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for Change



# Short Breaks Statement 2025 to 2028

Support for children and young people  
with special educational needs and  
disabilities and their families



# Foreword

Dear children, young people, parents and carers

As Cabinet Member for Children and Young People, Learning and Skills at West Sussex County Council, I am very pleased to introduce the County Council's Short Breaks Statement for 2025 to 2028.

This statement explains how our Short Breaks and social care support services for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) are organised and how you can access them.

The Short Breaks offer provides good quality breaks for parents and carers through fun, educational opportunities for children and young people with SEND, and through whole family activities. I have been fortunate to visit many of the Short Breaks suppliers and see first-hand the difference that they make to you. We continue to make changes and improvements to the Short Breaks offer based on feedback from you and our suppliers.

The West Sussex Short Breaks Statement has always been co-produced with local parents and carers. We are particularly grateful to the West Sussex Parent Carer Forum, who reviewed the previous statement and recommended updates most helpful to you. These have been incorporated into this document.

You can find details of Short Break and leisure activities, education, health and social care services for children and young people with SEND on the West Sussex Local West Sussex Local Offer. The Local Offer is regularly updated and so please check it often for new information.

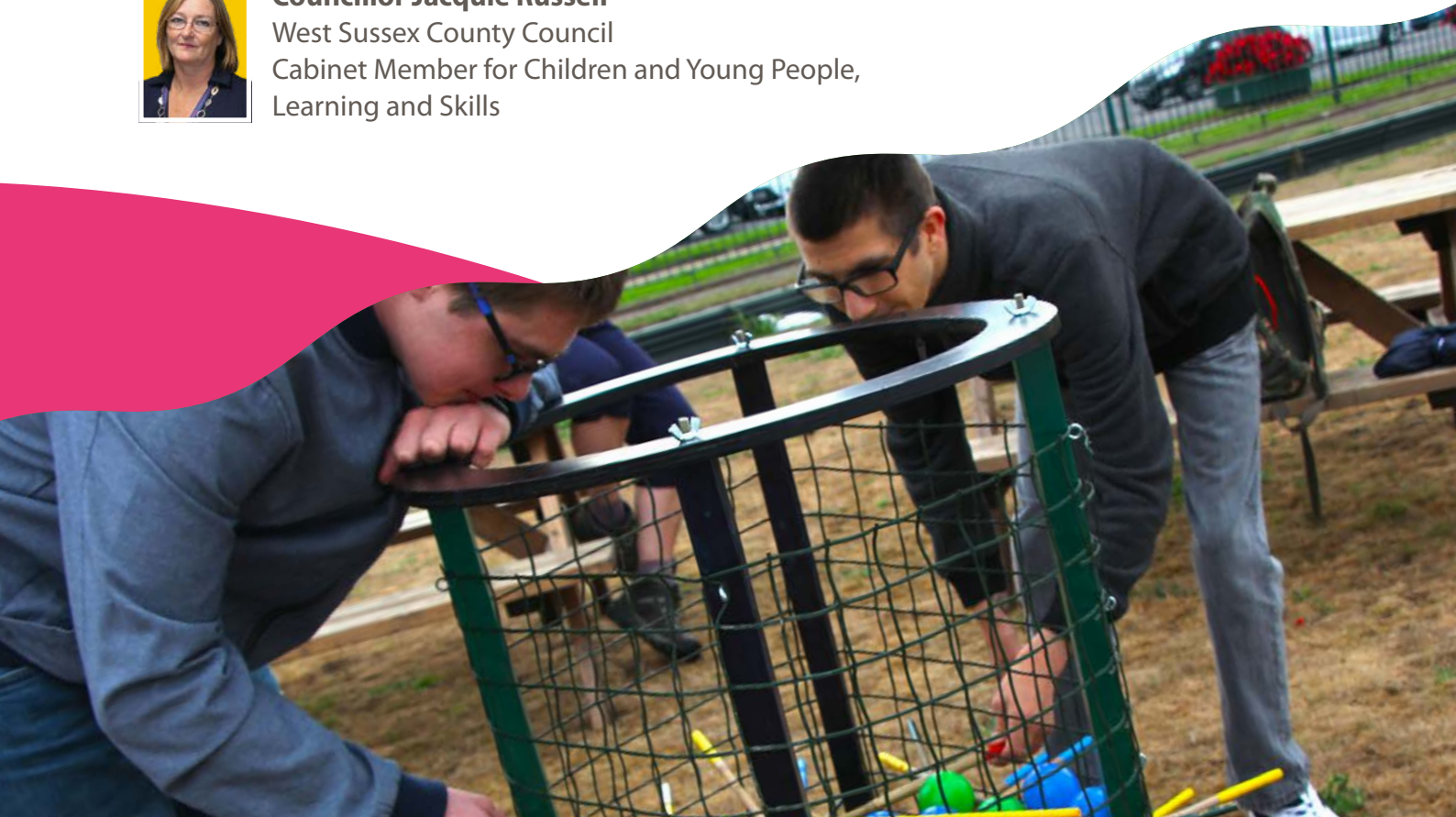
I hope you find this statement helpful.

Yours faithfully



**Councillor Jacquie Russell**

West Sussex County Council  
Cabinet Member for Children and Young People,  
Learning and Skills





## Universal and community offer

West Sussex County Council (WSCC) is committed to ensuring that children and young people with SEND, where possible, can access mainstream, universal provision. This allows them to have the same experiences as their non-SEND peers. Universal and community offer includes:

- Local Offer 0 to 25 – [West Sussex Local Offer](#)
- Libraries – [West Sussex County Council](#)
- Early Help Services – [West Sussex County Council](#)
- Connect to Support (Adults 18+) Home – [West Sussex Connect to Support](#)
- Scouts – [supporting people with additional needs](#) and [Join West Sussex Scouts](#)
- There are many leisure centres across West Sussex, who offer a range of different sessions and activities.

“Just want to say (supplier) is a life saver, especially in the long summer holidays when the children miss school and routine, and parents need a little break”.

Parents and carers may also wish to access the West Sussex County Council’s Family Information Service (FIS). This statutory service provides free impartial information and signposting for families with children aged 0 to 19 (up to 25 years for those with additional needs), including providing details of different childcare options.

The service helps families get the most out of the information and services available in the community and online including helping you find out about local events

and activities for your child and pointing you in the right direction when things are not going so well and you need a bit of extra support. Visit [WSCC Family Information Service](#)

All families are encouraged to look at the community offer to see what is available to them.

## Disability Register and Max Card

The County Council collects information about children and young people aged 0 to 25 with SEND to help plan and deliver their services. The register is maintained by the West Sussex Library Service. The benefits of registering include:

- a free Max Card offering discounts on attractions and activities nationwide; and
- regular e-newsletters with information about universal, community-based, and specialist services.

To claim your Max Card, present the confirmation email received upon registration at your nearest library. Visit this link to register [West Sussex Disability Register](#)



# What are Short Breaks, and what activities are on offer?

Short Breaks are 'targeted' services for children and young people with SEND who meet the following eligibility criteria.

- Children and young people aged 0 to 18 years old who live in West Sussex
- and are in receipt of either the middle- or high-care component of Disability Living Allowance (DLA) or the standard or enhanced rate of Personal Independence Payment (PIP) or have equivalent needs.

The purpose of Short Breaks is to provide children and young people with enjoyable activities, either with their families or independently. This allows parents and carers a break from their caring roles. Short Breaks can include the following activities.

"My child has grown so much since accessing your services, you were a lifeline when we needed you most".

- After-school clubs and activities
- Holiday playschemes
- Youth clubs
- Drama groups
- Whole-family activities

Through extensive work with families and based on the feedback that we have received, the programme prioritises

whole-family activities and school holiday provisions, especially during summer. Short Breaks are very popular with families and many have waiting lists. We encourage families to sign-up early. Suppliers will be able to give you details of their waiting lists and you can register with more than one supplier. For eligibility queries, please email [shortbreaks@westsussex.gov.uk](mailto:shortbreaks@westsussex.gov.uk)

## Find out more

- [SEND and Local Offer](#) at West Sussex County Council (this page includes a link to an interactive map showing the location of the sessions)
- [Short Breaks Facebook group](#)

# When and where do they take place?

Short Breaks are offered outside of the school/college day and can last from a few hours to a whole day, or even overnight. Many Short Breaks take place during school/college holidays in the form of playschemes.

Short Breaks run from a wide range of venues across West Sussex, including community and leisure centres. Some schools are also used for after-school clubs and during the holidays. The Council funds different types of Short Breaks to meet the needs of families and children/young people. Some children and young people can access both 'universal' and more specialised activities. You might wish to use several different providers, and types of breaks, if this works for your family.

"Everyone was really friendly and he was able to manage the day really well. He really loved it. It's so good to be able to have a good experience for him out of the house. It really doesn't happen often".

## Who runs Short Breaks activities, and how do I know they are good quality suppliers?

WSSC commissions (buys) services from over ten different organisations to provide Short Breaks for families in West Sussex. These range from local voluntary organisations to large national providers. All organisations providing Short Breaks on behalf of the Council have been through a rigorous selection process and comply with on-going monitoring. Formal and informal feedback is regularly obtained from families and helps adapt services to meet changing needs.

One example of this is that in previous years, families told us that they wanted to enjoy breaks together as a whole family and so we made this a priority focus. As a result, multiple whole-family activities are provided through the Short Breaks programme.

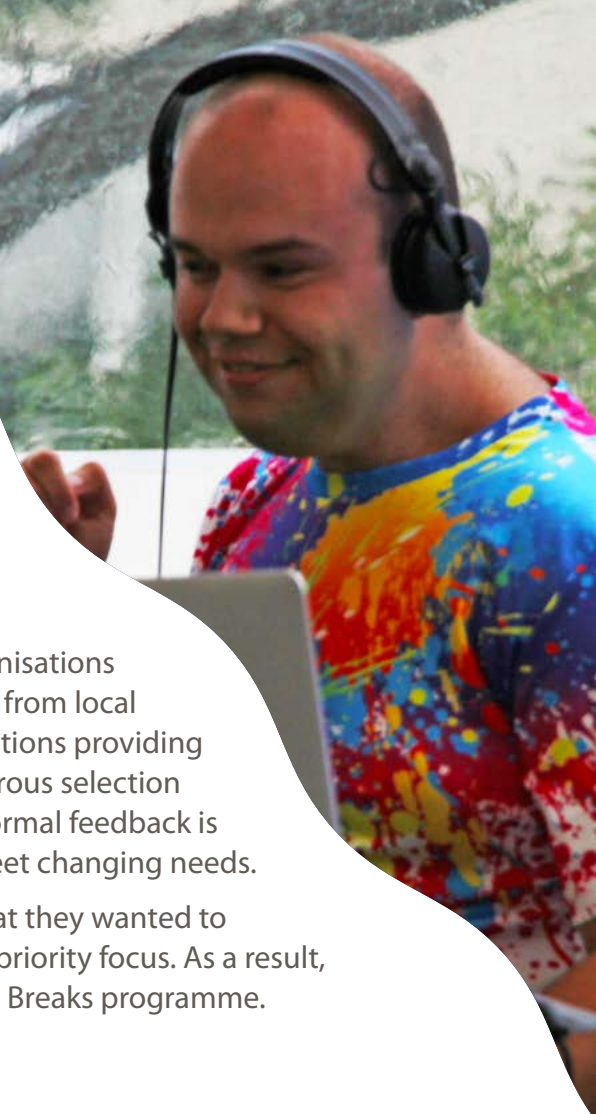
## How much does it cost?

The cost of Short Breaks varies across suppliers and is based on a number of factors. These factors can include the length of a session, whether there are any admission/entry fees, associated transport costs and the type of support being provided. For instance, a day trip to London on the train may cost more than an after-school club. Parent carers are asked to make a small contribution to the cost of the Short Breaks with most of the cost met by the Council. Parent carers can expect to pay around £3 per hour for a short session and around £15-£30 for a day, however this varies depending on the activities and supplier.

## How do I sign my child up for a Short Break?

Once you have chosen a supplier/s you think is right for your child/young person, please contact the supplier directly to find out what they are offering and if they have spaces. You may have to join a waiting list for a short while before your child is able to access services. Suppliers often have Facebook pages that provide information, support and updates. The link for all of these can be found on the website [Local Offer Short Breaks](#).

“Thank you so much for everything. Without you my child wouldn’t be socialising with other children or having the opportunity to build on those vital skills. He wouldn’t be able to attend holiday clubs or after school clubs without you as his behavioural needs are so complex”.





## We need an overnight break. What is on Offer?

Some Short Break suppliers offer overnight breaks as part of their programmes. Some also have lodgings which families can access and these can either be funded through personal budgets or privately.

Overnight Short Breaks can also be offered in local authority residential settings or with foster carers. These are accessed through a children's social care assessment. These assessments can be requested through the Integrated Front Door, or if you have a social worker then you should talk to them. Access to overnight Short Breaks will be dependent on the outcome of the assessment.

"My son and I came to the activity day today and I just wanted to pass back some feedback from him. He said he absolutely loved the day, gave it 10/10. He didn't stop chatting on the drive home".

## How are Short Breaks services developed with families?

Co-production with parent carers, children and young people and our suppliers is key to ensuring that families receive appropriate support. It also ensures that funding is allocated in the best way. We do this by:

- carrying out extensive work with our co-production partner, the West Sussex Parent Carer Forum. The forum is key to helping us engage more widely with parent carers through surveys, polls and focus groups;
- gathering wider feedback as part of our on-going monitoring processes with our suppliers;
- working with our Short Break suppliers through our Provider Forum; and
- encouraging young people to become involved and give feedback through the Voice and Participation Team.

If you want to get more involved with shaping services, or have questions, comments, ideas and feedback relating to Short Breaks then you can do this through:

- the West Sussex Parent Carer Forum at [wspcf.org.uk](http://wspcf.org.uk)
- the Voice and Participation Team at the website [Your Voice and Participation Team](#)
- the Short Breaks Facebook group at WSCC Short Breaks for [Disabled Children Facebook Group](#)
- or email [shortbreaks@westsussex.gov.uk](mailto:shortbreaks@westsussex.gov.uk)



# Preparing for and transition to adulthood

“Thanks so much - the boys had a brilliant time and would love to come back again”.

As part of the Short Breaks offer, children and young people are encouraged to develop independence. This might include simple tasks like putting on their own coat or helping with activities such as giving out cups at snack time.

Some suppliers offer groups specifically designed for teenagers, focusing on preparing for adulthood. These groups include activities such as travel training, handling money, shopping, basic cookery and meal preparation, as well as washing up.

When transitioning from children’s services to adults’ services a new assessment will be carried out to determine the care and support needed. This will determine what care and support your young person needs. It is important for the young person and parent carers to be actively participate in the assessment. More information about services can be found at [West Sussex Connect to Support](#)

## Other services to support families

In addition to Short Breaks, some families need additional or bespoke support. While many families rely on their own network of friends, families and support groups, others don’t have this level of support and need more help from the Council. Below is an overview of the various types of support available.

### Local Offer

The Local Offer is a central website containing information about all services, support and events for children and young people aged 0 to 25 years who have SEND. For more information, visit the [Local Offer website](#)

### West Sussex Parent Carer Forum

The West Sussex Parent Carer Forum is a parent carer led charity for parent carers of children and young people aged 0 to 25 years with any SEND. They provide information, support and advice to help parent carers understand, improve and make positive changes to the lives of their families and others. They also provide support and training for parent carers to enable a positive experience in navigating through the health, education and social care world of special educational needs and disabilities. Please visit the website [West Sussex Parent Carer Forum](#)

### Reaching Families

Reaching Families is a parent carer led charity, also have some helpful factsheets on their website [Reaching Families factsheets](#) and one-to-one benefits advice on their website [Reaching Families Benefits Advice Service](#)

### Integrated Front Door (IFD)

Integrated Front Door (IFD) provides a single and consistent point of access to advice, guidance and decision making around deciding the right level of support for a child/ young person with additional needs and/or disabilities. A specialist child disability social worker is part of the IFD. Visit the website [I’m a member of the public or relative](#)

## Early Help

Early Help is a range of coordinated services for children and families aged from 0 to 25 years old. Within the service there is a 'whole family' approach to support, with the aim that it gives all children the best start in life and makes it easier for families to get the help they need.

Visit the [Early Help website](#)

## Children with Disabilities Team

The Children with Disabilities Team provides a specialist service to children and young people with severe and/or complex disabilities and their families. The Review Team provides support to families who meet the social care criteria but need less regular support and therefore don't need a child disability team social worker. Children's Deaf Services offer advice and providing services to children with significant hearing loss and their families. All the above social care teams are accessed via an assessment.

Please visit [West Sussex County Council Child and Family Assessment](#)

## Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Information and Advice Support Service (SEND IAS)

Offer accurate, up to date and impartial resources and information about the law on special educational needs and disability, providing information in a range of different formats. For more information, visit the website [SENDIAS](#)

## Carers Support West Sussex (CSWS)

Offers a range of services to parent carers across West Sussex including groups and workshops and individual support. Visit the website [carerssupport.org.uk](http://carerssupport.org.uk)

## West Sussex Disability Register

The West Sussex Disability Register is a register and associated concessions card scheme for children and young people under 25 who have special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). For more information, visit the website [West Sussex Disability Register](#)

## West Sussex Single Point of Access (SPoA)

The West Sussex Single Point of Access (SPoA) is a dedicated service which provides a simplified single route to access specialist emotional wellbeing and mental health support. The SPoA helps direct you to the right service, eliminating the need to refer to multiple services. Visit the website [West Sussex Single Point of Access \(SPoA\)](#)

## Mental health and wellbeing

Mental health and wellbeing advice, information, and services to support your mental health and wellbeing or supporting someone else? Find out about local services here. For more information, visit the [Pathfinder website](#)

## Advice on Disability Living Allowance (DLA) or Personal Independence Payments (PIP)

Advice on Disability Living Allowance (DLA) or Personal Independence Payments (PIP). WSCC provide benefits advice and support in order to help you make an application for this government benefit. For more information, visit the website [Citizens Advice in West Sussex SEND Information and Support](#)



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