

# **Gateshead short breaks position statement – summary of feedback**

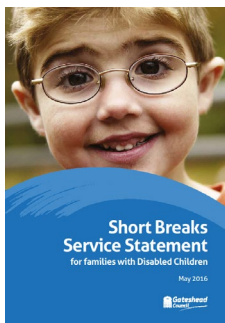
**January 2023**

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# Introduction

- Gateshead Cares is made up of health and care organisations including the Council, local NHS organisations and voluntary and community sector who are all working together to improve the health and wellbeing of local people.
- As part of their work programme Gateshead Cares want to ensure that services for children with disabilities and their families are meeting local need. One part of this work is to review the 'Short Breaks Service Statement for families with Disabled Children' to ensure that the statement is fit for purpose.
- In 2011 the Government published 'Breaks for Carers of Disabled Children Regulations 2011' also known as 'Short Breaks Regulations 2011'. As part of this, local authorities are required by law to provide a range of short breaks to meet the needs of disabled children, young people and their parents/carers and to produce a short breaks statement detailing:
  - o The range of available breaks
  - o Any eligibility criteria attached to the breaks
- Gateshead Cares wanted to gather feedback from parents of children who are eligible to use the service on the current Statement (linked below), ahead of a refresh of the document in 2023.



- In particular they wanted to know:
  - o How accessible the document is
  - o The amount, clarity and usefulness of the information provided
  - o Whether anything is missing
  - o The design of the document
- Parents/carers of children eligible to use the Service were invited to take part in a short interview in early January 2023. Six parents/carers shared their views.
- The following is a summary of the findings.

# Parent/carer views

## Key themes

### Accessibility

- The current Short Breaks Statement document is easy to read and follows a logical format but for people new to the service, a glossary of terms may be useful. The inclusion of some real-life examples of short breaks would also aid understanding of what is on offer.
- The document should be available in a variety of formats to ensure that the information is accessible for all, taking into account those who have English as an additional language and those who are blind or partially sighted.
- There was a request for greater promotion of the document and a number of suggestions around where to promote it were put forward. Any promotional activity should also highlight the change in terminology from 'respite' to 'short breaks.'

### Content

- People understand the aim of the document and feel that it would be useful to them. They found most of the content relevant but questioned the need for background information around the origins of the service and statistics which they felt were not relevant to finding out how to access short breaks.
- A range of other information that could be included in the document was put forward, but it was noted that the document should not exceed 12 pages. Suggestions included case study examples of short breaks and testimonials, more information on how to access the service, a list of providers and what they offer and links to documents mentioned in the Statement.

### Design

- People were generally happy with the design of the document, they found it eye-catching, liked the images and colours used. However, the accessibility of the colours was questioned, and it was suggested that reducing the size of the printed document to A5 would make it more appealing to pick up.
- It was felt that the prominent Gateshead Council branding on the front cover was important to show the trusted origin of the information.

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## Summary of findings

### Content

- Accessibility
  - Did you find the document easy to read?
    - All but one participant felt that the current document is easy to read. They made the points that readability is important as "jargon can put people off" and some parents/carers may also have a learning disability so plain English is vital.
    - They felt that any unfamiliar words are explained within the text and any changes to terminology since the first document, are highlighted.
    - They liked the use of diagrams, tables and text boxes to break the information down.



information but upon looking at it felt that the way it is broken up with images and diagrams means it is not as in-depth as the 12 pages suggest.

- If there is too much information, what do you think could be taken out?
  - One participant felt that the document was too long, and they and another queried the inclusion of the background information around how the service came about. They would not read this and were “more concerned about the current services.”
  - They also felt that the principles and facts/figures sections were more aimed at professionals and would “go over your head if you were a parent/carer looking for information.”
- Do you want to see any other information included?
  - All participants suggested other information they would like to see within the document:
    - Case study examples of using the short break service and testimonials of people who have used the service.
    - FAQ (Frequently Asked Questions) section around people’s worries/concerns about using the service.
    - More information on how to access the service i.e. “what to ask for” as there are a number of options including having support from someone you know.
    - Information about each provider including links to their websites/contact details etc and who can access it.
    - Changes to local provision, and why these changes were made
    - Services/charities that can provide support (practical and financial) or run children’s programmes.
    - Other useful information for parents/carers such as Active Kidz schemes, Max Cards, links to the Local Offer and helplines for parents/carers who are struggling.
    - Links to the governance documents and Acts mentioned in the text.
- Do you think you would find the information provided within the document useful?
  - All feel that the information is useful, and three participants stated that they had learnt something new from reviewing the current document.
  - One shared that when they were informed of the service, they had just assumed it was an offer for their child to go away somewhere but they now realise there are a range of options available.
- Do you think the information is in the right order?
  - All felt the information was in a logical order, “different services are presented...and follow on from each other in a way that makes sense.”

## Design

- Colour

- Do you think the colours in the document are accessible?
  - All liked the colours used and one felt that the blue text was actually easier for them to see than the black on white. It was felt that the blue colour was also

calming and that there was no requirement for additional colours which could be distracting.

- One participant queried how it would work for people who are colourblind.
- Do you think the document is eye catching/would catch your attention?
  - All but one participant felt the document was eye-catching with the image and clear title.
  - One participant suggested that they would be more likely to pick it up and take it away if it were in a more manageable A5 format.
- Images
  - What do you think of the images in the position statement?
    - Participants felt there were enough images within the document, and they illustrated the aim of the service by portraying happy children and includes a range of ages, different genders and ethnic backgrounds.
    - One participant queried the size of the images and felt that reducing them would shorten the document.
- Branding
  - Is it clear who produced this document?
    - All were clear that Gateshead Council had produced the document and they felt that having the logo on the front of the document was important as they knew the information contained within it was from trusted source.
    - They also felt it was important for people to understand who is funding the service.
    - However, one participant thought that there should be some mention of the other organisations the Council is working with to provide the short breaks so that people do not think it is only the Council providing breaks.

### **Other comments**

- Do you have any other comments about the position statement?
  - It was suggested that parents/carers who use the service could be offered to be added to a distribution list to give them updates on any changes to the service.
  - Two participants stated how much they valued the short breaks service which enable their children “to go places they wouldn’t get to otherwise” and provide a “lifeline.”
  - Two participants discussed the sharing of information and felt that information for families with disabled children should all be available in one place on the Council website. Currently it was felt that “unless you know exactly what you want...[it is] difficult to navigate around the Council website” which they find frustrating.

# Recommendations

## Accessibility

- Ensure that the document is available in a range of formats and languages so that the information is accessible to all and that digital copies are compatible with screen readers.
- Include a glossary of terms.
- Consider the accessibility of the design for people who are colourblind or partially sighted.
- Consider producing an A5 sized paper document.
- Continue to use images and diagrams to break up the information.
- Continue to display the Council logo prominently on the front cover of the document.
- Ensure that the document is promoted across a range of platforms including social media, Whatsapp and posters in GP practices.
  - When promoting the document highlight the change in terminology from 'respite' to 'short breaks' to ensure people understand the content of the document.

## Content

- Consider revising down the contextual information around the origins of the short breaks service and local facts and figures.
- Consider including the following content:
  - Case study examples of using the short break service and testimonials of people who have used the service.
  - FAQ section around people's worries/concerns about using the service.
  - More information on how to access the service i.e. "what to ask for" as there are a number of options including having support from someone you know.
  - Information about each provider including links to their websites/contact details etc and who can access it.
  - Changes to local provision, and why these changes were made
  - Services/charities that can provide support (practical and financial) or run children's programmes.
  - Other useful information for parents/carers such as Active Kidz schemes, Max Cards, links to the Local Offer and helplines for parents/carers who are struggling.
  - Links to the governance documents and Acts mentioned in the text.

## Other recommendations

Although outside of the scope of this project the following additional recommendations are put forward for consideration:

- Consider asking parents/carers who use the service if they would like to receive regular updates around the short breaks service.
- Consider having a place on the Council website which brings together all of the information for families with disabled children. Once developed promote this extensively to stakeholders.