

PRESS RELEASE

Kent County Council and it's NHS Primary Care Trust partners are Aiming High for Disabled Children with Increased Funding for Short Breaks

Kent County Council, working in partnership with Kent's NHS Primary Care Trusts is hosting an event at the Ramada Hotel in Hollingbourne on the 24th October for all those organisations who are, or may wish to become, involved in the delivery of short break services for disabled children living in the county.

Kent has been successful with a bid to become one of 21 'pathfinder' areas in the country for the Government's Short Breaks Transformation Programme. This status brings with it a significant amount of money to invest in short break services and will run until March 2011. The Government has given an undertaking that funding will continue to be available to local authorities and the NHS beyond the three year period.

A 'short break' may be delivered in a variety of ways. The services will include family based or individual day care (which includes trips to football matches and the cinema, eg), play schemes, weekend fun clubs, befriending, holiday activities, toddlers' clubs and outreach services. These services will focus on providing children with positive experiences.

We are committed to making a significant impact on the availability of services for families in Kent. For this reason we hope that as many organisations interested in providing new services or building on existing services will attend. We hope to stimulate attendance from organisations not previously involved in the direct delivery of services for disabled children, if they wish to diversify into this area - organisations with a history, for example, of providing befriending services, services for disabled adults, carers support, mainstream childcare, young people's services or development services.

The event will focus on providing information about the Short Breaks Transformation Programme and how organisations may become involved and go on to secure funding to assist us in meeting our targets. It is also hoped that the event will initiate the development of strong links with organisations who may wish to provide short breaks in the future, as well as strengthen the relationships KCC and its PCT partners have with existing service providers.

The Department of Children, Schools and Families were pleased with the consultation work with parents prior to submission of the bid. We will continue to ask parents, children and organisations providing services for disabled children during the course of the Programme to make sure we are in touch with their wishes and to ensure we purchase the best services to meet their needs.

For more information on the event and for a registration form please contact **Julie Smith, Short Breaks Programme Administrative Officer, c/oDisabled Children's Services, Kroner House, Eurogate Business Park, Ashford, Kent, TN24 8XU. (Tel. 01223 652125, e-mail shortbreaksPathfinder@kent.gov.uk)**

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