

Short Breaks Statement: Supporting parents and carers of children and young people with disabilities.

Temporary Changes to the Short Breaks Offer during Coronavirus Pandemic (Covid-19)

21 May 2020

Hull City Council (Hull CC) Children's Services and our partners would like to take this opportunity to reassure our parents/carers, children and young people that we are here to support as much as possible at this challenging time.

In response to the Coronavirus pandemic the short breaks offer has needed to change in line with government guidance, resulting in the closure of our residential short break facilities at Limetree Court and Sunshine House and many community based group activities including Leisure and Family Support Service (LAFSS) and the summer holiday activities. These services would normally provide parents with an essential short break and fun for children and young people. Face-to-face contact and support from our key staff has been limited to ensure the safety of children, families and staff themselves.

We recognise due to the impact of the Coronavirus pandemic a number of children and young people are not able to participate in their usual short break activities, or their PA is not able to support them. We understand that all families are also faced with the challenge of keeping their child or young person entertained and occupied during this period of lockdown.

Staff working in those short break services (including Limetree Court, Sunshine House and LAFSS) are making regular contact through various methods including telephone, email, text and virtual calls (such as WhatsApp and Microsoft Teams) with the families they currently work with to offer advice and support.

Because of the current situation we are offering families of children and/or young people with a disability who would normally be eligible for a short break, additional flexibility and support. This offer includes all families who have or are eligible for personal budgets (direct payments/personal health budgets) through social care or continuing health care, and/or access short breaks in residential and/or community settings. **During this period we will consider ALL suggestions for alternative support options that would help to meet you and your child's short break needs.**

We are, for example, (but not limited to), supporting some families with the opportunity to purchase equipment (such as outdoor play equipment, books, arts and craft materials), alternative activities, and additional hours or for alternative care. Whilst we

are not routinely able to provide group work and routine face-to-face visits there may be circumstances where based on an individual risk assessment, staff will continue to work directly to support children and families.

If you would like alternative and/or additional support.

1. Parents and carers to have a discussion with your named key worker /professional (e.g. your Social Worker, LAFSS or Early Help Worker, Continuing Care Nurse) to agree what type of support you need.
2. Your named key worker /professional (Social Worker, LAFSS or Early Help Worker, Continuing Care Nurse) will jointly review (with other professionals as needed) you and your child and family's needs.
3. Your named key worker/professional will present your request for approval to the virtual Short Breaks and Continuing Care Panel held every Wednesday.
4. You will be informed of the Panel decision by your named key worker/professional following the panel.

We expect this process to take no more than 10 working days.

This does not change the process for new requests from families who do not currently receive a short break. Requests for a short break and/or continuing care continue through the existing processes and via the Children and Families Disability Social Care or Children's Continuing Care teams

<http://hull.mylocaloffer.org/s4s/WhereILive/Council?pagelid=4217>.

In the event of immediate need or a crisis, decisions will be made outside Panel by the relevant managers.

We will continue to work with our partners to provide responsive services that support and meet the needs of our children and families wherever possible and in line with Government guidance. There will be further information about support during the summer holidays and this will be communicated separately.

We hope this provides assurance of our continued commitment to improving the support and outcomes for children with disabilities and their families.

This statement and offer will be reviewed regularly and in line with government guidance and changes to the Coronavirus Act 2020.

If you require advice, guidance or support you can contact:

- Children and Families Disability Team: Telephone 01482 715155
- Your named Social Worker by email at their work address.
- Early Help/ LAFSS: Telephone 01482 715155

- Children's Continuing Care Team: Telephone 01482 878778
- SENDIASS: Telephone: 01482 467540
- If you have any queries regarding SEND EHC Plans and process contact: SEND Team: Telephone 01482 878778
- Choices and Rights. If you manage your current support using a Direct Payment and you have any queries in relation to employer responsibilities during this time, contact your independent advocate for Direct Payments.
Choices and Rights Coronavirus support: Telephone: 01482 616007. Email: office@choicesandrights.org.uk
Choices and Rights Covid-19 Co-ordination Team. Telephone: 01482 612 875. Email AdultSocialCareCovid19@hullcc.gov.uk.

If you are experiencing any difficulties contacting your social worker or have concerns you can email the Children and Families Disability Team Managers:

- Jill Laws: jillian.laws@hullcc.gov.uk
- Karen Lamb: karen.lamb@hullcc.gov.uk
- For Early Help/LAFSS: Simon King: Simon.King@hullcc.gov.uk

If you have any concerns regarding the safety of either your own or someone else's child please contact: Early Help and Safeguarding Hub (EHASH) 01482 448879

Further Information during Covid-19

To see the latest updated Frequently Asked Questions and Answers for SEND Covid information please visit:

<http://hull.mylocaloffer.org/s4s/WhereILive/Council?pagelD=5127>

If you have any questions, concerns or comments about the services and support you receive at this time please email: COVID19.FAQ@hullcc.gov.uk. We aim to answer questions within 3 working days wherever we can.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-for-people-receiving-direct-payments>

Getting in touch

The Hull Parent Carer Forum is the independent Forum for Hull representing the views and experiences of Hull SEND families. They will be very happy to offer support or signposting at this time.

If you require further information for please email: Hullparentsforum@hotmail.com. You can also find them on Facebook: 'Hull Parent Carer Forum'