

## Learning example – short breaks

<b>Provider name</b>	<b>Barnardo's - Include Me 2</b>
<b>Area/Service</b>	<i>Lancashire</i>

### Summary of Short break provision

**Barnardo's - Include Me 2** provide social opportunities for disabled children that are unable to access universal services (e.g. local football, Guides/Scouts or other clubs). In normal times the service supports 50 children at Include Me 2 and it would run Monday to Thursday 3-7pm and on weekends from 10am – 4pm.

During the lockdown this provision has been adapted. Many of the children and young people have not been accessing school and the structure has changed, instead of having 4 evening sessions there are 2 days where sessions run 1pm-7pm and 2 days from 10am-4pm, in addition to the regular 10am-4pm weekends. This has enabled them to provide places for the families who have still wanted their child to attend whether they are also attending school in some way or not.

### What needed to change?

Through a detailed risk assessment and management process the dedicated team at Include Me 2 have been able to quickly adapt to support children and young people in small groups. Some of the key changes to their approach in order to keep staff, children and families safe included:

- Not permitting parents to come on site and having marked lines in the car park to promote social distancing.
- When children and staff arrive on site they wash their hands and then have their temperature taken. When children arrive with their parents pre-screening questions are asked to ascertain whether children are displaying any symptoms of COVID-19.
- Children arrive at different times and place their items from home in a box.
- Rooms in the building were measured, in order to obtain an understanding of the amount of people that can be in a room at one time and still maintain social distancing.
- Increased cleaning of the building and surfaces has been implemented.
- The provider utilises two mini buses for children to also help maintain social distancing. On each bus there are masks, anti-bacterial wipes and hand sanitizer.
- PPE equipment is provided to staff and enhanced PPE is particularly used when staff are working in close proximity with children, for instance; when providing personal care, feeding, administering medication, moving and transferring.
- At the end of each session the room is emptied of all toys, games, books and equipment which are all sanitized. This supports staff to know which toys and equipment are used during sessions and to avoid cross contamination.

The effectiveness of the risk management strategy is shown in the outcome, in which the service has experienced no outbreaks of coronavirus. This has given parents and staff the confidence to trust the service and know that environment is safe.

### What enabled the changes to happen?

The team was able to continue to provide support and make quick decisions about changes to the environment as they have their own building, and domestic cleaning staff. Maintaining communication with parents (now via the phone, rather than face-to-face) strengthened relationships and, as time went on, increased confidence for children to attend sessions.

In addition:

- ✓ A designated staff member took on the role of health and safety lead, monitoring and updating the team about new government guidance.
- ✓ Regular communication with Ofsted and CQC to support planning.
- ✓ Where possible the focus was on outdoor games and/or minimising physical contact by using cones, children being given their own equipment for activities, such as painting rather than sharing equipment.
- ✓ Understanding the risk and that not all the children will be able to social distance and to mitigate this, staff regularly use hand sanitizer when needed.
- ✓ Increased the use of makaton and pecs for children that have communication difficulties.
- ✓ Social stories were developed for children to help them understand changes to the setting and to prepare them for staff wearing PPE.

**“Although we had anticipated that some children and young people might be worried about us wearing PPE most of them found it hilarious, or said we looked like aliens!”**

### What next – scaling up and sustainability

The team has carried out an audit with families and found that many would like to start accessing the service again. Therefore, they are coming up with a plan for the main building with the help of a health and safety advisor.

They are planning on having a new model; 2 split days with 2 x 4 hour sessions and an hour in the middle for cleaning. Currently the service has only been available for children and young people with an assessment from the social work team however they hope to start the non-assessed service from an alternative venue.

They plan to minimise mixing groups of children and staff by setting consistent days for children to access sessions.