

Walsall Short Breaks Statement 2024

An overview of Walsall Short Breaks Services for families and professionals who care and support for a child or young person up to the age of 18, who has a disability and lives in the borough of Walsall.

Introduction

The statement explains:

- What Short Breaks are for children and young people with disabilities
- Who can have a Short Break
- Service Pathways and How to access a Short Break
- What sort of breaks are available

Short Breaks Regulations

Legal Framework:

- Breaks for Carers of Disabled Children regulations 2011
- Children Act 1989 (Section 17 (1))
- Children and Young Persons Act 2008
- Children and Families Act 2014
- Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1970
- Equality Act 2010 NHS Act 2006 (Amended 2012)
- Care Act 2014 Short Breaks Regulations

The Short Break Regulations provide detail on how local authorities must perform their duties outlined in the Children's Act 1989. Local authorities

Review date: January 2025



are required to do three key things, and these are outlined in the Regulations:

- To ensure when making short break provision, they have regard to the needs of different types of carers.
- To provide a range of breaks during the day, night, at weekends and school holidays.
- To provide parents with a short breaks' services statement detailing the range of available breaks and any eligibility criteria attached to them.
- The current short breaks service programme is funded by Walsall Council.
- Some commissioned packages of care and support may be jointly funded with health and education services.

Who is responsible for this Statement?

The multi-agency Walsall SEND Local Area Improvement Board, which includes parent, health, education and social care representatives, are working to ensure that opportunities for children and young people with SEND are maximised, enabling them to benefit from high quality services, designed and co-produced with parents, carers and children and young people. Contributors to this annual statement include the Childrens Commissioning Team, Short Breaks and Inclusion Coordinator, Early Help Officers and the Disabled Children and Young Peoples' Social Work Team together with Walsall Families and the local parent carer forum, as part of the memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between Walsall Council and Families and Carers Empowered (FACE) Group.

Short Breaks: What we can do and what we offer

Level of Services

Short breaks are part of the support for an 'Ordinary Life' as set out in the Children and Families Act 2014. There is range of short break services available in Walsall:

They range from supporting children and young people with additional needs and/or disabilities to access a break within a universal setting, to providing specialist services at a local level. They can take place in the child or young person's own home, in the home of an approved carer, a residential or community setting.

Support can be available in evenings, at weekends, throughout the school year and during the school holidays based on assessed needs.

The Activities include:

- day-time care in the homes of children and young people or elsewhere
- overnight care in the homes of children and young people or in a residential setting
- educational or leisure activities for children and young people outside their homes
- term time group activities specific to child's age and skill level
- play schemes that are age / theme specific.

We recognise the needs for each family may vary. Some families may need more support than others. Children with very complex needs may require much more support to have a short break. We will work with parents and young people to make sure there is a range of short break

provision for those with complex needs; to do this an assessment may be necessary.

Service Pathways

Service	How needs are identified	Type of Provision
Universal Provision – available to all.	Self-Referral	Clubs, sports and leisure, group activities
Targeted Services – available to those who need additional services above Universal Provision	Early Help assessment or self-referral via Walsall short break passport	Short Break Saturday clubs, activity workers to support participation and inclusion, holiday play schemes. Family Offer – Family Sensory Sessions and monthly Multi-Sports and Swimming Sessions
Specialist Services – available to those who need additional services above Targeted Services	Social Care and provider assessment	Short break Saturday clubs, activity workers to support participation and inclusion, specialist holiday play schemes, overnight fostering and residential short breaks, Personal care, Care and Support in and out of the home, Personal Budgets/Direct Payments.

Universal Provision

Universal activities are open to all our families with children and young people with additional needs and/or disabilities.

We want them to be able to access the short breaks services that are available to everyone. We will challenge barriers to inclusion and offer equal opportunities to our disabled children. Our families should be able to access fun activities, and parents receive a break from caring. We are working in close partnership with many local groups and

organisations to develop their Special Education Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Offer.

Universal activities may include:

- Leisure, youth, sports and play services
- public spaces, for example, parks and adventure playgrounds
- Libraries and Walsall Art Gallery
- Early Years services and children's hubs
- Extended services in school including after-school and holiday clubs
- Voluntary and community facilities
- Scouts, Guides, Brownies
- Sports and games clubs

Target Short breaks

Short Breaks Family Offer

Family Fun Days sessions for our Families with additional needs funded through a grant agreement and are delivered by Sassy Sensory Surprises through the year.

Since January 2023, our Family Offer has grown with Sassy Sensory Surprises delivering monthly family Multi Sports and Swimming Sessions at Bloxwich Active Living Centre. These run on the first Sunday of every month.

Families can book directly with the provider through the information they will have received by opting in to receive service information through our mailing list.

These sessions are very popular, as they give families a chance to attend activities as a family as siblings can attend and there is no age range for the family fun day sessions.

Short Breaks School Holiday Offer

The Short Break Targeted School Holiday activities can be accessed with or without an early help or social work assessment.

Parents can contact the short break and activity co-ordinator, who will provide advice and guidance about accessing the short break targeted school holiday activities. She will also check to see whether the child or young person meets the eligibility criteria for the short break targeted school holiday offer. Families will then be supported through the process and have the option be added onto the short breaks mailing list.

The criteria for the Short Breaks Holiday Schemes for a child or young person is:

- 8 years to 18th birthday
- Living in Walsall
- Has a disability and can provide evidence of diagnosis of needs
- In receipt of disability living allowance (DLA) and can provide evidence of award
- Has a completed short break passport ideally reviewed on an annual basis.

Short Breaks Passport

An up to date short breaks passport is required to access the targeted short break holiday activities, to ensure that the activity co-ordinators have the most up to date information about the child/young person.

We are not able to progress an Expression of Interest from Families without a completed short breaks passport.

The passport provides a focus on measurable outcomes for individual children and young people, identified by the child, young person and/or parent carer, as progress towards their aspirations. It is also used by the activity co-ordinators to check they can meet the child's needs and is used when the activity co-ordinators are allocating sessions to the children and young people.

The service offer to each child or young people is informed their Short Break Passport, which captures the voice of our children and young people and their parents and carers.

The Passport is also used internally with colleagues to aid the Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) programme offer for children and young people with SEND.

Short Breaks Expressions of Interest Process

Parents can submit an Expression of Interest once checks have been carried out to ensure that:

- Their child or young person meets each part of the short break eligibility criteria.
- That a completed or updated short breaks passport has been submitted to the short break service.
- The short break activity co-ordinator cannot progress any Expression of Interest that is submitted without a completed short break passport.

A Short Break Expression of Interest Booklet is produced for every Short Break Holiday Activity Scheme. It details the offer that will be available for the holiday period.

This booklet, along with an email detailing how parents can apply, is sent out to all parents and carers who are on the Short Breaks mailing list, along with key professionals in social work and early help teams and schools.

Parents and carers must submit a new request for every holiday period as the offer changes.

Short Breaks School Holiday activities

Activities are delivered at:

- Aldridge Airport - Urban Project (8 -17 years) Aldridge Airport, Bosty Lane, Aldridge, WS9 0QQ
- Short breaks at My Place (8 -17 years), Walstead Road West, Walsall. WS5 4PE
- Minions at My Place (8 - 12 years) Walstead Road West, Walsall. WS5 4PE
- Resources for Autism (8 - 17 years) St Luke's Church, Selbourne Street, Chuckery, Walsall. WS1 2JN.

Specialist Short Break Services

Specialist services are for our families with the most complex needs, who require more support than is offered through play, leisure, and holiday activities. This may be because:

- There are changes in the family's capacity to support their child

- The child or young person's needs have become greater.

You can find out more about specialist short breaks, and check if you are eligible, by speaking with your allocated worker. If Specialist Short breaks are identified as an outcome-based intervention, a report outlining the allocated worker's assessment will be presented to the Complex Care and Short Breaks Panel.

The panel decision may result in:

- A co-ordinated intervention through a term time group
- An activity buddy worker through a commissioned care package of support or direct payment
- A commissioned package of care and support either within the home or in the community to meet the child or young people's needs.
- An overnight short break services.
- Specialist Short break services will be agreed for a specific time frame, be outcome focused and reviewed regularly by the allocated worker.

Preparing for Adulthood Summer Transition Scheme

We linked with our colleagues in the adult transition services team at Walsall Goscote Centre, who worked in partnership with us to organise and deliver a Preparing for Adulthood Summer Transition Scheme.

The scheme ran over two weeks in August 2023 and three weeks in August 2024. The scheme provided a personalised programme of activities and support services for young people approaching adulthood. They had all been referred to the scheme by their allocated social workers.

Throughout August 2024, the scheme supported 15 young people who were approaching adulthood.

At the end of the scheme a comprehensive evaluation is completed on the scheme to assist with planning for next year's Summer Scheme. This will commence in January 2025. The scheme also identifies clear outcomes for the young person.

Our Short Breaks statement for 2025

Our Short Breaks statement for 2025 will detail how we continue to strive to meet the social care needs of Children and Young People with disabilities in Walsall and details the levels of support available, who it is available to and how to access it.

We will be working closely with Face (Walsall), Parent Carers Forum to ensure the document and its content is co-produced with our families in Walsall.

Once the formal consultation and coproduction activity has been completed in December 2024, a final version of the statement will be then presented to the Walsall SEND Local Area Improvement Board in January 2025 for their endorsement.

Our Short Breaks statement for 2025 will then be available to access and download through Walsall Short Breaks Local Offer webpage from mid-January 2025.

A copy of our statement will also be available via email to families and professionals who have opted in the Short Breaks Mailing List for service information and updates. Alternative formats will be available on requests.

Additional Help

Further help is available if you need additional support to care for a child or young person. If the child already has an allocated worker, then contacting the current worker is the best course of action.

Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)

The family, or any School/health or other professional can contact the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) at MASH@walsall.gov.uk

All contacts are initially received and screened by MASH. The team will gather information held by the partnership and a decision will then be made as to how the family will receive the most appropriate level of support they require.

This could be through the following routes:

- Signposting to universal services
- Family meets the threshold for support by Early Help Services
- Child meets threshold for support by the Children with Disabilities Team
- Child or family meets threshold of Children's Services for an assessment.

Walsall SENDIASS – Family Action

You can also contact Walsall SENDIASS (Family Action) for free impartial, information, advice and support on Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) for children and their families in the Walsall area.

Children and young people aged up to 25 with SEND and their parents/carers can self-refer to this service on the following contact details:

Email: walsallsendiass@family-action.org.uk

Telephone :01922 612008 (24Hour Messaging Service)

Website: <https://family-action.org.uk/services/walsall-sendiass/>

Walsall Short Breaks and Inclusion Officer and Short breaks Mailbox

For more information on Short Breaks contact: Liz Phillips, Short Breaks & Inclusion Officer.

The Short Break booklet and expression for interest online form for school holiday play schemes for every holiday (excluding Christmas) is available six weeks before each school holiday via the local offer:

<https://send.walsall.gov.uk/support-parents-and-carers/short-breaks>

To join the mailing list for 2025 and receive the booklet by email, families can opt in by emailing shortbreaks@walsall.gov.uk