



Sandwell
Children's Trust

**Children and Young People
with additional needs or disabilities**

Short Break Offer

June 2023

For families and practitioners who support or care for a child or young person who is aged 0 to 18, who has additional needs or disability and lives in Sandwell

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Our Aims

At Sandwell Children's Trust (SCT) we serve the purpose of improving the lives of children and young people by:

- Listening, learning, and caring
- Being ambitious and confident
- Encouraging innovation
- Acting with openness and transparency

Our Vision

Sandwell Children's Trust, alongside Sandwell Local Area Partnership, are committed to deliver our vision for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) to enable them to:

- achieve their aspirations for a healthy and successful life through experiencing high quality education and support services during their learning, growth and development stage leading to adulthood and meaningful employment and fulfilling relationships within the community of their choosing.
- have choice and control over decisions about their health, education, employment, care arrangements, friendships, and relationships; and
- successfully participate in the community and access meaningful occupation, employment, and life-long learning opportunities.

We know asking for help or advice can sometimes be difficult. Whatever you are feeling or experiencing, the chances are that someone else has been through it, too.

To help with achieving this vision Sandwell Local Area Partnership has produced, as required by law, a '[Local Offer](#)' which is a web based directory that sets out the support, services and activities in Sandwell that are available for children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities

Our Sandwell [local offer](#) aims to provide information on what is available and who might help, including [Sandwell Parents Voices United](#) which is run by parent carers for parent carers and can share experiences and what has helped. In addition, [Sandwell Special Educational Needs and Disability Information, Advice and Support Service \(SENDIASS\)](#) provides independent advice and guidance.

Our early help strategy promotes an approach where support is provided to families at the earliest opportunity ensuring that children and family are offered the right service at the right time. We are keen to understand the needs of a family and help them to get the right support or advice for the whole family. One of the options available is through the provision of Short Breaks, delivered by Sandwell Children's Trust or a range of other services and support.

Short Breaks

Children and young people with additional need and/or a disability have the right to be supported at home and in their local communities, to have opportunities to meet and make friends, feel confident, and to thrive with a good family life.

Short breaks can help to do this by giving an opportunity for children and young people to meet new people, take part in activities, enjoy positive learning opportunities, and have different experiences

Every family and situation are different, but short breaks are for disabled children and young people including those with complex health needs aged between 0-18 years living in Sandwell.

Short breaks can give opportunity for children and young people to have a change of scene, try different experiences, have fun, and make friends. This can help with their confidence and independence. Having time away from their primary carer, gives them opportunities to explore and establish their own identity.

Short breaks are an opportunity for parent carers to recharge batteries, spend time with others or pursue a particular interest. Short breaks can give families a valuable break from their caring responsibilities, helping them to spend time with other family members or have time for themselves.

We aspire that our children with additional needs and/or a disability are enabled to be an active member of their local community; and we promote inclusion in local leisure, clubs and social activity, but we also recognise that for some specialist provision may be needed.

A short break can take place in the community, in a supported setting or if needed in a family's own home.

Our Short Breaks Statement explains the range of short breaks we offer, who they are for, and how to access them.

The Offer

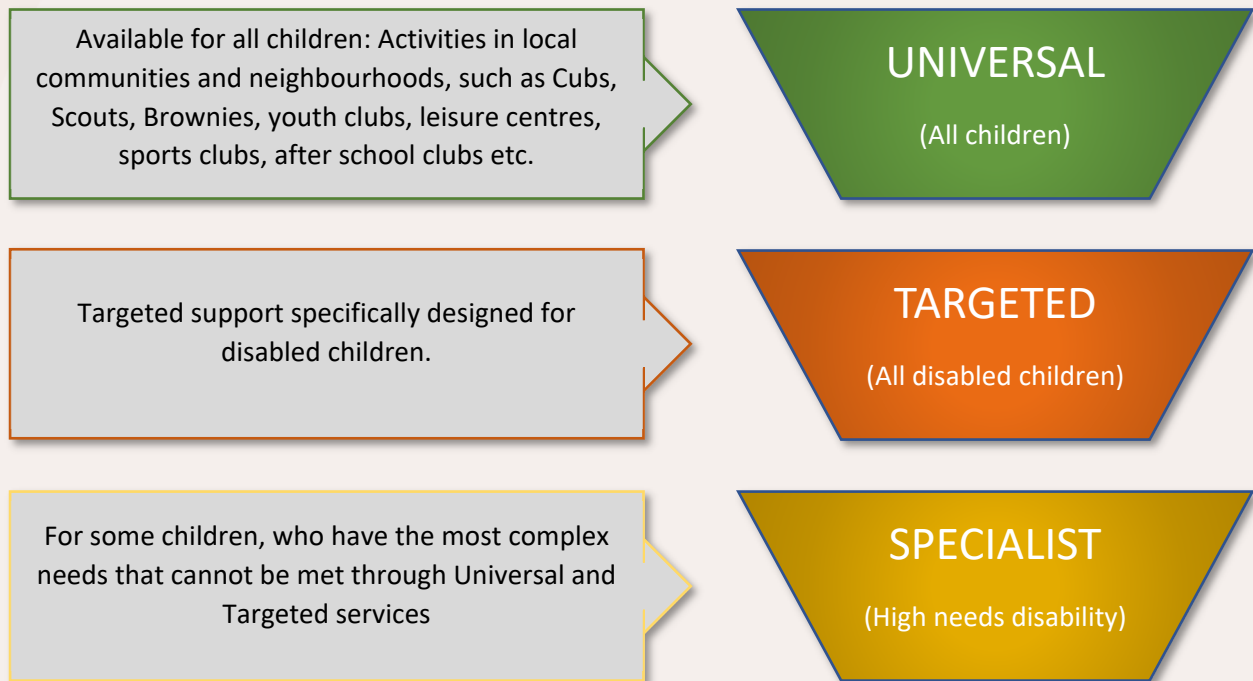
- Short breaks are for children and young people up to the age of 18 with a disability. Supported social activity after 18 is provided by Adult Social Care Services following a Care Act assessment.
- We offer a range of short breaks because everyone's needs, and circumstances are different.
- Short breaks can be individual or group sessions, in a setting, community activity or in the child's home
- Most activities are for the individual, but sometimes it will be arranged to be with brothers or sisters, or the whole family.
- They usually take place outside of the school day, so evenings, school holidays and weekends
- The aim is to benefit the whole family. Short breaks give the child opportunities to socialise and develop, while giving the family a break from caring duties
- In circumstances evidenced by the social work assessment overnight breaks can be provided

Categories of short breaks and how they can be accessed

There are three categories identified within our short breaks offer, depending of the needs of the individual children:

- Universal
- Targeted
- Specialist

The diagram below summarises the support available to children and families based on the three identified criteria:



“disabled” is used to include those who prefer a description of additional needs or specific challenges

Universal is available for all children, but it is recognised some children won’t be able to access either because of their additional needs or the providers current inability to meet the need. In these situations, either the universal provider should identify how they could be enabled to meet need, or the child is supported to access either through targeted or specialist resources. For an example a Personal Assistant goes with the child to a universal activity.

Universal

There is a wide range of clubs, leisure facilities and social activities in the community open to all children. We promote and encourage these to be inclusive and to make reasonable adjustments and offer support to children with disability to help them take part. All universal services have a duty to respond to the Equality Act 2010 by ensuring their services are accessible to disabled children and young people

Details of different clubs and activities can be found on the [Local Offer](#) website and the [Family Information hub](#). Children and young people can also find information on [Sandwell Voice website](#)

Parents, children, and young people can enquire directly about, joining and using these services and any concessions available.

Targeted

These short breaks are activities are specially designed for children and young people with disabilities. They help children who are not able to take part in universal activities without additional support.

Some Targeted activities, parents can access directly, details can be found on the [Local Offer](#). Where they are a commissioned service the following criteria is applied and will require either an Early Help or a social work assessment.

- Children and young people up to their 18th birthday,
- Living in the Sandwell,
- With a disability, or additional need related to an additional need or disability, that prevents them from accessing universal services without additional support.

Speciality

Eligibility criteria for specialist Short Breaks

- Children and young people up to their 18th birthday. There are exceptional circumstances specialist breaks are allocated for children under 5, but like most children aged under 5, its unusual to access clubs and activities without their parent or carer being with them.
- Living in the Sandwell,
- Have a severe learning disability
- Have profound multiple disabilities
- Have a severe sensory impairment
- Have complex and severe health problem

These are usually defined from diagnosis, but it is accepted that criteria might be met by those pursuing a diagnosis. This will be evidenced from the assessment which should highlight how this is impacting on a child's daily life, for example, preventing access to social and leisure activity and/or high care demands on parent carers and family life of their brothers or sisters.

We may sometimes support children with less severe disabilities if:

- A parent carer, carer or those with parental responsibility has a disability or chronic illness,
- The impact on the family is severe,
- A sibling also has moderate or severe disabilities.

These short breaks are activities for children and young people with the most complex needs. They need to have an assessment to identify the need and plan for the type and level of support required, in partnership with the child, young person and their family and to agree which short breaks package would best contribute to meeting these needs.

For young people over 14 there will be an emphasis on developing independence skills, as part of their preparation for adulthood (PFA)

Sandwell children's Trust commissions these services and they are reviewed every 3-5 years. Short breaks can be provided by offering a place at an activity, access to a resource/setting or funding a personal assistant. Alternatively, a direct payment can be requested to enable a family's own support package to meet the assessed need and achieve the desired outcomes.

Following the assessment, this should be shared with the family along with the recommended plan. The worker will present the request to the Resource Allocation Panel, who will determine whether the allocated provision should go ahead.

The Resource Allocation Panel is chaired by the Director of Operations and has representation from Heads of Service, Commissioning and Finance, along with representatives from Health and Education.

Types of support under the specialist short break offer:

Personal Assistant

This is an individual worker who is matched as a Personal Assistant to support an individual child / young person to access activities in the community including independence skill development. There will be allocated number of hours per week or fortnight as required. *Hours cannot be banked to be used as a block.* It is recognised that school holidays may require additional hours to term time.

These services do not include any charges for activities or transport costs, except if identified within the assessment, these must be funded by families.

Direct payments

Parents have told us they enjoy the flexibility of arranging and managing their own short breaks through direct payments and personal budgets funding. This means they can choose and arrange services themselves, to fit their lives. We are committed to supporting families to do this wherever possible. This funding will be reviewed at least every year to ensure it is meeting the assessed need and delivering the outcomes identified.

Joint provision or Funding between Health and Sandwell Children's Trust

Where a child has a complexity of disabilities and/or ongoing health care needs, we will work with Continuing Health Care colleagues for a joint assessment and where eligible a co-ordinated package created with you.

Personal Budgets

For those children and young people with an Education Health Care Plan, a personal budget may be requested. This is an amount of money that is identified to flexibly support an individual child or young person with their education, health and/or care needs as identified in their EHCP. It can include funds from Sandwell Children's Trust social care support, from the council's Education service, and/or health's Integrated Care Service.

Families can receive a personal budget for care needs, education needs or health needs or a mixture of all of them.

Personal budgets cannot be used to pay for universal services that all children and young people can access but can help with individual support that needs to be put in place for a child or young person with SEND.

Personal budgets are designed to help families and young people have more control and greater choice over how their needs are met and outcomes delivered. They will be reviewed against activity and progress towards meeting agreed outcomes.

Overnight short breaks

For some families, an overnight short break that offers short-term care, i.e. a weekend, a midweek night, a day in the school holidays, for children and young people with a disability or health condition that significantly impacts on the family, will be the right help for them.

Overnight breaks will form part of a support package based on the particular needs of individual child and their families, as identified in the Social work assessment. They could be provided by a foster carer, registered children's home (for short breaks) or an additional carer within the family home.

Transport

Parent carers, carers or those with parental responsibility are responsible for transporting their children to and from Short Break activities, unless agreed as part of a child's Social Care assessment and plan.

Preparation for Adulthood

All children need to be prepared for adult life. For young people with a disability Short Breaks can play an essential role in developing young people's independence and confidence.

Support for transition arrangements starts at an early age. Some of the short break activities are specifically designed to give disabled young people the opportunity to develop skills for future independence. These may contribute to the 'preparing for adulthood' outcomes of independent living, inclusion in the community and maintaining personal health.

In Summary

UNIVERSAL

(All Children)

There is a wide range of clubs, leisure facilities and social activities in the community open to all children. We promote and encourage these to be inclusive and to make reasonable adjustments and offer support to children with disability to help them take part. All universal services have a duty to respond to the Equality Act 2010 by ensuring their services are accessible to disabled children and young people.

Services	Eligibility	Referral Process
<p>Details of different clubs and activities can be found on the Local Offer website and the Family Information hub.</p> <p>Children and young people can also find information on Sandwell Voice website</p>	<p>There are no eligibility criteria applied to access these services</p>	<p>Self-referral</p>

TARGETED

(All Disabled Children)

These short breaks are activities are specially designed for children and young people with disabilities. They help children who are not able to take part in universal activities without additional support.

Services	Eligibility	Referral Process
<p>Details of Some Targeted activities, parents can access details can be found on the Local Offer. Where they are a commissioned service the following criteria is applied and will require an assessment.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children and young people up to their 18th birthday, • Living in the Sandwell, • With a disability, or additional need related to an additional need or disability, that prevents them from accessing universal services without additional support. 	<p>Community operated – self referral</p> <p>Or</p> <p>Following the assessment, that will have been shared with you and the recommended plan, the worker will present the request to the Resource Allocation Panel, who will decide on the allocation provision or not. If agreed, your named worker will help access the service</p>

SPECIALIST

(High Needs Disability)

These short breaks are activities for children and young people with the most complex needs. They need to have an assessment to identify the need and plan for the type and level of support required, in partnership with the child, young person and their family and to agree which short breaks package would best contribute to meeting these needs.

Services	Eligibility	Referral Process
<p>Sandwell children’s Trust commissions these services and they are reviewed every 3-5 years. Short breaks can be provided by offering a place at an activity, access to a resource/setting or funding a personal assistant.</p> <p>Alternatively, you can request a direct payment to create your own support package to meet the assessed need and outcomes to be achieved.</p> <p>For young people over 14 there will be an emphasis on developing independence skills, as part of the preparation for Adulthood (PFA)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children and young people up to their 18th birthday, (There are exceptional circumstances specialist breaks are allocated for children under 5, but like most children aged under 5, its unusual to access clubs and activities without their parent or carer being with them) • Living in the Sandwell, • Have a severe learning disability • Have profound multiple disabilities • Have a severe sensory impairment • Have complex and severe health problem <p>We may sometimes support children with less severe disabilities if:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A parent carer, carer or those with parental responsibility has a disability or chronic illness, • The impact on the family is severe, • A sibling also has moderate or severe disabilities. 	<p>Following the assessment, that will have been shared with you and the recommended plan, the worker will present the request to the Resource Allocation Panel, who will decide on the allocation provision or not.</p>

Reviewing our Short Breaks statement and offer

The short breaks statement is reviewed bi-annually or more often if required

Commissioned services are required to provide regular information including feedback from children, young people, and their parent carers, so that the Trust can learn from parents and young people what has worked best for them and what outcomes have been achieved. In addition, the Trust continues to collect data on the population of disabled children in the local authority. These combined data sources will contribute to future service design and commissioning.

Getting involved

We value the involvement of parents, carers, children, young people, and professionals, and will seek children, young people, and parent carers contributions to inform the commissioning of new services, as part of the process. Our aim is to work together to find ways to better meet the needs and providing value for money to improve outcomes for children and young people with disabilities.

If you would be interested in participating in any consultation groups or by offering to give specific feedback on our services, please contact us:

[Contact Sandwell Children's Trust](mailto:CS_Firmstep@sandwell.gov.uk) 0121 569 7867 CS_Firmstep@sandwell.gov.uk

[Black Country Advocacy Service](mailto:BCA.referral@childrenssociety.org.uk): 0808 169 9954 BCA.referral@childrenssociety.org.uk

Or visit [Sandwell Voice](#)

Providers of Short Break services

Funding is awarded through an application and tendering process that ensures that the providers offer services and activities that meet current demand, have the necessary skills, and experience and provide value for money. They are all required to safeguard and promote children's welfare.

These requirements are reflected in the contracts with providers and ensure they are met through ongoing contract monitoring.

Legal framework used in this statement:

- Breaks for Carers of Disabled Children Regulations 2011
- Care Act 2014
- Children and Families Act 2014
- Equality Act 2010
- Children and Young Persons Act 2008
- Children Act 2004
- Children Act 1989
- Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1970