



## **SHORT BREAKS DEFINITION: SHARED CARE SCOTLAND POSITION**

### **Definition**

A short break is any form of service or assistance which enables the carer(s) to have sufficient and regular periods away from their caring routines or responsibilities.

### **Purpose**

To support the caring relationship and promote the health and well-being of the carer, the supported person, and other family members affected by the caring situation.

### **Description**

Breaks from caring may:

- be for short or extended periods
- take place during the day or overnight
- involve the person with support needs having a break away from home allowing the carer time for themselves
- allow the carer a break away with replacement care in place
- take the form of the carer and the person they care for having their break together, with assistance if necessary, providing a break from the demands of their daily caring routines

### **Justification**

Due to the intensity of their caring role, carers are often only able to get the rest and relaxation which are essential to their health, well-being and continuing capacity to care with the help of a short break, including replacement care if appropriate.

### **Provisos**

- Services or assistance enabling carers to be in employment are not a 'respite' break because the right to work is a universal human right. Such services or assistance are vital to many carers, but in addition carers, like any employed person, have a right to time for themselves for rest, leisure and to pursue wider interests.
- Cover for carers when they are unwell should be deemed as an emergency break. (See below.)

## **Key principles**

### *1. Choice and Flexibility*

Whichever form the break takes, choice, flexibility and personalisation are key to achieving successful outcomes all round with the needs of everyone in the caring relationship carefully considered and balanced.

### *2. Planning*

Carers and those they care for should be offered assistance to weigh up the different options and to plan ahead for their breaks. This will help them feel more confident about the service or support being provided, make the necessary arrangements, and have time to plan what they want to do to make the most of their break.

## **Examples**

In order to meet these different needs a diverse range of short break opportunities should be available locally. These could include:

- a choice of specialist services such as:
  - hospice care
  - generic or condition specific short break services
  - community flats with care support
- residential accommodation with nursing or personal care support
- building-based day centre provision
- services which offer breaks in the home of another individual or family
- breaks at home through the day or overnight provided through a care at home service
- a range of accessible and inclusive community-based activities and groups
- holiday breaks using mainstream or specialist holiday providers, with or without the carer
- specialist play schemes and after school clubs
- befriending schemes where volunteers help facilitate the short breaks
- peer support groups

## Self-directed support

The further expansion of self-directed support will allow carers and supported people to explore a range of different short break options tailored to their personal outcomes. For example, they may use their agreed budget to:

- employ a personal assistant to accompany the supported person on leisure breaks, with or without the carer
- hire or purchase equipment that helps facilitate breaks for the carer, the supported person or both
- receive time flexible vouchers that can be exchanged for assistance from registered care providers/agencies
- purchase membership of leisure facilities

### Emergency breaks

It is also important for people to have access to emergency support if they need replacement care at short notice, due to the unexpected ill health of the carer; deterioration in the health of the person they are looking after; or in response to a crisis - such as bereavement.

Emergency services may need to be available at short notice, with the duration unknown, but limited.

To minimise the levels of stress that can be generated by these events, **an emergency plan should be prepared in advance that includes any options for emergency respite cover.**

This will be particularly important for any carers that are at increased risk due to their own health or caring circumstances.