**Short breaks Q & A**

**What are ‘short breaks’?**

Short breaks are play and leisure activities which support the family of a child with SEND in the home, at an activity or in the community. They can last for one hour or a whole day.

Short breaks used to be known as ‘respite’ and have been renamed in recent years to reflect the opportunities short breaks hold for children and young people.

 Short breaks provide children and young people with the opportunity to:

* Have fun
* Engage in positive activities
* Learn new skills
* Meet with, and make new friends
* Improve physical and mental health by being active
* Become more confident

Short breaks support children and young people of all ages to prepare for adulthood so that they can:

* Maintain and develop friendships and relationships
* Know and engage with Enfield’s community
* Maintain good health and wellbeing
* Live as independently as possible when they are an adult
* Gain the skills to work or volunteer in the future

We aim to provide short breaks that allow children and young people with SEND to be supported and be part of the community activities wherever possible.

We want to ensure that there are fair and transparent policies and pathways to services and support.

Most families feel that short breaks help them to better manage their caring responsibilities. In some cases, the support provided by short breaks has helped to reduce family stress and breakdown.

Short breaks provide parents with the opportunity to:

* Spend time with their other children
* Undertake household tasks
* Improve their well being
* Take part in leisure activities
* Rest

**How can people find out if they are eligible and how to apply?**

It is important that short breaks are shared out in a fair way.

Some families need more support than others because of the needs of their child, their family circumstances and/or the support they have available from their network of family and friends.

Because every child, young person and family is different, there are different levels of support available.

**Level 1 – services for all:**

There are activities in Enfield that ALL children can attend, these are called INCLUSIVE services. Most children and young people with SEND can access these services.

**Level 2 – Services for all Plus**

This is support available to children and young people with SEND who need some additional support to access short breaks.

**Level 3 – Specialist Services**

This is support provided for a small number of children and young people who need specialist support due to; their complex needs, family circumstances, concerns about safety at home or because there is significant risk of family breakdown to access short breaks.

# **Level 1 short breaks**

Level 1 short breaks can be accessed by anyone, at any time. Services for all include:

* Early years settings
* Childminders
* After school groups
* Holiday play schemes
* Drama and dance groups
* Music activities
* Sport activities
* Youth groups
* Scouts, guides etc.
* Leisure centres/gyms
* Community and voluntary organisations
* Parent partnership activities
* Parks

**ALL** services must make reasonable adjustments to support **ALL** children and young people to access their service, this is because they have a legal duty.

If a child or young person is struggling to access a service, parents should contact the organisation to discuss their child’s needs and find out what support the service could offer.

If the organisation feels that they may need some additional training for their staff, they can contact the Joint Service for Disabled Children (JSDC) by email at cheviots@enfield.gov.uk

You can find level 1 services to access by:

* Looking on Enfield’s Local Offer page which has information about activities that are available and places to go in Enfield. Some are free and for some there is a cost. Click here to see more: ‘[activities and things to do](https://new.enfield.gov.uk/services/children-and-education/local-offer/short-breaks-and-activities/)’
* Communicating with your child about what they would like to do and consider what they are interested in.
* Asking other parents and families what activities they do, what is good and see if there are any activities your children could do together.

# **Level 2 Short breaks**

Some children and young people whose needs are more complex may need some support to access short breaks.

If parents feel their child needs more support to access short breaks, they should ask a professional that knows their child well to complete the Joint Service referral/assessment with them.

This assessment will include detailed information about:

* Their child’s needs
* Family circumstances
* Support that the family has had
* Short breaks the child is currently attending
* Information about why the child has not been able to access the inclusive services and activities.

This year the JSDC is subsiding playscheme sessions for children and young people with SEND with two new providers in Enfield, there are 400 sessions available.

**LEVEL 3 Short breaks**

These services, offered from social care, are targeted at families with the most complex needs, offering an individualised package of support. Most of these children and young people will have:

* A child in need plan
* Regular network meetings with parents and professionals, where possible involving the child or young person.

These individualised packages are offered to a very small number of children and young people with highly specialist needs who may require more short breaks. This may be due to:

* The impact and risk of the behaviours of concern that the child or young person demonstrates
* Their complex physical and medical needs.
* There being more than one disabled child in the family
* Parental ill health
* Exceptional circumstances in the family
* Concerns about the child’s safety at home

**Will there be sufficient places this summer?**

We have more playscheme places than ever this summer.

Endorphins and Sportsworks are new playscheme providers in Enfield and each playscheme will deliver 200 sessions that have been subsidised by the Joint Service. We will be gathering feedback from children and young people and parents about these schemes to decide if we will work with these schemes in future.

 Sportsworks are also offering sessions for free for children who are eligible for free school meals, these places are funded by the Government scheme this summer.

We have a new provider BLS which is run by a teacher at Durant’s school that can offer 135 sessions, Centre 404 can offer 240 sessions, ALWA can offer 480 sessions, there is also Cheviots schemes, VIPS, Teen scheme and Summer Uni.

There are 226 families in receipt of short break grants so that they are able to choose the activities that best meet the needs of their child.

We will continue to develop and promote new opportunities for children and young people with SEND.

We have been working with our colleagues in the youth service and will be starting a SEND youth club in September.

In partnership with our SEND Commissioner, we are continuing to search for more providers who could develop services in Enfield.

**Late information is being given – many parents are worried that they would lose short breaks money if they didn’t get booked up in good time.**

We agree that the information should have been published earlier but we have been waiting for information from providers – we will work on improving this at future holidays.

**Short Break Grants: Will the Joint Service be recouping funds this summer?**

We have written to all parents that receive a short break grant to confirm that we will not recoup any funds until after the summer holidays to enable parents time to spend the funds that may have accumulated over the past 18 months when services were limited.

The short break grant agreement states that if funds accumulate in the account the parent will be contacted to explore how this will be used, and a decision could be made to suspend further payments until the balance reduces or to recoup funds.

If parents are struggling to identify activities or services that can meet their child’s needs they can contact cheviots@enfield.gov.uk for advice and information.

Payments of Short Breaks Grants, have continued to be paid throughout the pandemic If parents have any specific queries about their SBG please email cheviots@enfield.gov.uk

**What happens in terms of short breaks funding when a young person turns 18?**

Short breaks funded by children’s services end when the Young Person is 18 years as the responsibility for providing support transfers to adult services.

**Using the payment card to pay for services and activities.**

Parents can use the E card in the same way as a debit card.

If you need advice on how to make payments, please refer to the letter you received with the payment card and the helpline

**How can I use my short break grant?**

When you sign the short break grant agreement you will be provided with a fact sheet.

Short break grants are a **contribution** towards the cost of short breaks for your child.

There are two types of short break grants, one to fund activities and one for services.

The services grant can be used to fund playschemes and agency home care for example and the activity grant is to fund activities. As the cost of playschemes are considerably more than activities the grant is higher.

The factsheets which contain full details are available on the Local Offer or you can contact Cheviots@enfield.gov.uk for a copy.

**Funding towards Holiday costs?**

Families that receive a short break grant are able to use up to £200 per year towards holiday costs for the disabled child only.

There is information on the local offer about organisation and charities that may be able to support with funding for holidays.

**Can I pay for playschemes myself?**

Yes - you are free to contact any playscheme directly.

**Information about breaks or relief available for families with special needs children are not clearly or easily available**.

We agree that the information on the Local Offer needs to be clearer and we are continuing to work to improve this with input from Our Voice.

**Individual Queries:**

As you can imagine this is an extremely busy time for the service but if you have specific queries about your own situation, please email Cheviots@enfield.gov.uk and a member of the team will contact you.

# Summer Uni questions and answers

**What is the booking and follow-on process when a parent books their Child or Young Person onto one of the SEND specific courses? Currently, when a parent / carer selects a relevant course, there is no option, or 'further information' box to detail the child/young person’s disability, support needs, etc.**

When registering any additional needs should be added in the ‘*any additional notes or medical issues’* box which is on the registration form. Thereafter we aim to contact parents of young people who have added information in the box at least 5 days before the course commences to ensure their needs can be met on the course.

**How would a parent / carer know how their child will be supported during the session, or will have appropriate support provided in line with their needs?**

Based on our discussion with the parent ahead of the commencement of the course, we will ascertain what support is needed and if these needs can be met.

**Additionally, for the SEND specific courses, we are assuming that parents do not need to stay for the session. Is this correct?**

After our conversation prior to the course starting, then a decision will be made.

**The above also applies to the other inclusive non-SEND specific courses. It would be helpful to have an option (when booking) that allows a parent /carer to say if their child/young person has a disability / accessibility needs.**

This should be disclosed in the additional information when the young person is registered as this information sits in their profile and we are able to review and respond to this.

**How soon will a parent know that their child/young person has got a confirmed place? As with all families, this is particularly important for a family who have child with SEND to know as soon as possible in order to help with planning their summer holidays.**

 If a space is available on your chosen course, you can simply book the course and you will receive an email stating that you have a place on the course. However, based on the child’s information which has been provided at point of registration in the additional information/medical needs section we would aim to contact the parent/guardian of the young person as stated above at least 5-7 days prior to the commencement of the course. After the discussion we would aim to confirm the place as soon as we can.  Also, if parents have not filled in the section, we would request parents to send information to us or arrange a telephone conversation as soon as possible.

**Please clarify the age ranges for the Summer Uni program. On the first page, it does say the age range is up to 25 if a child/young person has special needs. However, when looking at the individual courses (including the SEND-specific ones), there is a different age range on them.**

The age ranges advertised on the courses in the booklet/website are not applicable to young people with SEND, meaning that all young people up to age 25 with SEND can book on to the courses regardless of what has been specified.