



Torfaen Short Break Service Statement 2026

Introduction and Background

Prior to the implementation of the Social Services and Wellbeing Act 2014 (Wales) (SSWA), every Local Authority in Wales was required to write a 'Short Breaks Statement' to help parents and carers of disabled children and young people identify:

- the range of services the local authority provides
- any eligibility criteria
- how they can be accessed.

Welsh Government has committed to ensuring that the continuing need for short break service provision is recognised in the regulations and codes of practice which accompany the SSWA. The Act has provision of preventative services at its heart.

The provision of short breaks will often be provided as part of a disabled child's care and support plan by assessing and meeting an individual's care and support needs. This will particularly be the case where the break is designed to enable the child to participate in safe and stimulating activities outside the family home.

The SSWA has introduced changes in the social services sector so that;

- People have control over what support they need, making decisions about their care and support as an equal partner
- Easy access to information and advice is available to all
- Carers have an equal right to assessment for support to those who they care for
- New proportionate assessment focuses on the individual
- Powers to safeguard people are stronger
- A preventative approach to meeting care and support needs is practised.

Under the SSWA Local Authorities are now required to have a list of local preventative services. Torfaen CBC has therefore revised the original Short Breaks Statement to provide up to date information.

What is a Short Break?

Short breaks, sometimes called respite, provide parents and carers who have children and young people with disabilities 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 un-wind, rest, spend time with their other

children and give brothers and sisters an opportunity to enjoy family time too. Examples of short breaks can include holiday play schemes, family fun days and home sitting.

Short Breaks can take the form of:

- Daytime care in the home or elsewhere
- Overnight care in the home or elsewhere
- Leisure activities outside of the home
- Services available to assist carers in the evenings, at weekends and during school holidays

Short breaks come in many different forms and can last anything from a couple of hours to days. The length and type of break will depend on your child, young person and family. Not all children and families will need the same level of support and short breaks; some will need more than others because of the nature and severity of their child's disability or family circumstances. This is why we may need to assess your child and family to ensure we provide the right amount of support and short breaks at the right time.

The Principles behind Short Breaks

- Short breaks should not just be there for those at crisis point; they are designed to be an early intervention.
- Access to short breaks must not be judged on impairment alone
- Short breaks should be reliable and regular to best meet families' needs
- Parents should be engaged in the design of local short breaks services
- Short breaks can build on and be offered by universal service providers
- Short breaks can be a key service to promote greater levels of confidence and competence for young people moving towards adult life.

What short breaks are available?

An assessment maybe required for some short breaks and not for others. Short breaks broadly fall into 3 groups:

1. Opportunities which can be accessed by all children and young people locally

All children and young people should be able to access universal leisure and activity opportunities. These are opportunities which everyone can get involved in such as libraries, sports centres, youth groups and playgrounds – for some of these opportunities there may be a charge to access them. Wherever possible these are the opportunities which should be used as a first point of call. Disabled children, young people and their families are part of their local communities, and it is important that they can have the opportunity to become involved in local opportunities. Some children may require additional support in order to fully participate in community-based activities. We are committed to ensuring that universal groups and services have the support they need to meet the needs of disabled children, young people and their families. You can find out information about these opportunities through the Torfaen Council website, Family

Information Service and information points such as schools, libraries and community centres.

2. Opportunities for children and young people who require some additional support

We recognise that families may have additional needs if they are raising a disabled child and that the children and young people may need extra support, either short or long term, to be able to take part in activities. There are services available which aim to offer support to prevent difficulties building up and to encourage children and young people to try new things.

Short break support services are specifically for disabled children and their families and may be provided for different age or impairment groups. Access is not necessarily dependent on a formal assessment of need although each service may operate its own criteria.

Examples of opportunities for children and young people who require some additional supports are given below. For some of the opportunities there is a charge to access them.

Torfaen Play – Chwarae Torfaen

Torfaen Play and Respite Sessions / Play Opportunities

Torfaen Play Services model of Inclusive Play has been identified as sector leading. Provisions are open to all children, aged between **5-18 years old**, regardless of ability and social background. Play volunteers and Play care workers are trained to provide support for individual needs. Torfaen Play work in close partnership with several organisations including Social Care, Education, Health and Families First to ensure that suitable support is in place. Torfaen Play's inclusive model helps to reduce social barriers and is vital for both parents/carers as well as children and young people.

Play sessions take place in various settings across the borough. A variety of activities are provided for children and young people which may include sensory experiences, music, arts and crafts, sports, and games. Play and Respite sessions take place during weekends, half terms, Easter and Summer holidays. In addition to this there are also sessions that run during the Christmas holidays. Referral for the play and respite sessions are through the completion of an 'All About Me' form available from the Play Service Team or the Disabled Children's Team within Children & Family Services. This form details the individual needs of the child. When this form is completed the level of support your child/young person requires to attend the play provision can be assessed and any additional training the worker / volunteer may require can be identified. For more information, please follow the link [School Holiday Play Opportunities | Torfaen County Borough Council](#)

Specialist Provisions

The play service provides 1-1 support for children and young people with disabilities and behavioural needs to attend play opportunities. Support is provided to children aged 5+ to attend opportunities during holiday times and weekends. To register your child for 1-1 play support or for more information, please follow the link below:

[Torfaen Play Specialist Provisions - Registration Form](#)

Weekend Play and Respite Sessions

These include weekly sessions on Saturdays and Sundays for ages 5-18 years. The sessions run from Victory Church, Thornhill Community Centre, The Cockerel, Glenside Community Hall and Abersychan Hut. All named sessions can only be accessed via referral only. For more information, please contact torfaenplay@torfaen.gov.uk

Disability Sports

Within Torfaen we have a number of clubs and provisions offering a variety of sporting activities for disabled people both inclusively and disability specific. Disability Sports Wales have a number of regional Development Officers which are tasked to initiate, promote and provide quality sporting and recreational opportunities for people with disabilities, mainly at grassroots level, and to establish mechanisms for development in partnership with Torfaen Health Sport and Fitness (previously known as Torfaen Sports Development)

This can include supporting disabled children and young people to access sports clubs, but also includes supporting sports clubs to become more accessible, for example, training coaches and helping with the purchase of specialist equipment. For more information, please follow the link to [Torfaen Health, Sports and Fitness](#) or [Disability Sport Wales](#).

Torfaen Health, Sport and Fitness Team (first point of contact)

Disability and inclusive sport enquiries for Torfaen are directed through the Health, Sport and Fitness Team.

- **Email:** sports.development@torfaen.gov.uk
- **Telephone:** 01633 628965

Able

Able provides services to young people aged 13-19 who have diagnosed learning disability, autism or a neurodivergent condition. Able was founded in 2006 by a group of volunteers passionate about improving the everyday lives of those living with a disability. Starting as a radio station, the enterprise grew rapidly through demand and now plays a pivotal role within the community. Beyond on-air broadcasts, Able have developed a range of offerings which are designed to be personalised and tailored to each individual's needs. Ables facilities include; two changing facilities (with overhead hoists), sensory room, therapy suite, sensory radio studios, ILS kitchen, podcast room, media hub, ILS zone, quiet rooms, poly tunnels and a woodwork shop. Able staff are trained to the highest standards, offering support and personal care. Able offer a variety of forward-thinking

activities that enable individuals to build life skills and develop confidence, all whilst having fun and making new friends. Able have a transition group on a Monday 4:30-6:30, the cost is £10 PP and offer other activities such as Woodwork, Independent Learning Skills, Drama and Music, Radio Podcasting, Cooking Lessons and more.

For more information on Able, please visit [Home | Learning Disability Day Centre & Life Skills Centre | Able | Cwmbran, South Wales](#)

Togs

The TOG's [Torfaen Opportunity Group] Disabled Children's Centre New Inn, Pontypool provide services to families in Torfaen who have children and young people with physical, learning or sensory disabilities. This Centre is owned and run by Trustees and Parents. Special Youth Clubs are run by a team of Youth Workers and Voluntary Workers.

TOG's is a self-funding local charity and any parent/carer of a disabled child from 8 to 18 years who live in and around the borough of Torfaen can make a self-referral to TOG's for their child to join us; you do not need to be referred by any statutory organisation.

For more information, please visit [TOGS Centre Torfaen - Homepage](#)

Hope GB

[Hope GB](#) is a registered charity that provides support to individuals with autistic spectrum conditions and their families. Hope GB offer guidance, encouragement, and a sense of community. Hope GB offer:

- **Little Explorers Club** creates a fun and supportive environment for little ones on the autistic spectrum. If your child is aged between 2 and 6 years old and has a diagnosis or an emerging diagnosis of autism and lives in the Aneurin Bevan Health Board area, they are welcome to register interest in the Little Explorers Club. Hope GB run a variety of activities which are supported by trained volunteers and staff with a range of relevant qualifications. These range from soft play, sensory play, crafts games and much more. A nominal club subscription fee is payable.
- **Tuesday Home Education Sessions** - 10.00am – 11.30am and 12.00pm – 1.30pm *These sessions can be booked on the website. £5 per child, £2.50 per sibling. Babies under 1 year free. This is for ages up to 11 years.
- **Thursday Adult Social Club** - 12.00pm – 2.00pm – offer a relaxed and supportive environment for parents and carers, while their children and young people on the autistic spectrum enjoy fun, stimulating activities with their peers. The clubs take place during term time to undertake age-appropriate opportunities ranging from craft and games to group discussions – all supported by trained staff and volunteers. A nominal club subscription fee is payable. Spaces are limited. However, if your child or young person is aged between 6 and 18 and has a

diagnosis or emerging diagnosis of autism, and lives in the Aneurin Bevan Health Board Area, you are welcome to register your interest in securing a space.

- **Young Adults Sensory & Social Groups** - As part of Hope GB's ongoing transition support, they have created regular opportunities for young adults age 16-25 on the autism spectrum to come together in relaxed, social environments. These gatherings are designed to help build confidence, encourage friendships, and ease the often-challenging shift into adulthood. The sessions are open to all young adults who would benefit from the experience. These social events vary in format and location, from casual meetups to more structured activities.
- **Social Young Adults** - 6.00pm – 8.00pm for age 16 – 30 years. Subs are £5.00 per person.

For more information, please visit [Hope GB | Autism Charity in Cwmbran, South Wales](#)

Sparkle

Sparkle is a service based at Serennu Children's Centre that provides vital care, treatment and activities for children and young people with disabilities and/or developmental difficulties living in Newport, South Monmouthshire and South Torfaen, as well as support for the wider family. The Centre's guiding principle is to ensure that children with a disability or developmental difficulty and their families are fully supported to participate in valued childhood experiences and have access to the same range of opportunities, experiences, services and facilities as other children. It does this by providing treatment for the child, family-centred services to accommodate the needs of parents and siblings, and onsite leisure and social facilities in a safe, supportive environment. Sparkle offers regular leisure clubs for all ages 0-17. Family activities including family swim sessions, fun days and watching a film as a family at our fully accessible MediCinema, access to psychology services for parents and children, family liaison support and parent support groups, run by parents for parents. Well-equipped Sensory room for families to hire for sessions/parties. Fully accessible outside park area, inside and outside centre hours. Specialist and play equipment identified by therapists and more.

For more information, please visit [Sparkle, helping special children shine](#)

Cwmbran Centre for Young People (CCYP)

CCYP is an open access venue for young people age 14-25 living in Torfaen. The staff have invested in core interactive skills, such as communication, several have trained in youth work, and they all have an in-depth knowledge and delivery experience to support young people through a wide range of services, training and activities. They support young people to develop life skills, achieve key qualifications, overcome barriers and realise their potential to transition into healthy adults. CCYP offer youth clubs run at the centre and specific sessions for children with neurodiversity. CCYP also offer counselling sessions for young people.

For more information, please visit [Home | Cwmbran Centre For Young People](#)

Torfaen Youth Service

Torfaen's Youth Service provides a range of opportunities for young people aged 11-25 in their local community youth clubs, out on the streets with our detached team, within local schools and through our exciting youth activities and projects. The service offers evening and weekend activities for young people to engage in and a summer and school holiday programme with lots of fun and challenging things to do. The Youth Service offer youth clubs specific for children and young people with ALN, Young Carer's and LGBTQ+ sessions.

For more information, please visit [Youth Service | Torfaen County Borough Council](#)

Torfaen Young Carers' Service

The Torfaen Young Carers Service supports unpaid carers under the age of 18, who is assessed as meeting the following criteria:

1. They are under 18 years old.
2. They are providing care or support that goes beyond what would reasonably be expected for someone of their age.
3. They are caring for someone who has a diagnosed disability, illness or significant substance-misuse issue.

These criteria work together to ensure that support is directed to children whose caring responsibilities have a meaningful impact on their wellbeing and daily life, distinguishing them from children who provide typical, age-appropriate help within the family.

The Young Carers Service in Torfaen provides dedicated support to children and young people who take on caring responsibilities for a family member (as outlined above). The service offers a range of information, advice and practical assistance to help young carers balance their caring role with their own wellbeing, education and social development.

Support may include emotional support, group activities and respite opportunities, giving young carers valuable time away from their responsibilities. These sessions also enable young people to meet peers in similar situations, helping to reduce isolation, build confidence and develop positive coping strategies. The overall aim of the service is to ensure that young carers feel supported, understood and able to enjoy the same opportunities as their peers".

For more information, please follow the link to [Torfaen Young Carers](#).

The Additional Learning Needs and Inclusion Service

The ALN and Inclusion Service works alongside parents and other professionals to bring children with additional learning needs and families together to develop learning, so that the children have the best possible basis for their future development.

For more information, please follow the link to [Additional Learning Needs and Inclusion Service | Torfaen County Borough Council](#)

Sensory and Communication Support Service (SenCom)

SenCom works alongside parents and other professionals to bring children with visual impairments and families together to develop learning, so that the children have the best possible basis for their future development.

For more information, please follow the link to [Sensory & Communication Support Service \(SenCom\) | Torfaen County Borough Council](#)

Torfaen Family Information Service (FIS)

Torfaen Family Information Service (FIS) provides free impartial information and advice on services and facilities for children, young people and families, including parents-to-be, in Torfaen. They also hold an extensive range of information to support young people, parents and prospective parents of children and young people and hold childcare related information. This includes information on nursery education, day nurseries, playgroups, registered childminders, out of school clubs, baby and toddler groups, leisure activities and lots more.

For more information, please follow the link to [Torfaen Family Information Service](#)

Early Years Service - 0-5 years

The Early Years Service provides early intervention support for pre-school children who have an emerging developmental need. Support is delivered through Family Support, Early Language Support, and Early Years Development & Support teams.

A single point of access is provided through the Torfaen Early Years Intervention Panel for targeted support. The panel brings together multi-agency professionals to review referrals, consider the child and family's presenting needs, and recommend the most appropriate early support. This ensures coordinated, timely intervention using the full range of available services and resources.

Early intervention may include:

- Group or bespoke programmes delivered by Early Years teams
- Advice and strategies to support a child's development
- Short-term funding for childcare to promote wellbeing, play, and developmental progress

Funded childcare is provided as intensive, short-term support for children aged 2–4 (where other funding is not available), with progress reviewed each term to ensure it continues to meet the child's needs.

Out of School Support

For children aged 4-12 years in full time education, after school provision may be funded

For further information contact [Torfaen Family Information Service](#).

Opportunities for children and young people who require a high level of support

These are available to children and families who are assessed as needing a specialist service from the Council's Disabled Children's Team or the NHS. They are provided to children and families with the most complex needs and include services in or away from the child's home and could be with family carers or with individual support workers to use community facilities. Due to the nature of some of these services there may be a waiting list to access them.

Social Care Assessment:

As the parent of a child with a disability, it is your legal right to ask for an assessment of your child's needs by social care services. In Torfaen, we provide social care services, in partnership with other agencies, to children and young people who meet the eligibility criteria: [Children with a Disability Eligibility for Support](#)

The assessment process, carried out by a social worker, will establish if your child is eligible for social care services, and will enable us to find out exactly what kind of support your child needs. We may need to consult with health and education professionals and voluntary agencies to get the clearest picture of your child's needs.

Once we have established that your child is eligible for services from the Disabled Children's Team, we will produce an individual Care and Support Plan which sets out what kind of support services you and your child need. This will be reviewed on a regular basis to ensure it continues to meet your child's needs.

To arrange an assessment of your child's needs you will need to contact Torfaen Council's Customer Care Centre on 01495 762200.

There are a range of short break options available from Torfaen Social Care, depending on your wishes and your child's needs, including:

Family-based short breaks

These are provided by foster carers who have been approved specifically to offer short breaks to disabled children. These foster carers have been rigorously assessed and, as with all our foster carers, have been DBS-checked. Short breaks, including overnight stays, for up to six weeks per year can be arranged depending on assessed need. All family-based breaks are arranged by the Disabled Children's Team so you will need to speak to your child's allocated worker if you wish to arrange one for your child.

Direct Payments

Direct payments, for social care needs, allow the parents of disabled children who are eligible for services to arrange care and services themselves instead of receiving them directly from their local council.

Following an assessment, direct payments can be used for a variety of services, including personal care, short breaks and recreational opportunities.

Direct payments must only be used on services that meet the needs described in the child's assessment. There are some services that direct payments cannot be used for, for example to pay for health or housing services.

Disabled young people aged 16 and 17 are entitled to receive direct payments in their own right and may enjoy the additional choice and control over their care arrangements that direct payments provide; the scheme also supports independent living. Direct payments are also available to unpaid carers, including young carers of 16 or 17.

If you choose to use direct payments, you will take on the role of employer and the people who provide your child with care and support will be your staff. While this might sound daunting, a lot of families of disabled children now choose direct payments to give them more choice and flexibility.

More information and on-going support is provided by the Direct Payment's Support Provider, Independent Living Team [Direct Payments Information](#)

Community Children's Nursing Service (CCNS)

The CCNS is a team of Registered Children's Nurses and Healthcare Support Workers who provide both short-term and long-term nursing care and support for children / young persons who have *children's continuing care status*.

A referral to the CCNS for children's continuing care status can be completed by any professional within health, education or the local authority. However, parental consent is required for the process to be undertaken. Parents and carers who have previously been discharged from the CCNS can also make a direct referral if the child / young person's needs have changed / deteriorated or if families who previously declined support, have changed their minds.

Services available from the CCNS include:

- Skilled nursing support is provided in identified special schools to support the needs of children with health requirements access education. However, where a child / young person has continuing care needs that require bespoke support in a mainstream school setting the CCNS will liaise with the local authority, education, health professionals, child / young person and family / carers to ensure the necessary support is delivered enabling access to education.

- Following an individualised assessment of the child/ young person's needs the CCNS provide training for educational staff to perform tasks required for the child / young person to access school trips.
- Skilled nursing support can be provided if a child has identified health needs that require nursing support on transport to and from school, this is considered on an individual basis.
- Skilled nursing support can be provided for a child / young person within their own home who meet children's continuing care status to support families with delivery of ongoing health interventions. This care is typically providing blocks of support and awarded against an assessed exceptional level of ongoing health needs.
- Skilled nursing Support is provided at Serennu Children's Centre play schemes so that children with ongoing health needs are able to access these services that provide families with respite. Where an additional or bespoke play scheme has been requested for an individual child / young person, the CCNS would consider the request. The CCNS work in conjunction with the local authority, health professionals, child / young person and family / carers to support wider access to play schemes.

Tŷ Hafan (The Children's Hospice in Wales)

This is a family-orientated children's hospice based in the Vale of Glamorgan. Tŷ Hafan provide short breaks, palliative and end of life care to children suffering from life-limiting conditions (those which mean that the child or young person is not expected to reach the age of 19). Symptom management reviews and support is also offered. Children and their families might receive support for many years, or just for a few days at the end of life. Either way, Tŷ Hafan provides love, care and support for the children and their families free of charge. Referrals can be made by anyone, e.g. parent, professional or family friend, however the parent or carer's consent must be given before the referral can proceed.

For more information, please go to www.tyhafan.org

What you have said about our services

When asked what impact the Community Children's Nursing Service's playscheme had on the rest of the family:

"He gets so much enjoyment and unconditional support from everyone. It is also a massive help to the family during the holidays."

"Give mum a break, enabling me to spend quality time with siblings and carrying out activities, teaching them to swim"

"We have been able to go off for the day and do activities which would be impossible or difficult to do".

When asked about Direct Payments:

“Allows mum to spend time with her other daughter and also frees up time to spend with husband”

“Breather – nice for the family and nice for son to have outside interests”

Disabled Children's Team

Children and Family Services

Torfaen Children & Family Services

Civic Centre

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