

North Somerset Council Children's Services

Short Breaks Statement

2025



Introduction

This document provides information about the range of Short Break services available to families of children and young people with a Special Educational Needs and disabilities (SEND) living in North Somerset aged 0 to 25 years.

Our Short Breaks Statement should be read in conjunction with our North Somerset SEND Strategy 2022 to 2025, which emphasises supporting children and families at the earliest opportunity to access the services and interventions they need to thrive. We are equally dedicated to delivering a Short Breaks offer to children and families that allows for flexibility, choice and access to services that meet their needs.

We recognise that Short Breaks provide essential support for parents and carers of children with SEND and should be delivered as part of a broader package of family support services as outlined in our Local Offer.

Short breaks

What is a short break?

Short breaks are sometimes also known as respite.

- Short breaks provide opportunities for children and young people with additional needs to spend time away from their primary carers.
- Short breaks can take place during the day, evening, overnight, at weekends or during the school holidays
- Short breaks activities might happen in a child's own home, the home of an approved carer, a residential or community setting

The term 'Short Breaks' describes services that help parents and carers to provide care more effectively for their child with SEND by providing them regular breaks so that:

- They can meet the needs of other children in the family
- They can study or take part in leisure activities themselves
- Carry out day to day household tasks

Short Breaks give children and young people with SEND, a chance to enjoy fun social, leisure or new activities, build confidence and develop vital skills with or without their parent or carer present.

Short Breaks are activities offered during the daytime, evening, overnight and weekend for a child or young person with SEND and can range from a few hours to overnight breaks. They can take place in the child's home, the home of an approved carer, in a registered home or in a community setting such as a youth club or sports activity.

Short Breaks can be described in the following three categories; Universal, Targeted and Specialist.

Definitions

The terms "respite" and "short breaks" are often used interchangeably; over the years there has been a shift in language towards short breaks as it tends to be more reflective of the mutual benefit of the support provided. In either case our aim is to make sure that the service provided meets both the needs of the child or young person receiving care and support, and the needs of the parent or carer. It should be a positive experience for the whole family.

Respite refers to a service giving parents and carers a break, by providing short-term care for the child or young person with care needs in their own home or in a residential setting. It can mean a few hours during the day or evening, 'night sitting', or a longer-term break. It can also benefit the child or young person by giving them the chance to try new activities and meet other children and new people.

Short breaks are when a child or young person with care and support needs spends regular short periods of time away from their parent carer, giving them the opportunity to be involved in something different; and at the same time gives the parent and carer a break. These breaks may take place in the child's or young person's own home, in the home of an approved carer, after school club. The break might last a few hours, an activity one afternoon, a weekend, or anything in between.

Who are short breaks for

Short Breaks in North Somerset are available to children and young people who:

- Have a Special Educational Need and/or Disability
- Are aged 0 to 18 years old
- Reside in North Somerset

Eligibility decisions are based on assessed needs including to what extent a child or young person's disability or impairment affects their lives and those who live with and care for them.

What North Somerset Council must do

The Breaks for Carers of Disabled Children Regulations came into effect on 1 April 2011 and established in law the duty for each Local Authority to provide a range of Short Breaks for families with disabled children and young people from birth up to their 18th birthday.

As part of the duty, each Local Authority must produce a Short Breaks Statement so that parents and carers understand the range of Short Breaks available, how to access the range of Short Breaks available; and how Short Breaks have been designed to meet local needs.

Applying for a short break: access and eligibility

Many children or young people with SEND will access a mixture of services. Some may access Specialist Services provided through an assessment, and some will be accessed through Targeted Services commissioned from voluntary or independent providers. Some children will be able to access Universal Short Breaks services with or without support. Short breaks can be described in three categories. The information below describes what is available within each of these categories and how different types of Short Breaks can be accessed.

Universal services	Targeted services	Specialist services
No assessment needed	Offered with and without an assessment Additional 1:1 support funding available	Child and Family assessment needed to assess eligibility for services
Mainstream activities such as leisure centres, holiday activities, sports, scouts.	Targeted activities would include things like, disability sports clubs, theatre for the disabled, targeted youth groups	Specialist Short Breaks, Respite provision, Direct Payments, Home Care, Short Break Foster Care

Universal short breaks

Universal Services offer Short Break opportunities open to all children and young people in North Somerset who choose to use them whether or not they have a Special Educational Need and/or Disability (SEND). Universal Services offer activities that enable all children and young people to have fun and make friends. We want the services to be as inclusive as possible for children with disabilities. All universal services are expected to make reasonable adjustments so that every child and young person can take part and feel included.

Family Hub's and Youth Clubs act as hubs for the local community and can provide information on the Universal Services available. They bring services together in one place so that all families can access information and support when needed.

How do I access a universal service?

Many Universal Services advertise their activities within libraries, schools, Children's Centres, leisure centres and community centres. You can access Universal Services by contacting organisations directly to discuss the activities they offer.

Some of these activities may be free. Some may have costs for all children and young people who access them. Children and young people with SEND should not be charged more than other children or young people.

Though we recognise that children and young people with SEND may have specialist support requirements, we encourage parents and carers to access Universal Services and discuss the support their child needs with providers. This will help providers to increase their knowledge and skills regarding supporting children and young people with SEND. We advise that families tell the service provider about their child's additional needs including:

- Give the provider information about your child's additional needs and how to best support them. This could include sharing a copy of your child's SEN Support Plan or EHC Plan from school
- Discuss and explore what the provider may need to change (reasonable adjustments) based on previous experience
- Jointly assess the risks and make a plan to reduce those risks
- Make a plan for your child to have a visit, trial session or to start attending

[North Somerset People First](#) offers Inclusion training designed to support services to become more disability inclusive.

We will continue to ensure families are supported to make the best use of their Short Break with advice and input from a professional to access activities they will enjoy.

You can look for what's on using: [The SEND Hub](#)

This year our summer holiday activities programme, ensured sessions were inclusive for all children to attend, there were also specialist provisions for those children and young people who needed more support. This ensured that we meet the needs of all local children and young people. North Somerset is committed to ensuring all activities are as inclusive as possible and you will see within the booklet our new Inclusion Rating, designed to help individuals and families easily identify sessions that meet their needs.

Universal services	Description	Where to get further information
65 Hub Nailsea	Various inclusive clubs for children and young people	Timetable of all events available 65 inclusive youth clubs
Long Ashton Youth Club	Various inclusive clubs and activities available	Long Ashton Youth Club
YMCA Clevedon	Inclusive clubs and activities available	YMCA Clevedon
YMCA Weston super Mare	Inclusive clubs and activities available	YMCA Weston super Mare
South Weston Activity Network	Inclusive community activities available	Email: swan.wsm@outlook.com
All-Aboard Water Sports Bristol	Inclusive water sports	All-Aboard watersports

Backwell Leisure Centre	SEND lane swimming sessions available	Backwell Leisure Centre SEND lane swimming
Boogie Beats	Inclusive dance and music sessions for children	Boogie Beats covering Yatton, Weston and Somerset
Bristol Inclusive Climbing	Inclusive climbing sessions	Bristol Inclusive Climbing
Brean Splash Park	Inclusive sessions with downloadable sensory guide	Brean Splash Park
Brean Theme Park	Accessible theme park	Brean Theme Park
Just Play	Music sessions for all the family	Just Play
Keepers Gate Forest School	Inclusive Forest school sessions	Keepers Gate Forest School
Little Town Adventures	Inclusive and assessable family adventures	Little Town Adventures
Noah's Arc Zoo Farm	Inclusive family activities	Noah's Arc Zoo Farm
Puxton Park	Inclusive family activities	Puxton Park
Revo Glo Golf	Accessible and inclusive indoor golf	Revo Glo Golf full wheelchair accessible 9-hole glo golf
Rock up Climbing Weston super Mare	Inclusive activity sessions	Rock Up Climbing Weston-Super-Mare
SENDCAS Clubs and Activity service	Inclusive, universal activity sessions	Email: SENDCAS@n-somerset.gov.uk

Strawberry Line adaptive cycles	Accessible and Specialist cycles for hire	Strawberry Line
Super Culture	Inclusive activity sessions for children and young people with SEND	Super Culture
Twist-O-Flex Dance Company	Inclusive dance and exercise classes	Twist-O-Flex Dance Company
Urchinwood Manor Riding Centre	SEND riding sessions available	Urchinwood Manor riding centre
West of England Music and Arts	Music Therapy and holiday sessions	West of England Music and Arts
Yeo Vale Forest school	SEN forest school sessions available	Yeo Vale Forest school
North Somerset Library events	Inclusive Family Sessions	North Somerset Library events
Weston Museum	Inclusive family sessions	Weston Museum events
Stagecoach performing arts	Inclusive sessions	Stagecoach performing arts
Mendip outdoor pursuits	Inclusive outdoor sports sessions **some limitation for those with mobility differences	Mendip outdoor pursuits
M Shed - Bristol	Inclusive and accessible family activities	M Shed
Hutton Moor	Inclusive family activities	Hutton Moor
Grand Pier Weston	Inclusive family activities	Grand Pier Weston

HAF Activity Sessions available Easter, Summer and Winter school holidays	Inclusive and accessible activities available	HAF Activity Sessions
---	---	---------------------------------------

Targeted short breaks

Sometimes Universal Services cannot meet the needs of children and young people with additional needs, even when reasonable adjustments have been made. Targeted Services provide Short Break opportunities specifically aimed at children and young people with SEND. North Somerset funds some Targeted Services, while voluntary groups and charities provide others. Services that the Local Authority does not commission may carry a charge.

Targeted Short Breaks supplement the local universal provision and enable families to access Targeted Short Breaks with and without an assessment.

How do I access a targeted service?

To access these activities, we advise parents and carers to contact providers directly. Examples of targeted activities would include theatre groups for the disabled, disability sports clubs, targeted youth groups etc.

More information about targeted activities for children and young people with SEND can be found on the North Somerset Local Offer website: [Activities for SEND children and families](#).

For some Targeted Short Breaks an assessment will be required

Targeted services	Description	Where to get further information
All-Aboard watersports Bristol	All-inclusive and accessible watersports	All-Aboard watersports Bristol
Backwell Leisure Centre	Sessions for those with SEND only	Backwell Leisure Centre SEND lane swimming

Barnardos HYPE	Holiday drop-ins Sessions for those with SEND Only	Barnardos HYPE school holiday drop-ins
Bristol Bears Community Foundation	Fully accessible and inclusive wheelchair rugby sessions	Bristol Bears Community Foundation
Diverse UK	Specific activities for those children and young people with Autism	Diverse UK activities for Autistic people
Cineworld	Accessible and sensory friendly film showings	Cineworld
Hutton Comets Disability football	Football Club with sessions for children and young people with SEND	Email: huttoncomets@gmail.com
Kingsmoor playground	A specialist playground, enclosed and secure life membership available only for use for families with children with SEND	Kingsmoor playground special needs
Little Town Adventures	SEND only Sessions	Little Town SEND Only sessions
Nova Sports holiday activities	SEND only activities	Nova Sports holiday activities
Parish Wharf Leisure Centre	SEND only swimming sessions	Parish Wharf Disability swim

Portishead Youth Club	SEND only Youth Club	Email: kim@portisheadyouthcentre.co.uk
Twist-O-Flex Dance Company	Street without limits. Specialist sessions for children and young people with SEND	Twist and Flex SEND only sessions
Super 1's Cricket	Cricket for children and young people with disabilities only.	Super 1's Cricket
Rock up climbing	SEND only sessions	Rock Up Climbing Weston-Super-Mare Autism and SEN friendly sessions
Scouts	SEND only Scouts 34th Weston-Super-Mare (6 to 14 years)	Email: 34thwestongsl@axescouts.org.uk
Strawberry Line Cycles	SEND cycle lessons available	Strawberry Line Cycles
Urchinwood Manor riding centre	Stable management and riding sessions for children and young people with SEND	Urchinwood Manor riding centre
West of England Music and Arts	Programmes and projects for children and young people with SEND	West of England Music and Arts
Ups and Downs	Clubs and Activities for children and	Activity timetable

	young people with SEND	
The Avon Horse riding Centre	SEND specific sessions	The Avon Centre horse riding

Specialist short breaks

Specialist Short Breaks are services for disabled children with the most complex needs. Specialist Short Breaks support children, young people and their families where the child or young person's disability has a substantial and long-term effect on their ability to carry out day-to-day activities. Specialist Short Breaks include:

- Day care or overnight Short Breaks with an approved Foster Carer
- Residential Short Break Facilities
- Personal Budget including Direct Payments
- Home care and agency support

How do I access a specialist service?

In order to access Specialist Short Breaks, your child will require an assessment of need.

For most Specialist Short Breaks, this assessment will be completed by a Social Worker and is called a Child and Family Assessment. There are exceptions to this which can include Personal Budgets, including Direct Payments.

Eligibility decisions are based on individual needs including to what extent a child or young person's disability or impairment affects their lives and those who live with and care for them. However, it is likely that if a child or young person is eligible for Specialist Short Breaks support, their disability and/or special educational needs could be described in one or more of the following ways:

- A significant, permanent and enduring physical disability;
- A significant global learning disability;
- A severe and enduring communication disorder;
- Autism with a significant global development delay and/or challenging behaviour; and/or

- A significant sensory impairment.

How to request an assessment for short breaks

Any child or young person with additional need is entitled to an assessment of need as set out in the Children Act 1989. The carers needs will be considered as part of this assessment. North Somerset is committed to completing these assessments when a request to do so is received.

If you are interested in applying for a Short Break for your child or would like to request an assessment, you should discuss this with your child's Special Education Needs Co-Ordinator (SENCO) or another professional working with your child.

Personal budgets and direct payments

A Personal Budget is a dedicated amount of money that the Council allocates towards the cost of a Short Break for your child, if they are assessed as needing this. This could include an amount to enable your child to access the short break and/or funding for the short break activity. Personal Budgets aim to give you and your child more flexibility, choice and control over the care or support your child receives. This allows you to have a greater input about what types of activities your child attends and the support you know your child needs.

There are different ways you can receive your Personal Budget. These are:

- Direct payment -The payment is paid to a bank account that is exclusively used for the purpose of the Personal Budget account and your family buy and manage the Short Break services yourselves. Direct Payments can be used flexibly to purchase Short Breaks from an inclusive setting, to fund activity sessions tailored to your child's needs or to employ a support worker or by employing a support worker or Personal Assistant as agreed in your child or young person's Care Plan.
- Council managed budget: An amount of money is allocated, which is held on your behalf by the Council, and they arrange services for your child on your behalf. This option is helpful if you prefer not to handle the financial or administrative responsibilities. Services will only be provided to the value of the allocated budget.
- Council provided services. Instead of money, the Council directly provides agreed services, such as specialist holiday club sessions as part of your

child's care plan. For example the Council books a place for your child in a specialist holiday club for children with additional needs

- Through a combination of the above

The Personal Budget is reviewed every year. More information can be found on North Somerset's [SEND Hub](#)

If a child or young person is assessed as not being eligible for specialist short breaks

Children and young people and their families who, despite their disability, are assessed as not being eligible for Specialist Short Breaks, will be supported to connect with and access Universal and Targeted Services.

What is the Register of Additional Needs and Disabilities

All Local Authorities hold a database of children and young people with disabilities living in the borough. This is often referred to as the 'Register of Additional Needs and Disabilities'. The purpose of the Register is to record information about children and young people with disabilities to ensure that Local Authorities can forward plan and predict what services they need to commission and make available in the future.

If you have a child or young person with a disability, you can choose to add their details to the register. Joining the register is completely voluntary. It will not affect the outcome of any assessments or the services your child or young person receives

Travel assistance

Transport for Short Breaks is not ordinarily provided. However, transport is provided by some Short Breaks providers to allow a child to get to their Short Break. Families should ask the provider if transport is provided as part of their offer.

We run travel training activities over the summer holidays to help children learn to get out and about and practice their route to school.

If your child would like to try the travel training summer scheme and go out with a buddy for a few hours a day in the holidays, please apply through the transport application on the Local Offer Travel Buddying and Independent Travel Training.

Transitions

We want the transition from childhood to adulthood to be an exciting and optimistic time for young people and to support them with the vital skills as they become young adults and take their place in the world. Our Short Breaks provide opportunities for young people to extend their independence and life skills by focusing on:

- Employment
- Independent Living
- Friends, Relationships & Community
- Good Health

Young people have told us they want to continue spending time with their school friends once they are 18 and not lose contact because they can only attend Short Breaks provided by Adult Services. Our Short breaks will be developed to reflect their needs as teenagers, ensuring friendship circles that carry through into adult life.

We also want the transition from Children's to Adult's Services to be a seamless and well-coordinated experience for young people and their families. When young people turn 17 years old and are accessing a Specialist Short Breaks service, we will have already begun the process of planning their transition into Adult Services. Children are referred to the Transitions Team, from Year 9 or aged 14. who A Transition planning meeting, held around age 16, help families prepare. - Specific guidance is available for navigating the process of transitioning from an Education, Health, and Care (EHC) Plan to adult services. Part of this planning will be carrying out an Assessment to establish if the young person meets the criteria for continued support and access to specialist adult services.

If you require more information or feel your child requires the assistance of the Transitions Team, please discuss it with your child's Social Worker.

For those children who are not accessing a Specialist Short Break but may be accessing Universal or Targeted Short Breaks, or where it is felt that a specialist

service will be required after a young person's 18th birthday, a referral can be made to Adult Social Care by contacting 01934 888808

More information can also be found on the North Somerset SEND Hub [Preparing for Adulthood](#)

We will ensure that our short break services focus on improving life opportunities and outcomes for disabled young people and their families through continuing to develop our participation strategy with disabled children, young people, and their families.

We know that the views of families and disabled children are essential to support positive outcomes look forward to continuing to strengthen the voices of children, parents and carers through our Parent Carer Forum and will continue to strengthen the voices of children, parents and carers in shaping services through our Parent Carer Forum, SEND and You, and North Somerset parents and carers working together.

As outlined in our SEND Strategy 2022 to 2025, we will know we have achieved impact against our current Short Breaks priorities when:

Parents and carers know about, and can easily find and access, the local offer, which includes short breaks, social activities for children, local respite provision and for older children, short breaks in the summer holidays.

More children and families are receiving short breaks offers and early help support.

Any changes we make in response to consultation with parents, carers, and young people will be publicised on the Local Offer web pages.

What to do if things do not go to plan

If you are trying to access Short Breaks and things are not going to plan, or you have any concerns, we recommend you talk to the organisation providing the Short Break or activity first. If this does not help, several steps can be taken.

If you have an allocated Lead Professional or Social Worker, you can raise concerns about Short Breaks services with them. They can talk to the service or

provider or seek advice on your behalf. If this does not help and the service is provided or commissioned by North Somerset Council, you can make a complaint by contacting the North Somerset Customer Relations Team.

Further contacts

North Somerset's Parent Carer Forum

Open to all parents and carers of children and young people (up to 25) with SEND who live in or access services, in North Somerset.

[North Somerset Parent Carers Working Together website](#)
[YouTube NSPCWT](#)

SEND and You

SEND and You now delivers the 'SENDIAS' (Special Educational Needs & Disability Information Advice & Support) service for three local authorities; **Bristol**, **North Somerset** and **South Gloucestershire**.

Our office is in Bristol. <https://www.sendandyou.org.uk/about-us/>

North Somerset's Local Offer

The Local Offer is information for parents/carers of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. It explains the support we offer in North Somerset for those children and young people.

Childcare

If you need a break from caring for your child so that you can go to work, then this becomes a childcare requirement. Find further information on childcare please contact: [Family Information Service](#)

Additional Useful Links Short Breaks

- [How Local Authorities should provide Short Break Care](#)
- [Children and Families Act 2014](#)
- [SEND code of practice](#)
- [Council for Disabled Children](#)