

Knowsley Children and Family Services
Short Breaks Statement



Knowsley Short Breaks Statement

This short breaks statement is for families living in Knowsley who have a disabled child aged 0-19.

The Short Break Regulations Duty says that Local Authorities must:

Provide a range of short breaks services.

- Give families the choice to access short breaks services using a direct payment.
- Publish a statement of their short break services on their website.
- Keep their short breaks statement under review.
- State in their short breaks service statement the range of short break services available, the criteria by which eligibility for services will be assessed, and how the range of services is designed to meet the needs of families with disabled children in their area.
- Consult parents as part of the review of the statement.
- Consider the legal implications of the eligibility criteria they apply to short break services.
- Not apply any eligibility criteria mechanistically without consideration of a particular family's needs.

The Department for Education suggests that it is good practice to describe a 'local offer' to provide access to short breaks without any assessment, but instead based upon existing evidence of disability that parents provide.

Knowsley welcomes this approach and has set out this statement with this in mind.

What is a Short Break

Short breaks are intended to give primary carers of children and young people with disabilities a break from their caring responsibilities. Short breaks should equally provide children and young people with disabilities opportunities to have fun, make friends and develop skills. Short breaks come in a variety of formats and each one can last from just a few hours to a few days, depending on the type of provision and the needs of the child and their family. Short breaks can occur during the day, during the evening, overnight and at the weekend and can take place in the child's own home, the home of an approved carer, a residential or community setting. Short breaks should be used routinely to help parents and carers to maintain and improve the quality of care they naturally wish to provide and should not just be used as a crisis intervention.

The Vision for Short Breaks in Knowsley

Throughout the Aiming High programme and now the Short Breaks programme in Knowsley there have been a number of consultations with children and families. Through these consultations we asked children and families what they want us to consider when planning and commissioning short breaks services.

Parents, carers, children and young people want services that;

- *Are positive, enjoyable and appropriate experiences* for children and young people with disabilities.
- *Are accessible* – our starting point is that all children and young people should be able to access universal services. In addition, we recognise

the need to provide additional services according to some children and young people's individual need.

- Are *flexible and person-centred*, and aim to meet the individual needs of children and young people, and their families.
- Allow parents and families *a break from caring* responsibilities.
- Are *regular and reliable* and at the times that children and young people and their families most need the breaks, for example during the school holidays and at weekends.
- Are *easy to access*, and have transparent, easy to understand eligibility criteria, and make available *good quality, clear information* about services.

To achieve this vision, we agreed to;

Work together, with parents and carers and other local partners, through the SPEAK forum.

Fully involve parents, carers and children and young people with disabilities in all aspects of short break planning and delivery.

Develop the market by working closely with providers and potential providers to ensure that we commission services that are of the highest possible quality, that meet the needs identified, at the most efficient cost.

Develop our workforce by ensuring that we identify the skills that our commissioning strategy requires our workforce to have, and ensuring that this is reflected in our workforce development strategy, working closely with the Workforce Development Group to achieve this.

Regularly monitor and report on progress to the Children and Families Board.

How to access Short Breaks

A significant amount of work has been undertaken over the past two years to ensure that universal services are accessible and explicitly welcoming to disabled children and their families. This work has been supported by the development of the Knowsley Local Offer which has encouraged families to access clubs, activities and facilities in their local communities

Our eligibility for services and short breaks is based on the following principles:

- The need to be fair, clear and equitable.
- To promote the health, safety and wellbeing of disabled children and young people, ensuring they can fully participate in family and community life, enjoying themselves with friends and making decisions about their lives.
- Preventing family crises through the provision of the right level of support at the right time.
- To reduce the need for additional assessments.

Children and young people are eligible for short breaks if they have a physical or mental impairment, which has a substantial and long term effect on their ability to carry out day to day activities. This may include:

- Physical or mental impairment
- Sensory impairment
- Autistic Spectrum Disorder
- Children who have challenging behaviour as a result of a learning disability
- Children who have complex healthcare needs and who may have palliative, life limiting or life threatening conditions.

Not all children and families will need the same level of support and short breaks. In Knowsley there are three levels of provision for disabled children within the Short Breaks Programme.

Level of support	Assessment type/ access to services	Examples of services
Level 1 Universal	No assessment required – self referral – contact service directly. Alternatively a Common Assessment Framework may be undertaken. Services can be contacted directly	Extended schools, youth service, youth theatre, school and community holiday clubs, leisure centres. Family activity days.
Level 2 Targeted	Initial assessment required and referral to services made by a professional.	Targeted holiday pplay schemes, after school programme of short break activities, supported swimming sessions, individual day care; family holidays. Families can also request support at this level to attend universal provision
Level 3 Specialist/complex	Core assessment and or specialist assessments from Children’s Services may be required and referral to services made by a professional.	Direct payments, family based short breaks, overnight stays in residential provision; health and care packages in the home.

Families can contact the Short Breaks team to discuss access to targeted activities or to request a particular short break. Families may also be referred by any professional working with the family.

Knowsley's Local Offer

Wherever possible we will create access for disabled children and young people to the provision of their choice. We will also provide a range of activities that offer quality experiences for children and young people that are age appropriate, enjoyable and enriching, whilst offering carers a break from their caring responsibilities.

The range of Short Breaks currently on offer in Knowsley

- Family Fun days – weekly stay and play activities managed by family support groups, with enhanced provision in holiday periods
- Out of School Activities - a borough wide choice of arts and sport sessions supported by specialist staff during the week and at weekends.
- Holiday Activities – both inclusive and specialist schemes during the main and half term holidays. We will be increasing the range of full-day activities during all the holiday periods.
- 1:1 support for individual children and young people
- Overnight short Breaks
- Home Care
- Befriending – young people can be allocated a specific support worker who may go out with them or support them to attend an activity.
- Family holidays – at Centre Parks or at the adapted caravan in Wales

Monitoring Eligibility and Assessment Criteria

In accordance with parents and carers views many of the short break services provided by Knowsley Council do not require any assessment to be undertaken. Any families that do not meet the eligibility criteria for the Local Offer, and who feel that their child requires the additional support that the offer provides are able to appeal (using a CAF). Knowsley Council will continue to ensure that the Local Offer eligibility criteria are meeting the needs of families by;

- Regularly monitoring the appeals made to ensure that no group of children or young people have been unfairly excluded from the eligibility criteria.
- Regularly reviewing the eligibility criteria, and parental satisfaction with these, with the SPEAK Forum.

Ensuring these Services Meet the Needs of Children and Young People and their Parents and Carers

Knowsley Council will continue to ensure that the views of parents and carers are represented at all stages of the commissioning and service monitoring cycle by;

- Continuing to fund and work in partnership with Knowsley SPEAK parents forum, to ensure that

- Its representatives' are fully involved in all relevant strategy and working groups and are able to influence the development of existing and new services.
- It is able to collect and represent the views of parents and carers about short break services and is able to independently report its findings as it sees fit.

Knowsley Council wishes to improve the involvement of children and young people in the strategic development and monitoring of services, and will do so by;

Ensuring commissioned services meet the Knowsley Participation Standards, using the expertise of the Rights and Participation Team to ensure that it reflects best practice and a sufficient and appropriate range of opportunities.

This statement will be kept under review and revised as appropriate.

For further information or to share your comments please contact:

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