

# Short Breaks

Statement 2026



Walsall Council

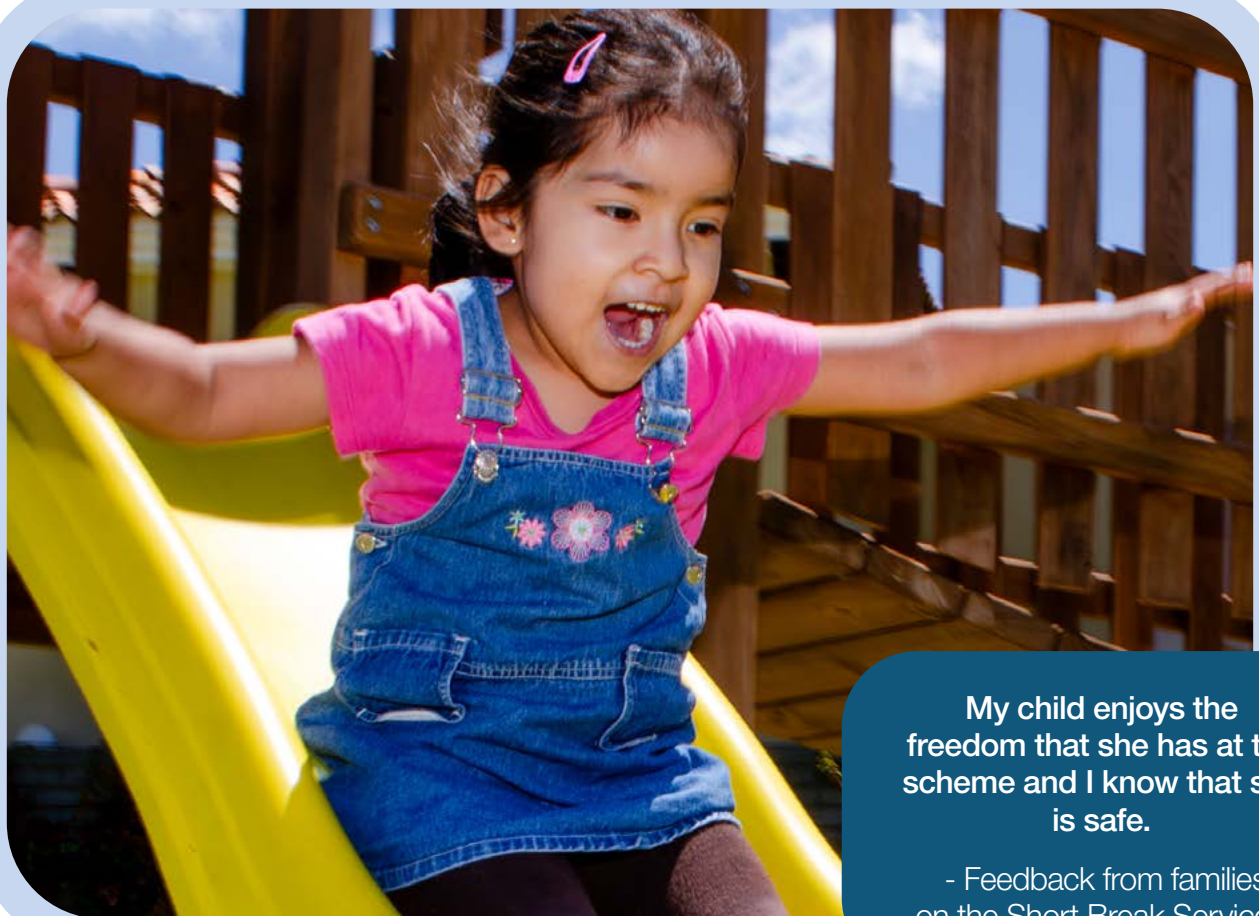
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Children



# Walsall Short Breaks

## Statement 2026

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.



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

- Feedback from families on the Short Break Services

# Introduction

The statement explains:

- What Short Breaks are for children and young people with disabilities
- Who is eligible for the Short Breaks Services
- 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 statutory guidance on how local authorities must fulfil their duties under the Children Act 1989. In delivering short breaks provision, local authorities are required to meet three key requirements:**

- Have regard to the needs of different types of carers when planning and delivering short breaks.
- Ensure a range of short breaks is available during the day, overnight, at weekends and throughout school holidays.
- Publish a Short Breaks Services Statement for parents and carers, setting out the range of services available and any associated eligibility criteria.

The current short breaks service programme is funded by Walsall Council. In some cases, commissioned packages of care and support may be jointly funded with health and education partners.

# 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, Family Help Officers and the Children and Young Peoples Disabilities 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) Forum.

## 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.	Family 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 Family Hubs
- Extended services in school including after-school and holiday clubs
- Voluntary and community facilities
- Scouts, Guides, Brownies
- Sports and games clubs

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

- Feedback from families on the Short Break Services

# Targeted 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 a Family Help or social work assessment.

Parents can contact Walsall Short Breaks by email at [shortbreaks@walsall.gov.uk](mailto:shortbreaks@walsall.gov.uk) for advice on accessing targeted school holiday activities and to check eligibility. 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.

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

- Feedback from families on the Short Break Services

# 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 Short Breaks Passport captures the voice of our children and young people and their parents and carers and helps inform our service offer

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, and 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.

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 Family Help teams and schools. To join the mailing list for 2026 and receive the booklet by email, families can opt in by emailing [shortbreaks@walsall.gov.uk](mailto:shortbreaks@walsall.gov.uk)

Parents and carers must submit a new Expressions of Interest for every holiday period as the offer changes. Please note, Expressions of Interest cannot be progressed without a completed and up to date Short Breaks Passport. 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 Sikh Development Academy (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 an overnight short break, 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.

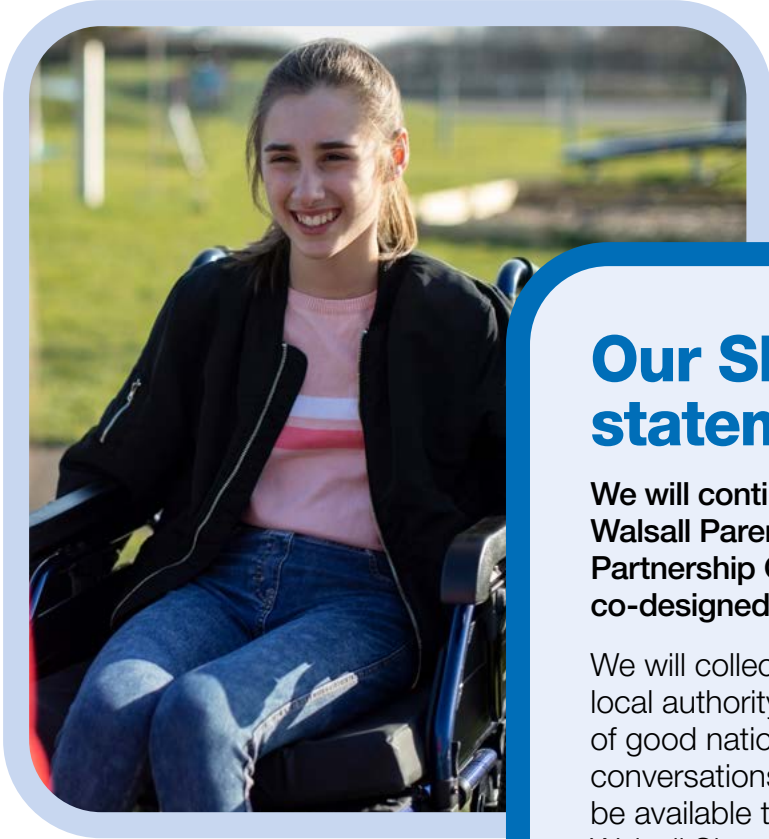
The panel decision may result in:

- 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.

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

- Feedback from families on the Short Break Services

Further Service Guidance is available from Page 12



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

- Feedback from families on the Short Break Services

## **Our Short Breaks statement for 2027**

**We will continue to work closely with FACE Walsall Parent Carer Forum and our local Parent Partnership Group, to ensure our Statement is co-designed with our families in Walsall.**

We will collectively review other local and regional local authority statements, as well as examples of good national practice to help inform our conversations. Our statement for 2027 will then be available to access and download through Walsall Short Breaks Local Offer webpage in early April 2027.

## **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](mailto: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 Family Help Services
- Child meets threshold for support by the Children and Young Peoples Disabilities Team
- Child or family meets threshold of Children's Services for an assessment.

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

- Feedback from families on the Short Break Services

## 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](mailto:walsallsendiass@family-action.org.uk)

Telephone :01922 612008 (24Hour Messaging Service)

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

## Walsall Local Offer

The Walsall Local Offer brings together information about services and support for children and young people aged 0–25 with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and their families.

It helps families understand what support is available locally, how to access it, and what to expect from education, health and social care services.

Find out about:

- Education and post-16 provision
- Health and therapy services
- Short breaks, leisure and activities
- Social care and Family help
- Preparing for adulthood and wellbeing support

Contact the Walsall Local Offer

- Telephone: 01922 652871
- Email: [localoffer@walsall.gov.uk](mailto:localoffer@walsall.gov.uk)
- Website: <https://send.walsall.gov.uk>

If your child's needs change or you need further support, the Local Offer can help you find the right services at the right time.

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

- Feedback from families on the Short Break Services

**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**

- Feedback from families on the Short Break Services



# Further Service Guidance

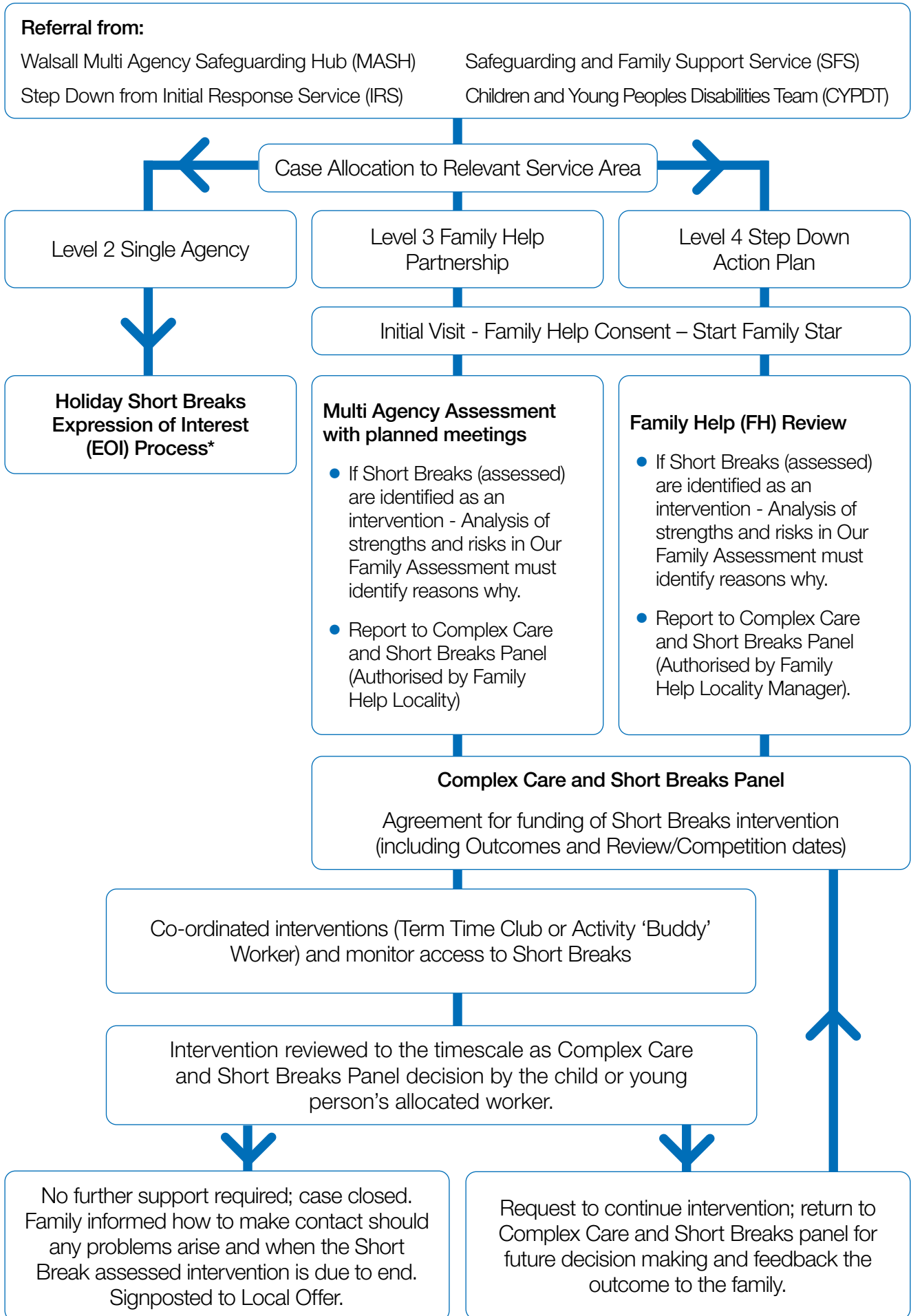
## Walsall Short Breaks Thresholds and Pathways Document

Criteria: Children and young people with Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities (SEND) aged 0-18 years, living within Walsall.

Need	<p><b>Level 1. Universal: yours, mine, every child</b></p> <p>Children and young people making good overall progress in all areas of their development and receiving appropriate universal services such as health and education.</p>	<p><b>Level 2. Single Agency Family Help</b></p> <p>Children, young people and their families are experiencing emerging problems, or have additional needs that require some targeted support. They are likely to require 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.</p>	<p><b>Level 3. Partnership Family Help</b></p> <p>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.</p>	<p><b>Level 4. Statutory Support – In need of protection, likelihood of Significant harm</b></p> <p>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.</p>
Provision Service	<p>Walsall Local Offer</p>	<p>Walsall Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)</p> <p>Family Event Days/ Sessions for families with additional needs, all age, grant funded.</p> <p><b>Targeted Services (Expression of interest and Short Breaks Passport)</b> School Holiday play schemes. (8-18years)</p>	<p><b>Targeted Services (Expression of interest and Short Breaks Passport)</b> School Holiday play schemes. (8-18years)</p> <p>Targeted/Specialist Services (Family Help Assessment)</p> <p>Saturday term-time clubs; Activity workers.</p>	<p><b>Specialist support (Social Care Assessment)</b> 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 or residential short break homes. Personal Budgets/ Direct Payments.</p> <p>Targeted Services (Expression of interest and Short Breaks Passport) School Holiday play schemes (0-18 years)</p>

<b>Referral route</b>	Open access, self-referral	Single Agency Lead Professional Walsall SENDIASS Open access through (Expression of interest and Short Breaks Passport).	Family Help Partnership/Family Help SEND	Children and Young Peoples Disabilities Team/ Children Service Social Work teams
<b>Approval</b>	N/A	Expression of interest Allocations.	Expression of interest Allocations. Complex Care and Short Breaks Panel	Complex Care and Short Breaks Panel
<b>Review</b>		Review and annual update of Short Break Passport. Monitoring of access undertaken, informed by families and Schools.	Review and annual update of Short Break Passport. Monitoring of access undertaken, informed by Lead Professional (Family Help Partnership/Family Help SEND) Set at Complex Care and Short Breaks Panel.	Set at Complex Care and Short Breaks Panel. Review and annual update of Short Break Passport. Monitoring of access undertaken and informed by Lead Professional (Social Work teams)

# Walsall Family Help Short Breaks Pathways



## 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).

### Family 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, and where appropriate, the Family 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.

### Children and Young Peoples Disabilities Team Step Down Cases

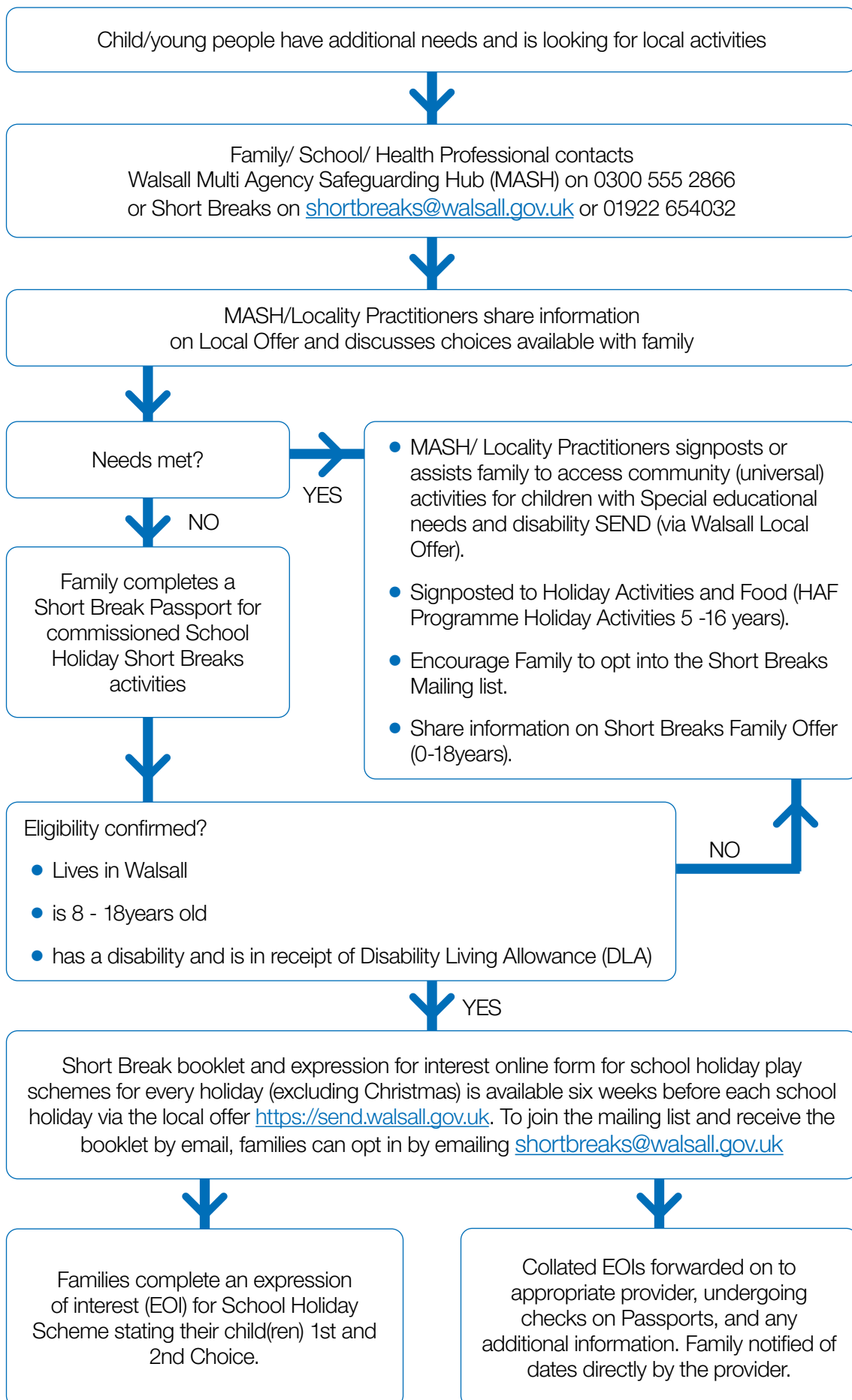
At the end of Children and Young Peoples Disabilities Team social care intervention, some children and young people may be stable with an activity (buddy) package or a term time club in place and the social worker assessment identifies that this should remain on an ongoing basis. A request will be made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

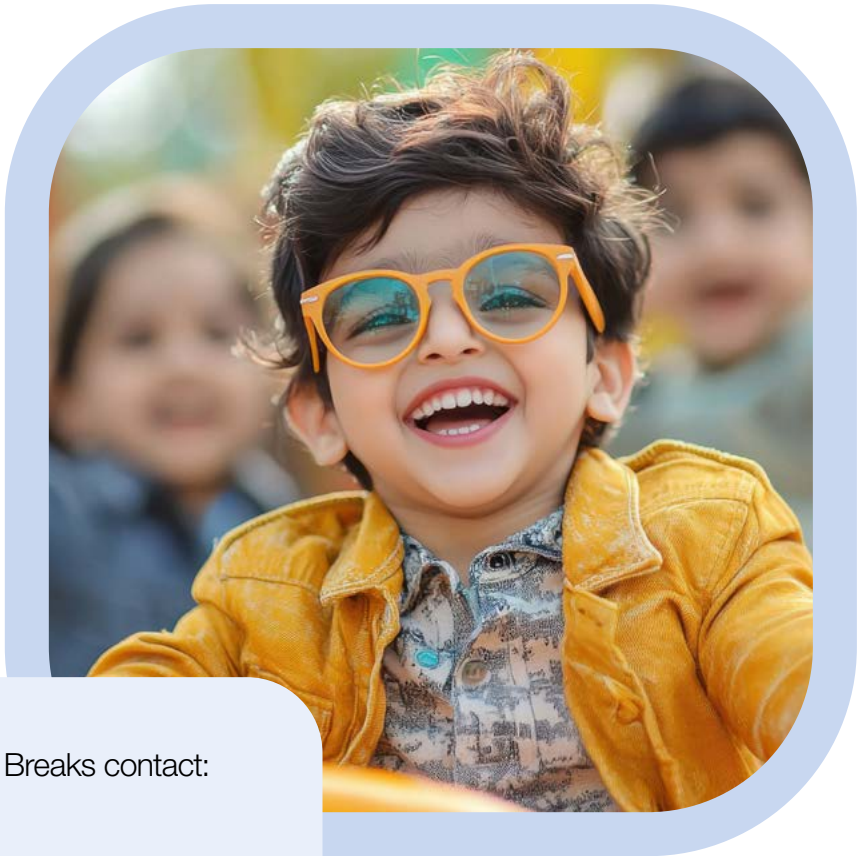
#### Family Help then:

- Engages with the family as per any step down to establish the relationship and identify any other support that Family 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.

# Flowchart for Short Break Services - School Holidays Activities via Short Break Passport





For more information on Short Breaks contact:

[shortbreaks@walsall.gov.uk](mailto:shortbreaks@walsall.gov.uk)

01922 654032