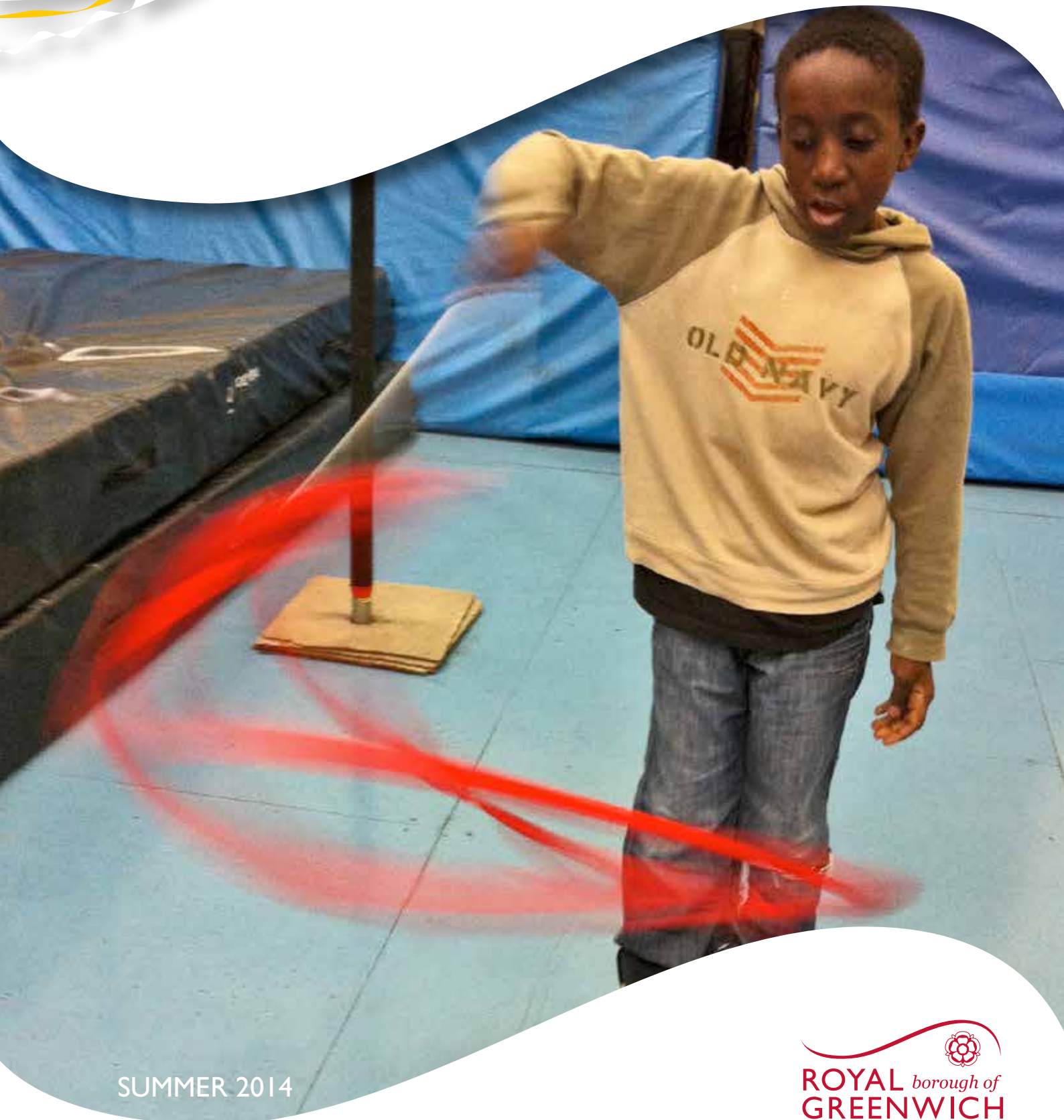




Short Breaks Statement

Guide to Short Breaks services and activities for disabled children and their families



SUMMER 2014



I am pleased to introduce this guide to the Royal Borough of Greenwich's short breaks for 2013-14.

We know that short breaks are of enormous benefit to disabled children and their families. Children and parent/carers tell us how important it is to have access to a range of engaging short break activities in Royal Greenwich and how useful these are in providing support to a family.

This guide is intended to help families in choosing the best short breaks for their particular needs and to make the most out of the support available to them. It has been prepared with a great deal of valuable input from many partners, including parent representatives and the organisations providing short break services in Royal Greenwich.

I am particularly grateful to the families who have shared their views and experiences. Feedback from families has been essential for putting the guide together and is used to shape on-going arrangements for short breaks in Royal Greenwich.

Together we are working to ensure that the short breaks available for disabled children are of the highest quality. They deserve nothing less.

Councillor Jackie Smith

Cabinet Member for Children's Services
Royal Borough of Greenwich



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Short Breaks



What are short breaks?

Short break services provide opportunities for children and young people with disabilities to spend time apart from their primary carers. The short breaks should be positive experiences for the child or young person whilst also giving their parents a rest from caring duties. A high proportion of these short breaks are funded by the Royal Borough of Greenwich.

- Short breaks are there to give children and young people the chance to do something they enjoy.
- Short breaks should always be fit-for-purpose and must fit the individual support needs of the child.
- Short breaks should be available for families before they reach a crisis.
- Short breaks can be anything from an hour-long activity at a youth club up to a few nights away from home.
- Short breaks can be used to allow parent and carers to attend training, to spend time with other family members, or to enjoy leisure activities by themselves.
- Short breaks used to be referred to as 'respite services'.

What do we mean by disabled children?

Any child or young person with a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long term effect on their ability to carry out day-to-day activities is considered to be disabled. For example, this definition could include those with:

- A physical or learning disability
- A hearing or visual impairment
- Autism or Asperger's Syndrome
- Complex needs such as a life-threatening or a life-limiting condition.



How can short breaks help your child and your family?

Short breaks bring all sorts of benefits to children with disabilities and their families. For a disabled child or young person, short breaks can be opportunities to:

- Take part in fun and interesting activities of their choice
- Meet with peers, make friends and feel included as part of a group
- Participate in activities independently of parents and carers
- Achieve goals, become more confident and develop useful life skills

For parent-carers, short breaks can be opportunities to:

- Take time out from the caring role in the knowledge that your child is enjoying a positive experience
- Focus on other family members or your own interests
- Meet with other parent and carers who share similar experiences
- Join in an activity with your disabled child

Who is eligible for short breaks?

The Royal Borough of Greenwich funds short breaks for children and young people with disabilities.

To qualify for targeted and specialist Royal Borough of Greenwich short breaks, the child or young person must:

- Have a moderate or complex disability (or disabilities)
- Be under 18 years of age (or under 25 for youth services)
- Live in the Royal Borough of Greenwich

The needs and family situation of each child or young person are different. Short breaks are therefore offered to meet specific needs in each case. There are three different types of service on offer:

CASE STUDY

Parents and carers make use of short breaks in all sorts of different ways. Short break services have a vital purpose in allowing them to take some much-needed 'time out'.

One parent in Royal Greenwich told us how she likes to drop off her son at his regular short break activity and then spend the next two hours shopping or meeting up for a coffee with friends.

However, if her husband has a day off work they sometimes like to all go along to the short break activity together as a family. They can then help their son to participate, see him use the new skills he has learned, and meet the friends he has made.

Royal Greenwich's short breaks programme aims to give families choice and flexibility. Parent and carers are welcome to use the time offered to them through short break services however they see fit!



The three levels of service

SPECIALIST SERVICES

TARGETED SERVICES

UNIVERSAL SERVICES

UNIVERSAL SERVICES:

These are short breaks that are available **to all children** in Royal Greenwich, whether disabled or not.

Examples of universal services include Children's Centres 'Stay and Play' activities, youth clubs and after-school clubs, and Brownies and Scouts.

We want these services to be as inclusive as possible for disabled children. All universal services are expected to make reasonable adjustments so that children with additional needs can be included. For most children, these short breaks are enough and they do not need to visit targeted or specialist services.

TARGETED SERVICES:

These are short breaks set up to provide activities for disabled children only.

Families can use targeted services without needing to go through an assessment by the Royal Borough. In other words, you can simply contact the service and arrange for the child or young person to attend – they do not need to wait for the Royal Borough to allocate them a place.

Some targeted services are funded by the Royal Borough of Greenwich and some by voluntary groups and charities. Examples of targeted services include Charlton Athletic Community Trust's sports club for young people with Down's syndrome and New Lodge Riding Centre's activities for children with disabilities.



SPECIALIST

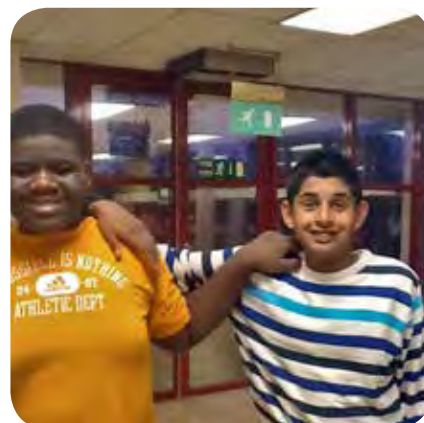
SERVICES:

These are services for disabled children with the most complex needs.

Due to their specialist nature, there is a process for ensuring that these services are suitable for the family.

The child or young person will require an assessment – this is usually carried out by a member of the Royal Borough's Children with Disabilities Team. The results of the assessment will then go to a decision-making body called the Care Package Panel. The Care Package Panel will consider the case and decide whether the child is eligible for the specialist services.

Examples of specialist services are Direct Payments and overnight breaks.



The Families Information and Outreach Service (FIOS)

SPECIALIST SERVICES

TARGETED SERVICES

UNIVERSAL SERVICES

This service will be able to help you to find a suitable activity for your child, and may help you contact providers of activities.

FIOS also coordinates the Royal Greenwich Disabled Children and Young People's Register – families choosing to be included on this register are automatically sent regular information updates about activities and services.

FIOS can provide information about all forms of childcare and early learning and can arrange one-to-one childcare brokerage to support families to identify their most suitable childcare. Some of the childminders or

home carers may be able to provide short breaks and FIOS can help you to find one.

FIOS are also able to help to advise about benefits and signpost to other benefits advice services.

To contact this service please email fis@royalgreenwich.gov.uk or telephone 020 8921 6921.

More information can also be found at:
www.royalgreenwich.gov.uk/fis
www.royalgreenwich.gov.uk/disabledchildrensregister



Short Breaks funded by the Royal Borough

SPECIALIST SERVICES

TARGETED SERVICES

UNIVERSAL SERVICES

Most of the short break services in this booklet are commissioned by the Royal Borough of Greenwich. Organisations are commissioned to provide services because they are able to demonstrate how they can arrange high-quality activities and support for disabled children and their families.

Organisations selected to provide short break services in Royal Greenwich must meet strict safeguarding standards. This is to reassure families that the child or young person will be kept safe whilst attending the short break.

The organisation is also required to show how they have experience of working with disabled children and their families. Providers are asked what training they organise for their staff and what specialist skills they possess. They will need to ensure that the short breaks are accessible and welcoming to children and young people with a variety of needs and from a range of backgrounds.

The Royal Borough carries out checks to monitor the short breaks being provided and to help ensure that they are meeting the expected high standards.



Greenwich Mencap



SPECIALIST SERVICES

TARGETED SERVICES

UNIVERSAL SERVICES

TuneTastics

- Run in partnership with Greenwich and Lewisham Young People's Theatre, TuneTastics offers weekly music-based sessions for children with a learning disability.
- TuneTastics is for children aged 5-10.
- The sessions take place from 10am-12 on Saturdays at the Tramshed in Woolwich (SE18 6ES).
- Activities include exploration of instruments, experimentation with sounds, and group and individual performances.



BigTopTastics

- Run in partnership with the Hangar Arts Trust, BigTopTastics is a weekly circus skills class.
- BigTopTastics is for children aged 9-13.
- The sessions take place from 10am-12 on Saturdays at the Hangar Arts Trust in Woolwich (SE18 5NR).
- Children are able to participate in a range of circus skills such as juggling, hula hooping and tightrope walking.

GymTastics

- Supported gym sessions taking place on Saturday afternoons (between 2.15 and 4.15pm) at the Thamesmere Leisure Centre in Thamesmead (SE28 8RE).
- GymTastics is for young people aged 12-18.
- Participating young people can try new sports, join team games, use the swimming pool and have access to the gym in a supervised, safe and friendly environment.





*Look at me, I can fly!
This is the best
thing ever!*

Child taking part in Big TopTastics

What types and levels of disability are catered for?

The short break services provided by Greenwich Mencap are for children with a learning disability.

The Greenwich Mencap staff providing support have the skills and experience to work with children and young people with a variety of needs.

Is the service suitable for children with complex needs?

Greenwich Mencap works hard to ensure that its services are suitable for children with complex needs.

TuneTastics takes place at the Tramshed in Woolwich where there is ramp access and accessible toilets. All staff are trained to offer personal care and can support children with their toileting needs. Those attending the service currently include a wheelchair user, non-verbal children and those with complex medical needs.

BigTopTastics currently takes place in the upstairs of a building with no lift. If a child is unable to walk up the stairs arrangements can be made to move equipment to a more accessible location.

GymTastics takes place at Thamesmere leisure centre and is attended by children with complex behaviour and communication needs. Thamesmere leisure centre has ramp access, accessible toilets, and a hoist which can be used to lower a young person into the swimming pool. There is limited gym equipment for wheelchair users but alternative activities can be arranged if requested.



Greenwich Mencap also offers training and advice to organisations providing universal services on how best to include children and young people with learning disabilities.

Is the service suitable for children with challenging behaviour?

All services offered by Greenwich Mencap are suitable for those with challenging behaviour. Every child will be subject to an Initial Care Needs Assessment where the support needs, potentially challenging behaviour and how to promote positive behaviour will be discussed. Greenwich Mencap will work flexibly with families to ensure that the support needs of each child are met and no children or adults are put at risk. GymTastics, Big-TopTastics and TuneTastics offer specialist support and staff are fully trained to prevent/manage challenging behaviour. Each setting has a safe space where children and young people can be taken if their challenging behaviour is a risk to themselves or others.

What training do staff receive?

Greenwich Mencap staff are fully trained and supported to work with children with a variety of needs. Individual staff members may have additional skills and areas of expertise, however, Greenwich Mencap cannot guarantee individual staff members to always be at a particular session. Training available includes: emergency first aid, people moving and handling, safeguarding children, and managing challenging behaviour. If additional skills and expertise are needed to work with a particular child families are welcome to discuss this with Greenwich Mencap.



This is the first time that my two children have been able to attend an activity together. Thank you!

Mother of two children (one with complex needs and one without any additional needs) who attended TuneTastics

Greenwich Mencap runs all sorts of fun activities for children and young people with learning disabilities.
020 8305 2245
www.greenwichmencap.org.uk



Are there any waiting times?

Before accessing a service at Greenwich Mencap, all families have to have an initial care needs assessment to discuss the child's support needs. Additional staff training may be arranged if required. Children are then placed on the waiting list and will be supported to access a service as soon as there is a space available.

BigTopTastics and TuneTastics attendance is reviewed every half term and GymTastics attendance is reviewed termly.

Spaces of children who persistently miss sessions are given to those on the waiting list, unless extenuating circumstances are present.

Are there any charges/fees?

There are no charges or fees for the short breaks provided by Greenwich Mencap.

Are non-disabled siblings able to join the service activities?

Same-age siblings are welcome at all specialist projects, providing there are spaces available.

CASE STUDIES

1 Participation in short breaks can help children to socialise and boost their self-esteem. One young person has been attending GymTastics for 18 months. He is a 14 year old boy with autism, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) and low self-esteem.

His mother learned of GymTastics through a poster that was up in her local library. She contacted Greenwich Mencap directly to find out more. A home visit was arranged during which she and Greenwich Mencap's Activities Coordinator discussed her child's support needs.

Since attending GymTastics regularly once a month, the young man's self-esteem has increased and his concentration, behaviour and enjoyment of school has greatly improved. He has made new friends and has said that the session makes him feel included, popular and part of something good.

2 TuneTastics is run by Greenwich Mencap and is an example of a short break service that can accommodate the non-disabled siblings of children with disabilities.

One six year old girl has learning disabilities, epilepsy and a chromosomal disorder. She is in a wheelchair and has been attending TuneTastics once a fortnight since November 2012.

She attends the project with her older sister who does not have a disability. Her mother reported how happy she was that this activity was available which allowed the girls to do something together that they enjoy, while meeting both girls' needs.

The daughter with disabilities participates enthusiastically in the sessions - experimenting with different sounds, playing different instruments, and listening to the songs the group sing. Although she is non-verbal she still moves her head and hands in time to the rhythm and the smile on her face shows that she enjoys her time at TuneTastics



SPECIALIST SERVICES

TARGETED SERVICES

UNIVERSAL SERVICES

This is one of the country's leading toy libraries for children with special needs and the Royal Borough commissions a number of services from Greenwich Toy and Leisure Library Association (GTLLA).

GTLLA is normally referred to as 'Greenwich Toy Library' and is based at the Newhaven Annexe (at Newhaven Gardens, Eltham, SE9 6HQ).

Greenwich Toy Library

020 8854 7090

www.gtlla.org.uk

Under 5s Play Sessions

- These sessions are run at the Greenwich Toy Library's base at Newhaven Annexe where the facilities include a large soft play area and a sensory studio.
- Sessions run from 10-12 and 12-2pm, with many children and parents staying over for the lunch period.
- All the activities – such as storytelling, music and rhyme, messy and creative play – are based around a monthly theme (for example: Goldilocks and the Three Bears).
- The play sessions can also involve going out into the community. The GTLLA minibuses recently took groups to the Horniman Museum and to Woodlands Farm.

Holiday Playschemes

- Suitable for ages 5-19.
- Greenwich Toy Library takes participating children on trips into the local community – and beyond! Past schemes have included visits to the seaside, theme parks and sites of historical interest.
- Children get picked up on a GTLLA minibus in the morning and will be returned in the late afternoon.
- All participants receive one-to-one (and sometimes two-to-one) support.

Family Trips and Outings

- Greenwich Toy Library organises regular group outings for families of children with special needs – including to museums, zoos, and the seaside. A supporting volunteer is assigned to each family to help make the trip as straightforward and enjoyable as possible.
- These activities are suitable for children or young people from ages 0 through to 19.
- The trips take place during the holidays.

Supported Family Holidays

- Greenwich Toy Library also organises week long group holidays. Families are accompanied by volunteers who are there to provide support.
- These activities are suitable for children or young people from ages 0 through to 19.
- Previous holiday groups have gone to Alton Towers and to the Motability Roadshow.

“
*All the trips have
been magical this year.*”

Parent who attends supported family outings with Greenwich Toy Library



Supported Family Holidays

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- These activities are suitable for children or young people from ages 0 through to 19.
- Previous holiday groups have gone to Alton Towers and to the Motability Roadshow.



What types and levels of disability are catered for?

Children with a wide range of disabilities successfully access short break services at Greenwich Toy Library – including children with learning difficulties, Autism Spectrum Disorder, and neurological and physical disabilities.

Greenwich Toy Library has a transport service that can pick up and collect families who would otherwise find it difficult to access public transport.

Is the service suitable for children with complex needs?

Greenwich Toy Library welcomes children with complex needs.

All children receive a comprehensive child profile detailing their needs and all relevant information. Parent-carers are encouraged to meet with staff beforehand to discuss their child's needs in more detail and help them start to build up a relationship with their designated carer. It may be decided to build up attendance gradually, or invite parent along to one of the initial sessions. Medical assistance is on standby at all times.

Participation on the busy family

trips and outings programme is often the gateway to a successful playscheme programme. Staff are always at hand to support children but we do rely on the experience, knowledge and expertise of dedicated volunteers.

Is the service suitable for children with challenging behaviour?

Greenwich Toy Library would not exclude any child due to challenging behaviour. However, as in all cases there has to be detailed profiling and a risk assessment undertaken. It may also be that the child needs to build up his attendance to reduce any undue stress or anxiety.

GTLLA would also look at the level of support necessary and increase accordingly. Many children with difficult behaviours would receive 2:1 support.

What training do staff receive?

All key staff have relevant qualifications in childcare and education.

Are there any waiting times?

Numbers are limited and early booking is essential. Families are welcome to apply to join at any time. GTLLA aims to acknowledge all referrals within weeks (and can also arrange to visit families to help introduce them to the services if required).



Taking part in activities at Greenwich Toy Library has enriched my children's lives. They now have such a variety of friends.

Parent of child participating in short break services at Greenwich Toy Library





Are there any charges/fees?

Families must be members of Greenwich Toy Library; the current annual membership fee is £30, which includes additional services outside the short breaks programme like toy and equipment lending and parent workshops.

Costs for the day trips vary but GTLLA tries to keep prices to an absolute minimum (usually around £10). Families can also apply to a small welfare fund for assistance.

The supported holidays cost £100 per person.

Are non-disabled siblings able to join the service activities?

Greenwich Toy Library aims to run an inclusive service as it sees it as essential that (non-disabled) siblings are included in these short term breaks and are able to form friendships with others while on the scheme.



CASE STUDY

Participation on a Greenwich Toy Library family trip can be a gateway to successfully accessing other short break services.

For example, one child with complex needs (including global developmental delay, right-side hemiplegia, and frequent seizures) attended a day trip organised by GTLLA where she was supported by an experienced volunteer and a member of staff, as well as her parent.

The Greenwich Toy Library team was then able to observe the child and benefit from the expertise of her parent. With the GTLLA volunteers and staff familiarised with her needs, she was then able to join in Greenwich Toy Library's summer play scheme without being accompanied by her parent.



SPECIALIST SERVICES

TARGETED SERVICES

UNIVERSAL SERVICES

New Lodge Riding Centre

Would your child enjoy learning how to ride a horse? Is your child fond of animals and keen to meet some ponies?

The Royal Borough funds activities at the New Lodge Riding Centre, a dedicated horse

riding school for people with disabilities. New Lodge Riding Centre, Mottingham Lane, London SE9 4RW.

The short break opportunities include riding lessons for children with special needs and 'pony mornings' where children are invited to help with the feeding and grooming of the New Lodge ponies.

The lessons take place on Tuesday afternoons throughout the year while the pony

mornings are organised during the Easter and Summer holidays.

Short breaks at New Lodge can be accessed by children aged 4 and older. The centre caters for children with most types of disability – though the child must be able to bear their own weight if they are going to ride a horse.

New Lodge Riding Centre

020 8851 6447

www.newlodgerda.org.uk

Horse riding lessons

- Lessons for Greenwich children with special needs take place on Tuesdays at 4.45 and 5.15pm throughout the year.
- Lessons are for children aged 4 and over.

Pony mornings

- Children are welcome to help with the care of the horses – including the feeding and grooming of the New Lodge ponies.
- This activity takes place during the Easter and Summer holidays and is suitable for children aged 4 and over.



When our daughter Victoria is taking part in activities at New Lodge, she is not known as 'the Down's girl' or 'the autistic girl'... At New Lodge Victoria is Victoria – just another of the gang who has come to be near the ponies.

Parent of a young person attending short breaks at New Lodge Riding Centre



We feel that the horse riding lessons have helped our son to improve his balance and coordination. He has also developed a strong sense of responsibility towards his horse.

Parent of a young person attending short breaks at New Lodge Riding Centre

What types and levels of disability are catered for?

New Lodge Riding Centre can organise lessons for children with most types of disability. Assistance is provided for helping children onto the horses, but the child must be able to bear their own weight if they are going to ride. The centre has plenty of experience in successfully working with children with autism and learning disabilities.

Is the service suitable for children with complex needs?

Yes, although for a child with complex needs or challenging behaviour it is usually best to have a parents or carers in attendance at their first session at the centre. This will help the staff to learn quickly how best to work with the child. The centre understands that children with complex needs or challenging behaviour may not want to mount the horses immediately. They are welcome to instead spend time stroking the horse and familiarising themselves with the animal – there is no hurry to start riding straight away!

Is the service suitable for children with challenging behaviour?

The centre is used to welcoming children with challenging behaviours and understands that disabled children will want to interact with the horses in different ways.

The centre has an overriding duty to avoid harm to both children and horses. Parents or carers should discuss their child's challenging behaviour with the centre ahead of a session taking place as this will help staff to properly handle the child.

What training do staff receive?

The group instructor at New Lodge is qualified by the Riding for the Disabled Association and is also First Aid trained. She also holds the British Horse Society Assistant Instructor qualification. All staff receive in-house training.

Are there any waiting times?

There is a waiting list for the riding sessions funded by the Royal Borough. The waiting time varies: it can be a matter of weeks or months before spaces become available.

Are there charges/fees?

There are no fees for the activities available to families of disabled children as Royal Borough of Greenwich short breaks.

There are fees for other riding sessions at the centre. Taking part in a group lesson costs £15 per half hour per child. Taking part in a private lesson costs £25 per half hour.

Are non-disabled siblings able to join the service activities?

The riding sessions funded by the Royal Borough of Greenwich are only available to disabled children.

However, non-disabled friends and siblings are welcome to ride the horses in fee-paying sessions.