People Department

Children and Young People with Disabilities

Short Breaks

Introduction

This document is intended for parents and carers of children and young people with disabilities living in Croydon. Croydon is committed to supporting children with disabilities and their families to live “ordinary lives” and offer choices in taking short breaks.

Paragraph 6 (1) (c) of Schedule 2 of the Children Act 1989 requires Local Authorities to provide services designated to give breaks for carers of disabled children.

Since 1 April 2011, Croydon has had a statutory duty under the Break for Carers of Disabled Children Regulations 2011 to

“Provide short breaks to those who care for disabled children when it would improve their ability to care for their disabled child, or when they could not continue to provide care without a short break” and to “Publish information to parents about the service available in their area and criteria for accessing it by 1 October 2011”.

Short breaks provide opportunities for disabled children and young people to access mainstream or universal services such as after school clubs, activity groups and day care settings such as Children’s Centres and Youth Groups. They may also include specialist sessions for children and young people with more complex needs. Short breaks can include both day and overnight provision.

Short Breaks in Croydon have been developed following consultation with parents and carers, children, young people and partners within the statutory, voluntary and community sector. Consultation, participation and feedback have been fundamental in shaping the development of services and best use of budgets. We will continue to talk to parents, young people and children about the type of services and short breaks they want.
What is a short break?

A short break provides an opportunity for disabled children and young people to have enjoyable experiences away from primary carers. Its purpose is to:

- Allow the child or young person to benefit from different experiences and activities
- Enable parents and carers to have a break from caring responsibilities.

A short break can take place during the day, evening, weekend or overnight, and can happen in the child’s home, carer’s home, in a residential or community setting. Short breaks can be in both specialist and universal settings.

Croydon currently offer:

- Out of school clubs
- Saturday clubs
- Sports activities
- Youth activities
- Holiday clubs
- Specialist provision, including one to one support and overnight stays with a carer or in a residential unit
- Direct payments

Short break provision is an integral part of the wider offer to families. Short breaks previously referred to as ‘respite care’ have been offered to families as part of the wider family support offer for many years, and the Aiming High for Disabled Children Programme (2008/2011) with its additional investment has enabled a development of these services to take place.

Who can access Short Breaks?

Children and young people resident in Croydon can access short breaks if they are less than 18 years, have a physical or learning impairment which has a substantial and long term effect on their ability to carry out day to day activities. This may include a physical, learning disability or a significant hearing or visual impairment. It includes children with autism or autistic spectrum
disorders with communication disorder and developmental delay and children who have challenging behaviour as a result of their learning disability. It also includes children who have complex medical needs and who may have a life limiting or a life threatening condition.

A child is considered to be disabled if he or she meets any of the following statutory definitions: Section 17 (11) of the Children Act 1989; section 2 of the Chronically Sick and Disabled persons Act 1970 or section 6 and schedule 1, Part 1 of the Equality Act 2010.

The principles underpinning access arrangements for short breaks are:

- Services should be additional to universal provision and disabled children and young people, their families and services, will be supported to achieve access to local and universal services.
- Short breaks should be preventative, intervening to offer early support and not just as a crisis intervention.
- Services should promote the health, safety and wellbeing of disabled children and young people, ensuring that disabled children can participate in family and community life, enjoy themselves with friends and make decisions about their life.
- Services should target resources to those families in greatest need or at greatest risk of breakdown.
- Decisions about services should reflect the individual circumstances and changing needs of families.
- They need to be fair, clear and equitable.
- Disabled children and their families are entitled to request an assessment of their needs under the “Framework for the Assessment of Children in Need and their Families”.

**What are the range of short break services available in Croydon?**

There are a range of services available to children with disabilities in Croydon.

Many of these services can be accessed directly; others require an assessment and referral from the Children with Disabilities Service.
The following services listed below do not require an assessment of need and can be accessed by contacting the service directly:-

**Croydon Youth Arts –**

Jessica Hodge [jessica.hodge@croydon.gov.uk](mailto:jessica.hodge@croydon.gov.uk) 07436 031163

Arts group for 11 – 18 year olds.

- Variety of arts projects, including film, theatre, crafts, music and dance. Cross over projects, such as puppetry which explores theatre and crafts together.

**NAS (National Autistic Society)**

Sarah Omari 0208 662 4663  [Sarah.Omari@nas.org.uk](mailto:Sarah.Omari@nas.org.uk)

- Music Therapy club for children with Autistic Spectrum Disorders aged 6 – 12
  Improve social skills including turn taking, listening and waiting.

- Cool Club – club for young people with autism – Every other Saturday in term time at Waddon Youth Club for 12 – 18 year olds.

- Trampolining Club – run from Waddon Leisure Centre on Friday evenings.

**Rutherford’s Aiming High Saturday club.**

Jenny Borg 020 8688 7560  [jenny.borg@garwoodfoundation.org.uk](mailto:jenny.borg@garwoodfoundation.org.uk)

Saturday scheme for children and young people 5-18 with disabilities and complex health needs living in Croydon.
Saturday club – St Giles School - Saturdays In school term time
Sara Medland  0759611413

Activity based club at St Giles School for youngsters aged 6-18 for both wheelchair users and those who are able bodied.

Sport and Physical Activity Team
Barry Lloyd  barry.lloyd@croydon.gov.uk  020 8760 5592
Activities for Children and Young People with mild to moderate disabilities, run from various locations throughout the Borough:-

- RAP Holiday scheme and Saturday scheme,
- Swimming club (3 groups - beginners, intermediate, advanced)
- Trampolining club.
- Boccia
- Athletics
- Inclusive basketball
- Wheelchair athletics

Youth Services
Paul Funnell:  Paul.funnell@Croydon.gov.uk  07990 790 183

Support including funding is also provided to the Youth Service and extended school activities (small number of special schools). Integrated Youth Support Service based at Waddon Youth Centre, 85 Waddon Way, Croydon, CR0 4HY offers a range of activities for young people with disabilities up to the age of 25 years. Other specialist Youth Service clubs at other venues throughout the Borough:-
Croydon’s Model of Staged Intervention:

To respond to different levels of needs Croydon provide a range of levels of support which is accessed through Croydon MASH team:-

**Stage 1: Universal personalised services. (Level 1)**
**Direct access and inclusion**

Wherever possible, disabled children and young people should be able to access mainstream provision, preferably within their local area. This includes: Pre-school provision, child care, extended school activities and youth clubs ensuring disabled children and young people have fun and enjoy themselves.

We aim to support disabled children and young people in universal settings wherever possible and promote genuine inclusion where services are designed, equipped and staff trained to enable disabled children to enjoy the same activities as their peers. The short breaks project has made a considerable investment in training staff to meet disabled children’s needs and has also funded adaptations to some premises.
Stage 2: Single and multi-agency help (Level 2 low/vulnerable)

Targeted Services: (Direct access or following an assessment of need)

Where a child or a young person’s needs, or their family situation are more complex short break arrangements may need to be designed as an individual package. This will require an assessment; (CAF Common assessment framework) by a professional. A lead professional may be appointed to support the family and team around the family resolutions offered.

There are also a number of specialist resources for disabled children and young people which are funded through the short breaks project which can be accessed directly.

These include:

- Specialist after-school and Saturday schemes and clubs
- Specialist sports activities
- Summer holiday facilities

These services are accessed by making direct contact with the provider or organiser. A small fee is normally charged – refer to the list of clubs and resources above or on Croydon Council’s website or family space [http://www.familyspacecroydon.co.uk/](http://www.familyspacecroydon.co.uk/)

If you are unsure please contact the The Children with Disabilities Team (0208 726 6400).

Stage 3 & 4: Higher or statutory intervention to promote and protect the welfare of children /young people. (Level 3 & 4 complex and acute)

This includes more intensive levels of service for children who have very severe levels of disability or where there are additional complex social factors.

It will result in a referral to specialist assessment and services, team around the family resolutions or specialist services. Access to short breaks at this level will be via the service for children with disabilities and following a social work assessment of need.
Specialist Short Break Services that require a referral to the children with Disabilities Team for an assessment of need

For those children and families requiring a greater level of support, an assessment will be completed by a Social Worker. Following identification of a particular need, the following short break services may be offered:-

- Short breaks (home based care) where a child/young person visits the carers home for a number of hours or for overnight stays;
- Individual support where an agency carer or outreach worker supports the child/young person in their own home, supervises them in the community or assist with an activity;
- Activity/play schemes during school holidays and on Saturdays;
- Direct Payments (managed by parents or available to young people aged 16 and 17 years to purchase their own services;
- Residential short breaks;
- Others as appropriate.

Following an assessment of need when a specialist short breaks need has been identified, the social worker will present this to the Resource Allocation Panel. The panel will consider the assessment which will take into account the views of the child and their parent, the development needs of the child, the capacity of the parent or carer to meet them, the impact of the environment and the support networks on the parent’s ability to support their child.

The specialist services that can be provided are:-

**Individual Support** (delivered by a number of registered domiciliary care agencies)

One to One individual support is provided by an agency or outreach worker in the community or family home to support the child/young person with their personal care, play, leisure activities, independence skills etc. It is intended to offer the child a chance to develop, socialise or take part in a community activity such as swimming, sports and leisure activities and give the parent a break. It increases opportunities for youngsters to be included in activities that interest them including universal activities open to all children.
Callydown Short break unit

This unit which is managed by Croydon Council provides specialist overnight and day care for disabled children.

Activity Schemes

There are a number of Schemes, available to children/young people with disabilities, managed by the Service for Children with Disabilities. The schemes offer activities and social opportunities for children with a wide range of disabilities and are open to children/young people referred by the Service for Children with Disabilities.

- **Summer and Half Term Schemes during school holidays**

  Over the summer holidays the schemes run for 2/3 weeks. During other holidays activities are available for a number of days each week. The scheme for secondary school age youngsters is held at Bensham Manor School. The one for primary school age children is held at Portland House, Thornton Heath.

- **Saturday Schemes**

  The Saturday Schemes run during term time only; on alternate weeks for the different age groups listed above. The scheme for secondary age youngsters takes place at Bensham Manor School. The scheme for primary age children takes place at Portland House, Thornton Heath.

Direct Payments

Personal budgets in the form of direct payments provide parents with the opportunity to arrange care and services for their child instead of receiving a direct service from the local authority. Following an assessment, direct payments can be used in a variety of ways to promote flexibility and choice for families. This may include;
• Short breaks
• Personal assistance to enable your child to attend an activity, club or sporting activity
• Personal care
• Specialist equipment

Once an assessment has been completed and the number of hours of support allocated, an amount is agreed to fund this support. Parents can use direct payments to employ their own personal assistant or directly purchase support.

As the employer there are a number of responsibilities in managing the short break assistance. The Direct Payments Team will support and advise Direct Payments users with these activities.

Direct Payments
Bernard Weatherill House
Telephone 0208 726 6400
Mini com 0208 760 5797
Address: Bernard Weatherill House
          Direct Payments Team
          8 Mint Walk
          Croydon CR0 1EA

All services at this level are subject to a regular review and can be provided in addition to directly accessed services

**How services are designed to meet the needs of families:**
Parental participation and Children and Young Peoples feedback

The current range of short break services has been developed following extensive discussion and consultation with parents, carers, disabled children, young people and their siblings from 2007 to the present and with Parents in Partnership Croydon (PIP)

A needs analysis was undertaken to identify the disabled child population and their particular needs.

*If you have any suggestions as to how services may be improved please contact – Short Breaks Co-ordinator (Service for Children with Disabilities) 0208 726 6400 ex 63601*

Parents’ Comments

Discussions, questionnaires, parents forums, visits to a range of parent groups (National Autistic Society, Rutherford’s Parents Group, parent and carer lunch clubs, Croydon Opportunity Play Group, Parents in Partnership etc.) have informed parents of our work and we have listened to their views about current provisions, gaps in service and future developments.

An electronic questionnaire was sent to provider organisations to distribute to families and to parents through, Parents in Partnership, Parent Carer Forum for Croydon. The purpose was to gain feedback on current short break provisions and to gather the views of parents and children on future services. This resulted in a comprehensive evaluation of current provision and identified gaps. This information has informed the recent commissioning decisions from which we have developed a range of short breaks provision to meet the needs and the wishes of our local population.

Croydon in conjunction with Parents in Partnership held a parents event to consider how to develop short break services.

We will continue to develop our short break provision by providing variety and choice for young people and their families.

Children and Young People’s Comments

Observation, interviews and discussion with children and young people, questionnaires - often completed with the assistance of parents – and discussion with carers and a range of workers have informed us of the views of children and young people. This has
taken place at a range of venues with children and young people of different ages and disabilities, including some with complex health needs, autism and physical disability.

A consultation was completed by the organisation **Jigsaw4u** with children and young people in Croydon from a wide spectrum of disabilities.

The conclusions from this consultation are as follows:-

- A large proportion of the children and young people are very keen on sports activities and want to take part in more.
- Another large proportion of the children and young people are very keen on arts and crafts activities.
- An overwhelming number of children and young people thoroughly enjoy swimming or want more opportunities to go swimming.
- There is a potential interest in a computer games club.
- The staff working within short breaks provision are generally liked and performing their duties well.

In conclusion, there seems to be a good variety of clubs, societies and other short breaks provision that is meeting the needs of most of the children who are involved with them already. The difficulty seems to be in reaching those who do not attend these schemes, and improving the information transfer process to ensure that they can make a choice to attend or not. We therefore need to work more effectively and creatively to keep information updated and available to those who need it.

**Providers**

Providers of services in Croydon have been encouraged to contribute their views through the consultation process. Meetings and workshops have enabled them to work jointly together to promote services to meet the needs of children and young people.

**Working with other Services**

The service works in partnership with the voluntary sector, colleagues in the CCG, NHS, education, early years, community sports partnership and the youth services. We network with professionals from other boroughs which generates ideas and potential efficiencies regarding specialist services.
**Communication strategy**

A key component in achieving the improvement of services for disabled children and their families is communication at all levels which will ensure transparent, effective strategic planning, commissioning, consultation and participation. Disseminating information and knowledge about the short breaks services is essential to its success:

We ensure information about short break services is available through the following organisations, web sites and newsletters: I Count Disability register, Parents in Partnership (PIP), Parent, Family Space Croydon, Carers Information Service and Croydon Mencap.

**Universal Services**

The short breaks programme supported increased accessibility for physically disabled children to use universal services. The refurbishment of a youth club provided a hygiene room, a ramp and a specially adapted kitchen. This gives young people the opportunity to take part in an inclusive youth club, giving them a chance to widen their network of social activities.

A contribution was made to Bensham Manor school towards the soft play area and a community room which not only benefits the pupils attending Bensham Manor but is open to the wider community. In the near future younger children, their parents/carers and siblings will be able to access the facilities in a safe and secure environment over the weekends and in school holidays.

St Giles School has received a contribution towards a soft play area in the playground and children from the wider community will benefit from this area once this is completed. St Nicholas school benefitted from capital funding to provide changing facilities for their football pitch. The football pitch will benefit other children within the community.

We continue to develop universal services across Croydon that offer inclusive provision.
Transition into Adulthood

Croydon want the transition from children to adult services to be as positive for the young person and as seamless as possible. We recognise the importance of close liaison between children and adults’ services and are reviewing our structures to facilitate better integration between services in the young person’s transition. The transition workers work in close conjunction with young people, parents, SEN team, specialist schools, and specialist personal advisors, occupational therapists, to promote positive experiences and outcomes for young people going through the transition process. A review of the service to improve the transition process is planned.

Measuring Impact and Review

The short breaks programme in Croydon has developed a greater range, more choice and easier access to short break provision. Disabled children and young people are having more say about services they want through their increasing participation. They are enjoying more opportunities to engage in ordinary activities and are increasing their social networks, as well as increasing in confidence and skills. More parents are involved in local service planning and contribute to decisions about service development.

In Croydon we will continue to work closely and strengthen our relationships with both parents/carers and children and young people. We will continue to consult on a regular basis to help us shape services for the future. We will use a variety of methods to consult with parents, young people and our partners which will include meetings, telephone calls, questionnaires, school forums and e-mails. We will include providers in our discussions to keep them informed on how they will be required to adapt to meet needs.

New services were re commissioned in April 2013. There has been an increase in the choice of services being offered, popular sporting activities have been expanded and a new brokerage service has been introduced. Any changes will take parents, children, young people’s views into account in future commissioned services.

Disability Register

Parents and carers are encouraged to ensure that their children are registered on the ‘I Count’ register of children with disabilities. It is not however obligatory to have your name on the register before a service can be provided but it assists Croydon in planning of services for the future and understanding the need of this group of children and young people in the borough.
Parents receive an I Count card which identifies your child as having a disability and is recognised and supported by local, national organisations and companies.

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