

Short Breaks

Statement 2025



Walsall Council



Walsall Short Breaks

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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 Breaks Regulations provide detail on how local authorities must perform their duties outlined in the Children's Act 1989. Local authorities are required to do three key things, and these are outlined in the Regulations:

- To ensure when making short breaks 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 Inclusion 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.

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 breaks 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.	Direct access, 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 breaks passport. Self-Referral.	Short Breaks Saturday clubs, outcome focused activity workers to support participation and inclusion, School 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 breaks Saturday clubs, activity workers to support participation and inclusion, School 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 Breaks Targeted School Holiday activities can be accessed with or without an early help or social work assessment.

Parents can contact the short breaks and activity co-ordinator, who will provide advice and guidance about accessing the short breaks targeted school holiday activities. She will also check to see whether the child or young person meets the eligibility criteria for the short breaks 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 Breaks 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.

Our Short Breaks and Inclusion Officer works closely with our HAF Colleagues to help understand and resolve potential barriers for children with SEND or additional support needs in accessing HAF activities (e.g. access to personal care support, staffing ratios).

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 breaks eligibility criteria.
- 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 breaks passport.

A Short Breaks Expression of Interest Booklet is produced for every Short Breaks 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. To join the mailing list for 2025 and receive the booklet by email, families can opt in by emailing shortbreaks@walsall.gov.uk

Parents and carers must submit a new request for every holiday period as the offer changes. The Short Breaks 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 our local offer: <https://send.walsall.gov.uk/support-parents-and-carers/short-breaks>

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 Breaks 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 breaks services will be agreed for a specific time frame, be outcome focused and reviewed regularly by the allocated worker.

Further information in relation to access to services is available within the Walsall Short Breaks Thresholds and Service Pathways (Please refer to Page 12) and Service Flowcharts (please refer to Page 13-15).

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 Summer 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. The scheme also identifies clear outcomes for the young person.



Our Short Breaks statement for 2026

We will continue to work closely with Walsall Face, Parent Carers Forum, and our Local Offer Parent Participation Group, to ensure our Statement is co-designed with our families in Walsall.

We will collectively review other local and regional LA statements, as well as examples of good national practice to help inform our conversations. Our statement for 2026 will then be available to access and download through Walsall Short Breaks Local Offer webpage in early April 2026.

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/>

**For more information on Short Breaks contact:
Liz Phillips, Short Breaks and Inclusion Officer
at shortbreaks@walsall.gov.uk**



Appendices

Walsall Right4Children

Feedback from families on the Short Break Services ?

All of the staff are so helpful and accommodating and they completely understand my child.

My child is well supported and challenged with the activities and he is growing in confidence and self esteem.

The scheme gave my son something for himself to look forward to—a bit of independence for him."

"We have been accessing the scheme for a while now through different avenues, everyone is always professional, helpful and seems to enjoy what they do"

My child enjoys the freedom that she has at the scheme and I know that she is safe.

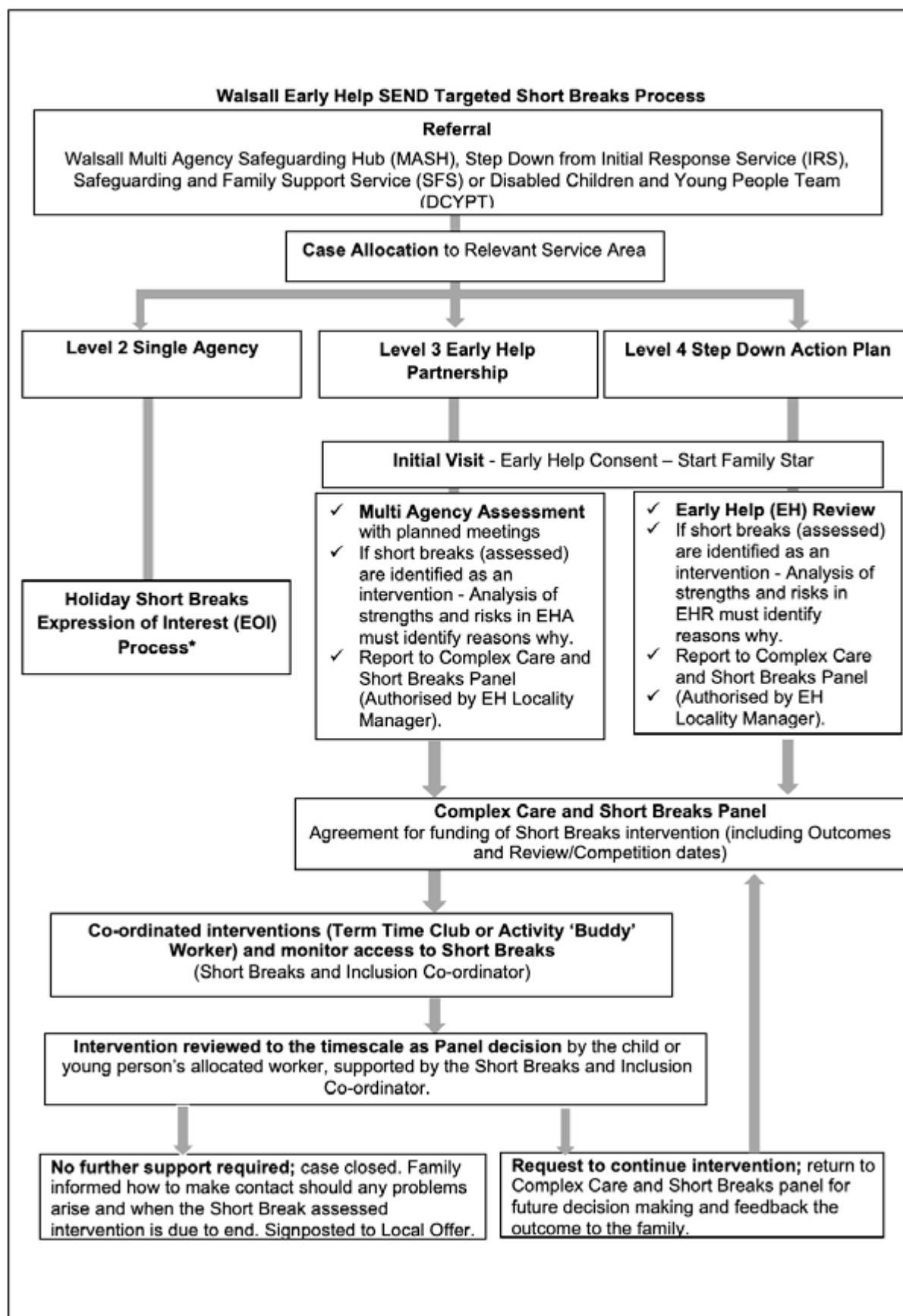
"I could do my other important work while my child attended this scheme."

My son loves going on the short breaks and he enjoys it.

I like the friendly staff with professional skills and the happy atmosphere and good fun.

Walsall Short Breaks Thresholds and Pathways Document

Criteria: Children and young people with Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities (SEND) aged 0-18 years, living within Walsall.					
Need	Level 1. Universal: yours, mine, every child Children and young people making good overall progress in all areas of their development and receiving appropriate universal services such as health and education.	Level 2. Single Agency Early Help Children, young people and their families are experiencing emerging problems, or have additional needs that require some targeted support. They are likely to require early help for a time limited period, to help them move back to Universal (level 1) and reduce the likelihood of needing level 3 more targeted support.	Level 3. Partnership Early Help Children, young people and families with identified vulnerabilities who are experiencing multiple and complex needs and are likely to need a more targeted, multi-agency coordinated approach. They are likely to require longer term help.	Level 4. Statutory Support – In need of protection, likelihood of Significant harm Children, young people and their families who are experiencing very serious or complex needs that are having a major impact on their expected outcomes or there is serious concern for their safety. These acute needs may require statutory intensive support for children and young people for protection.	
Provision Service	Walsall Local Offer	Walsall Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) Family Event Days/Sessions for families with additional needs, all age, grant funded. Targeted Services (EOI and SB Passport) School Holiday play schemes. (8-18years)	Targeted Services (EOI and SB Passport) School Holiday play schemes. (8-18years) Targeted/Specialist Services (Early Help Assessment) Saturday term-time clubs; Activity workers.	Specialist support (Social Care Assessment) Saturday term time clubs; Activity workers; Personal care in and outside the home; Fostering short breaks; Residential overnights at Bluebells (Internal Residential Home) or independent fostering agencies and residential homes. Personal Budgets/Direct Payments. Targeted Services (EOI and SB Passport) School Holiday play schemes (0-18 years)	
Referral route	Open access, self-referral	Single Agency Lead Professional Walsall SEND/ASS Open access through EOIs and SB Passport.	Early Help Partnership/Early Help SEND	Disabled Children and Young Peoples' Team/ Children Service Social Work teams	
Approval	N/A	Short Breaks Co-ordinator – EOI Allocations.	Short Breaks Co-ordinator – EOI Allocations. Complex Care and Short Breaks Panel	Complex Care and Short Breaks Panel	
Review		Review and annual update of Short Break Passport. Monitoring of access undertaken by Short Break Co-ordinator, informed by families and Schools.	Review and annual update of Short Break Passport. Monitoring of access undertaken by Short Break Co-ordinator, informed by Lead Professional (Early Help Partnership/Early Help SEND) Set at panel	Set at panel Review and annual update of Short Break Passport. Monitoring of access undertaken by Short Break Co-ordinator, informed by Lead Professional (Social Work teams)	



Targeted Short Breaks Guidance on Referrals

Short Breaks Holiday Activities (Playschemes)

No assessment required but children or young person must meet the following eligibility criteria:

- lives in Walsall
- is under 18 years old
- has a registered disability
- in receipt of Disability Living Allowance - DLA).

Families and Professionals can make a 'self-referral' for each holiday period via the Expression of Interest Process. (*Please refer to Flowchart for non- assessed Short Break Services, School Holidays Activities via Short Break Passport).

Early Help Partnership Level 3

Complex Care and Short Break Panel decision is required following on from approval from Group Manager to present Short Break intervention request to panel by allocated worker.

Where it has been agreed by Complex Care and Short Breaks panel that a child or young person is to access an **activity (buddy) worker package or to access a term time club** this intervention will be monitored and reviewed to ensure it meets the desired outcome, undertaken by the child or young person's allocated worker, supported by the Short Breaks and Inclusion Co-ordinator, and where appropriate, the Early Help Partnership Officers will support historical cases or where there is an absence of an allocated worker.

Please note: the request for a Term Time Club and Activity (Buddies) Worker must be an Outcome Focused piece of work to promote independence.

Disabled Children and Young Person Team Step Down Cases

At the end of Disabled Children and Young Person Team social care intervention, some children and young people may be stable with an **activity (buddy) package or a term time club** in place and the social worker assessment identifies that this should remain on an ongoing basis. A request will be made for agreement and continuing funding to Complex Care and Short Breaks Panel in preparation for step down to Early Help.

Early Help then:

- Engages with the family as per any step down to establish the relationship and identify any other support that Early Help can offer.
- Where it has been agreed by panel that a child or young person is to continue to access an **activity (buddy) worker package or to access a term time club** this intervention will be monitored to ensure it meets the desired outcomes by the child or young person's allocated worker.
- Following the review, the allocated worker must present the case to Complex Care and Short Breaks panel for future decision making and feedback the outcome to the family.
- If no further support is required, the case does not need to remain open to a worker, but the family do need to know how to make contact should any problems arise and when the Short Break assessed intervention is due to end.

Contact Walsall Short Breaks for further guidance.

Tel: 01922 654032

Email: shortbreaks@walsall.gov.uk

Website: <https://go.walsall.gov.uk/the-send-local-offer/Social-Care/Short-breaks>

Flowchart for non- assessed Short Break Services (School Holidays Activities via Short Break Passport)

