

# Short Breaks Statement

Refreshed  
March 2023

Short breaks for  
parent carers  
of children and  
young people  
with additional  
needs and/or  
disabilities  
(SEND).

**Developed and agreed  
working in partnership  
with education, health,  
care and parents/carers.**



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# Introduction

## What do we mean by short breaks?

You may hear the term short breaks and wonder what this means. This is the term used to describe opportunities for parent carers to have for a break from their caring responsibilities.

The opportunity to have a break from caring may help parent carers enhance the ability to care for their children and young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and any other children/young people they may care for.

Within this Short Breaks Statement, we look to understand the needs of parent carers, what exists in County Durham that can support and any current gaps in meeting these needs. The statement explains how we will work towards creating sufficient short breaks and help parent carers to access these when needed.

Benefits of a short break could be achieved through creative solutions, accessing support from networks, something that your child/young person attends without you to allow you the break or something you do as a full family to reduce stress (with the right support).

- **Short breaks opportunities allow parent carers time to look after their own emotional, mental and physical health and also help develop personal, social networks.**
- **Your child/young person can benefit by developing new interests, keeping fit, being more independent, socialising with friends and taking part in hobbies.**

Short break opportunities will look different for each family, how often you need a break, when and for how long. Wherever possible, inclusion in local networks and communities to allow these breaks, will be at the heart of what we do in County Durham. However, where there are barriers for families, we will work with you to find suitable options that can help. This can include, a child/young person attending, a virtual activity, leisure facility, family days out, physical activity, local youth activity with the right support.

There are a small number of children/young people with very complex needs who may require specialist support to help them access something to allow parent carers a break. These needs will be considered as part of an assessment by a social worker and in some cases the child/young person could sleep at a children's residential setting overnight to secure a break for parent carers.



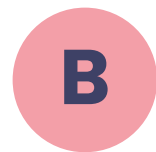
# What is the short breaks offer in County Durham?

In County Durham we offer graduated support:



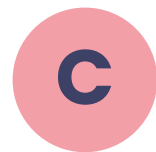
## **Advice, signposting and enabling access.**

- We provide funding to an external organisation, Durham County Carers Support, to work with parent carers to help understand what they need to support them in their caring role, including short breaks from caring and how these needs can be met. Parent carers can have a carers assessment completed as part of this service.
- We provide SEND Empowering Inclusive Communities (SENDEIC) who will work with families to help you develop a personalised response to meet your needs for a short break. This will include:
  - Providing information, signposting and developing potential solutions to meet individual needs. Help you find a suitable local community activity for your child/young person to access which will allow parent carers a short break from a caring role.
  - Working with parent carers who need a break from caring but are experiencing barriers in accessing a local community activity. We will work with you to personalise innovative, creative ways to help remove barriers, fill any gaps in provision and enable access where possible.



## **Additional support.**

- SENDEIC will work with families and organisations to develop local community activities with additional support for children/young people who require this to enable them to take part in an activity to allow parent carers to have a short break from their caring role.



## **Specialist support.**

- For families who feel they require more specialist support for children/young people with a range of complex needs that are unable to be met within the existing offer, they can access a statutory assessment to help identify unmet needs and work on potential solutions to meet these needs.

# What type of support is provided within the current short breaks offer and how can it be accessed?

## Overview of the graduated support

The types of support required can vary depending on the needs of the child/young person and their family circumstances. This graduated model gives families flexibility to step up and down between the different types of support, as and when required.



### Advice, signposting and enabling access

Advice, signposting and support to enable access to universal services within local communities.



### Additional support

Additional support for children and young people who are unable to access community activities and have their needs met within advice, signposting and enabling access.



### Specialist support

Specialist services that support children/young people with complex needs whose requirements are not being met within advice signposting and enabling access or additional support. These children and young people have complex needs and it is identified in social work assessments.

# Advice, signposting and enabling access

## Services for every parent carer of a child/young person with SEND

Durham County Carers Support	SEND Empowering Inclusive Communities (SENDEIC)	
<p><b>Parent carer support</b></p> <p>Durham County Carers can offer support if you care for a child/young person with additional needs in an unpaid capacity. They can help by providing advice and support if you are finding your caring role very stressful and are struggling to manage, help guide you with welfare benefits or provide some ongoing support. Depending on your circumstances they may be able to support you to access a carer break or grant, and issue you with a Carer Friendly Discount Card.</p> <p>Telephone: <b>03000 051 213</b></p> <p>Email: <a href="mailto:admin@dccarers.org">admin@dccarers.org</a></p> <p>Website: <a href="http://www.dccarers.org">www.dccarers.org</a></p> <p>Facebook: <a href="https://www.facebook.com/durhamcountycarerssupport">durhamcountycarerssupport</a></p>	<p><b>Advice and signposting</b></p> <p>There is a dedicated point of contact where families and professionals can obtain advice and be supported to navigate what is available in the local community which can allow a short break.</p> <p>SENDEIC will support families to identify options and make their own choices about accessing the community activity. Work together on solutions for your child/young person to take part in activities in your community to allow you a regular short break.</p> <p>The Inclusive Communities Officer will build a picture of your child/young person and their needs, for example</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● <b>The child/young person’s individual interests and hobbies.</b></li><li>● <b>What suits your child/young person better a large/ small group activity.</b></li><li>● <b>Do they access anything in their local community already? If not is there something they would like to access but need support to access it.</b></li><li>● <b>Any barriers that are preventing access to an activity</b></li></ul> <p>SENDEIC will look for suitable activities in your local community which your child/young person can access.</p>	<p><b>Enabling access</b></p> <p>When there is a barrier to accessing a local community activity the Inclusive Communities Officer will refer the family to the Enabling Inclusive Communities Co-Ordinator.</p> <p>Barriers could include: lack of staff for the activity, large groups, access issues, transport, staff’s lack of training/ knowledge of SEND or the need for the child/young person to have 1:1 support.</p> <p>The Enabling Inclusive Communities Co-ordinator can work with the family and the organisation to enable the child/ young person to access the activity. This could include sourcing training for the provider to widen their knowledge on SEND, support with access issues or parental worries.</p> <p>Ensuring affordable local activities for families through the discount card. (MAX Card) These can be obtained by a parent carer of any child/ young person with SEND who is registered with the Children and Young People’s Network.</p> <p><b><u>Children and Young People’s Network - Durham County Council</u></b></p>

## Eligibility criteria

All parent carers who have a child/young person with special educational needs and/or disability age 0-25 can access the above services.

These services promote the inclusion of disabled children/young people and their families to participate in their local community whilst also offering the opportunity for parent carers to have a short break.

## Referral routes

You can contact Durham County Carers Support on

- Telephone: 03000 051 213
- Email: [admin@dccarers.org](mailto:admin@dccarers.org)

You can contact SENDEIC:

- Telephone: 03000 260 270
- Email: [SENDEIC@durham.gov.uk](mailto:SENDEIC@durham.gov.uk)



## Examples of support that can be access through Durham County Carers

Service	How to access
Parent carer needs assessment	Durham County Carers Support
Grants or carers breaks	Durham County Carers Support
Welfare benefit support	Durham County Carers Support

## Examples of activities that everyone should be able to access

Service	How to access
Out of school club	SENDEIC/ Local offer
Sports clubs	SENDEIC/ Local offer
Youth Group	SENDEIC/ Local offer
School holiday clubs	Fun and Food/Local offer/SENDEIC
Childminders	Local offer

## Examples of activities that everyone should be able to access

Service	How to access
Additional training to staff at youth group	SENDEIC
Grants/ funding	SENDEIC
Awareness raising with peers	SENDEIC
Organise adaptations for activities	SENDEIC



## Additional support

For families unable to have their needs met within the community activities to enable breaks for carers.



### Community activities with additional SEND support

When universal and local offer activities are not suitable, then the Enabling Inclusive Communities Co-ordinator can make a referral to one of the community activities with additional support. Durham County Council and our health partners fund a number of providers to deliver an “Inclusive Community Short Breaks Offer” (activities with additional support).

**These providers have additional training and expertise to support children and young people who may have a range of SEND.**

### Eligibility criteria

When speaking to SENDEIC, those whose needs cannot be met within the advice, signposting and enabling access part of the offer, a referral can be made to a community activity with additional support to meet needs. You do not need a social care assessment to access these providers.

Service	Example activities	How to access
Virtual activities	Online gaming sessions, family fun bingo and family quizzes.	SENDEIC
Practical activities	Activities within a group setting in the community such as bowling, gym sessions, swimming, cinema, eating out.	SENDEIC
Keeping families connected	Weekly term-time sessions that can be enjoyed by the whole family such as soft play, trampolining, sport sessions, youth groups or inclusive family days out in the school holidays.	SENDEIC
Physical activity programmes	<p><b>Group 1</b> - For children and young people who can move into community groups in the future. Staff can support with the move to the community groups.</p> <p><b>Group 2</b> - For children and young people who can't access community groups currently and need more specialist support.</p>	SENDEIC
Specialist youth groups	Weekly term time youth group for children and young people aged 10-16. The session will include activities such as sensory time, cookery and arts & crafts.	SENDEIC
Pilot personalisation pot	The purpose is to reduce social isolation, improve mental wellbeing and allow short breaks as a family or separately. You may have identified something that will help your family, for example sensory equipment, outdoor equipment, annual pass to somewhere your child/ young person likes to go.	Durham County Carers Support/ Durham County Council Children's Services

### Referral routes

You can contact the SENDEIC

● Telephone: 03000 260 270

● Email: [SENDEIC@durham.gov.uk](mailto:SENDEIC@durham.gov.uk)



## Specialist support

**For families who feel they require more specialist support for children/young people with a range of complex needs unable to be met within the existing offer.**

There may be some families who require some additional support which is more than what can be offered from advice, signposting and enabling access or additional support to meet their needs. These children/young people will have a range of complex needs which require a more specialist level of support, longer duration of session, or a different type of service.

A gap in meeting needs will require identification as part of a social care assessment. The social worker will work with the family to identify ways in which these needs could be met. Where possible this will be led by the family and individual solutions will be developed as to how you can best meet your needs. Where gaps cannot be met, personalised funding can be used or a specialist commissioned service may be provided.

### Examples of specialist support

Service	What this includes	How to access
Innovation	Creative solutions, needs led by the family in relation to the best way of meeting family needs.	Social work assessment
Personalised Response	It may be agreed that the funding for support will be personalised and allow your family to employ their own support worker through a direct payment.	Social work assessment
Domiciliary Care	Personal home care support into your family home.	Social work assessment
Community Outreach Support	Where a specialist outreach support worker would allow your child/young person to access the community with support.	Social work assessment
Community Group Activities	This could include after school or weekend groups with specialist support.	Social work assessment
Over-night respite care	Where your child/ young person would stay in a residential setting.	Social work assessment
Hospice care	Where your child/young person would stay in hospice care.	Social work assessment

## Eligibility criteria

If there is not a social worker in place then Durham County Carers Support can work with you to understand your needs as a parent carer.

Durham County Carers Support may feel that a referral is required to the First Contact Service.

If this is the case a social care worker can work with you and your family to understand your social care needs and complete a full assessment when needed.

## Referral routes

- Durham County Carers Support  
Telephone: 0300 005 1213  
Email: [admin@dccarers.org](mailto:admin@dccarers.org)
- First Contact  
Telephone: 03000 267 979  
Email: [SDC@durham.gov.uk](mailto:SDC@durham.gov.uk)



## How are the services designed? How will we know what parents/carers need and if this is working? (Participation and consultation)

In order to keep the short breaks offer under review, we use information on Children's Disability Register. In County Durham this is called the Children and Young People's Network.

### **Children and Young People's Network - Durham County Council**

We work in co-production with families and use this register to engage further with families at regular intervals using a range of methods such as surveys or feedback forms, to determine whether needs are being met, the impact of short breaks and any gaps in meeting needs, to ensure your voice is heard.

This information is used to feed into the sufficiency strategy and action plan 2023 – 2026. This document outlines how the sufficiency of short breaks will meet the needs of our SEND children and young people. If you would like further information this can be obtained by emailing [SENDEIC@durham.gov.uk](mailto:SENDEIC@durham.gov.uk).



# Useful contacts

## **SEND Empowering Inclusive Communities (SENDEIC)**

SENDEIC provide information, signposting to parent carers who have a child/ young person with SEND and professionals to develop potential solutions to meet individual needs. Such as finding a suitable local community activity for your child/young person, find creative ways to help remove barriers, fill any gaps in provision and enable access to activities where possible.

Email: [\*\*SENDEIC@durham.gov.uk\*\*](mailto:SENDEIC@durham.gov.uk)

Telephone: **03000 260 270**

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## **Durham County Carers Support**

Durham County Carers Support can provide information advice and support you in your caring role if you care for a child/young person with additional needs. They can help you with benefit and grant forms or provide some ongoing support. Depending on your circumstances they may be able to support you to access a carer break or grant, and issue you with a Carer Friendly Discount Card.

Telephone: **0300 005 1213**

Email: [\*\*admin@dccarers.org\*\*](mailto:admin@dccarers.org)

Website: [\*\*www.dccarers.org\*\*](http://www.dccarers.org)

Facebook: [\*\*www.facebook.com/durhamcountycarerssupport\*\*](https://www.facebook.com/durhamcountycarerssupport)



## **Making Changes Together (MCT)**

This is County Durham's parent carer forum, they represent the interests of Parent carers of children and young people with SEND in County Durham. They work together to shape and improve services for families of children and young people with SEND.

Telephone: **0191 587 3541**

Email: [\*\*info@mctdurham.co.uk\*\*](mailto:info@mctdurham.co.uk)

Website: [\*\*www.mctdurham.co.uk\*\*](http://www.mctdurham.co.uk)

Facebook: [\*\*www.facebook.com/MakingChangesTogetherDURHAM\*\*](https://www.facebook.com/MakingChangesTogetherDURHAM)

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## **SENDIASS**

Durham Special Educational Needs and Disability Information, Advice and Support Service (SENDIASS) are a 0–25 years statutory service supporting parent carers of children and young people with SEND. SENDIASS provide confidential information, advice and support through a range of services. This includes 1:1 telephone appointments, attending meetings in educational settings and liaison with all services working with children and young people

Telephone: **03000 267 007**

Email: [\*\*sendiass@durham.gov.uk\*\*](mailto:sendiass@durham.gov.uk)

Website: [\*\*www.durhamsendiass.info\*\*](http://www.durhamsendiass.info)

Facebook: [\*\*Durham SEND Information, Advice, Support Service\*\*](#)

## **First Contact**

If you have a concern about a child or young person's welfare who lives in County Durham. First Contact brings together children's services staff with partners such as Durham Constabulary and health services.

When you contact First Contact you will speak to a trained officer. They will work with you to decide the level of response needed. Providing early help to children, young people and their families is their priority. They will start an Early Help Assessment to inform what happens next, which may be:

- Giving you appropriate advice and guidance
- A referral to preventative services such as One Point, with a 'team around the family' and a named lead professional
- A statutory referral to assessment and interventions teams due to safeguarding concerns, with a 'team around the family' and a named lead professional

Email: [\*\*scd@durham.gov.uk\*\*](mailto:scd@durham.gov.uk)

Telephone: **03000 267 979**



## Children and Young People's Network

Every Local Authority must keep a register of children and young people with a special educational need or disability, up to the age of 25. In County Durham we call this the Children and Young People's Network.

The register helps to make better plans around what services are needed and in what areas. The register creates a virtual network where they share information with members about services and activities that may be of interest.

As a member of the Children and Young People's Network, you and your children/young person will receive:

- Email or text alerts covering the latest news and developments, short break activities, events and general information.
- Entry into the exclusive Children and Young People's Network Membership Card scheme which offers discounts to organisations across County Durham and the North East.

Telephone: **03000 265 792**

Email: [cypn@durham.gov.uk](mailto:cypn@durham.gov.uk)

Website: [www.durham.gov.uk/cypn](http://www.durham.gov.uk/cypn)

## Local offer

We also have the Local Offer which is the place to find information for families of children and young people with (SEND).

Visit [www.countydurhamfamilies.info/localoffer](http://www.countydurhamfamilies.info/localoffer) for a wide range of services that may help you or your child as they progress into adulthood from birth to 25.



