

Wakefield Children's Services

Short Breaks Statement 2026 - 2027

"In Wakefield, the child and their family are at the centre of everything we do, and we take an individual approach to make a difference for every child and young person with Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities"

For children and young people with SEND living in Wakefield



Foreword

Welcome to Wakefield and District Short Breaks Statement.

Wakefield is ambitious for our young people; we want to make sure that all our children are happy, healthy, safe, supported and achieving their potential.

Parent carers, children, and young people (CYP) in Wakefield have told us that the information about short breaks (and how to access them) needs to be clear and easy to understand. We are grateful to them for telling us their views and the time they have given to help us create and design this document.

Wakefield's Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) strategy clearly identifies our vision for children and young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities, putting the child and their family at the centre of everything we do and taking an individual approach to make a difference for every child and young person with SEND. This Short Breaks Statement has been developed with this in mind.

Wakefield's Early Help Strategy makes it clear that the Wakefield Together Partnership is committed to delivering services for all children and families that need help, at the earliest opportunity and in the right places. Short Breaks are an important part of the early intervention strategy. Together we will make sure that everyone who needs a short break is able to access one through an improved Short Breaks Offer.

Cllr Matthew Caton
Portfolio Holder CYP Services

Vicky Schofield
Director of CYP Services



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SECTION ONE: INTRODUCTION

What is a Short Break?

Short Breaks offer children and young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) the opportunity to take part in enjoyable and meaningful activities outside their home. Short breaks sessions typically run during evenings, weekends, and school holidays, providing safe and supportive environments where children and young people can build friendships, develop new skills and experience enjoyable time away from their families. At the same time, Short Breaks give parents and carers valuable time to rest, recharge, or attend to other responsibilities. This will promote their wellbeing and help them to sustain their caring roles.

Short Breaks come in various forms, including group activities, clubs, and one-to-one support. Each offer is tailored to meet the needs of individuals and their families.

A Short Break can be...

Accessible fun activities in the community	Services to help carers in the evenings, weekends or school holidays	Day time or overnight care in the home or elsewhere	Support to access fun activities in the community
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What is a Short Breaks Statement?

A Short Breaks Statement outlines the range of short break services available, eligibility criteria, how services are designed to meet individuals needs and how families can access support. The Wakefield Council has a legal duty under the Children Act 1989, Children and Young Persons Act 2008, Breaks for Carers of Disabled Children Regulations 2011, and the SEND Reforms 2014 to provide short breaks for children and young people (CYP) with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).



How can Short Breaks help children, young people, and their families?

Short Breaks help children and young people to:

- Enjoy fun activities like other children do
- Develop independence
- Spend time with their friends and make new ones

Short breaks help families to:

- Spend time together
- Meet and get to know other families and share experiences
- Have a break from their caring responsibilities

SECTION TWO: WHO CAN ACCESS SHORT BREAKS?

Children and Young People with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) can access short breaks. There are different types of short breaks available to meet different needs.

UNIVERSAL SERVICES

Activities and fun things to do for everyone including children and young people with SEND

TARGETED SERVICES

Activities and services designed specifically to meet the needs of children and young people with SEND

SPECIALIST SERVICES

Activities and services for children and young people with SEND who need extra help as they may have very complex needs that cannot be met by any of the services above.

SECTION THREE: FIND OUT MORE

The **Short Breaks Statement** contains a lot of useful information you may need. Additional details are available on the **Local Offer** website.

[What are Short Breaks? | Short Breaks | Wakefield SEND Local Offer](#)

Wakefield SENDIASS (**formerly WESAIL**) is available to parent(s)/carer(s) of children and young people aged 0–25 who have, or may have, special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and who live within the Wakefield District. The service is also available to professionals seeking advice and guidance while supporting children, young people, and their families. [Wakefield SENDIASS \(formerly WESAIL\) - Family Action](#)

Join the Information Network

You can join the Wakefield Information Network by calling **01924 302471** or online at <https://wakefield.mylocaloffer.org/information-network/how-can-i-join/>. Membership gives you access to:

- Updates on consultation exercises, advice, and training sessions.
- A termly newsletter.
- Details of council-organised play schemes during school holidays.
- Information about local events via the Wakefield Parent Carer Forum.
- The option to receive a **Max Card** – a national discount scheme offering reduced entry to over 3,000 venues across the UK, including SEA LIFE, Tropical World, and Diggerland. Learn more at www.mymaxcard.co.uk

Young people aged 16–25 with additional needs can also join independently, provided they understand, have capacity, and can make informed decisions about the consent they give regarding how their information is used.

SECTION FOUR: SHORT BREAKS SERVICES:

UNIVERSAL SERVICES

There are a wide range of activities and services available for everyone, including children and young people with SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities). These include family hubs, youth hubs, sports clubs, libraries, parks, bowling alleys, and leisure centres.

In addition, there are many community-based activities that all children and young people can access, such as Brownies, Rainbows, Guides, Beavers, Cubs, Scouts, Boys' Brigade, and Army/Sea/Air Cadets.

Service providers of universal activities have a legal duty to make reasonable adjustments to ensure that children and young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) can access them.

While some activities may be free, others may involve a cost for all participants. Children and young people with SEND should not be charged more than their peers for accessing these services.



How can you access these activities and find more information?

Families can book activities and services directly with the activity provider. To explore what's available in your local area, you can:

- Contact your local **Community Centre**
- Visit the **Experience Wakefield** website, [Experience Wakefield website](#)
- Explore the **Youth Hubs** or **Family Hubs** via **Wakefield Families Together**, [Family Hubs – Wakefield Families Together](#). Family Hubs can also support with meeting SEND needs.

These platforms offer a wide range of opportunities tailored to children, young people, and families.

Carer Discounts and Max Card - Many activities offer **free or discounted entry for carers**, especially when using a **Max Card**. The Max Card is a national discount initiative designed to make days out more affordable for children and young people with additional needs.

To learn more, visit the Max Card website www.mymaxcard.co.uk

TARGETED SERVICES

How can you access these activities and find out more?

Families can book activities and services directly with the activity provider. You can find more details of all the targeted short breaks activities, clubs and play schemes via the [Wakefield Local Offer website](#).

Family Hubs can also support with meeting SEND needs via [Family Hubs – Wakefield Families Together](#).

If you cannot find what you're looking for, contact Wakefield SENDIASS (previously known as WESAIL) on 01924 965588 or send them an email wakefieldsendiass@family-action.org.uk.

These are activities and services specifically designed to meet the needs of children and young people with SEND (Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities).

There are many community-based activities and services that cater to specific needs — for example, autism-friendly cinema screenings, disability sports groups, and youth clubs for children with learning difficulties.

My son has gone from not wanting to be apart from me to being happy to go with his PA. It has improved his social skills and understanding in social settings. He has made new friends and is now interested in making new friends when we are out and about.

Short Breaks Survey 2025



You Said:

We need to make it easier for you to find activities and things to do.

We Did:

We have made it so much easier to search for activities and things to do on the [Local Offer Website](#) — you can filter by days, times, disability, age, activities, and postcode or you can contact Wakefield SENDIASS on wakefieldsendiass@family-action.org.uk.

Did you know... Cineworld offer Autism friendly screenings, and you can apply for a CEA card so carers go free!



SECTION FOUR: SHORT BREAKS SERVICES:

SPECIALIST SERVICES

Who Are These Services For?

These services are designed for families with the most complex needs – those who require more support than is typically provided by other services. This may be due to changes in the family's ability to support their child, or because the child or young person's needs have increased.

While some families may have a wider network of support, others may not. If you feel your family would benefit from additional support from Wakefield Council, you can request a social care needs assessment.

These activities and services for children and young people with SEND who require additional support due to very complex needs that cannot be met by universal or targeted services.

This additional support may include access to specialist medical equipment, personal care, or assistance from specially trained professionals.

Specialist short breaks are intended to provide children with complex needs the opportunity to engage in enjoyable activities within a safe and supportive environment. These breaks also offer families valuable respite from their caregiving responsibilities.



How can you access these activities and find more information?

To explore what you and your child might need from specialist short breaks, you can request an assessment at any time by calling Social Care Direct on 03458 503503 or refer through the family hubs [Family Hubs – Wakefield Families Together](#). This assessment helps determine the needs of your family and places you and your child at the heart of the process. It will involve a discussion with either a Social Worker or a Specialist Short Breaks Practitioner.

The assessment will consider:

- Your child's needs and development
- Parent(s)/Carer(s) needs (Parent/Carer Assessment)
- Family and environmental factors

Once the holistic assessment is completed, you and the Short Breaks Practitioner will work together to identify the support required and how your child's needs can be met appropriately. If the needs cannot be met through available services, the Short Breaks Practitioner will discuss alternative options with you.

Pathway for Specialist Short Breaks Service



Referral

- Parent/Carer and Professionals can submit a referral to Social Care Direct - 03458 503503 or through contact with your local family hub Family Hub



Pre-Assessment Checks

- Practitioner to check if family's self identified needs can be met by universal or targeted services
- If needs cannot be met, continue the pathway for specialist short breaks service



Assessment of Need

- Practitioner completes a holistic assessment with the family including parent(s)/carer(s) assessment and determine eligibility to access the specialist short breaks services.



Support Planning

- Practitioner advises parents / carers of all specialist short breaks support options.
- Practitioner works with family to create a package of support as part of a short breaks panel application.



Short Breaks Panel Referral

- Practitioner will submit panel referral to Short Breaks Panel with proposed package of support and copy of assessment for decision/approval



Short Breaks Panel

- Multi-agency panel meets fortnightly to agree eligibility of specialist short breaks and award specialist support care packages



Brokerage and Implementation of Support

- Parent(s)/carer(s) will be notified by practitioner and Short Breaks Support Team of SB panel decision
- Short Breaks Support Team will begin brokerage and identify suitable support as agreed by Short Breaks Panel

Short Breaks Survey 2025

90% of parents said that their short break meets their child's needs some or all of the time.

The holiday provision is a real help in terms of respite and time to work during school holidays. Seeing him build relationships with 1:1 carers over time is good to see and gives hope for the future.

Short Breaks parent, Survey 2025

Who checks the assessments?

All assessments are checked by your worker's manager during supervision and regular quality assurance meetings. This may mean they have to come back to you for more information to make sure you receive the right support for your family.

What is a Parent Carer's Assessment?

Wakefield Council has a duty to assess the needs of any carer who either requests an assessment or appears to require support. The Council adopts a holistic approach, considering the needs of parents and carers as part of a broader assessment to gain a clearer understanding of the support required. However, parents and carers also have the right to request a separate assessment focused solely on their own needs.

What factors are discussed?

- ❖ Own physical health and mental health
- ❖ Family factors (such as lone parents / any relationship difficulties).
- ❖ Amount of support available from wider family or friends
- ❖ Caring for others
- ❖ Being employed or in education/training
- ❖ Housing situation
- ❖ Quality of sleep
- ❖ Support during School Holidays

Is there an eligibility criterion?

While an assessment is not required to initiate general support, there are specific criteria that must be met in order to access specialist short breaks. An assessment is conducted to determine whether these criteria are fulfilled.

Eligibility is determined by considering a combination of factors, including the needs of the child, the parent(s)/carer(s), and the broader family and environmental context. This holistic approach helps to identify the level and type of support required.

For further details, including the specific eligibility criteria, please see [Types of Short Breaks | Short Breaks | Wakefield SEND Local Offer](#) available on the Local Offer website.

Love the groups, my child enjoys it, likes the people there and the activities they do. It meets her needs while she's there...very happy with the service and grateful for it. Gives my child a chance to mix with friends outside school and do things that interest her and gives me a chance to do activities with my other children that I'd be unable to do otherwise.

Short Breaks parent - Survey 2025

• SECTION FIVE: CREATING A PACKAGE OF SUPPORT

- **After a holistic assessment, you and the Short Breaks Practitioner will create a package of support**

This information will include:

- **Outcomes** – what the short break is intended to improve for you and your family (examples of outcomes will be provided).
- **How your child's needs will be met** – the type of specialist short break that will support your child in achieving the identified outcomes.
- **Frequency and allocation of support** – how often the short break will occur, and the level of support allocated.

I will access social and leisure opportunities in the community every week so that I can have fun and be able to spend time with my friends without my parent/carer being there.

I will travel with support on public transport in the school holidays to access fun activities in my community. This will develop my independence and help me work towards travelling more independently.

Who agrees the package?

You and your worker agree the package first. Your worker then submits a Short Breaks referral including your proposed Short Breaks Support Package to be checked by a manager to ensure all your options have been identified, your eligibility checked and to help explore what services and support are available for you.

The application then goes to Short Breaks Panel to agree the short breaks provision.

What Specialist Services are available?

The [Wakefield Local Offer website](#) contains all the most up to date information on activities and services available. If you can't find what you're looking for speak to your worker, give feedback here [Feedback | Feedback | Wakefield SEND Local Offer](#) or contact wakefieldsendiass@family-action.org.uk.

Information can be categorised by type of support, days/time, and if there are minimum/maximum hours to be used to suit your needs.

It has given her confidence to be apart from me. It has given me time to either rest, be with her brother or clean her bedroom. It gives her some structure to the holidays, gets her up and dressed and washed.

Short Breaks parent – Survey 2025

How will I know the Short Breaks I chose are right for my child?

Knowing what you want to get from your Short Break will help decide which is right for you as every child and family is different.

If you start with one type of support, then change your mind, your worker can help support you to find a new one.

Is there Transport for Short Breaks?

Those with parental responsibility are responsible for transporting their children and young people to access Short Break support.

Your family's transport needs will be looked at as part of your assessment, any transport needs will be discussed at Short Breaks Panel.

Now she's older it's hard finding activities to do as a family so this allows us to split up and make sure all my children are having their needs met.

Short Breaks parent, Survey 2025



SECTION SIX: PERSONAL BUDGETS

What is a personal budget?

The Personal Budget is often referred to as a **Direct Payment** provided by the local authority to meet the assessed needs of a child or young person. It is agreed following an assessment and approval at a **Short Breaks Panel** and is detailed in the **Short Breaks Referral**. This gives families **control and flexibility** to choose and pay for the services that best meet their child's needs.

Support can be arranged in **three main ways**:

1. **Direct Payment** - The money is paid directly to family nominated person who will manage the budget themselves and arrange services independently.
2. **Combination (Mix and Match)** - Part of the budget is managed by the family, and part by the local authority or fully managed by LA.
3. **Flexible Payment** – flexible arrangements may be made if discussed with and agreed by the case worker and Short Breaks Panel.

SECTION SEVEN: MANAGED ACCOUNTS AND DIRECT PAYMENTS

Managed Account

When the council finds support and pays it on your behalf out of your short breaks' allocation.

Direct Payments

When you find the support yourself and you pay for it directly from your allocated allowance.

MANAGED ACCOUNT

The **Wakefield council manages your short breaks allocation**, selects the provider, and **pays them directly**. These providers:

- Have a **contract** with the council.
- Are **commissioned** by the council.
- Meet **minimum quality standards** (e.g., **CQC** – Care Quality Commission).
- Have appropriate **policies and procedures** in place.

Wakefield Council-Run Services: If your support is through a **service run by the council itself**, this is also considered a **managed account**.

Non-Commissioned Providers: If the provider you want is **not commissioned by the Wakefield**, it doesn't mean they're low quality. It simply means the **council cannot pay them directly**. In this case, you can choose to receive a **direct payment** and **manage the arrangement yourself**.

DIRECT PAYMENTS EXPLANATION

Direct Payments allow you to manage all or part of your personal budget yourself. This can be done in two main ways:

- **Hiring your own care provider** and paying them directly.
- **Employing a Personal Assistant (PA)** – key responsibilities of a PA are outlined below.

While this may feel daunting, please be reassured that there is plenty of support available. You will receive support from **Penderels Trust** to help you set up your Direct Payments. They offer:

- Employment and legal advice.
- Assistance with recruiting and selecting a Personal Assistant.

Third Party Supported Account (TPSA) - If you would like to manage your own budget but feel unable to handle invoices or bank accounts, a **Third Party Supported Account (TPSA)** may be an option. Your worker can discuss this with you and help you decide if it's the right choice.

Key Responsibilities if you find your own provider and pay directly are:

Ensure the service provider is registered with the appropriate body (Ofsted/CQC)

Check that the service provider's invoices are correct

Pay the service provider's invoices

Key responsibilities if you employ your own personal assistant are:

Interviewing PAs, gathering references and applying for a DBS through the council (they will pay and do this for you).

Providing the PA with a job description, employment contract and manage staff including covering holidays and sickness

Paying wages including holiday and sick pay and other payments such as Tax and NI.

Pay your child's activities if they go out with PA

The PA's health and safety whilst employed by you including employer's liability insurance.

All children and young people need support to prepare for adult life—and Short Breaks play a vital role in helping those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) build the skills they'll need for the future. The short breaks promote independence, boost confidence, and encourage social interaction.

Some Short Breaks are specifically designed to support transition planning from an early stage, helping young people develop practical life skills that contribute to their future independence and overall wellbeing. By engaging in new experiences and exploring different interests, children and young people gain valuable skills that support the key outcomes of preparing for adulthood, including:

- **Independent living**
- **Participating in the community**
- **Maintaining good health**
- **Achieving employment or meaningful activity**

Short Breaks not only benefit the child or young person but also strengthen family relationships and help carers continue their vital role with greater resilience and support.

Employment and further education	Living independently	Having friends and relationships and being able to participate in local community	The best health possible
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SECTION EIGHT: HOW CAN YOU GET INVOLVED?

As a Local Authority, we need to make sure we ask parent(s)/carer(s) and children and young people what you all think of the Local offer to help us improve it and make sure it meets your needs.



Short Breaks Survey 2025
88% of parents said that Short Breaks make a difference to their family some or all of the time.

SECTION NINE: CONTACT INFORMATION

The Short Break Statement is reviewed annually or more often if required. You can let us know what you think about the Local Offer and Short Breaks Statement at any time during the year by:

- Contacting us on Facebook @ Wakefield SEND information
- Contacting Parent Carer Forum
<https://www.wakefieldparentcarers.co.uk/> or email at info@wakefieldparentcarers.co.uk
- Contacting WESAIL on 01924 965588

What to do if you have a worry about Short Breaks

If you are worried about a short break or activity that you or your child have accessed, or you are not happy with the support provided to you during the assessment process - we recommend you talk to your worker or the Short Breaks Support Team:
Telephone: 01924 306065

Out of hours contact, if you have a safeguarding concern about a child or provider, please call 0345 850 3503.

If you are still not satisfied with the support, you can make a formal complaint to the Complaints and Representations Team.

Telephone: 01924 302840

Email:

socialcarecomplaints@wakefield.gov.uk

Post: Wakefield One, PO Box 700, Burton Street, Wakefield, WF1 2EB

