

Family Services

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Barnet Short Breaks Statement 2021 - 2022

Short breaks services have been informed by feedback from children, young people, their families, short break providers and professionals. The Short Break statement is for families living within the London Borough of Barnet who have a child or young person aged 0 -19 with a disability. It is to inform them of Barnet's Short Breaks offer and how services can be accessed. The short breaks statement will be reviewed and updated annually. This will reflect changing needs, the learning from the delivery of short breaks, changes arising from policy and practice developments.

Introduction

Since 1 April 2011, Barnet has had a statutory duty to undertake the Break for Carers of Disabled Children Regulations 2011 to:

"Provide short breaks to those who are carers for disabled children when it would improve their ability to care for their disabled child, or when they could not continue to provide care without a short break and to Publish information to parents about the services available in their area and criteria for accessing it by 1 October 2011".

What are short breaks?

Short Breaks are activities for children and young people with a disability. They allow children and young people with disabilities to have an enjoyable break away from their main carer and give their carer a break from their caring responsibilities. These breaks can include day, evening, overnight and weekend activities and can take place in the child's own home, in a community or residential setting. They come in a range of formats and each can last just a few hours to a few days, and occasionally longer depending on the type of provision and the needs of the child and their family (Short Breaks Implementation Guidance. DCSF, DOH2008).

Short breaks previously referred to as "respite care" have been offered to families as part of the wider family support offer for many years and the Aiming High for Disabled Children Programme 2008/2011 with its additional investment enabled a transformation of these services to take place. In Barnet this has meant that a large number of children and young people have been able to access services and there has been a wider range of opportunities for them to choose from including universal, targeted and specialist services.

The government allocates funding for short breaks and Barnet has an annual budget of £630,000.00 to deliver short breaks in 2021-2022.

Who are short breaks for?

Short Breaks are available for all Children and young people living in Barnet, 0-19 years old, who:

- Have a Special Educational Need and / or Disability. This may include a physical disability, learning disability or a significant hearing or visual impairment.
- It includes children with autism or autistic spectrum condition with communication disorder and developmental delay, and children who have challenging behaviour because of their learning disability.
- It also includes children with complex medical needs, some who may have life limiting conditions.

Barnet Short Break Service

The principles underpinning Barnet's short breaks service are:

- enabling children and young people with disabilities and complex health needs to have the **same opportunities** and choices as their peers and for families to have the **opportunity to enjoy ordinary lives**.
- Short Breaks are an integral part of the wider offer to families and with few exceptions children and young people's needs are best met living with their family and as members of their local community.
- Children and young people's access to high quality, enjoyable and challenging short break activities which enable them to make friends, develop social skills and independence and promote learning is more likely to secure better outcomes for them in childhood and equip them better into adulthood.

Objectives

- Empowering families **to make informed choices** about the short break services they access ensuring fair access to services, through transparent criteria, joined up working and common assessments providing a range of timely and responsive short breaks.
- To offer children and young people with severe and complex disabilities and /or life limiting conditions, positive experiences which promote their social and emotional development and independence.
- To encourage children, young people and their families to contribute to service planning, delivery and evaluation in ways that they choose and ensure that their views are reflected in services.
- Maintaining high standards including the safeguarding of children across all service providers, through effective commissioning, performance management and working in partnership
- Providing a flexible offer that allows families choice in how they meet the needs of their children

What different types of short breaks are available?

Universal Services

The London Borough of Barnet is committed to ensuring children and young people with a disability can, where possible, access mainstream, universal provision, preferably within their local area. Equality and inclusion is promoted where services are designed, equipped and staff trained, to enable children with a disability to enjoy the same activities as their peers. For all Short Breaks within universal provision, parent and carers need to check details with the provider directly. Universal services are provided by voluntary groups and charities. Some of the organisations include:

[Unitas Youth Zone](#)

[Barnet Council Children Centres](#)

[Barnet Libraries](#)

[Children, Family and Young People Early Help Hubs \(0 – 19\)](#)

Targeted Services

For some children and young people with a disability, universal provision may not be enough to meet their needs. Where a child or a young person's needs, or their family's situation is more complex; Short Break support may be provided as a targeted offer. Some targeted services are funded by the London Borough of Barnet while others are provided by the voluntary sector.

To be eligible for a short break service, children and young people must be aged 0-19 (until 19th birthday), be in receipt of an Education Health Care Plan EHCP and be in receipt of the Disability Living Allowance DLA at the middle or higher rate.

They must fall under one of the following groups:

Group A

Children and young people with Autistic Spectrum Condition (ASC). They are likely to have other impairments such as Severe Learning Disabilities or behaviours which challenge. Children and young people in this group will display behaviour which challenges services or behaviour which causes injury to themselves or others. Not all children with ASC will require target short break services.

Group B

Children and young people with complex health needs including those with disability and life limiting conditions and/or those with associated impairments such as cognitive or sensory impairments and who may have moving, and handling needs or require specialist trained staff and specialist equipment.

In exceptional circumstances, applications for Short Breaks that fall outside of this criteria may be considered at the Disability Resource Panel (DPR).

Short Breaks Offer

The Offer for Families in Barnet is as follows:

- 15 days or 90 hours of service provision (using Barnet's provider List)
- £1200 Funding via pre-paid card (allows families choice and flexibility of services. Subject to a 0-25 service funding policy and short breaks written agreement).

- Group based social, sport, cultural and play activities which will be available during school holidays and at the weekends. Some services may also be available during the day for pre-school children. The services must offer children and young people a safe and stimulating environment that supports them to make friends, develop new skills and participate in exciting activities. The activities should be about offering fun, challenge and enjoyment while at the same time reflecting the value of "ordinariness". These group-based activities could be offered as single events activity days or a structured programme over a number of weeks, throughout the year or as consecutive days such as holidays.

Specialist Provision

Specialist short breaks support children and young people where their disability has a substantial and long-term effect on their ability to carry out day-to-day activities.

To access a Specialist Short Break, the child or young person will require an assessment from the London Borough of Barnet. The Assessment is carried out by a Social Worker from the 0-25 Disability Service. Eligibility decisions are based on individual need, including to what extent a child or young person's disability or impairment affects their lives and the lives of those who live with and care for them.

It is likely that if a child/young person is eligible for Short Break support their disability and/or special educational needs could be described in one or more of the following ways:

- A significant, permanent, and enduring physical disability
- A significant global learning disability
- A severe and enduring communication disorder
- Autism with a significant global development delay and/or challenging behaviour
- A significant sensory impairment
- To request a child and family assessment to access specialist Short Breaks parents/carers should contact the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub

Decisions about support packages are made at the Disability Resource Panel. Some of the specialist support services include direct payments, agency support from our preferred providers and specialist respite provisions.

Overnight short breaks in community setting

Traditionally the short break service that is provided overnight has been offered from within a residential setting although locally there has been some community based overnight provision. Nationally, and in Barnet there has been a decline in the demand for overnight service compared to other types of short breaks with the most popular being activity-based overnights including camping and in activity centres.

Barnet delivers a limited number of overnight activity breaks for disabled children and young people with varying degrees of needs, and these are run during the school holidays.

Enabling service – personal assistants

Principally the purpose of this service is to support disabled children and young people to take part in a community activity but may also include activities and support in the child's own home. This service is available mainly but not restricted to the main school holidays and should be available at a range of times to suit the child and family including daytimes and evenings. The service should be able to respond to requests for emergency provision if required to meet the needs of disabled children and families and in exceptional cases where the need arises an overnight may be offered where this provides consistency of care for families.

Respite services

This service will provide residential day and respite care offering a break to families identified as having acute social care need. As well as offering planned respite breaks, the service will be able to respond to requests for emergency provision if required to meet the needs of individual disabled children and their families. The service will be for those children eligible for social care provision based on the assessment of social workers. Majority of children and young people eligible for this provision will require a series of regular day or overnight respite breaks throughout the course of the year although in exceptional circumstances a longer period of residential respite may be required to support a family in crisis

Other useful organisations

Short Breaks are provided by a wide range of organisations within Barnet and beyond.

These include:

- Voluntary organisations
- Statutory services
- External providers

Information about Barnet Short Breaks including the services and activities available can be found at:

<http://www.barnet.gov.uk/shortbreaks>

- the directory for young people, carers, parents, and professionals can be found at <http://www.barnet.gov.uk/directme> and this provides up to date detailed information on activities including short breaks activities for young people-also provides more general information about services available
- Barnet Local Offer: helps children and young people with Special Educational Needs and /or Disabilities and their families find the information and support they are looking for, from across the Barnet local area. For more information please read: www.barnetlocaloffer.org.uk
- National Autistic society: They champion the rights and interests of all people with autism and aim to provide support to individuals with autism and their families. They can sign post to other services which may be able to offer support. For more information please contact: [The National Autistic Society | Barnet Council](#)