services can be provided to the child or a member of the family, therefore the needs of all family members should be considered.

The SEND Code of Practice (January 2015), clearly states that Local Authorities should identify the outcomes that matter to children and young people with SEN or disabilities to inform the planning and delivery of services and the monitoring of how well services have secured the identified outcomes.

This Statement has been developed to meet the requirements of the:

Children Act 1989 and 2004
Equality Act 2010
Breaks for carers of Disabled Children 2011
Children and young people's Act 2014
Carers Act 2015
SEND Code of Practice 2015