

Devon County Council

Short Breaks Commissioning Strategy 2021-2025



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Section 1: Context

Introduction

What are Short Breaks?

Short Breaks are aimed at families with a disabled child to give parents a chance to have a break from their caring role by allowing them some 'time out' to do something they would like to do for themselves.

Short breaks are also to enable disabled children and young people to be supported at home and within their local community. Short Breaks help to do this by giving opportunities for children and young people to take part in activities, meet new people and enjoy positive learning opportunities and different experiences.

Short Breaks can include support to access activities (such as sports, music, crafts, drama or community groups like Scouts or Brownies, youth clubs, holiday clubs), this might be through support from workers often called enablers. This could, in some instances, be for a limited time to help a child join in with an activity until they can attend independently.

Short breaks can last between a few hours, up to a whole weekend, or during the school holidays. They can take place at home, in the community or in a residential setting. Childcare settings can sometimes be used as venues for short break activities.

Support is also available in the home through short breaks, either to offer a child or young person's parents additional support while they are there or to allow family members to take a break from their caring role.

Community-based environments: provide an important place for disabled children and young people to express themselves, develop their skills, and be supported to be healthy and independent young people. Universal, inclusive, person-centred support and care enables disabled children and young people to thrive. Universal services include early years settings, schools, further education settings, Public Health Nursing (PHN), school nurses, Primary Care, and voluntary and community groups.

Overnight short breaks: For some families, an overnight short break offers short-term care for children and young people with significant disabilities or a serious health condition.

They form part of a support package based on the need of individual children and their families. They could be provided by a foster carer, registered children's home (for short breaks) or an additional carer within the family home.

If a child is not eligible for an assessment by the Disabled Children's Service, their needs can be assessed and supported by Early Help.

Eligibility Criteria

Short breaks may be appropriate if a disabled child:

- needs help to regularly access services to support their health and development
- to alleviate stress in the family which may lead to needing targeted or specialist support
- needs extra help to participate in community activities to aid their social and emotional development

Targeted support including Short Breaks is available for children and families that have been assessed as having eligible support needs. (further information around eligibility criteria can be found in the [Short Breaks Statement](#))

When we look at the support your child needs through the assessment, we also consider the needs of the rest of your family. For targeted support these needs might include:

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- **sibling needs:** your disabled child's needs are impacting on their siblings' opportunities
- **parent/carer needs:** your disabled child's needs are impacting your well-being and personal life
- **parenting:** you are unable to meet your child's needs but may benefit from specific and time-limited advice, information, or support.

Why do we need a Short Breaks Commissioning Strategy?

'Commissioning is the process for deciding how to use the total resource available for families to improve outcomes in the most efficient, effective, equitable and sustainable way.' (See Appendix Three – Commissioning Process)

- To enable Devon County Council, NHS Devon Integrated Care Board (ICB) and partners to commission services that will deliver priority outcomes, for children and families identified, within our joint and individual strategic plans
- To communicate our shared vision and Commissioning Intentions for Short Breaks to all stakeholders and support joint commissioning and planning around how we intend to achieve the intentions
- So that people who use Short Breaks are treated fairly and equitably and are able to access short breaks in a way that meets their needs and preferences as identified in consultation with them throughout the development of the Commissioning Strategy
- To enable proposed improvements to be co-produced with the Parent Carer Forum facilitating children and family involvement throughout the consultation process for the Short Breaks Commissioning Strategy
- To communicate and effect the required change to the current market provision for Short Breaks to offer flexibility and choice that will enable children and families to access services close to where they live so they can build networks that connect them to their community
- To further develop intelligence to understand the current and future need
- To provide services that are value for money and ensure all spend is directed where there is the greatest need

Special Education Needs and Disabilities Strategy (SEND) 2021 - 2024 – Priorities

The Short Breaks Commissioning Strategy sits under the overarching SEND Strategy and incorporates its vision, key priorities and outcomes.

Our vision is for all children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities to dream, believe and achieve and fulfil their potential.

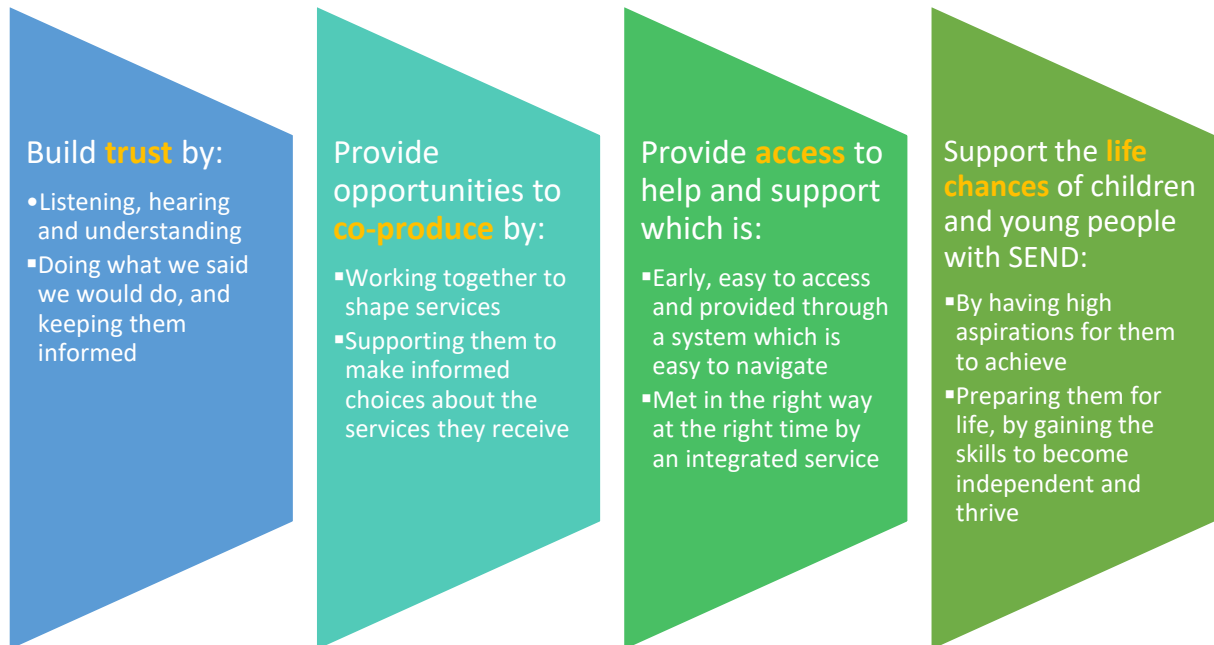
Our four overarching SEND priorities for children and young people receiving short breaks are:

- **Trust:** that they will receive effective, reliable, and consistent support which enables them to be happy and healthy
- **Co-production:** work in co-production with us so they are fully engaged in their education and local community

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- **Access:** have early access to services so they are thriving and resilient
- **Life chances:** have better life chance so they are fulfilling their potential and achieving their goals

For children and young people with SEND and families, we will:



In line with our Commissioning Intentions, we will focus on Embedding these priorities into practice:



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Current Provision

Devon County Council (DCC) currently provides short breaks services to disabled children and young people in a variety of ways across the spectrum of need. These include:

- ✓ **DCC and NHS owned overnight short breaks registered children's homes** x 3 across Devon. Across the three short breaks Homes we have a total of 12 beds available each night and these vary depending on the need at the time. The occupancy levels are based on the revenue budget allocated which is lower than the capacity available and is therefore being reviewed internally to provide the maximum support possible within allocated budgets. This resource is joint funded by NHS Devon ICB.
- ✓ **Family Based Overnight Short Breaks (fostering)** DCC have a block contract for 1333 nights per annum provided by Action for Children and jointly funded by NHS Devon ICB.
- ✓ **The Multi-Sensory Impairment Service** The service provides two main areas:
 - Supporting children in accessing their education setting
 - Providing short breaks outside of the school day.
- ✓ **The Enabling Service** This service is one of the areas we are looking at developing further to increase the internal provision offer to families across Devon with an initial focus on supporting children known to the Disabled Childrens Service.
- ✓ **Overnight Provision** Spot Purchasing with external short breaks registered children's homes and residential special schools
- ✓ **Community Short Breaks** Spot Purchasing across 180+ providers for the provision of community short breaks. This includes: enabling services; support workers into the home; holiday and Saturday clubs; after school clubs and activities; accessing the community and wider support such as behaviour support courses for parents.
- ✓ **Direct Payments:** The provision of direct payments to parents/carers for parents to purchase their own services where this is their preference.
- ✓ **Grants:** DCC also support service provision for disabled children and young people through grants for:
 - Funding to support and encourage voluntary and charity sector to provide services to disabled children and young people, capped at £5k per provider
 - To the Citizens Advice Bureau to provide a 'Quids for Kids' service that supports parent/carers to access the benefits funding they are entitled to
 - To the Parent Carer Forum Devon to work with families across Devon and ensure their voices are reflected at a strategic level

Information and Advice

- ✓ **Pinpoint Devon:** offers a directory of community services that are available to families in Devon. Improvement work is needed according to current feedback (see Commissioning Intentions). This information in Pinpoint is supplied by community organisations themselves. It includes details of holiday activities, after-school clubs, overnight short breaks, enabling services, and support to access community-based activities

Early Help

DCC currently use **The Continuum of Need** which sets out how to access early support; the thresholds for single and multi-agency agency interventions at all levels; and when to consider a referral for a social care led 'single assessment'. The Continuum of Need supports practitioners to make sure children and young people are helped to access the right short breaks which will support their families and 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;

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and have regard to the needs of those carers who would be able to provide care more effectively if breaks from caring were given to them to allow them to undertake education, training or any regular leisure activity as well as meet the needs of other children in the family more effectively or carry out day to day tasks.

Background to development of the Commissioning Plan

In Devon, work has been ongoing around our short breaks offer and this was reviewed 2019. We know that the work was held up as a result of the covid pandemic, as priority was given to other areas of work, and this slowed down the work we wanted to achieve. An initial period of engagement was undertaken with parents and carers, disabled children and young people and providers of short break services for families between the summer of 2019 and February 2020. The aim of this engagement was to understand the support families were receiving, how well this was working and what would help to better support families to have a good family life (See Co-production)

A Short Breaks Working Group was established and led by DCC with representation from parents, local providers, and a Special School Head representative. The parental representation was ensured through the Devon Parent Carer Forum. This has developed into the Short Breaks Project Board which has been meeting every six weeks.

COVID-19

The short breaks provision usually available to families in Devon has been impacted by the government's COVID-19 restrictions. Our Disabled Children's Service has worked with families who have been unable to access their usual support to find alternative solutions. The intent was that this would be achieved using direct payments. However, information from individual parents, Parent Carer Forum Devon and independent support providers confirms that parents have faced significant difficulties in finding safe local short break provision to meet their needs, especially when they have been in receipt of a Direct Payment to employ Personal Assistants.

Due to the mixed rural and urban demographics of the county there is a risk of social isolation and loneliness amongst children and young people with disabilities which can be compounded by the lack of accessibility to public transport. There is a strong evidence base to suggest that reducing social isolation both for children and young people and their families is a key protective factor leading to better outcomes in adult life.

DCC has been working with organisations who provide short breaks to understand the pressures they are facing, and to support them to access what they need to safely provide services during this time, in line with government guidance. Organisations providing short breaks were prioritised in the roll out of the Covid-19 vaccinations and were provided with access to lateral flow tests to support Covid safe delivery of services.

Small grants scheme: Eligible organisations were offered the opportunity to apply to our annual small grants scheme to receive up to £5,000 to make additional places available and/or cover increased costs. During the financial year 2020/21 this scheme provided financial support to 28 organisations. Much of the market has needed to adapt and flex their offer due to fluctuating demand, attributable to both the caution that families have exercised and the changes to restrictions. This has led to some interesting innovation, with some services moving to online virtual delivery and others adapting environments and service delivery in line with guidance.

In November last year, the government allocated a Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) programme to provide healthy food and enriching activities to disadvantaged children. The programme covered Easter, Summer and Christmas holidays in 2021.

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What does the Data tell us?

As at June 2022, there are **8,239** children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) who have an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP).

There are currently **1,864** children and young people with SEND who are receiving short breaks support. **1,604** of the children and young people are also in receipt of an EHCP and an analysis has been undertaken to identify where demand for services are most prevalent across the county for these children.

Location

Nearly 31% of children and young people with SEND accessing short breaks live in the local authorities Mid and East locality, 28% live in Exeter locality, 21% live in South locality and 17% live in North locality. Just over 2% reside outside of Devon.

Age

The majority (56%) of children and young people with SEND who are accessing short breaks are aged 11-16, 34% are aged 5-10, 9% are 17+ and 1% are aged under 5.

Ethnicity

Of the 1,864 children and young people with SEND, the three highest ethnicity groups are White British 90%, White Other origin 3%, White and Asian 0.6%

Primary Need

The most predominant primary need listed for those children and young people who are accessing short breaks and have an EHCP is Autism Spectrum Disorder (37.47%), followed by Speech Language and Communication Needs (17.77%) and then Social Emotional and Mental Health (12.78%).

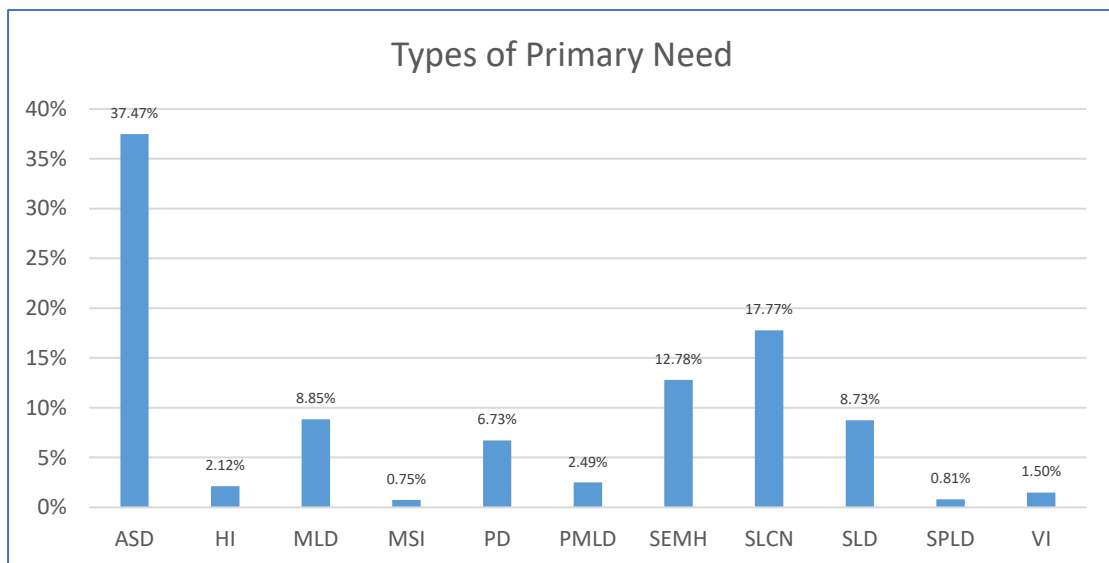


Figure 1: The types of primary need within the children and young people who have an EHCP and who have short breaks.

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How families access Short Breaks: Commissioned Services or Direct Payments:

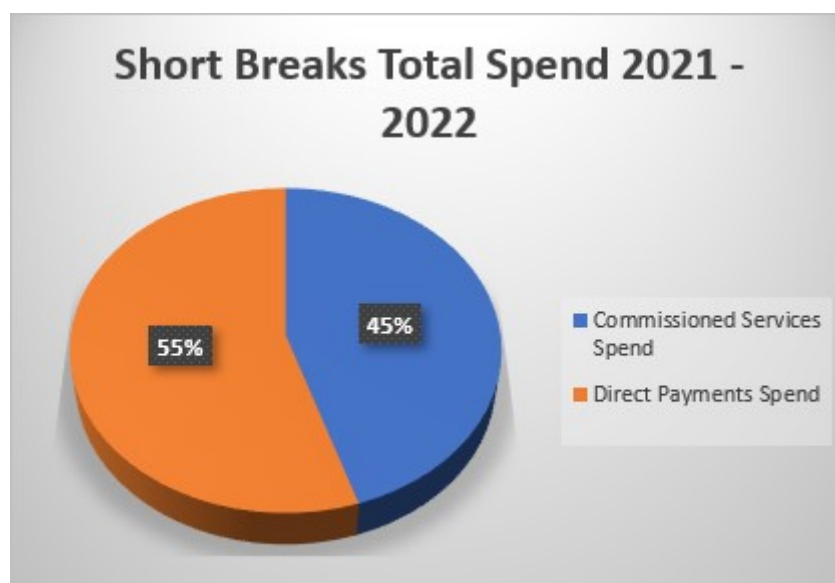


Figure 2: The split of spending on short breaks between Commissioned Services and Direct Payments (2021-2022).

Co-production

Children, young people and parents are encouraged to be equal partners in developing plans and agreeing outcomes to be achieved. Every effort is made to seek their views, reflecting on the vital role parents / family play in supporting their child's development.

Engagement and participation are vital to ensuring the services we provide meet the needs of the people who use them.

Listening to children, young people, parents and carers and working together helps services to know what works and where changes and improvements are needed:

The Children's Disability Service has recently engaged with Champions for Change to further explore how we can work together with them to improve our Short Breaks Offer.

NHS Devon ICB are funding the parent care forums to develop an Expert by Experience Reference Group for Autism. The group will have a key leadership role in the Neurodiversity transformation programme and feed in to the delivery of the short breaks strategy.

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Engagement with Families

In 2019, DCC organised workshops jointly with the **Parent Carer Forum Devon (PCFD)** to find out what people think of short breaks for disabled children and young people in Devon. We spent time with parents and carers, worked with our short break provider services to gain the views of children and young people, and launched a survey to invite views from parents, carers, and professionals.

What families told us:

- families want to spend **quality time together, close to where they live**
- families would also like us to be **creative and flexible** about the types of things they can do as a short break that will **meet the wider family's needs**
- children and young people would like to do more activities like **sports, music, being outdoors**, and have **more chance to make friends**
- **older children** and young people would like to do things more **appropriate to their age and interests**
- Families would like **better choice of experienced providers** who can offer opportunities for children and young people with more **complex and challenging needs and behaviours**
- some parts of Devon are better served for things for children and young people to do than other parts and we need to **provide equity across the board**
- **'enabling' services** and holiday clubs, which are really appreciated by families, can be **difficult to find and often have waiting lists**
- families feel services can be **too expensive**
- parents would like more **self-help information and advice** to support their children
- it's difficult for many families trying to juggle their lives, their relationships, interests, work etc alongside their caring roles
- sometimes parents and carers **feel isolated**, even in their own communities
- it's sometimes **difficult for siblings** of disabled children and young people, whose parents perhaps spend less time with them – they might want to do 'ordinary' things like having a friend over for tea, which in some situations is not possible
- many families do not have any contingency or crisis plan to fall back on in case it is needed
- Parents have told us they enjoy the flexibility of funding their short breaks through their **direct payments** and **personal budgets** so they can choose and arrange services themselves. We are committed to supporting families to do this wherever possible

What children and young people told us they would like:

- Have different options available, to choose the type, location, and time of my short break.
- Have help and support to become more independent.
- Have positive and good experience.
- Be able to plan and design short breaks.
- Reach their full potential and thrive.

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- Make new friends and learn new skills and become more confident.
- Build on strengths rather than difficulties or disabilities.

Parents and carers say they want:

- To know what short breaks are available and how to access them?
- Choices across the type, time, and location
- Clear communication from professionals to help make choices.
- More control and be able to deal with caring responsibilities.
- To know how to access support before reaching crisis point.
- To know that my child receives high quality short breaks and are cared for by trained, professional staff in a safe environment.

Wider system feedback:

- Adult offer and children's offer are very different in terms of what can be accessed both from a value and provision point of view.
- Transport from schools can be a barrier to accessing after school activities.
- Special schools are not offering the same opportunities for outside the school day/after school clubs that mainstream schools offer.

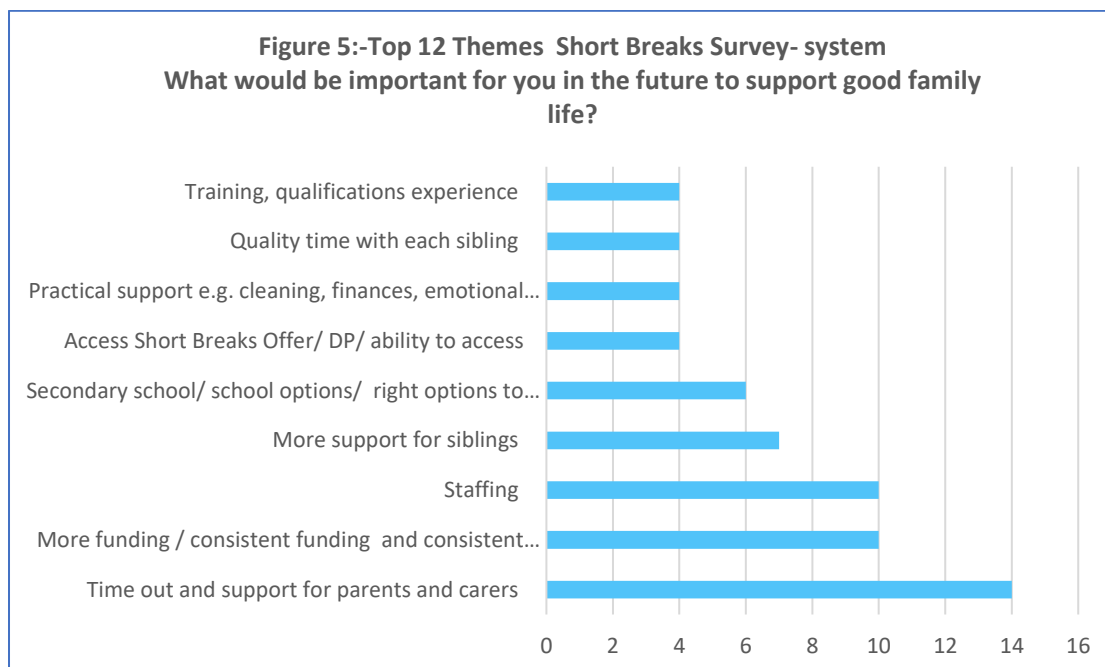


Figure 3: Family Feedback from 2019 Short Breaks Engagement Activity.

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Annual Family Survey

Since the above information was gathered, the Parent Carer Forum Devon (PCFD) have successfully completed an annual family survey, Nov 2021, with 719 respondents.

Feedback from the Parent Carer Survey by Parent Carer Forum Devon February 2022

“Parent Carer Forum Devon Annual Family Survey Nov 2021 719 respondents”

- Whilst many families do often feel excluded from the community, **extra-curricular activities** and **child-care** are the activities they feel most excluded from
- Over half of the parents that responded feel often or totally excluded from **child-care**
- Around half of the parents that responded feel often or totally excluded from extra-curricular activities such as **brownies or swimming lessons**
- Around a third of families feel excluded from both their **school** and their **local community**

Parents fed back that their child’s condition is often challenging due to the child’s health condition and behavioural needs and that struggling with the daily home and school challenges, impacted through their child’s condition, has a negative impact to family life

Parents added that they felt this was not helped by:

- Lack of support
- Lack of understanding
- Constant battling with professionals

Parents said they felt that:

- Professionals should listen to and believe what they were going through
- Other people were judging them and expected them to ‘fit in’
- There was a lack of awareness around SEND
- There was a lack of understanding around additional needs
- There were negative judgements made on their parenting

Of the parents of disabled children that responded:

- More than three quarters said they felt that **direct payments made a positive difference** to the child and the overall family
- Over half said they **do not experience collective working** across Education, Health and Social Care
- Over half said they **do not fully understand all the services available** to them
- Less than half said they feel that the services work with their child to **engage in the community** and lead a full and engaging life
- A quarter said they feel services **do not enable their child at all**

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Identified gaps in Short Breaks Services

Devon's offer includes overnight and community-based short breaks. Commissioned community-based providers offer a range of activities across Devon for disabled children and young people.

Unspent Direct Payments:

The aim is that families are potentially able to purchase access to short breaks using their direct payments. Parents have told us they enjoy the flexibility of funding their short breaks through their direct payments and personal budgets so they can choose and arrange services themselves. More than three quarters of parents said they felt that Direct Payments made a positive difference to the child and the overall family (PCFD Survey Nov 21).

However, some parents have reported significant difficulties during the pandemic in finding services to purchase or Personal Assistants to employ via their Direct Payment accounts and have said that they would prefer the Local Authority to assume more commissioning responsibility.

Parents and carers have told us that they are often unable to spend all their direct payments due to lack of suitable local provision. The Short Breaks offer in Devon lacks sufficient equity across the whole county. Local provision is especially important in a rural county like Devon where transport can be time-consuming and costly.

Market Management:

Currently services are procured on a spot purchase basis. This means that we are not maximising our buying power with providers which leads at times to insufficient and inconsistent capacity in the market. This exacerbates the difficulty outlined above to identify services to purchase with the use of Direct Payments

We know through feedback from families, the community-based offer is not currently meeting the needs of all young people, particularly those with Autism and Social Emotional Mental Health (SEMH) early or effectively enough. We are aware that there is a risk that this can lead to an avoidable escalation of needs, increasing demand for statutory provision across Health, Education and Social Care.

Error! Reference source not found. Types of Need evidences that ASD is the highest primary need amongst children accessing Short Breaks that have an EHCP at 37.47%, SLCN is the second highest primary need at 17.77% and SEMH is the third highest primary need at 12.78%

Identified gaps in the Short Breaks Service through feedback from the Disabled Children's Service

The Support and Advice Team and the Social Work Teams completed a questionnaire to identify:

- Services that are always difficult to access
- Services that are frequently difficult to access

Information has been collated around the services that were identified by Children's Social Care staff as 'always difficult' or 'frequently difficult' to access to evidence, from their perspective and working knowledge, the most predominant gaps in service provision. The six most predominantly cited are detailed in the table below: (see appendix 4 for more extensive data)

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Always or frequently difficult to access – of the Disabled Children’s Service staff that completed the questionnaire, the following % cited:		Predominant Age Categories - % of children and young people in age category relating to the Short Break category
Enabling	100%	32% are 5-11 and 30% are 12 - 16
Holiday clubs	96%	33% are 12-16 and 28% are 5-11
Saturday clubs	96%	31% are 12-16 and 29% are 5-11
After School clubs	92%	38% are 12-16 and 30% are 5-11
Inclusive mainstream activities	88%	34% are 12-16 and 30% are 5-11
Overnight respite	78%	38% are 12-16 and 28% are 5-11

Enabling:

This was scored by DCS staff as the highest service area that is ‘always’ or ‘frequently’ difficult to access and relates in the main to the 5-11 age category, closely followed by the 12-16 age category.

This was also a feature of the 2019 engagement between Commissioning and families with disabled children. It was fed back that enabling services, which are really appreciated by families, can be difficult to find or have a waiting list. This was reiterated in the November 2021 PCFD Survey when a quarter of responses to this survey said that they did not feel services enabled their child.

Holiday Clubs and Saturday clubs:

These have been fed back by DCS service staff as the second highest service area that is ‘always’ or ‘frequently’ difficult to access. As with enabling services, families have fed back that they can be difficult to find and have waiting lists.

After School Clubs/Activities:

These are featured highly in the DCS staff survey as ‘always’ or ‘frequently’ difficult to access. In the 2019 family engagement it was highlighted that Transport from schools can be a barrier to accessing after school activities but also that Special Schools are not offering the same opportunities for outside the school day/after school clubs that mainstream schools offer.

Inclusive Mainstream Activities:

These were identified by DCS staff as the fifth highest area that is ‘always’ or ‘frequently’ difficult to access. The PCFD Survey Nov 2021 identified that whilst many families do often feel excluded from the community, extra-curricular activities and child-care are the activities they feel most excluded from. There were over half the parents that responded saying they felt excluded from child-care, around half felt excluded from extra-curricular activities such as brownies or swimming lessons. Around a third of the families said they felt excluded from both their school and their local community.

Overnight Respite:

This was identified by DCS staff as high on the list of areas that are ‘always’ or ‘frequently’ difficult to access largely for 12-16yr olds but with a significant number of 5-11yr olds.

Section 2: Our Plan to Develop & Improve the Short Breaks Offer

i-Thrive Model



As part of working together, Devon partners have signed up to I THRIVE Framework for system change. This is an integrated, person-centred and needs led approach to delivering services for children, young people and their families.

Emphasis is placed on preventing escalation of need and the promotion of wellbeing across the whole population. Children, young people, and their families are empowered through active involvement in decisions about their care through shared decision making, which is fundamental to the approach.

It conceptualises need in five categories: -

- **Thriving**
- **Getting Advice**
- **Getting Help**
- **Getting More Help**
- **Getting Risk Support**

Section 2: Our Plan to Develop & Improve the Short Breaks Offer

Commissioning Intentions

We will work to remove barriers for disabled children accessing their community and support them through the universal offer:

How will we do this?

- Work with universal service providers to build greater visibility of the opportunities open to disabled children within their communities
- Offer training to universal service providers to raise their awareness around SEND and enable them to be inclusive and have a better understanding of how to support children and young people with additional needs
- Review the use of grants to support the universal offer so that public money is used to encourage greater inclusion and choice and prioritisation to children and young people with disabilities and their families.
- Identification of a provider to develop a network of volunteer peer enablers to support children and young people's access to activities within their community
- Pilot an extension of the learning disability and autism key worker model with families and children waiting for assessment to signpost as well as support them to access services

How will we know we have achieved this?

- As the use of universal services within communities is maximised, specialist resources are kept available for those that need them
- More young people will have their needs met in the community and we will see a reduction in the number of young people and families requiring a short breaks assessment, as their needs will be met within their communities.
- More children and young people and their families have their neurodivergence needs met in the community and feel supported without requiring diagnosis.
- Disabled children and young people learn new skills, make new friends and reduce isolation or loneliness.

We want families to have access to clear information and advice to support children and young people with disabilities to access age and ability appropriate inclusive play, activities, and social opportunities

How will we do this?

- Expand the signpost plus service to ensure that this is accessible to all of Devon.
- Support families to understand what local provision is available to them, how it can meet their child's, and wider family's individual needs and how they can access short breaks as close to home as possible.
- Support families to understand how they can use Direct Payments to access Short Breaks through provision of clear Direct Payment Guidance documentation and consistent professional advice

Section 2: Our Plan to Develop & Improve the Short Breaks Offer

- Improve the Pinpoint directory including ease of navigation better quality provider information that includes a description about the service, its availability and cost.
- Expand access to ensure a more equitable and diverse offer of inclusive and accessible short breaks that cater for all ages across the range of eligibility.

How will we know we have achieved this?

- Families are in control of how they use short breaks and involved in the decision-making process
- Families who wish to use Direct Payments will feel confident to do so
- Families across Devon will know how to receive newsletters and snippets about short breaks in their communities.
- We will see more people using the short breaks pages
- Feedback from families and providers will tell us that the information they receive is helpful and informative.

We will develop the short breaks provider market to ensure families can access personalised support to match their needs through flexible and responsive provision at the right time and close to where they live

How will we do this?

- Through market engagement and the commissioning of a formal short breaks offer.
- Host short breaks provider fayres so that families can have the opportunity to meet and speak with providers about their child's needs and offer the opportunity of a bespoke package to support their child.
- Review the use of grants to support development of providers to enable them to widen their services. Public money is used to encourage greater inclusion and choice and prioritisation to children and young people with disabilities and their families.
- Activities which fall under HAF to be commissioned not just in holiday period but throughout the year and locally.
- Review the commissioning, panel decision making arrangements and use of internal residential homes to provide the maximum support possible within allocated budgets.

How will we know we have achieved this?

- We will have a diverse short break offer for children, young people, and their families across Devon.
- We will see bespoke individual packages being created for our most complex young people, which will support the families in the right way and on their terms.
- Staff are qualified and skilled to deliver safe and high-quality services
-

We will ensure short breaks providers offer high quality services that are safe, welcoming and value for money

Section 2: Our Plan to Develop & Improve the Short Breaks Offer

How will we do this?

- Through the introduction of a quality assurance framework that providers will have to work to, which will include site visits and review of practice, policies, and procedures.
- The child and parent / carer experience and perspective is prioritised when designing what services are delivered and how they are accessed.

How will we know we have achieved this?

- We will receive positive feedback from families, young people and professionals.
- Short breaks services are continuously improving and offer good value for money.

We will build strong relationships and adaptable approaches between commissioners, children and young people, their families, communities and short break providers to enable us to work together in a way that makes a difference

How will we do this?

- Ensure services are outcome focused and, where appropriate, link into supporting a child's EHC Plan
- Review the planning and decision-making groups to ensure a more collaborative approach across Health, Social Care, Education and the provider market through place based joint commissioning and joint packages of support for young people around short breaks
- Embed restorative, relational and trauma-informed ways of working with children and young people with Autism and SEMH focusing on ensuring they have consistent and trusted support available. Link to the Devon Autism Strategy and SEND WSOA

How will we know we have achieved this?

- We will see that our formal short breaks offer is meeting the needs identified
- We will receive positive feedback from families, young people and professionals.

We want a short-breaks offer that will support young people to have experiences that support a positive future, access training and enable them to access employment

How will we do this?

- Review the pathway and look at opportunities to work together with Adult Services for a more seamless pathway from childrens to adult services.

Section 2: Our Plan to Develop & Improve the Short Breaks Offer

- Through provider engagement and the commissioning of a formal short breaks offer - Linking with adults services around taster sessions/“reach down” opportunities.

How will we know we have achieved this?

- We will see, through reporting, that young people have access to a wide range of activities to support independence and supports their career choices into adulthood.

We will use good quality data and intelligence to inform our Commissioning to ensure we are matching services to need

How will we do this?

- By engaging with a wider range of stake holders throughout our engagement phases, including children and young people, parent carers, families, providers, other local authorities, management information, practitioners and team managers
- We have recruited a designated business intelligence role to support the development of this strategy
- Liaise with management information team to communicate specifically the data that we need to fully understand the need and the gaps in the market.
- Liaise with Early Help to obtain data from referral information
- Data sharing agreements in place so that we can take a more collaborative approach across health, social care and education to the levels of need and demand

How will we know we have achieved this?

- Accurate reporting will be available on demand
- Gaps in provision will be identified and new needs identified. We will then be able to work to address these and reduce the gaps.

We will regularly co-ordinate a review and update of the short breaks statement and the local offer in co-production in line with Statutory Guidance to ensure it remains relevant

How will we do this?

- By setting up a task and finish style working group, with Parent Carer Forum Devon and key professionals

How will we know we have achieved this?

- We will see that our short breaks statement reflects accurately an up-to-date short breaks position in Devon
- Feedback will confirm this is a useful resource for parent carers and professionals

What needs to happen and when?

An action plan detailing next steps is attached to this strategy as Appendix 4

Appendices



Appendix One: Legal Framework

Section 25 of the Children and Young Persons Act 2008 requires local authorities to provide short breaks for families with disabled children.

Each local authority is required to produce a Short Breaks Statement to inform families what services are available to them, the eligibility criteria to access these services and how the range of services is designed to meet the needs of the families with disabled children in the area.

How local authorities provide short breaks and what should be provided are set out in the Breaks for Carers of Disabled Children Regulations 2011 and include:

- daytime or overnight care in the homes of disabled children or elsewhere
- education or leisure activities for disabled children outside their homes
- services available to assist carers in the evenings, at weekends and during school holidays.

Short Breaks should be made available to children and young people aged 0-18. They would have been assessed as meeting the eligibility criteria to access short breaks and live within the borders of Devon County Council.

Whilst there are a range of legislative requirements of Local Authorities in respect of short breaks, there is a level of flexibility around how Local Authorities can deliver these requirements.

Therefore, we must:

- Consider all relevant legislative requirements when we make decisions about how we provide and fund short breaks
- Assess the needs of any disabled child or young person whose family may want or need services above the level available locally without an assessment
- Provide short breaks to children or young people where an assessment shows that they are necessary to meet their needs, taking account of the family context

The Local Authority has several duties associated with short breaks which include those owed to individual children and families in relation to assessment and care planning and wider commissioning obligations on local authorities. Further statutory duties are to be found within the following legislation:

- Children Act 1989
- Children Act 2004
- Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1970 ('CSDPA 1970')
- 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)

The starting point for consideration of the legal framework relating to short breaks is the general duty to provide services for children in need under section 17(1) of the Children Act 1989. The duty is to 'safeguard and promote the welfare of children within their area who are in need; and so far, as is consistent with that duty, to promote the upbringing of such children by their families, by providing a range and level of services appropriate to those children's needs.'

Appendices

Appendix Two: The Short Breaks Duty

Paragraph 6 of schedule 2 of the Children Act 1989 provides that.

(3) Every local authority shall provide services designed —

- (a) to minimise the effect on disabled children within their area of their disabilities.
- (b) to give such children the opportunity to lead lives which are as normal as possible; and
- (c) 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 duty in para 6(1)(c) of schedule 2, often described as the ‘short breaks duty’, was inserted by the Children and Young Persons Act 2008. It was intended to ensure that the improvement made by investment in short breaks through the Aiming High for Disabled Children programme was not lost. The effect of the short breaks’ duty is that the services provided by every local authority to children in need must include both ‘crisis’ breaks and breaks designed to ensure that family life can be sustained effectively.

2.6 Regulations have been made to supplement the short breaks duty, in the form of the Breaks for Carers of Disabled Children Regulations 2011 (‘the 2011 Regulations’). The key regulations are as follows.

- Regulation 3: Duty to make provision
- Regulation 4: Types of services which must be provided
- Regulation 5: Short breaks services statement

Appendices

Appendix Three: Commissioning Process

Commissioning takes place on a strategic, operational, and individual level and is a cyclical process of activities reflecting four key stages.



Figure 4: The Stages of the Commissioning Cycle.

Commissioning is the process by which commissioning agencies, partners and service users decide how to spend their allocated budget to best address local need. This involves understanding current and future need.

1. Analyse

- understand the needs that must be addressed by the commissioning agencies involved and environment in which they operate
- Population needs assessment
- Service review and provider market analysis to understand existing provider strengths and weaknesses and identify opportunities for improvement or change
- Identify resources needed and risks involved in implementing change and or continuing with the current situation

2. Plan

- Gap analysis
- Designing service to meet needs
- Strategy to identify clear service development priorities and specific targets for their achievement

3. Do

- Provider management and market development to ensure the right mix of service providers to offer service users choice in how their needs are met
- Develop good communications and manage relationships with existing and potential providers
- Purchasing and contracting of services and de-commissioning services that do not meet the needs of the population group

4. Review

- Monitor the impact of services and analyse the extent to which they have achieved the purpose intended