

**Leicestershire
SEND**



LEICESTERSHIRE CHILDREN & FAMILY SERVICES SHORT BREAKS STATEMENT

August 2025 to 2026

Special Educational Needs Disability Service



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1. Vision for children and young people with SEND

Our vision in Leicestershire for children with special educational needs and / or disabilities is the same as for all children and young people – for them to achieve well in their education, to be cared for in safe and supportive families, participate and be involved in their communities and lead happy, safe and fulfilled lives.

2. Introduction and Background

The definition of Short Breaks (previously known as respite care) is to provide disabled children and young people with an opportunity to be supported to take part in group or individual activities to have fun and relax and/or to pursue an interest. They provide families with the opportunity to take a 'break' from their caring responsibilities, the opportunity to rest and/or spend time with their other children.

This information is for families living in Leicestershire who care for a child or young person aged up to 18 years with a disability. It includes information on the purpose of Short Breaks and the current range of Short Breaks available in Leicestershire and how to access them.

Local authorities are required to publish a [Short Breaks Services Statement](#) so that families know what support is available, the eligibility criteria and how the range of short breaks are designed to meet the needs of local families with disabled children.

3. Who is responsible?

The Lead Officer is Hayley Binley, Head of Service for Children's Field Social Care, who reports to Sharon Cooke, Assistant Director of Targeted Early Help and Children's Social Care.

We have worked with the SEND Hub (parent and carer forum) to prepare this statement.

The Statement is compliant with The Equality Act 2010 which is used to support the development of suitable provision with appropriate reasonable adjustments.

4. Local Offer

Leicestershire's [Local Offer](#) brings together information and services across education, health, social care and independent and voluntary services that is available for children and young people with special educational needs and/or disability (SEND) and their families aged 0-25 years.

The Local Offer can be accessed to find suitable activities for your child. You may wish to consider these before going through an assessment for a Short Break.

Further information about the range of community activities available in Leicestershire can be found in our [Information and Support Directory](#) and on our [Local Offer](#).

5. Eligibility for Leicestershire Short Breaks

The Local Authority decision to provide a short break service (The Children Act 1989 Section 17 (6) or under Section 20 (4)) should be informed by an assessment of the child's needs and should take account of parenting capacity and wider family and environmental factors.

Eligibility criteria

You may be entitled to a short break if your child:

- is living in the county of Leicestershire.
- has a disability (see definition below).
- is aged 5 to 15 and is in receipt of high-rate care for Disability Living Allowance (DLA) or
- is aged 16 or 17 and is in receipt of high-rate care for Personal Independence Payment (PIP).
- has an EHCP or has been sent a letter that states your child will be receiving an EHCP.

Please note, we will not consider agreeing a short break if you have not yet applied for DLA or PIP.

This is what we mean by having a disability:

You are disabled under the Equality Act 2010 “if you have a physical or mental impairment, and the impairment has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on your ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.”

What ‘substantial’ and ‘long-term’ mean:

- ‘substantial’ is more than minor or trivial, for example it takes much longer than it

usually would to complete a daily task like getting dressed.

- 'long-term' means 12 months or more, for example a breathing condition that develops because of a lung infection.

If you do not meet the full criteria, for example if your child does not have an EHCP, but do meet the definition of disability, it may be possible to request an assessment to explain why your child/family needs support.

If you are requiring an overnight Short Break, this is completed through an assessment by a Social Worker in the Children's Disability Service. Please note, overnight breaks are generally only agreed for children with more complex needs and circumstances in line with our thresholds.

We recognise that each child and family is unique and will have different levels of support from their wider family and friendship network. Some families may need more support because of their family circumstances - this may be for a short period of time, or it may be longer-term.

6. The Leicestershire Short Breaks Offer

Children and families will use different types of short breaks depending on the age of the child and the child's interests.

Universal

Universal services are available to all children and young people regardless of whether they have a disability or not. Families can access these services directly. More information can be found on the [Local Offer](#).

Early Help

There are some targeted services available to families and children with disabilities and/or SEND, and/or low to moderate support needs that do not meet the threshold for statutory social care intervention. Families can access a number of these services directly. More information can be found on the [Local Offer](#).

Specialist

Designed for children and young people with the most complex and specialist needs, where they attend specialist groups, clubs or activities which are enjoyable, allowing parents/carers to 'take a break' from their caring responsibilities.

Definition of terms and use within Short Breaks for those children and young people that meet the eligibility criteria

Summer Direct Payment card

An amount of money available on a card over the summer period to spend on activities and/or resources for your child or young person to access.

Self-assessed Direct payments

Direct payments can be used flexibly to meet the needs of your child:

- Community activities, for example playschemes, holiday clubs, youth clubs, faith groups, sports, dance and drama classes, etc. These may be mainstream or specialist.

Worker-assessed Direct Payment

This will enable you to employ a Personal Assistant who can provide support to access a particular activity or support your child to pursue a particular interest or hobby.

N.B. For each type of direct payment that is awarded this is not to be used to provide childcare whilst you are at work, including the use of OFSTED registered child minders or a care agency.

Worker-assessed commissioned service

A service arranged through Leicestershire County Council. This may include weekend, after school or school holiday activity sessions, providing a range of activities such as arts and crafts, dance, outdoor experiences, music, sports, etc.

N.B. For a commissioned service awarded, this is not to be used to provide childcare whilst you are at work, including the use of OFSTED registered child minders or a care agency.

As at August 2025, the current list of approved Leicestershire County Council Short Break Specialist Providers:

- [FTM Dance](#)
- [Glebe House](#)
- [Goldhill](#)
- [SENSE](#)
- [Melton Mencap](#)

- [New Leaf Triangle](#)
- [Flourish with Phoenix](#)
- [Sportworks Ltd](#)
- [Woodleigh Health](#)
- [Purple Heart](#)

We do at times work with other agencies.

Domiciliary care

This provides help within the home for families requiring additional support with morning and evening routine and personal care.

The following care agencies have been through a quality assurance process with Leicestershire County Council:

- [Woodleigh Health](#)
- [Diversity](#)
- [Prestige Care](#)
- [Purple Heart](#)
- [Purple Care](#)
- [Anstey Healthcare Limited](#)
- [Daystar](#)
- [Alliance SC Ltd.](#)
- [Caremark](#)
- [Interpid Care & Support](#)
- [MK Executive](#)
- [Raageh Care](#)
- [Seven Care Services](#)

We do at times work with other care agencies.

Overnight Short Breaks

Overnight respite can only be assessed by a social worker, and it may be provided by either foster carers in their own home or a carer attending the family home due to a child's high-level complex needs. Legislation sets the number of hours that a child or

young person can access before being classed as a looked after child.

Overnight breaks are generally **only agreed** for children with **more complex needs** and circumstances in line with our thresholds.

Referrals into Leicestershire County Council

When a parent or an agency feels that a child's needs cannot be met by universal services alone a referral can be made for additional support. Referrals – whether from parents or from other agencies – are received by First Response Children's Duty, working with the Triage Team in Family Help (working with targeted Early Help services). First Response is a social work-led service. All requests for support that are received are screened first for any safeguarding issues, i.e. where a child may be at risk of harm. Thresholds are applied to decide whether a request for support should be provided by a social work service or a targeted early help service. It may be at this point that you may be contacted by the Triage Team in Family Help to participate in a pilot self-assessment process.

'Transfers' between Leicestershire County Council Children's Disability Service and Family Help Service

Sometimes, families will initially receive support through the Children's Disability Service and will have an allocated social worker who will work with the family to ensure the correct support is in place. When it is felt that the package of support is working well, we will look to transfer your package to Family Help. Support will be available to you if needed regarding any issues or if your circumstances change. Regular reviews are undertaken with you to make sure the agreed support continues to meet needs, the frequency depending on the size of the package of support you have in place. As your child turns 14, your worker will aim to attend EHCP reviews wherever possible, to support thinking about your child's transition to adulthood. If they are unable to attend in person, they will ensure they contribute written updates to the review process.

From time to time, if risk or more complex issues are identified, there will be a transfer to the Children's Disability Service. This will always be discussed with the family.

Decision-making

We aim to ensure equity in the allocation of resources to children, young people and their families with services that are needs-led, meet assessed needs, and with provision that is routinely monitored and reviewed. Therefore, we have established the Short Break Panel which takes place weekly. It is specifically tasked to consider the needs of children and

young people who require short breaks and other services which may support the family.

The panel considers the information provided in the assessment that has been completed by either a Family Help Worker (SEND Family Support Worker) or a Social Worker. In reaching decisions the panel looks at the needs of the individual child alongside the wider needs of the family and what additional help is required to meet the child's needs.

Packages can increase or decrease at the point of review.

This means that children who appear to have the same level of need will not always get the same level of short break because we have also factored into our assessment the family's capacity to respond to all children in the household and their own needs, for example children that have a Child Protection Plan.

If a Continuing Care assessment by health has taken place and an award has been given, the Short Break package will be reviewed to see if the level of support is still appropriate.

Appeals Process

Stage 1: informal resolution

Following assessment and Panel decision you will be notified of the outcome by your allocated worker. If you do not agree with the short break offer we have made to your child, or you feel that you are eligible for a short break but your request was declined, please get in touch with us within 10 working days. Contact the worker who undertook the assessment to discuss with them.

At this stage, we will try to resolve the concern raised informally by getting information from you about your concern and reviewing all the information provided to us. This may, or may not lead to a change of offer, which would be communicated to you in writing within 20 working days.

Stage 2: Formal Appeal

If you still disagree with the decision and wish to appeal, please contact the service manager by email at SENDShortbreak@leics.gov.uk stating that it is a formal appeal for the attention of the Short Break panel.

The relevant manager will review the assessment, speak to the assessing officer as required, and present the appeal to the Short Breaks Panel for consideration. We will aim to respond to your appeal within 20 working days, or let you know if that is not possible and set a new timescale. You will receive a written response to your appeal.

Stage 3: Leicestershire County Council complaints procedure

If you're not happy with our response to your appeal, you can make a complaint using our complaints procedure <https://www.leicestershire.gov.uk/about-the-council/contact-us/complaints-and-comments>

Self-assessment pilot

We have listened to feedback from parent/carers and have been working with the SEND Hub to develop a self-assessment process. This has included updating the eligibility criteria for a Short Break and developing a series of themed statements. To help implement a self-assessment process, some families may be offered the opportunity to take part in a manual pilot to test out the statements before the introduction of an on-line self-assessment process. If families do not feel that the outcome of the self-assessment meets need, there is still the option to request an assessment that would go to the Short Break panel to be considered.

Level 1 assessment

A level 1 offer for a short break is the summer direct payment card.

Level 2 assessment

A level 2 assessment will be a year-round package of support split as follows based on age:

- 5 to 12 year olds will have a year round package of 103 hours, equivalent payment for 2025 to 2026 of £1,445.09
- 13 to 17 year olds will have a year round package of 181 hours, equivalent payment for 2025 to 2026 of £2,539.43

These figures will be reviewed annually.

If it is felt that the Short Break offer will not meet need, there is the option to request an assessment by a Family Help worker (SEND Family Support Worker) or a Social Worker to consider your needs more fully.

Once we have worked through and evaluated the pilot, we will be able to share the statements once these have been agreed.

7. Transition to Adulthood

We want transition from childhood to adulthood to be an exciting and optimistic time for young people. We want to support them as they become young adults and take their place in the world, developing the interests of young people and allowing them to take part in local community activities when entering adulthood.

We want to ensure that short breaks address the transition needs of young people moving into adulthood. The package of support should reflect opportunities for teenagers, ensuring friendship and activity groups are supported to continue beyond the school years and extend independence and life skills, supporting the Preparing for Adulthood outcomes of:

- Employment
- Independent Living
- Friends, Relationships & Community
- Positive physical and emotional health

We want to offer choice for young people to enable them to have the opportunity to:

- undertake positive risk taking, whilst keeping themselves safe in the community
- develop decision making skills
- manage money
- travel independently
- improve their social interaction skills through modelling by their peers
- enjoying and accessing activities in their community
- take on opportunities to volunteer

We will begin planning at 14 years of age to take account of the voice the young person alongside their family's needs in preparation for adulthood. When young people are 16/17 there is a requirement under the Mental Capacity Act (2015) for an assessment where appropriate. As part of the review, consideration will be given to the requirement for a future Mental Capacity Act assessment. When a young person is over the age of 18, a

Carer Assessment can be requested through Adult Social Care.

When Short Breaks are requested for a young person aged 17 and a half years or over, it is expected that consultation would take place between Children and Adult Social Care, and it may be agreed that a joint assessment would be appropriate.

This Short Breaks Statement will remain valid for a period of 12 months until 14th August 2026 2026.

8. Transport

Unlike in the case of travelling to schools, there is no statutory duty for the Council to provide travel assistance to and from short breaks. Parent and carers are responsible for travel arrangements and this needs to be considered when selecting an activity, as other options closer to home may be available.

If this is not possible, and it would be detrimental to the child or family not to receive their short break, consideration may be given to providing funded transport.

Families should consider if they are eligible for the Motability element of the disability living allowance and how this could support travel to the short breaks. If you have tried these options and are still unable to support your child to access short breaks, please contact [Family Help](#) so a review can be undertaken and all options can be further explored as part of the outcome of a Short Break Assessment and associated support planning.

Appendix 1: Other services offering support

SENDIASS

The SENDIASS service is Leicestershire's SEND Information Advice and Support service which provides free, confidential and impartial advice and support to parent/carers of children and young people aged 0-25 years with SEND, as well as young people themselves.

The service can offer advice on:

- Special Educational Needs and disability law
- Resolving disagreements – both with the Local Authority and with schools
- Education, Health and Care plans
- School exclusions

SENDIASS, Tel: 0116 305 5614

<https://sendiassleicestershire.org.uk/>

Leicestershire SEND Hub

The Leicestershire SEND Hub is the Parent Carer Forum for Leicestershire, representing the views of parent/carers across Leicestershire and working with Local Authority and health services to improve services accessed by children and young people with SEND and their families. The Leicestershire SEND Hub can be found on Facebook.

<https://www.leicestershiresendhub.org.uk/>

Useful Contacts

Local Authority

- Leicestershire County Council, general enquiries, Tel: 0116 232 3232
- First Response Children's Duty, Tel: 0116 305 0005
- The Local Offer, <https://www.leicestershire.gov.uk/education-and-children/special-educational-needs-and-disability/where-to-start-with-send/what-is-the-local-offer>

Health

- NHS Direct, Tel: 111
- Leicester Royal Infirmary, Tel: 0300 303 1573

Appendix 2: Definition of terms and services

- **Universal or mainstream services** – services that are open to every child and young person without needing additional support. It does not necessarily mean that these are free.
- **Inclusion** - Genuine inclusion means services which are designed and equipped to enable disabled children and young people to enjoy the same activities and opportunities as non-disabled peers.
- **Early Help** – or can also be known as early intervention, is support given to a family when a problem is first seen. It can be provided at any stage in a child or young person's life.
- **Family Help** – this is the service in Leicestershire that provides early help to families. The Family Help service is a non-statutory service. This means that we need your permission to work with us. We work with families up to the age of 18.
- **Children's Disability Service** – the Children's Disability Service in Leicestershire is part of the social work team, providing support to those children and young people who are substantially affected in their everyday living with a disability. We work with families up to the age of 18.
- **Short Break** - an opportunity for parents and carers of a disabled child to have a break from their caring arrangements, and for their child to have a positive and enjoyable experience.
- **Respite care** - a term that was previously used and is sometimes still used instead of short breaks.

Appendix 3 – Examples of Short Breaks

Case Studies

Mo is 9 years old and has autism, ADHD and developmental delay and is in a special school. He lives with mum, dad, nana, and a 14 year old brother. Mo previously had a commissioned play scheme for summer holidays, but during Covid the family elected to use the Summer Direct payment card. The family use the card to buy membership at a local attraction and so are able to benefit from days out together through the holiday which they otherwise wouldn't be able to afford. They've decided to have the card again this year and so completed the self-assessment and were happy with a level 1 assessment.

Jack is 8 years old and is diagnosed with autism and developmental delay. He finds transitions difficult, for example when going into school, as well as moving between different activities. These often result in meltdowns that can last a period of time and does mean that parents are unable to take Jack out along with his siblings.

Jack attends a special school, which did take some time to settle into.

Jack lives with Mum and Dad, who both work full-time, along with 2 siblings that are under the age of 5. Mum has particularly found it difficult to manage Jack due to her own mental health needs.

When Mum completed the self-assessment, Mum completed level 1 and then went on to meet the level 2 criteria. Jack now enjoys 103 hours of direct payment so that he can go horse riding.

Mia is 16 years old and lives with her mum and older sister. She has cerebral palsy and mild learning difficulty and is a full-time wheelchair user. Mia is in an area Special School. Mia is unable to undertake self-care tasks without a lot of support, for example she needs help to wash and dress and is unable to wash her own hair. Mia has a significant difficulty with speech but is highly effective at using assistive technology to get her voice heard. Mia's family have previously had support to adapt the family home to Mia's needs, however in recent months she is expressing to her family that she is embarrassed that they must bathe her and dress her. In addition, Mia is frustrated that she does not get any opportunity other than at school, to spend time away from her family. She really wants to be able to spend time at the weekend with her friends outside of the family home.

Self-assessment would not have been appropriate as the payment would not have been appropriate to cover domiciliary care. The assessment went to Panel who agreed to support Mia with 4 hours of domiciliary care during the week – this will enable her to have independent support to complete personal care tasks. In addition, the panel agreed to 181 hours of support. This will enable the family to employ a Personal Assistant who can take Mia out on a Saturday to meet her friends, and work with Mia on developing independence skills, such as going into shops and cafes using her communication device to interact with others.

Taylor is 13 years old and lives with their Mum, along with two cousins who are both under the age of 5. Taylor has ADHD and Developmental Delay and is being assessed for ASD. Taylor sometimes finds it difficult to manage their emotions and this often results in a meltdown. Taylor will often bang their head and scratch themselves when they can't cope. Taylor is at a specialist school and says has friends. However, there is no special person that Taylor meets outside of school and has become more isolated and reliant on Mum. Taylor is wanting to become more independent like they see on social media but does need support as they would be a risk by themselves in the community.

The self-assessment was completed, meeting the criteria for level 1 and then also met the criteria for level 2. They will be receiving 181 hours direct payment so they can access a SEND gaming club.

Melody is 12 years old and is at a Resource Unit attached to a mainstream school with a diagnosis of autism and ADHD. Melody receives middle-rate care and low-rate mobility. Melody did not quite meet the eligibility criteria and so Dad requested an assessment of need. A SEND Family Support Worker from Family Help visited the family to find out more about their circumstances. Melody experiences school anxiety and has not been attending school for the last 6-months. Melody does receive some home tutoring, but parents are finding it difficult to motivate Melody to leave the house. The SENA service have agreed that Melody requires a specialist placement and is in the process of consulting with special schools.

The Short Break panel agreed that a short break would be beneficial to the family in this interim period and agreed direct payments for Melody for the next 6 months until she has settled in school. Any continuing need for the short break will be reviewed then. Her

parents have purchased an annual subscription to Twin Lakes and will take Melody and her sibling to enjoy time together as a family and encourage Melody to regain her confidence away from the home and increase social interactions.