

Short Breaks Statement

This short breaks statement sets out what services are available, the eligibility criteria for these services and how services are designed to meet the needs of families.

What are short breaks?

Short breaks are opportunities for disabled children and young people to have time away from their families or primary carers, to relax, have fun and develop their skills and independence. They also provide parents and carers of disabled children with a necessary and valuable break from their caring responsibilities.

Short breaks can range from a few hours to overnight breaks and can take place inside the home or away from it, such as school holiday, weekend or after-school activities.

Short breaks are part of a continuum of services that support disabled children, young people and their families. The level of support a child or young person is entitled to will depend on the severity and nature of their disability.

The support is categorised into three levels:

1. Universal services
2. Targeted services
3. Specialist services

1 Universal services

These are short breaks that are available to all children in Southwark, whether disabled or not. Examples of universal services include 'Stay and Play' sessions at children and family centres, youth clubs, after-school clubs, adventure playgrounds and free swim and gym sessions.

More information on universal services can be found on Southwark's [childcare webpage](#), [services for young people webpage](#) and ['One Hub' for young people](#).

All universal services are expected to make reasonable adjustments so that children with additional needs can be included. For most children, these short breaks are enough and they do not need to visit targeted or specialist services.

2

Targeted services

These are short breaks that provide activities for disabled children only. Some targeted services are funded by Southwark Council and some by voluntary groups and charities.

Examples of targeted services include school holiday, weekend and after-school activities that have higher staff ratios and additional resources to support children with a range of additional needs. These activities are listed on [Southwark's Local Offer](#).

Families can access council-funded targeted short breaks without needing to go through a full social care assessment, as long as they meet the eligibility criteria.

Eligibility criteria for council-funded targeted short breaks:

- Age 5-19 years
- Southwark resident
- EHCP (Education, Health and Care Plan)
- Unable to access universal services due to level of need and/or require additional support.

Families can register for council-funded targeted short breaks by visiting www.eequ.org/southwarkshortbreaks.

- Please note:** Council-funded targeted short breaks during school holidays are capped at a maximum of 10 days per child per year (1st April – 31st March), as demand during school holidays is very high.

3 Specialist services

These are services for disabled children with the most complex needs. There is some specialist provision available through the council-funded targeted short breaks offer, without need for a full social care assessment. This provision includes one-to-one support at specialist holiday schemes and weekend activities.

Children and young people can access this offer if they meet the enhanced targeted short breaks criteria.

Enhanced targeted short breaks criteria:

This includes the eligibility criteria above, as well as:

- Attending a special school (in or out of borough) and/ or receiving support from the All Age Disability Service in Southwark
- Severe or complex learning disability, physical disability and/or health condition.

Families can register for this provision via a link shared by their special school (or assigned practitioner if they have one).

Further support

If families require support over and above what is available through Targeted Short Breaks then they may be eligible for further support subject to an assessment by the All Age Disability Team.

If eligible, a care plan will be agreed outlining what additional support will be made available to meet the family's needs.

This may include a care package of a certain number of hours of support a week and/or overnight breaks.

Further information about the All Age Disability Team is available on [Southwark Council's website](#).

How was this statement developed?

Feedback from children, young people and families helps the council understand what families want and need from a short breaks service.

This Short Breaks Statement was last updated in March 2024 to reflect changes to the service, following feedback from families.

Have your say:

If you would like to raise concerns or tell us about a good service you can do this via the [Local Offer](#). If you require support with this please contact the SIAS Team.

Email: sias@southwark.gov.uk

Telephone: [0207 525 3104](tel:02075253104)