



Cyngor Bwrdeisdref Sirol

**Blaenau Gwent**

County Borough Council

# **Short Breaks Statement for Disabled Children**

Helping you to make the right choice



## Introduction

Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council have made it a priority to promote better outcomes for children and families. One way of helping to achieve this is to provide a range of short break services for children and young people with disabilities. Some services are provided directly by Education, Children's Services, Sport and Leisure, Youth Services or through partnerships with other organisations like Barnardo's. Our Children and Young People Partnership also fund a range of services for disabled children under their Families First work.

The statement is provided as a guide only and more information can be obtained about services by using the contact information at the end.

*Barnardo's is an excellent service with great support workers.*

## What are Short Breaks?

Short Breaks, sometimes called respite, provide parents and carers who have children and young people with disabilities with a break from caring for a few hours in the day or an overnight stay. Short breaks can help prevent family breakdowns and ease the stresses of everyday family life. There are a range of services that include after school activities, community based play, sport and leisure.

## Who are Short Breaks for?

Children and young people with disabilities between the age of 0 and 18 to enable them to:

- Enjoy a fun and positive time away from their parents or carers.
- Develop friendships and socialise.
- Take part in inclusive activities with non-disabled children.
- Develop new skills and abilities.

Parents and carers with caring responsibilities for children and young people aged 0 to 18. The range of services available should provide:

- Choice.
- Flexibility.
- Confidence.

## Who is eligible for Short Breaks?

Any parent or carer who has a child with a disability living in Blaenau Gwent County Borough will be able to access one or more services depending on their child's needs and their capacity to meet those. Apart from universal services most services will require an assessment to be carried out. The purpose of an assessment will be to identify



a child's specific needs and to suggest services that would be most suited to meet these needs. Other factors may be taken into consideration during an assessment such as health of a carer, impact of disability on family, etc. The following chart is provided as a guide to illustrate the 3 tiers of services available:

Level	Assessment	Service Example
Level 1 Universal - open to everyone	No assessment needed. Parent or carer will be able to ask for a service by ringing up or going along.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Family Information Service</li> <li>■ Cubs, Brownies, Scouts, Guides</li> <li>■ Playgroups, Childminders, Day Nurseries, Out of School Clubs</li> <li>■ Youth activities</li> <li>■ Sport and leisure clubs</li> <li>■ Disability Sport Services</li> </ul>
Level 2 Targeted to help meet needs	A short assessment will be carried out by the organisation providing the service. Parents and carers may ask a professional to refer them.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Flying Start</li> <li>■ Families First</li> <li>■ Assisted Places</li> <li>■ Early Years Referral Scheme</li> </ul>
Level 3 More specialised services	A longer assessment will be carried out by the Children With Disabilities Team, which will look at short breaks and to see if there are other things that can help a family.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Support with Leisure service</li> <li>■ Family based foster care respite service e.g. Family link carers</li> <li>■ Retained carer fostering service</li> <li>■ Direct Payments</li> </ul>

Most services mentioned in the statement will be based on an assessment of a child's needs to ensure that it best supports the child and helps them develop while providing an opportunity for parents and carers to take a break. Provided a child has a social worker, parents and carers will also be entitled to an assessment in their own right (carers assessment) which will help the social worker to understand the level and extent of care they are providing.

## What sort of Short Breaks are available?

There are many services that provide short breaks for children with disabilities and their parents and include:

### Community Based Services

Services close to where the child and family live such as: Scouts, Guides, after school clubs, youth activities, sports clubs, playgroups, holiday play and family support services.

### Disability Sport

Range of sporting and leisure activities open to children with disabilities and using leisure centres across Blaenau Gwent. Chris Garrett is the Disability Sports Officer for Aneurin Leisure Trust and runs lots of activities during the week, weekend and school holidays. He can be contacted on (01495) 353394 or email: [chris.garrett@aneurinleisure.org.uk](mailto:chris.garrett@aneurinleisure.org.uk)



*Couldn't be happier with Support from Leisure. It aids my child's confidence and independence.*

### **Additional Needs Referral Scheme**

The Additional Needs Referral Scheme is available to support children with an emerging or diagnosed condition to attend a pre-school setting alongside their peers. Support may be offered in a number of ways to enable the child to engage in a quality preschool experience.

### **Out of School Childcare**

Throughout the borough there are before school, after school and holiday clubs for school aged children that offer childcare outside of the school day. For more detailed information contact the Family Information Service on freephone 08000 32 33 39. [www.blaenau-gwent.gov.uk/5593.asp](http://www.blaenau-gwent.gov.uk/5593.asp)

### **Families First**

The Families First programme is funded by the Welsh Government to help families who are facing difficulties. The Families First team offers different types of support depending on what the needs are. Families with complex issues may need lots of support; however, some families may require help to overcome smaller problems to stop them getting worse.

Families First has a specific focus on providing support to families of disabled children and young people. The disability element of Families First includes a specialist team who engage with and undertake assessments for families of disabled children who are in need of support. The Families First Disability team work as part of the 'Community Hubs' offering Team Around the Family packages which draw in expertise and involvement from all types of services who may be involved with your family e.g. schools, health professionals, social workers.

In addition Families First also support children to access childcare provision through a 'Supported Places Scheme'. Diagnosis is not a requirement to access the service. However, an assessment of eligibility is required. The Scheme provides financial help towards the cost of childcare for disabled children and young people. The Supported Places scheme is open to all families of children with a disability via a simple request for services form. A member of the Families First Disability Team can provide assistance in completing this form with your family.

The service is supported with access to necessary training to ensure the best experience for all children. Extra support for families can be provided via informal meetings for parents and carers. This gives time to socialise with peers and gain more knowledge of what is available to them as well as having a voice regarding their services.

If you would like more information on Families First please contact the Family Information Service: 08000 32 33 39 or [fis@blaenau-gwent.gov.uk](mailto:fis@blaenau-gwent.gov.uk)



## Family Information Service

The Family Information Service aims to provide a confidential and impartial service offering information, advice and guidance on a whole range of services relating to children and young people and their families.

There is up-to-date information relating to:

- Play
- Childcare
- Youth Clubs
- Parenting
- Schools
- Sports and Leisure
- Health Services
- Other support services

For up to date information please call freephone 08000 32 33 39.  
[www.blaenau-gwent.gov.uk/5593.asp](http://www.blaenau-gwent.gov.uk/5593.asp)

## Youth Services

Youth services in Blaenau Gwent County Borough offer a range of services to young people with disabilities and range from clubs to adventure activities. They can be contacted by ringing (01495) 355811. Details are also available at [www.blaenau-gwent.gov.uk/leisure/16797.asp](http://www.blaenau-gwent.gov.uk/leisure/16797.asp)

## Flying Start

Flying Start is a Welsh Government programme which aims to support Language Development, Cognitive Development, Social and Emotional Development, Physical Health and Early Identification of High Needs for children aged 0-3 years.

Eligible children are entitled to free Flying Start childcare provision the term after their second birthday. The Flying Start Team includes Health Visitors, Family Support Workers, Parenting Support Workers, Early Language Support Workers to support you and your child.

Ring 08000 32 33 39 to see if you live in a Flying Start area.

*My son's  
confidence  
has greatly  
improved.*





### **Support with Leisure**

Support for children with disabilities to take part in activities within their local community. This service is provided by Barnardo's on behalf of Blaenau Gwent Social Services and children can be referred for a service following a Social Services assessment.

### **Family based Foster Care Respite Service**

Overnight or day time break for children with a community based foster carer - again following an assessment that identifies this as a need.

### **Retained Carer Fostering Service**

Overnight break for children and young people in a house that has a range of adaptations.

All children have different needs and often it is a good idea to ring a service and talk about what the service can offer and if it is right for you and your child.

### **Direct Payments**

Where an assessment has been undertaken by the Children with Disabilities Team and it is agreed that a disabled child or young person is eligible for a service, one option for providing that service might be through the provision of a direct payment to the family. It would be agreed what service was needed and what it should achieve for the child. Regular reviews would be undertaken by the child's social worker to ensure that the service the family was purchasing with the direct payment was meeting the needs of the child or young person.

After a direct payment is agreed families arrange for someone to undertake the work with their son or daughter. This could be a carer coming into the home or it could be someone to take the young person out and about. If a direct payment is agreed support can be given to help the family manage that process. Information about this can be given by the Children with Disabilities Team.

*The Retained Carer's Project is vital for not only my son's well-being but for my daughter who often gets side lined.*

*My child was so happy and enjoyed going to respite.*

## How do I ask for Short Breaks?

### Contact and Referral

If your child has a disability you can ask for help by ringing the duty referral team at Connect to Blaenau Gwent (C2BG) on (01495) 315700.

They will ask you for some information about your child and your circumstances to see if you are eligible for an assessment. If you are not, the person at the other end of the phone will provide you with information and tell you about other services that may be able to help including contact details.

### The Children with Disabilities Team

The Children with Disabilities Team provides a social work service to disabled children and their families that includes assessment, planning, support, information and short break services. There is also an Occupational Therapy service within the team for children needing help to access all parts of their home and to be able to get out and about. The manager Matthew Lawrence and the team can be contacted on (01495) 356014 or e-mail: [nicola.williams@blaenau-gwent.gov.uk](mailto:nicola.williams@blaenau-gwent.gov.uk)

## Other services that may be useful

### Third Sector Services

A directory of services available from the third sector (voluntary sector) is available at: [www.blaenau-gwent.gov.uk/health/5359.asp](http://www.blaenau-gwent.gov.uk/health/5359.asp)

### Contact A Family Wales

Freephone 0808 8883555

E-mail: [wales.office@cafamily.org.uk](mailto:wales.office@cafamily.org.uk)



## About this Statement

Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council would like to express their gratitude for the help and support in developing this statement provided by parents who themselves have disabled children. To prepare this statement, consultation questionnaires were distributed in July 2015 to all children with a disability via local schools.

The majority of feedback we received was extremely positive, particularly regarding the retained carer's project and Barnardo's Support with Leisure. All quotes used within this statement are from the most recent consultation questionnaires.

A common theme identified by families is that young people with disabilities often require additional support during their teenage years, to help them in their transition to adulthood. This is an area of the service which we and our partners are keen to continually develop and improve.

We would welcome any feedback from other parents and carers about the statement and how it can be improved.

**Please send comments to:**

**Sally Indge  
Children's Services  
Family Resource Centre  
Beaufort Road  
Ebbw Vale  
NP23 5LH**

**E-mail: [sally.indge@blaenau-gwent.gov.uk](mailto:sally.indge@blaenau-gwent.gov.uk)**

**Tel: (01495) 355760**



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