Short breaks statement

Last Modified May 07, 2024

Introduction

Every local authority has a duty to provide a range of short breaks to support children and young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their families/carers. This duty is a requirement under both the Breaks for Carers of Disabled Children Regulations 2011 and Section 25 of the Children and Young Persons Act 2008. You can view The Breaks for Carers of Disabled Children Regulations 2011

We aim to set out how Blackpool Council will seek to meet the short breaks duty requirements, outlining the council's short break services to support children/young people aged 0 to 25 with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their families, and the criteria required in order to access them.

Short Breaks assessments sit within the supporting children with complex needs team within children's services. The team work closely with the SEND team, to offer the best care and guidance for children, young people and their families.

Our vision is to:

- Promote positive experiences and opportunities for children/young people that will encourage social and emotional development, preventing social isolation Help children and young people develop greater independence
- Provide an important break from caring responsibilities for parents and carers, allowing carers to relax or spend time with other children or partners/friends.
- Empower families to make informed choices about the services they access
- Improve and promote better outcomes for children and young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their families/carers
- Ensure fair and equitable access to all services

The regulations require councils to publish and keep the short breaks statement under review. This statement will be reviewed again no later than September 2024, or sooner if changes are made to service provision. It replaces the previous statement written in 2018 and reflects feedback from the 2018 and 2020 short breaks consultations which gathered the views and opinions of children/young people and their parents/carers.

Alongside this short break statement, which outlines services commissioned or provided by the council, further information about specific activities, clubs, services and support groups for children/young people with disabilities and their families in the local area can be found on our SEND local offer

If you would like to share any feedback with us or if you would like support and guidance about anything mentioned in this statement please get in touch with the SEND team:

Email: send@blackpool.gov.uk
Telephone: 01253 476602

A short break refers to services designed to provide support to children and young people with disabilities (as defined above) and their parents, carer and families.

The purpose of a short break

1. Offer parents or carers a valuable break from caring responsibilities allowing them some time to relax/rest or to spend time with a partner or other children
2. Provide children and young people with disabilities the opportunity to enjoy different experiences, establish friendships and develop confidence, independence and social/emotional skills.

Short breaks form part of the 'local offer' for families of disabled children. Legislation placing a statutory duty on a local authority to provide short breaks includes:

- The Breaks for Carers of Disabled Children Regulation 2011
- Children and Families Act 2014
- Children Act 1989

Short breaks provide 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. It is our aim that short breaks will contribute to keeping disabled children safe and healthy, enabling them to enjoy new activities, make friends, and have new learning opportunities, as well as preparing teenagers for adulthood.

Short breaks can include a range of day, evening, overnight, weekend or holiday activities that take place in the child or young person's own home, the home of an approved carer, or a residential or community setting. Short break services can range from supporting children and young people with disabilities to access universal services, through to providing specialist services in the child's home or in the community.

The range of short breaks services includes

- Inclusive leisure activities that are available to all children with SEN and/or disabilities (as defined above) without any form of assessment required. This can include holiday clubs, weekend clubs, after school clubs, youth clubs, play schemes and various sporting and activity groups
- Support and assistance to carry out everyday tasks, for instance a support worker taking the child or young person out, or assisting the child in the home - the worker may be employed directly by the family, the council or by another provider
- Specialist activities for children with more complex needs during the evening, weekend or school holidays such as holiday clubs, weekend clubs and activities or youth clubs
- Day care/personal care in the child's own home and/or in the community
- Overnight respite care in the child's own home or in a specialist facility

Short Breaks can range from a 2 hour session to whole days or overnights. The length and type of short break will depend on the needs of the individual child and their family. Blackpool's short break statement outlines how families can access short break provision, from requesting access to inclusive mainstream activities, to more targeted and specialist support accessed via a social care team which may include overnight respite and direct payments.

Short breaks are not classed as childcare provision. They are positive opportunities for parents to take a break from their caring duties, and to help children with disabilities to become more independent and promote positive outcomes for the future.

Our short breaks offer

In Blackpool there are a wide range of short breaks available to children and young people with SEND, from activity clubs and holiday clubs, to overnight respite and care at home. However, not all children, young people and families need the same level of support due to the nature and severity of their needs, therefore we aim to be fair and equitable in providing positive solutions for all families based on an assessment of need as well as taking into account the family's individual circumstances.

To help us make decisions about the most suitable short break activities or service to suit the needs of their family, we have two categories of short break services:

- Inclusive breaks
- Targeted and specialist breaks

Inclusive breaks

These types of services include:

- Inclusive after school clubs for children with, and without, SEND run by both mainstream and special schools
- Inclusive holiday clubs for children with, and without SEND
- Inclusive weekend sports and activity club for children with, and without SEND commissioned by Blackpool Council
  Contact: Active Blackpool
  Email: active.blackpool@blackpool.gov.uk
  Telephone: 01253 478007
- Holiday play schemes
- A wide range of local, inclusive youth groups, sports clubs and activity clubs
- A larger number of local charities and support networks

Blackpool Council aims to promote inclusion, and remove the barriers to play and leisure activities, for all children and young people with disabilities within universal and mainstream settings. We work closely with all local mainstream and special schools to encourage, promote and educate about the importance of inclusion.

Targeted and specialist services

These services are aimed helping and supporting children and young people who have higher levels of need, which require one to one support or targeted activities to meet their needs, which cannot be met within mainstream settings.

These types of services include:

- Complex needs holiday club for children with SEND that requires specialist or one to one support commissioned by the local authority
- Complex needs weekend club for children with SEND that requires specialist or one to one support commissioned by the local authority
- One-to-one support in the community and in the child's home, to enable the child/young person to access activities, carry out everyday tasks and to provide respite for the family
- Personal care, including dressing, washing, dressing, for children and young people in their own home
- Some elements of nursing care for children and young people in their own home, including administration of medication
- Overnight respite

Personal budgets (direct payments)

The SEN code of practice states that when children and young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities are given an education and health care plan (EHCP) they are also assessed for receiving a personal budget if this is something that would be beneficial to the child and their family. Personal budgets enable children and young people with additional needs to manage their own care, choose how they lead their own lives and make decisions about the services they need. Parents and professionals should work together to agree how to support the child or young person to meet their outcomes as identified in the education, health and care plan (EHCP). Children and young people should be included in this process wherever possible. If everybody agrees that a personal budget is the best way forward, this will be written into the EHCP.

The SEND code of practice states that local authorities and their partners "should develop and agree a formal approach to making fair and equitable allocations of funding and should set out a local policy for personal budgets."

Our eligibility criteria for a personal budget is:

- A child or young person must have an EHCP
- It must be agreed that the allocation of a personal budget is the most effective way of meeting the child/young person's outcomes as identified in their EHCP

Personal budget policy

Eligiblity criteria

Children and young people are eligible for short breaks if they:

- Are aged between 0 and 18 years of age and live in Blackpool and have additional needs which have a substantial impact on their, and their families, lives.

These may include a physical or learning disability, or a hearing or visual impairment. It may also include children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and Attention Deficit and Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) as well as children who may have challenging behaviour as a result of a learning disability. It also includes children who have more severe or complex needs who may have palliative, life limiting or a life-threatening condition.

The needs of each family can vary hugely depending on their individual circumstances; some families will need more support than others. In order to ensure that we are providing the most appropriate level of support, assessments will be required for targeted and specialist provision. At 18 years a young person would then be assessed against fair access to care (FACS) by adult care services.

Inclusive breaks (Level 1 and 2 - universal and universal plus)

Our vision at Blackpool is to provide children and young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities with as many experiences and opportunities to fulfil their potential, meet new friends and build their confidence as possible. We believe that all children should be able to access the many and varied activities and clubs on offer in Blackpool, wherever possible.

We work closely with all the local mainstream and special schools, as well as a large number of community groups and local businesses, to promote inclusivity for all children regardless of their needs. Therefore, in Blackpool we are able to offer a large number of inclusive activities for children such as after school and holiday clubs, youth groups and sports clubs from a large number of different organisations.

Inclusive breaks are accessible to all children with SEND in Blackpool. A child who has a special educational need and/or a disability does not usually need an assessment or a referral by a social care worker to access these breaks.

All efforts have been made to ensure that inclusive breaks meet the requirements of children with additional needs so that they are able to fully participate and engage with mainstream provision. This includes making public buildings more accessible, providing better disabled toileting facilities and providing equipment that can help support participation, for example hoists, ramps, sensory equipment and quiet spaces.

However, if a child or young person needs additional support to access these activities, this will be assessed through the children with complex needs team and additional support may be put in place.

Targeted and specialist breaks (Level 3 and 4 – intensive and specialist support)

Targeted and specialist breaks are for children with disabilities that are assessed to have complex needs, including those who need assistance with personal care. To access targeted and specialist breaks the child or young person will need to have a formal assessment carried out by the council's social care team.

Blackpool has a number of targeted and specialist breaks for children with complex needs, these include holiday and weekend clubs, personal care in the child's home and overnight respite care. Specific criteria for accessing holiday and weekend clubs, as well as overnight respite care, can be found in the sections below.

To request a social care assessment

Telephone: 01253 477299
or complete an online request for support

Eligibility criteria – Targeted and specialist holiday and weekend clubs

Following the completion of a needs assessment the social worker will assess whether or not the child or young person meets the following criteria:

1. Children and young people under 18 years with permanent or long term, substantial disabilities, life limiting conditions and/or

complex health needs that impact on their ability to carry out day-to-day activities and
2. Their needs cannot be met by universal/universal + services alone.

It is likely that a disabled child or young person will fit into one or more of the following definitions:

- A significant, permanent and enduring physical disability
- A significant global learning disability
- A severe and enduring communication disorder
- A significant sensory impairment
- A complex autistic spectrum condition
- Multiple disabilities.(being a combination of disabilities - physical, cognitive, communication and sensory in nature)

If the child or young person meets the above criteria, and there is agreement that there is an unmet need, the social care team will then complete a referral form and send it to the provider.

Eligibility criteria – Overnight care

Following the completion of an assessment of need, carried out by a social worker, a resource allocation panel will consider the level of service required. A young person would be considered for a place where the following criteria have been met:

- Access to overnight care where Young person is aged between 5 and 17 years old and has a complex learning and/or physical disability which cannot be supported via family placement
- The assessment and care plan identifies the need for a young person to access short-breaks within Hornby Road
- The support is required to prevent breakdown of the caring situation due to the impact on paren/carer`s physical or mental health
- The child`s sleep pattern is irregular and results in significant disturbed sleep for parents/ family members
- Behavioural demands significantly impair normal family functioning
- The support will aid the child to attain greater personal and emotional independence
- The support offered will contribute to maintaining the quality of life of parent/family members

Additional information

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