

Birmingham City Council Short Break Statement 2012

Our commitment to supporting children and families

Our vision for children's services in Birmingham is that:

"Every child in every part of the City should achieve their potential. We will provide early help and support to those children and families who need it and, working together, will ensure that every child has the belief, aspiration and support to be their best."

Our vision and the drive to ensure children and young people are safe, healthy and engaged in learning will be delivered through a focus on six key priorities:

- Prevention
- Integration
- Aspiration
- Safeguarding
- Participation
- Excellence

Short Breaks are preventative services that provide support for the carers of disabled children and also allow young people to spend time away from their families and have fun, develop skills and make friends. Short Breaks support delivery of our vision and commitment to children and families.

Introduction and background

Paragraph 6(1) c of Schedule 2 to the Children Act 1989 requires local authorities to provide services to assist carers of disabled children to continue to be able to do this or do so more effectively by giving them breaks from caring.

"The Breaks for Carers of Disabled Children" Regulations 2011 came into effect in April 2011. These place a duty on local authorities to have regard to the needs of carers who

- would be unable to continue to care for their disabled child without a short break or would be able to care more effectively if breaks are given,
- to look after other children of the family more effectively
- or to take part in training education or leisure activities
- or to carry out day to day tasks in running the household

The range of services to be provided must include

- (a) day-time care in the homes of disabled children or elsewhere,
- (b) overnight care in the homes of disabled children or elsewhere,
- (c) educational or leisure activities for disabled children outside their homes, and
- (d) services available to assist carers in the evenings, at weekends and during the school holidays

The Regulations also require each local authority to produce a Short Breaks Services Statement so that families know what services are available, the eligibility criteria for these services, and how the range of services is designed to meet the needs of carers of disabled children in their area.

The statement must be published and kept under review and it should be revised when new services become available, or when there are changes to existing ones. In preparing or revising the statement the local authority must have regard to the views of carers in the area.

How this statement has been prepared

This statement has been prepared using information from parents and carers, and children and young people, service providers and partner agencies, gathered over the course of the Aiming High for Disabled Children Short Break Transformation Programme, 2008-2011.

This includes

- stakeholder engagement events held for parent/carers, disabled children, voluntary sector partners and a range of local authority and health professionals.
- regular surveys and focus groups to obtain views of parent/carers
- market-place events to promote information about Short Breaks and encourage parent/carers and provider interaction.
- service reviews and parent evaluations of short breaks during 2010 and 2011.
- consultation on the Short Breaks Strategy
- consultation on the Eligibility Criteria for Disabled Children's Social Care

Outcomes of an independent consultation and review of short breaks provision conducted by ParentViewsCount (November 2012) have also been taken into account in preparing this statement.

Publication and review

Our Short Breaks Statement is published on the Council's website for children's services, specifically on the website for the Family Information Service. It is also hosted on the ParentViewsCount website. Printed copies are available by contacting the Family Information Service on 0121 303 3521.

www.birmingham.gov.uk/fis

www.Parentviewscount.org

In addition it can be made available on request, in print, in accessible formats and community languages. It will be available to all our specialist and mainstream schools, partner agencies and the family of provision that make up children's services.

The statement will be updated annually and is next due for review in April 2013. The review will be carried out in partnership with disabled children, young people and ParentViewsCount, to make sure it reflects the views and choices of families.

What are short breaks?

Short Breaks are preventative services that provide support for the carers of disabled children and also allow young people to spend time away from their families and have fun.

Short Breaks covers a wider definition of care than traditional "respite services" and must be available on a planned and regular basis, but also on an emergency basis. Short breaks can include day, evening, overnight, weekend or holiday activities. These breaks can be from a few hours to a few days. They can take place in the child or young person's own home, the home of an approved carer, a residential or a community setting. This could include, for example, taking part in a universal activity for all children (e.g. after-school club) or participating in a specialist service for children with complex needs (e.g. specialist holiday scheme)

The level of short break support that will be required will be different from child to child and there is a need to carry out an assessment to determine both eligibility and the type of support that would be most appropriate.

Definition of Disability

In accordance with the Equality Act 2010, a person 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.

** 'substantial' means more than minor or trivial; 'long-term' means that the effect of the impairment has lasted or is likely to last for at least twelve months 'normal day-to-day activities' include everyday things like eating, washing, walking and going shopping*

The Children Act Definition of Disability which applies to these regulations is to be found at Section 17 (11) of the act which states

“For the purposes of this Part, a child is disabled if he is blind, deaf or dumb or suffers from mental disorder of any kind or is substantially and permanently handicapped by illness, injury or congenital deformity or such other disability as may be prescribed;”

Principles

- Short breaks are additional to universal provision.
- Short breaks should be preventative – not just a crisis intervention.
- Short breaks should support carers, provide benefits and improve outcomes for disabled children and young people and their families.
- Short break services should consider siblings as part of a family assessment.
- Short breaks are personal to individual need.
- Local authorities to focus on the impact of impairments on family life – not eligibility dependent entirely on conditions.

Local Needs Assessment and how we plan

When we talk about need, we consider:

- The number of families with disabled children
- The different types and levels of needs
- choices and preferences expressed by families

We get this information from

- Databases used by the local authority and health partners
- Monitoring information supplied by service providers
- Needs assessments and case audits of children and families
- Regional and national research
- Consultation and feedback from parent/carers and children

We use this knowledge to plan and commission services ensuring there is sufficient provision to meet demand and that services are located in the right geographical areas matched to needs.

What we know about families' needs

DfE research suggests that a measure of 7 -10% can be used to estimate the number of children with disabilities within the overall child population, and that 1.2% will have significant or complex needs¹. These measures are supported by local data taken from the Single View of the Disabled Child (CYPF, 2010).

1 Thomas Coram Research Unit. Research Report DCSF-RR042, June 2008

There are around 288,700 children aged 0-18 years in the City. The Single View Database (CYPF, 2010) identifies around 48,600 records of children with additional needs of which around 20,000 require specialist or targeted interventions (i.e. those on School Action, School Action plus or with an SEN Statement). Around 5,000 children have an SEN statement and around 2000 of these children are also known to Children's Social Care.

For the purposes of Short Breaks, we are planning services for up to 6,000 children and their carers. This is around 2% of our overall child population and covers children for whom Short Breaks would be a preventative service, as well as those with substantial and complex needs.

In line with national trends, there are twice as many boys than girls with disabilities in the City.

We also know that 73% of children known to disabled children's social care are aged 10-18 years. Demand is highest and most immediate from these age groups. However, we also recognise the need to support carers of children aged 6-10 years, both as part of a preventative agenda and in response to assessed needs.

There is a high demand for short breaks services for carers of children with autism and challenging behaviour as well for children with severe disabilities and complex needs.

Key messages from consultation with families

Throughout the Aiming High for Disabled Children programme, we held a number of consultation and participation events. At these events we asked disabled young people and their families what they want us to consider when planning and commissioning short break services. Key messages from consultation were:

- Activities covering all the school holidays, including half-term holidays
- Saturday clubs and weekend activities
- After school and evening activities
- Supported day trips
- Outdoor play space
- Opportunities for disabled children and young people to develop friendships
- Support through outreach workers or befrienders to enable disabled young people to access social and physical activities.
- A flexible range of residential short breaks
- Family-based provision allowing parents and siblings to take part in activities as a family with their disabled child such as supported day trips, weekend breaks, holidays
- Confidence that disabled children's needs will be met by appropriately trained staff in all settings
- Flexible services and timely support to meet changing family needs
- Opportunities to take part in inclusive activities with non-disabled children
- Support for siblings and young carers

Range of Short Breaks and how to access

We will continue to develop and invest in a range of services, day-time and overnights, to ensure families have choice of specialist and inclusive provision.

The carers of children and young people are eligible for short breaks from caring where children have a physical or mental impairment, which has a substantial and has long term effect on their ability to carry out day-to-day activities. This may include:

- Physical or mental impairment
- Sensory impairment.
- Autistic Spectrum Disorder.
- Children who may have challenging behaviour as a result of their learning disability.

- Children who have complex healthcare needs and who may have palliative, life limiting or a life-threatening condition.

Short Breaks in Birmingham consist of the following:

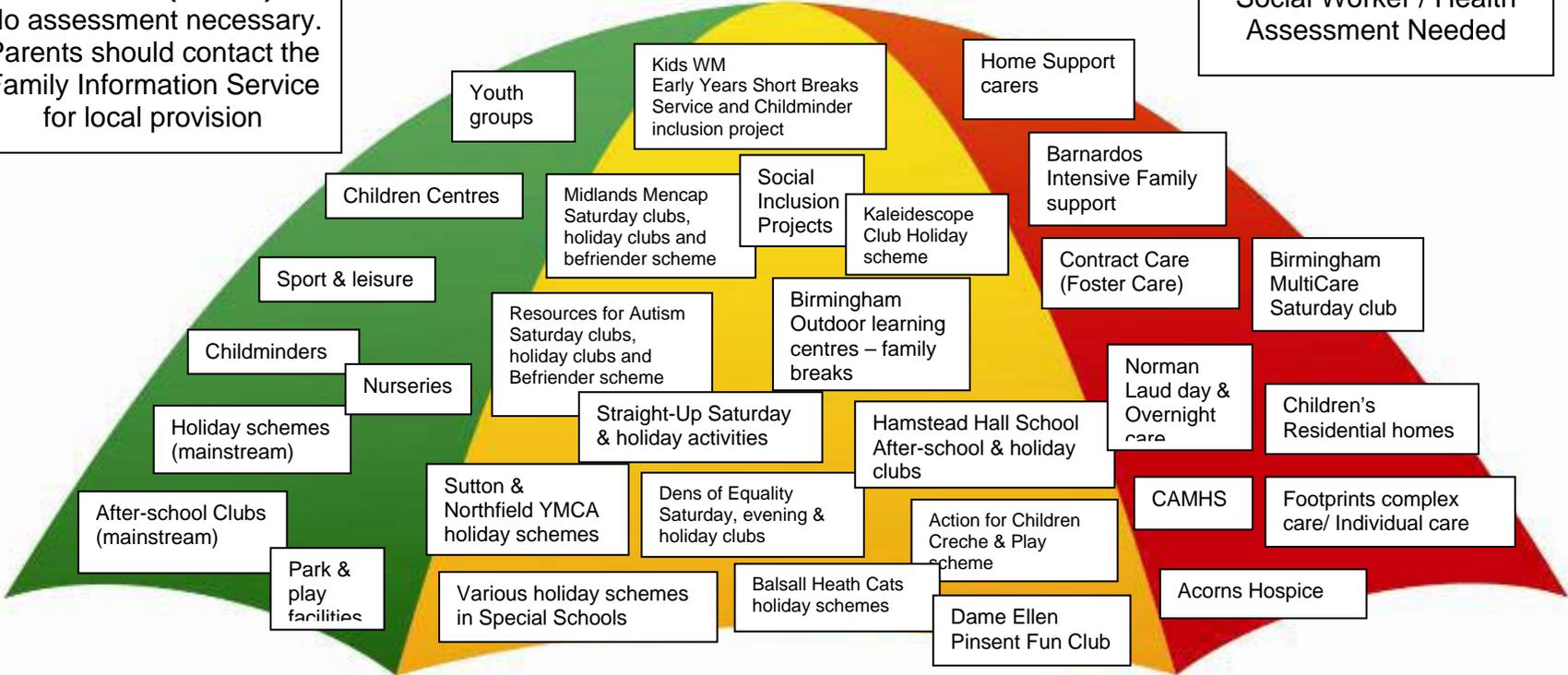
- Home Care/ Home Support Services
- Befriending schemes
- Holiday Activities – both inclusive and specialist, covering most geographical areas of the City
- Out of School Activities – both inclusive and specialist – during the day, evening and at weekends
- Overnight Short Breaks
- Family Fun Days.
- Support to access mainstream services
- Accessible childcare
- Accessible play areas

These are illustrated in the diagram on the next page along with details about how to access these services.

Targeted (Level 2)
Parents should talk to providers.
Provider assessment or CAF needed

Universal (Level 1)
No assessment necessary.
Parents should contact the
Family Information Service
for local provision

Specialist (Level 3&4)
Social Worker / Health
Assessment Needed



Further details and up-to-date information about all these services is available from the
Family Information Service,
tel: 0121 303 3521
www.birmingham.gov.uk/fis

Eligibility Criteria

Why do we need Eligibility Criteria?

We want all carers of disabled children to get the support and services they need to lead fulfilling lives and we know that in order to achieve this we have to be clear about how services are provided and accessed.

The basic needs of disabled children are no different from those of any other child.

Universal services have a role in meeting the needs of disabled children; children who have additional needs or face additional barriers which inhibit and prevent their inclusion in society.

These criteria are necessary because some carers of disabled children require a social care service and these services have to be prioritised for those with highest levels of need.

Social care services are services other than health or education, provided to disabled children and their carers which are

- additional to the universal services which **all** children benefit from – e.g. schools, nurseries, playgroups, childcare, healthcare etc.
- additional to the targeted services which **some** children benefit from e.g. behaviour support, family support etc which may be arranged by professionals in universal settings or through the Common Assessment Framework (CAF).

Disabled Children's Social Care will work in partnership with families, schools and other agencies such as health and the voluntary sector to ensure that the best use is made of all local and available resources. Our Eligibility Criteria is underpinned by the following principles:

- To focus on the assessed needs and outcomes for the child, in the context of their home and family circumstances
- The need to be fair, clear and equitable.
- To support access to inclusive mainstream services where this is appropriate.
- To provide reliable and timely information about services to enable families to make choices
- To provide access to specialist services where this is needed.
- To reduce the need for additional assessments.
- To ensure best value for money.

What do the Eligibility Criteria mean for children and families?

The Eligibility Criteria will be introduced from September 2012. They will be used to support disabled children and their carers requiring services from Disabled Children's Social Care. The criteria make it clear that Disabled Children's Social Care will mainly be supporting families with higher levels of needs (substantial and critical needs). Children with lower levels of needs will be referred to Integrated Access Teams to identify universal and community-based services to meet their needs.

The criteria may result in a change in support for some families. If this is the case, changes will only be made following a re-assessment of your child's needs. You and your child will be involved and engaged in the re-assessment and discussions about the changes.

The Assessment Process

Disabled children are by definition 'Children in Need' (S17, Childcare Act 1989)².

Many disabled children will never come into contact with Social Services, because their needs are met through universal and community-based services such as schools, children centres, leisure and play. The Equality Act 2010 places a duty on settings to support inclusion and access.

Some children may require additional support from more than one agency; this might result in a referral to an Integrated Family Support Teams for a CAF to access targeted support services, such as family support, behaviour support.

Some children will have higher levels of need requiring statutory or specialist services. These children will require an Initial or Core Assessment by a Social Worker.

The assessment will result in:

- an analysis of the needs and circumstances of the child.
- identification of whether and, if so, what intervention will be required,
- a relevant Support Plan which is outcomes-focussed, outlines what services will be provided, how they will assist in meeting outcomes, who has responsibility for delivering the plan and a timetable for review.

In addition to this, the assessment will recognise the importance of understanding the needs of carers who would be unable to care, or could do so more effectively if breaks were given. Parents/ carers are entitled to request a Carer's Assessment to identify their own specific needs. This will focus on their wellbeing, important commitments, relationships and wider responsibilities e.g. employment and training.

Eligibility Criteria are only applied following an assessment of need. The following categories will be used to determine eligibility for social care resources. Disabled Children's Social Care will focus on children with needs at Level 3 and 4. Children with Level 1 and 2 needs will be referred to Integrated Access Teams and Integrated Family Support Teams for access to universal and community-based support.

- Level 1 – Low
- Level 2 – Medium
- Level 3 – Substantial/ Complex
- Level 4 – Critical

We recognise that children's needs vary and may move between the four levels. For example the outcomes for a child initially assessed as having 'critical' needs may improve due to the support provided. Changes in need and changes to packages of care will be addressed through regular review of the child's support plan and re-assessment where necessary.

Decision-making

Decisions about resources will be made by the Disabled Children's Social Care Resources Panel. This is made up of professionals from health, education, social care and voluntary sector partners with expertise and knowledge of disability issues. The panel matches

² As such they are eligible for support under the general duty on local authorities to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in their area by providing a wide range of services, but this does not mean that they are entitled to a specific service.

assessed needs to resources depending upon priority and availability of provision within the City. Where possible, packages of care will consist of both universal and specialist services. The panel operates from the basis that:

- Except where a child is Looked After, it is the parents, not the local authority, who have the main responsibility for looking after their child³.
- An assessment of need does not automatically result in an entitlement to a specific service or amount of provision.
- Allocation of resources will take into account all available services in the City (across multi-agency partners and service providers) and how these can be effectively used to safeguard and meet the best outcomes for the child.
- Packages of care are not fixed and will be subject to change as the child and family's circumstances change.

Family Information Service

Birmingham's Family Information Service provides information and support to all families with children and young people aged from birth to 18 years (25 years for disabled young people). It provides information about

- Childcare including nurseries, childminders, after-school and holiday schemes
- Play and leisure facilities
- family and parenting support,
- school admissions
- support for families with disabled children,
- up-to-date information on holiday and after-school activities (inclusive and specialist)
- up-to-date information about Short Breaks Services.

As well as signposting, the Family Information Service offers a "brokerage" service, introducing families to service providers, arranging taster sessions and ensuring families find the right services to meet their needs.

The Family Information Service maintains a register of all childminders in the City and all settings that are regulated by Ofsted.

Universal settings have a legal duty to ensure their services are inclusive and accessible for disabled children. Measures have been taken to support inclusion e.g. training for settings, access audits, implementation of Success for Everyone Inclusion Framework and individual support through social inclusion workers.

Children's Services – supporting families

In order to safeguard children better and support families, Birmingham has recently changed the way Children's Services are organised. The teams that form a key part of the operating model for Disabled Children's Social Care includes:

- Integrated Access Teams
- Disabled Children's First Response and Occupational Therapy Teams
- Disabled Children's (Integrated) Family Support Team (for packages of support)
- Disabled Children's Safeguarding and Support Teams (x2 North & East; South & West)
- Disabled Children in Care and Safeguarding Team.

These teams offer a citywide service and work jointly with complex needs and disabilities specialists including health, the police, Special Educational Needs Assessment and Review

³ Short Breaks Statutory Guidance : How to safeguard and promote the welfare of disabled children using short breaks (March 2010)

Teams, Looked after Children Education Service, the voluntary sector and others service providers leading to:

- a clearer pathway for families
- integrated assessments – with reduced duplication
- improved and timely identification of need
- improved coordination of planning for children
- social workers will be able to focus on dealing with the most complex and critical cases.

You can find out more information about the service model for Children's Services and to download fact sheets about the work of the teams by visiting www.birmingham.gov.uk/change

Access to Childcare

Birmingham's Childcare Sufficiency Assessment (2011) found that there is sufficient childcare in Birmingham to meet the needs of disabled children. Many childcare providers have places available for disabled children but these are not being taken by families. All children aged 3-4years have an entitlement to 15 hours of free childcare.

Birmingham Early Years and Childcare service can provide working parents and parents who are training to return to work, with information about choosing registered childcare. This includes childminders, nurseries, breakfast clubs and after-school clubs.

The Family Information Service and the Early Years and Childcare team can help find childcare for parents of disabled children and young people aged 0-18yrs.

Registered group childcare settings can apply for additional resources to support disabled children to access their setting.

For a list of registered childcare settings including childminders and nurseries contact the Family Information Service on 0121 303 3521

Direct Payments

Families have a choice about the Short Breaks Services they receive. A personalised service – a Direct Payment - is one way of receiving a Short Breaks service. It is accessed following an assessment of needs. Direct Payments offer families flexibility, choice and control and can be used for example, to employ a Personal Assistant. Parent/carers directly manage the recruitment and invoicing arrangements, however, where required support can be provided through a support organisation. For more information contact Disabled Children's Social Care on 0121 303 4499.

Charges

Parent/carers have told us that they are willing to pay a reasonable cost for their short breaks activities. Providers have told us a higher value is placed on those services where parent/carers make a financial contribution and they are less likely to cancel or not send their child. Both parents and providers agree that no activity should cost more because of a child's needs.

Charges will be introduced for some short breaks services such as holiday, after-school and weekend clubs. We will continue to ensure that disabled children and families will not pay more than families of non-disabled children for short breaks or mainstream activities.

Working with our providers, we are committed to ensure that where a family cannot afford to pay, this should not prevent them having access to short breaks

Parent engagement

We are committed to working with parent/carers to improve, evaluate and review short breaks services. Since 2009, ParentViewsCount has been commissioned to lead on parental engagement in respect of children's services and Short Breaks. As result, parent/carers are represented on various strategic groups and have also played a key role in commissioning short breaks services.

Information about services is communicated to ParentViewsCount and is published by them on their website (www.parentviewscount.org). It is also circulated amongst their members and affiliated parent support groups.

Transport

We know that transport is needed by many families in order for their children to get to their short break. We also know that transport is expensive and time consuming – children can often be on buses for longer than an hour - so we will be working with Parents to develop solutions so that transport is provided fairly but not unnecessarily. Parent/carers are encouraged and expected to transport their child to and from short breaks. If this is not possible, and it would be detrimental to the child or family not to receive their short break, consideration will be given to providing funded transport.

We will continually be looking at how we can reduce transport costs without preventing any child from enjoying their break. We will work with our providers and our colleagues in Adult Services to ensure that where possible and where appropriate young people are supported to become independent travellers

Workforce development

Since December 2010, Birmingham has invested in a training programme for universal services and Short Breaks providers so that they can provide a high quality provision for disabled children and young people. The training programme consists of the following modules:

- Safeguarding and Disability
- Safe & Healthy Short Breaks for Disabled Children (managing risk)
- Communication -non-verbal and augmented
- Autism Awareness
- Managing challenging behaviour
- Listening and responding to children with profound and multiple disabilities

From March 2011, additional courses were introduced including

- Play and Leisure Activities with Disabled Children
- My Life, My Choice
- Working with Emerging Sexuality
- Difficult moments with Autism
- Communication Approaches with Young People with Autism

Around 600 staff from schools, children centres, Short Breaks have attended these training sessions. We hold a database of all those who have attended these courses enabling us to identify settings/practitioners who have shown a commitment and are improving their practice in supporting disabled children and young people in community settings

Transition to adult life

We want transition from children's to adult's services to be an exciting and optimistic time for young people. We want to support them as they become young adults and take their place in the world. We want to ensure that short breaks address the 'transition' needs of young people moving from children's to adult's services. For example young people have told us that they want to continue to spend time with their school friends once they are 18 and not lose contact.

We are working with all our Short Breaks providers to ensure they develop positive activities for young people which allow them to take part in local community activities and reflect their needs as teenagers, ensuring friendship and activity groups are supported to continue beyond the school years. They will also provide opportunities for them to extend their independence and life skills including:

- learning how to manage risk, whilst keeping themselves safe in the community
- developing decision making skills
- learning aspects of money
- learning to travel independently
- improving their social interaction skills through modelling by their peers
- leading ordinary lives enjoying and contributing to everyday activities

Monitoring and Measuring Impact

We will ensure that our short break services focus on improving life opportunities and outcomes for both those caring for disabled children and the children themselves, through continuing to develop our participation strategy with disabled children, young people and their carers. We know that the views of families and disabled children are essential to support positive outcomes.

Not all disabled children and their families will need the same level of support; some will need more than others because of the nature of their child's disability and their individual circumstances.

We are committed to working with short break providers to ensure short break services make a positive difference to the carers of disabled children and the children themselves, in Birmingham. All short break providers are required to meet safeguarding and quality standards and will be monitored on their performance against key performance indicators. Each quarter providers are required to supply detailed information regarding children and families who have accessed their service. This gives us important information about the range and numbers accessing Short Breaks. Providers are also asked to gather feedback from parent/carers and disabled children and young people.

We will continue to monitor and review the views of disabled children, parents and providers so that everybody feels involved and included. This will assist us with developing a cycle of continual improvement.

Feedback from disabled children, young people and families

I became quite emotional just telling the staff how different my child was after attending the Easter club. He is using a lot more speech at home and he has not done this before.

A big thank you for not turning your back on my son I have tried so hard to get the right help for him but have just been let down time and time (parent)

Thanks to the fantastic staff at the Sunday Club my son went to. They were amazing. We're having terrible trouble with him just lately and I feared how he'd be, but he enjoyed himself and had a great time by the sounds of it and we were able to get a few hours respite as well, it was fantastic.

Thank you for the place for my son, he really, really enjoyed himself and wants to go again. This is not only fantastic news for us but also music to my ears because of how difficult it is to place him in the right setting

I'm being harassed by several children here everyday, they loved the rock climbing and are desperate to do more (Head Teacher of special school)

Without the Short Breaks service, we would not be a family, we were at breaking point (Parent)

One boy asked if he could share something with the group and he said "I love coming here and have made a really nice friend"

My child went to the cinema, which is a first !! I was pleased she did this and felt it was positively managed. (parent)

😊 : being away from home, with mates
☹️ : not long enough (Young person)