

# Short Breaks Statement

September 2023

MKCC SEND Team



## Introduction:

This is our short breaks services statement which provides information about the short breaks on offer in Milton Keynes for children and young people with disabilities and additional needs. It sets out the different kinds of short breaks available, information about who is eligible and describes how to access them. It will be reviewed annually. The date for the next review is March 2024.

This statement has been prepared by Milton Keynes City Council in partnership with members of the Milton Keynes Short Breaks Multi-Disciplinary Working Group.

The short breaks working group advise on the planning and delivery of Short Breaks in Milton Keynes. This programme is subject to regular review.

As part of good practice, the local area will capture the voice of the children, young people and families to improve the offer. This is gathered through a number of different means including surveys and direct conversations with both children and young people and their families and is led by members of the working group.

The short breaks working group use the feedback to continuously improve our services, increasing the range of short breaks on offer to include activities and opportunities that have been suggested. MKCC work closely with providers of short breaks services to ensure the children and young people that access the scheme have a positive experience. Specialist training is offered to all short break providers via the MKCC SEND Team. Commissioned Services are reviewed by MKCC.

Provider details of what is on offer can be accessed on the [Milton Keynes SEND Local Offer](#).

Short break vouchers are intended exclusively for the child or young person who the application has been made for and are not transferrable to other individuals. Should you not use or plan to use your short break vouchers, we would ask that the vouchers are returned to MKCC either via post or return them to Milton Keynes City Council, Civic, 1 Saxon Gate East, Central Milton Keynes, MK9 3EJ.

If parents/carers would like additional support, please don't hesitate to contact our SEND Support Line: 01908 657825 / [SENDSupport@milton-keynes.gov.uk](mailto:SENDSupport@milton-keynes.gov.uk)

## What is a short break?

A short break enables children and young people with disabilities and additional needs, to spend time away from their day-to-day routine.

Short breaks enable children and young people to experience new opportunities and to develop relationships with other people and make new friends. It also contributes to increased confidence and self-esteem.

A short break could be provided in a variety of different ways covering activities from school-based schemes, an evening out or an overnight stay. It can take place in the family home or a residential setting as well as a wide range of community venues. The following are just some of the settings where Short Breaks are offered:

- Children's centres
- Activity centres
- Arts clubs
- Play centres
- Leisure centres
- Sports clubs
- After school, weekend and holiday play schemes
- Local respite centre (only available via assessment from the [Children with Disabilities Team](#) – see Level 3)

[Calendar of SEND events](#) – Please see our calendar of events signposting parents and carers to the SEND activities available in Milton Keynes. The calendar can be found at the bottom of the homepage of the [Milton Keynes SEND Local Offer](#).

Short breaks offers come in a variety of different means and we aim to offer as much choice as possible, which range from being free of charge to parents or carers making a financial contribution. The local area have coproduced the short breaks offer and have taken consideration the views of children, young people, parents and carers in continuing to develop this further. Young peoples' views are obtained informally from providers and families whilst they are accessing the different scheme and providers update their offer where reasonably possible. The underlying principle of the short breaks scheme is that, as far as possible, all services and activities for children and young people with disabilities and additional needs in receipt of an EHCP should be accessible and available for all. To make sure this happens, we work with and fund a range of local organisations to access relevant training. These organisations provide a range of activities during school holidays, term time and weekends.

## What does the law say?

Children with disabilities and their families have the same rights as those without disabilities. The law requires us to provide services that help caregivers continue their caregiving role effectively. This includes offering different types of breaks during the day, night, weekends, and school holidays. We also provide parents with information about these breaks and any eligibility criteria through a service statement, as outlined in the [Breaks for Carers of Disabled Children Regulations 2011](#).

## What does a service statement do?

The service statement provides details about short breaks. It includes information on:

- The different types of short break services available in Milton Keynes.
- Who is eligible to use each type of service.
- The criteria for determining priority in accessing these services.
- The reasons why short break services are considered important.

## Types of short break services

Short breaks in Milton Keynes are provided using a levelled structure with eligibility for those who have a finalised Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) to spend time away from their day-to-day routine. This could include leisure activities which are accessed as a family or with friends or an opportunity for carers to access a short break.

Short breaks in Milton Keynes are accessed through a variety of Universal, Targeted, Specialist and Acute services. Many families with a child with a disability can utilise Universal services such as, activities from school and local leisure activities or community groups.

There are some families that can access Targeted provisions which are designed to meet the needs of the child with a disability. In Milton Keynes, we run the short break Voucher Scheme.

Short break vouchers can be accessible for Children and young people who have an Education and Health Care Plan. These can be used in a variety of settings which can accommodate to Children with Special Needs e.g., Barnardos, Action 4 Youth.

For some families, they will need a higher level of support due to the impact of their child's disability and their family circumstances. Access to Specialist Services are based on a Children and Family Assessment which is prepared by a Social Worker. The family will need to meet the eligibility criteria to access this service.

Acute services would involve those families whose child needs intensive support within the home, or the home environment is no longer safe for them. This would be discussed in collaboration with the family, child and health and Social Care professionals, then assessed appropriately to ensure that the child is safeguarded at all times and their needs continued to be met.

|               | <b>Universal/preventative</b>                                      | <b>Targeted</b>  | <b>Specialist</b>                                   | <b>Acute</b>   |
|---------------|--|--|---|--|
| <b>Access</b> | No assessment, no referral needed, self-referral, contact directly | Eligibility through Short break vouchers, self-contact | Eligibility through C and F, Social Work assessment | Eligibility through CCG, Social Care assessment, Child |

|                     |  |  |  |  |
|---------------------|--|--|--|--|
|                     |  | directly,<br>assessed by<br>provider   |  | Protection<br>Assessment.                    |
| <b>Example</b>      | Cubs, brownies, after<br>school activities,<br>community local based<br>groups | Barnardo's,<br>Action for<br>youth, Autism<br>youth group,<br>SEN family<br>swimming | Short break<br>respite<br>through care<br>agency or<br>personal<br>assistant | Overnight<br>respite,<br>residential<br>care |
| <b>Service cost</b> | Funded by families   | Funded by<br>families, short<br>break<br>vouchers                                    | Direct<br>payments via<br>connection<br>support,<br>Council<br>funded        | Funded by<br>CCG, Social<br>care             |

## Who is eligible for a Short Break?

The Short Breaks scheme is available to children and young people with disabilities and additional needs, aged 0 – 25 whose education and well-being is the responsibility of Milton Keynes City Council and who have a finalised Education and Health Care Plan (EHCP). When an EHCP is ceased, for example the young person is no longer accessing education and/or has transitioned to adult services the short breaks scheme will cease.

The offer is also available to children and young people with a disability or additional needs who are in receipt of a Milton Keynes EHCP.

Children and young people living in Milton Keynes but whose care and education is the responsibility of another authority (e.g. children in foster care placed by another local authority) are not normally eligible for the Milton Keynes short breaks scheme. However, exceptions may be made on a case-by-case basis especially for children and young people who are in long term care in Milton Keynes and are unlikely to return to their home authority.

Children and young people who attend Milton Keynes schools as day pupils but do not live in Milton Keynes will not be eligible for the Milton Keynes short breaks scheme. They will be entitled to short breaks organised by their home local authority which will be able to advise on what is available.

## Short breaks activities

Once parents and carers are in receipt of a finalised EHCP, they can apply for short breaks vouchers. Vouchers are valid for the financial year in which they are issued (i.e. from 1 April to 31 March the following year). Each voucher is worth £1.00, £2.00 or £5.00. Organisations cannot give cash refunds for part use of a voucher.

Applications for the short break voucher scheme run annually, parents and carers are requested to complete the short online form each year. We request this to be completed annually as the family situation/ circumstances may change year on year. The local area will advertise via a number of different streams when parents can reapply, if you need some support in doing this please contact the SEND Support Line (01908 657 825 [SENDSupport@milton-keynes.gov.uk](mailto:SENDSupport@milton-keynes.gov.uk)) who will be able to advise.

The brochure sets out where vouchers can be used can be accessed on the [SEND Local Offer](#). The short breaks voucher brochure is updated on a regular basis and this can be found on the [SEND Local Offer](#). Parents and carers can use the short breaks vouchers sent to you to pay for all or part of the cost. Before attending the activity, please contact the organisation to ensure their services meet with your child's needs and to find out how many vouchers you will need to attend. The number of vouchers required will depend upon your choice of activity or session.

Childcare is not a short break and vouchers cannot be used for this purpose. It may provide an opportunity for parents/carers to have a break.

Short Breaks Vouchers do not have any value outside of the Short Breaks scheme.

We have tried to avoid the need for additional assessments or a complicated application process.

## Levels of short breaks

All children and young people with an EHCP have a Level 1 voucher eligibility. With Level 1 vouchers we aim to make sure that every child with a disability or additional needs receives some support to help them access a short break. However, we recognise that those children and young people with higher levels of need should have access to a higher level of service and we want to make sure that opportunities for short breaks are provided according to levels of need. Therefore, there will be some children and young people who will be awarded additional vouchers, this is what we call the Level 2 voucher award. Children and young people who are awarded Level 2 vouchers receive these in addition to Level 1 vouchers. The Level 2 voucher award is £80 in addition to Level 1 (£40) therefore £120 Short Breaks Vouchers in total for the full year or pro-rata for any period less than a full year. To be eligible for Level 2 vouchers, children and young people must have Level 1 award and meet at least one of the following:

- Have an EHCP
- Attend a special school or
- receive 20 hours, or more, support per week in a mainstream school or
- be in an alternative education unit arising from a disability or long term complex medical need.

When you apply online the Short Breaks Team will check your eligibility and the vouchers will be posted out to you.

### Level 1

The current Level 1 voucher award is £40 per child or young person for a full year. This level of support would be for our children and young people receiving a targeted approach.

### Level 2

The current Level 2 voucher award is £120 per child or young person for a full year. This level of support would be for our children and young people receiving a targeted approach.

### Level 3

In addition to receiving Level 1 and Level 2 voucher award, some children and young people with complex additional needs will be eligible for specialist short breaks. These are provided after a statutory children and families assessment which is carried out by the Social Work Team. This may include breaks in the family home or overnights in the local respite centre. This could also take the form of one-to-one support to enable a child or young person to access a short break in a community setting.

After an assessment, any specific needs will be discussed with you and assessed short break may be arranged by Milton Keynes City Council. This assessment will be reviewed yearly, MKCC acknowledge that family situations can change therefore your package may be reviewed at any point in the year. Please speak to your allocated worker if you feel your assessed short break is not working for you. Assessed short breaks may take the format of a direct payment and the family will become responsible for organising their own short break, which will be monitored by the Children with Disabilities Team.

This level of support would be for our children and young people receiving a specialist/acute approach.

The Children with Disabilities Team can also commission assessed short breaks.

If you think your child may be eligible for this aspect of the service, please contact the [Children with Disabilities Team](#) on 01908 253617. Further information on the [Short Breaks](#) scheme can be found on the [SEND Local Offer](#).

We are interested in your thoughts on our service and may use this to inform our decision making on service improvements, if you wish to provide constructive feedback on this document or any other aspect of the Short Breaks provision please email [EHCP@milton-keynes.gov.uk](mailto:EHCP@milton-keynes.gov.uk) or [pacamk@gmail.com](mailto:pacamk@gmail.com)

### Useful links

Please find some useful links about other activities children and young people with additional needs can access.

[Holiday Activities and Food Programme \(HAF\)](#) - A range of FREE activities and food for children, young people and their families who are in receipt of benefit related Free School Meals

[Calendar of SEND events](#) – Please see our calendar of events signposting parents and carers to the SEND activities available in Milton Keynes. The calendar can be found at the bottom of the homepage of the [Milton Keynes SEND Local Offer](#).

Parents and carers may looking to find SEND friendly providers in Milton Keynes, our [Short Breaks brochure](#) can be supportive in finding activities available in Milton Keynes.

[Children and Family Centres](#) - Offer support and activities for families from 17 Children and Family Centres across Milton Keynes. These centres are hubs of activities and services for families and the local community.

All our Children and Family Centres offer a range of services for families from pregnancy to 5 years old. Our Family Centres also have services for families with children up to the age of 19 years, support the community with sessions and support for adults who may not have children or whose children may have grown and left home.

[SEND Directory](#) - A directory of services in and around Milton Keynes.

[Parents And Carers Alliance MK \(PACA\)](#) is an independent and voluntary group of parents and carers of children and young people with disabilities or additional needs.

[Carers MK](#) - Carers MK supports unpaid carers of all ages, from all backgrounds and in all caring roles.



MKCC SEND Team

[SENDSupport@milton-keynes.gov.uk](mailto:SENDSupport@milton-keynes.gov.uk)

01908 657 825

<https://www.mksendlocaloffer.co.uk/>

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