

Short Breaks Information Session

FAQs

08/05/2024 11-12pm.

Q: What are Short Breaks?

A: Short breaks are opportunities for disabled children and young people to do something fun and develop their skills and independence, whilst providing parents and carers with a valuable break from their caring role. Short breaks can range from a few hours to overnight breaks and can take place inside the home or away from it. This can include afterschool, weekend and holiday clubs, support from a PA or support worker to access community activities, or overnight stays.

Q: What are universal, targeted and specialist short breaks and where can I find information about what's available?

A: Universal short breaks are activities for all children in Southwark, whether they have a disability or not. Examples include Stay & Plays at children and family centres, youth clubs or free swim and gym sessions. Providers of universal services are expected to make reasonable adjustments so that children with additional needs can be included.

Information on universal services can be found on:

Southwark's childcare webpage: www.southwark.gov.uk/childcare-and-parenting/childcare

Services for young people webpage: www.southwark.gov.uk/events-culture-and-heritage/services-for-young-people

'One Hub' for young people: www.onehubsouthwark.co.uk

Targeted short breaks provide activities for children and young people that have additional needs that may not be met within a universal setting. Examples include school holiday, weekend and after-school activities that have higher staff ratios and additional resources to support these additional needs.

To access these activities, children and young people must meet the targeted short breaks eligibility criteria. Families do not however require an assessment with social care/the All Age Disability Service to access the targeted short breaks offer.

You can register for Targeted Short Breaks provision via the registration platform:

www.eequ.org/southwarkshortbreaks. Once you register, the council will check that you meet the criteria, and if eligible, your request will go through to the activity provider.

These activities are also listed on Southwark's 'Local Offer' www.localoffer.southwark.gov.uk along with other activities for children and young people with SEND.

Specialist short breaks are for disabled children and families that require support over and above what is available through targeted services. Access to this is via an assessment with the All Age Disability (AAD) Service.

- **For under 18s:** Referral is via Southwark's Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH). Telephone: 0207 525 1921; Email: MASH@southwark.gov.uk
- **For 18-25s:** Referral is direct to the All Age Disability (AAD) duty team. Telephone: 0207 525 5372; Email: AADDuty@southwark.gov.uk

Q: What is the criteria for Targeted Short Breaks?

A: To access social care funded Targeted Short Breaks a child or young person must meet the eligibility criteria.

For **general support** (staff ratio of 1:3 or 1:4), the eligibility criteria is:

- Age 5-19 years
- Southwark resident
- Has an EHCP (Education, Health and Care Plan)
- Unable to access universal services due to level of need and/or require additional support

For **enhanced support** (staff ratio of 1:1), the eligibility criteria is all of the above plus:

- Attends a special school (in or out of borough) and/ or open to All Age Disability Service in Southwark
- Severe or complex learning disability, physical disability and/or health condition

Q: How can I access Targeted Short Breaks?

A. You can register for Targeted Short Break activities that offer support at a general ratio of 1:3 or 1:4 via the registration platform: www.eequ.org/southwarkshortbreaks.

Once you register, the council will check that you meet the criteria, and if eligible, your request will go through to the activity provider.

Registration links for enhanced support (1:1) are available via special schools and the All Age Disability service.

Q: My child has specialist requirements, but we do not have regular contact with social services/ the All Age Disability Service. How can I get a targeted link for an enhanced short break?

A: The pathway to accessing enhanced Targeted Short Breaks is via a link shared by the All Age Disability Service (AAD) and our Special Schools (without need for an assessment with AAD). If your child attends a special school in Southwark then they can request a link from the school when provision becomes available.

If they do not attend a special school and do not have an assigned worker from the All Age Disability Service then they technically do not meet criteria for an enhanced placement.

However, if there is evidence that this level of supported is required, then this will be considered on a case-by-case basis. For more information contact thriveto25@southwark.gov.uk

Support over and above what is available through Targeted Short Breaks

If a family requires support over and above what is available through targeted short breaks then they will need an assessment with the All Age Disability service. The local offer includes information about the [threshold for the All Age Disability service](#) - this will help you assess whether your child meets the criteria.

All families are asked to start with the Local Offer and see whether they can access targeted short breaks and/ or other provision first. Providers will always get back to you once you have filled in the information, to advise whether they can meet your child's needs or whether you may need support over and above what they can provide. Always fill in the information as best you can.

It may be that they redirect you to the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) to make a self-referral or they may refer you. We can then consider your child and family's needs.

Q: When do referrals for school age children (under 18) go via the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub?

A: You do not need to go via MASH to access Targeted Short Breaks.

Referrals go via MASH if the child or family requires support over and above what is available through Targeted Short Breaks, or where there are any safeguarding concerns.

For example: If a family believes they need more than what is available through targeted short breaks or the child needs 2:1 support, then that would be a self-referral via MASH. If you are a professional who has some additional concerns for a family, then you would also speak to MASH. Once you have made that initial contact, MASH will make contact with the All Age Disability service and do some basic checks to ensure you meet the [All Age Disability threshold](#) (the criteria is outlined on the Local Offer) – if you meet the threshold for All Age Disability, you will be referred into the service and the team will make contact with you.

For these types of referrals:

- **For under 18s:** Referral is via Southwark's Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH). Telephone: 0207 525 1921; Email: MASH@southwark.gov.uk
- **For 18-25s:** Referral is direct to the All Age Disability (AAD) duty team. Telephone: 0207 525 5372; Email: AADDuty@southwark.gov.uk

Q: What does the local offer do? What do they provide?

A: The Local Offer is the '*local offer of services for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities and their families*'. This information is published on the Local Offer website. This is updated by the Southwark Information Advice and Support team (SIAS). This team is sometimes referred to as the Local Offer, but SIAS is the team that provides information and advice to families and children up to the age of 25 in the borough, to help them navigate the local system. The Local Offer itself is the range of services and support that's available.

Q: Where can we access direct links to information about activities that are available? Parents and carers are having difficulties accessing relevant information.

A: Direct links to a range of useful webpages are included above and in the [presentation slides from the information session](#). Additionally, when you visit the Local Offer website there are different sections for different types of activities and different ages. For example: if you have a child aged 16-25 there is an area specifically for this age group called the 'Youth Offer'. There isn't one page at the moment with all the activity information on, it depends on the age of the child and type of activity.

You can access the Local Offer webpage here: www.localoffer.southwark.gov.uk

Q: Is there any support for people who do not speak English as a first language?

A: The registration platform can be translated into a wide range of languages using Google Translate. [Please watch this 2-minute video to see how you can quickly and easily share the information in a multitude of different languages.](#)

We have also worked with practitioners, school staff and others that work with families, so they can provide support with the initial registration. Once registered, booking placements is fairly simple.

If someone is still struggling due to language, literacy or digital barriers, there is another way that families can book. There is a 'message mentor' tab on the front of each listing which either the family or someone on their behalf can use. This is a simple message function which allows you to contact the provider and explain any difficulties the family is having. If you include the contact details then the provider can make contact with the family and book them on over the phone. However this is a last resort, as it bypasses the system and we need to avoid this as far as possible. The disability hub will also be able to provide assistance with registration once up and running.

There is a [video that explains how practitioners can support families](#) who find the booking system overwhelming.

Q: What is the cut off age for children? For example, Whippersnappers has a requirement that the child must turn 5 before August 2023. Is this the case with other providers? Endorphins have a starting age of 8. If so, can this be made clearer in the information?

A: This often relates to providers' Ofsted Registration and stipulations that surround this. We will ensure that, where there are specific age restrictions, that this information is included in the listings.

Q: Is there a provision for booking transport to and from holiday groups? I'm thinking of those who would usually use school transport and may need wheelchair support.

A: Transport is not included in the Targeted Short Breaks offer. One of our providers, Whippersnappers, can offer transport on a discretionary basis, but this provision of transport would replace some of the placement hours that the family can access.