**Wakefield Children’s Services**

**Short Breaks Statement 2024/2025**

“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 Margaret Isherwood

Portfolio Holder CYP Services

Vicky Schofield

Director of CYP Services

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section one: introduction

**What is a Short Break?**

Short Breaks are activities for children and young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). They provide children and young people with enjoyable breaks and positive experiences away from their parent(s)/carer(s), while giving their parent(s)/carer(s) a break from their caring responsibilities. Short breaks come in different shapes and sizes and take place outside of school hours during evenings, weekends and school holidays. Short Breaks enable families to continue to provide care and support children with disabilities to be fully part of their family.

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| **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 else where | Support to access fun activities in the community |



**What is a Short Breaks Statement?**

The Children & Young Person’s Act 2008, The Short Break Regulations 2011, SEND Reforms 2014, The Children’s Act 1989 places a duty on Local Authorities to offer short breaks. The statement provides information about short breaks, who can access short breaks, the range of short breaks available, information about how to access suitable short breaks and how we listen and respond to children and young people and parent(s)/carer(s)’ views

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| **How can Short Breaks help children, young people, and their families?** | | |
| **Short Breaks help children and young people to:** |  | **Short breaks help families to:** |
| Enjoy fun activities like other children do | Spend time together |
| Develop independence | Meet and get to know other families and share experiences |
| Spend time with their friends and make new ones | 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 has a lot of the information you may need – more is available on the Local Offer website

[About | Short Breaks | Wakefield SEND Local Offer (mylocaloffer.org)](https://wakefield.mylocaloffer.org/short-breaks/about/))

Wakefield Early Support Advice Information Liaison (WESAIL) is available to parent(s)/ carer(s) of a child/young person who has or may have SEND aged 0-25 who are living within the Wakefield District. This service is also available to professionals for advice and guidance who are supporting CYP and their families.

[Overview - WESAIL – Wakefield Early Support Advice Information - NHS (www.nhs.uk)](https://www.nhs.uk/services/service-directory/wesail-%E2%80%93-wakefield-early-support-advice-information/N11010815)

**Join the Information Network**

Joining the Information Network means you can get information about consultation exercises, advice, training sessions and your own copy of a newsletter issued once per term. It also means you will get details of any play schemes the council organise during school holidays. Parents and carers can also choose to find out about events happening through the local area’s Wakefield Parent Carer Forum (Formally Known as TEAM). You can also choose to get a Max Card. This is a national discount scheme which helps reduce costs for families to enjoy fun days out together. There are over 3,000 venues across the country, which accept a Max Card like SEA LIFE, Tropical World and Digger land. You can find out what discounts may be available by visiting their website at [www.mymaxcard.co.uk](http://www.mymaxcard.co.uk). Young people aged 16-25 years with additional needs can also join the network themselves. They can do this if they are able to understand and make their own decisions what consent they will give about how we could use their information.

How to join the Information Network (IN)

There are 3 ways to join the Information Network:

• Request a postal application form by emailing [InformatioNetwork@wakefield.gov.uk](mailto:InformatioNetwork@wakefield.gov.uk) or calling 01924 302471

• Complete an online form at:

[https://wakefield.mylocaloffer.org/information-network/how-can-i-join/](https://eur03.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwakefield.mylocaloffer.org%2Finformation-network%2Fhow-can-i-join%2F&data=05%7C02%7CInformationnetwork%40wakefield.gov.uk%7Cba7e9571d1ca437b1b7208dc53ee95d6%7Cd76faab796b740c79b253d2fbd4ac1f1%7C0%7C0%7C638477531419112156%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C0%7C%7C%7C&sdata=2%2B8B1SzBdzmNUDWGhzysnY2LuZOpqzs%2F6q6O110PyTs%3D&reserved=0)

• A third option is to call our phone line 01924 302471 and where we can complete the application form over the phone

section four: short breaks services:

universal services

**These are activities and services for everyone including Children and Young people with SEND and this includes family hubs, youth hubs, sport clubs, libraries, parks, bowling and leisure centres.**

**There are lots of activities and services in the community which all child and young people can access e.g. brownies, rainbows, beavers, cubs, scouts, boys’ brigades and Army/Sea/Air cadets etc**

**The people who run these universal services have a legal duty to make reasonable adjustments to make sure children and young people with SEND can access them.**

**Some of the activities may be free but some have costs for all people who access. Children and young people with SEND should not have to pay more than other children and young people.**



**How can you access these activities and find more information?**

Activities and Services can be booked directly with the activity provider. You can find out more about these in your local area by contact your local Community Centre, looking at the [Experience Wakefield website](https://experiencewakefield.co.uk/) or looking at the [Youth Hubs – Wakefield Families Together](https://www.wakefieldfamiliestogether.co.uk/youth-hubs/)

Often services and activities allow entrance for a carer to the activity for free or at a discount – e.g. with a Max Card. This is a discount initiative which has been designed to make days out more affordable for children and young people. For more information visit [Max Card website.](https://mymaxcard.co.uk/)

The council offers free Max Cards to families with children and young people aged 0-25 years old with SEND. To receive a free Max Card, you need to sign up to the Information Network (more information in section 3).

section four: short breaks services:

targeted services

**How can you access these activities and find out more?**

Activities and services can be booked 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.](https://wakefield.mylocaloffer.org/search-page-lo/?searchTab=activitiesSearchTab&templateId=c92f6502-35e0-4b35-9a94-aef90121c068&sortOption=Name%3Basc&pageNumber=1&pageSize=10&distance=1609&filters.distance=1609)

If you cannot find what you’re looking for, contact WESAIL on 01924 965588 or send them an email wesail@family-action.org.uk or follow them on [Facebook.](https://www.facebook.com/WakeLocalOffer)

**These are activities and services designed specifically to meet the needs of children and young people with SEND.**

**There are a lot of activities and services in the community that can meet specific needs e.g. autism-friendly cinema screenings, disability sports groups, and youth clubs for children with learning difficulties.**



“I find the group very helpful as it covers topic areas and have noticed a difference in my daughter keeping herself safe whilst using the internet and social media which was a big worry to us, and the Youth workers are always approachable and supportive” - Mum

**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](https://wakefield.mylocaloffer.org/) – you can filter by days, times, disability, age, activities, and postcode or you can contact WESAIL or follow them [Facebook.](https://www.facebook.com/WakeLocalOffer)

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

These are 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 universal or targeted services.

The extra help includes specialist medical equipment, personal care, or support from specialist trained workers.

Specialist short breaks are designed to enable children with complex needs to enjoy fun activities in a safe environment and/or give families a break from their caring role.

**Who are these Services for?**

For families with the most complex needs who require more support than is offered by other services. This may be because of changes in the family’s ability to support their child or because the child or young person’s needs have become greater.

Some families will have a wider network of support, however, if you find you don’t, or your family would benefit from extra support from Wakefield Council you can request a social care needs assessment.



**How can you access these activities and find more information?**

To see what you and your child might need from specialist short breaks, you will need to have your family’s needs assessed. You and/or your child will be at the heart of the assessment, and it will consider your family needs as well as your child’s needs. These can be requested anytime and it’s a discussion with either a social worker or Specialist Short Breaks Practitioner. They will look at:

* Child’s needs and development
* Parent Carer’s needs (Parent(s)/Carer(s) Assessment)
* Family and environment

Once a holistic assessment is completed, you and your worker will look at what support is required and how your needs can be met. If your needs cannot be met, your worker will discuss your options.

**Pathway for Specialist Short Breaks Service**

**Short Breaks Survey 2023**

**92% of parents said that Shorts Breaks meets their child’s needs some or all of the time.**

**My son enjoys attending and comes home with a smile on his face every time – Short Breaks parent.**

**What is a Parent Carer’s Assessment?**

The council has a duty to assess the needs of any carer who requests an assessment, or who appears to need support. The Council works on the principle that parent carer’s needs are looked at as part of a holistic assessment and this gives a clearer picture of any support required. However, parent(s)/carer(s) can ask to have their own needs assessed.

**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 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

**My daughter really loves the time spent with the support staff as this is something different for her as her only other time is with her parents. She can develop social skills and learn that her family isn’t her world – Short Breaks parent.**

**Is there an eligibility criteria?**

Not for an assessment but there are criteria to access a specialist short break and an assessment is completed to see if you meet this.

To decide eligibility, both the child and the parent(s)/carer(s)’ needs as well as family/environmental factors are looked at together to assess/identify what overall support is needed.

For further information you can view the [eligibility grid](https://wakefield.mylocaloffer.org/Resources/Councils/WakefieldOffers/Specialist-Short-Break-Eligibility.pdf?v2) on the Local Offer website.

section five: care and support plans

After a holistic assessment, you and your worker will create a Care and Support Plan for your child and family. This will include:

* Outcomes (what the short break needs to improve for you and your family – examples of these are given below)
* How your child’s needs will be met (what type of specialist short break will support your child to meet the outcomes)
* The frequency of support and allocation for your short break

**My child loves going to groups because he enjoys playing and meeting new people and he can’t wait to come home and tell us all about it – Short Breaks parent.**

**What Specialist Services are available?**

The [Wakefield Local Offer website](https://wakefield.mylocaloffer.org/search-page-lo/?serviceCategories.0=312347C9-24E5-46C8-9D3C-AEF500F36C4A&searchTab=servicesSearchTab&templateId=fd62c561-1dce-40c6-aa7f-aef900d122a4&sortOption=Name%3Basc&pageNumber=1&pageSize=10&distance=1609&filters.serviceCategories.0=312347C9-24E5-46C8-9D3C-AEF500F36C4A&filters.distance=1609) 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](https://wakefield.mylocaloffer.org/feedback/about/) or contact WESAIL.

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

**Who agrees the plan?**

You and your worker agree the plan first. Your worker then submits a Short Breaks referral including your proposed Care and Support Plan 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.

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.

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.

**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.

**It has improved my child’s confidence massively. This has been having a positive knock-on effect at home and school. The break gives myself and my partner quality time together where we can shop, eat and relax – Short Breaks parent.**



section six: personal budgets

**What is a personal budget?**

A Personal Budget is referred to Direct Payment, it gives family control and flexibility to choose and pay for the services they need. It is an allocation of funding following the agreement at Short Breaks Panel which should meet the total cost of provision indicated in the Care and Support Plan.

Support can be provided through Direct Payment or managed account or you may wish to have a combination of the two.

section seven: managed accounts and direct payments

**Direct Payments**

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

**Managed Account**

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

**MANAGED ACCOUNT**

The council manages your short breaks allocation, finds the provider for you and pays them directly. The council only pays short break providers who they have contracts with and who they commission. To become a commissioned short break provider, they must go through an application process and meet minimum quality standards (CQC) and have the right policies and procedures in place.

If your support is provided through a service that the council runs itself, then this is also a managed account.

If the service, you require is not a commissioned short break provider it doesn’t mean they are not good quality – it just means that we cannot pay them directly so you could take a direct payment to manage this yourself (more information on the next page).

**DIRECT PAYMENTS**

You manage all or part of your budget yourself – this could be either through finding your own provider and paying them directly or employing a personal assistant (key responsibilities of these are detailed below). This can be quite daunting, but the council has a lot of support available.

You will receive support through Penderel’s Trust to set up direct payments. They provide employment and legal advice and assist you in recruiting and selecting a PA.

If you want to manage your own budget but don’t think you can manage the invoice and bank accounts, then a Third Party Supported Account (TPSA) can be requested – your worker can discuss this with you.

**Key responsibilities if you employ your own personal assistant are:**

Interviewing PAs, gathering references and applying for DBSs 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.

**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

All children need to be prepared for adult life and Short Breaks play an essential and important role in developing children and young people’s independence, confidence and social awareness. Support for transition arrangements start at an early stage and some of the Short Break activities are specifically designed to give disabled young people the opportunity to develop skills for future independence and improve overall family functioning and wellbeing.

Children and young people can experience new activities and interests through social interaction opportunities designed to develop skills and ultimately prepare them for adult life. These activities contribute and link to “preparing for adulthood” outcomes of independent living in the community and maintaining health in the four key life outcomes:

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Employment and further education | Living independently | Having friends and relationships and being able to participate in local community | The best health possible |

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 2023**

**97% 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](mailto:info@wakefieldparentcarers.co.uk)
* Contacting WESAIL on 01924 965588



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](mailto:socialcarecomplaints@wakefield.gov.uk)

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

**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