



City of London
Short Breaks Strategy
September 2011-August 2014

REVISION HISTORY

Version	Revision Date	Status	Summary of Changes
0.1	August 2011	Draft	First draft of Short Breaks Policy written
0.2	September 2011	Proposed	Second Draft written. Published as a 'proposed' copy out for consultation. Copy posted on children's social care website and hard copies sent to all families with a child/young person with a disability.
0.3	November 2011	Proposed	Proposed Policy drafted after a consultation period.
1	October 2011	Final Draft	Presented to the Community and Children's Services Committee for agreement, December 2011

DISTRIBUTION

Name	Title	Date of Issue

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**Education and Early
Years Manager**

Review Body:

**Health and Well-being
Board**

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INTRODUCTION

The City of London is committed to working in partnership to provide quality services that are responsive to the individual needs of children, young people and families. This is reflected in our Children and Young People's Plan 2009-2012, the ultimate aim of which is to ensure all children and young people are afforded the same opportunities to achieve their full potential and secure improved outcomes.

Whilst our aim is to ensure we deliver inclusive services accessible to all we also know that children with disabilities sometimes require extra support to ensure that they prosper, stay healthy and have equal access to education and other local resources. This includes ensuring that there is sufficient, high quality provision available to children, young people and families across the continuum of need so that they can enjoy a quality of life that is comparable to that of other families.

Short breaks are one of a range of services that provide support to disabled children and their families and the Council has a statutory responsibility to provide such services. They are additional to those services provided to all children through universal services but can be delivered as an extension of a universal offer. They are designed to provide a range of opportunities for children and young people to support their personal and social development and promote social inclusion. They also provide invaluable support to parents/carers and families.

It is well documented that short breaks provide considerable benefits for disabled children and their families. In particular, they help children and young people to explore and experience new interests and activities, build positive relationships and friendships and develop independence skills. They can also assist parents/carers to cope better with their caring responsibilities, attend to their own and other family members' well being and maintain and develop social networks.

We have gone some way in developing services for disabled children and since October 2011 are fully meeting our requirements in respect of the provision of short breaks. Our commitment is to ensure that families are able to access the full range of services they are entitled to receive, which includes inclusive universal provision and targeted and specialist support for those with additional needs.

Through the development of our Full Service Officer we will:

- Ensure the seamless delivery of services to disabled children, young people and their families.
- Increase choice and control for children, young people and families.
- Ensure equity of access through a fair and transparent allocation of services.

In order to realise our vision for all disabled children and young people we have produced this short breaks strategy so that we can develop a comprehensive local offer along with a pathway to services. This is supported by a Statement of Services all of which will ensure families are fully aware of the services available and how they can access them.

We have consulted local families who have helped to inform our strategy and together we aim to transform our short breaks provision through an ambitious agenda for change.

As the number of disabled children in the borough is small and in order to achieve the best possible value and range of services for families we are working in partnership with the London Borough of Tower Hamlets who are supporting us with commissioning and co-ordinating our short breaks services. The City has also signed up to the 'East London Solutions Framework Agreement', which will support the commissioning of short break services in the east London area and will increase the levels of provision to City families.

NATIONAL CONTEXT

The Government has recently published proposals to reform education and health support for disabled children and young people and those with special educational needs. This builds on the success of the Aiming High for Disabled Children (2007) transformation programme with short breaks featuring throughout the proposals.

This commitment has been supported by the continuation of grant funding which has been allocated to authorities through the Early Intervention Grant. Whilst this funding is non ring fenced the expectation is that local authorities will continue to invest in these services as they have a legal obligation to do so under the Children Act 1989 and the Breaks for Carers and Disabled Children Regulations 2011.

LEGAL CONTEXT

The Children Act 1989 places a duty on local authorities "to provide, as part of the range of services they provide for families, breaks from caring for carers of disabled children to support them to continue to care for their children at home and to allow them to do so more effectively".

The Short Breaks Regulations (2011) set out a number of requirements that local authorities must follow to ensure they perform their duty under the 1989 Act. These are summarised below:

- to have regard to the needs of different types of carers, not just those who would be able to continue to provide care without a break;
- to provide a range of breaks, as appropriate, during the day, night, at weekends and during the school holidays; and

- to provide parents with a short breaks services statement detailing the range of available breaks and any eligibility criteria attached to them.

LOCAL CONTEXT

The City of London is unique in many ways. It is geographically small but hugely significant, not just to the country but the world. The City's role as the heart of the UK's financial industry means that its daytime working population dwarfs its number of permanent residents.

The resident population is small but it is growing steadily. Our recent Childcare Sufficiency Assessment found that the current population of children and young people is 1120, with a 10% projected increase to 1236 by 2014¹

The numbers of families with a child with an additional need, including a disability, is small. A disability is defined as a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long term adverse effect on the child's ability to carry out day to day activities.

The percentage of children with a statement of special educational needs (SEN) is currently just above 1% with a further 1% with a SEN without a statement. Of these just over one in three children has a disability.

Target Group A – one third of children and young people with a disability fall within this category which includes children and young people with Autistic Spectrum Disorder (who have severe learning disabilities or behaviour which is challenging) OR those children and young people whose challenging behaviour is associated with other impairments such as severe learning disabilities.

Target group B – two thirds of children with a disability fall within this category which includes children and young people with complex health needs including those with physical and/or learning disabilities, those who require palliative care (nursing care) and those with associated sensory impairments.

The ages of these children range from 4 to 19 years of age.

VIEWS OF CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND FAMILIES

Families informed us that their children do benefit from a range of leisure/social activities but these are often funded by the family or take place in mainstream settings. Families also often accompany the child or young

¹ Source: GLA 2006 Round of Demographic Projections. Estimating an accurate population figure for The City is difficult. With such a small population, the margin for error is far greater. Many residents are believed to have homes elsewhere for instance, and ONS migration estimates based on the International Passenger Survey are flawed by the fact that people often mistakenly state an intention to live and work in The City of London when they actually mean metropolitan London.

person to the provision. Parents have reported that this results in services being delivered by individuals that do not fully understand the needs of their children which limits their impact on improving outcomes and means families do not benefit from a break from caring.


Overall parents feel that short breaks delivered by The City are limited and are difficult to access as they say information available on what is on offer is not easy to find and there is a lack of transparency in how to access services.

Families are keen to ensure their children receive a range of opportunities and their children's interests are wide and varied. In future families want to see a broad range of services that their children enjoy both independently or with friends and family that are delivered after school, during the day, over night, during holidays and at weekends.

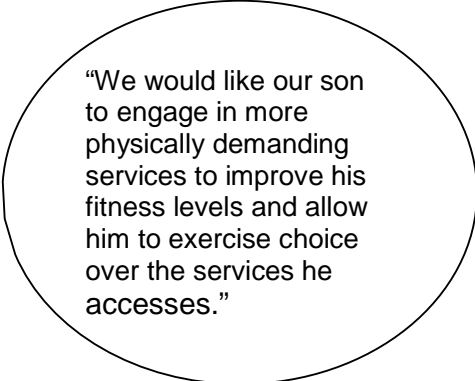
They want their children to be supported to use mainstream services but also to have access to specialist services with children with similar needs all of which should be delivered by an experienced workforce.

Children and young people want to get out and about more and benefit from the same experiences as others. They want to be able to access a range of cultural, leisure and sporting activities on a regular basis. These include:

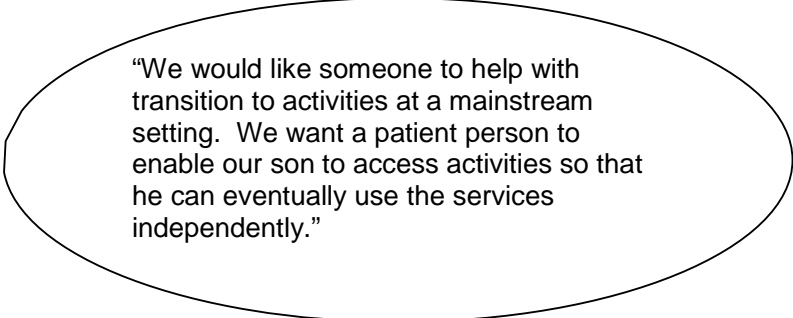
- Visits to museums
- Music, art and drama
- Trips to parks and playgrounds
- Swimming, cycling, gymnastics, rock climbing and canoeing



"We want the City of London to provide and promote a range of services that are available to families and outline what they can offer."



"We would like our son to engage in more physically demanding services to improve his fitness levels and allow him to exercise choice over the services he accesses."

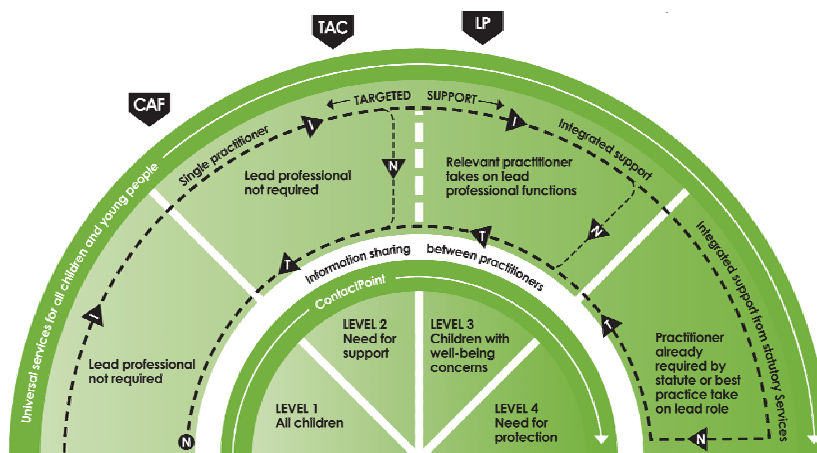


"We would like someone to help with transition to activities at a mainstream setting. We want a patient person to enable our son to access activities so that he can eventually use the services independently."

SERVICE PROVISION

Due to the small number of children and young people resident in the borough The City of London has one children's centre and some youth and play provision which are accessible to disabled children, young people and their families. They also have access to some specialist provision which is commissioned through the voluntary sector in neighbouring boroughs.

The diagram below shows how the range of provision in The City is distributed across the continuum of need. This tiered model also underpins the borough's approach to our all of our work with children, young people and families and is set out as a way of conceptualising and organising service provision and support practitioners to effectively manage the interface between early intervention and targeted support.



Key	
CAF	Common Assessment Framework
TAC	Team Around the Child
LP	Lead Professional
I	Identification of need
N	Needs met
T	Transition back to lower level when needs met

SUCCESSSES

The City has made some progress in the establishment and embedding of key policies and procedures to identify need through an equitable and fair assessment process for short breaks. To date we have:

- Agreed a Pathways to Services structure
- Established a Family Support Panel to ensure that all applications for a short break are treated in a fair and equitable way in line with the eligibility criteria

- Commissioned the Daycare Trust to deliver consultancy and training services to childcare settings based in the city of London, to offer support to providers in the area of disability and inclusion.

STRATEGY FOR CHANGE

The support available to City of London families is not as comprehensive as we would like and the challenge now is for us to capitalise on the support that is available within the borough and in neighbouring authorities. This will involve strengthening our universal provision to provide effective support to disabled children and ensuring specialist services are available to those whose need is greatest.

We will strive for equity of access to services for all eligible families. However, as the needs of individuals differ greatly the level of support offered will be dependent on the complexity of need and individual family circumstances. This means some families will receive a greater level of support than others but **our aim is that all disabled children will be offered at least one short break which they can access through self referral.** Those families wishing to receive additional breaks will require an assessment so that we can ensure we provide the right level of support at the right time and ensure access to services is fair.

PRINCIPLES

The following principles will guide the development and commissioning of all short breaks activity in the City of London:

- Children, young people and families will be at the centre of their care and are fully involved in decisions relating to interventions, identification of outcomes and specialist services will be tailored to individual needs.
- Services will be of a high quality, cost effective and meet the needs of all disabled children and young people, including those with the most complex needs.
- Short breaks provision will be culturally appropriate and meet the racial, cultural, linguistic needs of disabled children and their families.
- There will be fair, understandable and transparent eligibility criteria to enable short breaks to be used as a preventative service and will not restrict provision to those at a point of crisis.
- Provision will be available on a planned and regular basis and at times when families and young people need a break.
- Services will be age appropriate to ensure all eligible children and young people can access short breaks.
- Services will focus on delivering improved outcomes including increased confidence and competence and prepare young people for adult life.
- Services will be delivered by a skilled, competent and flexible workforce that receives ongoing professional development and supervision in keeping with national occupational standards.

AREAS FOR DEVELOPMENT

The following areas for development have been identified through our needs analysis and through consultation with key stakeholders which we will address to ensure our short breaks provision is brought up to the excellent standards we aspire to for all children's services:

Strategy and commissioning

- The planning and commissioning of short breaks services has not been as effective as we would like and we need to address the fact that there are limited opportunities available to children, young people and families as a result of this.
- Resources for the delivery of short breaks are scarce and there is a limited local market through which to commission services which means we will need to build our capacity to enable us to meet our duties relating to the provision of short breaks.
- There are too few systematic opportunities to engage service users to inform strategy and actively participate in service developments.

Access to services

- The lack of transparent eligibility criteria and pathways into services creates barriers to and inequality of access.
- There is no one to one support for children and young people and this reduces their ability to access universal and other services independently from their families.
- Information on services that are available is difficult for families to access.

Delivery of services

- There is a lack of capacity in universal settings to deliver truly inclusive services available to all.
- The limited menu of services available reduces the range of experiences children and young people can benefit from and impacts on their ability to achieve of positive outcomes.
- Many staff working in universal settings often do not have sufficient confidence of working to meet the needs of disabled children which reduces the benefits they receive from using such provision.

OBJECTIVES

To realise the vision set out in this plan will require a stronger strategic framework for services, more precise targeting of support, continued commitment to delivery, and greater communication between all those who work with children and young people to improve access to services.

Over the next three years we will:

Strengthen our commissioning arrangements

- We will develop a three year commissioning plan that will underpin the short breaks strategy which will be reviewed annually to ensure services remain relevant.
- We will maximise the funding available and provide best value in the delivery of short breaks by developing innovative solutions to address local need.
- We will ensure that children, young people and families are central to the commissioning of short break services by enabling their continuous engagement in the development and delivery of services through existing forums.
- We will ensure there are sufficient professional development opportunities available to the children's workforce.

Improve access to services for children, young people and families

- We will develop and publish a statement of services that can be accessed by disabled children and their families and a referral pathway into them.
- We will introduce a self referral system to enable families to have greater choice and control over the services they receive.
- We will offer Direct Payments to all families who meet the eligibility criteria for short breaks and will work with the available market to ensure services can be accessed independently.
- We will develop and publish clear and transparent eligibility criteria for accessing short breaks.
- We will work in partnership with the London Borough of Tower Hamlets to co-ordinate our short breaks and broker services for families.
- We will ensure ongoing consultation with children, young people and families so that we can commission services that meet changing needs.

Increase the volume of services available across the continuum of need delivered by an appropriately skilled workforce

- We will work with our universal services to further build their capacity to more effectively deliver services to disabled children and their families.
- We will work in partnership with neighbouring boroughs and the voluntary sector to increase the opportunities available to City of London children, young people and families.
- We will ensure that support is commissioned to enable children and young people to access universal services.

MONITORING PERFORMANCE

Monitoring the delivery of this plan is fully integrated within the joint accountability arrangements for the Children and Young People's Plan and will be overseen through the Health and Wellbeing Board.

KEY PERFORMANCE MEASURES

Progress against the delivery of the Strategy will be monitored through the following performance indicators:

- Number of children and young people receiving a short break service.
- Number of short breaks received by individual families.
- Length of time from referral to access.
- Number of families accessing a short break through a Direct Payment.
- Percentage of children, young people and parents/carers expressing satisfaction with services.

SHORT BREAKS REFERRAL PATHWAY

