

Developing a Short Break Bureau

Right Break,
Right Place,
Right Time



About the guide

The original intention was to scope the range of Short Break Bureau approaches in Scotland, and to harness the learning of these initiatives in order that other local authorities might reduce their learning curve.

Initial research focused on four local authorities known to be using the Bureau approach, and a similar service offered independently by an established voluntary organisation.

What is a Short Break Bureau?

For the purpose of this guide a Short Break Bureau is defined as a single point of access through which carers, and those requiring care, can access personalised, *overnight*, short-breaks.

While there was an expectation that larger SBBs would also be a route to more traditional breaks in locally provided residential centres, it was anticipated that the majority of breaks being organised would be alternative, or non-traditional, in nature.

Key Ingredients for Success

- Develop a clear concept about the vision and purpose of the service, and its intended outcomes
- On-going consultation with carers and the people for whom they are caring is VITAL
- Work towards sustainability from the outset
- Allocate sufficient resources, and monitor their usage

Key Ingredients for Success

- Create appropriate IT systems, to enhance service management and delivery
- Ensure that staff have a working knowledge of Direct Payments, Independent Living Allowance and other potential sources of funding
- Limit the financial resources that are tied to 'block booked' provision

Key Ingredients for Success

- Integrate a proactive approach to awareness raising amongst all stakeholder groups, to broaden understanding about what a short break *can* be
- Establish a policy of shared responsibility for risk management amongst the family, the break purchaser and provider. *Ensure that everyone is clear about which responsibilities are theirs.*

Key ingredients for Success

If at all possible, engage a 'champion' - someone who is passionate and confident about the value of such a service for the range of stakeholders, and thus able to make a strong case for it.

Services with such a champion were more likely to get the go-ahead, perform well at pilot stage, and secure the interest of people who hold the purse strings.