



All Different, All Equal:

Dudley Short Breaks Statement

This statement is for families and professionals who support or care for children and young people 0 to 18th Birthday, living in the Local Authority area of Dudley with Special Education Needs and/ or Disabilities. The statement will provide clear information about the short break services available and how to access them.

1 What is a Short Break

Short breaks provide disabled children and young people with an opportunity to spend time away from their parents, relaxing and having fun with their friends.

They provide families with a 'break' from their caring responsibilities, and also give parents a chance to unwind, rest, spend time with their other children and give brothers and sisters an opportunity to enjoy family time too.

When we talk about short breaks, we want to offer the best support for children, young people, and their families by offering the right level of support. We recognise that the needs and circumstance of each family is different and must therefore ensure there is a broad offer that can meet this need whilst complying with the statutory duty to make the following types of short break provision available:

- leisure activities for disabled children outside their homes including those with opportunities for learning
- services available to assist carers in the evenings, at weekends and during the school holidays.
- day-time care in the homes of disabled children or elsewhere
- overnight care in the homes of disabled children or elsewhere

All Different All Equal:
Dudley Short Breaks Statement



2. What Legislation Applies

Section 25 of the Children and Young Persons Act 2008 requires local authorities to provide short breaks for families with disabled children. Regulations relating to this duty came in to force on 1 April 2011¹ . Local authorities are required to:

- ensure that, when making short break provision, they have regard to the needs of different types of carers, not just those who would be unable to continue to provide care without a break;
- provide a range of breaks, as appropriate, during the day, night, at weekends and during the school holidays; and
- provide parents with a short breaks services statement detailing the range of available breaks and any eligibility criteria attached to them.

A range of other legislation has also informed the duty placed on local authorities and NHS bodies in respect of short breaks² .

3. Lead Responsibility

The lead officer responsible for preparing this statement is the Head of Dudley Disability Service who reports to both the Director of Children's Services and Director of Adult Social Services.

¹ Breaks for Carers of Disabled Children Regulation 2011

² Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1970; Children Act 1989; Education Act 1996; Carers and Disabled Children Act 2000; Children Act 2004; Childcare Act 2006; NHS Act 2006 (as amended by the Health and Social Care Act 2012); Equality Act 2010; Care Act 2014; Children and Families Act 2014

4. How do we plan and review Short Break services

Before we can plan Short Break services, we need to understand how many children in our area have a disability and the nature of their disability. We also need to know what types of activities are popular with families.

We get this information from a number of sources. These include:

- Feedback from children, young people and their families
- Feedback from Short Breaks providers, service reviews and information events
- Information about SEND Support in schools
- Our register for disabled children
- Social worker assessments
- Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs)
- Quality Assurance Management Panel which currently has oversight of all requests for short breaks/direct payments
- Regional and national research reports
- Statistical information from Census data

A significant amount of this information has recently been compiled as part of a SEND Strategic Needs Analysis.

Where the Council and CCG has contracts in place for short break services (see below) meetings are held every three months, as a minimum, to review the service and ensure that families are continuing to receive high quality support.

All Different All Equal:

Dudley Short Breaks Statement



5. How have children young people parents and carers been involved in developing this Statement

We use a variety of approaches to engage with our children and young people and their families, through activities, voluntary and community sector organisations and operational staff that have experiences shared by service users. Some of our more formal routes for engagement are as below:

- SEND Participation Strategy outlining our intentions for the coming year
- Parent Carer Forum
- Participants of the Small Bids Panel
- Feedback on the Local Offer
- Providers of services from Universal to Specialist

We have recently undertaken specific and separate consultation exercises with children and young people and parents/carers to understand their views on short breaks in Dudley. The consultation was wide-ranging covering everything from awareness of and access to short breaks, through to the quality of existing short break provision and suggestions of what else may be required

It can be hard to access if you don't know what you want or need

The assessment process to access short breaks can feel long and complicated

Small Bids helps to provide activities for children and young people who do not receive Direct Payments which is positive

Would be good to have more special sessions for swimming, trampolining, outdoor activities, bowling etc.

The current offer is quite narrow compared to what is available in other areas

Finding a Personal Assistant or the right Personal Assistant can be a challenge

Not clear how to access short breaks or what the criteria is

More things to do with PA after school

There is some good provision in the borough such as KIDS youth groups and the Sycamore Centre

More messy play activities for children over 5

More day outings on a coach for families who don't have access to a car and trips that are wheelchair accessible

This feedback has been crucial to informing the development of this Statement and the work plan that follows to ensure the short breaks offer in Dudley continues to develop in line with the needs and aspirations of the families it is designed to support.

All Different All Equal:
Dudley Short Breaks Statement



6. Access to Short Breaks Services

We aim to be fair, clear and impartial, so that we can promote the health, safety and wellbeing of disabled children and young people.

This ensures they can fully participate in family and community life, enjoying themselves with friends and making decisions about their lives. By providing the right levels of support at the right times, we can help prevent family crisis.

We think it is important to allocate short breaks in a fair way. Not all children and families will need the same level of short breaks; some will need more than others because of the impact of their child's disability. Some families may need more support because of their individual family circumstances. As every child and their family are different, we provide different levels of short break support.

Short breaks for children and young people with disabilities and additional needs are available in three ways depending on need:

1. Universal short breaks for everyone, including children and young people with disabilities and additional needs

There are many activities in the community that all children and young people can access. The people who provide these activities have a legal duty to make reasonable adjustments to make sure children and young people with disabilities and additional needs can access these services, for example, accessing additional training to meet behavioural or medical needs.

2. Targeted activities for children and young people with disabilities and additional needs

The service threshold/eligibility criteria are that the child or young person has a formally diagnosed disability which:

- has a long-term effect on their ability to undertake activities typically expected in line with their chronological age; and
- there are difficulties in meeting identified needs within their family, broader support networks or through local universal provision.

This includes children and young people with:

- moderate learning disabilities.
- a diagnosis of Autistic Spectrum Disorder which has an impact on their communication needs, social and behavioural development.
- global development delay.
- moderate sensory impairment; or
- a permanent and enduring physical disability or health need.

All Different All Equal:
Dudley Short Breaks Statement



3. Specialist short break services for disabled children and young people with acute needs

The service threshold/eligibility criteria are that the child or young person has a formally diagnosed disability which:

- has a substantial and long-term effect on their ability to undertake day-to-day activities typically expected in line with their chronological age; and
- there are significant difficulties in meeting identified needs within their family, broader support networks or through local universal provision.

This includes children and young people with:

- a severe learning disability.
- a diagnosis of Autism with associated severe learning disability which has a significant impact on their communication needs, social and behavioural development;
- severe global development delay.
- a severe sensory impairment; or
- a significant, permanent, and enduring physical disability or health need.

7 What Short Breaks are available in Dudley

It is often the case that many children and young people access a mix of short break services to meet their needs and the needs of their families.

Some short breaks activities can be accessed without a formal statutory assessment – often referred to as a CYPA which stands for Children and Young Person’s Assessment. In other cases a CYPA is required to ensure that the child and family are receiving the right level of support, this includes access to the most specialised short breaks as well as direct payments.

[Dudley’s Local Offer Website](#) is a one stop resource of information and services available to children and young people (aged 0 -25) with Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities (SEND), their parents, carers and families.

We aim to help you to make informed, positive choices and decisions by bringing together the range of services and support on offer across Dudley Borough, including details on how to access them. There is a wealth of information on areas such as education, health and social care, training and employment, leisure and support to prepare you for adulthood.

Dudley’s Local Offer includes information and services for children and young people with the most complex of needs and with an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP), as well as children and young people who have less complex needs but their additional needs mean they require Special Educational Needs (SEN) support.

All Different All Equal:
Dudley Short Breaks Statement



Information on the short breaks offer in Dudley is published on the [Local Offer](#) but we have also summarised this below, broken down in to three categories; universal, targeted and specialist.

Universal Services – for all children and young people

These are services available to all children and young people within our local communities through local youth centres, sports and leisure centres, children centres, funded childcare and early education, after-school clubs, brownies, scouts, or other community activities. Universal services are often the first point of contact for many families. A wealth information can be found on [Dudley's Community Information Directory](#) or via your local [Family Centre](#). This includes access to information for families with early years children including the potential to access short breaks via a range of [childcare options](#).

Targeted Services - for children and young people who meet the eligibility criteria for Short Breaks that can be accessed without a Children and Young Person's Assessment

We recognise that children and young people may have additional support needs to access a short break safely and need targeted activities with a disability focus and appropriately skilled/qualified staff team. The Local Authority and CCG short breaks budget is currently used to commission/ subsidise youth club and summer playscheme provision across a range of different age groups. Further information can be found [here](#).

We are aware that a number of these groups are currently oversubscribed and operating waiting lists. We are actively looking at options for how capacity can be increased to enable more children, young people and families to benefit from this type of provision. We have also identified that attendance at these groups is not representative of Dudley's overarching population of children with disabilities and are planning further activities to understand the reasons for this and what can be done to ensure that the short breaks offer is meeting the needs of all families in the borough.

Small Bids: Each year Dudley Council makes available an amount of funding and invites applications from organisations, groups and departments (not individuals) to provide social activities that are outside of school/school hours for disabled children and young people (and in some cases their family members as well). To follow the ethos of short breaks activities bid for should be fun, safe and life enhancing for the child or young person.

Any organisation/group wishing to access funding must complete an application form that is considered by the Small Bids Panel which meets on a monthly basis. The panel is chaired by a DMBC Commissioning Officer and is comprised of four parent/carer representatives who collectively reach a decision on bids submitted.

The parent carer members are involved on a voluntary basis and collectively, they possess a wide knowledge and experience of services for children with disabilities and parent/carers needs. The Panel is supported and co-ordinated by an officer from within Dudley Disability Service.

The maximum amount of funding that can be applied for in each application is £499. Multiple applications can be submitted by individual organisations/groups over the course of the year however they will receive greater scrutiny by the Panel and more supporting information will be requested prior to a decision being made.

More information on the Small Bids process and a copy of the application form can be found [here](#).

Specialist Services - for children and young people with more complex needs that require a Children and Young Person's Assessment to identify the level and nature of support that would best meet the needs of that family.

Where a statutory assessment is requested and/or required you can contact our access team directly or be referred from your practitioner.

Telephone: 0300 555 0050 (Mon-Fri 9am-5pm)

For Practitioners and those working with children, referrals should be made via Dudley's Social Care and Early Help Portal.

All Different All Equal:

Dudley Short Breaks Statement



Following a referral a social worker will contact you to discuss your request to access a short break. In line with the eligibility criteria you will be provided with the right level of support appropriate to your needs. This can be through universal, targeted early help or statutory social care services.

Where a need for specialist short breaks is identified as the outcome of an assessment, the following options are currently available:

- Overnight short breaks with specialist foster carers, currently provided by Barnardo's.
- Overnight short breaks at a specialist residential provision, currently [Coppice Lodge](#) for children and young people with complex physical health needs or [Stourbridge House](#) for children and young people with behavioural support needs.
- Direct Payments where parents wish to receive an allocated budget in order to secure their own personal assistant.

Some families may receive a combination of support including an element of direct payments alongside residential overnight care.

We are aware that families can sometimes experience challenges in identifying personal assistants and managing the processes involved in employing these individuals. We will be undertaking further work to address these issues.

8. Preparation for Adulthood

Managing transition into adulthood is a priority for young people and their parents/carers as they progress through their teenage years.

Transition planning is an integral part of the journey for the young person and developing positive activities that allow them to participate in their local community in accordance with their wishes and interests is a key part of this.

We are aware that many young people want to continue to spend time with their school friends once they are 18 and not lose contact as a result of transition to Adult Services. Within the current short breaks provision there are currently two youth clubs that offer access through transition up to 25. Children's and Adult Social Care Services are currently working together and with partners to ensure effective transition at 18 which includes consideration of ongoing requirements in respect of short breaks (often referred to as respite within Adult services).

The Council and its partners are also working more broadly to create and ensure opportunities for young people to extend their independence and life skills in accordance with [Dudley's Preparing for Adulthood Strategy](#).

All Different All Equal:

Dudley Short Breaks Statement



9. Costs of Short Breaks

The costs of overnight specialist short breaks will be met in full by Dudley Council and Dudley CCG. On occasions some universal and targeted short breaks will require families to contribute towards the cost of provision. Details of any parent/carer contributions required will be shared prior to a short break being undertaken. There are occasions when families may choose to appoint a particular agency for PA support or recruit a PA above the threshold payable by the local authority, this is at the family's discretion.

10. Transport

Parents and carers are responsible for transporting their children/young people to Short Break activities, unless an alternative arrangement has been agreed as part of the outcome of a Children and Young Person's Assessment and associated support planning.