

Short Break Carers Needed for Children and Families affected by Disability



FIND OUT MORE TEL: 01463 703 431
Or email us at fostering@highland.gov.uk

Short break care is family based and takes place in the carer's own home.

Bringing up a child with a disability can put extra demands on any family. Though friends and the wider family can help many parents find that regular short planned breaks with trusted and trained carers can make a huge

difference to them, to the child with disability and other children in the family.

In Highland many children and their families are linked with a carer family, and have been for many years.

Here is what some of them have to say:



"Having short breaks for John means uninterrupted family time and undisturbed sleep. It means our son has a chance to meet other people, get out and about and have a life outside his home. He loves home but gets depressed if he doesn't have things to look forward to. He has hopes and dreams like anyone else and loves making plans for his holidays. Respite helps him develop life skills and learn from the wider world."

Lorraine – mother of a teenager with autism



"I have gained valuable experience in cooking, fishing, climbing, golfing, shopping, bog walking, video watching, glueing, gardening, painting, bowling, cycling, drawing, playing board games, sand castle building, reading, egg rolling, badminton, Xbox and pool - as you can see, I have had a ball too!"

Carer – Sutherland



"My family give breaks for children younger than me. I only have one big brother, and respite is like having younger brothers and sisters some of the time."

Helen aged 10 – daughter of carers in Dingwall

"For us as a family Tommy has taught us that life is for living and even though at times it can be hard we can't choose the life we are given we just have to make the most of it but you can have some fun and laughter along the way. Tommy enjoys time away from his family life where he can escape into the madness and chaos of life with a family that is just as mischievous as him."

"People have often said that they don't know how we do what we do or that it takes a special kind of family but there is nothing about us that makes us any different from them except our lives are richer and more fulfilled because of our extended family and the fun and laughter that they bring."

Carers – Inverness

"I like going to my carer as we do fun things and go to the cafe for chocolate cake."

"It is good for our family as it gives the other children a break and us a peace of mind that she's being cared for in a home environment so we can relax more for the weekend."



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"My name is Krista Lee and I sometimes stay with Dave and Gill. This first started when I was 6 years old and I am now 9. My mum loves me and cares for me but sometimes needs a break.

The things I like here are making cakes with Dave and Gill's daughter and even though she is a bit bossy she is terrific. She helped me write this because I haven't learned that yet and if you ask at school they will tell you I have dyspraxia and something called autism. Dave and me are making pancakes for tea today. If you are thinking about doing what Dave and Gill are doing I think that is good and maybe my brother could go and stay with you."

Krista Lee, young person

"My name is John and I stayed at Jan's. I first met Jan ages ago and came to stay with her just to get to know her more. There I met and made friends with Diesel. He is a Black Labrador and he is great and he taught me how to cross roads, all about hair gel and that he likes gold fish. He is good and calm and follows me everywhere. At first I didn't want to leave mum so Jan really got on my case. Mum and Jan are friends now and even though I don't stay at Jan's anymore I still see her and we laugh about the gold fish and the hair gell."

John, young person



"On a personal level looking after children seems to bring out the best in Frank and me, in other words we think about what would make them safe and happy, try to make their time with us as enjoyable as possible that in turn makes you happier."

Carers – Caithness



"The importance of Tony's time at his carers' house has been substantial. This has given him a second home where he can relax and enjoy the company of positive male role models - something that he has missed out on over the course of his life. It also means that he can have the individual time spent on him that may not always be possible at the Orchard which he needs. Tony has enjoyed being involved with the carers' boys and talks about them and about when his next visit is on a daily basis. When he is relaxed he can be himself and can enjoy new things. He recently ate two fried eggs while on a stay and this really shows how comfortable and relaxed he is when he is there. I am delighted with the support he gets there and I really feel the benefit knowing he is enjoying it so much."

Mother – 10 year old boy with autism

There isn't a typical child or family who can be helped by having regular short breaks, just as there isn't a typical carer.

Children and teenagers are affected by disability in many different ways. Here is a 'snapshot' of the children we need carers for in all parts of Highland.

So who needs just some of your time and energy?

- 2 brothers 8 + 10 with learning difficulties
- 7 year old deaf girl
- 14 year old girl on the autistic spectrum
- 18 months old baby with complex developmental problems
- 3 year old autistic boy
- visually impaired 9 year old
- 13 year old needing wheelchair access
- toddler with limited life expectancy
- 5 year old with cerebral palsy

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So.... Should we do this?

Pros:

It will give children and families a real break ✓

It sounds fun and rewarding ✓

We can give so much with our experience of life ✓

My cousin had cerebral palsy and I know how hard it was for my aunt ✓

It will help my children have a wider view of the world ✓

I don't use my qualifications now I'm not working ✓

My children have left home and I have space ✓

Cons:

We don't have a spare room

* You do need to have space

Not sure how big a time commitment we'd need to make

* The time a child may spend with you may be quite short but it will have a regular pattern over time

We think we'd be better with some children rather than others

* This is taken into account

We would need help and support especially to start with

* There are specialist staff in the Fostering & Adoption and Children's Disability Services to support and train you and of course the child's parents.