

Short Breaks for Disabled Children Soft Market Testing Survey – Summary Responses

A total of 17 responses were received, 9 responses were received from providers currently commissioned by Cheshire East to deliver Short Breaks for Disabled Children.

A) Experience of delivering Short Breaks

1. Do you have experience of delivering short breaks for disabled children? If so, what model(s) have been used? Does it include overnight support? If so, how was this delivered?

All 17 providers confirmed they had previous experience of delivering short breaks for disabled children and young people.

The different models used to deliver short breaks include:

- 1:1 support including befriending/buddying
- Group sessions including trampolining, gym sessions, swimming sessions
- Youth groups including youth clubs, breakfast clubs, bowling clubs, drama groups
- Overnight/Residential short breaks varying from 1 night to more than 3 nights in a residential setting

2. What do you understand to be the main challenges to the delivery of short break services for children?

The following areas were highlighted by providers as the main challenges they encounter when delivering short breaks:

- Time of delivery – difficult to satisfy all needs
- Duration of activity – same as above
- Cost effectiveness of running a session
- Behaviour management that affects group sessions
- Referrals – same children accessing services, struggle to reach families that don't access a short break.
- Travel – both accessing services and delivering services in rural locations
- Funding received to deliver services
- Short Term contracts – longer term would offer increased sustainability
- Non attendance of children at short or no notice meaning sessions are over staffed/not at full capacity

3. Given your experiences and expertise within this field, what new and innovative ways of working can your organisation bring to this service?

The below extracts were taken from provider responses:

“We would aim to help young disabled people gain employment or volunteering opportunities elsewhere in the locality and would aim to develop a training package for employers who may be concerned about taking on a young person with additional needs”

“Providing a home based overnight break is something that we know anecdotally, parent carers want. We are providing a break overnight in the family home enabling the child to be a familiar environment. We match workers beforehand to give them time to get to know the child and family to build up the rapport needed to develop trust.”

“We offer a range of learning opportunities for parents to partake in, some of the courses include assertiveness, cookery, first aid, Reiki, parental guidance and Information Technology. It is great for parents to learn new skills, improve their cv and have fun”

“We also know that some children miss out on short breaks due to their health needs so we propose taking a mobile sensory unit to the child’s house to support children whose health needs mean they cannot leave the house every day. The benefits will be of positive play experiences and social interaction with a person outside of the family unit, sensory stimulation which supports language development, cognitive growth and fine motor co-ordination as appropriate”

Providers also stated that partnership working, joint locations of delivery can also provide innovative ways to improve the services provided to children and young people with disabilities.

4. Would your organisation be interested in tendering for this service? If so, what would be your desired length of contract to ensure best value, and how long would you require mobilising a service from contract award?

All providers stated that they would be interested in tendering for this service.

Providers responded that the desired length of contract would be a minimum 1 year to a maximum of 4/5 years.

Providers responded that the required length of mobilisation would be between 1-6 months. This would provide time to recruit staff, advertise and promote commissioned services/activities.

5. How would you ensure that commissioned services work towards achieving the 6 outcomes of the children and young peoples plan 2019-2021?

1. **Children and young people we care for** are happy and given every opportunity to achieve their full potential.
2. Children and young people **feel and are safe**.
3. Children and young people are **happy** and experience **good mental health and wellbeing**.
4. Children and young people are **healthy and make positive choices**.
5. Children and young people leave school with the **best skills and qualifications** they can achieve and the life skills they need to thrive into adulthood.
6. Children, young people and young adults with **additional needs have better chances in life**.

The below extracts were taken from provider responses:

“We would ensure that disabled children, young people and parent carers are involved in planning activities, clubs and sessions. We will ensure staff and volunteers are trained in order to support the needs of disabled children. We will create a happy, safe and secure environment in which children can have fun and make friends”

“All children who attend group complete an evaluation where we can evidence the voice of the child. We work with parent carers to understand what good mental health looks like for their individual child and ensure any strategies developed by health and education professionals are followed.”

“ To ensure people have better chances we will signpost to services within our organisation or local sports clubs or community groups who support our activity programme as a potential exit route. For example this could be training opportunities such as first aid through our Training Academy or chances to volunteer as part of Volunteer Programme which lead to other opportunities or chances”

“ As part of our Short Breaks service we encourage children to make healthy food choices and move as appropriate to their individual needs and mobility. We refer families to organisations for advice and support with healthy cooking on a budget, weight management etc.”

“ Within everything that we do, our aim is always to provide a happy and safe place for all, where children and young people feel safe, and experience good mental health”

One provider stated that they did not have enough time to complete this question, however they expect this to be part of any future contract management of commissioned services.

6. Please give any suggestions for how service delivery could be improved for children, young people and families of Cheshire East.

Some providers stated that they were unable to comment on this question as they are not currently delivering services within Cheshire East.

Suggestions of how to improve service delivery include:

- More involvement of the families and specifically the disabled children regarding their needs and requirements.
- Extend services generally to cover more support at weekends
- Continue to bring commissioned providers closer together through networking sessions
- Families to have access to a ‘portal’ where they can leave reviews and feedback on the services they have accessed through Cheshire East Short Breaks Team.
- Adequate funding
- Commissioned services and other VCFS being seen as equal partners in terms of supporting children, YP and families to improve outcomes.
- Session observations - throughout the delivery it is paramount to adapt the activities to suit the needs of the children taking part. Checking that children are enjoying themselves and getting the most out of each activity session. This allows us to view what is not working well and focus on how we can develop the session to keep it family focused.