

# Thrive-to-25: Southwark's Short Breaks Innovation Programme

**Thrive-to-25 is Southwark's Short Breaks Innovation Programme, funded by the Department for Education.**

This programme of work aims to improve short breaks and other forms of support for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), and their families. Southwark Council is working with a wide range of partners to deliver the programme from 1st April 2023 to end March 2025.

The programme has 4 key areas of activity, developed in partnership with parents and professionals to address current gaps in provision.

For more information visit [www.localoffer.southwark.gov.uk/care/thrive-to-25](http://www.localoffer.southwark.gov.uk/care/thrive-to-25)

## Key areas of activity:

### Under 8s\*

SENSational Play sessions have been rolled out across the borough by our Children & Family Centres in collaboration with Cherry Garden School. SENSational Play sessions are fun FREE sessions for children with additional needs or disabilities and their parents and carers. There is a combination of 'stay & play' and 'short break' sessions so families can

- have fun with their child
- meet other families with SEND children
- get information and support on topics such as communication, sleeping and eating, positive behaviour and Autism
- take a break at selected sessions.

There are now 11 regular sessions delivered from 8 different locations.

For more information visit the [SENSational webpage](#).

\* Term-time sessions focus on 0-8s but holiday sessions are available for up to 11s!

### Higher support needs

We are working with a number of providers to improve access to short breaks for children with higher support needs, particularly during school holidays.

This may include children and young people that require more support to meet their health needs, personal care needs or to support communication and behaviour.

This includes working with existing providers to see how we can support them to be more inclusive of children with a broader range of needs, as well as piloting new provision with some specialist providers.

We are working with our social care teams and special schools to identify children and young people that may need a higher level of support in order to access holiday schemes.

## 16 - 25s

We are funding a range of new special interest groups and social clubs for young people aged 16-25 including a coding club and 'gigs and trips' group. These activities aim to support young people to develop new and existing skills and connect with peers around shared interests. Visit Southwark's [Youth Offer](#) for details.

We are also working with local partners, Bede House and Southwark Resource Centre, to pilot a new awards programme for 19-25 year olds with an education, health and care plan (EHCP) who are not in education, employment or training. The awards programme is based around [Mencap's Gateway Award](#) which is a bit like an accessible version of the Duke of Edinburgh Award.

## Inclusive provision

We are working with VoiceAbility, parents and young people to conduct reviews of local activities and to develop action plans for improvement.

The reviews centre around improving access for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities.

Through this strand of the programme, participating providers have access to specialist support, training and resources to help them respond to feedback and improve their provision for children and young people with SEND.

To find out more about the work of VoiceAbility, visit their [website](#).

## Learning from Thrive-to-25

The funding for this programme is short term so it is vital that we use this opportunity to learn as much as possible about what is effective in meeting the needs of local families. This will help us to develop an improved offer moving forwards.

To support this we have appointed an independent learning and evaluation partner, [Renaissi](#). They are capturing data and learning from across the programme to feed into future service development. They have recruited a number of local parents as peer-researchers, to help capture feedback from children, young people and families that are accessing activities delivered through the programme.

## Get in touch:

For more information or to join the Thrive-to-25 mailing list please email [thriveto25@southwark.gov.uk](mailto:thriveto25@southwark.gov.uk)

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