



Our Short Breaks Statement

**for families with disabled children in
Oxfordshire**

(Updated July 2022)

This short break statement is for families living in Oxfordshire who have a disabled child aged 0 - 17 years.

Short Breaks provide disabled children and young people with an opportunity to spend time away from their parents, relaxing and having fun with their friends. They provide families with a 'break' from their caring responsibilities; they give parents a chance to unwind, rest or spend time with other children.

Information about short break opportunities can be found in

**Oxfordshire's Local Offer at
www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/localoffer**

**Short Break webpage
www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/shortbreaks**

**Family Information Service website at
www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/disabilityinformation**

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Introduction

The Council provides a range of short breaks for disabled children under the Breaks for Carers of Disabled Children Regulations 2011.

The law says that a local authority must provide, as far as is reasonably practicable, a range of services which is 'sufficient to assist carers to continue to provide care or to do so more effectively'. The Short Break regulations require local authorities to:

- provide a range of breaks, as appropriate, during the day, overnight, at weekends and during the school holidays
- provide parents with a Short Break Services Statement detailing the range of breaks and any eligibility criteria attached to them.

Disabled children and their families have the same human rights as those who do not live with disability.





We aim to ensure that families of disabled children have the support they need.



We recognise that all children and young people are unique and may require different levels of support and different types of short breaks depending on their needs and circumstances.



We know that children's and families' needs change both as individuals and in terms of the services they use, and we will want to be responsive to these changes.



We know that children and families value services which are safe; we are committed to supporting disabled children close to home wherever possible as this helps everyone to make sure that children are protected from harm.



The Council always aims to consider the views of disabled children and young people, their families and key stakeholders and providers from health, the voluntary and independent sector when reviewing and developing short break services.



The Council will work with all its partners to make sure that the funding invested in short break services is used to achieve the best possible outcomes for children and families and provide value for money.

Consultation and participation and co-operation

We want to make sure that short break services 'work' for children and families.

Parents and carers tell us that they want to be able to go straight to short break providers without having to go through a specialist assessment first and this is why many of the services can be accessed in this way.

Disabled children, young people and their parents continue to play a key role in what we ask providers to do and in choosing how they do it



Guiding the way, the services and activities are available and run

What Parents and Children and Young people want:

- Fun and positive opportunities for disabled children and young people.
- To have a choice of short break activities.
- To know that disabled children's needs will be met by appropriately trained staff.
- To have flexible services to meet changing family needs.
- Opportunities to take part in inclusive activities.
- Provide opportunities for disabled children and young people to develop friendships and socialise.
- Short break services that support disabled children and young people with complex needs to have opportunities to mix with peers and access community opportunities.
- To prevent family crisis through the provision of timely support to meet individual family needs.
- Fun time as a family together.

A short break is meant to allow families to spend time together with or without their disabled children doing ordinary family things.

As well as providing a break from caring, short breaks are also about disabled children having fun, trying new activities and developing friendships

Parents, carers, young people and professionals provide feedback and take part in a variety of consultations regarding service development.



We also hold provider network and partner meetings three times a year with our short break providers. This enables us to communicate our plans for contracting services, share good practice, help make links with other organisations and listen to and discuss the issues that service providers and families may be facing.

Range of service delivery

Approximately 1136 disabled children and young people received a range of short break activities and services in Oxfordshire in 2021/22. 3132 children and young people, between the age of 0 – 17 years are on our Disability Register.

In Oxfordshire we offer a wide range of provision through voluntary, independent sector and statutory providers to meet the different needs of disabled children, young people and their families. We recognise that each family is unique and that the needs of families change.

This table shows some of the service areas and gives an overview of the types of short break services that have developed in Oxfordshire.

Community and local based groups and activities

Enabler funding is available to help support children to access community and local based opportunities outside the school day and at weekends, i.e. Brownies, martial arts, swimming etc.

After school activities

After school activities run throughout the county; these offer a range of activities after the school day.

School holiday activities

School holiday breaks that run throughout the county for a broad range of disabled children and young people. These days offer fun opportunities throughout the holiday periods.

Direct Payments / Personal Budgets

Direct payments/personal budgets can be used in a variety of ways to meet the needs of disabled children, young people and their families. These breaks are only available after a social work assessment.

Specialist youth groups

Provide a weekly youth club for young disabled young people to meet, socialise have fun and consider youth issues in a supported environment.

Overnight Breaks

Residential units or family placement service offer overnight breaks. These breaks are only available after a social work assessment.

How to access short breaks

We think it is important to allocate short breaks in a fair way. Not all children and families will need the same level of short breaks; some will need more than others because of the impact of their child's disability. Some families may need more support because of their individual family circumstances. As every child and their family is different we provide different levels of short break support.

Many families with disabled children will not require any extra help because they will be sufficiently supported using 'universal services'. **Universal services** are those which are used by and benefit all children and families – for example, health visitors, leisure activities provided at the child's school or through local community groups and organisations.

Targeted Services are open access to families and are short breaks services designed to meet the needs of disabled children. Children are disabled if they have a physical or mental impairment, which has a substantial long-term effect on their ability to carry out day-to-day activities¹. These Services can be contacted directly without an assessment.

Access to **Specialist Services** is based on a child and family assessment which is prepared by a social worker to support families who need significantly more support than is available through universal and targeted services to access short breaks.

The Child and Family assessment addresses:

- the needs of the individual child
- the capacity of the parents to meet their child's needs and the needs of the other children in the family.
- the social, economic/financial and environmental factors that make it easier or more difficult for individual families to meet their children's needs.

Eligibility for services is based on the following principles:

1. Preventing family crisis through the provision of the right level of support at the right time.
2. The need to be fair and equitable
3. Promoting the health, safety and wellbeing of disabled children and young people, ensuring they can fully participate in family and community

¹ Disability Discrimination Act 1995; Equality Act 2010.

life, enjoying themselves with friends and making decisions about their lives.

What level of Support is available

	Level 1 Universal/ preventative	Level 2 Targeted	Level 3 Specialist/Complex Level 4 Acute
Access to Services	No assessment required, self-referral, contact service directly. Alternatively a Early Help assessment may be undertaken. Services can be contacted directly.	Open Access services; children are assessed by the provider Referral to services can be made by a professional or direct referral by families.	Allocated on the basis of a child and family assessment which is prepared by a social worker in accordance with the Assessment Framework for the assessment of children in need and their families. Parents and carers are also invited to complete a carer's assessment about their own caring needs
Examples of services/ support	Cubs, Brownies, Cadets, after school clubs, leisure clubs. Family activity days, some group based activities. Enabler Support Scheme	Specialist holiday play schemes; group based day care; individual day care. Open access after school, holiday and youth activities	Direct payments, family based short breaks, overnight stays in residential units, short break provision for disabled young people with complex health care needs (assessment by Health for children with Continuing Health Care needs).
Service cost to Oxfordshire County Council	Families pay cost of the service.	Families pay no more than they would for a non-disabled child in a mainstream setting	Costs vary considerably based on the child's needs and the setting used. OCC pay the cost of the service

Oxfordshire County Council's Children's Services also provide:

- Funding to support families overcome some of the difficulties they have in accessing these services, such as fees, transport and 1:1 support in mainstream settings.
- Partnership working between Oxfordshire County Council and Health to provide training on Shared Care Protocols.
- Better information and support for families through the Family Information Service (FIS), Disability Information Officer and through the Out of School Liaison Officers (OSLO) in special schools.
- Max Card discount scheme is designed to help families of disabled children and children with additional needs save money on great days out. The Max Card is free to families in Oxfordshire; it has been funded by Oxfordshire County Council working in partnership with Action for Carers in Oxfordshire. To register for a card, contact Michelle:
☎:01235 424715
✉: michelleevans@carersoxfordshire.org.uk
Website: www.mymaxcard.co.uk

"12 months ago, I couldn't let him go to the end of our road on his own. Last Saturday he went into town on the bus on his own so that he could buy a new CD in HMV - all by himself. I think that says it all." (parent of an 11-15-year-old, "Have your say" survey May 2014)

I cannot overstate how much joy it brings us as parents to see him accepted and greeted by the other children.

Comments from
parents about
short break
services in
Oxfordshire


"Through the short breaks scheme we have been so lucky my son loves art but is 14 years old and is a big lad, he does not cope well with big classes and can fly off the handle. The short breaks scheme allowed us to get him an art course in the summer with specialist staff and gave us a rest when he was there. We couldn't have done this without that support.

How does the Local Authority help parents to find short break support for their disabled child?

For general advice about short break and childcare services for disabled children

- Visit www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/disabilityinformation for Oxfordshire's Family Information Service Directory section on disability, SEN & additional needs to
 - find services, advice and guidance covering a variety of topics
 - view the 'what's on' calendar to find out about upcoming activities and the latest news
- The Disability Information Officer, Pauline MacKinnon, supports families with disabled children by:
 - responding to queries from parents and carers of disabled children and young people;
 - helping families with disabled children to find options for childcare, play and leisure activities and information on support groups available for families;
 - supporting applications for help with funding and transport for disabled children attending mainstream schools and some special schools where there is no Out of School Liaison Officer (OSLO).

You can contact Pauline by email pauline.mackinnon@oxfordshire.gov.uk or telephone 07554 330244.

- You can find out more about short breaks for disabled children in Oxfordshire on our Short Breaks Webpage.
www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/shortbreaks
-  The **local offer** for SEN and Disability (SEND) brings together information about education, health and care services for children and young people from 0 to 25 with SEND
www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/localoffer.
- Parents who want to request a social care assessment for their disabled child should do so via the MASH – 0345 050 7666. Professionals from the Locality and Community Support Service (LCSS) in the MASH will be involved in making sure an assessment is passed to the most appropriate professional/team.

- Families should be aware that they may be supported to access other services and most referrals will need an Early Help assessment before receiving a child and family assessment by a disability social worker.

These are the contact numbers for the Locality and Community support Services for professionals working with disabled children who are not open to statutory social care teams are:

Area	Contact details
LCSS North	Samuelson House, Tramway Rd, Banbury OX16 5AU Tel: 0345 2412703 Email: LCSS.North@oxfordshire.gov.uk
LCSS Central	Knights Court, Between Towns Road, Cowley, Oxford, OX4 3LX Tel: 0345 2412705 Email: LCSS.Central@oxfordshire.gov.uk
LCSS South	Abbey House, Abbey Close, Abingdon, Oxon, OX14 3JD Tel: 0345 2412608 Email: LCSS.South@oxfordshire.gov.uk

- Families who have already had a child and family assessment, but who want to understand more about specialist short break services which could work for their child, should contact their social worker or a Childrens Disability Team manager:
 - Southern Oxfordshire and Direct Payment lead: Kerry Headen
Kerry.Headen@oxfordshire.gov.uk
 - North and West Oxfordshire: Sarah Beerling
sarah.beerling@Oxfordshire.gov.uk
 - Oxford City: currently vacant

How does the Local Authority help make sure disabled young people have short breaks which help to build independence and are age appropriate?

There are a number of organisations providing these services with the emphasis on supporting disabled young people to increase independence and life skills within a social environment with their peers.

- The Oxfordshire Family Information Service Directory - Disability, SEN & additional needs information zone has a dedicated area 'Moving into Adulthood'. www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/disabilityinformation
- Oxfordshire's local offer for SEN and Disability (SEND) brings together information about education, health and care services for children and young people from 0 to 25 with SEND and has a section regarding Moving into Adulthood. www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/localoffer
- The Oxfordshire Learning Disabilities Community online forum aims to ensure that adults and children with learning disabilities (including autism) get the best support and opportunities available. The site offers access to information, mutual support, experience and lots of knowledge. www.lcox.org



Yellow Submarine

Helping to support teenagers' transition into adulthood and to access mainstream services, socialise independently and engage in meaningful work.

To be able to 'do more' but to 'need less'.

Go for it!

Providing social opportunities and personal development to young people.

GO Active

GO Active is a project that aims to help people in Oxfordshire to do more physical activity and exercise, getting more activity into their everyday lives.

My Life My Choice

My Life My Choice, Oxfordshire's only self-advocacy organisation run by and for people with learning disabilities.

OXSRAD

OXSRAD is an integrated centre that provides a welcoming, friendly environment for all abilities to come together and enjoy sport and recreation

Oxfordshire Employment Service (OES)

Supports people with long term health issues or a disability into paid employment

Mencap

A programme of support to help people with a learning disability to get a job

Measuring the impact of short breaks

We ensure that our short break services focus on improving life opportunities and outcomes for disabled young people and their families.

Some children and young people were asked about what makes good short breaks and here are some of their comments:

- ★ “it’s the opportunity to meet new people and to make new friends; even it’s just making one new friend”
- ★ “So, I can get out of the house and my Mum is working all the time, if I was inside I’d be watching TV and lying with the dog. Sometimes I row with my Mum so sometimes I want to go out and clear my head. My Mum and me get along much better when I’ve cleared my head and my Mum has cleared her head too [because I’m not there].
- ★ “And I live in the middle of nowhere – so it’s harder for me to do stuff. So Short Breaks are extra important because of that reason”



Safeguarding children

The Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) is the front door to Children’s Social Care for all child protection and immediate safeguarding concerns.

Call Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub
(MASH) Tel: 0345 050 7666.

“Without Short Breaks life would be a continuous stream of work. There would be no chance to relax or have fun. The changes that happen are that you are more active and have more fun. Enjoying breaks from school is really important. Otherwise you get too mentally and physically tired”.

“I think it’s good to do things inclusively [disabled and non-disabled CYP doing things together]; to be with people where it doesn’t matter if there is a disability or not. And not to care if there’s a disability or not and to treat you the same.

Comments from young people² about Short Break services in Oxfordshire

“I get to do loads of things and things on the computer. Cool maths games - they are excellent.”

“A thing that’s good about a short break is that you are in a new place that you’ve never been before, and you have new experiences which will be with you for the rest of your life. Because if you did the same thing all the time you’d get bored with it and you’d not be learning”.

² OYE report – Oxfordshire’s children and young people June 2014



Contact Details

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Information about short break opportunities can be found in

Oxfordshire's Local Offer at www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/localoffer

or on our Short Breaks webpage –

www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/shortbreaks or on the

Family Information Service website at

www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/disabilityinformation

