

Short Breaks Somerset

10th January 2024



Somerset
Council

What is a short break?

Holiday activities

Daycare

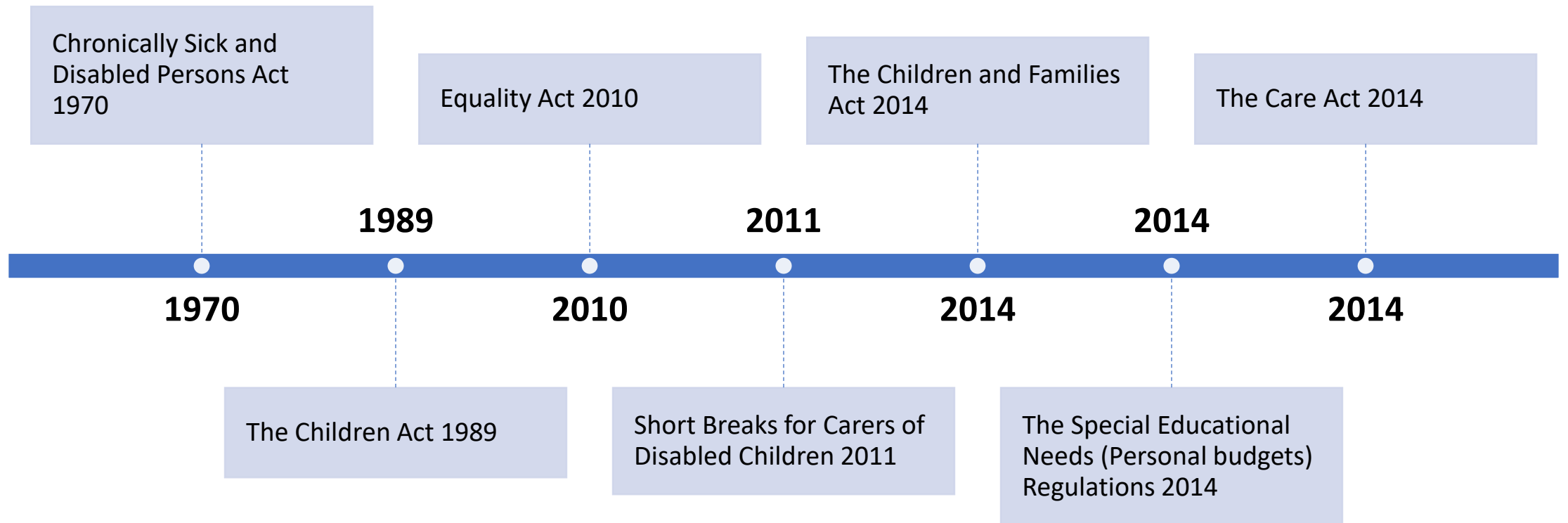
Fostering

Residential

What isn't a short break?

- School wrap-around activities (the right to work)
- Family trips (family bonding, not a break)
- Some holiday activities (where parent must be present)
- Some Direct Payments

Statutory Requirements



Local authorities must:

- Provide a range of short breaks services
- Give families the choice to access short breaks services using a direct payment
- Publish a statement of their short breaks services on their website
- Keep their short breaks statement under review
- State in their short breaks service statement the range of short breaks services available, the criteria by which eligibility for services will be assessed, and how the range of services is designed to meet the needs of families with disabled children in their area
- Consult parents as part of the review of the statement

Current figures

141 Children with Disabilities with a Social Worker

427 Children with disabilities receiving early support.

5490 current EHCPs

Current resources

- Two homes (reduced from 3 in 2022) – total of 8 beds a night for children to experience overnight short breaks – but underused due to staffing.
- 21 Somerset Supporters (reduced from 80 in 2000)
- 1 dedicated Short Break foster carer (reduced from 35 in 2015)
- Summer holiday provision from the Children's Inclusive Activities (CIA) team for 752 children and young people
- Summer Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) provision for 857 children with SEND



Sprint





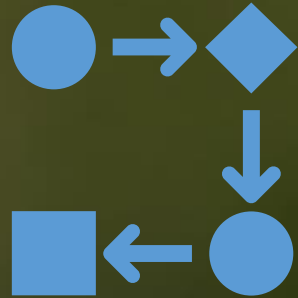
What families told us....

- “It’s my life, not a service”
- “We want to have the same opportunities as everyone else”
- “We shouldn’t have to fight for what we need”
- “There’s a new build leisure centre close to me, but without accessible facilities, because there’s another leisure centre 20 miles away which is accessible – so they said they didn’t need to make the new one accessible”
- “I’m a 17 year old male, and my mum has to do my personal care”
- “If I could take my child to the park, I wouldn’t need a short break”
- “I don’t ask about clubs – they won’t want my child to go”

Big issues

- **Time:** The process to get short breaks is too long
- **Assessment:** Restricted resources can impact a true assessment of need
- **Trust:** earning parents' trust is vital
- **Range:** meeting needs across age-range, ability and interests and geography of Somerset, is difficult.
- **Transport:** needs to be available and accessible
- **Workforce:** Supporting children & young people with disabilities and their families should be a rewarding and popular career
- **The fight:** parent carers consistently describe getting help to be a fight – directly impacting wellbeing and mental health
- **Feedback:** SPCF, Event feedback, Complaints, mediation, tribunals and ombudsman judgments

Process



Re-design the assessment process to be faster



Increase access to local resources so that needs can be met nearer, faster.

Workforce

- Make it easy for me to work with children safely
- Working with children should be a rewarding job
- Encourage activity providers to work in this field
- Work with micro-providers to dispel myths
- Identify the right incentives for the workforce



Community Hubs

- Hubs – Centres of expertise for staff, parent carers and foster carers – including residential homes
- More opportunities for children and young people to have overnight short breaks and day time activities
- Harnessing resources and skills of community projects and special schools
- Flexible – able to meet a range of needs



Pulling these actions together to....

- Increase local support, reducing transport.
- Increase families' ability to get help earlier, faster.
- Improve families' ability to support each other
- Increase families' ability to influence local provision



Next steps...

01

Action Plan –
finalised in
January

02

Fortnightly
meetings to
progress

03

Return to
Scrutiny in May
to provide
update

Scrutiny Members - what can you do?

Be our critical friend – what do we need to be mindful of?

Workforce – can you help us make this a career to be proud of?

Accessibility in your community – eg the design of parks and play areas, toilets, neurodiversity.

Support – keep children with disabilities in mind, and help us get the resources families need.



Questions