

# Thurrock Council – Short Breaks Duty Statement

January 2018

## Mission statement

In Thurrock our vision for children and young people Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) is based on the belief that they are children first and foremost and that each has unique potential.

We believe they have the right to be protected from harm, have the best possible start in life, do well at school, have their health needs met, have access to leisure and recreational activities and to make a successful transition into adulthood. We believe they are also entitled to have opportunities and support to access further education and maximise their employment opportunities.

We also believe that children and young people should have their needs met as locally as possible and be provided with opportunities to participate fully in their local communities and their families appropriately supported in their care.

Thurrock Council is committed to the principle of inclusion. We will work to challenge all forms of discrimination. We will listen to the experiences and views of these groups of children and young people, their families and carers so that their needs can be met in a way that makes sense to them.

## CaPa Participation Group

CaPa is a small group of parents and carers of disabled children and young people. One of their main aims is to work alongside the Disabled Children's Service in Thurrock to keep other carers involved and informed about Short Breaks.

They meet regularly to discuss everything surrounding the Short Break programmes and the reforms to SEND. This very often includes their own experiences and views of the Short Breaks they receive.

They pass on information and feedback, good and bad in order to further improve the lives of disabled children and young people. There are parent and carer participation groups in almost every local authority across the UK. They welcome your comments and if you have a question, need help or advice then please contact them.

Sam Foster

Phone: 01375 389 869

Email: [capaparticipationgroup@gmail.com](mailto:capaparticipationgroup@gmail.com)

# What is a short break?

Short breaks:

- have been designed because it is recognised that there is an impact on everyday life if a child has a disability. This impact is as individual as each child and their family is unique
- offer a wide range of opportunities, activities and support so families have choices
- have been developed to offer children, young people and their families support, opportunities and activities
- are a part of everything else in the lives of children and young people with disabilities and their families
- can be anything from a couple of hours to overnight stays
- offer children and young people with disabilities the opportunity to have fun and take part in enjoyable experiences that contribute to their personal and social development away from their parents
- help children and young people with disabilities to develop new interests and take part in different activities
- give opportunities for children and young people to have something to do – especially at weekends and during the school holidays. They can see their friends and make new friends
- enable parents and families to have a break from their caring responsibilities
- help families catch up with everyday activities such as sleep, cleaning, shopping as well as having more time with their other children, their friends and hobbies

## Who are short breaks for?

Short breaks are for children and young people aged between 0 and 18 years old with disabilities and their families who reside within the boundaries of Thurrock Council.

### Comments from parents...

"Just having a couple of hours a week break has really helped me to have a break from my son's needs, thank you..."

### Comments from parents...

"My son was diagnosed as autistic at the age of 5 and is on the go all day and night. His challenging behaviour makes it impossible to take him with me to do simple but essential things like shopping. It also affects my daughter's revision for her A-levels as he spoils her art work and needs constant supervision.

The Sunshine Centre offered my son a place at the Saturday Club shortly after his diagnosis. He so looks forward to going, which makes me very happy as I then know I can catch up on essential duties while he is there. More importantly it allows my daughter to study/revise, complete her homework and maybe watch her favourite film in peace; just simple things are so much easier when he is at the Sunshine Centre.

Life with my son is extremely hard and I struggle on a daily basis with him, but it helps me to know that every 3 weeks he has Saturday Club, and recently he has started to attend Monday Club. I trust them to look after and care for my son, and he likes all the staff and feels comfortable there. I am so grateful that such a wonderful place exists."

# Background and legal context

Please refer to appendix 2.

## Definition of disability

A child or young person who has a permanent and substantial disability, in achieving his or her potential in areas of personal or social development, emotional or physical health, family life, education or employment due to:

- sensory impairments
- learning disabilities
- communication difficulties
- physical impairment
- chronic or life limiting condition
- complex health care needs

## Access to short breaks

There are short breaks that can be accessed by children, young people and their families where additional social work assessments are not required. These services are part of the Early Help Offer via the Prevention and Support Service.

There are short breaks and support services available where there is a need for referral and assessment via the Team for Disabled Children or the Short Break and Outreach Service (formerly the Sunshine Centre). There may be some complex or specific healthcare needs that require specialist assessments from Health care professionals.

## Eligibility criteria

Short Breaks are to be used as a preventative measure, to enhance the ability of parents to care for their disabled child and any other children they may have, and should not just be available to a few families in crisis.

Short breaks have two closely interlinked objectives; to promote the ability of the person with parental responsibility for the disabled child to care or continue to care for the disabled child and also to provide the child with new interests, relationships and activities which will lead to improved outcomes for the child as identified in the Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP). These objectives are usually complementary.

Short breaks reduce pressures on parents, allowing them to re-charge their batteries while their children gain confidence and enjoyment through new opportunities. Short breaks will also enable parents to care more effectively for any other children they may have.

Improved outcomes for children are likely to follow from participation in positive activities and the enjoyment of new experiences which foster friendships with other children and new supportive relationships with adults.

In making provision for short breaks, local authorities should have regard to the needs of persons with parental responsibility for a disabled child where:

- a) that person is unable to undertake any regular training, education or leisure activity because of the level of care required by the child and met by the parent
- b) that person is unable to undertake other activities that are essential to caring for other members of the family and the maintenance of the household because of the level of care required by the child and met by the parent
- c) a failure to provide a short break would compromise the carer's capacity to care for the disabled child; and the provision of breaks would enhance the quality of family life by enabling parents to care more effectively

## **What is the short breaks offer?**

### **Service objectives**

Service objectives are:

- to provide children and young people with severe and complex disabilities and/or life limiting conditions with positive experiences which promote their social and emotional development and independence
- to provide regular, reliable breaks for carers in order to maintain their well-being, and prevent carer or family breakdown
- to support parents in meeting their child's additional health and social care needs
- to ensure that universal activities are accessible to all disabled children and young people

### **Service principles**

Short break services should meet the Full Service Offer and:

- be centred on the needs of the children and their families
- promote equality, be culturally appropriate and meet the racial, cultural, linguistic and religious needs and requirements of children and families living in Thurrock
- use fair, understandable and transparent eligibility criteria
- be developed through consultation and accurately reflect the identified wishes of children, young people and their families in their delivery
- be developed in partnership between statutory and third sector agencies
- provide best value and be of high quality
- be reliable, flexible and easy to access
- be delivered by trained, skilled and experienced workforce

### **Families**

Families can:

- talk to the practitioner who knows them well and they can support by making direct contact by using a CAF (Common Assessment Framework)
- make the most of any existing meetings, such as Special Educational Needs Annual Review, Education, Health and Care Planning meeting (EHCP), Team around the Family, or Multi-Agency/Children in Need Meetings to discuss short breaks and how to access them.
- speak to the Short Break and Outreach Service staff or allocated social worker
- talk to the practitioner who knows them well and they can support by making direct contact with Social Care for advice on how to access services

## **Short breaks available without a social work assessment but with a common assessment**

This type of short break includes:

- befriending groups
- Sunshine Centre – after-school clubs, weekend clubs and holiday clubs
- Hannah's Place – after-school clubs, weekend clubs and holiday clubs
- summer play scheme

All the above services are available via the Short Break and Outreach Service.

All services are subject to the child/young person meeting the eligibility criteria.

### **Comments from parents...**

"I just wanted to say that my son enjoyed his 4 days at the summer play scheme this year and to say thank you to everyone involved. It was my son's first time and although he was initially apprehensive, when I collected him at the end of each day and asked him how he had enjoyed, I got the same one word reply – Fantastic"

..."Can't believe the play scheme went by so quickly. My son had a great few weeks. It was lovely to see him so full of life again. Thank you for making it so much fun and for taking care of him."

Where families (or practitioners on their behalf) make contact with the service providers, the providers will explain what they offer and complete a short referral form. Parents, children and young people can decide whether it is right for them or not. The services will then work with families to ensure they know about the individual needs of the child.

## **Short breaks and support that require additional social work assessments and referrals**

This type of short break and support includes:

- individual day time care and support that is regular and frequent
- support from specially trained support staff for a short length of time to help families support their child to achieve a special target such as being able to sleep better, behaviour management strategies
- overnight stays in a residential provision especially designed for children and young people with disabilities or complex health needs
- overnight stays in child's home
- shared care – care in another family home – during the day or at night

The assessment undertaken by the Team for Disabled Children will help determine the support needs of the child, young person and their family. These may be a combination of short breaks that are listed above.

The Team will also refer to the guide Threshold of Need Criteria for Disabled Children's Services. (Appendix 2) to ascertain whether there is a need for support and services from Social Care.

## Direct payments

If the assessment by Social Care identifies that families have needs for short breaks and support that requires a service to be commissioned by the Team for Disabled Children, there is the option of receiving direct payments instead.

Direct payments are a specified amount of money paid to parents to buy their own support services to meet the assessed need. Often this is used by parents to employ a carer/personal assistant who can look after their child either at home or out and about for the agreed number of hours. Families who chose to access direct payments are supported with these via We are Purple. They offer a payroll service and advice and guidance on the role of being an employer.

### Comments from parents...

"Our family have greatly benefitted from short breaks... With the aid of direct payments, quite truthfully, we have been able to keep our daughter at home. It has also enabled us to support our other daughter through a recent illness"

"Direct payments can be a very useful and flexible way for parents to arrange care at a time and in a way that suits them. Providing and caring for a disabled child brings a lot of additional expense which the direct payments can alleviate. The Sunshine Centre is a particularly valuable resource: the staff are understanding and flexible and know how to engage with parents.

If you have a child who requires a lot of time and attention, it's really important to have breaks so you can just do simple things like go out to lunch, but you also need to be confident that your child is being well looked after and is having a good time too. It's important that parents of disabled children have time to themselves, so they can recharge their batteries and be better parents too."

## Is there a charge for short breaks?

Families will not have to pay for any additional support their child receives to help them participate in their chosen leisure activity.

Families are expected to pay the same ordinary childcare rates as anyone else receiving childcare. Families will not have to pay for any additional support their child may require.

Families may be asked to contribute financially for some clubs and holiday activities. Some organisations charge an hourly fee or request a voluntary contribution. Please contact the clubs or activities directly for further information.

Families will not have to pay for the day time support from an individual carer who comes into your home and either looks after your child at home or takes your child out about, if this is an assessed need and referred from the Team for Disabled Children.

Families will not have to pay for the day time support that is a few hours, not necessarily regular or frequent, from an individual carer who comes to your home and either looks after your child or takes your child out. Families will have to pay for the activity for their child during this time.

**Clare Moore,**  
**Strategic Lead. Disabled Children's Service**

# **Appendix 1 – Short Break Services**

## **Allied Health Care**

Provide sitting and befriending services to children and young people.

Phone: 01268 581 170

## **Hamelin Outreach service**

Provide sitting and befriending services to children, young people and their families.

Phone: 01277 651 266

## **Hamelin House**

Offers overnight stay in a Residential Setting- Billericay

Phone: 01277 651 266

## **EPIC (Child Care Respite Services)**

Phone: 01245 398 770

## **Little Havens Children's Hospice**

Short break services to children and young people with life-limiting conditions. Most of the children with life limiting conditions, or who require palliative care services, will be disabled.

Phone: 01702 552 200

## **Direct payments**

Direct payments are payments for disabled children who have been assessed as needing help from social care, but who have decided they would like to arrange and pay for their own care and support instead of receiving it directly from Thurrock Council.

Phone: 01375 659 637 – Team for Disabled Children

## **Short Break and Outreach Service**

The Short Break and Outreach Service is an integrated child development and disability service based across two sites: the Sunshine Centre at Civic Square Tilbury and Hannah's Place, Buxton Road, Grays. They are part of Thurrock Council's Children's Services – the Team for Disabled Children – with links with professionals from Health and Education.

The focus is primarily on supporting families to care for their children either at the settings or in their local community, so the children have the same opportunities to participate in activities being enjoyed by their mainstream peers. Staff are happy to answer any queries you might have.

## **Sunshine Centre, Tilbury – services for children up to Year 6**

The Sunshine Centre supports disabled children and their families. The information officer based at the centre is available for parents and carers to contact for any information they may need regarding their child and disability matters, such as services available locally, nationally, voluntary or statutory, benefits and leisure.

### **Monday Club**

Come and have some fun on a Monday! There are lots to do, including cooking, arts and crafts, games, adventures and outings. For children in school years 1 to 6.

### **Young Carers**

For children aged from 4 to 8 Years who have either a disabled parent or sibling or a parent who is dependent on drugs or alcohol or who has a mental health condition. Thursdays, 4pm to 6pm.

### **Saturday Club**

Offering a range of activities for children, divided into school years: reception to year 2; years 3 to 6 and 7+. There is also a group for children who have complex physical and medical needs.

Phone: 01375 413 525

Email: [sunshinecentre@thurrock.gov.uk](mailto:sunshinecentre@thurrock.gov.uk)

Web: [thurrock.gov.uk/sunshinecentre](http://thurrock.gov.uk/sunshinecentre)

## **Hannah's Place, Grays – services for children in Year 7+**

### **Youth club**

Youth Club offers young people a place to hang out and be with their friends. As part of this the young people also eat together enhancing the social aspect and supporting social interactions. Youth club meets on Tuesday evening, 5pm to 7:30pm and Wednesday evening 4pm to 6pm. A donation of £3 is suggested towards the food and all specialist diets.

### **Saturday Club**

The Saturday Club for this age group runs out of Hannah's Place. This offers Young People an age appropriate space for them to spend time with their friends at the weekends. A donation of £5 per session is suggested.

### **Complex needs**

This group offers activities for children and young people with the most complex physical and medical needs. A donation of £5 per session is suggested.

### **After school provision**

This provision is about offering support to parents/ carers that wish to work and have children older than that which would normally require child care regardless of disability. It is recognised that there are some parents, who because their child's disability, struggle to find appropriate childcare for their older child who could ordinarily be left at home after school until their parent/ carer returns from work.



It links to the three after school clubs that are offered at Hannah's Place and provides care between the young person finishing school and the start of the club. This provision is offered Tuesday, Wednesday during term time.

## **Befriending**

Befriending is about accessing the community. It is aimed at children and young people aged 8-18 who require less support. It is made up of small groups of children and young people who can spend time together in an environment where social interactions can be supported and friendships can be nurtured. Groups include:

- **Lucky Stars** – for children aged 8 to 11 meeting every other Tuesday after school and one Saturday a month
- **Supersonic** – for children aged 11 to 14, meeting on every other Wednesday after school and one Saturday a month
- **New York Peeps** – for young people aged 14 to 18, meeting every other Friday evening and 1 Saturday a month
- **School Holidays** – groups run across both sites and all age groups during the school holidays, offering respite, play and recreational activities with sessions arranged by age, with each age group from 10am to 3pm an allocated day

## **Summer play scheme**

The play scheme runs out of the Short Break and Outreach Service across both bases. It offers play and recreational opportunities for children with disabilities. The children enjoy days out to places that are age and ability appropriate but also fun and engaging. As well as days out the children are offered play sessions at base, these may involve sensory play, arts and crafts and specialist activities. The sessions run from Monday to Thursday from 10.am to 3.pm. There is a cost to this service however it is subsidised and represents excellent value for money.

The play scheme is broken into groups based upon age. The groups are: 4-8, 9-12 and 13-18 (19 if still in full time education). The play scheme recruits staff with high levels of experience, qualifications and enthusiasm to support the fulltime centre staffs who lead each group.

The service is currently looking towards its 8th year of running the Play scheme and continues to develop and improve the service year on year. Booking is completed via the Sunshine Centre For further information please contact the Sunshine Centre directly. There is a daily charge.

## **Shared Care**

Shared Care provides vital support to disabled children, young people and their families by offering regular short breaks. These can be anything from a few hours per week to a few days per month, at intervals that work for families.

Contact the Fostering Team, Thurrock Council

## **Family Information Service (FIS)**

The Family Information Service (FIS) provides free impartial information and advice on childcare and family support services in Thurrock. The service is aimed at parents/carers (and prospective parents) of children up to their 20th birthday – this includes childcare registered with Ofsted, including child minders, day nurseries, pre-schools, out of school clubs and holiday schemes.

Phone: 01375 652 801 – information and guidance helpline

Email: [fis@thurrock.gov.uk](mailto:fis@thurrock.gov.uk)

Web: [thurrock.gov.uk/fis](http://thurrock.gov.uk/fis)

## Education, health and care plans

New education, health and care plans have been introduced for children and young people aged 0 to 25. These replace statements of special educational need, and the learning difficulties assessments for young people entering college.

A new way of working looks at children and young people's needs, bringing together education, health and social care support into a single plan.

It is more family-focused, with emphasis on:

- individual goals for children
- improving their opportunities for education and employment
- introducing the opportunity for personal budgets to support these plans

The main point of contact for these changes, for carers and parents in Thurrock, is through the CaPa Participation Group. This group brings together representation from carers and parents across all areas of SEND. There are a number of consultations taking place at venues across Thurrock. You can contact CaPa at:

CaPa Participation Group, The Beehive Resource Centre, West Street, Grays, RM17 6XP

Phone: 01375 389 869

Email: [capaparticipationgroup@gmail.com](mailto:capaparticipationgroup@gmail.com)

The full code of practice for the SEND reforms can be found at the GOV.UK website:

[www.gov.uk/government/publications/send-code-of-practice-0-to-25](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/send-code-of-practice-0-to-25)

*"This is the beginning of a journey, and the vast majority of local authorities have told us they are ready and parents have been supportive over the changes"*

(Children and Families minister, Edward Timson MP)

## OASIS – Open Access Substance Information Service and drop-in

Oasis is a free confidential open access substance misuse and alcohol service for adults. Trained staff are available to provide information advice and support regarding drugs and alcohol. You can either call in or phone to receive help with any problems you may be experiencing.

Phone: 01375 374 411, or 0800 633 5202 for Thurrock 24/7 substance misuse helpline

Email: [oasis@opendoorservices.co.uk](mailto:oasis@opendoorservices.co.uk)

Web: [opendoorthurrock.co.uk](http://opendoorthurrock.co.uk)

## Changing Pathways – domestic abuse drop-in

This is a drop-in for women who have experienced domestic abuse, offering advice and support on legal matters, financial matters, employment, housing, safety and planning. No referral needed.

Phone: 07875 342 015

Web: [changingpathways.org](http://changingpathways.org)

## **Aveley Children's Centre**

Aveley Primary School, Stifford Road, Aveley, RM15 4AA

Phone: 01375 413 936

Email: [aveleycc@thurrock.gov.uk](mailto:aveleycc@thurrock.gov.uk)

Web: [thurrock.gov.uk/childrens-centres/aveley-childrens-centre](http://thurrock.gov.uk/childrens-centres/aveley-childrens-centre)

## **Chadwell Children's Centre**

Claudian Way, Chadwell St Mary, Grays, RM16 4QE

Phone: 07912 781 446

Email: [chadwellcc@thurrock.gov.uk](mailto:chadwellcc@thurrock.gov.uk)

Web: [thurrock.gov.uk/childrens-centres/chadwell-childrens-centre](http://thurrock.gov.uk/childrens-centres/chadwell-childrens-centre)

## **East Tilbury Children's Centre**

East Tilbury Village Hall, Princess Avenue, East Tilbury, Tilbury, RM18 8ST

Phone: 01375 858 243

Email: [tilburycc@thurrock.gov.uk](mailto:tilburycc@thurrock.gov.uk)

Web: [thurrock.gov.uk/childrens-centres/east-tilbury-village-hall](http://thurrock.gov.uk/childrens-centres/east-tilbury-village-hall)

## **Ockendon Children's Centre**

2a Afton Drive, South Ockendon, RM15 5PA

Phone: 01375 413 936

Email: [ockendoncc@thurrock.gov.uk](mailto:ockendoncc@thurrock.gov.uk)

Web: [thurrock.gov.uk/childrens-centres/ockendon-childrens-centre](http://thurrock.gov.uk/childrens-centres/ockendon-childrens-centre)

## **Purfleet Children's Centre**

Centurion Way, Purfleet, RM19 1PF

Phone: 07912 781 447

Email: [purfleetcc@thurrock.gov.uk](mailto:purfleetcc@thurrock.gov.uk)

Web: [thurrock.gov.uk/childrens-centres/purfleet-childrens-centre](http://thurrock.gov.uk/childrens-centres/purfleet-childrens-centre)

## **Stanford Children's Centre**

Copland Road, Stanford-le-Hope, SS17 0DF

Phone: 07912 781 446

Email: [stanfordcc@thurrock.gov.uk](mailto:stanfordcc@thurrock.gov.uk)

Web: [thurrock.gov.uk/childrens-centres/stanford-childrens-centre](http://thurrock.gov.uk/childrens-centres/stanford-childrens-centre)

## **Stifford Children's Centre**

Parker Road, Grays, RM17 5YN

Phone: 01375 387 894

Email: [thamesidecc@thurrock.gov.uk](mailto:thamesidecc@thurrock.gov.uk)

Web: [thurrock.gov.uk/childrens-centres/stifford-childrens-centre](http://thurrock.gov.uk/childrens-centres/stifford-childrens-centre)

## **Thameside Children's Centre**

Thameside Primary School, Manor Road, Grays, RM17 6EF

Phone: 01375 387 894

Email: [thamesidecc@thurrock.gov.uk](mailto:thamesidecc@thurrock.gov.uk)

Web: [thurrock.gov.uk/childrens-centres/thameside-childrens-centre](http://thurrock.gov.uk/childrens-centres/thameside-childrens-centre)

## **Tilbury Children's Centre**

Anchor Field, London Road, Tilbury, RM18 8EY

Phone: 01375 858 243

Email: [tilburycc@thurrock.gov.uk](mailto:tilburycc@thurrock.gov.uk)

Web: [thurrock.gov.uk/childrens-centres/tilbury-childrens-centre](http://thurrock.gov.uk/childrens-centres/tilbury-childrens-centre)

## Appendix 2 – Background, legal and policy context

- 1.1. Paragraph 6 of Schedule 2 to the Children Act 1989 (the 1989 Act) imposes a duty on local authorities to provide, as part of the range of services they provide for families, breaks from caring to assist parents and others who provide care for disabled children to continue to do so, or to do so more effectively.
- 1.2. The intention is that breaks should not only be provided to those struggling to care for disabled children but also to those for whom a break from their caring responsibilities will improve the quality of the care they provide.
- 1.3. Local authorities must provide these services to carers in accordance with regulations.

### Status of the guidance

- 1.4 The guidance is issued under section 7 of the Local Authority Social Services Act 1970, and therefore local authorities are required to act in accordance with this guidance.
- 1.5 Although the duty to provide breaks lies with local authorities, that duty can be implemented most effectively through a partnership between the authority, the Primary Care Trust (PCT) and other relevant partners of the local authority.
- 1.6 Section 10 of the Children Act 2004 requires local authorities to make arrangements with its relevant partners to promote co-operation, with a view to improving the well-being of children in the authority's area.
- 1.7 In turn, section 10 also requires the relevant partners of a local authority in England to co-operate with the local authority in this regard.
- 1.8 The Short Breaks Regulations 2011 and the Guidance address the following aspects of the duty to provide breaks:
  - Who should be considered for access to breaks from caring;
  - The range of short breaks the local authority should provide, so far as it is reasonably possible; and
  - How the LA should assess the need for short breaks in its area.

### Legal context

#### The Children Act 1989 (the 1989 Act)

- 3.1 Short breaks are provided by local authorities under Part 3 of the 1989 Act.
- 3.2 Part 3 of the 1989 Act sets out local authorities' powers and duties to provide support services for children in need and their families in order to safeguard and promote the welfare of such children.
- 3.3 Section 17 of the 1989 Act requires local authorities to provide a range of services to assist children in need.
- 3.4 Section 17(1) sets out the general duty of local authorities to 'safeguard and promote the welfare of children within their area who are in need', and 'so far as is consistent with that

duty to promote the upbringing of such children by their families by providing a range and level of services appropriate to those children's needs.'

- 3.5 Section 17(3) allows services to be provided directly to children or to a member of their family as long as they are provided with a view to safeguarding or promoting the welfare of the child.
- 3.6 The definition of children in need at section 17 includes children who are disabled within the meaning of the 1989 Act.
- 3.7 Schedule 2 to the 1989 Act provides detail about how the local authorities should provide services for families.
- 3.8 Section 25 of the Children and Young Persons Act 2008 amends paragraph 6 of Schedule 2 to the 1989 Act, Provision for disabled children and paragraph 1 now reads:
  - "6 (1) Every local authority shall provide services designed—
  - "(a) To minimise the effect on disabled children within their area of their disabilities;
  - "(b) To give such children the opportunity to lead lives which are as normal as possible.
  - "(c) to assist individuals who provide care for such children to continue to do so, or to do so more effectively, by giving them breaks from caring."
- 3.9 Short breaks are a key service but one of a range of services local authorities are required to provide in order to meet the range of needs presented by disabled children and their families.
- 3.10 The 1989 Act defines a child as 'a person under the age of 18'. Short breaks provision therefore should be made in respect of such individuals.

## **Children and Families Act 2014**

The Children and Families Act offers simpler, improved and consistent help for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

As well as protecting the schools budget, it will extend provision from birth to 25 years of age. This will give families greater choice in decisions and ensure needs are properly met.

The new system will extend rights and protection to young people by introducing a new education, health and care plan. Professionals will also provide more tailored support to families, giving them the help and assistance they need. (GOV.UK).

The 'Local Offer' is a statutory obligation for all Local Authorities coming out of the Children and Family Act 2014.

### **'Local offer' – how special needs support is changing**

A change in the law means there are major changes to the way support is provided in Thurrock for children and young people with special educational needs or disabilities (SEND) from September 2014. This is available via the Family Information Service.