

Bristol Short Breaks Statement 2022

Short breaks: fun activities for disabled children and young people



Bristol City Council
June 2022

Bristol's short breaks statement is for families with a disabled child or young person living in Bristol. Short breaks are just one element of the support available for disabled children and young people in Bristol. For details of the full offer visit [Bristol's Local Offer](#)

Introduction

The purpose of this document

The short breaks statement sets out how Bristol will provide short breaks for disabled children and young people, and their families and will cover:

- how short breaks help disabled children, young people, and their families
- the law
- the range of short breaks available
- who short breaks are for and how needs are assessed
- how the range of services is designed to meet the needs of the carers, disabled children and young people and their families.

A short breaks definition

Short breaks: fun activities for disabled children and young people

Short breaks are supportive, family services that allow parent carers to have time out from their caring responsibilities in the same way that parents and carers without disabled children are able to do.

They also give disabled children and young people the opportunity to go places, spend time with friends, take part in fun and enjoyable activities, become more independent and try new things. They can be at any time, ranging from an hour to a day, evening, overnight, weekend or a holiday, depending on the needs of the child and their family involved. The short break may take place in a community activity setting, a child/young person's home, or other residential setting.

Who is responsible?

The lead professional responsible is Sarah Parker, Director Children and Families Services, Bristol City Council.

Bristol City Council is responsible for commissioning short breaks jointly with Bristol, North Somerset, South Gloucestershire NHS Commissioning Group.

How this statement was prepared

We've worked closely with parents and carers to co-produce this statement and the short breaks services it describes.

The targeted short breaks services (see page 5 for a definition of targeted services) were last re-commissioned in 2018/19. At this time, we listened to lots of disabled children and parent carers to learn more about their experiences and what they want from short breaks services. This was to make sure we have the right support in place for children, young people, and their families when they need it. We are currently in the process of beginning a new re-commission with the aim to have re-commissioned services in place by October 2023.

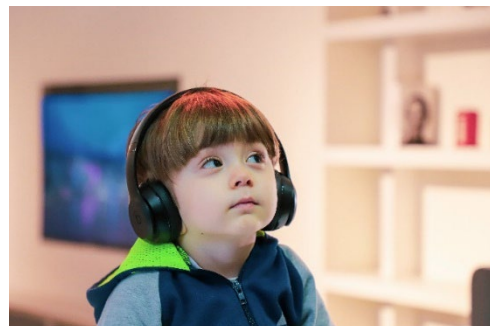
All the commissioned short breaks services are required to seek feedback from children and families to make sure people are happy with their services and so they can adapt what they offer if needed.

How short breaks services help children, young people, and their families

Short breaks services contribute to the following outcomes

Disabled children and young people

- have safe and stable home lives
- improved physical health through physical activities
- improved emotional health and well-being
- enjoy their short breaks
- try doing new things
- less dependent on their parent or carer
- learn and develop skills and abilities
- young people develop skills that help toward independence in adulthood



Parents/carers and families of disabled children

- improved emotional well-being
- parent/carer has more time to do other things (e.g. leisure, work, study, spending time with other children)
- family is able to lead a more ordinary life
- family environment is less chaotic and more sustainable
- improved quality of life for parent/carer and family



Strategic outcomes

- fewer disabled children become looked after either permanently or part-time because of their disability
- reduction in need for unplanned placements in residential units
- disabled children and young people have the opportunity to enjoy a wide range of activities, not just short breaks services
- families have increased choice and greater control over the short breaks services they receive



The law

Legal duty to provide short breaks

Local Authorities are required by law (Section 25 of the *Children’s and Families Act 2014*) to have a range of short breaks services for disabled children and young people and to also have a short breaks statement so that families know about the support available.

The short breaks statement has been prepared in accordance with the following Acts (see appendix):

- Children’s Act 1989
- The Breaks for Carers of Disabled Children Regulations 2011
- Children and Families Act 2014
- The Equality Act 2010

You said...

When the services were recommissioned in 2018/19, parents and carers of disabled children told us

- “We want more things to do and more places to go”
- “We want to do the same fun things as our brothers, sisters and friends”
- “We want access to more ordinary activities that all other young people use, such as youth clubs and leisure activities”
- “We don’t understand who can access what”
- “It’s the transport – I can never get there”
- “Give us more evening and weekend breaks – I want a night off!”



Children and young people told us

- “A break from caring is the most important thing that helps me to cope”
- “We just want to do ordinary things for a while”
- “We don’t want lengthy assessments in order to get a short break”
- “We don’t want to have a social worker in order to get a break”
- “Fun activities with our kids are great, but they don’t always give us a break from caring”



Feedback from the children and young people who use short breaks services and their families (2019/20)

- “I had so much fun”
- “He looks forward to coming along so much and has a total blast; he’s always full of fun and mischief when I come to collect him and this just shows he’s been having a fantastic time! To be able to leave him where I know he is in safe hands and totally understood means so much. It helps him gain independence and he can explore all the creative things he loves so much.”



- “The break gave X an opportunity to build up his social skills and interaction with other young people his own age without being with us all the time. He very much enjoyed his break”.
- “The staff are always lovely, friendly, patient and kind. Bags of enthusiasm”

The types of short breaks available

Universal Service – fun activities open to all families with disabled children

In Bristol we want families with disabled children and young people to be able to use the services that are universally available to all children and young people such as:

- leisure and sports services
- youth and play services
- public spaces – e.g. parks and adventure playgrounds
- early years services and children’s centres
- extended services in schools
- after-school and holiday clubs
- voluntary and community facilities

These services and facilities have a legal duty to make reasonable adjustments so that disabled children and young people can use them.

How are we supporting universal services to be inclusive?

In Bristol many mainstream services have a ‘can do’ attitude and they are removing barriers and supporting more disabled children and young people in their settings. We are working in the following ways to support settings to be inclusive:

Family Support and Inclusion Team within the Disabled Children Service

The Inclusion Service works directly with children, young people, and families to help them to find suitable play, youth, and leisure opportunities in their local communities. When needed, the Inclusion Service can fund universal settings so that they can provide:

- short-term support for disabled children and young people whilst they settle into a new setting and staff get to know about their needs
- ongoing one-to-one support for a small number of disabled children and young people to meet

their specific needs

The Inclusion Service can also provide access to training about complex health needs and/or complex disabilities for staff working in universal services.

Supporting Inclusion in Early Years Settings

Early Years Settings (nursery, pre-school, children’s centres, childcare providers) offer places to disabled children in accessible venues, with skilled staff responsible for inclusion, additional support for the child, and specialist resources. Bristol City Council’s Children’s Centres all offer inclusive practice.

Training

Staff working in children’s centres, childcare settings, after school clubs and in sports clubs have been trained so that they have the skills and confidence to include disabled children in their activities.

Making Bristol more accessible

More places have been given equipment that allows disabled children to access play settings for example, including an investment into creating four Adventure Playgrounds and public visitor attractions such as Bristol Beacon to make them accessible.



“The events were really positive; the premises were nice and quiet and staff from WECIL engaged really well with my child”

(parent feedback)

During 2020 families with disabled children visited the M-Shed and Bristol Museum while they were closed to the public due to COVID-19. Their feedback was used to make sure that the attractions were accessible to families with disabled children when they re-opened. Our ambition is to make sure this learning is shared with other venues and attractions across the city.

We have also improved the equipment available in short break residential homes, and in the homes of specialist foster carers.

Bristol has made this investment in the community and will continue to do so.

Targeted Services – for families of disabled children and young people who need some help to access universal services, or need activities that have been designed for disabled children and young people

These services and the activities they offer have been designed to meet the specific needs of disabled children and young people.

Families can apply directly to these services or they can get referred by a professional. Each service or activity may have specific eligibility criteria based on age, impairment, or other factors.

See the [Bristol Local Offer - Short Breaks page](#) for more details of these services and their contact details:

Provider	Service	Ages
WECIL	Evening youth sessions	13 to 18
	Independent living skills	19 to 25
WECIL Time to Share	Saturday sessions and trips	13 to 18
	Befriending	5 to 18
	Family activities	
National Autistic Society	After school clubs	8 to 18
KHAAS	Weekend sessions for children and young people from minority ethnic backgrounds	5 to 18
	School holiday day trips for children and young people from minority ethnic backgrounds	8 to 18
WECIL play	Stay and play sessions	5 to 18
	Closed play sessions	8 to 12
SENSE	Evening sessions	5 to 18
	Saturday trips	5 to 18
Various Providers	Family Fun Days	5 to 18
Bristol Autism Project	Family holiday activities for autistic children and young people with autistic and/or those with social, sensory, communication interaction (SSCI) needs and their siblings	5 to 18

WECIL and Sense holiday short breaks	School holiday sessions for disabled children and young people	5 to 18
Bristol City Council Family Support and Inclusion Team	Inclusion Services based in the Disabled Children’s team, who support access to community universal services and Family Support Workers	5 to 18
Creative Youth Network and other organisations	Fully inclusive one to one support and youth sessions for children and young people with a social, health & wellbeing and/or education/skills needs	11 to 19 or up to 24 for disabled young people

Specialist services – for families of disabled children and young people where the identified need cannot be met by universal, targeted or inclusion services.

These services are for disabled children or young people with severe and complex needs. To use these services, families need to have a social work assessment.

Access to specialist services is based on the family environment, parenting capacity and the child’s development. This will include consideration of the child’s and family’s needs and strengths. More details about accessing these services are available on the [Bristol Local Offer – Short Breaks specialist services page](#)

Provider	Service	Ages
Bristol City Council	Residential overnight breaks (age 8 to 18*)	8-18*
Bristol City Council	Overnight breaks in another family’s home	8-18*
Bristol City Council	Direct payments that a family can use to employ a personal assistant/buy short breaks services that meet their child’s needs	0-18*

**Young people are no longer eligible for children’s specialist short breaks services once they turn 18 years old.*

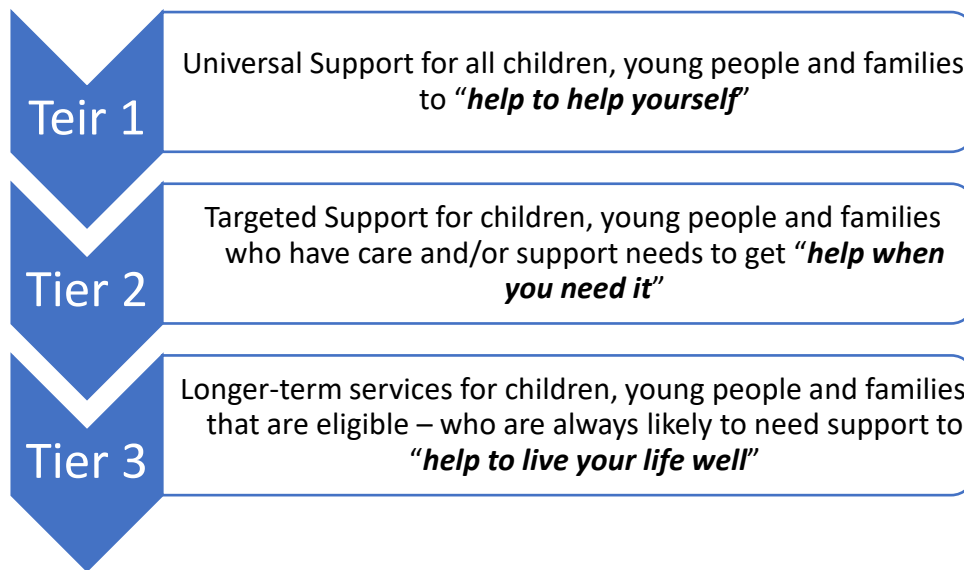
Bristol City Council cannot fund costly interventions in short breaks settings, such as Applied Behaviour Analysis therapy, that are not evidence based and are not recommended by bodies like the National Institute for Clinical Excellence.

Who can access short breaks and how are needs assessed?

The targeted and specialist short breaks services available are for children and families where the child:

- is aged 0 to 18 years old, with the exception of WECIL's independent living skills sessions for 19 to 25 year olds
- lives in the Bristol City Council local authority area or is a child in care placed by Bristol City Council
- has a life-limiting or long-term health condition or disability.

Bristol City Council has implemented a **Three Tier Model** of support:



This means that disabled children, young people, and their families are encouraged and supported to use tier 1 and 2 services before accessing any support within the third tier.

This may not be possible or appropriate for everyone. However, many disabled children and young people with complex needs have been successfully supported to attend universal and/or targeted short breaks services in their local communities and this has provided the right level of support for them and their family.

The Assessment Process

- **Universal services**

Some universal services have no assessment procedures and any child or young person can use them. Others may have assessment procedures and/or eligibility criteria which could be based on a child's age or postcode.

- **Targeted services**

Parents and carers can apply for support for their disabled child by contacting these services directly. Each service or activity may have specific eligibility criteria based on age, impairment, or other factors.

- **Specialist services**

Access to these services requires a social worker assessment. The assessment is reviewed by a panel of professionals who will agree whether specialist short breaks services will be offered and what type. Access to specialist services is based on the family environment, parenting capacity and the child's development. This will include consideration of the child's and family's needs and their strengths.

Preparing for adulthood

More information about preparing for adulthood, including the transition into adult social care is available on the Local Offer: [Adulthood - Bristol's SEND Local Offer - bristol.gov.uk](https://www.bristol.gov.uk/adulthood).

Information about local clubs and activities for disabled young people over the age of 18 can also be found on the Local Offer: [Things to do - Bristol's SEND Local Offer - bristol.gov.uk](https://www.bristol.gov.uk/things-to-do)

Publication

Bristol will publish this Short Breaks Services Statement on the [Bristol Local Offer website](https://www.bristol.gov.uk/local-offer)

In accordance with Regulation 5 of the Breaks for Carers of Disabled Children Regulations 2011 this statement is kept under constant review and will be updated in partnership with Parent Carer groups when new services become available, or when there are changes to existing services.

We welcome your feedback on this document and the services it describes. If you're unhappy with something, please let us know. You can send us [your complaints or feedback via the Bristol City Council website](#)

Appendices

Appendix 1; The Law Children Act 1989

Short breaks can be provided by local authorities through the use of their powers under:

- Section 17(6) of the 1989 Act which gives local authorities the power to provide a range of services, including accommodation, in order to discharge their general duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in need;
- Section 20(4) of the 1989 Act which gives local authorities the power to provide accommodation “for any child within their area (even though a person who has parental responsibility for him is able to provide him with accommodation) if they consider that to do so would safeguard or promote the child’s welfare.”

Paragraph 6 of Schedule 2 to the 1989 Act (amended by s.25 of the Children and Young Persons Act 2008) provides that local authorities must provide services designed –

- To minimise the effect on disabled children within their area of their disabilities; and
- To give such children the opportunity to lead lives which are as normal as possible; and
- To assist individuals who provide care for such children to continue to do so, or to do so more effectively, by giving them breaks from caring.

The Breaks for Carers of Disabled Children Regulations 2011

These Regulations describe how local authorities must perform the Schedule 2 duty above.

Regulation 3 says local authorities must:

- Have regard to the needs of those carers who would be unable to continue to provide care unless breaks from caring were given to them; and
- Have regard to the needs of those carers who would be able to provide care for their disabled child more effectively if breaks from caring were given to them to allow them to:
 - Undertake education, training or regular leisure activity,
 - Meet the needs of other children in the family more effectively, or
 - Carry out day to day tasks which they must perform in order to run their household.

Regulation 4 provides that local authorities must provide, so far as is reasonably practicable, a range of services which is sufficient to help carers to continue to provide care or to do so more effectively. In particular the local authority must provide, as appropriate, a range of:

- Day-time care in the homes of disabled children or elsewhere,
- Overnight care in the homes of disabled children or elsewhere,
- Educational or leisure activities for disabled children outside their homes, and
- Services available to help carers in the evenings, at weekends and during the school holidays.

Regulation 5 requires that local authorities prepare a short breaks statement for carers in their area setting out:

- Details of the range of services provided,
- Eligibility criteria for those services, and
- How the services are designed to meet the needs of carers.

Children and Families Act 2014, Section 26

Local authorities are also required to jointly commission services with partner commissioning bodies for disabled children and young people and those with SEN.

The Equality Act 2010 defines disability as: ‘a physical or mental impairment’, which has a ‘substantial and long-term adverse effect’ on the ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. The law requires local authorities to ‘safeguard and promote the welfare’ of children in need, and as far as is consistent with this, to ‘promote the upbringing of these children by their families’.

This duty is to be met through the provision of a range and level of services that are appropriate to those children’s needs (Children Act 1989, Section 17 (1)).

