

A short guide for parent/carers to Short Breaks for disabled children and young people

1. What are Short Breaks?

The purpose of Short Breaks is to offer children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities, accessible activities that benefit them and that they enjoy, having a break away from family, whilst allowing you to also get a break from your caring role.

Short breaks are like community holiday clubs and weekend activities, but more tailored to the support needs of children and young people with SEND

Short Breaks can include the following and more:

- ✓ holiday playschemes
- ✓ youth clubs
- ✓ drama groups
- ✓ accessible sports activities
- ✓ activities for the whole family to enjoy together

2. Is my family eligible for Short Breaks?

Short Breaks are available to children and young people with a wide range of special educational needs and disabilities.

Short Breaks services are for children and young people who:

- ✓ are under 18 years with additional needs and/or disabilities and
- ✓ live in West Sussex and
- ✓ 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). Your child is eligible if they have equivalent needs, even if you are not currently claiming DLA/PIP for your child – please contact the supplier's directly and they will talk to you about your child's needs and decide whether they are equivalent to those eligible for disability related benefit. Please contact us if you are not sure.

3. When and where 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. During school/college holidays playschemes and youth schemes are available; they run from a wide range of venues mainly across West Sussex, including community and leisure centres, and at some schools.

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

WSCC commissions a range of providers to run Short Breaks and all have been through a rigorous checking process and continual monitoring. Details of all of the suppliers can be found at: [Short Breaks \(local-offer.org\)](https://www.westsussex.gov.uk/short-breaks). Providers are encouraged to regularly obtain feedback from children and young people and their families and so please contribute when requested. Sometimes things don't always run smoothly and if you are unhappy about any aspect of the service then please talk to the provider directly; if you are not satisfied with the response or consider it serious then providers all have a formal complaints procedure that you can ask them to follow, however in our experience most complaints can be dealt with informally.

5. How much does it cost?

Short breaks activities are subsidised by funding from West Sussex County Council, which means as a family you do not pay the full cost of your child's place. You can expect to pay around £3 per hour for a short session and around £20 for a day, however this varies depending on the activities/supplier. You may be asked to contribute more where additional charges will be incurred e.g. admission/entry fees, associated transport etc.

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

You can see details of all of the providers at: [Short Breaks \(local-offer.org\)](https://www.westsussex.gov.uk/short-breaks). Once you have chosen a provider(s) you think is right for your child/young person you can contact them directly to find out what they are offering and if they have spaces. It is also a good opportunity for you to ask questions to help you decide which provision is best for your child. Each provider has their own sign-up process during which you will be asked questions about your child/young person's needs. This helps the provider check they have the right support in place for your child. In some instances an activity or club may not be right for your child, in which case the provider should be able to signpost you to something more suitable. You may have to join a waiting list before your child is able to access services – many providers also have Facebook pages and other ways that you can receive support and information whilst you are waiting. You may wish to also look at other providers to see if they have a space.

7. What have families told us is helpful about having a Short Break?

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

- ✓ to have opportunities, with support, appropriate to their age and ability
- ✓ to try new things, have fun and spend time with peers
- ✓ the ability to access community activities with support through outings and trips
- ✓ enjoy positive learning opportunities and have different experiences
- ✓ to enjoy activities together as a whole family

Some of the benefits of Short Breaks for you:

- ✓ provide a break from caring responsibilities
- ✓ feel confident that your child is safe and having fun – with staff who are able to support them well
- ✓ opportunities to build friendships/networks with other families who share similar experiences
- ✓ allow you to spend time with other family members
- ✓ relax knowing that you and your family are in a safe and inclusive space

If you have any other questions about Short Breaks then please contact the team at:
SENDCommissioningTeam@westsussex.gov.uk