

# Short Breaks Statement 2021-2024





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## Experiences of families run throughout this document.

Green boxes are parent/carers' comments, blue is from young people, those in orange are parent/carers' observations of what young people with non-verbal communication enjoy and the choices they make at their sessions.

**Parent/carers' comments**

**Young people comments**

**Parent/carers' observations**

# A guide for parent/carers about Short Breaks for disabled children and young people

Dear Parents and Carers

Welcome to the 2021 – 2024 Short Breaks Statement which is a guide that sets out West Sussex County Council's (WSCC) Short Breaks offer to children and young people (0-25-year olds) with additional needs and/or disabilities. This is an informative document about the range of services within WSCC, what support is available to you and your family and how to access it all. Our current Short Breaks offer is focused on 0-18-year olds although some breaks are offered for young people up to 25 years old.



WSCC have co-produced this guide with the support and help of the West Sussex Parent Carer Forum and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND). In August 2020 we used social media platform Facebook to capture a wide range of parents and carers' views to help develop this guide. We also followed up with a smaller group of parents who reviewed this guide, who suggested changes which we incorporated.

We welcome your questions, comments, ideas and feedback about anything relating to Short Breaks.

Please tell us what you think either directly via our team email: [SENDCommissioningteam@westsussex.gov.uk](mailto:SENDCommissioningteam@westsussex.gov.uk) or through the [West Sussex Parent Carer Forum Facebook page](#).

**If you need this guide in a different format or need advice on short breaks, please contact us.**

Best wishes from:

Michael Rhodes-Kubiak

Acting Senior Commissioning Manager (SEND)



## **Is my family eligible for Short Breaks and how do I apply?**

Short Breaks are available to children and young people with a wide range of additional needs and/or disabilities including wheelchair users, those with autistic spectrum conditions, profound and multiple learning disabilities and complex health needs.

Short Breaks services are for:

- ✓ Children and young people under 18 years with additional needs and/or disabilities (up to 25 for some Short Breaks, see page 6)
- ✓ Children and young people who live in West Sussex
- ✓ Children and young people who are in receipt of either the middle or high care component of Disability Living Allowance (DLA) or the standard or enhanced rate of Personal Independence Payment (PIP) or have equivalent needs.

If your family meets these criteria you can contact providers directly, see page 4. If you are not sure if you meet the criteria you can get advice by emailing [SENDCommissioningteam@westsussex.gov.uk](mailto:SENDCommissioningteam@westsussex.gov.uk)

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## **We don't currently get Disability Living Allowance (DLA) or Personal Independence Payments (PIP). Where can we get advice about these benefits?**

Information and details of organisations that provide support can be found on the [West Sussex Local Offer](#).

Reaching Families, a parent/carer led charity, also have some [helpful factsheets on their website](#).



## What are Short Breaks, and what kinds of activities are on offer?

I choose pizza making.

I like going on trips.

I like quiet sensory chill out time.

I made a Pac Man game out of cardboard boxes.

The purpose of Short Breaks is to offer children and young people activities that benefit them and that they enjoy. Allowing parent/carers to also get a break from their caring role.

Short Breaks can include:

- ★ after school clubs and activities
- ★ holiday playschemes
- ★ youth clubs
- ★ drama groups
- ★ activities for the whole family to enjoy together.

You can find more specific information about what's on offer on the following websites:

- [Short Breaks Local Offer](#)
- [Short Breaks accessible website](#)
- [Short Breaks Facebook group](#)
- [Commissioning Team Wiki website](#)

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## When do they take place?

Short Breaks are offered outside of the school/college day and can last anything from a few hours, to a whole day and even short holidays.

Play and youth schemes are also available during the school/college holidays.

He knows it's ok to leave us for periods of time because we will always come back to collect him afterwards.

# Short Breaks


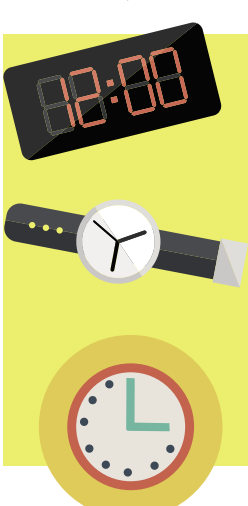
## 2019-2020



**Over 40  
new and  
creative  
projects**

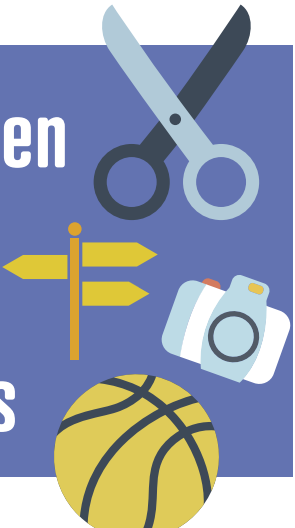


**38**  
providers are  
registered with us



**60,176**  
hours of  
breaks in  
total

**3,042 children  
and young  
people used  
short breaks**



**8,000 hours of breaks for 18 to 25 year olds**



## Where do they take place?

In a wide range of venues across West Sussex, including community and leisure centres, and at some school locations during the holidays or after school during term time. Some breaks are delivered virtually.

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## Who runs Short Breaks activities, and how do I know they are good quality providers?

WSCC commissions a range of organisations to provide Short Breaks services across the County. These range from local voluntary organisations to large national providers. All organisations providing Short Breaks on behalf of the Council have been through a rigorous selection process and comply with on-going monitoring.

We obtain a wide range of informal and formal feedback and use this information to adapt and/or commission new services in order to meet the changing needs of the families who access services.

For example, in previous years, families told us that they wanted to enjoy breaks together as a whole family. In response to this we commissioned a range of family fun days and events.

Play and youth schemes are also available during the school/college holidays.

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## How much does it cost?

The cost of Short Breaks varies across organisations based on a number of factors. These include the length of time of the break, whether there are any admission/entry fees, associated transport costs and the type of support being provided. For instance, a day trip to London on the train may cost more than an after-school club. Parent/carers are asked to make a small contribution to the cost of the Short Breaks with the majority of the cost met by the Council. Parent/carers can expect to pay around £3 per hour for a short session and around £10 for a day, however this varies depending on the activities.

**We know that the staff can meet all of B's needs, medical and emotional, so we can relax and not worry.**



## How do I sign my child up for a Short Break?

Once you have chosen a provider/s you think is right for your child/young person (using the information on the links above) please contact the provider directly to find out what they are offering and if they have spaces. You may have to join a waiting list for a short while before your child is able to access services. Many organisations also have Facebook pages and other ways that you can receive support and information whilst you are researching or on a waiting list, link for all of these can be found on the [Short Breaks Wiki website](#).

WSCC commissions different types of Short Breaks to meet the needs of families and children/young people. You might wish to use several different providers, and types of break, if this works for your family. The following questions cover some more information about the types of break on offer:

### I'd like my child to join in with activities all kids their age take part in. What is on offer?

Short breaks funding supports providers to ensure activities can be enjoyed by young people alongside their peers. As well as enabling SEND specific activities.

I like art and gaming, and the same stuff as other people, but I'd be nervous to go to a new club on my own.

They communicate with my sister; they are really good with that. Staff use Makaton and symbols. They do listen to the kids.

### I'm looking for specialised support and an environment that's set up just for children with special needs and disabilities. What is on offer?

We fund targeted services specifically for children and young people who need additional support or who may need activities or groups tailored to meet their needs.

It's a place where children can have fun and feel safe

More details of providers is on the [Local Offer](#).





## **We need a break overnight. What is on offer?**

Some Short Break providers offer fun overnight breaks as part of their programmes and have lodgings which families can access. These can be funded through personal budgets or privately.

Overnight Short Breaks can also be offered in local authority residential settings or with foster carers and are accessed via a children's social care assessment. These assessments can be requested through the Integrated Front Door. Or if you have a social worker you should talk to them. Access to overnight Short Breaks will be dependent on the outcome of the assessment.

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## **We would like to spend time together as a family.**

Families told us they would like more opportunities for the whole family to relax and have fun together in an inclusive and accessible environment. We commission family fun days to meet this need in a variety of settings.

You can find out about events coming up on the [Short Breaks Facebook group page](#) or on our [Short Breaks wiki website](#).

You can also access information about these via providers' own social media and websites.

**A great way to spend time with the whole family in a safe and inclusive environment.**

**I'd like to learn about managing my own money.**

**I like relaxing in the spa.**

**Everyone is different and just because you are an adult doesn't mean you don't still want to do fun stuff!**

## **We are looking for something for an 18 to 25 year old, what is there on offer for young adults?**

In response to feedback from families asking for more choice for this age group WSCC worked closely with a panel of young people to help us to develop our Short Breaks offer for young adults.

Young adults told us that their top priorities were socialising and making friends, being able to do more for themselves and develop life skills, be part of a team, group or club and being able to follow their own interests. This is reflected in the services we researched and commissioned.

You can find details of what is on offer, as well as lots of other useful links and information, in the [Short Breaks wiki young adults section](#).

## How are Short Breaks services developed with families?

It is really important that our Short Breaks offer is co-produced with parent/carers, young people with SEND and our providers. This helps us to make sure that families get the right support and we use Short Breaks funding in the best way.

**We actually got to help decide where the funding went.**

We do this by:

- ✓ Working with the [West Sussex Parent/Carer Forum](#) as our co-production partner. The forum also helps us to engage more widely with parent/carers through surveys, polls and focus groups and works in co-production with the Council.
- ✓ Gathering wider feedback as part of our on-going monitoring processes with our providers.
- ✓ Online surveys and face to face drop-in sessions for both parent/carers and young people.
- ✓ Working with our providers through our Provider Forum.
- ✓ Youth panels and through the work of the Commissioning Teams' Participation Lead, who supports the Young Voices Forum.

We welcome new members to our virtual youth panel and Young Voices. Take a look at the [Participation Wiki website](#).

**I like people-watching when I'm out at the café**

**He loves going and just being with his friends.**

**You can pick what you want to do, go karts or football or toys**

## What do families find helpful about having a Short Break?

Disabled children and young people have the right to be supported at home and in their local communities, to have opportunities to make and meet friends, feel confident, and to thrive with a good family life.

Some of the benefits of Short Breaks for the child/young person:

- ★ to have the same opportunities appropriate to their age and ability as their non-disabled peers
- ★ to try new things, have fun and make friends
- ★ the ability to access mainstream services with support
- ★ enjoy positive learning opportunities and have different experiences
- ★ to enjoy activities together as a whole family



**It is always lovely to be able to spend some time 1:1 with B's brother or just to relax as a couple.**

**Meeting other parent/carers has enabled her to build up special relationships outside of the family which is just amazing.**

Some of the benefits of Short Breaks for parent/carers:

- ★ provide a break from caring responsibilities
- ★ feel confident that their child is having fun – with staff who are able to support them well
- ★ allow them to build friendships/networks with other families who share similar experiences
- ★ allow them to spend time with other family members

## Examples

*Names and some personal details have been changed to protect privacy.*

### **Inclusive sports activities at a local leisure centre**

J is non-verbal and was initially quite anxious. She really struggled with unfamiliar faces. During the swimming activity, J would stay in one area and would not have the confidence to explore the whole pool.

J tried lots of new things with us and her confidence has grown, now swimming is her favourite activity. She will happily explore the entire pool and interact with lots of different staff and young people when she is swimming. She has formed really strong bonds with the staff and the other young people; she loves intensive interaction with the staff. J now has the confidence to jump in the foam pit at the trampolining park, which took a lot of encouragement but was a huge achievement for her and her family.

**I feel secure leaving her, and she has the best time engaging in fun activities with her peers. You have enabled her to build up special relationships outside of the family which is just amazing. You are enabling my daughter to develop into a secure teenager.**



**None (of the other services) had spent time with us as a family or backed us up and helped us learn how to actually deal with T's behaviour. It made a difference for me just to have someone behind me who understands us as a family.**

## **Outdoor fishing course**

T has a diagnosis of ADHD, Autism spectrum condition and sensory processing disorder. His mum was worried about his self-esteem and confidence and especially his relationship with his older sibling D. T is often the focus of the family and D felt left out and had become withdrawn. The staff have worked with T on his emotional literacy and getting him to communicate without being angry or frustrated. He's learnt to be more self-sufficient and take responsibility for himself. He's now dressing himself and his mum thinks he's learning the basic stepping-stones for his future personal development. He now thinks before he acts or reacts. The best thing for T was that his sibling and mum went on the course with him. T was able to tell them what they should be doing and help them. He got the chance to interact with his sibling in a positive way and they got to see him doing something that he's good at and knowledgeable about. The family have really bonded since going on the course. His sibling got to meet other siblings of children with SEND, and his mum found meeting other parents really supportive and a good way to share experiences and information. She also felt she could relax as the other parents were all in the same boat and wouldn't be judging each other, plus the staff were very confident in how they worked with the young people. Watching the staff work with T was very helpful. She felt like they understood what the family were going through. She picked up some tips on how to communicate with T and deal with his behaviour.

## Other services to support families

In addition to Short Breaks, some families need additional or bespoke support. Many families use their own resources of friends and families and other support groups. However, some don't have this support and need more help from the Council. Below is a list and description of various aspects of support available.

The **West Sussex Parent/Carer Forum** is a parent/carer led charity for parent/carers of children or young people 0-25 years old with any SEND. They provide information, support and advice to help parent/carers understand, improve and make positive changes to the lives of their families and others. They also provide support and training for parent/carers to enable a positive experience in navigating through the health, education and social care world of special educational needs and disabilities.

[www.wspcf.org.uk](http://www.wspcf.org.uk)

The **Children with Disabilities Service** comprises of five teams of social workers across the County and offer a specialist service to children and young people with severe and/or complex disabilities and their families.

[westsussex.local-offer.org/services/265](http://westsussex.local-offer.org/services/265)

The **Choice Team** provides support to families who meet the social care criteria but need less regular support. This team is currently going through a re-design and the plan is to integrate these children and young people into the main Children with Disabilities Service. The current purpose of the team will remain.

**Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Information and Advice Support Service (SEND IAS)** offer accurate, up to date and impartial resources and information about the law on special educational needs and disability, providing information in a range of different formats.

[westsussex.local-offer.org/services/7](http://westsussex.local-offer.org/services/7)

**Carers Support West Sussex (CSWS)** offers a range of services to parent/carers across West Sussex including groups and workshops, counselling and individual support.


[www.carerssupport.org.uk](http://www.carerssupport.org.uk)

The **Local Offer** is a central website containing information about all services, support and events for children and young people aged 0 - 25 years who have SEND

[www.local-offer.org](http://www.local-offer.org)

**Early Help** is a range of coordinated services for children and families from 0-25 years old. Within the service there is a 'whole family' approach to support, with the aim that it gives all children the best start in life and makes it easier for families to get the help they need.

[westsussex.local-offer.org/services/671-early-help](http://westsussex.local-offer.org/services/671-early-help)



All enquiries/referrals for both Social Care and Early Help are dealt with through the **West Sussex Integrated Front Door (IFD)**. This is the only public contact point for Early Help and Children's Social Care. The IFD triages all enquiries and referrals upon receipt and directs to the appropriate service to support with the query, providing a seamless process with children receiving a service proportionate to their needs in a timely way. A specialist child disability social worker is part of the team. They can signpost you to local services including short breaks if you are unsure whether you would like a social care assessment or not.

[westsussex.local-offer.org/services/731](https://westsussex.local-offer.org/services/731)

**West Sussex SEN Assessment Team (SENAT)** works with pupils who already have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) and considers and conducts assessments for those who may require an EHCP. SENAT does not directly assess children. The processes and decisions the team coordinate are based on the professional advice provided to them as part of the assessment or annual review process.

[westsussex.local-offer.org/services/147](https://westsussex.local-offer.org/services/147)

The **West Sussex Educational Psychology Service (EPS)** is a specialist team working across the County. Through the application of psychology, they aim to promote the educational, social/emotional development of children and young people who have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP).

[westsussex.local-offer.org/services/132](https://westsussex.local-offer.org/services/132)

Portage is a home visiting educational service for very young children with significant support needs from birth. Other children are referred later as their needs are identified. Portage provides support for families by working alongside parents offering practical help and ideas to encourage a child's emerging skills.

[westsussex.local-offer.org/services/88](https://westsussex.local-offer.org/services/88)

The **Compass Card West Sussex** is a disability register and associated concessions card scheme for children and young people under 25 who have special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). You can use the card at lots of leisure venues to get discounts or special offers – so you end up paying less to have fun! The information that you supply also helps the Local Authority to plan services.

[www.compasscard.org.uk](http://www.compasscard.org.uk)

**Reaching Families** is a parent-carer led charity that provides a wide range of services to West Sussex families of children with SEND including in-depth parent guides, fact sheets, animations, training, befriending, 1-2-1 counselling, parent support groups and a Facebook support group.

[www.reachingfamilies.org.uk](http://www.reachingfamilies.org.uk)