



Short Breaks Capital Programme: Planning and Practice

What the product is: A set of prompts to support the capital planning process, including strategic planning, partnerships, project management and tendering and procurement. These are illustrated by a variety of case studies.

How the product can be used: This product provides quick guidance and examples on use of capital within the Short breaks programme. It is intended to supplement the formal guidance contained in the Aiming High for Disabled Children Short Breaks Implementation Guidance (DCSF, 2008), along with the Memorandum of Grant (Feb 2009) and any local authority/PCT policies and procedures.

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Introduction to TDC Product Suite

This is one of a range of products that Together for Disabled Children (TDC) is developing to support local authority and health service teams to transform their short breaks services and embed parent participation.

The suite builds on existing guidance and experiential learning from the field of practice.

The aims of the product suite are to:

- provide practical help and resources for local authority and health staff to use the new resources available to really transform the experience of and access short breaks for disabled children
- ensure that services established are sustainable and successful and meet the needs of children, young people and their families

The product suite focuses on issues that local areas themselves have identified as being particularly challenging.

We greatly appreciate the contribution made by those who are working in local areas, either in delivery or commissioning of services towards the development of the product suite. A full list of contributors for this particular product is given below, together with an overview of its contents.

We hope that you find these products useful. If you have any feedback you would like to offer, please contact us at mail@togetherfd.co.uk



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This product supports published DCSF capital guidance.

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Introduction

This product is intended to supplement the formal guidance contained in the Aiming High for Disabled Children Short Breaks Implementation Guidance (DCSF 2008) (www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/ahdc).

Advice contained here has been drawn up by practitioners and is designed to be used as a set of prompts to support the capital planning process. Local areas should also refer to the Short Breaks Implementation Guidance, the Memorandum of Grant (Feb 2009) and their own local authority/PCT policies and procedures.

Capital funding should be used to directly support the local area's strategic short break service plan for transforming their short breaks service.

1. Strategic approach to needs and provision

- Needs assessment: The capital programme plan for short breaks should have a clear link to needs assessment and must be utilised in order to support the provision of substantial short breaks. Short break capital funding should not be used therefore to improve facilities that require the parent carer to be in attendance.
- Consider and plan for longer-term sustainability by planning revenue funding, and maintenance and running costs
- Link with revenue funding: Planning for capital spend should link clearly to short breaks revenue spending plans
- Cost/benefit analysis: A cost/benefit analysis should be carried out as part of the planning process
- Planning should be done jointly with the PCT wherever possible
- Capital spend should be used to directly support short break provision, delivered through targeted short break services. This expenditure may be in universal settings and also improve general access to premises for disabled children/people, but general access should not be the primary aim of the expenditure. DDA funds should be used for general access projects
- Lead in times for capital projects can be long. This should be taken into account. Carry over of funding against planned expenditure may be allowed up to end of March 2011, but will not be permitted after that date
- Consultation: The capital programme should reflect the outcomes of consultation with parent and children and young people

2. Partnerships

- Explore the development of partnerships, for example with other local areas who may wish to combine funding to secure specialist provision, or site facilities on the boarder between local authority/PCT boundaries
- Explore the development of partnerships with other departments in the local authority such as education housing, play and leisure to maximise impact of capital spend. However, be aware of the risks of involvement in large scale capital projects which may have delivery timescales which do not match the AHDC short break programme
- Secure any necessary approvals for proposed partnerships, such as with the private and voluntary sector
- Pool resources with other departments in the local authority such as housing, play and leisure to maximise impact of capital spend this is similar to the second point
- Look for charitable funding that might supplement the short break capital spend

In **Kent**, the portfolio of capital projects within the Aiming High short breaks transformation programme is a joint venture with the Primary Care Trusts.

The strategy for Disabled Children's Services is centred on a "hub-and-spoke" model of provision, underpinned by a belief that children across the county should receive equitable services, based in their local community, which promote inclusion into mainstream provision wherever possible. Kent also recognise the important role of shared care in meeting the Full Service Offer, and are adapting a number of identified foster homes across the county. The authority is well advanced in developing resource centres as multi-agency "hubs" capable of providing short break provision.

The programme comprises the following:

- building a new Ashford multi-agency assessment centre and day facility
- upgrading two overnight break units currently used by health services, which will form part of the "hubs" in Maidstone and Dartford
- modifying the Overnight Break Unit in Ashford, to improve the air quality and to enable physically-disabled children to access breaks there
- providing a toy library for families accessing short breaks in East Kent
- upgrading three properties to develop transition units for young people to acquire independence skills
- providing equipment to enable the county-wide portage service to provide short breaks for families

adapted transport for use by the Resource Centres and foster families to transport children to and from short breaks services

Sunderland have pooled some of their capital money with the play pathfinder in the area who have contributed match funding so that they can develop a dedicated room within a sports and leisure facility to be kitted out as sensory room.

This room will be able to be booked by short break carers as well as others supporting children (as long as they have been trained to use the equipment). This widens the range of facilities that can be used by children on a short break.

Families can use it together if they wish, or other children could go swimming while a parent uses the room with disabled child, for example. They have also bought cars that contract carers can use to enable them to transport children with physical disabilities.

Gateshead have worked with the play team and bought outdoor play equipment that can be used on adventure playgrounds, that is accessible to disabled children and makes play more exciting than on an ordinary play park.

They have paid for the development of sensory gardens and quiet spaces in parks and also kitted out an independent living skills unit so that it can be used by teenagers with disabilities to 'hang out' together. These facilities will be used by disabled children during short breaks.

Dudley is a play pathfinder. A play barn is being built in the north of the borough, which will now include two bedrooms for use by disabled young people and their carers. This is being done at no extra cost to short breaks. Health has contributed funding to this project.

There are now plans to build a similar facility in the south of the borough using short breaks capital. Parents and young people have been involved in deciding that this is needed.

Durham are planning an eco-village for short breaks and are working in partnership with an organisation to develop this. The eco village project is looking to create a legacy in County Durham for all children and young people and offer them breaks, opportunities and fun in the heart of the County Durham countryside.

The project is very much at the start of its journey and plans to build an environmentally sustainable site are underway involving environmental experts.

The creation of a central communal pod could be supported by camping facilities, an orchard, an allotment and a playing area in the heart of the Durham countryside. This would provide a unique space which could be utilised for a multitude of activities or just as a peaceful place to be.

The concept has been discussed with families and it has been welcomed and Durham are now determining how to develop the concept. A real strength to their programme has been the way in which they have consulted and developed proposals and including procurement arrangements with parents.

3. Capital projects

- Local authority projects: Check and follow your own local authority's/PCT's procedures in planning a capital spend. Seek advice from relevant department specialists
- Wherever appropriate, link short break capital programme planning in to local area capital programme funding. Ensure there is no overlap of plans or inherent contradictions
- Private and voluntary sector projects: Where an organisation other than the local authority or PCT owns the resource that is being supported/developed, draw up an agreement in advance about who will own and maintain the resource. Also be clear about use of the facility by whom, when for how much time
- Ownership: Where work is to be carried out on a site which is not owned by the council, ownership and/or legal issues associated with the site should be clarified very early. Consider whether there is a need for input by legal representatives

In **Lincolnshire** combining needs has led to the initiation of a project to purchase a holiday bungalow whilst providing young people with the opportunity for a business venture.

This facility will be used by outreach workers and other providers of short breaks, as well as enabling use by families. Consultation with families showed they would like to be able to enjoy days out together with siblings of their profoundly disabled children. The bungalow will also be used by individual disabled young people who want to book an overnight stay with friends. They would be supported by their PA.

Lincolnshire also considered the fact that work and training opportunities are hard to come by for disabled young people and have decided to initiate this mini enterprise project involving disabled young people. There are three elements to using this resource as an enterprise opportunity for disabled young people which demonstrates partnership working:

1. The local authority holds the capital asset
2. A private organisation has contract management (maintenance responsibility)
3. Social enterprise runs the bungalow recruiting disabled young people to run it as a business, taking bookings, etc.

Although early days, approval has been gained and the team is being established. Parents and young people will be involved in the whole plan. Social enterprise providers in the county are also being approached.

4. Tendering / Procurement /Contracting

- Check and follow your own local authority's/PCT's procedures for tendering, procurement and contracting. Seek advice from relevant department specialists
- Consider a range of smaller projects rather than one large project to ensure deliverable within timescales and project management time/resource commitment appropriate to the level of investment

Suffolk examples:

Fritton Lake Woodland Lodge is a new acquisition, purpose built for short break activity both overnight and daytime breaks. It has a lake for boating and fishing, riding stables, and close by, woodland trails, a large adventure playground, local pubs and holiday attractions.

East Anglian Sailing Trust has a boat for sailing breaks for disabled children and young people.

Specialist bikes, go-carts and wheelchair area are available for short break activities. Suffolk is also purchasing a holiday cabin / caravan for disabled children.

5. Capital project management

- Check your own local authority's/PCT's procedures for project management and consider the level of project management appropriate to the scale of the planned project. Seek advice from relevant department specialists as appropriate. Speak to someone with experience of managing capital programme development before starting on projects. Nominate someone to lead on short breaks capital
- Establish the decision making body for the project at an early stage with representation from all stakeholders, those responsible for the budget and end-users
- Create a project plan with clear accountabilities, deliverables and timescales
- Monitor progress against the plan to avoid slippage. This is especially important towards the end of the funding period
- Quality management: Specify for quality as part of the commissioning process. Develop, in advance, criteria for assessment of tender proposals
- Cost management: Factor in contingencies as part of the planning
- Think about the impact of capital spend on revenue e.g. purchase costs from capital but maintenance from revenue
- Risk management: Identify the risks involved in the project and have a plan for managing risks

6. Post investment

- Review and asset management: Make arrangements for post investment review and longer-term asset management
- Establish clear agreement on the responsibility and budgeting for maintenance

7. Should problems arise

In the event of problems arising:

- tackle them sooner rather than later
- use solution focused problem solving techniques rather than looking to see who was responsible for what
- consider whether the problem is a one-off or part of a larger issue
- create an action plan for dealing with problems arising with accountabilities and timescales
- increase the level of supervision of the project
- speak to your TDC Local Programme Adviser

8. Possible purchases from capital grant

- Mobile hoists, e.g. in carers' homes
- Residential facilities
- Refurbishment of existing facilities to create facilities for short breaks
- Adaptations to a home that will be used to provide short breaks for a number of children/young people
- Transport – vehicle purchase
- Capital project management/consultants fees (see Short breaks Implementation Guidance page 49 for more details).
- Other equipment e.g. bikes, adaption to boats, camping equipment.

Bradford are buying a holiday lodge that will be able to be used by families and groups for short breaks. They have also purchased vehicles for use by family based carers. They have invested money on building up specialist equipment and toys that can be used by families offering breaks and also in residential or day care settings, making it possible to offer breaks to children who have a range of needs.

Gloucestershire are investing capital money in two electric 4x4 all-terrain wheelchairs and two all-terrain buggies (for pushing primary aged children) which they will make available for short break carers and families to hire if a child wants to take part in more adventurous activities than they could otherwise manage. They are currently in discussion with a Shopmobility centre about how best to manage the initiative.

Using Capital Funding to Support Family Based Short Breaks

Feedback from local areas' consultations with parents has confirmed that families want and need more family based short breaks. To respond to these requests, many local areas are using capital funding to develop these types of services.

This funding will be used to purchase specialist equipment and renovate buildings, which will support disabled children and young people, many of whom have complex health needs.

The range of family-based services being developed includes residential services, foster carer homes and a contract carers service.

Bournemouth are working with their housing department to renovate a property which will enable disabled children with complex health needs to have short breaks. **Sunderland, Bradford** and **Bolton** are all adapting properties to enable contract carers to be able to provide short breaks for older children, especially those with moving and handling needs.

Examples of types of small projects that can expand choice and quality

These examples primarily enable short breaks, and improve the quality and range of experience during short breaks, rather than just providing access.

- floodlights for outdoor evening play activities
- powered wheelchairs
- bikes
- changing beds
- sensory room equipment
- soft play equipment
- art area and provision for a short breaks play scheme
- sensory garden or quiet space, calming activities
- specialist equipment for a play centre to improve the experience for disabled children
- spa pool, in an adult centre for young people 14+
- IT for children and young people in a short breaks settings
- minibus to facilitate travel to short breaks

Useful Resources

- General guidance from DCSF

General guidance on planning and implementing a capital spend programme is contained in Aiming High for Disabled Children: Short Breaks Implementation Guidance, Annex D (DCSF, 2008) (available to download at

www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/ahdc). The annex provides information on capital development timescales, success factors and financial management.

There is also brief guidance in the Sure Start, Early Years & Childcare Grant: 2009-10 Memorandum of Grant (DCSF, Feb 09) www.togetherfdc.org

- National Audit Office Toolkit

www.nao.org.uk/our_work_by_sector/third_sector/better_funding.aspx