



# Norfolk County Council



## **Short Breaks Team Further Update Relating to COVID-19 (Coronavirus)**

COVID-19 continues to have a significant impact on all services including Short Breaks. Our specialist Short Break providers closed down for several months initially and some are planning how to reopen and offer specialist Short Breaks again. The services they will be offering are going to be very different to what they would usually provide, due to the need for social distancing and ensuring staff and children are all safe in that setting.

In most cases, children will only be able to access a very limited number of sessions this year. We will continue to work closely with providers who are reopening, to ensure that wherever possible children will be offered some sessions up to 1<sup>st</sup> September 2020 initially.

As they will not have capacity to meet the needs of more children, we are not able to make new referrals to specialist Short Break providers at this time. We need to ensure that the children who currently receive these services have the opportunity to do so if sessions are available. We will however continue to offer the opportunity to all families to have a Direct Payment and will continue to review all our services on a regular basis during the pandemic.

We have therefore decided to continue to offer funding for toys and equipment to children who have a Short Breaks plan in place who may not be able to access their usual level of services at this time. At this point we are maintaining this offer up to 31 August 2020.

For any family with a prepaid debit card who still has funds in their Prepaid Financial Services (PFS) bank account, we can confirm that you can use the card to buy equipment. This includes outdoor play equipment, books, arts and craft materials, iPads, etc. to a maximum one off spend of up to £500 per child. This money will be deducted from your Short Breaks funding as usual. Please either keep the receipts or preferably upload them to your PFS account.

If you do not already have a prepaid card, we can buy items on your behalf. Please contact the Short Breaks team at [cs.shortbreaks@norfolk.gov.uk](mailto:cs.shortbreaks@norfolk.gov.uk) and ask for a toys and equipment form or call 01603 692455. Please be aware that due to remote working we are not always able to answer calls immediately.

We are also able to offer the same service to families of children aged 5 to 17 who submit a successful Short Breaks application by 31 August 2020.