

# SHORT BREAK SERVICES STATEMENT February 2020

(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**

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.

The Short Breaks Service sits within the Children's Specialist Support Team within Children's Social Care and liaises closely with social workers and family workers to offer the best support for children, young people and their families.

Our 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

This statement will be reviewed again no later than September 2022 or sooner if changes are made to service provision. It replaces the previous statement written in 2014 and reflects feedback from the 2018 Short Breaks Consultation which gathered views of children/young people with disabilities and their parents and carers. The Bracknell Parent Carer Forum was also consulted for feedback and the following groups were given the opportunity to provide comments:

- Short Breaks Service mailing list
- Disability Register
- Kids Play and Leisure scheme database
- Kennel Lane parents' database

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](mailto: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 can take the form of:

- 1) Leisure activities outside the home such as youth clubs, scouts, football clubs
- 2) Daytime care in the home or elsewhere
- 3) Overnight care in the home or elsewhere
- 4) 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

Short Breaks support Bracknell Forest Council’s People Directorate Vision ‘People at the Heart of our Services’:

### **We are here to:**

- Protect you from harm if you need us
- Help you to get support so that you can be physically and emotionally healthy
- Work with you and your community to help you to be independent and resilient

### **We’ll do this by:**

- Focusing on quality practice
- Integrating services with partners
- Providing information & choice
- Focusing on what is most important

Bracknell Forest Council remains committed to providing a range of good quality short breaks for children and families with disabilities. Over the next three years the Short Breaks Service will be developing the short break offering in line with feedback from the Short Breaks Consultation 2018.

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

### **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 our most recent Short Breaks Consultation undertaken in 2018. Below are some comments from children/young people and their parents. For the full consultation report please email [short.breaks@bracknell-forest.gov.uk](mailto:short.breaks@bracknell-forest.gov.uk)

- *“Kids is great fun, I love it”*
- *“Good place to socialise with friends good place to make new friends”*
- *“It allows our child to enjoy a day out without parents. Also allows us as parents to spend some quality time with our other children.”*
- *“It is a vital scheme that helps my son get out of the house and make friends.”*
- *“Our family has benefited greatly over the years from Short Breaks.*
- *“Quite literally, it’s a lifesaver!*

### **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**

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.

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](mailto: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](mailto: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.

Kids Play and Leisure Scheme organise 20 Saturday sessions and 40 Holiday sessions a year. Of these sessions, children and young people can access 7 Saturday sessions and 13 Holiday sessions a year. The year runs from April to March.

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/carer 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. The parental contribution is £20 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 –ASSESSMENT VIA SOCIAL WORKER**

The Children's Specialist Support Team (CSST) is a team within Childrens' Social Care that specialises in delivering support to children and young people who have complex and enduring support needs with regard to a disability or complex health condition. They work specifically to provide equal opportunities for children with disabilities and build resilience to permanency within a child's family.

A social worker will make an assessment to decide if a child is eligible for specialist services. Support from the Children's Specialist Support Team can be provided where a child's disability is '*substantial*' and '*permanent*' and their needs, which arise from their disability, require more support than is available through the capacity of their parents/carers, family or local services.

*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.

The team work with children and young people who have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) and who have:

- Severe or Profound Learning Difficulty or Disability
- Moderate Learning Difficulty with a Physical Disability
- Permanent and Significant Physical Disability

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 promote 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 carers,
- Personal budgets (via direct payments),
- Home care and agency support, or community childminders.

#### **• BOOM – BECAUSE OUR OPINION MATTERS**

BOOM (Because Our Opinions Matter) is a council for children and young people with disabilities, who have a social worker. The group meets 3 times a year to discuss their views about receiving a service from the Children's Specialist Support Team through fun and engaging activities. It runs on selected Saturdays from The Rowans Children Centre. This group is strictly for children who have either a social worker or family worker (and their siblings) from the Children's Specialist Support Team.

• **RESOURCE ALLOCATION SYSTEM AND PANEL – ENSURING FAIR ACCESS**

The Children’s Specialist Support Team operates a Resource Allocation System and Panel to ensure fair access to services.

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 will initially give an Indicative Allocation. The Personal Budget amount is then set and agreed following approval of the Support Plan. The final amount of the Personal Budget could be more or less than the Indicative Allocation. The RAS Panel is made up of representatives from social care, health, SEN education, short break providers and the short break service. For further information visit

<https://www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/resource-allocation-system-policy.pdf>

**5.4 SUMMARY OF SERVICES**

Universal Services	Targeted Services	Specialist Services
No assessment needed Additional 1:1 support funding is available	Assessment by Home Visit undertaken by Playscheme Provider	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 ACTION PLAN**

The 2018 Short Breaks Consultation highlighted that the Short Breaks provision from Bracknell Forest Council is currently meeting a respite need for children/ young people with disabilities and their parents, carers and families. 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, there was a general feeling that more is needed, and the consultation findings have also highlighted common themes and views about areas that can be constructively developed or improved such as:

1. Raising awareness of the service,
2. Engaging and developing mainstream activities to become more inclusive,
3. Flexibility of thinking to provide more opportunities for children and young people with disabilities who “don’t tick a box”
4. Sibling support
5. Increasing the variety of activities offered
6. Reviewing provision for more targeted peer/age groups
7. Investigating the option of using Kids more flexibly, for example changing the allocation of days, looking at communication between parents and Kids, creating more defined groups

## ACTION PLAN FOR 2019 TO 2020

Below is the action plan developed to improve the Short Break Service over the next 12 – 18 months based on the findings from the consultation.

Action	How	By Who	When
1. To raise awareness of and improve communication about The Short Breaks Service, especially the Inclusion Fund and eligibility criteria.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Establish stronger links with FSAs and SENCOs to raise awareness of Short Breaks Service and reach families who may not know about the services we provide.</li> <li>▪ Review the Short Break Statement to help simplify the Short Break offering and give more clarity to eligibility criteria.</li> <li>▪ Establish a simple newsletter / email process – perhaps a monthly focus on one area of Short Breaks?</li> <li>▪ Attend Duty, FSM and Family Intervention Early Help Hub team meetings to raise the profile of the Short Breaks Services internally</li> </ul>	<p>Short Breaks Service (SBS) and SENCO Forum/Hub (Schools Standards and Effectiveness Team)</p> <p>SBS</p> <p>SBS with Corporate Communications/Community Engagement Teams</p>	<p>Mar 2019 and ongoing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>Presentation made at SENCO Forum in March and lead SENCO's contacted to arrange visit to Hubs</i></li> </ul> <p>Complete</p> <p>Launch April 2020</p> <p>Sept onwards</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>In progress – being booked</i></li> </ul>
2. Engage with mainstream clubs to encourage inclusivity.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Visit the current activities on Short Breaks newsletter to understand the offering and identify way things could improve if needed.</li> </ul>	SBS	Sept 2019 to Apr 2020
3. Thinking outside the box to create more targeted opportunities	<p>The actions below will collectively address points 3, 4, 5 &amp; 6</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Meet with other Short Breaks Co-ordinators in neighbouring boroughs to establish a local Short Breaks Network to share best practice.</li> <li>▪ Discuss flexible approaches with Kids</li> </ul>	SBS	Throughout year
4. Increasing the variety of services offered	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Investigate idea of a portal for parents to use to meet and “pool” direct payments to establish peer groups for their children and a more varied activity programme.</li> </ul>	SBS and Kids	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>Establishing relationships with other boroughs</i></li> </ul> <p>In progress</p> <p>Discuss with HoS initially about how best this could work.</p>

5. Reviewing provision of targeted peer/age groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish a focus group of parent/carers and children to discuss/mindmap 'flexible' provision solutions.</li> </ul>	SBS / HoS then BPCF/Kids potentially	
6. Allocation of Kids days			
7. Sibling support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify what currently exists in terms of sibling support.</li> <li>As above address the issue of sibling support with BPCF to identify what the needs are – is it a case of a service gap or just lack of awareness?</li> </ul>	SBS  SBS	January to March 2020

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

### **7.1. BRACKNELL PARENT CARER FORUM**

The Bracknell Parent Carer Forum is a voluntary and independent group of parents and carers of children and young persons who have special educational needs or a disability living in Bracknell Forest. The Forum's aim is to improve and make positive changes to not only children's lives but also the lives of their families. It is a positive peer support group for parents / carers.

It provides a networking opportunity and forum for consultation and participation in planning and developing services within Bracknell Forest, working alongside Bracknell Forest Council, East Berkshire Clinical Commissioning Group, local schools and community groups, to make a difference in Bracknell Forest.

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

### **7.2. PARENT/CARER TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES**

- The Behaviour Support Specialist in the Children's Specialist Support Team runs behaviour management courses and drop-ins throughout the year. Please email [short.breaks@bracknell-forest.gov.uk](mailto:short.breaks@bracknell-forest.gov.uk) to find out when courses are running.
- 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:
  - 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/>
  - Autism Berkshire – 01189 594 594 - <http://www.autismberkshire.org.uk/parent-family-carer/>
  - Bracknell and Wokingham Mencap - 0300 777 8539 - [http://www.wokinghambracknellmencap.org/act\\_carers.php](http://www.wokinghambracknellmencap.org/act_carers.php)
  - 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](mailto: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

### **7.4. 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>

### **7.5. SUPPORT FOR CHILDREN UNDER FIVE YEARS OLD**

Children's Centres 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 Children Centres 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;

<https://www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/children-and-family-services/special-educational-needs-send/child-development-centre/about-child-development-centre>

### **7.6. 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>

## **7.7. 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.

For young people approaching adulthood, travel training is available. This works to promote greater independence for both activities and access to further education or employment opportunities:

[https://bracknellforest.fsd.org.uk/kb5/bracknell/directory/service.page?id=ggtZse6Q5T8&familychannel=6\\_5](https://bracknellforest.fsd.org.uk/kb5/bracknell/directory/service.page?id=ggtZse6Q5T8&familychannel=6_5).

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](mailto:approaching.adulthood@bracknell-forest.gov.uk)

## **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  
Children's Specialist Support Team  
Bracknell Forest Council  
Time Square  
Market Street  
Bracknell  
Berks  
RG12 1JD

[short.breaks@bracknell-forest.gov.uk](mailto:short.breaks@bracknell-forest.gov.uk)

01344 352733