

Policy on Short breaks for children and young people with disabilities living in Worcestershire

Vision

Worcestershire County Council's Vision for children and young people with disabilities and complex health needs and their parents and carers, is that they will have a choice of short breaks and activities put on by the best people, in the areas they want them.

What is a short break?

A short break is a positive activity or service which:

- helps to develop a child or young person's social and emotional development by giving them opportunities to take part in and enjoy new experiences;
- gives parents and carers a break from caring responsibilities from time to time, allowing them time to re-fresh familial relationships

Short breaks on offer in Worcestershire

Short break activities parents and carers can arrange for themselves

Worcestershire County Council and NHS Worcestershire have undertaken a comprehensive assessment of need and available provision. As a result of that, services have been jointly commissioned to complement what is already provided by the voluntary and community sector. This means there are a variety of activities and services across the County that parents and carers can arrange for their child to take part in. These could include:

- Age appropriate activities provided by voluntary and community groups and leisure centres
- Weekend and evening clubs and activities
- Parent led groups
- Fun days out
- Children's centre activities
- Childcare and holiday scheme provision
- Youth services and groups
- Volunteering schemes
- Community and voluntary groups and activities for children with additional needs
- One to one support (home based, domiciliary services, outreach and family support)

Parents and carers can obtain advice on what is available in their local area from the Family Information Service.

Specialist short break activities and services

Specialist short breaks services (including residential and home based weekend and overnight care, personal assistant and domiciliary services) provide support for those families with children and young people who require the highest levels

of support, and where caring responsibilities place significant stress on the whole family.

Specialist short breaks services include:

- Specialist play-schemes
- Specialist support workers
- Residential and home based overnight and weekend care
- Youth groups with specialist support
- Direct payments

To access these services, an assessment of need is undertaken by a social worker from the Children with Disability Team. This assessment is then considered by the Short Breaks Panel to establish whether it is necessary to provide a specialist short break service.

To be eligible for a specialist short break service, the child or young person must be:

- Ordinarily resident in Worcestershire
- assessed as having a disability as defined by the Equality Act 2010;
- assessed as requiring services in order to prevent impairment to the child's physical, emotional and social development

Under the Equality Act 2010, a child has a disability if:

- they have a physical or mental impairment
- the impairment has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to perform normal day-to-day activities

Publicising the Policy

Information about the policy will be made available to parents and carers via the Family Information Service. A 'pathway' has been developed so the Family Information Service is the first point of contact. Parents and carers will be advised whether they should:

1. Choose from a variety of short breaks activities and services that they can arrange for themselves or;
2. Be signposted to the Access Centre where an assessment will be arranged to determine whether your child is eligible to access specialist short breaks services

Reviewing the Policy

The policy will be reviewed at least every 5 years in line with the periodic review of commissioning of short-breaks services. Policy reviews will include consultation with parents and carers and children and young people.