

Short breaks for children and young people with disabilities



Children with Disabilities
working together to make life better

A Family Guide



Find out what's
on offer



Your questions
answered



How to get
short breaks



Your short breaks
in your words

Welcome to the Family Guide to short breaks for children and young people with disabilities. Use it to find out about the wide range of short break services available in Norfolk, as well as details of how your family can access them.

We've also brought together experiences of other families and service providers to try to answer your questions or queries about short break services – everything from understanding the new Resource Allocation System to how you can tell that your child will be well looked after and what you should expect from services open to everyone.

Even more information is available on the website www.time-for-me.org.uk, which has been developed with parents to ensure it covers what you need to know.

To find out more about short break services for children and young people with disabilities, contact the CWD Access and Services Team.

Call: 01603 714185

Email: shortbreaks.pathfinder@norfolk.gov.uk

Visit: www.time-for-me.org.uk

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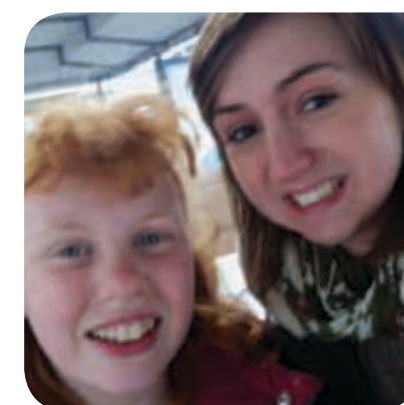
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What are short breaks?



Short break services give disabled children and young people an opportunity to meet new people and enjoy different experiences.



Short breaks come in all shapes and sizes and give disabled children and their families a break from their caring responsibilities.



A short break could last a few hours, a day, evening, overnight or for a weekend. They could take place in or away from the home.



They can involve supporting families to take a short break together away from the routine of daily life or can be a break for the child away from the family.

Short breaks could be

- Group activities like a youth club or Saturday group for children and young people with disabilities
- Holiday playschemes
- Sports, arts or music activities
- One to one support to access any other activities, such as youth clubs, cinema trips or meeting friends for lunch
- Overnight stays in a family home
- Overnight stays in a specialist residential unit

After a simple application process, eligible families will get a set number of hours to spend on short break services. You can choose how to spend those hours to make a package of services that is right for your family. There will be further assessment to access overnight stays.

See page 10 to find out more about applying for services.

What is 'respite'?

Respite literally means a brief period of rest and recovery between periods of exertion or after something disagreeable. Over time the term 'respite care' has been used to mean a break for carers or families, but short breaks offer so much more than that, often giving the child or young person the opportunity to meet new people and have new and exciting experiences in a safe environment. Short breaks aim to be a positive experience for both the 'carer' and 'cared for'.

In your own words.
Short breaks are...

Sanity Hope Fun Me time My space A rest Worry free
Being me Recharge time Calm Stressless Precious Safety
Relax Peace Quiet Thinking time Indulgence Special Escape
Treat Fun Demanded! Expected! Independence Equality
Confidence Different Challenging

About with Friends

I am Amber Jane, I am 18 years old I have been coming to About with Friends for three years. I love it because I get a social life. I love it because I got to go on holiday. I love it because you get out and do stuff. I've got billions and billions and billions of friends.



About With Friends took us all to Alton Towers. There's me, I'm on a cable car. It was fantastic and fabulous. I loved it because it was high up. We saw the whole park and all the rides.



One of the trips we went on was Butlins in Skegness. There's Shane, Hayley, Me and Sam

Helen* from Norwich and her teenage son have accessed short break services. We speak to her about her experiences.

Was there a reason that you hadn't used short breaks before?

I had no idea we were entitled to them so I hadn't even thought about it. My son has a statement at school but he's not registered as disabled.

How did you find out what was available?

We had a letter through school from Family Voice (Norfolk) inviting parents to an open meeting. I went along to that and found out about what was available.

What services do you now use?

We have a carer from Crossroads for an hour and a half once a week, plus very occasional evenings. She plays with my son, takes him to the playing field on a nice day, she takes him to the library or plays at home. It gives me a chance to have some time with my older son helping him with his homework, or even just catching up with the ironing.

How was it when you first started getting services?

It was a slow process. My son was quite clingy at first and our carer had to build his trust while we all made an adjustment. The process was good though and we could take it at our own pace. On the very rare occasions when our regular carer can't come we really miss the support she brings.

*not her real name



Short breaks mean... Friendship



Terri Nelson, manager of the Children's Service at the Hamlet Centre, explains how friendships are helped to flourish on their short break schemes.

There are two girls in particular who come to mind, one from Bungay and one from Norwich. They really hit it off here and became firm friends. It's difficult for them to see each other away from here, so we make sure that we book them on the same days as each other wherever possible. Both have found friendships difficult and are over the moon to have met each other.

Another development we've seen is young people and their families meeting through our services and then using mobile phones and social networking to keep in touch. It's as important for parents to come together and have a chance to share

information and chat as it is for children and young people. We see parents gathered outside just talking so we make sure we give them the opportunity to meet here if they want.



Your questions answered



These questions and answers are based on concerns families have had and asked us about. There is more information online at www.time-for-me.org.uk and you can also call the CWD Access and Services Team to discuss any other aspects of short break services.

Q How do I know my child will be well looked after?

A The short break services funded by Norfolk County Council have all been through a tough tendering process, where providers have had to prove they are up to the task. Parents played an important part in this process alongside professionals and you can feel confident that the right skills and experiences are in place.

Each type of short break will have clearly defined standards, review processes and complaints procedures. You can ask the providers for more information about these, or if you have any concerns, please contact the CWD Access and Services Team.

Q What about really poorly or really challenging children and young people – who will have them as they are ‘too complicated’ or ‘challenging’ for groups?

A Please don’t presume that this is the case. Give as much information as possible when you apply for services and we can work with you to help find the right options for your family. You’ll get lots of support to help settle into new services and you can change your mind and try something different if something doesn’t work for you.

There’s flexibility too as you can choose when to use your allocation of short break hours.



Q Who pays for and runs short breaks?

A Norfolk County Council Children’s Services provides a number of short break services itself and pays voluntary and independent organisations to provide many more.

Q Does taking a short break mean we’re not coping?

A No! Taking a break from caring for your child is not an admission of failure or a way of saying you don’t care. Without an occasional break you might become exhausted or even unwell. Keeping going is easier if you have had some time to do the things you can’t do whilst looking after your child.

What’s more, short break services offer children and young people with disabilities opportunities to try new and different things and to take part in activities other people their age enjoy, all in a safe environment. Short breaks can and should be positive experiences for everyone involved.

Q How is the quality of services monitored?

A There are systems in place to monitor the quality of care provided for children and young people, including regular staff supervision from team managers who also read and review reports and a regular audit of children’s case files to check they are of a good standard.

If you have any comments you would like to make about services, both positive and negative, please phone our main customer services number on 0344 800 8020 and ask for the Children’s Services Compliments and Complaints Team. Our Compliments and Complaints Team will follow up any concerns you may have.

There is also a Freephone number 0800 9177425 for children and young people to use to either speak to a member of the Children’s Services Compliments and Complaints Team or, if they are not there, to leave a message for them to get back to you. Please remember to leave a contact number or address as part of the message.



Q Will my information be shared with anyone else?

A We can only provide an effective service to you and your child by sharing information with other key people involved in your child’s welfare.

Normally this will only be done with your consent and you can ask us not to share certain information if you wish. However, there may be circumstances in which it will be necessary for us to share information without your consent. This is most likely to happen if there are concerns around the safety of your child.

Any assessments and plans we make will be shared with you, and you will be asked to sign to say that you have seen them and agree to them.

Q Will I have to pay for short break services?

A Most short breaks provided or funded by Norfolk County Council or Health Services are free in respect of the care provided, but there may be a small charge for activity-based short breaks. Short break daycare and playscheme providers often also make a small charge to families for their services.

How to get short break services



The Children with Disabilities service from Norfolk County Council provides specialist support and services to eligible disabled children, young people and their families in Norfolk. More information about the types of short breaks available is included on pages 13 to 27 of this guide.

To make the system as fair as possible, everyone follows the same application process for support from the Children with Disabilities service, which includes short breaks. This process is called the Resource Allocation System. This is a new system but everyone now needs to follow it to get short breaks.

Eligible families will receive care support at one of three levels: Green, Blue or Purple.

Levels of support available

Green

Who gets it?
All eligible children and young people with disabilities.

What do they get?
Up to 100 hours a year of short breaks.

How can they use them?
You can use a combination of Direct Payments and short break services such as youth groups, playschemes and one to one support, either at home or out and about. All Norfolk County Council funded services will track the hours you use.

How are they assessed?
Information from the referral form and the supporting evidence is used to assess need.

Blue

Who gets it?
All eligible disabled children and young people who need a higher level of support to have an ordinary family life and enjoy positive activities.

What do they get?
More than 100 hours a year of short breaks. The level of support will be worked out according to the child's needs.

How can they use them?
You can use a combination of Direct Payments and short break services such as youth groups, playschemes and one to one support, either at home or out and about. All Norfolk County Council funded services will track the hours you use.

How are they assessed?
Information from the referral form and supporting evidence is used to assess need.

Purple

Who gets it?
This higher level of support is available for a much smaller number of families who face extra challenges

What do they get?
Options include overnight stays in specialist units or inclusive settings such as activity centres, linked or short break foster care and a comprehensive package of short breaks possibly including Direct Payments.

How can they use them?
You can use a combination of services to get the right support for your family.

How are they assessed?
The family will be contacted by a worker from the Children with Disabilities service to discuss the best package of support. A multi-agency panel will be involved in deciding what package should be offered.

Eligibility for services

To be eligible, the child or young person must have a physical or mental impairment that is substantial and permanent, where:

- Substantial means considerable or significant factors that are life changing or limiting, and likely to involve risk and dependency; and

- Permanent means existing indefinitely and unlikely to improve (allowing for the episodic / intermittent nature of some conditions).

In addition, in order to demonstrate a level of impairment that severely impacts on their quality of life, the child or young person must meet at least one of the following criteria:

- Severe or profound learning disabilities
- Severe or profound physical disabilities
- Significant or profound sensory disabilities

- Multiple disabilities which together severely impact quality of life
- Complex long term health needs
- Severe or profound social and communication difficulties related to disability

Professional judgement will be used to clarify eligibility for support from the Children with Disabilities service in cases where there is uncertainty or dispute.

Turn the page...

...for frequently asked questions about eligibility and the application process

How to apply

- 1** The first step is to ask for a referral pack. You can get this from the Children with Disabilities Access and Services Team by calling 01603 714185 or emailing shortbreaks.pathfinder@norfolk.gov.uk. You can also talk to someone already involved with your child like a therapist, health visitor or school professional. They should be able to help you with the application process.
- 2** Fill in the referral form with a professional who knows your child and family and can give details about your child's needs. This person is called your 'referring professional'. They could be your child's childminder, nursery key worker, SENCo, teaching assistant, GP, Paediatrician, Parent Support Advisor, Learning Disability Nurse, Occupational Therapist, Physiotherapist, Portage worker or another professional you could identify. The referring professional cannot be a family member.
- 3** Send the form back, along with supporting evidence (such as a Statement of Educational Needs, Common Assessment Framework (CAF) assessment or a medical report). The information pack you get with the referral form will make it clear what information you need to send.
- 4** In most cases, no further assessment is needed and we will let you know the results of your application within about six weeks. In cases where we think a high level of support is needed, a member of the Children with Disabilities team will get in touch to talk through the options available and discuss the best ways to support your family.

Caroline* is the mum of Eliza*, aged 9. She followed the application process with her daughter's Assistant Headteacher as the referring professional. She tells us her experiences.

How did you find the system?

I am happy with the system, it worked well for me and went through pretty quickly. I was quite surprised.

What worked well?

I spoke to the school about helping me with the referral, at first I didn't know who to ask but they asked me to go down that afternoon and filled in the form with me there and then – the school were great.

What didn't work so well?

The different colour bands were a bit confusing to start with and what you can get for each but the school helped to explain what it all meant and then it was easy.

Is there anything that could be improved?

Nothing – once you get your head around it, it's ok!

How will this support your child?

So she can make new friends and become more sociable maybe at the Hamlet Centre – I haven't started to use the hours yet.

*Names have been changed.

More about eligibility and accessing short breaks

Do we have to apply to the Children with Disabilities service to access short breaks?

Yes. If you want to receive any short break services funded by Norfolk County Council then you will need to follow the application process explained on pages 10 to 12. We've listed many short break services in this guide.

Please see the key at the bottom right of this page for more information about how to access the services listed in this guide. If you're unsure about how to access services, please contact the Children with Disabilities Access and Services Team who will be able to help. Call 01603 714185 or email shortbreaks.pathfinder@norfolk.gov.uk

How long will our package of support last?

For those who are eligible, services will be allocated for 12 months. During that time you'll need to renew your package for the following year. We will contact you to let you know when that needs to happen.

What if our circumstances change?

You can move between the three levels of support over time if your family's needs change. Please get in touch with the Children with Disabilities Access and Services Team to talk things through. Call 01603 714185 or email shortbreaks.pathfinder@norfolk.gov.uk

Does it matter how much I earn?

No, the support allocation system does not depend on what income the family has.

Where can I go to if my child doesn't meet the eligibility criteria?

Norfolk County Council can offer advice on a range of Council and non-Council services. Call 0344 800 8014 for further information about these services.



short break services

The following pages list short break services available to children and young people with disabilities in Norfolk.

16 One to one support

- One to one support to access mainstream services
- Direct Payments
- One to one support at home

18 Group based activities

22 Overnight and residential stays

- Residential units
- Hospice care
- Daycare and overnight stays in a carer's home

Key: The level of support can be found beneath each listing.

- ● ● Available at green, blue or purple
- ○ ○ Available at purple level only
- ○ ○ Not part of the Resource Allocation System. Please contact direct



One to one support

One to one support is a very flexible way of getting short breaks. You could use Direct Payments to employ a personal assistant to provide one to one support to do what suits your family. Or, you could access one to one support from an organisation that provides trained support workers who can help in the home or out and about. There are also services to get one to one support to access mainstream activities such as local youth clubs or sports centres.



One to one support to access mainstream services

Mainstream services is a term used to describe all those activities that are open to anyone. So it might be scouts or brownies, a local youth club, playgroup, swimming pool or cinema. All the things most children and young people have the opportunity to do, but that can be more difficult for some children and young people with disabilities to do.

SCOPE Inclusion Norfolk

The SCOPE Inclusion Norfolk scheme provides support for the most severely disabled children and young people, particularly those with complex care needs and challenging behaviours, to access local leisure facilities. The service is available for children and young people up to the age of 18 with physical impairments, learning difficulties, behaviour problems and acute health needs. It is available right across Norfolk.

Contact

T: 01603 415867

E: sara.brown@scope.org.uk



Accessing mainstream services – your rights

The Equality Act 2010 gives disabled people important rights of access to everyday services. This means mainstream services should be accessible to children with disabilities and their families. In reality, we know that it can be more difficult for children and young people with disabilities to access these services without additional support.

The best way to make services more accessible for children and young people with disabilities is to educate and support the people running those clubs and activities so they feel more confident in what they have to offer.

With funding from the Children with Disabilities service, Momentum has developed an Inclusion Toolkit designed to help make clubs and activities more accessible to all young people. The toolkit provides heaps of information, including practical exercises and resources to guide settings through how to enhance and support inclusion. It is aimed at voluntary, community and charitable groups across Norfolk and will be regularly updated to reflect the changing nature of youth work and to ensure it remains an up to date and useful resource.

The kit is available online at www.momentumnorfolk.org.uk or by calling Momentum on 01603 263209.

Direct Payments



What are Direct Payments?

Direct Payments are one option for accessing short breaks. Rather than accessing existing short break services, you can opt for Direct Payments, which means you get money to buy and arrange your own support.



Why should we use them?

Direct Payments are designed to give families more control and flexibility about how, when and where they have short breaks. You can combine Direct Payments with other types of short break to design a package that suits your family best.



How do we use them?

Parents can use Direct Payments to employ someone to support and care for their disabled child. This could be as an overnight or day carer within the home or to support the child or young person in other activities outside the home. If you are using Direct Payments for a child under 8 years old, you will need to comply with childminding regulations.

What support is available?

Using Direct Payments can be a bit daunting, and some parents are concerned about the work that might be involved in employing someone directly. There is a free support service to help with financial advice, support and employment information about using Direct Payments. It is provided by Independent Living Norfolk.

Contact

Independent Living Norfolk
T: 01508 491222
E: iln@ncodp.org.uk
www.ncodp.org.uk/iln



Short breaks can make a real difference to everyone in a family – from the child or young person who gets to try new things and gain some independence, to brothers and sisters who get to have more of their parent's time through to parents who get a chance to recharge.

One to one support at home

Children's Short Breaks Home Nursing Team

Norfolk Community Health & Care provides home-based respite and nursing services for children and young people with complex health needs up to the age of 18. A trained nurse or carer will come to the family home. Packages of care are based on both the child and the family's needs.

The team covers the whole of Norfolk.

Contact

Central, South and North Norfolk
T: 01603 508935

West Norfolk
T: 01553 668511



Crossroads Care

Crossroads Care provides 'in the home' respite care and emotional support for the family. Their carers can also support a disabled child to attend outdoor activities such as scouts, playgroups or youth clubs. Crossroads Care also provides support to families. Evening, weekend and overnight service is available for families of children and young people with disabilities up to the age of 18.

Schemes cover the whole of Norfolk. Crossroads Care Norfolk covers South Norfolk, Thetford, Central Norfolk (Fakenham and Dereham) and West Norfolk. Crossroads Care in Norwich and East Norfolk covers Great

Yarmouth, Norwich and Broadland and North East Norfolk.

Contact

Crossroads Care Norfolk
T: 01362 691706
www.crossroads.org.uk/norfolklimited

Crossroads Care in Norwich and East Norfolk

Great Yarmouth District
T: 01493 441222

Norwich and Broadland District
T: 01692 500941

North East District
T: 01692 500006



Crossroads Care is a national charity focused on the needs of carers. Through their work providing practical and emotional support to carers, it soon became clear that having a break from caring could make a real difference to carers' lives.

Recognising that by providing services for disabled children, the charity could provide the best service for parents, Crossroads Care began to recruit staff who had the skills to work with children, such as ex-teachers and childminders, and encouraged them to work across all age groups.

Based on the needs of families, services developed to include breaks away from the family home, changing as a child grows and develops. A manager at Crossroads Care explains. "There's a boy we started caring for when he was six years old, and we took him to Beavers. As he got older, he went to after school clubs with one of our workers, then swimming, and now at 14 we accompany him to activities run by About with Friends. When he's there, he has his independence, but our worker is there to help with his personal care needs."



Group-based activities

There are all sorts of group-based activities on offer throughout Norfolk, offering the chance for children and young people with disabilities to try new things, socialise with friends, develop their independence, and above all, have fun. These include evening, weekend and school holiday activities. You can use your allocated hours for the activities listed on these pages.

There's more on offer

With so much on offer, it's well worth thinking about how to join in other group activities. See page 14 to learn more about the your rights to access all activities taking place in your area, and support that's in place to help those groups get it right for disabled children and their families.



Benjamin Foundation

What's on offer?

A weekly youth group for disabled young people with lots of activities on offer, held at Wells-next-the-Sea.

Who can go?

10 to 18 year olds from Wells-next-the-sea, Fakenham, South Creake and Walsingham areas. Transport can be provided.

Contact

T: 01692 500999
E: info@benjaminfoundation.co.uk



About with Friends

What's on offer?

All sorts of activities, including day trips, parties, theatre trips, bowling, young people's groups, bingo, cinema visits, karaoke nights and various sports. Young people will learn about developing relationships and friends, dealing with bullies, staying safe and understanding how community resources work. The activities also have an emphasis on moving into the adult world and run in the evenings, at weekends and in school holidays.

Where?

Based in Cromer with a catchment area of North Norfolk, Broadland, East Norfolk and North Norwich, although other areas will be considered. Activities may take place elsewhere.

Who can go?

9 to 18 year olds.

Contact

T: 01263 515230
E: info@aboutwithfriends.co.uk



The Hamlet Centre

What's on offer?

Short break playschemes throughout the year as well as summer holiday short break playschemes for children with complex health needs and those with additional needs. Early Support Opportunity Groups for under 5s and their siblings during term time as well as youth clubs in the evening for young people aged 8 to 18. A Toy Library service with specialised toys and equipment is open throughout the year.

Where?

The Hamlet Centre is based in Norwich but children and young people from across Norfolk can attend. There may be help with transport.

Who can go?

0 to 18 year olds.

Contact

T: 01603 766566
E: admin@hamletcentre.org.uk



Harford Manor School

What's on offer?

Harford Manor School offers a range of after school and summer school activities. It also provides residential holidays and a youth club. The school is in Norwich. Services are available for families in the Central Norfolk area.

Who can go?

Children and young people aged from 4 to 18 years old.

Contact

T: 01603 451809
E: office@harfordmanor.norfolk.sch.uk



Shine

What's on offer?

Holiday playschemes, term-time Saturday club and a Friday night youth club. There's also advice, guidance and support for parents and carers of children and young people from birth up to school leaving age on issues related to having a child with a special or additional need or a disability within the family.

Where?

Shine is based in Gorleston and services are available to families in the Great Yarmouth borough and surrounding areas

Who can go?

0 to 18 year olds.

Contact

T: 01493 661000
E: info@shine-gy.org.uk



Mid-Suffolk HOPS

What's on offer?

Holiday playschemes and a monthly Saturday club with specialist play equipment and activities, based in Thorndon, near Eye in Suffolk.

Who can go?

Children and young people aged between 4 and 16 who live in South Norfolk.

Contact

T: 07857 618161
E: midsuffolkhops@tiscali.co.uk



Deaftastics Multi-Sports Club

What's on offer?

Zone hockey, badminton, basket ball and trampolining at various locations around Norwich for children and young people with hearing impairments

Who can go?

Children and young people aged 8 to 18 years old with hearing impairments from across Norfolk.

Contact

T: 01953 717974
E: karen.n.park@btinternet.com



Whitlingham Outdoor Education Centre

What's on offer?

Taster sessions in a range of outdoor pursuits at weekends and in school holidays. Sessions include katakanu, archery and sailing.

Who can go?

8 to 18 year olds

Contact

T: 01603 632307
E: ncc.oep@norfolk.gov.uk



Churchill Park School

What's on offer?

A school holiday scheme and monthly youth club offering a range of activities within the school and at various locations within the King's Lynn area.

Who can go?

Children and young people aged from 6 to 18 years.

Contact

T: 01553 763679





Discovery Arts from Musical Keys

What's on offer?

Music and art workshops for children and young people with complex needs, including making music, movement, animation, junk percussion and instruments. Run in locations across Norfolk during school holidays.

Who can go?

Sessions are divided into two age groups: 6 to 11 and 12 to 18.

Contact

T: 01603 405858
E: enquiries_mk@yahoo.co.uk



Eye Opportunity Group

What's on offer?

Play sessions for 0 to 5 year olds three times a week during term time and school holidays at Eye in Suffolk. Brothers and sisters can join in too.

Contact

T: 01379 870975
E: eyeopportunitygroup@btconnect.com



Fakenham Children's Daycare Centre

What's on offer?

Holiday activities for children aged 0 to 16 with additional needs along with childcare for their brothers and sisters. Based in Fakenham, but open to children across Norfolk

Contact

Tel: 01328 862422
Email: fcdc@btconnect.com



NANSA

What's on offer?

Two school holiday clubs and monthly youth clubs for 11 to 14 year olds and 15 to 17 year olds with physical or learning difficulties.

Where?

Based in Norwich and open to people from Norwich and surrounding areas.

Contact

T: 01603 627662
E: christowndrow@nansa.org.uk



National Autistic Society, West Norfolk

What's on offer?

A fortnightly Saturday club in Kings Lynn for 5 to 13 year olds with ASD from across West Norfolk

Contact

T: 01553 660224
E: westnorfolk@nas.org.uk



Norwich City Community Sports Foundation

What's on offer?

Disability specific multi-sports camps during school holidays and a Saturday matchday club at Norwich City Football Club. There are also football coaching sessions, evening soccer centres and after school activities for all children.

Where?

Matchday club is at the Carrow Road ground in Norwich, multi-sports camps are run across Norfolk.

Who can go?

5 to 16 year olds.

Contact

T: 01603 761122
E: info@communitysportsfoundation.org.uk



Norfolk Deaf Children's Society

What's on offer?

Monthly youth club in term time in Norwich and activities and outings in term time and school holidays across Norfolk.

Who can go?

5 to 18 year olds who are deaf or hard of hearing.

Contact

T: 01953 717974
E: Karen.n.park@btinternet.com



Sensory Support Service

What's on offer?

Regular activities for deaf and visually impaired 7 to 18 year olds and their brothers and sisters across Norfolk in term time and school holidays.

Contact

T: 01603 704040
E: sensorysupport@norfolk.gov.uk



NANSA



Hello my name is John and I go to NANSA in Norwich. Not that long ago we all went on a trip to Swardeston which is outside Norwich. We met a man who does conservation. There's Matt, telling us what we can do.



There's me and Joe, Nathan and two dogs having lunch. They are my friends and they go to NANSA too.



It was hard work. We are all very proud of our work that day. It was good fun out there.

Overnight and residential stays

Residential overnight stays are short breaks that provide nights away from the family home in a small residential unit with a homely feel, at a carers home or in a hospice – often with other children with similar needs.



Residential units

Short breaks at residential units involve overnight stays with lots of activities.

Within each unit, every child will have their own room. There will usually be between 4 and 6 children at the unit at any time. There will be staff awake all night to monitor the children's well being. Some residential units also have trained staff to provide specialist care for children with health care needs.

Staff will work with families and children to make sure children's favourite activities, foods, likes and dislikes are paid attention to.

A range of enjoyable activities will be on offer, within a setting where children feel well supported and secure. There is often opportunity to try new things not possible at home.

Foxwood

Foxwood is a six bed residential short break unit in Sprowston, Norwich. Most children come from the Norwich and Broadland areas, but children from further afield may also use the service. Foxwood is for 5 to 18 year olds with severe learning disabilities or multiple disabilities including a learning disability. Foxwood is run by Norfolk County Council Children's Services.

Contact

T: 0344 800 8014
E: Joanne.nudd@norfolk.gov.uk



Marshfields

Marshfields is a four bed residential short break unit in Kings Lynn. Marshfields is for 5 to 18 year olds with severe learning disabilities or multiple disabilities including a learning disability from across Norfolk. Marshfields is run by Norfolk County Council Children's Services.

Contact

T: 0344 800 8014
E: nicola.king@norfolk.gov.uk



Morley House

Morley House provides residential short breaks during weekends and school holidays for five to 18 year olds with a disability from across Norfolk. It is in Kings Lynn. Morley House is run by Break.

Contact

T: 01553 772157 for information
T: 0344 800 8014 for referral
E: carol.gyton@break-charity.org



Nelson Lodge

Nelson Lodge is a six bed residential short break unit in Tharston, Norfolk. It is for 5 to 18 year olds with learning disabilities including autistic spectrum disorders and challenging behaviour. Nelson Lodge primarily serves the South Norfolk area, but children from other areas of Norfolk may also use the service. Nelson Lodge is run by Break.

Contact

T: 0344 800 8014
E: office@break-charity.org



Little Acorns

Little Acorns is a purpose built bungalow in Gorleston. It provides residential short break care for up to five children at a time in a homelike environment. It is for children and young people aged 5 to 18 years with complex health needs with or without a learning disability from across Norfolk. Little Acorns is run by Norfolk Community Health and Care.

Contact

T: 01493 651945
E: amie.daynes@nchc.nhs.uk



Shakers Lane

Shakers Lane is a residential unit run by Scope in Bury St Edmunds which provides residential stays with regular days out. It is for 8 to 18 year olds with physical impairments, learning difficulties, behaviour problems and acute health needs. It is open to families from South and West Norfolk.

Contact

T: 01284 753957
E: suffolk.breaks@scope.org.uk



Squirrels – Mill Close

Squirrels is a five bedroom residential unit in Aylsham for 5 to 18 year olds with complex health needs with or without a learning disability. It is for families in North Norfolk, Broadland, Norwich and South Norfolk and is run by Norfolk Community Health and Care.

Contact

T: 01263 734938
E: charles.hebdon@nchc.nhs.uk



Foxwood



This is me in the sensory room. Sensory room is where people can chill out and talk and relax. It's a favourite place of mine although I do tend to sleep sometimes when I'm feeling tired.



This is a bedroom at Foxwood and this is Clare, a lady that helps me. She is very nice.



Here I am with Peter dancing to a Nintendo Wii game. This is the front room where you can relax and watch telly and read books and play Nintendo Wii, play the X-box, stuff like that. I think I beat him on that!

It's just fun really, I like to do lots of things. I always feel like I've had a proper holiday.

A short break at a specialist residential unit such as Little Acorns can be a great opportunity to try something new.

"We offer a home from home environment at Little Acorns, but with 24 hour nursing care, it also means we can get out and about and take part in a wide range of activities," explains Team Leader Amie Daynes. These include trips to local attractions, cinema visits, picnics and boat trips, all of which are planned around what the children and young people who are staying want to do.

"The children and young people who come here have complex health needs and disabilities. We can offer the chance to try activities that it might be difficult to do within their families. It also means that families have the chance to do things with their other children that they might not otherwise be able to do.

"For weekend visits we'll have a rough plan of what we're going to do, but we'll talk it through with the children and decide from there. If we've got a group of teenage girls, they might want to go shopping or have a pamper day, or maybe stay in and watch DVDs in their pyjamas."

In the summer holidays Little Acorns has themed weeks based around what people want to do, it may be outdoor activities, or fairies and princesses – activities are varied and many. As well as getting out and about, there's also lots to do on site at the five-bedroom purpose built unit, including a sensory room, play room and garden.



Hospice care

Quidenham Children's Hospice (EACH)

Quidenham cares for children and young people from birth to 18 years old across Norfolk and Suffolk. It is for children with life threatening conditions requiring palliative, end of life care or short break care and children with complex nursing needs requiring constant or unpredictable specialist nursing care.

The child can be cared for at the hospice, community or in the family home. Specialised family support services are available.

Contact

T: 01953 888603

E: julia.shirtliffe@each.org.uk



Julia Shirtliffe of the EACH hospice at Quidenham explains how they plan activities to make the most of every short break.

The children and young people who use the hospice all have life threatening conditions, which makes the organisation's 'life's for living' mantra very real. "It's important that everyone is comfortable. We want our young people to enjoy coming here and for parents to feel good about dropping them off," explains Julia Shirtliffe, Head of Children's Palliative Care at the children's hospice.

As well as arts, crafts, music and play at the hospice itself, a wide range of days out are on offer. The health needs of the children using the services mean that delivering these everyday activities requires careful planning and organisation behind the scenes.

"There are a lot of factors to consider," says Julia. "We get to know all our families really well, which helps us to get the mix of children right. We had a weekend recently with just teenage boys and they went to the football, the cinema and bowling.

The following week it was girls aged nine and ten. They chose to visit the zoo, and saw a very different film at the cinema."

Careful planning also means time to get the chef fully briefed on dietary requirements and ensure the right staff are on hand. "We use a swimming pool locally, but going swimming requires a lot of preparation. Our Occupational Therapist and physio will be there, and the team need to take equipment for feeding and medical care as well as infection control measures."

Planning for every eventuality means staffing levels are high, but this gives a lot of flexibility to the services on offer. "We will have two sick children's nurses here, so one can go with the swimming trip and the other stay here with any children who don't go. This means we don't have to cancel activities."

Day and overnight stays in a carer's home

Linked Families service

The 'Linked Families' short breaks service links each child with a family or carer who offers an agreed package of care which can include day care and overnight care in the carer's home. Carers may also go to the child's own home allowing parents and carers to have time outside of the home pursuing their own interests or spending time with their other children. The service is not provided to allow the main carer to work.

The service matches families with very experienced carers who provide an individual package of care. The carers are thoroughly vetted and are assessed and approved to foster care standards.

Where?

The service is available to families across Norfolk

Who is it for?

0 to 18 year olds

Contact

T: 0344 800 8014

E: nicola.king@norfolk.gov.uk

www.norfolk.gov.uk/childrenwithdisabilities



The success of the Linked Families service relies on carefully matching carers and children.

"The key to a successful short break is that the child is happy, the parent is happy and the carer is happy – I think you need all three to ensure good care," explains Nicola King, who co-ordinates the County Council-run Linked Families scheme. Many of these breaks take place in the carer's home and often involve overnight stays, so it's essential to build trust and a strong relationship. "Our carers often spend time with the child at their school and in their family home, and parents and families are fully involved in the matching process." The carers work on a self-employed basis, providing breaks for a small number of children who they get to know well. The carers come from a variety of backgrounds.

"Some live by themselves, some have families and children of their own. All of them make their homes friendly, safe and welcoming for children to stay in. We see it as a way that some disabled children can go to other houses and stay overnight like a sleepover that their brothers and sisters may already experience," Nicola explains.

Although most breaks involve overnight care this is not always the case. One carer regularly takes a girl to Guides every week, something she had only previously dreamt of. Other carers take children to all kinds of different activities. Most people working for the scheme have worked in other care settings and have made a positive choice to join the Linked Families scheme. "They are motivated to work with the disabled children we place because they enjoy working one to one and most importantly because they make a real difference."



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