



Short Breaks Summary 2025 to 2028

Support for children and young people
with special educational needs and
disabilities and their families



Introduction

West Sussex County Council is committed to making sure that children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) can access mainstream universal provision (where possible) allowing them to have the same experiences as their non-SEND peers.

Universal and community-based offer

All families are encouraged to look at the community offer to see what is available to them. Universal and community-based offer includes the following.

- Local Offer 0 to 25. Visit [West Sussex Local Offer](#)
- Libraries. Visit [West Sussex County Council](#)
- Early Help Services. Visit [West Sussex County Council](#)
- Connect to Support (Adults 18 and over). Visit [West Sussex Connect to Support](#)
- Scouts. Visit [supporting people with additional needs](#) and [Join West Sussex Scouts](#)
- There are many leisure centres across West Sussex, who offer a range of different sessions and activities.

The West Sussex County Council Disability Register collects information about children and young people aged 0 to 25 with SEND to help plan and deliver their services. As a thank you for signing up for the Disability Register the County Council is providing each individual with a MAX Card. A Max Card provides discounts on attractions and activities across England. Families who sign up also receive regular newsletters with helpful information about universal, community-based and specialist services. Visit the website for the [West Sussex Disability Register](#)

West Sussex County Council's Family Information Service (FIS) also provides support, free impartial information and signposting for families with children aged 0 to 19 (up to 25 years for those with additional needs). The role of the service is to help families get the most out of the information and services available in the community and online. Visit the website for the [Family Information Service](#)

Targeted support

Short Breaks are 'targeted' services for children and young people with SEND who meet the following eligibility criteria.

- Children and young people 0 to 18 years old who 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) or have equivalent needs. 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.

They are enjoyable activities that allow children and young people to have 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 are also activities for the whole family and can include the following and more.

- Holiday playschemes
- Youth clubs
- Drama groups
- Accessible sports activities
- Activities for the whole family to enjoy together

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.

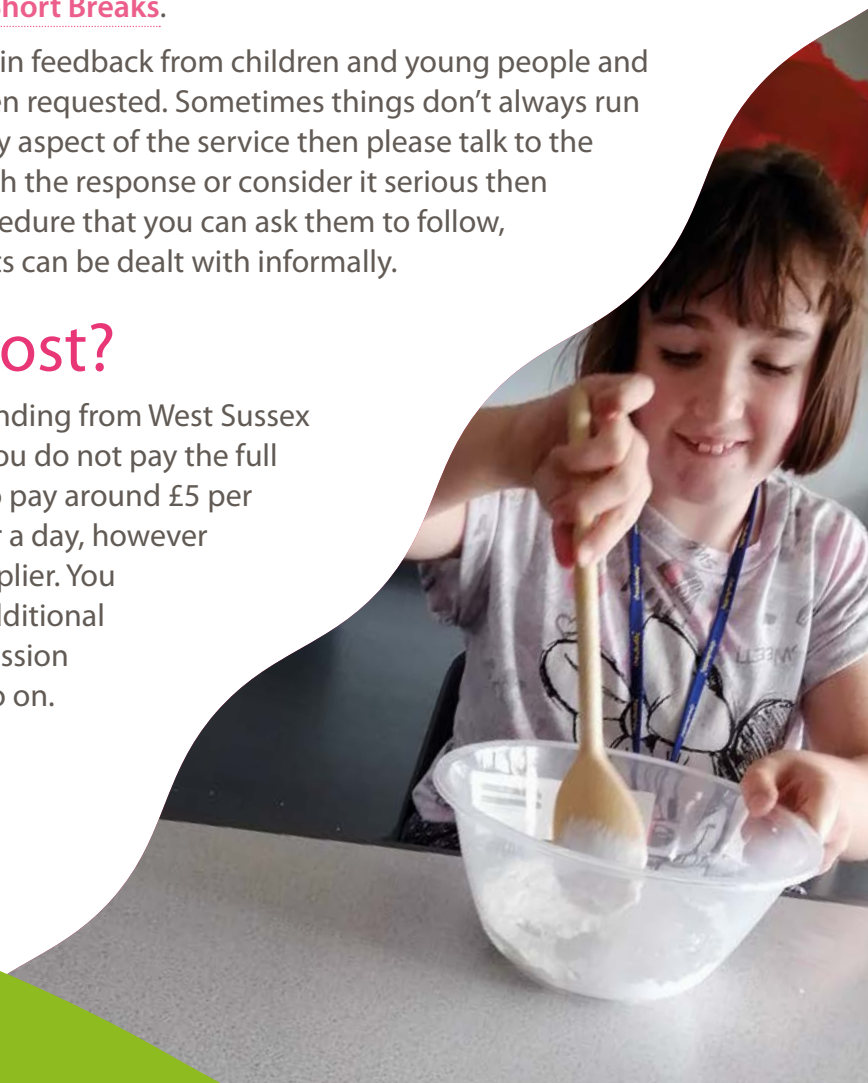
Who runs Short Breaks activities, and how do I know they are good quality?

WSCC commissions a range of suppliers to run Short Breaks and all have been through a rigorous checking process and continual monitoring. You will find details of all of the suppliers at the website [West Sussex County Council Short Breaks](#).

Suppliers 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 supplier directly; if you are not satisfied with the response or consider it serious then suppliers all have a formal complaints procedure that you can ask them to follow, however in our experience most complaints can be dealt with informally.

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 £5 per hour for a short session and around £30 for a day, however this varies depending on the activities/supplier. You may be asked to contribute more where additional charges will be incurred, for example, admission and entry fees, associated transport, and so on.



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

Once you have chosen a supplier(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 supplier has their own sign-up process during which you will be asked questions about your child/young person's needs. This helps the supplier 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 supplier 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 suppliers 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 suppliers to see if they have a space.

You can see details of the suppliers at the website [West Sussex Local Offer Short Breaks](#).

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

Some of the benefits of Short Breaks for the child/young person include the following.

- Opportunities with support appropriate to their age and ability
- 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
- Enjoy activities together as a whole family

Some of the benefits of Short Breaks for you include:

- providing a break from caring responsibilities;
- feeling confident that your child is safe and having fun with staff who can support them well;
- opportunities to build friendships and networks with other families who share similar experiences;
- allowing you to spend time with other family members; and
- knowing that you and your family are in a safe and inclusive space.

If you have any other questions about Short Breaks then please email the team at shortbreaks@westsussex.gov.uk

You can access the full Short Breaks Statement through the website [West Sussex Local Offer Short Breaks](#)

If you need a copy of this document in an alternative format including printed/printable copies then please email **shortbreaks@westsussex.gov.uk**