

Halton's Short Breaks Statement 2016-2017



SEND Local Offer for Halton



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What is a Short Break Statement?

In April 2011, The Breaks for Carers of Disabled Children Regulations came into effect and set in place a requirement for all Local Authorities to produce a statement that explained what short break services were available to disabled children and their families and how they could access them. This must be made available to families on the Council website. The statement must be reviewed to ensure that the information is amended when services change or new ones are developed.



In September 2014, The Special Educational Needs and Disability Regulations (Children and Families Act 2014) came into effect which requires all Local Authorities to establish a Local Offer website that provides easily accessible information to disabled young people and their families about services that are available in Halton.

The Short Breaks statement can be found within the Local Offer section of the Halton Borough Council website and read alongside information about the range of community services also available to families.

We hope you find the information useful but if you have any queries about Short Breaks then please contact Halton's Disabled Children Service at:

DCS@halton.gov.uk or phone the team on 0151 420 7767.

Halton's Vision for Short Breaks

Halton's Children's Trust has produced the Halton Children and Young People's Plan (CYPP) 2014-2017 which highlights the aims and values for all children and young people living in Halton. It states that:

'Our ambition is to build stronger, safer communities which are able to support the development and learning of children and young people so they grow up feeling safe, secure, happy and healthy, ready to be Halton's present and Halton's future'.

It sets out 3 main areas for improvement for the next 3 years. These are:

- Working together to deliver services in a joined up way to make sure children and their families get the right help at the right time - Early Help & Support
- Working together to plan and fund outcome focused services for children and families, that deliver high quality services that are value for money – Integrated Commissioning
- Working together to focus services towards the needs of our most vulnerable children, young people and families to 'close the gap' by improving health, education, social and cultural outcomes.

To access the CYPP and Annual Review please click [Halton's Children and Young People's Plan 2014 – 2017](#) and [Annual Review 2015](#)

In Halton, we have developed a Vision for Short Breaks in partnership with young people, parents and carers and other agencies.

"Halton's vision is to extend the quantity and quality of Short Breaks to ensure that disabled children, young people and their families have a choice of services, increased access to inclusive services and opportunities towards independence. We will continue to develop engagement with families and young people towards the provision of flexible and responsive services that are child and family focused, and led."

We established the principle that, in Halton, we understand that families of disabled children want to lead ordinary lives. They want to provide the best care and opportunities for their children to feel safe, and to be healthy and happy.

We are continuing to develop our range of services in line with the 3 priorities in the CYPP and we hope this will help families of disabled children lead a more 'ordinary' family life within their communities.

We are committed to:

- Supporting disabled children and families to take part in local community life;
- Providing clear information for families about support, services and how to access them;
- Providing choices for disabled children and their families to help them make decisions that can best improve their daily lives;
- Listening to the views of disabled children and families so we can continue to improve the quality of their lives;
- Working in partnership with disabled children and families to ensure their involvement in decision making, regarding the development of support services;
- Supporting disabled young people to become more independent through a smooth transition into adulthood;
- Providing services that enable families of disabled children to have an improved quality of life within their communities.



What is a Short Break?

The Breaks for Carers of Disabled Children Regulations 2011 came into effect in April 2011. These placed a duty on local authorities to provide Short Breaks services for carers of disabled children to enable them to continue to care for their disabled child and to participate in everyday activities.

In particular they must provide a range of:

- day time care in the homes of disabled children or elsewhere;
- overnight care in the homes of disabled children or elsewhere;
- educational or recreational activities for disabled children outside their homes.

These services must be available in the evenings, at weekends and during school holidays. They must be regular and reliable but authorities should offer experimental and innovative options to families.

Carers' breaks are to be used as a preventative measure and should not just be available to a few families in crisis. Local authorities are required to take into account the needs of those families whose children have profound and multiple impairments, and families faced with continuing demands for parental care and attention, for example because of their child's complex health needs or behavioural difficulties.

Provision must be culturally and age appropriate and fit for purpose so that certain groups are not disadvantaged in accessing Short Breaks. Those children with profound and multiple disabilities are likely to require specialist provision which must be available within the range of Short Breaks services on offer to families.

Since 2011, we have regularly consulted with families and disabled young people to review Halton's Short Breaks provision and used the information supplied to assist in the development of those services and the commissioning of all Short Breaks contracts.

Who is eligible for a Short Break?

This section tells you who may be eligible for Short Breaks and how we work with disabled children, young people and their families, to make sure they receive the services that best meet their needs.

Who is a disabled child?

In Halton, we see disabled children as being those children and young people aged 0–18 years whose daily lives are substantially affected by one or more of the following diagnosed conditions:

- A hearing impairment;
- A visual impairment;
- A learning disability;
- A physical disability;
- A chronic/life threatening physical illness;
- A communication disorder (including autism);
- A consciousness disorder (e.g. epilepsy);
- A mental health condition.

Their condition should usually be expected to last for **more than 12 months** and have a **substantial effect** upon the child in more than one of the following areas:

- Physical ability;
- Communication and understanding;
- Awareness of risk and danger;
- Behaviour;
- Independence.

We understand that children and young people may also be disadvantaged because of other factors, such as their environment; other people's attitudes; poverty and social exclusion. However, these factors alone do not entitle them to be considered for Short Breaks services.

Each child and family will have different needs and the impact of the child's disability needs to be considered against what would usually be expected for any child of the same age. Their family's circumstances will also be different and so it is important to assess how their situation impacts upon their ability to lead an ordinary life within the community. Halton's Short Breaks assessment process is explained in more detail in the section called 'How can families get a Short Break?'

Halton's Short Breaks Offer

Halton Borough Council offers a range of Short Breaks and support services for disabled children and their families in conjunction with private and voluntary providers who receive Council funding to deliver services on their behalf. In effect, we offer a continuum of support that is based on the level of need the child and family requires. This can range from lowest levels of support, for example signposting to the more complex levels of need which would require a higher level of support.

In Halton, local community services are available to all children whether they have a disability or not and can be accessed directly without any formal assessment. These include Children Centre activities, Youth Provision, drama groups, sports activities, uniformed organisations and faith groups. See Halton's **Local Offer** for details.

We have developed a range of Short Break services that are available to disabled children and their families without the need for additional assessments. Your child might already have one or more of the following:

- Disability Living Allowance for care at middle rate or above;
- A statement of Special Educational Needs or an EHC Plan;
- Individual support at school for 15 hours or more.

If this is the case then you could be eligible for Short Breaks and you can access these services without any formal assessment:

- ChAPS activities;
- Play Council Open Access Groups;
- Greenbank/Cavendish Bike Project;
- Core Assets group activities;
- Family events;
- Disabled Sports activities;
- Accessible Youth activities.

In some cases, those services listed above may not be sufficient to meet the child and family's needs. Therefore, further information or assessment may be required to identify the additional needs and consider what support and services would be more appropriate.

Other Short Breaks Services, for example specialist clubs, individual support and overnight breaks are available for those disabled children who have more complex needs and who may be living within difficult family situations. These can be accessed, via DCS or Social Care, once a holistic assessment has been completed that establishes what level of support would be beneficial to the family. You can find out further information about the assessment and planning process in the Assessment, Planning and Review section.

Short Breaks Offer Additional Information

Most of the services are free of charge but you will usually be required to transport your child to an activity and pick them up afterwards. In certain circumstances transport might be offered to a child for a specific activity if an assessment establishes that it is appropriate to fund all or part of the transport costs.

Similarly, parents may be asked to provide a packed lunch, spending money for some trips or a contribution to certain activities which may be for longer outings or special occasions.

The Short Break Services Guide 2016-17 shows the full range of regular Short Break Services provided in Halton. Other additional activities that may be organised throughout the year can be found on the Halton Local Offer website.



Short Break Services Provided by Health Services

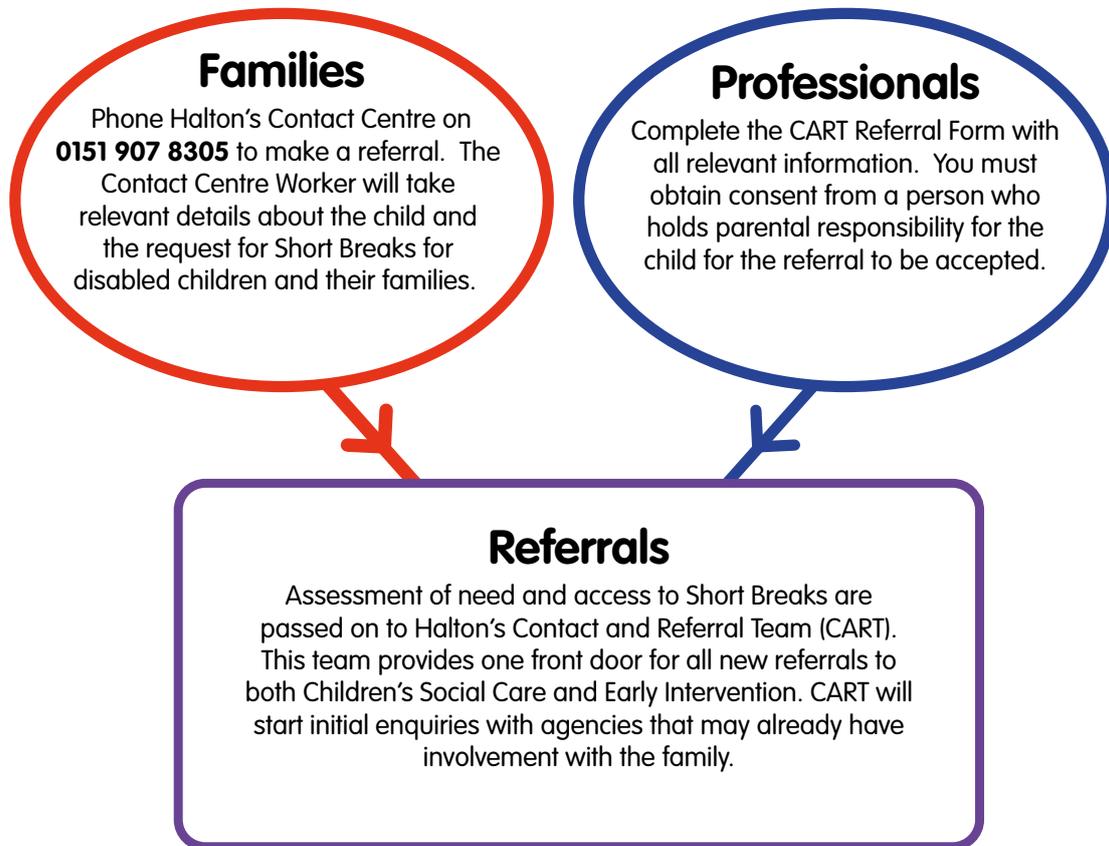
Provision for Short Breaks for children and young people with complex health needs is provided in a number of ways across Halton from Health Services. This is usually in collaboration with colleagues from other services and, in some cases, delivered through joint funded packages of care agreed at Complex Needs Panel or Continuing Care Panel.

How can families get a Short Break?

Families can access Short Break services via Halton's model of Early Intervention and support. It is called 'Team Around the Family' (TAF). The aim of the model is to ensure that appropriate help and support is offered to families as soon as additional needs are identified. By offering support to the whole family at an early stage, we can help prevent further difficulties arising in the future and more specialist interventions becoming necessary.

The Disabled Children's Service is part of 'Team Around the Family', which also includes other services such as parenting support and Children Centre provision. The service continues to benefit from staff with specialist knowledge around disability, but they work closely with the staff in Halton's Locality Teams to share their knowledge and experiences with colleagues who also provide Early Intervention for some families of disabled children. All these professionals provide a whole family approach rather than just focussing on the needs of the disabled child.

What is Halton's referral process?



Assessment, Planning and Review of Short Break Services

CART will decide the level of need for each referral using [Halton's Level of Need Framework](#). If they decide it meets:

- Levels 1 or 2 and an Early Intervention Service is more suitable they will pass the information for discussion at the weekly multi-agency Working Together meetings where the Disabled Children Service (DCS) will pick up any requests for Short Breaks.
- Level 3 for those disabled children with more complex needs living in more difficult family circumstances they will pass the information on the Children's Social Care.

**NO ADDITIONAL ASSESSMENT REQUIRED (UNIVERSAL/LEVEL 1)
LOCAL COMMUNITY SERVICES**

Some families just need access to information about local activities and inclusive services in their community. At this level of need, the Disabled Children Service can provide relevant information and signpost families to appropriate services. If necessary they can make contact with the service provider to facilitate a smooth entry into the activity.

**PRE-CAF/CAF ASSESSMENT (LEVEL 1/LEVEL 2)
LOCAL COMMUNITY SERVICES + CONTRACTED SERVICES**

- The DCS worker with parent's permission, will access any assessments that are already in place e.g. CAF or EHC. The worker will participate in the current plan for the child, providing advice on services and completing the Short Breaks documentation required.
- If no recent assessment is available, the DCS worker will discuss with the family whether they would benefit from a Pre-CAF or CAF Assessment.
- If the Pre-CAF or CAF Assessment identifies that there is a need for a Short Breaks service, but there is no other concerns, then the CAF can be closed and the Short Break service provider will take the lead role for the child's individual support plan.
- The DCS will monitor the plan through the providers' quarterly contract reviews to show the positive outcomes for the child and family. If the agency or the family has concerns about the suitability of the service they can refer back to DCS to consider appropriate alternative services.

**CAF ASSESSMENT (LEVEL 2)
INDIVIDUAL SUPPORT + ANY OF ABOVE**

- If CART information indicated that a child may need a more specialised service with individual support the family will be offered a CAF Assessment.
- Once this has been completed the DCS worker alongside the family will complete Halton's Resource Allocation System (RAS) using the CAF/EHC Plan Assessment information and the RAS Guidance Notes. RAS is a points system used to say how many hours of service might benefit the family and the type of services appropriate. When a Short Breaks service is delivered via a CAF/EHC Plan, the DCS worker will review the service as part of the review process.
- If it is agreed by the family and professionals that the CAF Plan is no longer required, then the DCS worker will set up a Short Breaks Plan to co-ordinate and review the service to ensure it is meeting the needs of the child and family.

**SOCIAL CARE SINGLE ASSESSMENT (LEVEL 3)
OVERNIGHT CARE + ANY OF ABOVE**

For disabled children with more complex needs or living in more difficult family circumstances that require a higher level of support. The CART worker will pass the referral to the Social Care Team, the Social Worker will consider the appropriateness of Short Breaks and the level of service required as part of the package of support for the family. They will liaise with DCS who will advise them on Short Breaks services and how to access them. Short Breaks will be reviewed as part of the Social Care Plan.

Short Break Contracts

In April 2015 new contracts were awarded to continue Halton's programme of Short Breaks delivery. Following a tendering process a range of Short Breaks services were commissioned:

- Specialist group activities for family and children/ young people
- Inclusive Play services
- Consultation for disabled young people

Young people and parent/carers information from Short Breaks questionnaires were used to inform the decision making and a representative from the Bright Sparks young people's group and two parent carers were involved in the selection process.

The new contracts were awarded to two small local providers and one larger private provider all with experience of delivering Short Breaks:

- Group Activities – Core Assets Children's Services
- Play Services – Halton Play Council
- Consultation with Young People – Halton Speak Out

Halton has also commissioned 4 organisations using small grants to deliver small group activities to supplement the larger contracted services. They are easily accessible and details can be found on the Local Offer in the Short Breaks Services Guide 2016-17.

In cases where it has been identified that a disabled child/young person requires individual support to access a Short Break, Halton has access to a range of care agencies to provide this support. The DCS worker will work with the family to commission a bespoke service to meet the child/young person's needs. An individual contract will be drawn up and reviewed by the worker and family as part of the review of the child's CAF or Short Break plan.

Family Events

Halton Disabled Children Service (DCS) organise various family events throughout the year, usually during school holidays. They are available for all families of disabled children living in Halton and provide an opportunity for all the family to have fun and get to know other disabled children and their families.

These are publicised on the Local Offer where you can also find information about previous events in [Case Studies](#) section. These activities have been very popular and as demand is high you will need to book with the DCS team if you wish to attend one of the events.



How can families find information about Short Breaks?

Any information or services that are recognised as being accessible for disabled children, young people and families will have the Aiming High logo displayed on their publicity information e.g. flyers, posters.

Halton has a Pinterest Board which is used to display these flyers/posters about up and coming events and new activities, this can be found on the [Local Offer](#).

Personal Budgets for Short Breaks

This section contains additional information specifically relating to Short Breaks services provided by a Personal Budget.

Some families might prefer to arrange their own service as this may offer greater flexibility and choice of activities that may be better suited to their child and family's needs. The process for accessing a Personal Budget is, initially, the same as any other Short Breaks service and is explained in the section – How can families get a Short Break.

Once it has been established that your family is eligible for Short Breaks, the relevant assessment will identify your child's needs and the worker will discuss all the options available to you including a Personal Budget.

Halton currently has 3 types of Personal budget available for Short Breaks, these are:

- An individual agency contract organised and paid for directly by Halton's Disabled Children Service or Social Care;
- A higher level Direct Payment which can be used to employ a Personal Assistant to support your child either in the home or outside in the community;
- A lower level Direct Payment which can be used to purchase different activities in the community for your child to access.

If the Lead Professional for your family is a Social Worker, they will complete a Single Assessment. This will establish the level of support that is appropriate for your child and family and they will agree the appropriate services which may include a Personal Budget.

If the Lead Professional is a worker from the Children Disabled Service, the Personal Budget is established by the completion of a Resource Allocation System (RAS). The RAS system, RAS Guidance Notes and relevant documents will be available on Halton's Local Offer – Leisure section under 'Short Breaks'.

Each child that receives a Short Break via a Personal Budget will have an individual plan, this will state the:

- Short Break service to be provided;
- Outcomes that should be delivered;
- Person responsible for co-ordinating the service, ensuring that it is safe and delivers the outcomes in the plan.

Personal Budgets for Short Breaks: Where can I find more information?

Information about Personal Budgets is available on Halton's [Local Offer – Education, Health & Care Plan](#) section.

Halton's Personal Budgets Guidance for Short Breaks 2016-17 provides information for families wishing to manage a Personal Budget available on Halton's Local Offer – Leisure section.

Halton Borough Council provides a range of Short Breaks Services, details of these can be found in Short Breaks Services Guide 2016-17 on Halton's Local Offer.



Transition

Transition is the process that occurs when young people move from Children's Services to Adult services. This usually happens when young people reach their 18th birthday but the Transition process begins when young people are 13 years plus. This is usually started at school review meetings when young people can start to make plans about what they want to do when they leave school. There is more information about transition on Halton's [Local Offer - Preparing for Adulthood](#) section.



Transition in Short Break Services

The Breaks for Carers of Disabled Children Regulations 2011 states that Short Break services should be provided, appropriate to the age and needs of disabled children.

Whilst some services are available for children from aged 0-18 years, others are for specific ages.

Sessions in the Children Centres are for those children aged 4-8 years; play services are for those children aged 5 to 12 years; and youth services are for those children and young people over the age of 10 through to 25 years.

It is important that children are supported during transition from one service to another; that the young person and family are aware of the choices available to them; and that they are fully involved in the plan to move on.

Service providers will review the child's needs and work with staff in Children Services, the young person and their family to agree how this should happen. They are also involved in the transition planning when young people move on from children's activities to activities within adult services when the young person reaches their 18th birthday.

Consultation and Participation

Consultation and participation are key elements to the development of family-centred services, having a positive impact on disabled children and their families.

We have developed a number of mechanisms which we use to gather information from young people and carers. This feedback helps to develop strategies, policies, wider Council plans and service provision, for example, Halton's Children and Young People's Plan.

How Do We Gather Your Feedback?

- [Short Breaks Online Questionnaires](#) on the Local Offer – Leisure section under 'Short Breaks'.

These are for parent/carers and children/young people to complete to tell us about their experiences of Short Break Services and ideas about any gaps in services to help us to commission and develop new services.

- Halton ImPart parent participation group and Bright Sparks consultation and participation group.

We work closely with both groups to seek views, feedback and help us to review our Short Breaks services.

- Talk to Staff Delivering Short Breaks Services

Families can talk to any of the staff delivering the Short Breaks services to share their views or concerns about the services they use. Workers routinely gain families views when discussing the assessments, Short Breaks plans and reviews. They also talk with carers at coffee mornings, Carers Forums, Support Groups and information events at a range of locations across the Borough.

Consultation and Participation Groups

Halton ImPart

This is a group for parent/carers of children who are involved in the national Parent Participation Project. They represent the wider group of Halton parent/carers in steering groups and consultation events, empowering parent/carers to have their voices heard within services delivered in Halton for children with a disability/additional need through parent/carer participation. They have developed links with parent groups across the Borough and consult with them on specific topics and feed their views into the appropriate groups.

The group are linked into the regional and national Parent Participation Networks. They meet monthly to plan their activities, organise training and events and look at ways to reach more parent/carers and invite them to join the group. The group can be contacted by telephone on 07958516859, [email](#) or using their [Facebook address](#).

Bright Sparks

[Bright Sparks](#) is a consultation and participation group that supports young people with disabilities to give their views on services in Halton that are provided to support them. The group is supported by a local self-advocacy group Halton Speak Out. Bright Sparks also help with the planning of new services or strategies' in Halton included in the Halton Children and Young People's Plan.

Any organisation that wants to find out what young people think about their services can contact the Bright Sparks at Halton Speak Out. They will give their views and also talk to other young people with disabilities to get their views and ideas.

Bright Sparks also facilitate a [kite mark project](#) that support children and young people with additional needs to check out venues and facilities in Halton. If these meet the standards for the kite mark they will be given the Bright Sparks Kite Mark Award.

As part of the consultation of this Short Breaks Statement, Bright Sparks have agreed to produce an accessible version of this statement during the school holidays in 2016. When this is completed it will be published on the Local Offer.

Reviewing the Statement

We monitor the quality of the services through our contract evaluation system. We will also work with our providers to respond to comments and suggestions from families regarding future service development.

[Short Breaks Online Questionnaires](#) are available on the Local Offer – Leisure section under 'Short Breaks' for parent/carers and children/young people to share their views, ideas, suggestions for further improvement or help us to identify any gaps in services to help us to commission and develop new services.

Both Bright Sparks and Halton ImPart continue to work with Halton Borough Council and partner agencies to influence the development of Short Breaks services in Halton. Both groups always welcome involvement from new members who wish to play a key role in influencing the future shape of services in Halton.

The Team Around the Family Services welcome contact from families so they hear their views and staff will continue to meet and speak with families at information events, coffee mornings and consultation sessions. They will also collect views from individual young people and carers through their direct involvement with them throughout the year.

This statement will be reviewed on an annual basis and be updated to reflect any changes in service delivery. It will take into account the views of families of disabled children, parent/ carer groups, disabled young people and service providers. We welcome comments about this statement and any suggestions on what could make it more useful for families.

Lastly, we would like to thank all the people who have contributed to this statement, particularly Bright Sparks and Halton ImPart; families that have kindly allowed us to use their photos in this Short Breaks Statement and the professionals who have supplied us with information about the services they provide.

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