Sandwell’s Short Breaks Services Statement

1. Background

SMBC in partnership with parents and carers produced a Short Breaks Services Statement in 2011. The statement was reviewed in 2013, 2016 and 2017. The functions of Children’s Social Care transferred to Sandwell Children’s Trust (SCT) on 1st April 2018. The statement will be reviewed in October 2021.

This was in accordance with duties under the Children Act 1989 (as amended by the Children and Young People Act 2008) and the Breaks for Carers of Disabled Children Regulations 2011 requiring a Short Breaks Services Statement. The Statement describes a menu of provision across a full range of services, activities from accessible universal / targeted and specialist resources.

The statement is viewed as part of the Local Offer as prescribed by the Children and Families Act 2014 and the Special Educational Needs and Disability Regulations 2014 (Part 4).

In co-production with children, young people, parents and carers SCT completed the tender process for a range of short breaks with the new commissioned services commencing on the 1st April 2018 for a period of 2 years with an option to extend for a further year.

2. Drivers for change in the delivery of services;

Currently Sandwell Children’s Trust deliver services for disabled children and young people from the ages 0 to 18 years. The main legislation in this area is:

- Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1970 (CSDPA)
- The Children Act 1989
- Equality Act 2010 (underpinned by guidance from the Equality and Human Rights Commission)
- The Care Act 2014
- The Children and Families Act 2014

Part 3 of the Children and Families Act 2014 introduced the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) reforms which came into force on 1st September 2014. The accompanying SEND Code of Practice set out duties upon social care to provide information advice and support to disabled children and their families, introduced a single Education Health and Care Plan and provided rights to personal Budgets for eligible Children, Young People and their families.
This legislation is within the context of the personalisation agenda introduced by the Department of Health in 2010, where personal choice and flexibility in meeting the needs of disabled people were promoted. This method of self-directed support is currently being progressed through the development of Personal Budgets. Sandwell Children’s Trust are committed to this agenda through the delivery of services that are efficient and effective for disabled children and young people whilst ensuring quality of services.

3. What is a Short Break?

Short breaks form part of SCT’s Local Offer for families of disabled children and young people. A short break provides disabled children and young people with an opportunity to spend time away from their parents and siblings, relaxing, having fun with their friends, trying new experiences and developing their independence skills. In addition, short breaks give families a break from their caring responsibilities and provide time for parent to spend quality time with siblings.

A short break is part of SCT continuum of services which support disabled children and their families. Sandwell Children’s Social Care vision is that through the short break offer it will strive to enable disabled children and young people to lead ordinary lives. Disabled children will be able to choose from a full range of services, activities including specialist provision, accessible universal and targeted provision.

Short breaks can vary in time from a couple of hours to overnight stays. Short breaks can take place during the day, evening, overnight, weekend or holiday activities that take place in the child or young person’s own home, the home of an approved carer, a residential or community setting.

4. Short Breaks available in Sandwell

Short Breaks available cover a range of services, organisations, providers across the public and voluntary sector. The list below is not exhaustive but included the following:

- Individual one to one support in the community
- Holiday activities both inclusive and specialist
- Out of school activities
- Family activities

5. Children and Young People Participation

SCT had young people representatives on the short break tender process,

All contracted services are required to complete 6 monthly narrative reports around the outcomes from the service spec with numbers of children that achieved/improved as well as cases studies for each outcome.

During contract monitoring meetings service providers are required to evidence how they have involved the child or young person in decision making and service development.
6. Parents and Carers Participation

SCT undertook a consultation with parents prior to undertaking the short break tender process to understand what services they would find of benefit and remains committed to parents and carers being partners in the on-going development of the short break provision and the development of personal budgets.

SCT will continue to undertake consultations with parents and carers at regular periods. The Team Manager from the Children with Disabilities Team attends the Sandwell Parent Voice meetings and any questions or queries raised by parents via the Sandwell Parent Forum are sent to both procurement and the Children with Disabilities Team Manager, this ensure there is open communication between parent, carers and the local authority.

7. Provision

SCT actively promotes the inclusion of disabled children and young people enabling them to achieve short break. Sandwell provides a range of targeted services to all children with disabilities.

In addition to the universal and targeted services supporting all disabled children the Children with Disabilities Social Work Team on completion of a Single assessment which identifies a need for specialist services will recommend additional short break respite services including access to overnight respite breaks and direct payment’s which allows the young person or families to secure their own services.

The Director’s Resource and Professional Decisions Panel which is a multi-agency panel considers all completed single assessments for children with disabilities seeking or reviewing a package of support including short breaks. This process will continue until SCT has the Resource Allocation System / Personal Budgets in place.

Short breaks for children with complex health needs may be funded by the CCG when the child meets the Children’s Continuing Health Care criteria.

8. Access and Information

Information on short breaks can be accessed through:

The Local Offer which can be found at www.sandwell.gov.uk/SEND

Family Information Service on 0121 569 4914

Sandwell Disabled Children’s register mail outs

For more specialist short breaks these can currently be accessed through an assessment via the Children with Disabilities Team. All referrals for the Children with Disabilities Team are made through the Single Point of Contact Team.

Single Point of Contact 0121 569 3100
9. Evaluation and Improvements:

This revised statement and the commissioning work that underpins it is to promote continuous improvement across quality, best value and efficiency.

Partnership arrangements will continue across Sandwell Parent Voice, S.H.A.P.E and 3RD Sector organisations to capture feedback from children, young people and their families to ensure the evaluation of services continue to improve on quality and range of services offered within SCT.