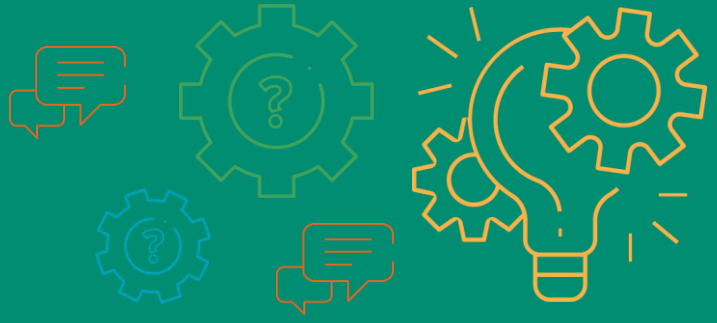


# Bitesize Briefing for Short Breaks



## What is a Short Break?

Short Breaks form one element of the support offered by the London Borough of Sutton to children and young people with disabilities and their families. They provide opportunities to spend time away from their primary carer, taking part in positive activities and working towards agreed outcomes, while also providing much needed breaks for the parent/carers. Short breaks are personal to individual needs and can include day, evening, overnight, weekend, or holiday activities in a range of settings including the home, a residential or community setting.



## Who is eligible for Short Breaks?

All families with a child or young person with a disability can access universal services within their local communities in a range of settings including:

- Children’s centres and nurseries
- Play services
- After school clubs
- Sports and leisure services
- Youth services

Short Breaks are for children and young people who:

- Have a disability that has a substantial and long term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities
- Need support to take part in leisure activities
- Are between 0 and 17 years old
- Live in the London Borough of Sutton.

Once the above criteria has been established, the London Borough of Sutton uses the Functional Needs Assessment, in combination with an Early Help Assessment, or Short Breaks Review, to determine the level of support required for your child and family. The holistic approach to assessing will determine whether your child is eligible for Universal, Core or Enhanced Short Breaks support.



## Core Short Breaks Offer

We think it is important to allocate short breaks in a fair way. Not all children and families will need the same level of short breaks; some will need more than others because of the impact of their child's disability. Some families may need more support because of their individual family circumstances. As every child and their family are different, we provide two levels of short breaks support: **Core** and **Enhanced** Offer.

The Core offer is for children and young people with disabilities assessed as having needs over and above those that cannot be met through mainstream activities.

The Core Short Breaks Offer is:

Option 1:

- Term Time – A contribution towards one weekly after school club or one alternative weekend activity
- School Holidays – A contribution towards one session during each school holiday week for a maximum of 10 sessions

Option 2:

- Term Time – Upto a maximum of 3 hours of Personal Assistant support via Direct Payments
- School Holidays – Upto a maximum of 6 hours of Personal Assistant support via Direct Payments

You may wish your child or young person to access mainstream activities or sport clubs that cater for children with disabilities as part of their weekly short break activity. It is important to us that your child or young person has a range of options to help meet the identified need and planned outcomes from the assessment we carried out. To do this you may need the support of a personal assistant to take them to an activity which will enable you to have a break from your caring role. Option 2 may be best suited to this and it is expected that parents fund the activity.



## Enhanced Short Breaks Offer

Enhanced short breaks are for children, young people and their families or carers who may need a higher level of short breaks with extra specialist care. The assessment for the enhanced offer will not only look at the child's needs but will consider parental and family capacity as well as environmental factors. For example, parents with significant health needs of their own, impact on siblings, children with complex medical needs and families with more than one child or young person with disabilities. The short breaks that are provided will be in addition to the core offer as outlined above. The enhanced short breaks offer may include personal care support, overnight stays, increased specialist short breaks in term time and the school holidays pending the recommendations of the social worker assessment.



## Early Help Assessment

Once the Functional Needs Assessment has confirmed eligibility for assessment, one of our Specialist Support Workers will be in touch with you to complete an Early Help Assessment or Review (if you already have a short breaks package) and will be completed either virtually or in person at your home. The Specialist Support Worker will meet with you and your child or young person and find out more about you and your family, assess your level of need and determine whether a short break is required to support your family. If agreed, the worker will then choose an outcome to work towards as a result of accessing a short breaks package of support.



## Short Break Outcomes

We want to make sure that the Short Breaks package is making a positive difference to your family. To do this we need to think about what is important to you and what you want to experience from your short break: A Short Breaks package will aim to meet one of the following outcomes which will be agreed with your Specialist Support Worker.

**Social Integration** - your child will experience positive, fun age appropriate interactions with other children that make him/her happy. This may help you if your child does not / is not able to access to leisure activities with other children or has limited social opportunities to make friends.

**Family Resilience** - you and your family will feel stronger and equipped to provide good care to your child when things are challenging. Whether it is challenging behaviours or complex health needs the support should improve the quality of family life and support the family relationships and their ability to cope in challenging times. This may help you if you worry that without support your family could experience a crisis in being able to support your child's needs.

**Independence** - your child will learn new skills that will help them move towards their adult life equipped to achieve their full potential. This may help you if you feel your child lacks the confidence or skills to be independent.

Each year a review is carried out against these outcomes to ensure the short break remains supportive to your family need. We will seek updates from you, your child or young person and the provider of your short break. If the outcome has been met, then your short breaks package will be reviewed for the following year to ensure that the short break remains beneficial and purposeful for everyone. It may even mean that you no longer need the support of a short breaks package.

E.g. If the identified outcome was for Social Integration and your child has been accessing a service such as Keen2Go who reports that your child is fully integrated and has built on their social and relationship building skills then the outcome has been met. The package of support will have met the identified need and therefore your short break may no longer be required unless a further need or outcome is being sought, in which case the package will be adjusted.



## The assessment process is completed, what happens next?

Following your completed Early Help Assessment, your case will be presented at the weekly Resource Panel and, once approved you will receive a letter confirming the agreed package and detailing any next steps. These will be dependent on the package of support that has been approved. For example whether it is in the form of a Direct Payment or a Personal Budget. Your Specialist Support Worker will explain the different options to you during the Early Help Assessment.



## How long do I get a short break for & do you provide transport?

A package of support is usually approved for a 12 month period, but this is dependent on individual needs and sometimes we may need to review the support in place earlier. This could be at 3 or 6 months, or, if your child or young person's needs have changed during this time. A Specialist Support Worker will contact you to carry out an Early Help Review.

The review focuses on your child's and family current need, how the Short break package is working and revisits the outcomes that were previously agreed. Once reviewed it could be that the Short break package stops, slightly changed or continues as it has been previously. Your case will be presented at the Resource Panel again for the new package to be approved. Some children respond really well to the packages of support we put in place and meet their outcomes and they may be ready to access universal activities.

We do not provide transport to your short break. The package is designed with your family in mind which is why it is important for us that we help you to source a local break near to where you live. Some breaks do happen outside of the borough and these options will be explored with you in more detail before proposing it as part of your package.



## My child's needs have changed, what next?

If you find that your child or young person's needs have changed and the package isn't meeting the identified needs as planned, you can request support from our duty service who will explore small changes to your package, or an early review as detailed above.

However, sometimes the package doesn't work because the child or young person no longer enjoys the initial activity chosen e.g. dance. With the personal budget already awarded, you are able to change the activity **once** during the award period (usually 12 months). The new/alternate activity must continue to meet the identified outcome e.g. social integration. For example, your child may now wish to access another physical activity instead of dance that still meet in a group and meets our social integration outcome. You do not need to advise our team of this change but must keep any receipts of payments and evidence of meeting the identified outcome for when your review is due. If you have changed your activity once already and are looking to change again, you will need to contact our team who will assist you further on our duty line 0208 770 6010.