



SHROPSHIRE Parent  
And  
Carer  
Council

# What Shropshire SEND Families have told us about Short Breaks Services

A summary of feedback 2013 - 2022

**Information & Support, Influence & Change**

PACC has done a substantial amount of work to engage with SEND families about local Short Break provision over the past few years, resulting in us publishing 3 reports.

- ▶ **2013 – Shropshire Short Breaks Report;** considering the future development of Shropshire’s Short Break offer and exploring the difference that Short Breaks make to SEND families. <http://www.paccshropshire.org.uk/content/uploads/files/Shropshire%20Short%20Breaks%20report%202013.pdf>
- ▶ **2015 – Accessing Social Care Support for Children with Disabilities in Shropshire;** exploring parent carers knowledge and experience of requesting social care support. <http://www.paccshropshire.org.uk/content/uploads/files/PACC%20Accessing%20Social%20Care%20Support%20Report%20DEC%202015%20final.pdf>
- ▶ **2017 – Re-commissioning of Assessed Short Breaks in Shropshire;** looking at overnight residential short breaks and specialist community based short breaks, what was working / not working & identifying parent carers priorities for these services. <http://www.paccshropshire.org.uk/content/uploads/files/PACC%20Participation%20report%20-%20assessed%20SB%282%29.pdf>
- ▶ **2022 – Re-commissioning of Assessed Short Breaks in Shropshire** – current activity, testing previous messages are still applicable and collecting current experiences.



**Report 1: 2013 -  
How can Short Breaks help  
to deliver the future parent  
carers want for their  
children and young  
people?**

Parent carers told us that they want the following for their children;

- A focus on developing independence and life skills
- A long-term vision for their child's life
- Clear goals and opportunities for achievement for their child
- Consistency in support
- Flexibility to respond to individual needs
- A focus on friendships and relationships

When asked about how Short Breaks could help deliver the above parent carers felt that there should be more focus on using Short Breaks to help young people to prepare for the future, providing opportunities to develop new skills and confidence and supporting the development of friendships.

They also highlight the importance of good communication between Short Break providers and families and the need for effective planning, working with families to understand the young person's individual needs creating a person-centred approach to support.

## Report 2: 2015 – Accessing Social Care Support For Children with Disabilities in Shropshire Survey

- Well over half of the parent carers who completed the survey were not aware of the fact that a disabled child is eligible for a Child in Need Assessment
- Two thirds of the parent carers who completed the survey were not aware of how to request a Child in Need Assessment
- Approx. half of respondents had not heard of any of the overnight short breaks services available in Shropshire
- Only half of the respondents had heard of either Early Help, | Compass or First Point of Contact and significantly less understood the role of these teams
- The most common reasons for needing support were challenging behaviour and wanting to support their child's development and independence away from home. Lack of sleep and wanting to spend more time with other children were additional significant reasons for needing support

## Key Messages from Parent Carers About Why Short Breaks are Important

Residential and community support short breaks are essential to enable me to continue in my caring role

It is important to me that residential and community support short breaks offer opportunities to develop my child's independence and new skills

I would like residential and community support short breaks to enable me to maintain or start work

Residential or community support short breaks help me to maintain my relationship with the rest of my family

I need increased access to residential or community support short breaks during the school holidays

Residential and community support short breaks are an important part of preparing me and my child for the future

My family needs residential and community support short breaks to be available in times of family emergencies or illness because we do not have other sources of support

## Report 3: 2017 – Re-commissioning of Assessed Short Breaks in Shropshire

**Key messages from parent carers about how residential and community based Short Breaks should be delivered**

Residential and community support short break services should be able to respond to a child or young person's individual needs, including medical needs

Residential and community support short break services must be committed to maintaining good communication with the child's family

Residential and community short break services must have appropriate staffing ratios, with knowledgeable and well trained staff, that work in a person centred way

Residential and community short break services should be flexible and able to respond to changing needs and family commitments

Residential and community support short break services should offer a plan to deliver agreed outcomes for each child and young person, which is agreed with home, school and other services – delivering a collaborative approach to support

**Key messages from parent carers about how residential and community based Short Breaks should be delivered continued.....**

Residential and community short break services should offer continuity in staff and quality relationships with the child and family
Residential and community short breaks services should be available for children under the age of 4
Residential and community short break services should be funded and managed jointly by health and social care
Residential and community short break services should focus on developing the independence of children and young people
Residential and community short break services should offer a higher level of support during school holidays
Families need a brokerage service to help them purchase support with personal budgets

# Summary

Some messages were consistent across the 3 reports.

- ▶ Both residential and community based Short Breaks are valued by parent carers supporting a child with complex needs and are seen as important in improving the quality of family life.
- ▶ Residential and community based Short Breaks should offer quality outcomes for children and young people with complex needs in addition to providing a break from caring for parent carers, with a particular focus on preparation for adulthood
- ▶ The experience of requesting support should be transparent, positive and without judgment, recognising the impact on family life of caring for a child with complex needs and understanding how this results in a need for support
- ▶ Support should be person centred and able to respond to individual needs and connect individuals within their own community
- ▶ Staff should be well trained and consistent
- ▶ Regular, effective and timely communication between providers, commissioners and families is essential
- ▶ The residential and community based Short Breaks offer should be able to respond to local demand levels, including being able to respond to periods of increased demand such as school / college holiday periods.
- ▶ There were also some other important messages about the importance of support being made available for parent carers of young children (under the age of 6) with complex needs and supporting families who are offered direct payment to find the support needed.



# Current Activity 2022

Specialist Short Breaks Services are being recommissioning in Shropshire, with the existing contract ending in March 2024. The present contract delivers overnight Short Breaks at Bradbury House in Shrewsbury for children and young people up to the age of 18, along with an outreach programme of specialist support. The current offer of support is in the main based in and around Shrewsbury.

PACC is providing parent carer representation for the re commissioning process. PACC reps join the fortnightly meetings which are part of this process and are supporting the co-production of the new offer. To date this has included an in person Short Breaks Workshop on the 10<sup>th</sup> October and an evening virtual discussion on 12<sup>th</sup> October. The key messages from the 2017 recommissioning were used as the basis for the discussions at these events and a summary of the feedback is provided on the following slides.



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# Key Messages About Short Breaks from Parent Carers in 2022

- ▶ **Transport and location of service is an issue.** This impacts families and the quality of the break. Need to join up services and join up families. *“If you have to travel a long way to get a break of a couple of hours its not worth it.”* Services need to move out of Shrewsbury and closer to where families live.
- ▶ **Capacity** – *“there doesn't feel like there are enough beds” “there needs to be an understanding of need / demand and sufficient provision to meet it”* Need beds for emergencies – it is so disruptive for families when stays are cancelled – *“we are all vulnerable families”*. Explore using other places to increase capacity and choice – Wingate Centre / Clwyd RDA.
- ▶ **Communication** – *“Contact only seems to happen if we initiate it”* Families need a single point of access and to know what is available *“It took me ages to figure out what was suitable for us from the HAF programme”*. *“It would be nice if somebody contacted us just to see how things are going”* – Better and more accessible information is needed and somebody to provide guidance and information for parent carers.

*“The thing that frustrates me is that I have no idea how long we will have to wait - I kinda cope – I feel misled, I just want a realistic timeframe”*

# More key messages



- ▶ **Independence** of CYP should be supported and promoted through Short Breaks – spending time away from the family environment is important for young people as they grow older.
- ▶ **Mainstream provisions should be more accessible** – families need help to find 1:1 support so that CYP with complex needs can attend community-based activities and feel included
- ▶ **Supporting peer friendships** through Short Breaks is essential for young people's quality of life

*“Sleep is still an issue for my family so the break is really important just to keep going”*

*“I have DP's but feel I don't understand how to use them properly “I was not told was to expect in terms of a reasonable offer”*