

Carmarthenshire County Council Short Breaks for Disabled Children and their Families Statement



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Introduction

In 2012 Welsh Government issued The Breaks for Disabled Children (Wales) Regulations. This states that Local Authorities must provide short breaks for disabled children and their parent/carers. Also we must also provide a short break services statement so that everyone knows what short breaks we offer in Carmarthenshire.

What are short breaks?

Traditionally short breaks were referred to as respite. However, the term is hardly ever used in Children's Services any more as families and professionals thought that it was a very negative term and made the children appear to be a problem. Therefore, the term short break is used for any activity or support that offers disabled children an opportunity to have fun, try new activities, socialise, make friends and promote independence. The short break allows families to do positive things together or supports the child in a safe and secure environment and as a result the parent/carers get a break from their caring responsibilities.

More information is available on www.fis.carmarthenshire.gov.uk or contact 01267 246 555

Or on the parent carer's information website www.haipac.org.uk

Or Mencap Family Advisor Service on 01267 232 256

How to access a short break

Some services can be accessed by everyone others require the children and family's needs to be accessed and a referral made. In the following sections we outline:

- a) Those services that are open to everyone
- b) Services that can be accessed by disabled children who are not supported by the Children's Disability Team

c) Services only accessed via the Children Disability Team or the Transition Team

a) Services open to everyone

Within Carmarthenshire there is a wide range of services e.g. social clubs, sports clubs etc that are open to everyone. Disabled children, young people and their families are members of their local communities and can access the same opportunities as all other citizens living in the area. The Carmarthenshire Family Information Service provides information and advice of what is available in their area to all parents and carers within Carmarthenshire. The service can be accessed on www.fis.carmarthenshire.gov.uk or contact 01267 246555.

b) Services that can be accessed by disabled children who are not supported by the Children's Disability Team

Some children have additional needs that require extra support but do not need to have a key worker within the Children's Disability Team. The Family Information Service also has details of activities for disabled children or those with additional needs. In addition the Family First programme supports children to access such activities as:

- Play groups
- Play schemes
- Out of school clubs
- Riding for the disabled
- Accessing mainstream groups e.g. Brownies
- Specialist activity and social groups

Carmarthenshire County Council also partially funds the **Carmarthenshire Inclusion Scheme. (CIS)**. CIS provides 1:1 time limited support to children who have such conditions as Aspergers, or ADHD so they can access mainstream provision. This allows the child to develop the social skills and networks to enable them to continue to

access the service in the long term e.g. youth clubs, Brownies, swimming clubs. Details of CIS be found on www.haipac.org.uk or telephone Wendy Thomas on 01267 246536.

Also there is **Carmarthenshire Adult Autism Advise service** which offers a signposting, information and advice service to adults aged 18 plus who have Aspergers Syndrome or high functioning autism. More information about this service can be obtained from www.carmarthenshire.gov.uk/autism or on 01267 246513

C) Services only accessed via the Children Disability Team or the Transition Team

These are specialist services which support disabled children with the most complex needs and their families. The provision of these services is based on assessed need and is allocated via the service allocation process. There is a range of in house and commissioned services that offer from a few hours break to overnight stays – this reflects the diverse needs and wishes of disabled children and their families. In developing a mixed range of services it is hoped that we increase choice and are more flexible to need. Examples of the services we offer are:

- Overnight stays in Llys Caradog and Blaenau Children's Centres
- Overnight stays in short break carer's homes
- Longer stays with specialist foster carers
- A family support service
- Specialist domiciliary care
- Specialist play schemes and after school clubs
- Social and youth clubs
- Transition youth club and social groups
- Saturday social clubs for young people with ASD
- Specialist small groups based on interest e.g., a Summer outward bound group
- Support in mainstream provision e.g. play groups, social clubs etc
- Direct payments

All disabled children and young people who are supported by the Children's Disability and Transition Teams will have detailed care plans that look at:

- The child or young person's needs including social and emotional
- The needs of the parent/carer
- Long term plans and aspirations
- Emergency arrangements
- Any additional requirements e.g. specialist aids and equipment, transport etc.

Eligibility

The Children's Disability Team is a multi disciplinary team that support disabled children with a permanent and substantial disability. They do not provide support to those with:

- ADHD
- Behavioural difficulties
- Mild or moderate learning disabilities
Unless there are additional significant disabilities

The Transition Team is a Social Care Team that works with young people from 16-25. They only work with young people who have accessed or were eligible to access the Children's Disability Team.

How services are developed

The services available in Carmarthenshire are from a range of providers including Carmarthenshire County Council, the voluntary and independent sectors. We commission services based on:

- Identifying needs by speaking to disabled children and young people, parents, carers, professionals and other interested 'stakeholders'. We do this through a range of things including workshops, questionnaires, individual reviews, interviews and research and best practice.

- We have several parent representatives who work with us on task and ongoing planning groups to make sure that parent/carers views form part of any planning and commissioning. These representatives are supported through Mencap who we commission to provide the service.
- In addition we ensure that we access any available external funding to help us develop as much provision as possible this includes European, Welsh Government and Lottery funding.
- We continually monitor the performance of services within the county and as part of this we ensure that we get the views of children, young people, parents and carers. If appropriate we will work closely with providers to improve performance or recommission services to ensure that our disabled children and young people access high quality, effective and appropriate services.
- This is also true of our in house services including the Children's Disability and Transition Teams themselves. A great deal of work has been undertaken and continues to be undertaken with regard to transition. A transition strategy and work streams have been developed to look at improving the experience of disabled young people and their families as the young person reaches adulthood.