

Staffordshire County Council

Children & Families (Social Care) Services

Policy & Procedures – Children’s Disability Services

Part Five, Section 7 - Disabled Children’s Short Break Services

1. Legislative Framework

- 1.1 Staffordshire County Council is required to provide short break services by the 2008 Children and Young Person’s Act (2008). These services are available to any person under the age of 18 and who are therefore legally defined as a child. (1989 Act).
- 1.2 Other relevant legislation: Children Act 1989, the Adoption and Children Act (2002), the Children Act (2004), the Chronically Sick & Disabled Person’s Act (1970), the Disability Discrimination Act (1995), Childcare Act (2006), the Carers and Disabled Children’s Act (2000), the Education Act (1996) and the Education Inspections Act (2006).

2. Vision

- 2.1 Our Vision for Staffordshire is:

‘Disabled children and young people and their families are supported to live as ordinary lives as possible, living, playing, learning and contributing alongside their peers and within their communities’.

- 2.2 Short break services are defined as any activity that supports disabled children and young people, in their lives, homes and communities. The short break service will be as varied as the children, and young people who need the support.

- 2.3 In line with government guidance Staffordshire County Council endorses the following:

This standard relates to children and young people who are disabled and/or those with complex health needs, including children and young people with learning disabilities, autistic spectrum disorders, sensory impairments, physical impairments and emotional/behavioural disorders. Many disabled children have no need for ongoing treatment and/or nursing care and help with everyday activities. Some disabled children will also be children in special circumstances. NSF 8 (2004).

2.4 In addition we recognise that the following groups are at most risk of social exclusion.

(a) Children and young people with Autistic Spectrum Disorders (ASD). These are likely to have other impairments, such as severe learning disabilities, or have behaviour which is challenging. (Not all children on the Autistic Spectrum will require specialist additional short break services).

(b) Children and young people with complex health needs which includes those with disability and life-limiting conditions who have reached the palliative care stage of their life cycle, as well as other children and young people with complex health needs as well as other impairments – physical, cognitive or sensory impairments.

(c) Children and young people aged 11+ with moving and handling needs that will require equipment and adaptations. These children are likely to have physical impairments, and many of them will also have cognitive impairments and/or sensory impairments.

(d) Children and young people where challenging behaviour is associated with other impairments (e.g. severe learning disability). Children in this group will display behaviour which challenges services or behaviour which causes injury to themselves or others.

(e) Young people aged 14+. The young people who fall into this group are young people who are severely disabled and require services that are appropriate to their age.

3. Access to Short Break Services

3.1 We try to make access to short breaks and positive activities as simple as possible for children young people and their families. We will try to ensure that the professionals are working together for children, young people and their families, so that they do not have to keep telling their story, and that the planning and delivery of services are co-ordinated.

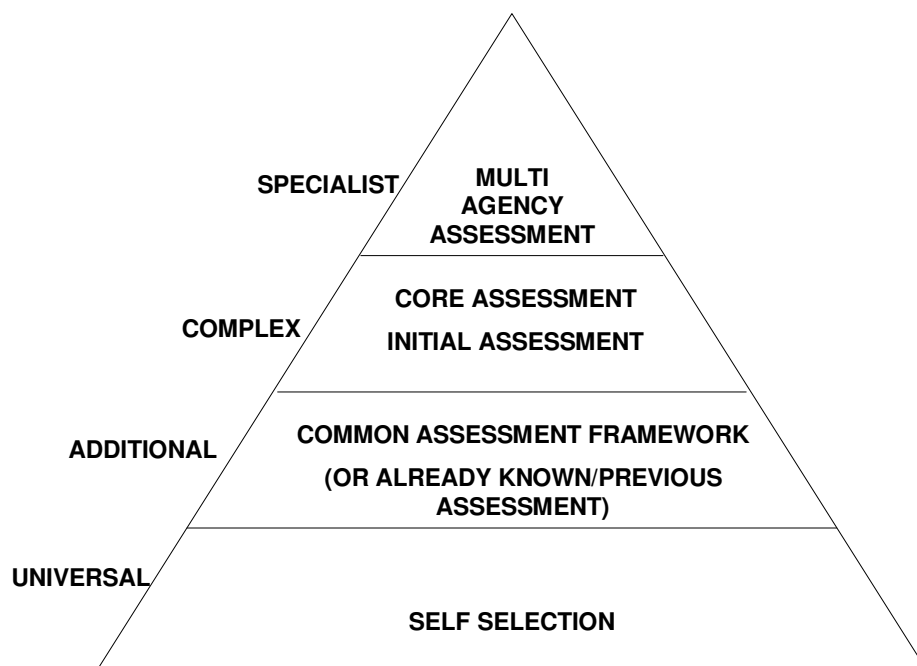
3.2 We believe that disabled children and young people and their families do not always require a social worker to access short break services. We have organised short break services to reflect the **Children's Trust Continuum of Need Framework**. We recognise that in the best interests of disabled children, young people and their families, that services should be local, timely, and inclusive and promote independence.

3.3 We know that children, young people and their families have different needs at different times of their lives and therefore short break services will reflect these changes. We will always strive to ensure that we

promote independence and positive experiences for children and young people.

- 3.4 We also recognise that any services we provide will be additional to the support that children and young people can expect from their families. As a large Local Authority, with a variety of provision in different areas, we will strive to be consistent in the outcomes for children and young people and their families, but acknowledge that different types of short break services exist within different parts of the county.

4. **Assessment Process**



- 4.1 Assessment processes will be carried out in line with the relevant guidance, i.e. the 'Framework of Need for the Assessment of Children in Need and their Families' (DoH 2000); the 'Common Assessment Framework for Children and Young People' (DCSF 2009); the 'National Framework for Children and Young People's Continuing Care' (DoH 2010) and the 'Special Educational Needs Code of Practice' (DES 2001).

- 4.2 Assessment will be proportionate to the service being offered.

5. **Decision-Making Processes**

- 5.1 **Universal Services** – The child, young person or their families' access services independently.
- 5.2 **Additional Services** – Services that are targeted at children, young people and families who are already known. Services have clear processes to deal with oversubscription.
- 5.3 **Complex Services** – Social Care Team Manager or Resource Panel/Management Overview Panel allocate resources based on assessed need, and in line with the **Social Care Eligibility Criteria**.
- 5.4 **Specialist Services** – Joint agreement with Health and/or Education to deliver short break services. Agreed via the **Complex Needs Panel**.

6. **Types of Short Break (link with Sufficiency Statement)**

6.1 Universal Short Breaks Services

Children, young people and their families self select their use of these services, e.g. going to a soft play area, young person accessing a youth club in their area, activities provided by Community and Learning Partnerships (C&LPs) etc.

6.2 Targeted Short Break Services

Children, young people and their families are targeted for these services because of information already known to services, or as a result of a Common Assessment Framework (CAF). For example, short break services provided by special schools, tailored activities for children, young people with ASD and their families, specialist youth work support, buddying, mentoring, activity grants/individual budgets, and bookable activities.

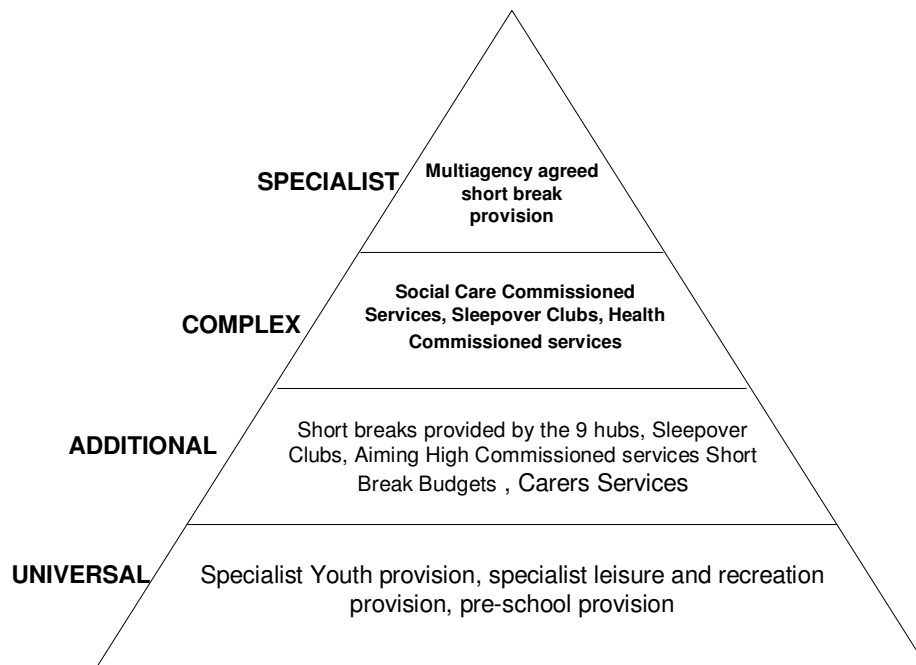
6.3 Complex Short Break Services

Accessed via Children's Social Care due to the severe disability of the child or young person. The child or young person has to rely on others to meet their needs and/or there are significant social issues. For example, they need support at home with moving and handling issues, they need emergency support, direct payments/individual budgets, overnight short breaks. These services are single funded services by social care.

6.4 Specialist Short break Services

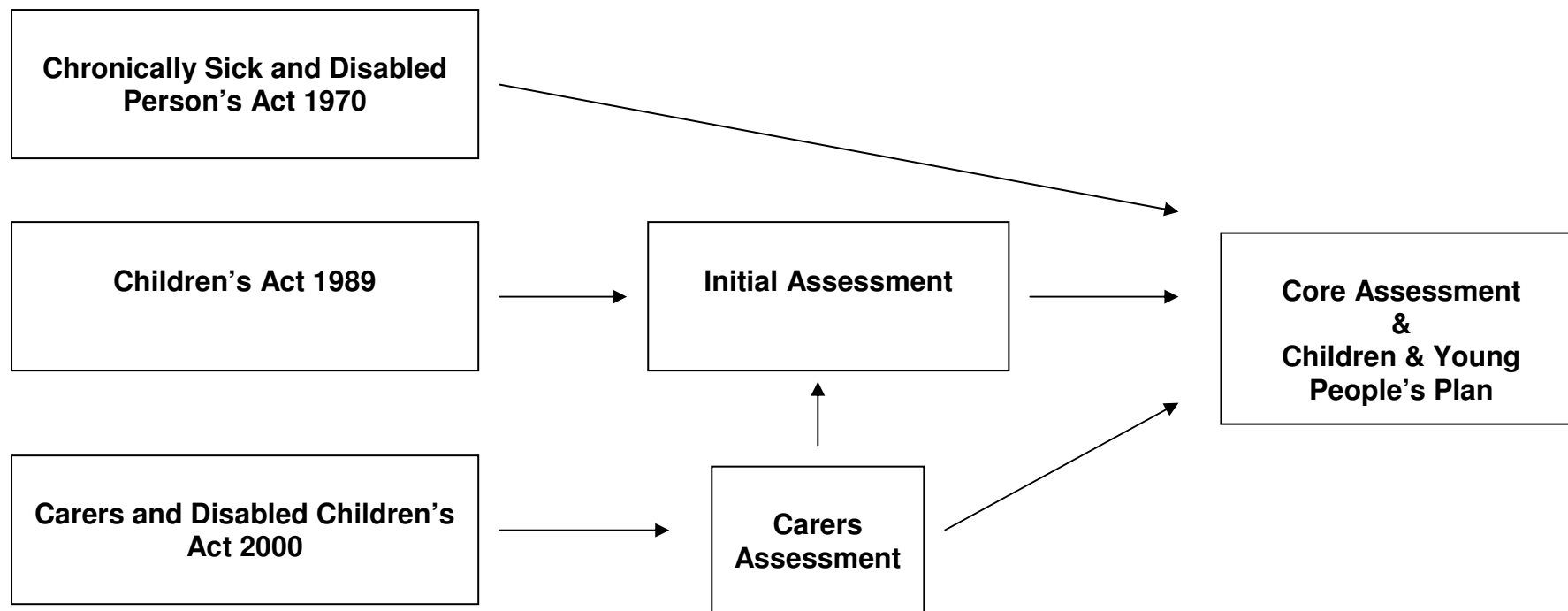
This would be short break support that is jointly or triple funded between health, social care and education. It would also include short

break services provided as part of a Child Protection Plan and short breaks provided as a result of a joint assessment process under the National Framework for Children’s and Young People’s Continuing Care.



Note: A child, young person or their family can access short breaks across a range of tiers of service provision, up to the tier of their assessment.

SOCIAL CARE ASSESSMENTS
LEGAL FRAMEWORK



1. If providing short break services under Children Act 1989, this can be done either via an Initial or Core Assessment (Core Assessment would be required on most complex needs or issues of significant work).
2. If providing short break services as a result of the Chronically Sick and Disabled Person's Act 1970, then Staffordshire would provide services where there are issues of significant harm to be addressed.
3. Any parent or carer can request a Carer's Assessment. This would be additional to an Initial or Core Assessment.
4. All services provision would be reviewed in line with the principles of the Children Act 1989, and any such guidance that exists at the time.