



Report Title	Update on Redesign of Short breaks and Respite for Children with Disabilities
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Executive Member	Cllr Scott Edwards

Key Decision	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for call-in by Scrutiny?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Are there public sector equality duty implications?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information (whether in appendices or not)?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Applicable paragraph number/s for exemption from publication under Schedule 12A Local Government Act 1972	

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1. Purpose of Report

The purpose of the report is to update the Scrutiny Committee of work and public consultation completed to date to develop a new model for short breaks and respite for children with disabilities.

2. Executive Summary

The Short Breaks redesign project is collaboration between Northamptonshire Children's Trust (NCT) who commission the services on behalf of West Northamptonshire Council (WNC) and North Northamptonshire Council (NNC), Northamptonshire Integrated Care Board (NICB), service providers, and families. The primary goal is to enable children and families to access the right support at the right time by significantly enhancing access to non-residential short break services for children with complex health and social care needs.

The proposed model, developed through collaboration with parents and practitioners, features a Lead Provider overseeing both residential and non-residential short breaks within a budget

cap of £2,686,200 (WNC&NNC £2,019,200, ICB £667,000). This streamlined approach aims to enhance resource utilisation and provide families with a broader range of choices and support.

The report details the short breaks redesign background, public consultation and engagement, the redesigned model, next steps to enable the redesigned service to be operational from 1 November 2024.

3. Recommendations

The Scrutiny Committee is asked to:

- 3.1. Note the results of the consultation undertaken October / November 2023 to develop the redesign of short breaks services
- 3.2. Note the proposed new model of short breaks services
- 3.3. Note the next steps to be taken to commission the new model of short breaks services by November 2024.

4. Report Background

4.1 What are Short Breaks?

Short Breaks are breaks for children and young people who have a disability giving them rich opportunities while also allowing carers to have a break from caring to carry out other vital activities they otherwise would not be able to do. Whilst short breaks do not have to be overnight, residential short breaks are offered to families with higher needs to give them a longer break. Short breaks can prevent families from reaching crisis point and requiring admission to hospital or care.

Short breaks benefit children and young people with disabilities by supporting:

- Peer socialisation
- Confidence, resilience, and self-esteem
- Independence
- Exploration of new activities and challenges
- Relaxation and enjoyment

For parents and carers, short breaks provide:

- A convenient respite from caregiving
- Confidence and reassurance about their child's well-being
- Assurance that the service can address their child's emotional, behavioural, physical, and medical needs
- Confidence that their child is engaged in positive and enjoyable activities supporting growth and development.

4.2 Legislation

There are important duties on both Local Authorities and Integrated Care Boards (ICB) as part of the **Children Act 1989 section 17** and **The Children & Families Act 2014** to arrange for the provision of services or facilities for any children and young people who have special

educational needs or who have a disability. Additionally, each ICB has a duty under section 3 of the NHS Act 2006.

Additional legislation can be found in the:

Breaks for Carers of Disabled Children Regulations 2011 section 4.
Children Act 1989 paragraph 6 of schedule 2.

Key statutory duties can be found within the following legislation:

Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1970
Children Act 2004
Equality Act 2010
Care Act 2014 (in relation to transitions)

In the West Northants Council (WNC) area, 8,175 children (8% of those aged 0-24) are estimated to have disabilities. North Northants Council (NNC) area is estimated to have 7,405 children with disabilities (9% of the same age group). The level of needs vary within the cohort. The Short Breaks services are part of each area's Local Offer and are intended for children and families whose level of needs mean they are not able to access mainstream and universal services without additional support.

4.3 Current provision

Currently WNC, NNC and the NICB pay for a range of different breaks to meet this need. These are currently delivered by several different organisations. These include residential (NHFT) and non-residential short-breaks (Action for Children), personal care and support, holiday clubs, sensory impairment services (Northamptonshire Association for the Blind and Deaf Connect) and sleep support (Scope).

With no viable bidders for the residential short breaks tender in 2020 an agreement was reached between NHFT, NCT, WNC, NNC and NICB for NHFT to continue delivery of the residential short breaks service for disabled children from 1st April 2021 under a 4-year contract with the proviso that the service was re-designed and transformed.

Residential Short Breaks – There are two units, currently run by NHFT, which are open 7 days a week, John Greenwood Shipman Centre in Northampton for children who have Autistic Spectrum Condition and/ or have learning disabilities; and Squirrels in Rushden which is for children with complex health / medical needs. John Greenwood Shipman can support up to 8 children at any one time and Squirrels up to 6. Each setting supports children from across Northants.

Non-Residential Short Breaks – Action for Children currently run this service. There are weekly Saturday clubs in Corby, Daventry, Kettering, Northampton and Wellingborough. During the school holidays they run holiday clubs in the same areas. Youth groups are delivered in the evenings in Daventry, Northampton and Wellingborough. Action for Children sub-contract Greenpatch to run activities in Kettering and they deliver an afterschool club, Saturday club and holiday clubs at their allotment site.

The Sleep Service – Scope currently run this service and offer support by telephone to families with a child with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) who need help to sleep at night. They deliver a 6-week intervention on an individual family level. Training is given to other practitioners so that they can offer initial support to families they are in contact with.

Sensory Impairment Services – Each service runs 7 holiday clubs each year. Additionally Deaf Connect run a basic sign language course for parents and Northamptonshire Association for the Blind offer 1:1 support to families.

4.4 Co-Production, Consultation and Engagement

Co-production has been integral to redesigning short breaks services since Autumn 2021. Throughout the lifetime of the project representatives from NPFG have been members of the Children with Disabilities Board that meets quarterly to review the performance of the Short Breaks services. Engagement with NPFG in relation to the redesign increased in 2023, with involvement in planning engagement sessions, public survey design and membership of the steering group.

The goal is to continue to enhance co-production, in line with the West Northants and North Northants SEND co-production charters, with parents / carers children and young people participating in ongoing performance monitoring and service development of the new service, collaborating closely with the provider.

North Northants SEND Co-production Charter Values and Principles	West Northants SEND Co-production Charter Values and Principles
Learning from lived experience	Communication
Working Together	Respect
Honest, Open and Transparent	Transparency
Responsive and Accountable	Working Together
Ambitious	Accountability

Three key stages of the consultation and the history are presented in the report appendices.

- History of Engagement and Shaping of the Short Breaks Model (Appendix A)
- **Phase one:** Council for Disabled Children facilitating workshops in 2021 (report Appendix B). This was followed by a partnership design phase.
- **Phase two:** Further views were sought from the public on the potential model in April/ May 2023 and validated 2021 feedback (report Appendix C).
- **Phase three:** Public consultation in October/ November 2023 shaped the final model for commissioning the new short breaks model (report Appendix D).

The majority of participants in the April/May 2023 survey supported the idea of centralising short breaks services under a singular lead organisation. Parents and carers expressed a preference for weekend availability of these services, alongside a consensus on the necessity for more proactive, early intervention services to prevent family crises.

Summary of Phase Three consultation October/ November 2023:

During the consultation there were 150 responses to the electronic survey and 134 attendances at the workshops. Overall, 104 parent responses (37%), 115 professional responses (40%) and 65 members of the public responses (23%) contributed their feedback. 6 children and young people accessing short breaks services separately gave their feedback.

There were 10 workshops held over 6 weeks in multiple locations in Northamptonshire including Corby, Kettering, Northampton, Daventry, Brackley, Thrapston, Wellingborough and 3 opportunities to join online too.

The workshops engaged with 49 parents (37%) and 85 professionals including short breaks providers (63%). Some attendees came to multiple sessions. The electronic survey was online for 6 weeks and received responses from 55 parents (37%), 7 short breaks staff (5%) 23 professionals (15%) and 65 members of the public (43%).

Organisations engaging in the workshops were North Northamptonshire Council and West Northants Council representatives, Northamptonshire Parent Forum Group (NPFPG), North and West IASS (Information Advice Support Service), Sport Northamptonshire, Action for Children, Scope, Northamptonshire Association for the Blind, Northamptonshire Healthcare Foundation Trust and Sport 4 Fitness.

Additionally, there were short breaks stands at the WNC SEND Strategy Launch marketplace event and the NPFPG Fun Day marketplace to further engage with parents / carers and practitioners.

The feedback on the proposed model was:

- The idea of a single referral pathway is good to avoid families having to tell their stories over and over.
- The majority of respondents felt that any assessment that was already in place should be used for access to the short breaks services which should include Early Help Assessments (EHA), Social Care Assessments, Continuing Care Assessments, Education Health and Care Plans, Disability Living Allowance assessments etc. Some respondents did want to keep self-referrals.
- Respondents agreed with the principle of reallocating funding from the residential short breaks unit to increase the number of non-residential short breaks services in order to avoid families going into crisis. However, they did not agree with closing the residential short breaks unit 1 day a week instead offering the alternative solution of reducing the bed capacity instead.
- Respondents shared what their preferred activities for daytime activities should be with the most preferred being swimming, activities involving animals, cooking or musical activities.
- Respondents were keen for there to be better links with activities already taking place in communities and supporting children and young people to access them rather than set up new activities if they are not needed.
- Respondents felt that the highest need to enable children to take part in activities was 1:1 or 2:1 staffing, followed by secure environments and small groups.
- Overwhelmingly respondents felt that the sleep service should not be added to the short breaks group of services. People felt that this was a health service rather than a social care service and they also felt that adding it to short breaks would be a barrier to access for those who did not need a short break. There was also huge concern for the current long waiting list and what would happen for the people on it.
- Similarly, respondents felt that the sensory impairment services should not be included within the short breaks group of services as it could be a barrier to access for those children who would not need a short break. Some felt that there are already services available to support children such as the sensory impairment service and teachers of the deaf and hearing impaired.
- Most people felt that adding personal care and support services to the short breaks group of services would be positive.
- In general respondents agreed with some parts of the proposals but not all of it.

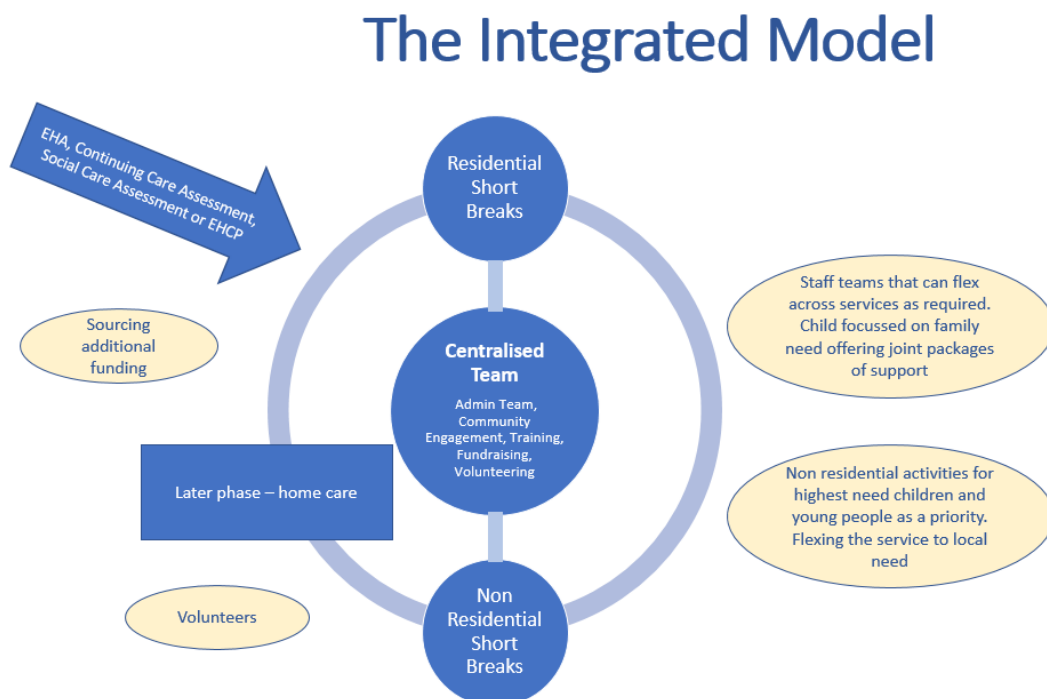
- “What is good about the proposal” comments included the joined-up referral pathway, the centralised hub and additional functions and joining up with community services for daytime activities.
- “What needed more thought” was the sleep service and sensory impairment services being included in the short breaks group of services, reducing the number of nights that residential short breaks would be open, transport to access the services, the number of secure venues in the county, ability to increase the number of volunteers.

Parents/carers also shared their experiences of having a child with disabilities and seeking support, not just in relation to short breaks. This feedback is being shared with SEND Boards in North and West Northants for further consideration.

5. The Final Redesigned Model

Following extensive feedback from various engagement sessions, the final redesigned short breaks model has been formulated. The redesign will enable services to be more family-centric, adapting to their specific needs. The proposed approach is outcome-focused, collaborative, and actively involves parents in the decision-making process.

This approach aims to streamline operations under a lead provider, enhancing resource utilisation, and providing families with a broader range of choices and support. Additionally, the model aspires to proactively allocate resources to bolster early intervention services, ensuring support is accessible before families reach a crisis point necessitating overnight breaks.



5.1 The Integrated Model intends to:

- Simplify access to support and reduce the duplication of administrative tasks by having a central hub supporting both services with a single referral and assessment pathway.

- Ensure staff work seamlessly and share skills by having a whole service, joined up and sharing of information, skills and knowledge and support that can flex to meet changing needs.
- Ensure services can develop and grow by introducing a fundraising function.
- Increase the staffing capacity within the services by having volunteer buddy co-ordination function to ensure that support staff time is freed up to maximise the number of children accessing services whilst keeping the quality of the activities.
- Develop with community relationships and partnerships ensuring that the short breaks services are well advertised and there is a good knowledge of other community services available, and work within communities to improve access to activities where needed.
- Provide information, support and guidance to parents/ carers
- Explore whether the residential short breaks units could be used to run non-residential short breaks for children requiring 1:1 or 2:1 support.
- Consider alongside commissioners the option to add home care services (Personal Care and Support Services) in the second year of the contract to further join up the services offered to families with children with disabilities.
- Offer daytime activities in different ways such as working with existing community groups to be able to offer their activities to children with more complex needs and funding individual activities.

5.2 Single Referral Point & Lead Provider model

- Referrals to both residential short breaks and non-residential short breaks would come through a single point, utilising existing assessments of children's needs (e.g. early help assessment, social care assessment, continuing care assessment, education health and care plan). Multi agency panels will be utilised to identify how best to meet the families' needs. A central record would be held for all referrals so that families do not have to keep retelling their stories. Support would be able to flex to meet changing needs.

5.3 Overnight Breaks - Residential Short Breaks

- To enable a redistribution of funding to allow children whose needs are more complex to access non residential short breaks, and to develop the central hub, bed occupancy will be reduced from 8 to 6 beds per night at John Greenwood Shipman (JGS) and 6 to 4 beds per night at Squirrels. The residential short breaks service is currently operating below full occupancy, therefore a reduction in the number of beds is likely to have minimal impact on families.
- The analysis shows that reducing the number of beds will continue to meet the need for overnight short breaks at the same level for the current service users due to the current bed occupancy levels. It is also expected that over time, the improved offer would reduce the need for residential short breaks. The consultation showed this option was favoured over reducing the number of nights that residential short breaks are available.

5.4 Daytime Activities - Non-Residential Short Breaks

- The non-residential short breaks staffing will be increased so they can support children with more complex needs. The provider would be required to understand the provision and need in each area of the county (Northampton, Kettering, Corby, Wellingborough,

South Northants, Daventry and East Northants) and develop a locally tailored offer, taking an innovative and flexible approach.

5.5 The Sleep Service

- Demand for the Sleep Service has significantly increased and there is a long waiting list for support. In response to the consultation feedback, the sleep service will not be included in the short breaks group of services and will undergo a full system review in order to ensure that going forward the sleep support given to those who need support are appropriate and sustainable. The current budget for the Sleep Service will therefore not be included in the short breaks budget.

5.6 The Sensory Impairment Services

- It is proposed not to include specific sensory impairment support within the revised model, as specialist support is available, but children with sensory needs would be able to access the new service if they require a short break.

6. Finance

The Lead Provider will oversee both residential and non-residential short breaks within a budget of £2,686,200 (with contributions from WNC & NNC at £2,019,200 and ICB at £667,000). WNC and NNC funding is transferred to NCT to commission the services on their behalf alongside ICB. This is the same as the current total budget across short breaks services, minus the Sleep Service budget as this will be reviewed and commissioned separately.

7. Risks & Mitigations

Risk	Mitigation
Delays to contract start date	Timetable set out and monitored by short breaks steering group. Oversight by Short Breaks Strategic Group
No bidders for contract when tendered	Provider engagement events prior to contract advertising to test the viability and appetite of providers delivering the model. Negotiation time built into procurement timetable before award. Encouraging collaborative bids Regular conversations continue with providers to warm up the market. FAQs to be provided, including queries regarding financial liabilities related to transfer of workforce on NHS terms and conditions and access to NHS Pensions.
Impact to current provider workforce	Regular engagement sessions in person with staff to keep them up to date with progress
Impact to children, young people and their parents/ carers	Multiple engagement exercises to gain the views of families and shape the model accordingly. Publication of feedback received through the consultation, changes made to the model as a result and next steps

	Continued participation of parents/ carers, children and young people through steering group
Impact on current provision due to change	Service delivery monitored by providers and commissioners and mitigations identified for any potential impact

8. Next Steps

The ICB Board gave approval on 21st December to proceed with commissioning the redesigned new model of short breaks and recognised the changes made as a result of the final phase consultation feedback. The following timeline has been agreed to allow sufficient time for the new service to achieve required registration.

The project will continue to be overseen by the multi- agency steering group which includes parent carer forum group representatives and a strategic group of senior officers from NNC, WNC, NCT, NHFT and ICB. Commissioners will work collaboratively with the current and incoming providers to ensure a smooth transition to minimise impact for children and families.

Action	Starts	Week Commencing
Publish consultation and advertise contract	08/01/2024	
Negotiation	19/02/2024	
Evaluations	04/03/2024	
Award Contract	18/03/2024	
Recruitment of registered Manager if required	18/03/2024	
Register with Ofsted & CQC (requires Registered Manager to be in post)	08/07/2024	
Demobilisation / Mobilisation	05/08/2024	
Transition and hand over	30/09/2024	
New service fully operational	28/10/2024	

Appendix A – Council for Disabled Children Engagement Report Autumn 2021



Appendix B - Council for Disabled Children

Appendix B - 6 Week Engagement Report April / May 2023




Appendix C - 6 Week Engagement Report A

Appendix C – 6 Week Consultation Report October / November 2023

To be added

Appendix D – You Said – We Did

Stage	Who did we engage with? 	What you said	What we did
Initial engagement Sept 21 – Oct 21	14 people responded to the survey of whom 13 were parents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Need to improve transitions. All children to be able to access support. One referral process More early help support. Need flexible, responsive, forward thinking, transforming services. A simpler pathway to access services is required. Not enough staff to support children with 1:1 or 2:1 staffing needs. Flexible, integrated services Services close to home 	<p>Potential new model designed that included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Single service offer Run and led by one lead organisation. <p>The redesign proposal was developed by a Partnership Design Group.</p>
Design Phase Nov 21 – Mar 23	Children With Disabilities Board and SEND Accountability Board (members included NPPG and providers)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> These proposals were discussed and reviewed at each Children with Disabilities Board to shape the model. 	Redesign proposal was developed and agreed by a Partnership Design Group, agreed, and approved by the Children and Young People's Transformation Board.
Second phase April 23- Jun 23	233 people from an electronic survey and 6 focus groups. 43% of respondents were parents/carers. 28% current provider staff 34% public	<p>Majority of respondents said:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bring residential and non-residential short breaks together. Flexible team across services Increasing non-residential short breaks will reduce need for residential short breaks. One referral point and joined up assessment and reviews. More short breaks with 1:1 or 2:1 staffing. Additional services: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fundraising Peer support Volunteer buddies 	<p>The proposed lead provider model will have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Central hub supporting all services. Single referral and assessment pathway Staff working across the contracts. Grow capacity through fundraising and volunteers. Specialists play workers to support with designing activities. Build community relationships and links to enable greater choice of short breaks. Advertise short break opportunities centrally. Support families to step up and step down.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whole family activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional day care activity offered a residential short break. • Add home care services
Third Phase Oct 23-Nov 23	284 engagements from the electronic survey and 10 workshops of which 37% were parents, 40% professionals and 23% members of the public	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The idea of a single referral pathway is good to avoid families having to tell their stories over and over. • Any assessment that is already in place should be used for access to the short break's services. Some respondents did want to keep self-referrals. • Agreed with the principle of reallocating funding, however, they did not agree with closing the residential short breaks unit 1 day a week. • Preferred activities for daytime activities were swimming, activities involving animals, cooking or musical activities. • Better links with activities already taking place in communities and supporting children and young people to access them. • Need 1:1 or 2:1 staffing, followed by secure environments and small groups to access services. • Sleep service should not be added to the short breaks group of services. • Sensory impairment services should not be added to the short breaks group of services. • Adding personal care and support services to the short breaks group of services would be positive. • In general respondents agreed with some parts of the proposals but not all of it. • "What is good about the proposal" - the joined-up referral pathway, the centralised hub and additional functions and joining up with community services for daytime activities. • "What needed more thought" transport to access the services, the number of secure venues in the county, ability to increase the number of volunteers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There will be a single referral route into the short break's services. • Existing assessments will be able to be used to access the short breaks services. • The residential short breaks units will not close 1 night a week but will instead reduce the bed capacity which had been suggested during the consultation as a better alternative; analysis shows this will still enable need to be met • The Sleep Service (and budget) will not be included in the Short Breaks group of services. The service will have a full review. • The Sensory Impairment services will not be included in the short breaks group of service • To consider adding PCaS services during the 2nd year of the contract after modelling the viability of this. • Feedback from the consultation will be shared across the system and with the new provider to ensure it is considered