



Short Breaks for Children and Young People aged 5-18 with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities

Service Statement

Worcestershire Children First

What is a Short Break?

The Local Authority is required by law to provide Short Breaks as part of the Local Offer to meet the needs of Children and Young People aged 5-18 with Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities and their families within Worcestershire.

Short Breaks vary depending on the needs of the Child, Young Person, and their family. A short break could last a few hours, a day, an evening, overnight or for a weekend. They could take place in or away from the home. It could range from an activity like an afterschool club to an overnight stay with a carer or at a short break unit.

They provide opportunities for Children and Young People with Disabilities and Special Educational Needs to experience positive experiences, activities, and clubs, ideally within their community, that they would not ordinarily be able to access due to their additional needs.

Short Breaks enable Children and Young People to spend time away from their family, develop new friendships, new skills and enjoy different activities in a safe and supportive environment.

Short Breaks provide carers of disabled children a break from their caring responsibilities, time to spend with family and friends, to access their own hobbies or to catch up on day-to-day tasks.

Types of Short Breaks

Universal Services

Universal Services are youth services, leisure services, groups, and other mainstream activities. Many of these are accessible to Children and Young People with Disabilities.

Many Children will be able to access the universal activities offered in their local communities and will not require any additional support to do this. We would encourage all children and young people to access universal services and would expect that these have been explored prior to seeking to access Targeted or Specialist Provision.

Wherever possible these are the opportunities which should be used, these services have a duty under the Equality Act 2010 to make reasonable adjustments and not to treat a disabled person less favourably.

These may include services such as;

- Play Schemes
- Scouts, Guides, Boys Brigade etc
- Sporting Clubs
- Youth Groups
- Parks
- Swimming Pools
- Gyms/Leisure facilities
- Child Minders
- Early Years Settings
- After School Clubs
- Libraries

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- Cinema/Theatres

Many activities and events can be found through the Community Services Directory, Worcestershire's Here2Help [SearchForHelp \(worcestershire.gov.uk\)](https://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/search-for-help), for those children and young people that are in receipt of Free School Meals or for a small number of children considered vulnerable (this may include due to their SEND) they may also access the Holiday and Food Programme [Ready Steady Worcestershire - Holiday Activities and Food \(HAF\) Programme | Worcestershire County Council](#)

How are universal services funded?

Most parent/carers will pay a fee to access universal services for both disabled and none disabled children.

Targeted Groups and Activities

Targeted groups and activities enable those who are unable to access mainstream activities to still have access to those experiences that enrich and support development and play. These are commissioned services that are aimed at those Children and Young People that require more support than available through Universal Services. Those Groups and Activities available through the targeted provision will continue to be developed alongside feedback and identified needs of those accessing targeted level support.

How are Targeted Groups and Activities funded?

Worcestershire Children First award grant funding to selected groups and activity providers, via a commissioned organisation, to enable them to offer places at a subsidised rate so parent carers pay similar rates as for universal places. Once all subsidised places have been filled, parent carers may have the option to pay for a full priced place for their child.

How do I book a place at a Targeted Group or Activity?

To view and book Groups and Activities operating across Worcestershire, please go to our booking system: This currently under development – please link directly with providers identified on the Local Offer at present.

Specialist

Specialist short breaks are accessed by children and young people with disabilities with more complex needs. To access specialist services, children and young people will need to have had an assessment and referral from a social worker from the Children with Disabilities or Young Adults teams. They will work with you to find out if a specialist short break is needed, how much of a short break is needed and what type of short break would best meet your needs.

How are Specialist Services funded?

If your child has been assessed as needing specialist services, you may be awarded [direct payments](#). Direct payments let you choose and buy the services your child needs yourself and could include:

- Employing a family member or friend to care for your child or young person and/or provide additional support to enable them to access a group, activity, or club.
- Employing a one-to-one support worker from an agency who takes your child or young person out and about and/or provide additional support to enable them to access a group, activity, or club.
- Payment to access a targeted group or activity.

Your child/young person may be assessed as qualifying for overnight short breaks, either at a specialist short breaks home or with a family for one or more nights depending on your need. The cost of places at Worcestershire County Council short break units are covered by the Local Authority.

Overnight Short Break Units

There are three overnight short break units in Worcestershire. Two are run by Worcestershire County Council (Providence Road in Bromsgrove and Moule Close in Kidderminster) and two are run by Worcestershire Health and Care NHS Trust (Ludlow Road in Kidderminster and Osborne Court in Malvern). These units provide overnight short breaks to children and young people from across the whole of Worcestershire.

How do I get a social work assessment to access specialist short breaks?

Depending on the age of your child, you can contact the below teams:

- [Children with Disabilities Social Work Team \(0-16 years\)](#)
- [Young Adults Team \(16-25 years\)](#)

Transport

Transport can be challenging for families with both disabled and non-disabled children. Travel Assistance for Short Breaks is not provided as a matter of course. Families are encouraged to consider if they are eligible for the Motability element of their Disability Living Allowance and whether this could support their travel.

Additional monies/benefits

Disability Living Allowance

Disability Living Allowance (DLA) for children may help with the extra costs of looking after a child who:

- is under 16
- has difficulties walking or needs much more looking after than a child of the same age who does not have a disability

They will need to meet all the [eligibility requirements](#). For more information and how to apply please visit the [gov.uk Disability Living Allowance \(DLA\) for children webpage](#).

Free childcare for 3-4 year olds

All 3 to 4-year-olds in England can get 570 free hours per year. It's usually taken as 15 hours a week for 38 weeks of the year, but you can choose to take fewer hours over more weeks, for example.

Some 3 to 4-year-olds are eligible for 30 hours free childcare a week. [Check if you're eligible and find out how to apply](#).

Tax free childcare

You can get up to £500 every 3 months (up to £2,000 a year) for each of your children to help with the costs of childcare. This goes up to £1,000 every 3 months if a child is disabled (up to £4,000 a year).

If you get Tax-Free Childcare, you'll set up an online childcare account for your child. For every £8 you pay into this account, the government will pay in £2 to use to pay your provider.

If you've already registered, you can [sign into your childcare account](#).

You can get Tax-Free Childcare at the same time as 30 hours free childcare if you're eligible for both.

Child tax credit – disabled child

If you're responsible for a disabled child you may get extra Child Tax Credits if your child either:

- gets [Disability Living Allowance](#), [Personal Independence Payment](#) or [Armed Forces Independence Payment](#)
- is certified blind (or was within 28 weeks of your tax credits claim)

You still qualify if Disability Living Allowance, Personal Independence Payment, or Armed Forces Independence Payment stops because the child goes into hospital.

Family Fund

[Family Fund](#) deliver grants for families raising a disabled or seriously ill child or young people on a low income across the UK. Alongside giving grants, they offer families raising a disabled or seriously ill child, on a low income, wider support, including information and resources on where to go for help with money and benefits, budget planning, children's education, mental health and wellbeing, digital training, and creative workshops.