



**Take-A-Break:
Consultation on the
outcome of our review of
short breaks for adults
with a learning disability
and their carers**

**Consultation Document
5 September 2016 – 28 November 2016**

Foreword



We are proud of the progress we have made over the last 10 years to enable people with a learning disability to lead fulfilling lives as citizens, with the same rights as anyone else. Individuals now have greater choice and control over how they are supported to live their lives and be more independent. Many adults with a learning disability now have their own tenancies and are in employment. We want to build on this and continue to support people to become more independent and be part of their communities, at the same time as supporting carers and families.

We know how important having a break can be to the people we support and their families. We have carried out a review of our short breaks service and as part of the review we have engaged with service users and carers to make sure their views help to shape the service in the future. Indeed this Review has only been possible through active engagement with people with a learning disability and their carers.

Now that we have reviewed our short break service we would like to consult with you on the outcome and how we propose to provide short breaks in the future. We aim to provide a more flexible and tailored short break service and we look forward to the period of consultation to give us an opportunity to listen to your views.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Oscar Donnelly'.

Oscar Donnelly

Director of Mental Health, Learning Disability and Community Wellbeing

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Alternative formats

An Easy read version of this document is available on our website at www.northerntrust.hsc.net or by contacting the Equality Unit – contact details are below. Upon request the document can be provided in other formats including Braille, large print, computer disk, audio tape or in another language for anyone not fluent in English.

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About the Trust

The Northern Health and Social Care Trust became operational on 1 April 2007. The Trust covers four local council areas and provides services for a population of over 465,000. Our services are provided from a number of local, community and acute hospitals and a large number of community based settings with much of the service also provided in people's own homes.

Our Vision

“To deliver excellent integrated services in partnership with our community.”

We develop and deliver services adopting **‘Core’** values:

- We will treat the people who use our services and our colleagues with compassion;
- We will display openness and honesty with our patients, clients and colleagues, acting with integrity, providing professional, high quality services and support;
- We will respect the dignity, diversity and individuality of all our patients, clients and colleagues promoting equality and addressing inequality;
- We will strive for excellence, as a community of leaders, through consistent delivery of services and applied learning.

Background

Most people with a learning disability live in their family home and although family carers have told us they find their caring role rewarding, many talk about the impact caring can have on their physical and emotional wellbeing. For many carers, short break (respite) services have been an essential element of support, providing carers with much needed respite from their caring duties. Short break services also provide adults with learning disabilities with opportunities to meet new people and enjoy new experiences.

The number of people with a learning disability is increasing and the good news is that people with a learning disability, including those with complex health needs and challenging behaviours, are living longer. It is also good news that there are less people living in institutional care but the demand for short break services continues to rise.

The Equal Lives Report (2005) indicates that respite services need to be developed in a manner that moves away from an over reliance on inflexible residential provision to the provision of a menu of short break services that include home based support, community based activity, family placements and residential options.

The report by the Patient Client Council on Respite (Short Breaks), (2011) indicated that parents, carers and families of people with a learning disability felt that access to respite is essential. Carers said that respite, when they do access it, is provided to a good quality. Carers from the Northern Trust felt that respite services should be improved through greater availability, more flexibility and more local respite facilities.

We have completed a review of our short break service and have engaged with service users, carers and staff to get their views on how we should provide short breaks in the future. A full copy of our review can be found on our website or by contacting the Equality Unit – contact details above.

How we currently provide our short break services

We provide a variety of short breaks to over five hundred adults with a learning disability some of which may have complex health needs or challenging behaviour. We currently provide bed based services in Ellis Court Carrickfergus and Hollybank in Magherafelt. We also book some bed based services for people with complex needs and challenging behaviour from independent sector nursing and residential homes. Our 'Share the Care' service provides family based short breaks ranging

from day sitting to overnight, weekend and longer stays. The Share the Care service is available in the Causeway and Ballymena areas. There is also limited availability in the Mid Ulster and East Antrim areas.

We also have alternative arrangements that provide choice and flexibility including direct payments allocations, use of the independent living fund and third party bespoke arrangements when there is a risk of family or carer breakdown.

What our review of short break services told us and what we recommend

As part of our review we looked at how our current short break service is used and concluded that:

- There is a high level of demand for short breaks.
- We provide services for people with a wide range of needs and we must prioritise those with the greatest need.
- People living in different areas of the Trust do not have equal access to short breaks.

The Review resulted in recommendations which are aimed at making sure that the money we spend on short breaks is targeted in the right way. We also want to ensure best practice in the way that we commission and develop our service and in the way that we support our service users and carers. The key recommendations from our review are set out below.

- We will prioritise services for those who are most in need. We will do this by developing and implementing a new operational policy which is based on a person centred approach and carers' assessed needs.
- We will make sure that a carer's needs are assessed to find out what type of short break service is required and we will provide better information for carers on the type of short break services available.

- We will promote choice in our short breaks through the use of self-directed support which allows people to choose how their support is provided, and gives them as much control as they want of their individual budget.
- We will develop our bed based short break service for people with challenging behaviours. We will make sure our buildings are fit for this purpose and that our staff are properly trained to support people with challenging behaviour.
- We will buy alternative short break services for people with complex needs who need nursing home care or care in specialist residential settings from the independent sector. These will be longer term arrangements to allow for stability and continuity in care for these very vulnerable people.
- We will develop our 'Share the Care' service across the Trust for those with less complex needs to provide more flexibility and choice for service users, their carers and families.
- We will provide short break services that include day activities so that people will not have to attend their day care centre when they are on a short break.
- We will continue an engagement approach by developing a reference group inclusive of people with learning disability and their carers to help explore the development of innovative short break services delivered through community partnership approaches.
- We will bring to the attention of the DHSSPS and Commissioner(s) the increasing requirement for short break services to reflect the increasing needs of our population.

Impact on our staff

These proposals will have minimal impact on our staff. Trust staff working in short break services are trained to support service users with a variety of complex needs and challenging behaviors. Services are provided in many environments and are supported by community learning disability teams and specialist services such as the Positive Behavior Support Services.

Our Management of Change Human Resource Framework will provide a robust and transparent process for those staff who may be affected. The Trust has systems in place to support staff through the changes. A communication strategy will make sure that staff are kept fully informed of any proposed action and developments. Staff will also have regular communication meetings with their managers to discuss plans, influence the planning process and air their concerns. The Trust will work in partnership with trade unions to assess the impact on staff and to put robust mitigating measures in place.

Involving you

During our Review we talked and listened to the people who use our short break services and their carers. We also talked to a number of public representatives and the independent service providers who provide services on our behalf.

We held a stakeholder event with a number of voluntary and independent organisations, short break providers, service user representatives and carers groups. This provided the opportunity for those with an interest in the short break service to feed directly into the review process.

We also held a workshop for service users so they could give their views about the current provision of short breaks. This workshop was hosted by Compass Advocacy Network (CAN) group and the feedback we got has shaped our proposals.

The make sure that the views of family and carers were taken into account during the review we held six engagement meetings to explore

their perspectives on the development of future short break provision.

The people who use our services told us that our short breaks service should be more flexible, provide more things to do and be closer to home. Family carers told us how much they valued short breaks. They also felt that short breaks should be more flexible and meet the needs of their family. Some carers told us that they would like to explore and experience more innovative short breaks. Others told us they would like more of the traditional types of short breaks service.

Promoting equality and human rights

We are committed to promoting equality of opportunity, good relations and human rights in all aspects of our work and we have equality screened these proposals as required under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998. The screening process is used to identify if proposals are likely to have an impact on equality of opportunity or good relations. Screening assesses the likely impact as major, minor or none. We believe that these proposals will have a minor impact on service users. A copy of the equality screening template can be found on our website www.northerntrust.hscni.net. The Trust invites views on this screening assessment and will consider all feedback received during the consultation period which runs to 28 November 2016.

Formal consultation and engagement

We are consulting on the outcome of our review of short breaks for adults with a learning disability over a 12 week period from 5 September 2016 to 28 November 2016. The purpose of this consultation is to make sure that people who use short break services, and their carers, have the opportunity to influence the development of future short break services.

During the consultation period, we are seeking the views of people who use short break services, their families, carers, staff, voluntary organisations and the general public.

We want to consult as widely as possible on the recommendations as follows.

- This consultation document and an easy read version of the document will be issued to all consultees listed on the Trust's consultation database detailing the consultation process – a list of consultees can be found on the Trust's website or by contacting the Equality Unit (contact details below).
- A copy of this consultation document and easy read version is available on the Trust's website at <http://www.northerntrust.hscni.net>.
- The Trust will organise individual face to face consultations where necessary
- Information about the consultation process will be disseminated to carers
- The Trust will ensure a targeted consultation process with service users

For those who wish to provide written feedback, a comments form, also available in easy read, is available on the Trust Website at <http://www.northerntrust.hscni.net>. We welcome your feedback in any format. You can respond to the consultation document by e-mail, letter or fax as follows:

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Before you submit your response, please read the section on Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the confidentiality of responses to public consultation exercises at the end of the comments form.

In compliance with legislative requirements, when making any final decision the Trust will take into account the feedback received from this consultation process. A consultation feedback report will be published on the Trust web site.

If you have any queries about this document, and its availability in alternative formats (including Braille, disk and audio cassette, and in minority languages to meet the needs of those who are not fluent in English) then please contact the Equality Unit.

our vision

To deliver excellent integrated services
in partnership with our community

our values


COMPASSION

OPENNESS

RESPECT

EXCELLENCE

www.northerntrust.hscni.net

 Northern Health and Social Care Trust

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If you would like to give feedback on any of our
services please contact:

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