



The Short Breaks situation during COVID-19 – some answers to your questions.

Norfolk County Council and the Short Breaks Team have been receiving questions from families about the situation with Short Breaks during this challenging time. Family Voice Norfolk and SENSational Families have asked for more transparency about the ongoing situation and forward planning for Short Breaks for disabled children.

Is it possible to increase the current £500 available to eligible families for toys and play equipment, if the young person cannot access the contracted provision that is specified in their Short Breaks Plan?

All personal assistants and contracted Short Breaks providers continue to be paid during this time. At the moment providers are undertaking extra risk assessments and are experiencing significant increased expenditure on personal protective equipment along with implementing deep cleaning regimes. Additionally, provision is significantly disrupted due to social distancing and other external factors such as hand washing facilities, number of physical rooms available within settings and availability of staff (who may also be shielding, isolating or vulnerable).

Norfolk County Council has taken these steps to ensure provision does not have to close permanently, due to lack of funding. Therefore, the £500 exceptional COVID-19 spend that has enabled parents to buy toys and equipment cannot be increased. The ability to buy toys and equipment will finish on the 31 Aug 2020.

What is the situation with Direct Payments?

Personal assistants should have continued to be paid. If you have concerns or questions, please email the Direct Payment Support Service at DPCST@norfolk.gov.uk or call them on 01603 223392.

What if I have not been able to use all my Short Breaks funding?

Unfortunately, we will not be able to allow unused sessions or funds in your direct payment account to be used in your next year's Short Breaks budget.

How can we help reduce the risks?

We are asking all families in receipt of Short Breaks to wherever possible only use one provider, to reduce the risk of the infection spreading. We do appreciate in some circumstances this will not be possible. Local expectations at present are as follows:

- If your child or a member of your family is showing any symptoms of COVID-19 your child must not attend Short Breaks provision.
- In the above situation your family will need to be tested and a negative result supplied before resuming **any** Short Breaks. (www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19)
- If a child/worker becomes ill at Short Breaks, the contact details of everybody on site who has been in contact with the symptomatic child/worker will be supplied to NHS Track and Trace for associated testing, tracking and isolating.
- If a child/worker becomes ill at Short Breaks, it is likely that the provider will need to shut down for a minimum of 14 days.

If you do need any advice about this, please contact the Short Breaks Team. You can email them at cs.shortbreaks@norfolk.gov.uk or you can call them on 01603 692455.