

SHORT BREAK SERVICES STATEMENT

May 2023

(For children and young people with disabilities and additional needs 0-18 years)

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Accessibility

This document can be made available in large print, Braille, audio or in electronic format.

Copies in alternative languages may also be obtained.

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1. WELCOME TO BRACKNELL FOREST COUNCIL'S SHORT BREAK STATEMENT

Our vision

Bracknell Forest Council's SEND Strategy vision for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) in Bracknell Forest is that they achieve their full potential in their early years, at school and in college and lead happy and fulfilled lives.

Children's Social Care works from the secure base model to:

- promote resilience and competence in child and family social workers
- create the right environment for good work to flourish where workers can focus on improving outcomes for children, their parents, and the families they live with in a cost effective and sustainable way
- strives for inclusivity, eliminating discrimination and exploitation for all

It does so through the following principles:

- Fair Access – Access and eligibility must be applied fairly and not disadvantage anyone
- Proportionality – Right help at the right time, for the right children
- That children have a say in decisions about them and their lives
- Children are free from serious harm at home and in the community and have their needs met by people who encourage their growth and aspiration
- The right to family life is paramount in our decision making. Keeping families together where it is safe to do so and when it is not maintaining contact where it is safe & legally permitted to do so
- Support is provided to families to meet the needs of children with disabilities/SEND
- An effective complaints and QA process

The Short Breaks vision is to:

- Provide positive experiences for children/young people to encourage social and emotional development and prevent social isolation
- Help children/young people develop independence
- Provide an important break from caring responsibilities to allow carers to recharge their batteries or spend time with other children or partners/friends.
- Empower families to make informed choices about short break services they access
- Improve and promote better outcomes for children/young people with disabilities and their families/carers
- Ensure fair access to services

Bracknell Forest Council remains committed to providing a range of good quality short breaks for children and families with disabilities.

Purpose of the statement

Every local authority has a duty to provide a range of short breaks to support children and young people with disabilities and their families. This duty is a requirement under The Breaks for Carers of Disabled Children Regulations 2011 and Section 25 of the Children and Young Persons Act 2008.

This document sets out Bracknell Forest's Short Break Services to support children/young people (0-18) with disabilities and their families, and the criteria required in order to access them.

This statement replaces the one written in February 2020. It will be reviewed again no later than May 2026 or sooner if changes are made to service provision.

How is this statement informed?

When Ofsted and the CQC (Care Quality Commission) undertook their inspection of Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) services in late 2021, they highlighted that too many children and young people with SEND do not get the support they need in Bracknell Forest.

We responded by developing a Written Statement of Action (WSOA), published in July 2022, to immediately act and put in place meaningful and lasting improvements. Recommendations from the inspection and WSOA helped inform key priorities for the short break service over the next 3 years.

Bracknell Parent Carer Forum (BPCF) provided feedback.

Insights from surveys about Larchwood (our Short Break respite unit) and Kids Play and Leisure Scheme (our commissioned short breaks provision) also helped shaped the statement.

SEND Local Offer

Alongside this Short Break Statement, which outlines services commissioned or provided by the Council, further information about activities, clubs, services and support groups for children/young people with disabilities and their families in the local area can be found on our

SEND Local Offer

<https://bracknellforest.fsd.org.uk/kb5/bracknell/directory/localoffer.page?familychannel=6>

We are always happy to receive feedback, suggestions and comments or answer questions and provide information or signposting. Please do not hesitate to get in touch and contact:

Short Breaks Co-ordinator on 01344 352733 or email short.breaks@bracknell-forest.gov.uk

2. WHAT IS A SHORT BREAK?

A “Short Break” refers to services designed to provide vital support to children and young people with disabilities and their parents, carer and families.

The purpose of a Short Break is to:

- 1) offer parents or carers a valuable break from caring responsibilities allowing them some time to recharge their batteries or to spend time with a partner or other children
- 2) Provide children and young people with disabilities the same opportunity as other children to enjoy different experiences, establish friendships and develop confidence, independence and social/emotional skills.

Short Breaks are not childcare provision. They are positive opportunities to help children with disabilities to become more independent, be involved and included in their local community, promote positive outcomes for the future and for parents to take a break from their caring duties,

Not all children, young people and families need the same level of support due to the nature and severity of their disabilities and needs, therefore short break provision will endeavour to be flexible to provide positive solutions for all families based on assessed needs.

Short breaks can take the form of:

- Leisure activities outside the home such as youth clubs, scouts, football clubs
- Daytime care in the home or elsewhere
- Overnight care in the home or elsewhere
- Specialist activities during evening, weekends and school holidays

They can last anything from 1 hour to whole days or overnights. The length and type of short break will depend on the needs of the individual child and their family. Our Short Break Statement outlines how families can access short break provision, from requesting 1:1 support to access mainstream activities, to specialist support accessed via a social care team which may include overnight respite and direct payments. Please refer to section 5.

Legislation placing a statutory duty on a local authority to provide short breaks includes:

- The Breaks for Carers of Disabled Children Regulation 2011
- Children and Families Act 2014
- Childrens Act 1989

3. HOW CAN SHORT BREAKS HELP ME AND MY FAMILY?

For a child or young person:

- Take part in exciting activities that interest them
- Develop independence and increase confidence
- Spend time with friends and develop new friendship circles
- Achieve personal goals, learn new skills and reach potential
- Reduce isolation.

“Short breaks have a direct and positive impact on the lives of disabled children and young people that use them, making them more confident and independent”

(Every Disabled Child Matters Campaign, Council for Disabled Children 2015)

For parent/carers:

- Provide a break from caring
- Reduce feelings of stress,
- Increase resilience
- Spend time with siblings or together as a family/ couple
- Feel confident your child is having fun in a safe and secure environment
- Have an opportunity to meet other parents/families.

These benefits were also echoed in recent feedback across our short break settings.

Already referred a friend. Great service, much needed in the community, as a Mum dropping off for “the first time, I was anxious but put at ease by staff, xxx clearly had a great time.”

(Kids Feedback 2023)

“Love the scheme and the kids enjoy themselves.”

Kids Feedback 2023

“Staff encourage the children to make choices and participate in day-to-day activities. There is effective use of individualised communication schedules, social stories, and children s preferred communication methods. This helps the children to develop their communication skills and become more independent”.

Larchwood Feedback 2023

“My son is unable to attend his named school and therefore has little time with other children during his week. The Short Breaks service provision of a support worker to enable him to attend his Cubs group has truly been invaluable, as without this the Cub group would have had to say that he was unable to attend. He gains so much experience from the varying activities at Cubs and from socialising with his peer group, and this is also integral to his wellbeing as he really wants to spend time with other children despite his social struggles and demand avoidance. He looks forward to going to Cubs each week and to seeing his support worker there too”.

Inclusion Fund Feedback 2024

4. WHO CAN ACCESS SHORT BREAKS – ELIGIBILITY?

In Bracknell Forest, children and young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities up to the age of 18 and their families can access short breaks if they live in the borough.

The Disability Discrimination Act 2005 defines disability as ‘a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on a person’s ability to carry out normal day to day activities.

The eligibility for short breaks and access to services is based on the following principles:

- Promoting the health, safety and well-being of children and young people with disabilities, ensuring they can fully participate in family and community life, enjoying themselves with friends and making decisions about their lives
- Providing opportunities for children and young people to develop social skills and independence
- Creating opportunities to help to secure positive outcomes for families and equip children and young people for the transition into adulthood
- Enabling children and young people with disabilities and their families to have the same opportunities as their peers
- Preventing family crisis through the provision of the right level of support at the right time, thus supporting the well-being and resilience of parents/carers
- The need to be fair, clear and equitable.

5. BRACKNELL FOREST COUNCIL SHORT BREAKS PROVISION

To help parents/carers make decisions about the most suitable short break activities or service to suit the needs of their family/child/young person, there are three categories of services:

1. Universal
2. Targeted
3. Specialist and Crisis Intervention

5.1. UNIVERSAL SERVICES – NO ASSESSMENT NEEDED TO ACCESS

Universal services require no formal assessment process or eligibility criteria. They are mainstream settings that children and young people with or without disabilities and their families can access, such as, youth clubs, leisure centres, sports clubs, cubs/brownies, after-school and holiday clubs.

- The Bracknell Forest Local Directory can provide information about local mainstream activities and clubs.
<https://bracknellforest.fsd.org.uk/kb5/bracknell/directory/family.page?familychannel=0>
- The SEND Local Offer will provide information about activities and services for children and young people with disabilities.
<https://www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/children-and-family-services/special-educational-needs/send-local-offer>

If additional 1:1 support is required initially or longer term to help a child or young person with a disability access a universal/mainstream activity the Short Break Inclusion Fund can offer funding to an activity provider to pay for identified 1:1 support.

• THE INCLUSION FUND – SUPPORTS ACCESS TO MAINSTREAM ACTIVITIES

The Short Breaks Inclusion Fund aims to promote inclusion and remove the barriers to play and leisure activities for children and young people with disabilities within universal and mainstream settings. It is available for children up to the age of 18 who reside in Bracknell Forest and would otherwise be prevented from taking part. Children accessing these settings would typically require minimal supervision and have mild to moderate learning difficulties and may need some initial support to build confidence. However, for some children additional support may be required on an ongoing basis.

This funding is accessed by the activity provider directly. Parents should discuss their child's individual needs with a provider and if additional support is identified, the provider can contact the Short Break Service. To help the process move forward smoothly, parents and carers should also send details of the club/activity their child wishes to access to the Short Breaks Service. The Short Breaks Co-ordinator can then follow-up with the provider.

Families will pay the activity cost and the Inclusion Fund will pay for additional identified needs such as a 1-1 support worker. The priority for this scheme is to support access to out-of-school activities and/or holiday activities, such as guides, karate, dance, youth club or a holiday club. The scheme also forms part of our permanency strategy enabling parents, carers and families a necessary and valuable break from caring responsibilities.

This support can be provided for up to 1 day per week during the school holidays in line with our targeted provisions or once a week for a regular after-school activity

If you have a query regarding suitability or would like more information, please contact:

Short Breaks Co-ordinator on 01344 352733 or email short.breaks@bracknell-forest.gov.uk

- **MAX CARDS**

The Max Card is the UK's leading discount card for foster families and families of children with additional needs. Families can use their Max Card at venues across the UK to get free or discounted admission. The scheme is designed to help families save money on great days out at castles, zoos, bowling alleys, trampoline parks and many more. See here for more details <https://mymaxcard.co.uk/about-us/>

The Max Card can be provided to children and young people, living in Bracknell Forest, with additional needs, whether it is a physical, sensory, or a learning disability.

There is no cost to families for this card; if you require a second card for a parent not living at home then please let us know. Cards are renewed every 2 years and you will be required to complete a new form.

For an application form please contact Short Breaks Co-ordinator on 01344 352733 or email short.breaks@bracknell-forest.gov.uk

5.2. TARGETED SERVICES – ASSESSMENT VIA HOME VISIT

These schemes are primarily for children and young people with disabilities for whom, as a result of their high level of need and the support they require, mainstream settings are unsuitable.

- **KIDS PLAY AND LEISURE SCHEME**

The Council commissions a charity called Kids to provide a targeted Saturday and Holiday Club tailored to the children and young people with disabilities who have moderate to high needs and require significant support.

Eligibility for Kids is assessed through a home visit with parents/carers and child or young person by the Kids Play and Leisure Co-ordinator to create a care portfolio for each child and ensure their identified needs can be met. It is determined in line with the commissioned

contract and based on factors such as age, type of disability, level of support needs, peer group availability and potential risks.

Sessions run from 10am to 4pm and the scheme offers a variety of activities including:

- Centre days with cooking, arts and crafts, trips to the park, messy play
- Swimming
- Bowling
- Trips out to theme parks, Thomley, Thames Valley Adventure Playground, Camp Mohawk
- Party days
- Pantomime trips

Bracknell Forest Council subsidises the play and leisure scheme to ensure that parental/carers contributions are kept in line with mainstream holiday clubs and there is no disadvantage because a child or young person needs more support due their disability. A parental contribution is required per session.

Parents/carers can self-refer to Kids, there is no need to come through the Short Break Service. Please contact the Kids Play and Leisure Co-ordinator on 01344 453266.

5.3. SPECIALIST SERVICES – FOR FAMILIES OPEN TO SOCIAL CARE WITH AN ALLOCATED WORKER

Children and young people who have complex and enduring support needs with regard to a disability or complex health condition may need more specialised support to access a short break opportunity and the family is therefore open to Children's Social Care (CSC). This will have come about through a referral to MASH (Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub).

The MASH provides triage and multi-agency decision making regarding concerns about children or about children who may require specialist support.

Not everyone needs a social work service. The MASH team will consider the child's needs, any potential risks, the Council's legal duties and decide who can best help, with the emphasis being on improving outcomes for children at the right time, with support from the right service. They will then either

- Decide no further action and signpost on
- Offer information and advice
- Refer to Early Help
- Refer to the Duty and Assessment Team (CSC) for a single assessment by a social worker and potential allocation to a CSC long-term team

Depending on the assessed needs of the child/ren with a disability and their family the single assessment may lead to a child being allocated to a long-term team either the Family Safeguarding Team or The Children's Specialist Support Team. Both teams adopt an inclusive approach and will support children, young people and their families based on identified needs.

Support from the Children's Specialist Support Team is provided where a child

- has a '*substantial*' and '*permanent*' disability and
 - *Substantial* is defined as considerable or significant factors which are life changing or limiting and might include issues to do with risk and dependency.
 - *Permanent* is defined as existing indefinitely and not expected to improve.

AND

- has an EHCP that indicates a specialist educational provision is needed.

Following an assessment, a personalised service and support package may be offered including social work support; overnight short breaks; short break fostering and or support within and outside the home. We are committed to promoting personalisation to provide choice and flexibility.

These specialist services are provided by the local authority and include:

- Larchwood Short Break Unit (overnight, day and after school care),
- Short Break Foster Care,
- Direct Payments
- Home care and agency support.

- **RESOURCE ALLOCATION SYSTEM AND PANEL – ENSURING FAIR ACCESS**
(RAS PANEL)

The Head of Children's Specialist Safeguarding chairs a Resource Allocation System and Panel to ensure fair access to services for all children with disabilities.

A Resource Allocation System, often referred to as 'RAS', is a points system, based on individual needs and circumstance. It is a way of making fair and equitable allocations of funding to the whole population of children and young people eligible for support from a funding source.

The RAS Panel is made up of representatives from social care, health, SEN education, short break providers and the short break service.

5.4 SUMMARY OF SERVICES

Universal Services	Targeted Services	Specialist Services
No assessment needed Additional 1:1 support funding is available via The Inclusion Fund	Assessment by Home Visit undertaken by Playscheme Provider	Open to Children's Social Care Social Worker assessment needed to assess eligibility for services
Mainstream activities such as leisure centres, holiday activities, karate, scouts,	Kids Play and Leisure Scheme 01344 453266	Larchwood Short Breaks Unit Direct Payments / Home Care Short Break Foster Care

6. SHORT BREAK PRIORITIES

The services provided by Kids and Larchwood are valued very highly. Being able to access these services has a significantly positive impact on the emotional well-being of not only children and young people with disabilities but also the entire family.

However, parent/carers feedback and Ofsted have highlighted common themes and views about areas that can be constructively developed or improved. These will form the Short Break development priorities across 2023 to 2026.

1. Consultation with CYP and families to inform the planning and development of all identified priorities
2. Awareness of the Short Breaks service
 - a. Establish stronger links with SENCOs and FSA
 - b. Continue and develop the 8 weekly newsletter programme to reaching more stakeholders (families, schools, partner organisations)
3. Kids capacity
 - a. The demand on spaces at Kids Play and Leisure Scheme has increased since the pandemic leaving families unable to access as many sessions as they have before.
 - b. A key priority will be to create extra capacity to enable more families to access the service and more frequently.
4. Service provision gaps:
 - a. Flexibility of thinking to provide more opportunities for children and young people with disabilities who “don’t tick a box”
 - b. Co-production is needed with parents/carers and service providers to identify the key gaps and create ways to deliver a service to fill these gaps.
 - c. Look at Short Breaks Innovation Fund
5. Identification of more support / care agencies

7. FAMILY SUPPORT SERVICES - SERVICES TO MEET THE NEEDS OF CARERS

7.1. BRACKNELL PARENT CARER FORUM

The Bracknell Parent Carer Forum meets regularly to discuss the real issues that affect children and young people with SEND in Bracknell Forest.

The Forum was set up to make sure the views and concerns of parents and carers are heard by those who plan and manage services.

For more information please email bracknell.pcf@gmail.com or visit <https://www.bracknellpcf.com/>

7.2. PARENT/CARER TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

- Many local and national organisations offer universal training courses to support parents/carers of children with disabilities as well as some specific targeted training around behaviour management and children with autism. Details are available either through Short Breaks, the Family Information Service or the Local Offer. Below are some useful links to training opportunities:
 - GEMS – 01753 373244 / 0800 999 1342 - [Home - Gems4health](#)
 - Bracknell and Wokingham Mencap - 0300 777 8539 - http://www.wokinghambracknellmencap.org/act_carers.php
 - The Autism Group – 07423 636 339 - <https://www.theautismgroup.org.uk/training/>
 - Parenting Special Children – 01189 863 532 - <https://www.parentingspecialchildren.co.uk/support-we-offer/parenting-programmes/>
 - Scope - 0808 800 3333 - <https://www.scope.org.uk/family-services/>

7.3 INFORMATION, ADVICE AND SUPPORT SERVICE (IASS)

The Information, Advice and Support Service (IASS) provides confidential and impartial advice and information to support parents or carers and children and young people who have, or may have, Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and live in Bracknell Forest. Children do not need to have a diagnosis or an Education, Health and Care plan to use this service. This is a self-referral service so parents/carers and children/young people can contact directly.

IASS provides:

- A confidential helpline 01344 354011, SEND.Support@bracknell-forest.gov.uk
- Face-to-face meetings
- General information on special educational needs and disabilities and the law
- Impartial support for parents/carers, children and young people to express their views at school and local authority meetings
- Support during the Education, Health & Care plan process
- Help to complete forms and help to understand complex documents and reports
- Home visits and support at meetings
- Presentations to support groups
- Signposting to other relevant services and voluntary groups
- Support preparing for and during annual reviews

7.3. CHILDREN'S COMMUNITY NURSING TEAM (CCN TEAM)

The CCN offers specialist nursing care to families where the health needs of their child are complex and the support available locally is not sufficient. Following an assessment, the Children's Community Nursing Team may provide support such as care within the home or breaks for carers. Eligibility criteria need to be met. Please follow the link for more information <https://cypf.berkshirehealthcare.nhs.uk/5932>

7.4. SUPPORT FOR CHILDREN UNDER FIVE YEARS OLD

Family Hubs aim to give every child the best possible start in life. They are places where all families with children under the age of 5 can access a range of services including information and advice, drop in sessions, play and activities. More information on Family Hubs can be found at <http://www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/childrenscentres>

Disability specific support is available from the Child Development Centre (CDC) at Margaret Wells Furby, Great Hollands Square, Bracknell. The CDC supports children aged 5 and under who have developmental delay, disabilities or complex medical needs;

[Child Development Centre | Bracknell Forest Council \(bracknell-forest.gov.uk\)](http://www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/childrenscentres)

7.5. CHILDCARE

Short breaks are not designed to provide all the childcare working parents might need, as they are designed to provide parents and carers a break rather than childcare. However, as part of our continued commitment to provide adequate and appropriate childcare for children and young people with disabilities a number of local registered childminders can meet a range of additional needs. Further information is available from the Family Information Service:

<https://www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/children-and-family-services/family-information-service>

7.6 TRANSITION – MOVING FROM CHILDREN TO ADULT SERVICES

Bracknell Forest Council recognises the value of short breaks to those young people approaching adulthood. At this stage significant emphasis is placed on independence and accessing their local communities. Short breaks support the development of life skills and transition into adult life.

Young people are often involved in planning their short break activity i.e. where they go, what they do, and this helps to increase their ability to make decisions and solve problems, which builds skills, self-esteem and facilitates growth in confidence.

From about the age of 14/15 in both mainstream and targeted settings, providers work together to ensure a smooth transition to suitable alternatives. In specialist settings, professionals working within children's and adult services ensure a smooth transition for personalised support packages. Further information is available from the Approaching Adulthood Team – tel: 01344 354466 or e-mail: approaching.adulthood@bracknell-forest.gov.uk. Here is a link to the Approaching Adulthood policy:

[Approaching Adulthood: Policy and Procedure \(bracknell-forest.gov.uk\)](http://www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/childrenscentres)

8. CONTACT US

To discuss any short break needs or for more information, please contact the Short Breaks Co-ordinator at:

The Short Break Service
short.breaks@bracknell-forest.gov.uk
01344 352733