



Herefordshire's Short Breaks Statement 2025 -2026

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This statement forms part of the support for families that care for a child/ young person who has a disability/additional need up to their 18th birthday, who lives in the county of Herefordshire. It outlines:

- The services that are available
- Who is eligible to use these services, and
- How the range of services is designed to meet the needs of families with disabled children in Herefordshire

What is a short break?

A short break is an activity or service which:

- Provides parents and carers with a break from their caring responsibilities
- Helps to support a child or young person's social and emotional development
- Helps to support a child or young person learn new skills
- Provides a child or young person with new experiences

Families are expected to provide transport to and from their child's short break activity or service. In exceptional circumstances, support may be available to provide transport, and parents would be expected to contribute to the cost of transport, where this is in line with what any parent would contribute for a non-disabled child.

Short breaks can include day, evening, overnight or weekend activities. They can take place in the child's own home, in the home of an approved carer or in a residential or community setting.

Short Breaks Outcomes

A short break will enable children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) to:

- Have fun
- Spend time with friends and make new ones
- Take part in interesting activities and new experiences
- Develop positive life and social skills
- Be more independent or confident
- Prepare for life as an adult
- Be safe

For parents and carers of children with SEND, a short break will enable them to:

- Feel less pressured
- Be able to get on with normal routines
- Have some 'me' time
- Spend time with other children or together as a family

- Be confident that their child is safe and having fun with skilled carers who understand their needs

Types of services that must be provided

[Schedule 2 \(section 6\) of the Children's Act 1989](#) states the local authority has a duty to provide services that:

- Minimise the effect of a child's disabilities,
- Give children an opportunity to live ordinary lives, and
- Provide support to those people who care for a disabled/additional needs child/children by enabling them to have breaks from their caring role

[The Breaks for Carers of Disabled Children Regulations 2011](#) states that a local authority must consider the needs of carers who would be unable to continue to care unless breaks from caring were given to them.

Types of Short Break Services

Not all children and families will need the same type or level of short break; some will need more than others because of the nature and severity of their child's disability. Universal and targeted short break services (described below) can be accessed without a professional assessment of need.

Universal Services:

Mainstream community services are those that are open to the public. These are known as universal activities and include, for example, youth clubs, uniformed groups (for example cubs, brownies), leisure centres, nurseries, childminders and activity-based groups. Many families with a disabled child access these type of activities successfully once the provider has understood from parent carers, carers or those with parental responsibility how to meet their child's needs. You can access universal services by contacting organisations directly. Families pay any costs for using universal services.

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. Some universal services may offer concessions to disabled children and their carers. To find out whether the service you would like to access offers concessions you should ask the service directly.

Targeted Services:

There is a range of services designed specifically for disabled children/young people that can also provide a short break for the parents or carers. These services can be accessed without the need for a professional assessment.

For example, some clubs and groups offer SEND specific sessions and local venues offer dedicated sessions for children and young people with additional needs and disabilities.

Information about universal and targeted services is available on the [Talk Community Directory](#) website and are shared regularly on the [Herefordshire SEND Local Offer Facebook page](#).

Targeted Short Breaks Allowance Scheme:

Herefordshire Council's targeted short breaks (TSB) allowance scheme is to help children with special educational needs and disabilities who need some extra support to take part in clubs and leisure activities.

Children and young people aged 4 – 17 with an Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plan on Tariff D or above are automatically eligible for the TSB allowance. Children and young people aged 0 – 17 who do not have an EHC Plan, or those that do but have a Tariff A – C may still be eligible for the TSB allowance under 'special circumstances' if they need extra support to access leisure activities in the community. In both instances, families must complete an application form to request the allowance.

As part of the application process under the 'special circumstances' criteria, all applications are reviewed by a panel who will consider the evidence provided with the application. The panel meets regularly throughout the year to review in-year applications.

More information about the scheme's target group, terms and conditions, and how to apply for an allowance is provided on the [council's](#) website.

Assessed Specialist Services:

Some disabled children may have a higher level of need that can't be met by universal activities or targeted short breaks alone. Specialist short break services can be provided to meet a specific need following a social care assessment of the child and parent/carer's needs.

To determine the individual needs and identify the most appropriate solutions, Herefordshire Council's Disabled Children's Social Care Team will work with families to complete their needs assessment. Depending on the needs of the parent carers, their child and the rest of the family, they could have an in-depth Child and Family Assessment or they may only need a Short Breaks assessment – this can be discussed and agreed with your allocated worker. Depending on the outcome of the assessment, identified needs can be met through a range of services, including:

- Direct payments (DP) that families can use to employ a personal assistant or fund other non-commissioned activities
- assessed daytime activities, such as individual community-based sessions or group activities
- individual daytime support, such as where one or more skilled workers support a child on a 1:1 basis in the family home and or in the community
- Family-based overnight fostering short breaks
- Residential based overnight short breaks

Access to specialist short breaks is guided by the following principles:

- Promoting the health, safety and well-being of disabled children and young people, ensuring they can fully participate in family and community life, enjoying themselves with friends and making decisions about their lives and being prepared for adulthood
- Preventing family crisis through the provision of short breaks for carers
- The needs of children and their families change and the process of assessment and providing appropriate levels of support should reflect this
- The need to be fair, clear, equitable and sustainable

If you'd like to know more about the children with disabilities assessment process, please contact the Herefordshire Disabled Children's Social Care Team on 01432 261584 to discuss or e-mail DutyChildrenwithDisabilitiesTeam@herefordshire.gov.uk

What short breaks does Herefordshire offer?

- You can find information about short breaks services available in Herefordshire on the [Short breaks and respite](#) webpage
- You can search for short breaks providers and activities on the [Talk Community Directory](#)
- If you have any feedback about the webpage or the services you access, please email shortbreaks@herefordshire.gov.uk