

# Short Breaks Statement

**This short breaks statement sets out what services are available, the eligibility criteria for these services and how services are designed to meet the needs of Southwark families.**

## What are short breaks?

Short breaks are opportunities for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) to have time away from their families or primary carers, to relax, have fun and develop their skills and independence. They also provide parents and carers with a necessary and valuable break from their caring responsibilities.

Short breaks can range from a few hours to overnight breaks and can take place inside the home or away from it, such as school holiday, weekend or after-school clubs.

Short breaks are part of a continuum of services that support disabled children, young people and their families. The level of support a child or young person is entitled to will depend on the severity and nature of their disability.

The support is categorised into three levels:

1. Universal services
2. Targeted services
3. Specialist services

## 1 Universal services

These are short breaks that are available to all children in Southwark, whether they have SEND or not. Examples of universal services include [youth clubs](#), [adventure playgrounds](#), [stay-and-play sessions at children & family hubs](#) and [free swim and gym sessions](#).

All universal services are expected to make reasonable adjustments so that children with additional needs can be included. Some universal services even offer SEND-specific sessions. For many of these sessions there are no eligibility criteria other than age and being a Southwark resident. Additional activities are listed on [Southwark's Local Offer](#).

For most children, these short breaks are enough and they do not need to visit targeted or specialist services.

## 2

## Targeted services

These short breaks are funded by Southwark's All Age Disability Service, and are specifically for children and young people who are unable to access universal services.

Targeted short breaks include school holiday, weekend and after-school activities that have higher staff ratios and additional resources to support children with a range of additional needs.

Families can access targeted short breaks without a social care assessment, as long as they meet the eligibility criteria.

### Eligibility criteria for targeted short breaks:

- Age 5-19 years
- Southwark resident
- EHCP (Education, Health and Care Plan)
- Unable to access universal services due to level of support required

Families can see what's on offer and register for targeted short breaks by visiting [Southwark's short breaks booking website](#).

### Enhanced services:

The targeted short breaks offer includes some enhanced provision for children that need a high level of support i.e. 1:1 child to staff ratio.

This provision is for children and young people who have **a severe or complex learning disability, physical disability and/or health condition**.

Families are referred to this provision by their special school or the All Age Disability Service.

- **Please note:** Playscheme places during school holidays are capped at a maximum of **10 days per child per year** (1st April – 31st March), as demand during school holidays
- is very high.

## 3 Specialist services

If families require support over and above what is available through Targeted Short Breaks then they may be eligible for further support subject to an assessment by the All Age Disability Team.

If eligible, a care plan will be agreed outlining what additional support will be made available to meet the family's needs.

This may include a care package of a certain number of hours of support a week and/or overnight breaks.

Further information about the All Age Disability Team is available on [Southwark's Local Offer website](#)

## How was this statement developed?

Feedback from children, young people and families helps the council understand what families want and need from a short breaks service.

This Short Breaks Statement was last updated in March 2025 to reflect changes to the service, following feedback from families.

## Have your say:

If you would like to raise concerns or tell us about a good service, you can do this via the [Local Offer](#). If you require support with this please contact the Southwark Information, Advice and Support Team (SIAS).

**Email:** [sias@southwark.gov.uk](mailto:sias@southwark.gov.uk)

**Telephone:** [0207 525 3104](tel:02075253104)