

# Torfaen Short Break Service Statement 2022

## Introduction and Background

Prior to the implementation of the Social Services and Wellbeing Act 2016 (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 bringing up 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 support are given below. For some of the opportunities there is a charge to access them.

**Torfaen Playschemes Half term and summer holidays**

These take place in various settings across the borough including community halls and leisure centres. A variety of activities are provided for children and young people which includes: music; drama; arts and crafts; sports; and games. Playschemes take place for four weeks over the summer period and every half term, including Easter. In addition to this there is also a two-day playscheme for children and young people with disabilities at Christmas. Referral for the playschemes is through the completion of an 'All About Me' form available from the Play Service Team or the Disabled Children's Team within Social Care Services. This form details the individual needs of the child. When this form is completed the level of support your child 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 [Torfaen Play Service](#)

**Specialist Provision**

The play service provides 1-1 support for children with disabilities and behavioural needs to attend community play provision. Support is provided to children aged 5+ to attend play clubs, playschemes and specialist play projects. To register your child for 1-1 play support. For more information please follow the link [Torfaen Play Service](#)

**Weekend Respite Provision –**

A number of weekend respite sessions run. These include fortnightly sessions at Victory Church as well as a monthly session at Greenmeadow Farm, Lego Club and our monthly Cinema Club. All these sessions can only be accessed via referral only. For more information please follow the link [Torfaen Play Service](#)

**Afterschool clubs –**

These sessions take place at Crownbridge School. There are two sessions per week, which take place from 3.30p.m until 5.30p.m on a Tuesday and Friday. This is for children and young people with additional, complex and challenging needs aged 8 years +. there is an £6 charge per session for this service. To access this provision please contact Torfaen Play Service for more details For more information please follow the link [Torfaen Play Service](#)

**Disability Sports Development Officer** – Within Torfaen there are currently existing clubs and provisions offering a variety of sporting activities for disabled people. The role of the Disability Sports Development Officer is to initiate, promote and provide quality sporting and recreational opportunities for people with disabilities, mainly at grassroots level, and to establish mechanisms for 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 purchasing of specialist equipment. For more information please follow the link to [Torfaen Sports Development](#) or [Disability Sport Wales](#)

**Torfaen Young Carers' Service** – supports young carers, including those who are carrying out significant caring and household tasks because they have a brother or sister with a disability. The service offers one-to-one support, social groups, training, time out to enjoy group activities, advocacy and residential breaks, someone to talk to, to reduce anxiety, stress and isolation. For more information please follow the link to [Torfaen Young Carers](#)

**The Vision Impairment Service (VIS)**– The VIS 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 [The Vision Impairment Service](#)

**Torfaen Family Information Service (FIS)** – Torfaen FIS hold detailed information on local childcare, including Sure Start and parent and toddler groups. 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 on:  
For more information please follow the link to [Torfaen Family Information Service](#)

### **3. 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:

- In line with 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 care manager if you wish to arrange one for your child.

### **Tafarn Newydd**

Tafarn Newydd Children and Families Service provides a multi agency child and family centred service that promotes and enhances the development of disabled children aged between 0-18, including children 0 – 4 pending diagnosis. They receive referrals from a professional who has identified a need their services can meet. Referrals are considered by a Multi Agency Access panel that make recommendations on what aspect of their service would best meet the child's needs.

Tafarn Newydd Children and Children and Family Service then carry out an initial contact and referral assessment that assesses their suitability to access their service. The assessment identifies areas of child development, support for the family, and includes safeguarding issues. Services available from Tafarn Newydd include:

For more information please contact 01495751567ext2

**Early years daytime play and development and pre-foundation phase sessions for age 4 and under** - referrals are directed to the Early Years manager , who has discussions with the relevant professionals and the assessment is completed over the first three months prior to a review to determine if the child will remain open to the service for early intervention which will continue through to transition to school. The Early years setting is used for external professionals to complete their assessments and for work to be completed with families to support the diagnosis process.

**Saturday and Sunday short breaks service** – provided for disabled children and young people including young people with an Autistic Spectrum Disorder, complex physical health and behavioural needs aged 4-18. This offers the opportunity for children and young people to be able to socialise with their friends, have fun and participate in activities of choice with a support worker in a safe and stimulating setting at Tafarn Newydd children's centre or out and about in the community. The service is based on outcomes



identified by professionals and their families. The short breaks service also provides parents and carers with a break. Saturday sessions offer opportunities for young people who are in transition to adult service - Young people are encouraged and supported to expand and develop their practical life and social skills supervised by staff either in or outside of their local community. Sunday service offers early intervention prevention support to reduce the risks of family breakdown by providing a short break alongside implement strategies to help manage the of the young people, that can be transferable for families within the home and community. Young people are then closed at the point an outcome is reached or transitioned onto Saturday service to increase skill set if there is an on-going identified need for the service. Referral for Saturday service are through Health, Social Services, and Education.

Sunday service is solely Torfaen CBC Children with Disability Team referral only. All referrals are assessed by the registered manager of the Tafarn Newydd out of school services; through an holistic assessment obtaining information from the families and multi-agency professionals.

**Sitter Service** - Tafarn Newydd Children and Families Service provide a flexible sitter service for disabled children age between 4 - 18 years living in Torfaen and referrals come directly from the Disabled Children's Team. They have a dedicated and trained team of staff who deliver allocated hours of Sitter Service to referred families, to meet an identified need. This service can be delivered out in their community or from Tafarn Newydd. The service aims to help support families and help reduce the risk of family breakdown by providing a regular short break, while meeting assessed outcomes.

### **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 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](#)

### **3.4 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 provided over 5 or 10 hour 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 Sully 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). 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](http://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”

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