

## **Disabled Children's Strategy Operational Group Meeting – 4<sup>th</sup> October 2010**

### **Agenda Item 3: Disabled Children's Strategy – Summary Half Year Progress Report for 2010/11**

#### **Attachment: Hillingdon Pathways To Short Breaks**

This paper sets out a proposal for the development of a new system for families to access short break services without additional assessments from October 2010 onwards. The pathways provide information to families about access to short breaks and positive activities.

Short breaks and positive activities are there to give children and young people the chance to do something they enjoy doing away from their parents. They also offer an opportunity for parents to have a break from caring.

The government has provided funding until March 2011 to help local areas provide additional short breaks and positive activities for severely disabled children, young people and their families. Hillingdon is using this funding to offer more short breaks and positive activities and more choice in what is on offer. Given that there may not be any additional funding available after March 2011, professionals involved with planning services for children, are working hard to explore options how to sustain these additional provisions.

Children, young people and their families are regularly asked to help in designing the services they want. Disabled children and young people have fed back that they want to be able to do the same things as other people of their age. We want to make sure that they grow up with the support that will give them the same opportunities as other children to lead fulfilling lives. In Hillingdon the aim is to have all professionals working in partnership with families, children and young people to provide effective short breaks that meet the needs of all disabled children and their families.

Because every disabled child /young person and their family is different, the aim is to provide short breaks with different levels of support for different levels of need. Some disabled children and young people can go to mainstream activities with support. Other disabled children and young people will need short breaks and positive activities that are designed around their particular needs as well as joining mainstream activities. A small group of severely disabled children and young people will need help from specialists to enjoy a short break. This could be because they have serious health problems and need a lot of care.

#### **Access to short breaks**

We have tried to make access to short breaks as simple and fair as possible for families. For each of the pathways described below we aim to use information we already have i.e. not do new assessments unless absolutely necessary.

The needs of the child will be the primary factor determining access levels as described below, but family circumstances will also be taken into account in assessing the level of support needed and short break provision offered.

We recognize that both children's needs and family circumstances may change over time and that the short break offer for individual children may need to be flexible to respond to these changes. The pathways are intended as a way of identifying who has

the greatest need at any time and recognizing that movement between pathways is possible as these needs change.

### **Pathway 1 -**

This pathway offers access to mainstream activities with support from the services providing the activity. Through this programme it is intended that more universal services such as play, leisure, and youth services will become increasingly accessible to as many children and young people with disabilities. In addition, children are likely to benefit from services delivered through extended services in schools, the private and voluntary sector and Children Centres.

**Who can access:** Pathway 1 is open to all disabled children and young people.

**How can these be accessed:** Parents/ Carers or children and young people themselves can access these services without being referred. The Family Information Service can provide information about services and support available. Any specialist worker or team member can also help the family and young person decide which mainstream activity to access.

### **Examples of short breaks include:**

- Youth Provision
- Sports and Leisure activities
- After school clubs at their school (includes all out of school activities)
- Play groups in the community
- Children Centres

Hillingdon is working with services to enable them to support children and young people with disabilities. Some examples are...

- Putting in specialist workers for short periods of time that can support staff in non-specialised services to develop their skills through modeling the skills needed to support disabled children and young people
- Having intense and highly specialist accredited training
- Working with Sports and Leisure, Youth and Connexions to increase the availability of sporting youth activities and clubs – in some cases, they will get extra funding for special equipment or specialist workers

### **Pathway 2 -**

This pathway offers short breaks and positive activities with support designed around a child or young person's particular needs, as well as the short breaks and positive activities offered in mainstream activities.

**Who can access:** This basic offer is for children and young people with additional needs who may require more support to enable them to participate in enjoyable activities in their community. Children at this level include all vulnerable children within the community who have additional needs, for example, a child who has a physical disability which prevents them from carrying out many day-to-day activities, or who may have a moderate learning disability, or who may be moderately autistic and be presenting challenging behavior as a result of their disability. Typically they may be in receipt of middle level Disability Living Allowance.

**How can these be accessed:** For this pathway, a meeting with the child or young person and their family will be arranged to discuss the kind of support or activity they need and want. Before the meeting, one of the professionals involved with the child or young person will make an assessment of their needs if there is not one in place already (for example, through a Common Assessment - CAF). This will help everyone decide what support or activity would be most helpful. Professionals working with the children and young people and their families will, as part of their general multi-agency provision planning discuss their short breaks, positive activities and caring needs.

**Examples of short break provision include:**

- Outreach/home care services, including those provided by the voluntary sector
- Linked child support workers/ befrienders
- Targeted group activity, for example, a specialist club for children with autism, Disability multi sport activities
- Day time care or community child minder scheme
- Holiday programmes in mainstream schools, special schools and Specialist Resourced Provision (SRP)
- Services delivered through universal/mainstream services with ‘reasonable adjustments’ to make them more accessible, for example, the staff delivering or supervising the activity have specific relevant skills and experience; play programmes (after school, holidays, breakfast clubs); sports activities; arts, music and leisure activities

**Pathway 3 -**

This pathway offers short breaks and positive activities with support designed around a child or young person’s particular needs, which includes the short breaks and positive activities offered in Mainstream Activities and pathway 2

**Who can access:** This enhanced offer is for children with high levels of need, requiring constant and intensive levels of support. For example, they may have a severe, profound or complex physical or learning disability or may have profoundly challenging behaviour. In some instances they may be exhibiting increasingly challenging behaviours that are providing an “early warning” that more profoundly challenging behaviour is likely to develop without suitable early intervention. Typically they may be in receipt of, or be eligible for, the higher level of the care (or mobility) component of Disability Living Allowance.

**How can these be accessed** If a child or young person has a high level of DLA for care (or their existing assessment highlights requiring high levels of intensive support) and they are not already receiving short break support from Social Care or Hillingdon PCT, they can access specialist /targeted provision or group activity through extended schools, Sports and Leisure services, the Youth and Connexions service or Hillingdon PCT provision, without the need for a social care assessment, as well as the activities highlighted within the other two groups.

**Examples of short break provision include:**

- Link-In services i.e. the use of short-term specialist staff to ensure a smooth transition of a severely disabled child into a mainstream or specialist service. This would have the aim of building sustainable skills so that when the worker withdraws, the child's access is maintained; in some cases, children and young people will need long term support to enable them to continue to enjoy and participate in activities.

- Daytime care or community child minder scheme
- Group based specialist after school clubs
- Group based specialist weekend clubs
- One to one support accessing sports activities
- Group based specialist holiday schemes

In all cases this will most likely be a combination of activities.

#### **Pathway 4-**

**Who can access:** This specialized offer is available and designed for those children, young people and their families/carers who need short breaks with extra, specialist care. Again this could be in a mainstream activity or another type of short break. If a child with High Level of DLA (care) is possibly going to need more support i.e. direct payment, homecare, overnight care then this will be subject to a social care assessment in accordance with the Framework For The Assessment of Children In Need. This Initial Assessment would determine whether the child is in need of further services and the nature of services required and whether a more detailed assessment (Core Assessment) is required.

**How can these be accessed:** To approve all packages of care prior to the provision of a service following an assessment of need, the assessment needs to be presented at the Resource Allocation Panel (RAP). The purpose of the RAP is to allocate community resources through a multi-agency decision making process. The panel is made up of professionals from different services providing support to severely disabled children. The Resources Allocation Panel currently in place will continue to identify and monitor pathway 4 short break options and funding arrangements. The RAP will review all packages of care either at 6 monthly intervals or as agreed by the Panel at the initial/review presentation. The panel makes decisions based on:

The opinion of the specialists who work with the child or young person.  
 The parents'/carers' views about the kind of short break that is needed  
 The child/young person's views

#### **Examples of what the package could include are:**

Highly specialised sitting services  
 Foster carer services  
 Highly specialised programmes in specific settings  
 Overnight residential breaks  
 Direct payments  
 Outreach services including providing support for young people to attend medium need and universal services.  
 Home care  
 Again, in all cases this will most likely be a combination of activities.

#### **Getting better all the time**

We plan to develop more breaks, more variety in what we offer and more choice for children/young people and their families, also ensuring we have a wide range of short breaks available for all stages of a child's life.

We want to make sure our short breaks are creative and flexible to meet the needs of children/young people and their families. We plan to continue working with

parents/carers through our Parents' Forum to understand what they want and feedback information to parents through the [www.hillingdonparentscarersforum.org.uk](http://www.hillingdonparentscarersforum.org.uk) web site. We will also be developing more opportunities for disabled children and young people to give their views and contribute to the planning and evaluation of services.

### Hillingdon Pathways To Short Breaks

