**Community Short Breaks - Frequently Asked Questions**

**The Short Breaks service has been retendered, what is the tender process?**

All publicly funded services have a legal duty to periodically open up their contracts to test that quality and value for money are being met and to enable new providers to offer their services too. Tenders are measured using a combination of questions that demonstrate quality provision and the relative costs of provision. This enables a high-quality provision to score as much or perhaps more than a cheap lower quality offer. In our exercise the relative scoring of providers was used to rank them and those with highest scores were considered first for funding bids until all funds were used up. The scoring of bids was made by a team of experienced Oxfordshire County Council officers, a representative from Oxfordshire Parent Carers Forum (OxPCF), and moderated, by Oxfordshire County Council’s procurement team, to ensure fairness.

**How have the contracts been allocated?**

Contracts have been allocated using information submitted by providers as part of the retender process. All providers are required to demonstrate how they are able to meet the service specification for both quality and price.

For this tender, the service specification included information gathered as part of a comprehensive needs assessment.

**Do the current contracts have an end date?**

All contracts have a start and finish date. Contracts are awarded for an identified period and sometimes include a possible extension period, which can be agreed or not depending on service quality and budgets. The community short breaks contracts will end in March 2024 and there is no further opportunity to extend the current contracts further. The new Community Short Breaks contracts are due to start on 1 April 2024 for an identified period of three years, with an opportunity to extend for a further two years.

**Will current providers automatically have contracts renewed?**

All current providers and potential new providers must follow due process and submit a tender bid if they are interested in applying when a contract is retendered. There is no guarantee that current providers will be successful if they bid for a new contract.

**What happens if no provider submits a bid in my area?**

If no provider submits a bid the evaluation panel will explore the next steps. They might look at what other services are going to be in the area, and they could also look at commissioning services to address any gaps (subject to available funding).

**What involvement have parents and carers had in the process?**

The recommissioning of the Community Short Breaks services has been a process completed over a period of time. There has been consultation with families and collaborative work with Oxfordshire Parent Carers Forum. The Short Breaks team have collated feedback from families that has fed into the development of the specification, and a comprehensive data mapping exercise was completed using the Disabled Children’s Register.

**Who can access Community Short Breaks?**

Disabled children and young people who live in Oxfordshire can access Community Short Breaks services. Information about services will be on the Short Breaks for Disabled Children webpage as soon as details are finalized.

[Short breaks for disabled children | Oxfordshire County Council](https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/residents/children-education-and-families/information-parents/breaks-disabled-children)

**How can my child access services?**

Community Short Breaks are open access services, and families can contact providers directly to ask about their child accessing the activity. If a school holiday or Saturday activity is run by or located at a school, children and young people do not need to be pupils of the school to access the activities provided on the premises.

**What happens if I am unhappy with a Short Breaks service?**

In the first instance talk to the manager of the service. If you are not satisfied with the response you get, please follow their complaints procedure. At the same time, you can also email our quality and improvement team.

QualityImprovementTeam@Oxfordshire.gov.uk

**If my child currently accesses a service and it will be continuing, do we need to reapply?**

It is unlikely that you will need to do this but please discuss with the provider of services about their processes.

**Will my child lose a place if the provider in my area changes?**

If you have a new provider in your area, we recommend that you contact them as soon as possible to express an interest in the service they are offering.