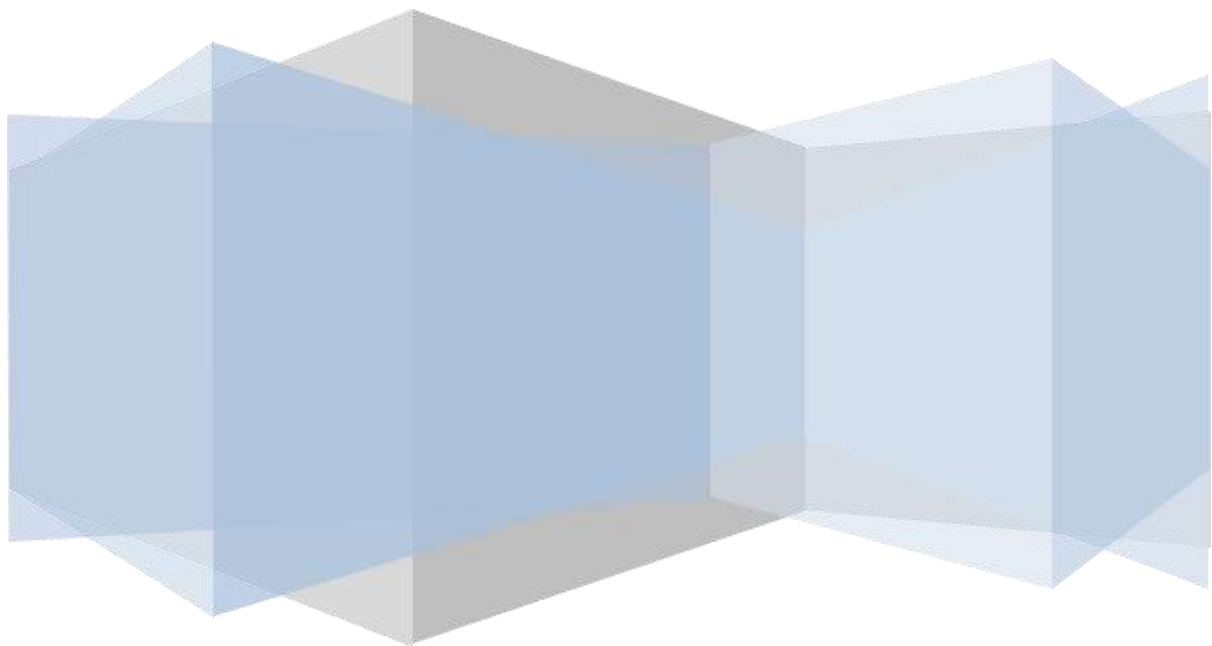


Highland Partnership
SHORT BREAK
STATEMENT

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Document Control

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Introduction

The Short Breaks Statement for NHS Highland (excluding Argyll & Bute) and Highland Council (known as Highland for the remainder of the document) was developed in early 2020 with sign-off planned in spring 2020. At this time however we did not anticipate the impact that the Covid 19 crisis would have on our existing way of delivering short breaks for unpaid carers. With that in mind we have taken the opportunity to revise our original statement in line with the “Coronavirus (COVID19): Framework for Decision Making” published by the Scottish Government on 29th May 2020. Here the First Minister suggests ‘the COVID crisis is inherently uncertain and complex and our understanding of it will evolve’.

Our focus now will be to help the people who need them access short breaks in a straightforward and convenient way, being mindful that some of the proposals set out will be time limited measures as we move into a new and more personalised approach to delivering services. Many of the opportunities available will be around providing a break from the current caring routine within the carer s existing space. We appreciate this may not be ideal but it may be the only way to offer support as we work our way through the phases of the route map out of this crisis. Throughout we will ensure that we work collaboratively with carers and carer organisations to ensure that carer s, and those they care for, get the type of breaks and the kind of care which has the biggest impact on maintaining their willingness and ability to continue in their valued roles.

This Statement has been developed collaboratively by NHS Highland, The Highland Council, and carer organisations. It includes information gleaned from the informed views of local carers, people with care and support needs, practitioners and representatives from a range of agencies. Working together we believe this has enabled us to have a greater understanding about what people want from a short break

Background

The Carers (Scotland) Act 2016 came into effect in April 2018.

It places a duty (under section 35 of the Act) on Local Authorities to prepare and publish a short breaks statement. Such statements should provide information about the short breaks services available for carers and cared-for persons. This information needs to be accessible to, and proportionate to the needs of, the persons to whom it is provided.

The aim of the statement is to help carers and cared-for people understand:

- What short breaks are
- Who can access them
- What short break opportunities are available to carers and
- How carers can access short breaks

By developing a statement, we want carers in Highland to consider whether a planned short break would make a difference to their life and to give them a better understanding of what a short break might look like and how it could make that difference.

However, people have also told us that there can be barriers for them in accessing and taking a break, including knowing what is available to them, how to access it and what the cost will be. We therefore want this Statement to give people concise information, and we recognise that developing good communications are necessary to make sure that people continue to have access to the support and information that they need.

The statement has been developed in partnership with unpaid carers and discussed through the Carers Improvement Group (the bi-monthly meeting that looks specifically at carer related plans) and will continually be reviewed and developed in line with feedback from carers and the ongoing development of carer's services. It has recently been revised to take the COVID19 crisis and the route map out of the pandemic into consideration.

The statement outlines what carers can expect to be available locally and how such services can be accessed as well as links to services available across Scotland. It will also support professionals and organisations delivering carer services to support carers to access bespoke short breaks.

Purpose of the Statement

This Statement aims to provide information to ensure that there is an understanding of the information and advice necessary to plan and arrange a Short break that works for the carer.

What is a Short Break?

A short break is anything which allows an individual of any age to have some time and space away from their day to day routines and their responsibilities, and ideally should be tailored to meet the specific needs and wishes of the individual carer. At this time we appreciate that many short break opportunities will be required to happen in the carers existing space. Some opportunities will be virtual, and we welcome the opportunity to support carers to fulfil creative solutions and approaches.

For carers, a short break can often be crucial in supporting their willingness and ability to continue to care. In Highland we are committed to ensuring that carers who need one, have access to meaningful, personalised short breaks. The break should make a difference to the carer's life, and this is sometimes described as a positive personal outcome. We have been making a collective effort to understand what is important to people and what it is that truly makes people feel that they have had a short break. This approach is beginning to make us think differently, beyond what people may have experienced with traditional 'Respite'

It is inevitable that short breaks for carers must include consideration of how the care needs of a cared-for person or persons (child or adult) that the carer supports will be met. Some carers may have a caring role that is reciprocal and may need to plan Short Breaks for themselves and their mutual carer.

Health and social care services have for many years provided services and supports that have given valuable relief to carers, by providing short term care to the person they care for. Often this care is provided in a group living setting or at a day care service, sometimes as a specialised unit or as part of a care home. These services are often known as 'respite care' or 'day care' and it is recognised that they are a valuable way of providing essential support for carers.

Many people benefit from this type of traditional respite/short break arrangement and it is anticipated that this type of support will continue to meet the needs of some carers and cared-for persons. In a number of circumstances this will be the only help that some carers are looking for. We also acknowledge that moving out of the COVID19 crisis, many carers may be anxious about using respite services. Previous respite opportunities may also not necessarily be available. We are currently working through a remobilisation plan to gradually reintroduce short breaks within care homes. This statement will be constantly updated to reflect these changes

Who can have a Short Break?

Unpaid carers and the people they care for (the cared for person) sometimes need a bit more help to have a short break and to make the arrangements for this. This statement is for carers, young carers and cared-for people. The definitions below should help people identify if this applies to them or someone that they know.

- The Carers (Scotland) Act 2016 describes a ‘carer’ as an individual who provides, or intends to provide, care for another individual (the “cared-for person”). This is not the same as someone who provides care professionally, or through a voluntary organisation.
- A carer is anyone who cares, unpaid, for a friend or family member who is affected by illness, disability, frailty, mental health challenge or alcohol or drug use.

Many carers support people through giving practical help. People tend to associate caring with physical tasks but giving emotional support can also be a big part of caring. Whether you give practical or emotional support or both you are a carer. The circumstances of each carer are unique. Carers can be any age and carers are part of every community and culture. Carers may be parents, spouses, grandparents, daughters, brothers, same sex partners, friends or neighbours. Some carers may be disabled or have care needs themselves. Sometimes two people with care needs are carers for each other. Some carers can provide care and support for more than one person.

Traditional respite resources in Highland:

At time of revising the short break statement it has been difficult to confirm when traditional respite beds will be available once again. We are currently working on a Respite Remobilisation plan and will keep carers regularly updated on plans to reinstate these resources as they evolve.

The plan is to gradually reintroduce respite facilities across the care homes which previously provided a planned respite service. We remain mindful that for many, the temporary approach may create a new challenge, as we expect the following will be required as per official current care home guidance:

- Self-isolation and a test prior to respite admission
- Isolation in bedroom throughout respite break
- Staff in full PPE whilst offering support
- One visit per week outdoors of one designated person.

Because each carer and the person they care for is unique, carers and cared-for people will continue to work with services and supports to develop increasingly personalised, flexible and responsive ways to meet their outcomes and design a break that works for them.

When carers talk about what a short break means to them they often talk about 'quality time' or 'time away' as well as the aspiration to have a new experience or re-establish a hobby or interest which had become too difficult to continue due to the caring role. In general, people feel that a break is what the individual feels will make a difference and that it should benefit both the carer and the person they are caring for. People see it as a time to look after themselves and look at their own individual needs. It also enables them to have peace of mind. Therefore, with support from staff linked to third sector organisations supporting carers we anticipate that solutions within the carer's own home will become more regular occurrences. Carers Centres are working at a national level to develop innovative at-home short break solutions. Shared Care Scotland has developed information on "Short Breaks for Strange Times": www.sharedcarescotland.org.uk

Other types of breaks:

There are currently various short break funding opportunities available for carers

- 'Time 2 Be'
- 'Wee Treat Grant'
- Respite (Short Breaks) Fund
- Caroline Thomson Legacy Fund

The grants identified above are managed by Connecting Carers and they can be contacted on **01463 723575** or by visiting **their website** <https://connectingcarers.org.uk/>

Accessing Self-directed Support (SDS) to plan your own short break:

If you are eligible for specific assistance to have a funded short break as part of your completed Adult Carer Support Plan or Young Carers Statement, SDS can allow you to decide how much control and responsibility you want to take over your funding.

SDS allows carers to have choice and control and flexibility around developing a short break.

These options are:

- *Option 1:* A Direct Payment (a cash payment) where you choose how the budget is used and you manage the money.
- *Option 2:* You direct how the budget is used, but the money is managed by someone else (sometimes called an Individual Service Fund).
- *Option 3:* You ask NHS Highland to choose and arrange services for you.
- *Option 4:* You can choose a mix of these options for different types of support.

Workers with organisations who support carers can offer advice and support around how the four options of SDS can support a carer to plan and develop short breaks.

Young Carer s:

A young carer is a child or young person under the age of 18, or someone who has reached the age of 18 years and is still a pupil at a school. They may have practical caring responsibilities or be emotionally affected by a family member's care needs. Young carers can sometimes put the needs of the person for whom they care before their own. During the COVID19 crisis we are aware that young carers are spending the majority of their time with the person they care for and not receiving the regular 'respite' that school and group activities afford them. Carer organisations have been keeping in regular touch with young carers through weekly Zoom calls and by telephone. They have been able to access additional funds that have assisted young carers to purchase laptops and mobile phones to ensure they are connected remotely.

Young carers can sometimes miss out on things that other young people get to do. This can mean that young carer s experience stress, anxiety, and worry. Because of this, they may sometimes need help or support from other people. For all practitioners working with families where there are young carers it is important to recognise the important differences between young carers and adult carers, and the importance of young carers being seen as children first and foremost. This will help to consider what further supports are required to enable them to access the same opportunities as their peers and achieve their full potential and this is even more important during the COVID19 crisis.

When young carers needs have been identified, then a young carers statement can be developed in partnership with the young carer's worker. Usually there are opportunities for young carers in caring roles to get together, have fun and have their voices heard. Although these activities are not currently happening in person, the young carer teams link in with young carers from across Highland on a regular basis

There are numerous services across Highland than can offer support to young carers:

Connecting Carers

<https://connectingcarers.org.uk/carers-services/connecting-young-carers.aspx>

Skye Young Carers

<https://www.skyeyoungcarers.co.uk/>

Caithness Young Carers

<http://www.spanglefish.com/caithnessklics/>

Tykes Young Carer

<http://www.tykesyc.co.uk>

What can a Short break look like?

In Highland, people have told us that a short break could be anything that releases them from their caring role and we have received a wide variety of responses from people and this has included opportunities to have a break away as a family, purchase of online courses or technology. As a carer you can make choices about how you might have a short break. You might choose to have a short break by yourself or with family and friends or with the person you support.

National carer organisations represent carers across Scotland and as well as offering advice on short break opportunities across Scotland they also offer additional information to carers.

Shared Care Scotland (01383 622 462)

<https://www.sharedcarescotland.org.uk/learning-exchange/short-break-short-stories/>

Carers Scotland (0808 808 7777)

<https://www.carer suk.org/scotland>

Carers Trust Scotland (0300 123 2008)

<https://carer s.org/country/carer s-trust-scotland>

Coalition of Carers Scotland (01786 850 247)

<https://www.carer snet.org>

Crossroads Caring Scotland (0141 226 2793)

<https://crossroads-scotland.co.uk/>

Minority Ethnic Carers of Older People Project (MECOPP) (0131 467 2994)

<https://mecopp.org.uk/index.php>

Emergency Breaks and Emergency Plans:

It's always best to take the opportunity to plan short breaks; however there are times when people need access to emergency support including alternative care for the cared-for person. Emergency arrangements are not the same as short breaks but can sometimes achieve some short break outcomes.

Where possible an Emergency Plan should be discussed by the carer and the cared-for person and plans prepared in advance of any crisis. Throughout the COVID19 crisis members of the carer organisations have been in contact with carers from across Highland to support them to complete or update emergency plans. Usually carers would have the opportunity to ask about this when the person they are supporting is undergoing an assessment and care planning. Another time that this could be discussed is when a carer is offered or undertaking an adult carer support plan or young carer statement. Cared-for people who do not have an assessment can still make an emergency plan; if they do not have or want external support they can record their own plan.

Further advice and a possible template is available at:

<https://www.enable.org.uk/get-support-information/families-carers/future-planning/emergencyplanning/> or via Connecting Carers

Why take a Short Break?

For carers, a short break from caring can offer support in many ways including reducing stress in a caring role, and enabling a carer to continue to care in good health as well as increasing confidence and giving a better life balance. There are several reasons that people who have care and support needs (cared-for people) may want to consider a short break. These include giving their carers a short break as well as reducing isolation, relief from the stresses, anxiety of day to day life, and recharging their batteries.

Some cared-for persons may not want a short break and when this is the case they may choose to seek (alternative) care arrangements that allow their carer to have a short break with minimal disruption to their daily routines.

Carers might find out information and be inspired by speaking to other carers, or to workers or by visiting carer's websites.

There is consistent information that accessing a short break reduces stress and maintains or improves health

For carers, it gives them time to be themselves. This often allows carers to reconnect with the sometimes forgotten relationship with the person they support. They could return to being a partner, a friend, a mum or a son again as well as having a caring relationship.

People feel that a short break is vital to protect relationships and continuing a balanced caring role. Other benefits include supporting recovery and 're-charging batteries'.

Throughout the COVID19 crisis and beyond, it is vital that carers continue to feel supported even where previous traditional elements of short breaks are not available and this will mean a much more creative approach to providing a short break from caring will be needed.

Help to arrange a Short Break?

Any break should make a difference to the carer: it should help them be better able and more willing to continue in their caring role into the future. It might, therefore, be helpful to discuss this with someone in a similar situation for whom having a short break has had a positive impact and/or to hear about what other carers have done.

There are lots of people that you can speak to in the first instance to find out about what short breaks might be available to a carer. This could be a worker in an organisation that you already know including a social worker, nurse, teacher or support worker etc.

Currently if you are a carer and you think you need some support to help you continue in your role a referral can be made to a carers organisation to offer support to complete an adult carer support plan or young carers statement. These documents will detail how your caring role is impacting on your life – and should detail the help required to continue in your caring role. Among this help may be the provision of a short break.

Waiving of Charges

Charges for short breaks for carers must be waived under the carers (Waiving of Charges for Support) (Scotland) Regulations 2014, whereas support to the cared for person may continue to be charged for and this is important when considering a short break for carers.

The following prompts may assist in determining whether or not the short break is being provided predominately for the carer. Such support will have been identified in the completed adult carer support plan or young carer statements. The assumption being that the care or support meets the identified needs of the carer and that such needs are eligible under the eligibility criteria:

- Is the care to be provided to the cared for person?
- Is the care replacing care usually provided by the unpaid carer?
- Is the care to be provided to enable the carer to have a break?
- Aside from the need for a break, is the carer willing and able to resume their caring role after the planned break?

Feedback and Review

We welcome all feedback on this short breaks statement to continue to provide accessible information to people.

The Highland Health and Social Care Partnership are responsible for this statement.

You can make contact on:

https://www.whatdotheyknow.com/body/the_highland_partnership

with specific feedback or comments about the statement. Please let us know your suggestions for ensuring this statement is communicated to everyone who needs it.

The short breaks statement will be reviewed annually by the Carers Improvement Group.

Appendix 1

Useful Contacts for Carers:

Adult Carers

Connecting Carers are currently contracted to provide an Information and Advice Service for Carers of all ages on behalf of Highland Health and Social Care Partnership. If you are a carer who lives in Highland or a carer who supports a Highland resident you can get in touch for advice about the supports available to you. As well as giving information about the role of the adult carer support plan and short breaks the staff at Connecting Carers can advise you about their support services and other supports that may help you. <https://connectingcarers.org.uk>

Young Carers

If you are a carer under 16 or you are caring for someone under 16, you can contact Children and Families Service if you need to discuss care and support in more detail:

https://www.highland.gov.uk/info/886/schools_-_additional_support_needs/827/young_carers

Finally, if you or the cared-for person have an urgent matter and the above services are closed you can contact the Out of Hours Service:

Socialwork.outofhoursteam@highland.gov.uk

Telephone: 08457 697284

Cared-for persons

If you are caring for an adult and you think a discussion about their care needs is required you may wish to get in touch with your local Integrated Health and Social Care District Team:

Single Point of Contact

Caithness - 01955 606915

Sutherland - 01408 664018

East Ross - 01349 853131

Mid Ross - 01349 860460

Lochaber - 01397 709873

Inverness West - 01463 888333

Inverness East - 01463 888333

Nairn - 01667 422702

Badenoch & Strathspey - 01479 812618

Skye, Lochalsh & Wester Ross – 01471 820174