

SHORT BREAK SERVICE STATEMENT



April 2021 – March 2022



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Introduction

Welcome to Hartlepool's Short Breaks Statement. The aim of this statement is to provide parents and carers with information about:

- How we design short break services to meet the needs of disabled children and young people aged 0 – 18 years in Hartlepool and their parents/carers
- Who is eligible to receive short breaks
- The range of short breaks available in Hartlepool and how to access them

Hartlepool's Vision

'Our vision is that we are committed to ensuring that all disabled children and young people and their families in Hartlepool should have equal access to a range of flexible services that support their ambition to live ordinary lives, enjoy a happy and fulfilling childhood and grow up to achieve their full potential.'

Better Outcomes for Families of Disabled Children

The delivery of the short break priorities are designed to improve the outcomes for disabled children and their families. As part of our service delivery the outcomes below are designed to make a difference for families of disabled children.

- Short Breaks aim to support parents and carers in their caring role and reduce levels of stress and anxiety due to the demands of caring
- They will aim to support disabled children and young people to access activities whereby they can make friends, have fun and support the development of their social, communication and independence skills
- When disabled young people are leaving school and making the transition to adulthood that they will be supported and are able to express their wishes and make appropriate choices
- Short Breaks will provide opportunities to enable families to spend time, relax together and for parents and their children to get to know other families and to build up a network of support and develop friendships

What is a Short Break?

A short break is an opportunity for children and young people to spend time away from their parents and carers, to take part in enjoyable activities and meet up with friends while being appropriately supported. It provides a break for parents and carers from their caring responsibilities; giving the parents a chance to relax, recharge their batteries, complete those everyday task and spend time with other family members.

A short break could be a couple of hours each week to an overnight stay in a residential setting or with a carer. The offer currently includes:

- Holiday Play schemes
- Out of School Clubs
- Extended Activities Provision
- Sport & Physical Activities
- Overnight Stays, including local residential or foster care provision
- Social groups
- Parent led Activities
- Specialist Toy Loan Service (including Stay & Play)
- Family based short break activities

Why do we need a Short Breaks Service Statement and what is it for?

The Local Authority is guided by 'The Breaks for Carers of Disabled Children Regulations 2011' and 'Disabled Children Regulations 2011'. This means that all Local Authorities must:

- Prepare a statement that explains the range of Short Break Services it will provide
- Make information available and accessible
- Have a clear criteria for eligibility for Short Break Services
- Say how the services will meet the needs of families

How has this statement been prepared and who was involved?

Hartlepool Borough Council has worked with Hartlepool's Parent Carer Forum – 1 Hart 1 Mind 1 Future to develop this statement.

1 Hart 1 Mind 1 Future is the Parent Participation Forum who work closely with the council to represent views and opinions of parents and carers across Hartlepool. They support the ongoing development and reshaping of services to support families.

Who is responsible?

The lead officer with responsibility for ensuring the statement has been prepared is the Short Break and Parent Participation Officer. Overall responsibility for the statement sits with the Director of Children and Joint Commissioning Services.

What have we achieved in the last 12 months?

During the last 12 months Hartlepool Borough Council have continued to commission a series of services that have been identified within feedback received by families as part of the evaluation and feedback requirements of the short break commissioned services and what families have told us via the Parent Carer Forum. The services have reflected on the feedback and adapted where appropriate.

We have continued to deliver short break activities during the COVID 19 lockdowns and groups have delivered innovatively to ensure that families still received the support when needed, albeit not always face to face delivery. A full evaluation report of the extensive activities delivered across the year has been produced to demonstrate the depth of activities delivered and the feedback received from families.

We have reviewed the Children's Disability Register and launched the online registration form to make it easier for families to access. This provides us with data and information to help the Council plan services.

We continue to maintain as a council the specialist changing facilities managed by the local authority which are located across Hartlepool.

We have consulted and worked with the Parent Carer Forum to review and revamp the Local offer of Services website. This site is has now been launched and is located under the banner of Hartlepool Now website.

We have provided free Max Discount Cards and continue to do so for families which provide great discounts to many attractions both locally, across the North East and the rest of the country. Families have benefitted from access to this service and saved money.

Short Breaks Support

Not all children and families will need the same level of support and short breaks. Some will need more than others because of the nature of their child's disability while some families may need more support because of their individual family circumstances. As a local authority we therefore need to assess your child and family to ensure that we provide the right level of support and short breaks at the right time.

Not all services require an assessment to be carried out and can be accessed directly by families. These are called 'Universal Services'.

Universal Services

These short breaks are available to all families where there are **low support needs** and might include youth clubs, holiday play schemes, activity clubs, Children's Centres and the Max Discount Card (which offers a discounted cost to access many attractions across the country.) The local authority also produce a Short Break Activity Programme which does not require an assessment of need, but includes commissioned services that are more targeted to meet the needs of disabled children. To find out more about these universal short break services for disabled children and their families you can contact the Short Break and Parent Participation Officer on: 01429 284876 or go onto the Local Offer of Services website: www.hartlepoolnow.gov.uk

Targeted and Specialist

Targeted

These are services available to children/young people with some support needs but may not meet the threshold for specialist social care support. In this case the family will have an Early Help Assessment which has been completed by any practitioner involved with your child/family such as a teacher, health visitor, parent support advisor or a family support worker within the Early Help teams.

Following assessment, a plan is drawn up outlining the support needed, which may include a short break. Plans are reviewed regularly to check what progress is being made and to decide whether less or more support may be needed.

Although the Short Break Activity Programme does not require an assessment of need to be undertaken these services partially commissioned by the local authority provide more targeted support than those delivered by universal services.

Specialist

These are highly specialist or bespoke services which are available to children and young people with high support need. They can only be assessed as a result as a Child in Need (CIN) assessment which will be carried out by a social worker from the Children's Disability Team.

The Social Worker has 45 days to complete the CIN assessment which looks carefully at the child's development needs, the parents'/carers' specific needs, any parenting issues and the wider family circumstances and environment. They will also gather relevant information from professionals involved with your child.

A support plan is devised following the assessment, which includes the services and short breaks that may be appropriate to be provided and how this will meet the child's/families' needs. The plan needs to be approved a panel before the short break is approved.

All plans are reviewed at least 6 monthly to make sure they respond to the needs of a child and family. Examples of a specialist short breaks package may include: day placements/overnight stays within a residential or foster placement, the provision of a Direct Payment in order to fund specific activities to meet the identified needs of your child such as accessing a specialist group or club or to fund 1:1 support to enable attendance and participation at a specific activity.

How do we know that Short Break services are meeting needs of children and young people?

In Hartlepool we have a very proactive Parent Led Forum that works in partnership with the Local Authority Short Break Lead Officer, other relevant agencies and groups to ensure that service delivery meets the need of families of disabled children.

There is also parent representation on a number of strategic and operational groups, which provides a platform for parents to contribute and influence change. Parents are also actively involved in the commissioning of non-assessed short break provision and continue to play a very active role in the development of the local offer of services.

Children and young people are actively engaged in having their say about things they like to do. This is carried out in a number of ways, including: questionnaires, face to face discussion and group work within the short break sessions. This information is also gathered to plan for future delivery.

All of our commissioned services are required as part of their terms and conditions of funding to engage service users in evaluating services on a quarterly basis. It is expected that this helps providers to adapt their services as required.

Examples of feedback are set out below:

Sport and Physical Activity Team

The team on behalf of the Short Break Services Programme deliver 2 sessions a week across 50 weeks of the year. These sessions consist of Fun-ability sessions every Thursday and a Multi Sports Session every Saturday morning for children and young people aged 6 – 16 years to support them in participating in a wide variety of physical activities.

This last year has not been without its challenges, the team have continued to work in partnership to deliver the weekly sessions. However, a variety of innovative online provision was scheduled through pre-recorded and live virtual delivery aiming to break the barriers and engage more people with additional needs to participate in sport and physical activity.

During this reporting period the team when allowed to provide face to face delivery COVID restrictions permitting, in addition to identifying supplementary engagement through activity packs, online delivery and the use of wider resources.

Throughout the year staff carry out participation feedback sessions to assist the delivery of future sessions to meet the needs of individuals accessing the session.

This is a snap shot of what parents, children and young people told us they enjoyed:

“As members of staff from Hartlepool Young Carers it was great to have the children involved in the sessions. Everyone had so much fun and we have lots of ideas as to how we can use the activity packs”

“I just wanted to leave my feedback for the Saturday Sports & Football sessions. How much an invaluable service they are to my child. He first joined the sessions when he was 5 and he is now 8”

“The Saturday sessions are amazing for my 6 year old child who suffers from poor core muscle strength, poor spatial awareness and epilepsy amongst other conditions. I was reluctant to send him at first, as I was anxious he would fall over and hurt himself or be pushed around by older children. The staff are amazing

Supporting him during the sessions. He returns home a happy boy and I have seen him join in and the older children are great with him and so patient”

“The kids have loved being back. They have so much fun here. This has been one of the only breaks we have had through lockdown.”

“Thanks for keeping in touch. Our child won’t join in the online sessions, he just wants to do it when it is ‘normal’ again. We’ll be back though.”



Families First North East & Hartlepool, including Hartlepool Special Needs Support Group

Provide the commissioned short break service on behalf of the local authority.

These services are offered over 50 weeks of the year and include: extended afterschool activities, holiday play schemes, and weekend activities, toy loan service and stay & play sessions.

In March 2020, COVID 19 pandemic saw the world of delivering services to children take a dramatic change. The doors to delivering face to face services closed until further notice.

So what did FFNE do to respond to family’s needs?

- Provided weekly telephone calls to all parents, children and young people, including the offer of practical support
- Delivered hundreds of regular activity packs, equipment from the toy loan service, including lap top and iPad distribution from normally utilised in the centre

- Youth group activities established themselves in the on line world and staff ensured that social gatherings continued, and friendships blossomed in a safe and supportive environment

As soon as government guidance started to feed through, the service quickly adapted to make plans to restart face to face services where it was permitted within the guidance.

The delivery of the service even as some restrictions lifted was not straight forward and it had to be mindful of the most vulnerable families who were still shielding, their worries of this virus and the potential impact on their children.

This however did not deter the passion of the staff to ensure children and young people had access to activities. A combination of bubbles, additional sanitisation, open spaces, improved hand hygiene, less travelling and social distancing allowed the service to achieve what initially appeared to be the unbelievable.

Here are quotes from families that use these services:

Families First NE

"It's the difference between us coping and not. Absolutely recommend".

"It's hard to find places you feel comfortable leaving your child. I am extremely comfortable leaving my child in their care. The staff are truly caring and my son has great fun there. I would definitely recommend to a friend".

"Fantastic, friendly, professional and they care about my son".

"It's his safe space".

"They are absolutely amazing. Without their continued support my child and family would still be very isolated. My child has had the opportunity to experience life in a way that he would never get to. To hear him come home at night telling me how many goals he has scored at football when all standard football teams couldn't cater for his needs is amazing".

During the COVID 19 pandemic, this is what families said about the service:

"Reduced isolation".

"Just knowing there was someone was there at the end of a phone was a great support".

"Fantastic to know we had a support network".

What did some of our young people tell us?

"I enjoyed the movie. I liked it when Simba went home to be king, it was awesome".

"I went outside to plant some seeds so we can grow some peas and cauliflowers and the children were saying that they want to socially distance the potatoes".

"I played in the playroom and in the arts and crafts. When I feel myself getting angry, I asked to go to the sensory room".



Hartlepool Special Needs Support Group

“Alfie joined Hartlepool Special Needs Support Group 11 years ago when he came to live with us, although it was very difficult at the time for him as it was a new adventure he soon settled in and to this day loves the group. He has become very confident and sociable and made many friends. Alfie has cerebral palsy and is non-verbal and the staff all communicate with him using signs and gestures as well as speech, he has become very independent and has been able to access specialised equipment i.e. go-karts, specialised bikes etc. Alfie particularly loves the Summer Scheme as he has jobs that he has to do including washing up, emptying bins and going on the bus he starts looking forward to the next one before the first one is over. This amazing group helped members access activities during lockdown through zoom and Pat rang regularly to see how we were all doing and if there was anything she could help with. It was a very hard time for everyone.”

“I cannot speak highly enough of the care and professionalism of the group. The group are the ‘best’ part of Shelby’s life outside of home. They have cared for her despite her constant epileptic fits which excludes her from every other form of group activity. With the group Shelby gets to be herself and her disabilities become no longer the major part of her life. She feels very much part of the group and it is the only place that I can have without doubt full confidence that all of Shelby’s needs are fully met with care and compassion.”

“Connor always looks forward to attending Children’s Fun Club, he really missed not seeing his friends during the lockdown. When the club started up again he was really happy and this give as a break. He liked receiving his Christmas packs as well as his sister and brother.”

Parent Carer Forum - 1 Hart 1Mind 1 Future

1 Hart 1 Mind 1 Future has continued to work with families in Hartlepool to develop family led activities. Through consultation with families the Forum has delivered many parent led activities for families to enjoy together. The activities delivered have brought the whole family together and the impact on families has been extremely positive. The Forum has increased families’ resilience, reduced isolation and increased social opportunities for the whole family.

During lockdown the Parent Carer Forum in conjunction with Hartlepool Carers and other organisations provided a wide range of activities and support and a more detailed evaluation of this can be found in the Short Break Provision Evaluation Report.

This is what families have told us:

“Thank you so much, you all have your children with needs, but you still manage to help others, this is so kind of you”

“This is the most amazing day, we have been locked up in shielding for months and to get out of the house and come somewhere different and take part in things we have never tried has been brilliant. The kids have had a ball”

“Absolutely brilliant, we had the rip, the staff were so friendly and accommodating”

“These packs are amazing, I managed to get 30 minutes in the bath by myself and can't tell you how good that felt”

How does the council support transition to adult services?

The 0-18 Children's Disability Team and the Adults 18 – 25 Disability Team will work together in partnership with a young person and the people that are important to them to explore if support needs to continue or be in place in preparation for the young person turning 18 years old. Children's and Adult Social Care work together in carrying out assessments of need under the Care Act 2014 to ensure that effective arrangements are in place which enhances the quality of life for all young people with a disability and their family as they move forward into adulthood.

The children and adult disabilities teams also work closely with the SEND education team to ensure that young people can access education and training.

Where can families get more information about Short Breaks?

There are a number of places where you can find Information regarding Short Breaks in Hartlepool:

- Contacting the Short Break & Parent Participation Officer. Tel No: 01429 284876.
- Hartlepool's Local Offer of services for families of disabled children website: www.hartlepoolnow.co.uk
- Sign up to the Children's Disability Register either by emailing to: ChildrensDisabilityRegister@hartlepool.gov.uk or request on line via the Local Offer of Services: www.hartlepoolnow.co.uk

- Hartlepool's Parent Carer Forum - 1 Hart 1 Mind 1 Future Contact: 07896 054361 or via their email address: HartMindFuture@yahoo.co.uk or join their face book page: 1Hart, 1Mind, 1Future Group Forum

If you are looking for more targeted or specialist service which may involve an assessment of need contact the Childrens Hub on: 01429 284284

What do we want to achieve in the next 12 months?

Priority	Action
Holiday Play schemes	Maintain and wherever possible to increase the numbers of places to accommodate children and young people to include 11 weeks of holiday play scheme provision
Extended Activities - out of school hours	Continue to maintain delivery of extended activity provision across 50 weeks of the year
Family Based and parent led activities	Continue to support the work of the Parent Carer Forum to increase awareness and engage with new families accessing short break services.
Specialist Toy Loan service, including Stay & Play	Maintain the service to include access to specialist toy provision for families and settings and to support families of children under the age of 5 to access play and stay services
Sport/Physical Activities	To maintain the delivery of the current number of sessions across the year (100) in total, to increase the participation and encourage access to club based sporting activity.
Increase access to information	Review and deliver briefing sessions of the new local offer of services website to increase better access to information.

	<p>The Parent Carer Forum to continue to use and promote their own face book page to reach wider audiences to disseminate information.</p> <p>Attend information day events to widen the reach of families accessing service.</p> <p>Produce easy read literature on services and products available.</p>
Max Discount Card Membership	<p>Maintain access to free discount cards for families of children with additional needs and disability to enable them to access many attractions across the country at discounted prices.</p>
Continue to support Parent Participation to influence the development of services	<p>Continue to support the parent led forum in the delivery of their work.</p> <p>Continue to raise awareness and increase the membership base of the group to ensure a broader range of parents are involved in the development of services.</p>

What do parents/carers do if they want to register a complaint or compliment?

If the Short Break is either delivered or commissioned by Hartlepool Borough Council, then the Comments, Complaints and Compliments Procedure should be followed. For further information you can complete an online form by going to: www.hartlepool.gov.uk or via email to cascomplaints@hartlepool.gov.uk or by calling: 01429 284020.

How can people access the statement?

Hartlepool's Short Break Service statement will be available in the following places:

- Hartlepool's SEND Local Offer of Services published on: www.hartlepoolnow.co.uk
- Hartlepool's Parent Carer Forum: 1 Hart 1 Mind 1 Future: www.1hart1mind1future.co.uk
- The Short Break & Parent Participation Officer. Tel No: 01429 284876