**Wakefield SHORT BReaks  
Annual Report   
2022 - 2023**

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# Context

Wakefield is ambitious for all its children and young people, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). We want to ensure that they are happy, healthy, safe, supported and able to reach their full potential.

The local authority has a legal duty to provide short breaks for children and young people with SEND under the provision of:

* Children Act 1989
* Breaks for Carers of Disables Children Regulations 2011
* Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1970
* Children Act 2004
* Children and Families Act 2014
* Equality Act 2010
* NHS Act 2006 (as amended by the Health and Social Care Act 2012)
* Care Act 2014 (in relation to transition to adult social care)

Short breaks are services that are provided to children and young people with SEND to experience things that other children and young people do, both at home and in their community, and enable them to play a full part in their families and the wider community.

They also enable family carers to continue to provide the care that enables children with disabilities to be fully part of their families. For most children and young people with SEND these are provided by services that are available to everybody.

Within Wakefield, Short Breaks can include **Universal, Targeted** and **Specialist** provision.

* **Universal -** Services and activities for everyone including children and young people with a disability. Examples would include; Brownies, bowling, access to parks and open spaces.
* **Targeted –** Services and activities that are designed specifically to meet the needs of children and young people with a disability, for example, disability sports groups, swimming, and disability youth groups.
* **Specialist –** Services and activities that are for children and young people with complex needs that cannot be met by other short breaks, such as those children who need specialist medical equipment, personal care or support from specialist trained workers. Examples of services include overnight residential services, connect carers, nursing support and personal assistants.

# Public Sector Equality Duty

All work undertaken in relation to short breaks takes into account the ‘Public Sector Equality Duty’ or ‘PSED’ under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010. This applies to everything done by local authorities, including its short break provision.

The ‘PSED’ mandates ‘due regard’ to a series of needs, being the need to:

* Eliminate discrimination
* Advance equality of opportunity; and
* Foster good relations between different groups.

The provision of short breaks to disabled children is obviously relevant to addressing all of these needs, as short breaks:

* Help address the discrimination disabled children face in being able to access mainstream leisure activities, clubs and so on;
* Promote equality of opportunity for disabled children compared with their non-disabled peers; and
* Increase disabled children’s visibility in the community and their contact with non-disabled people (including short break workers), thus reducing stigma and improving community relations. In this regard specialist and targeted short breaks must supplement wider efforts to promote community inclusion for disabled children, particularly through making universal services more inclusive.

As a result there must be careful consideration by local authorities of the needs specified under the PSED when budgets are set and commissioning decisions are taken.

# Assessments

An assessment of need is required to access specialist short breaks support and they are carried out by the Complex Care Needs Team and the Short Breaks Assessment Team. The majority of new requests for assessment come from the Short Breaks Assessment Team and Children’s First Hubs. Reassessments are also carried out by the Complex Care Needs Team or the Short Breaks Assessment Team. These can be part of a regular review cycle or at the request of a parent/carer or a professional where there has been a significant change in one of the three areas of need.

The three areas of need considered at an assessment or reassessment are:

* Child’s needs and development
* Parent carer’s needs
* Family and environment

In 2022-23 a total of 147 new referrals was received for short breaks support. Parents and carers were contacted and 44 did not meet specialist short breaks criteria. They were sign posted to target and universal services. A total of 97 new assessments were completed.

This represents a 22% decrease on the 125 conducted in 2021/22. 263 re-assessments were conducted, a 41% increase on 21/22.

A total of 97children and young people ceased support in 2022-23:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Turned 18 Years Old | 29 |
| No longer needed to access Short Breaks support | 62 |
| Receiving support via the family | 1 |
| Package ceased – no longer engaging | 1 |
| Moved out of district | 2 |
| Other | 2 |

# Short Breaks Panel

The current Short Breaks Panel was established in November 2019 with the remit to oversee the Short Breaks process.

* Reach decisions on requests for specialist short breaks
* Review specialist short breaks packages
* Quality check the short breaks assessments completed by the Short Breaks Assessment Team and Complex Care Needs Team

It is a multi-agency panel chaired by a Service Manager which meets every 2 weeks.

# Specialist Short Breaks Team

The Specialist Short Breaks Team is managed by the Specialist Short Breaks Manager supported by 1.5fte Short Breaks Co-ordinators and a 1.0fte Short Breaks Support Officer.

The team’s core roles are:

* To co-ordinate assessments for consideration at the Short Breaks Panel, which sits fortnightly;
* To attend, contribute to and minute the Short Breaks Panel;
* To inform parent/carer(s) of the outcomes of Panel;
* To liaise with Short Breaks providers to ensure that those approved for Short Breaks are picked up at the earliest possible opportunity following on from a panel decision;
* To ensure that providers used for Short Breaks, both internal and external meet minimum standards;
* To organise and deliver holiday group provision;
* To hold regular contract meetings with providers, supporting and challenging providers appropriately where problems may arise;
* Liaise with parent/carer(s) regarding all aspects of short break provision, including where provision is not working for whatever reason.

# Specialist Short Breaks

The following specialist short breaks support is available for children and young people in the Wakefield District:

* Managed Account – the Council manages the support on behalf of the family, finds the provider and pays the provider directly
  + Individual support in the home for personal care, waking and sleeping nights
  + Individual support in the community for social and leisure
  + Term Time and Non-Term Time specialist groups (except Christmas holidays)
* Direct Payment – the family manages all or part of their short breaks support
* Residential Provision
* Connect Care [connect-care-leaflet.pdf (wakefield.gov.uk)](https://www.wakefield.gov.uk/Documents/schools-children/fostering/connect-care-leaflet.pdf)

Many providers offer more than one type of support which can include personal support, group social/leisure in the community, individual social/leisure in the community, daytime support in the home, overnight support inside the home, overnight support outside the home. In addition to our internal providers we commission external providers and their information can be found on Local Offer website: [Search Results | Wakefield SEND Local Offer (mylocaloffer.org)](https://wakefield.mylocaloffer.org/search-page-lo/?serviceCategories.0=312347C9-24E5-46C8-9D3C-AEF500F36C4A&searchTab=servicesSearchTab&templateId=fd62c561-1dce-40c6-aa7f-aef900d122a4&sortOption=Name%3Basc&pageNumber=1&pageSize=10&distance=1609&filters.serviceCategories.0=312347C9-24E5-46C8-9D3C-AEF500F36C4A&filters.distance=1609)

# Performance

In 2022-23 there were 394 children and young people that received specialist short breaks support. This is an increase of 17.6% on 2021-22. The children and young people in receipt of the short breaks service are predominantly male and White British.

The majority of children and young people receiving short breaks continues to be those aged between 8 – 11 years old, in Key Stage 2.

The chart below indicates the areas where the children and young people in receipt of short breaks reside within the Wakefield district. Although not always possible, we use this information to inform the planning of our targeted and specialist short breaks to try to ensure that children and young people access opportunities within their local areas.

## Specialist Short Breaks

The table below is the summary of short breaks provision children and young people have received in 2022-23. The figures from previous years are included for comparison.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Provision** | **2020 - 2021** | **2021 - 2022** | **2022 - 2023** |
| Managed Account | 278 | 296 | 310 |
| Personal Care | 12 | 13 | 13 |
| Social and Leisure | 164 | 184 | 177 |
| Term Time Specialist Groups | 12 | 11 | 10 |
| Non-Term Time Specialist Groups | 90 | 143 | 154 |
| Direct Payments | 77 | 71 | 72 |
| Residential | 81 | 71 | 68 |
| Mixed Packages\* | 131 | 82 | 89 |

\*the figure provided is also accounted for in the relevant provision, this data has been supplied to give indication that 89 out of 394 children and young people receive more than one provision.

# Compliments and Complaints

We constantly strive for excellence, ensuring that children and young people with SEND have their needs met, families feel supported, and that we have a workforce of engaged providers who are well-matched to meet need. In order to achieve this, we actively seek out feedback from service users and providers, listening to what they tell us and acting upon it.

There were no formal complaints received in 2022/23.

## Complaint and feedback themes:

The Specialist Short Breaks Team have been proactive in dealing with issues when they arise but listed below are themes of issues that families have raised:

* Inconsistency of staff from providers and poor communication
* Support awarded is not what families have initially requested

Compliments

These are a selection of quoted compliments received. They evidence that the service is very much valued by families and children and young people alike. Compliments are also received from our providers.

*“Parent states that the short breaks provides her time to spend with younger son, who often (she feels) misses out. Parent states that Bxxxx enjoys his time with his carer, and they go to the cinema or into town. The carer is helping Bxxxx to cope with socialising in public and learn skills to be independent (buying tickets for the cinema etc). As a result, of his time with short breaks Bxxxx now has the confidence to go out on nature trails. It is his hobby to collect sticks and twigs to build items at home. Something Parent and Bxxxx do together.” - Parent*

*2Short Breaks has done an amazing job with my son in such a short space of time as he is now acting like a proper human and even putting on deodorant and aftershave just to go to school (which the teachers love), it's fabulous and she can't thank them enough for what they have done and the whole family is really happy.” - Parent*

*“I gained a new friend after attending the holiday group, we had gone for a bike ride together and my grandma was really happy.” - Young Person*

*“I have seen a massive improvement in the last 3 weeks since the provider completed my son’s first assessment. Txxxx has now come out of his bedroom and has been in the community and has even opened up about his feelings” - Parent*

# Feedback

Through wider feedback and regular contact with our Parent Carer Forum, we needed to explore extending our current provision for teenagers to prevent them from going into crisis. This will keep them attending local colleges with their peers and in their community. We addressed this via our successful bid for the DfE innovation short breaks funding.

We also needed to fill the gap for young people with Autism, SEMH and / or behaviours that challenge to support those not accessing an educational setting back into their school or college at the earliest opportunity. This cohort will need a more creative and bespoke approach as often they are unwilling or unable to access the support, we have available. We now have a service via the DfE innovation short breaks funding to address this.

# What we have achieved in 2022-23

## Integration of the Specialist Short Breaks Team to the Health and Wellbeing Service

The Specialist Short Breaks Team has moved from the SEND Development Team to the Health and Wellbeing service.

## Happy Healthy Holidays Funding

We have been successful for funding from the happy healthy holidays this meant that we have been able to provide more support to children and young people with SEND and their families over the summer holidays and offer free lunch for those who are eligible with free school meals.

In summer 2022 we were able to provide:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Number of:** |  |
| **Sessions** | 140 |
| **CYP** | 210 |

Comparison between Summer 2021 and Summer 2022

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Specialist CYP that accessed summer groups:** | **Targeted CYP that accessed summer groups:** | **Total:** |
| **2021** | 93 | 91 | 184 |
| **2022** | 154 | 56 | 210 |
| **%** | **65% increase** | **42% decrease** | **14%** |

The decrease of targeted CYP who accessed the summer groups could be caused by those CYP accessing other Happy Healthy Holiday providers who have also been awarded funding across the Wakefield District.

A further bid for funding has been submitted for summer 2023.

## EHCP Advice

From October 2022 until March 2023 138 initial discussions took place with only 3 out of the 138 conversations completed resulting in a full assessment.

The detailed initial conversation provides comprehensive tailored advice to families, following this the majority decide that they do not feel it is necessary for them to progress to a full social care assessment as they are now aware of the wider support they can access without the need for an assessment. This is then recorded as the EHC social care advice.

Examples of feedback:

*Thankyou L for all the information and help and advice, it’s very helpful and much appreciated thank you, both myself and C will work through all the information and if appropriate will involve M in some of the supports available explaining best we can that M will sort of understand. Thanks.*

*Many thanks for this, we really appreciate this information. It’s so hard to find the right information, especially groups and fellow parents meeting places so your visit and information is amazing.*

# Future Plans

## Further development of the use of Liquidlogic

The Specialist Short Breaks Team will continue to explore Liquid Logic can be used to improve our service to families.

Work is currently being undertaken to identify how Direct Payments can be processed through the system. This will ensure that payments are accurate and made at regular intervals. It will also increase capacity within the Short Breaks Support Team, ensuring that implementation times are reduced, and monitoring systems are established.

The use of Liquidlogic to provide regular performance reports is also being explored. This will provide a rich vein of data around Key Performance Indicators which will enable the establishment of targets for further service improvement, ensuring that our families receive the very best service possible.

The next developmental step in the use of the Liquidlogic central records management system to enable Direct Payments to be made. The Short Breaks Support Manager is currently working with Liquidlogic support staff to develop this capability.

## Updating of the Short Breaks Statement

The Short Breaks Statement is due for review.

There is a request from the Parent Carer Forum for it to include a clear pathway diagram with an explanation of what parents/carers can expect at each stage of the process. We will continue to work closely with them to ensure that the statement is fit for purpose and accessible.

As part of our drive to make all documents accessible we will produce an Easy Read version for children and young people, engaging with the Shout Out for Change group for ideas as to what needs to be included.

## Self Assessment

Initial consultation has taken place with the Parent Carer Forum who would welcome a self-assessment process for accessing short breaks. It is agreed that the need for professional assessment is required to access specialist short breaks, however the use of a self-assessment form to access targeted short breaks. Those who did not meet the criteria could be signposted to appropriate universal provision.

## DfE Short Break Innovation Programme.

Wakefield Council has been successful in bidding for Year 1 of the Short Breaks Innovation Programme, the Council will now be submitting a bid for Year 2 from the Department for Education. The funding will allow further short breaks support for children and young people with SEND. The successful year one bid will provide the following support.

The priority cohort are young people (YP) (teenagers 12+) with:

o Social Emotional Mental Health needs (SEMH)

o Autistic Spectrum Disorders (ASD)

o behaviours that challenge

o emotionally based school avoidance.

Two Young Person’s Motivational Coaches will provide critical support to isolated YP aged 12-18 whose SEMH and/or ASD needs means they cannot easily access support. These YP have been disproportionally affected by the pandemic and face overwhelming new barriers. Coaches will provide a bridge between educational settings and wider services, identifying those at risk at the earliest opportunity. They will provide imaginative packages of support that address acute and long term barriers/needs. This includes a creative new offer which will see each young person benefit from a co-produced development plan, setting out jointly agreed and personalised activities and underpinned by a flexible personal activity budget. Each plan/budget will identify an inspiring range of activities/social events/trips that will increase social interaction, improve family/peer relationships and sustain school/college attendance/engagement.

Innovative individual and group new outreach respite that transforms existing respite activities to place the planning of activities in the hands of YP. For the group sessions, young people will collaboratively plan new block and individual activities. Individual support will be provided to help prevent families going into crisis.

Age-appropriate evening respite activities to address the current gap for 18-24 year olds, providing sessions each week.

## Short Breaks Survey

The Specialist Short Breaks Team to produce a short breaks survey for families to complete to ensure consistent feedback is received and this is circulated to families in a timely manner to help improve the overall short breaks services.

## Happy Healthy Holidays Funding – Summer 2023

A further bid for funding will be submitted for Summer 2023 so we can continue providing a wide range of provision to both targeted and specialist children and young people in the summer holidays.