

Short Breaks Statement

This Short Breaks Statement is for families living in Derby City who have a child with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) aged 0-17 years.

This statement has been developed to meet the requirements of relevant legislation and includes information about the range of Short Breaks available, who Short Breaks are for, and how needs are assessed.

Introduction – what are Short Breaks?

Short breaks provide children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) an opportunity to spend time away from their families, relaxing and having fun. A short break could be for just a couple of hours, a whole day, or a few days. Short Break activities take place outside of school hours (evenings, weekends and school holidays). Short Breaks also provide families with a break from their caring responsibilities, giving parents and carers a chance to unwind.

Short Breaks provide families with the opportunity to:

- Feel better able to manage their caring responsibilities and help to reduce family stress and breakdown.
- Improve their well being
- Have time to do other things (e.g. leisure, spending time with other children, undertake household tasks)
- Feel that the home life is more sustainable
- Feel an improved quality of life

Short Breaks provide children with the opportunity to:

- Have fun and make new friends
- Explore new opportunities
- Become more confident
- Learn new skills
- Improve emotional health and well-being by being active and engaged in positive activities
- Improve physical health through participating in physical activities

What is the impact of providing Short Breaks?

- Fewer children with SEND become looked after (live away from their family) because of their disability.
- A reduction in need for unplanned/emergency requests and placements in residential settings.
- Families have increased choice and greater control over the short breaks services they receive.
- Prevent family crisis through the provision of the right level of support at the right time, this could be support for a short period of time to respond to a specific need within the family at that time, or longer term and ongoing support.

Allocating Short Breaks

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 is different, we provide different levels of short break support.

Some Short Breaks provision can be accessed directly, and others will require an Early Help Referral or a Social Worker assessment.

Range of Short Breaks

Derby City Council's aim is to commission and offer a range of local short break provision to enable children and their families to lead as fulfilling a life as possible and to enjoy, achieve and have access to the same opportunities as others in life. There are three categories of Short Breaks in Derby known as Universal, Community Short Breaks and Specialist Short Breaks.

Many families with children with SEND will not require any extra help because they will be sufficiently supported using 'Universal' services.

Universal Short Breaks

Universal settings (or 'mainstream services') can provide short breaks which benefit all children and families – for example, leisure activities provided at the child's school or through local community groups and organisations.

Universal settings are available to use without an assessment and offer a wide range of activities and a chance for children with SEND to mix with non-disabled peers. These settings include:

- After school activities
- Childminder and early years settings
- Holiday play schemes
- Drama clubs
- Sports activities such as swimming, football, martial arts
- Youth clubs
- Uniformed organisations like Beavers, Cubs, Scouts, and Girl Guiding

Universal services aim to be inclusive and open to children with SEND and have a legal responsibility to make reasonable adjustments to support all children to access their service.

There are no eligibility criteria for accessing universal short breaks. You should contact service providers yourself, to establish what is on offer, availability of spaces and any financial contribution or charges.

Where you wish to use universal services, you should talk with the service provider to:

- provide information about your child's additional needs and how to best support them.
- discuss and explore what the provider may need to change (these are called reasonable adjustments)
- jointly assess the risks and work together to create a plan to reduce any risks

You can usually find out what universal services are available in your local area from your child's school, your local library, friends and family or the internet.

Derby's SEND Local Offer

There is a list of organisations offering activities for children with SEND on our **Local Offer** webpage. [Local Offer service directories - Derby City Council](#)

You should always check that the service or organisation meets your own requirements by contacting them directly. We do not carry out checks on individual providers, services and events on your behalf.

Free childcare

The Government provides free childcare for working parents.
[Free Childcare for Working Parents: Apply for free childcare - GOV.UK](#)

Disability Living Allowance & Personal Independence Payments

The Government provides many families with direct financial support via Disability Living Allowance (DLA) and Personal Independence Payments (PIP). Families may use this to help them fund short breaks.

Community Short Breaks

Community Short Breaks are specific short breaks for children with SEND who cannot access universal services without additional support or because of individual, family, or environmental factors, or because their disabilities or needs are more complex that they cannot be met by universal services or family support alone.



Community Short Breaks may be provided in the evenings, weekends and school holidays.

There are two types of Community Short Break – a **Grant** and a **Specialist Provider Service**

Community Short Breaks Grant

The Community Short Breaks Grant is a cash payment made directly to the parent or carer of a child with disabilities. This cash payment allows families flexibility, choice and control to choose their own short break activity in the community.

The Grant may be used on a wide range of leisure activities dependent on your child's interests. Children in Derby are currently using their grant to enjoy activities such as:

- 1-1 swimming lessons
- 1-1 yoga sessions
- Piano lessons
- Martial arts classes
- Sailing club
- Theme parks
- Wrestling Club
- Football coaching
- Sensory soft play sessions
- Ice skating
- Horse riding
- Holiday clubs
- Group activities and play sessions with other children.

If a child needs specialist equipment to take part in leisure activities (e.g. prescription goggles for swimming) this may be acceptable in some circumstances but must be agreed by us in advance.

The Grant is paid directly to parent/carer's nominated bank account. Parents and carers will be required to sign a Grant Agreement and submit evidence of expenditure, including completing a simple spending form and submitting receipts.

Specialist Provider Services

We commission specialist providers to deliver some Community Short Breaks services. These providers arrange specialist activity groups which are designed to be stimulating, enjoyable and fun and help promote friendships and peer support. They offer an exciting choice of varied activities at several venues across the city. Special events are arranged throughout the year too, celebrating religious and cultural holidays, local carnivals and national events. Day trips are also available during the school holidays, some of which are suitable for the whole family to enjoy. Provider services are available after school, at weekends or during the school holidays

How much does it cost?

Support workers are provided free of charge. However, some activities will have additional costs which families will need to pay for.

Here is a list of our current specialist short break providers:

Community Links 50 hours per annum For ages 5-17 years	Community Links offer sessions on selected Saturdays throughout the year. Each session lasts 4 hours. Community Links do not offer support on weekdays or during the school holidays. https://www.cl-support.com/
Fun-Abil8y 50 hours per annum For ages 3-17 years	Fun-Abil8y offer group sessions during the week and school holidays. Sessions last for 2 hours. https://www.stjamescentrederby.co.uk/fun-abili8y
Umbrella 50 hours per annum For ages 5-17 years	Umbrella offer sessions at their two venues in Derby. Additional day trips in the community are offered during school holidays https://umbrella.uk.net/

Transport

In some circumstances, a Specialist Provider may be able to offer transport, but it is not routinely provided. Families will usually need to arrange transport to take their child to and from the activity sessions.

Who can apply for a Community Short Break (eligibility criteria)

If you feel that your child's needs cannot be met by universal services, an Early Help referral can be made to the Vulnerable Children's Meeting (VCM) by a professional who knows your child well. We will need to gather information about your child and family's needs and explore what additional support is needed so your child can access play and leisure opportunities that also support you to have a break from your caring responsibilities.

The referral information is presented to the VCM Panel who consider the information provided and agree which short break could best meet your child and family's needs. The panel meets every week.

Your child will have a diagnosed disability.

[What services do we offer? - Derby City Council - Community Short Breaks](#)

Specialist Short Breaks

Some children with more complex needs may require specialist short breaks and/or significant additional support from another person to enable them to participate in enjoyable activities and stay safe. They may already be receiving support through universal and targeted services, but this may not be sufficient to meet their needs.

Access to Specialist Short Breaks is based on a child and family assessment (a 'Single Assessment'), which is prepared by a social worker. The assessment will consider the impact of the child's disability on family life, parental needs and capacity and the family's circumstances and wider resources and support network. In undertaking the assessment, they will seek your consent to talk to other professionals involved with your child about their care needs.

The social worker will talk to your child to learn about their aspirations and to understand what is important to them.

Following the assessment, a decision will be made about the best way of providing and funding Short Breaks for your child. For some families the social worker may recommend Community Short Breaks; a Direct Payment to employ a Personal Assistant to access activities in the home or in the community; a Residential Short Break at a specialist setting or respite care with one of our foster carers.

The assessment will be written into a support plan which outlines the services and short breaks that may be appropriate to be provided and how this will meet the child's or families' needs and identified outcomes.

In determining the need for specialist services, the social care assessment will include consideration of the following:

- The severity of your child's disability and how it impacts on both their life and yours
- If you have more than one child with SEND.
- The number of other children or caring responsibilities you may have
- If you or your partner has a disability
- How short breaks will improve the quality of your child's life
- The level of support within your social and family networks
- Your child's wishes and feelings
- If there are concerns about a child's safety
- If your child has complex health needs in some cases it may be necessary for a Continuing Health Care assessment to be completed to determine how those needs should be met by health).

We will always endeavour to work in partnership with you to ensure we gather the most accurate information about your child's and family's circumstances to complete the assessment. It is recognised that the needs of a child with SEND and their family change from time to time. There will be times when you need more support and those when you need less. It is therefore important that the services you receive change accordingly.

There may be instances where an additional short break is agreed due to specific circumstances, i.e. a change within your family or support network. If you receive additional specialist short break services, we will review them to ensure that the level of support is right for your child and family.

Residential Short Breaks

A residential short break is a planned, temporary stay in a specialised setting that provides children with disabilities a safe, supportive environment away from home. It gives them opportunities to socialise, develop independence, and enjoy new experiences, while offering their families valuable time to rest, recharge, and manage other responsibilities. Residential short breaks are designed to enhance wellbeing for the whole family by providing high-quality care and positive, meaningful experiences for the child. There is more information about our Residential Short Breaks service on our website - [Residential Short Breaks](#)

Direct Payments

A direct payment is money given to parents and carers, by the authority, to enable them to buy in support that is assessed as being needed, instead of the authority providing that support through their own services such as residential care or a Community Short Break. There is more information about Direct Payments on our website - [Direct Payments](#)

Respite Foster Carers

Respite foster carers provide temporary care for children with disabilities. Respite care arrangements can range from day care and overnight stays, to regular weekends and longer periods of up to two weeks at a time. They would usually care for the same children on a regular basis in order to develop a positive ongoing relationship. Respite carers support children in a variety of ways. This can include personal care such as feeding, washing, bathing and toileting and giving medication. If this or any additional nursing procedures are needed, carers will be trained to do this by a health professional. There is more information about Respite Foster Carers on our website - [Fostering](#)

Measuring impact and shaping Short Breaks

We will ensure that our short break services focus on improving life opportunities and outcomes for children with SEND and their families. We will continue to monitor and review the views of children with SEND, their parents and Service Providers so that everybody feels involved and included. This will assist the Council with developing a cycle of continual improvement.

Regular meetings take place with all Service Providers of commissioned short breaks to continuously review individual packages of support and monitor the service.

By listening to the views and aspirations of children with SEND and their families, we will strive to ensure short breaks are available to enable and empower children to lead fulfilling lives, have access to enriching activities and have opportunities away from their families. This will be achieved by continuing to develop our short breaks services and ensuring responsive and timely services, which are accessible. Using feedback from children and parents and carers we will continue our work to help children with SEND to enjoy opportunities to reach their potential and fulfil their ambitions.

Each year, we undertake a Parent/Carer Feedback Survey to find out what parents and carers think of the service they are receiving and ask for suggestions for improvement. These are the results of the surveys carried out in October and November 2025:

Parent/Carer Feedback Survey 2025

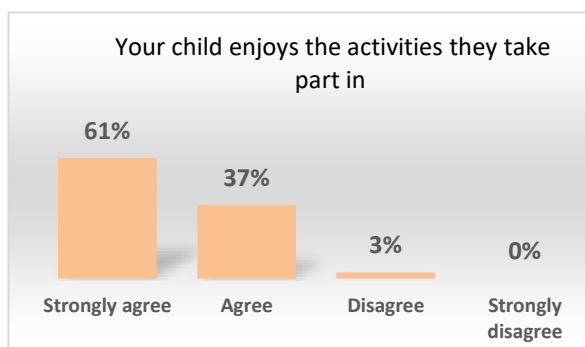
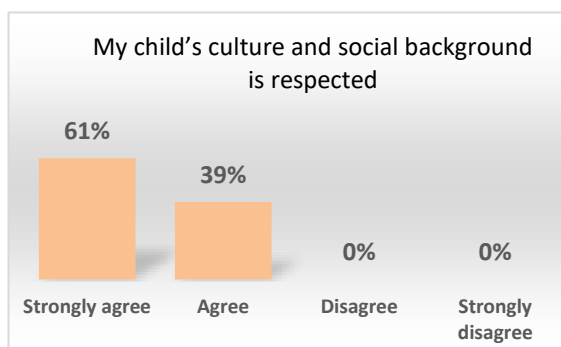
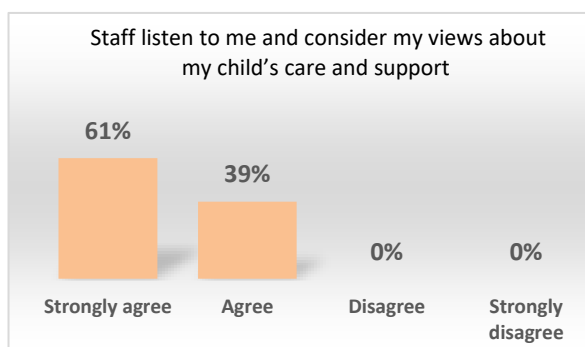
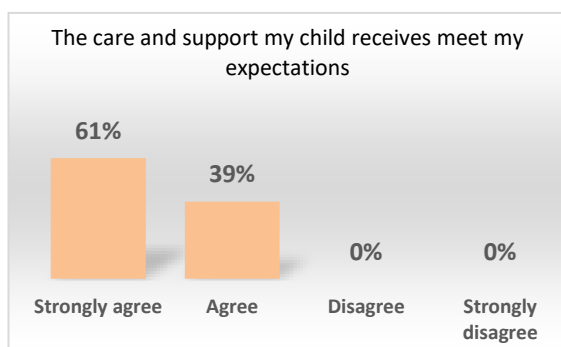
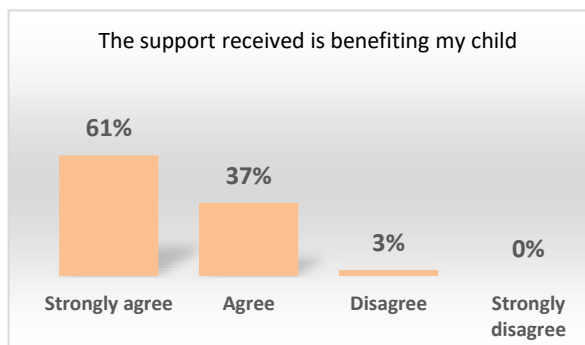
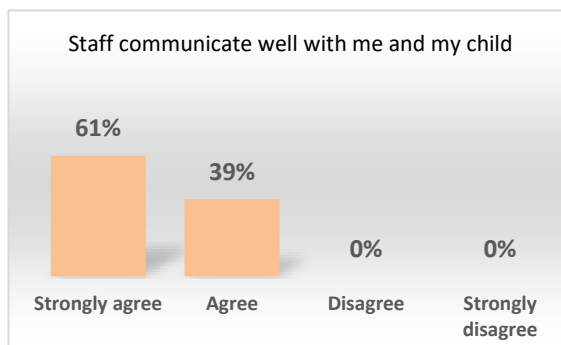
Community Short Breaks

In November 2025, 316 children were receiving a Community Short Break. We randomly selected 25% of parent/carers and contacted them to get their views on the service they are receiving. In total, we spoke to 78 families - of these, 38 families have children who attend activities with one of our specialist providers and 40 families have children who receive a Grant and who choose their own activity in the community.

Specialist Provider Feedback

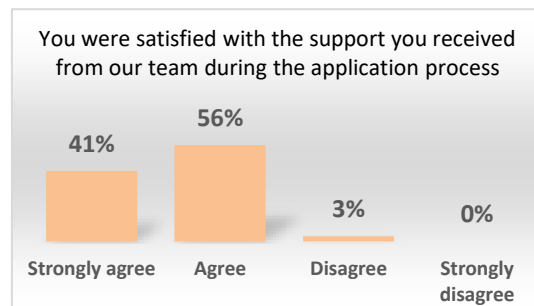
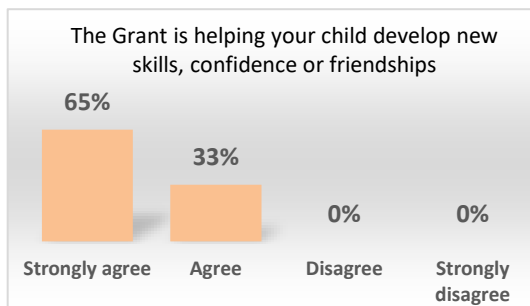
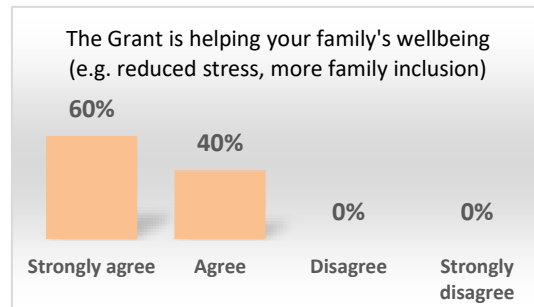
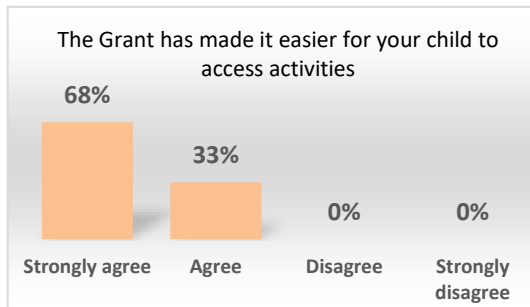
- 100% of parent/carers said the care and support their child receives is meeting expectations.
- 100% of parent/carers said staff listen to them and consider their views about their child's care.
- 100% of parent carers said staff communicated well with them and their children.

- 97% of parent/carers said the support received is benefiting their child.
- 100% of parent/carers said their child's culture and social background are respected.
- 97% of parent/carers said their child enjoys the activities they take part in.



Community Short Breaks Grant

- 100% of parent/carers said the Grant has made it easier for their child to access activities.
- 100% of parent/carers said the Grant is helping their family's wellbeing.
- 100% of parent carers said the Grant is helping their child develop new skills, confidence or friendships.
- 97% of parent/carers were satisfied with the support they received from the team during the application process.



Is there anything we could do to make the Grant application process easier next time

- 75% of parent/carers said they found the application process simple.
- 3 parent/carers said they sometimes found it difficult to get hold of the team.
- 1 parent/carer thought it took too long to renew the Grant.
- 1 parent/carer said they found it difficult to remember to renew in time.

Would you apply for a Grant next year?

- 100% of parent/carers said they would reapply for the Grant next year.

Do you have any other feedback or suggestions for improving the Grant scheme?

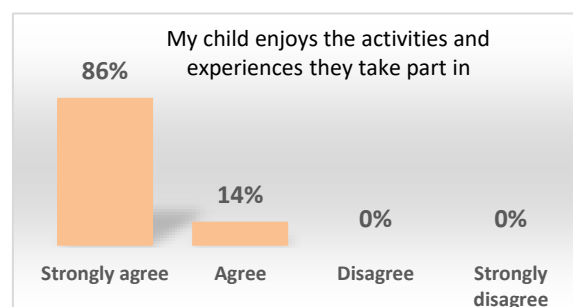
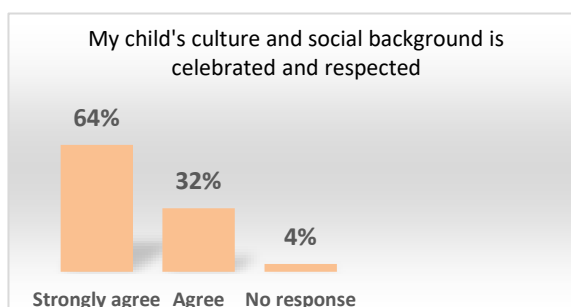
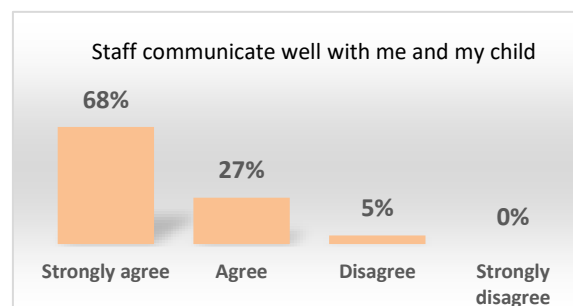
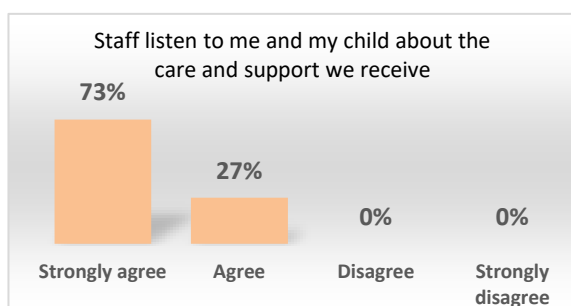
- 1 parent/carer said they would like more freedom to choose where they spend the Grant.
- 1 parent/carer suggested we publish a list of available opportunities/links to websites for places where the Grant can be used.
- 1 parent/carer said they would like to be able to use the Grant to pay for a Personal Assistant.
- 1 parent/carer said they do not get as much as they used to as prices have gone up.
- 1 parent/carer felt Derby City Council's Early Help offer needs to be more transparent and it should not be a requirement that you have to go through a Single Assessment to get a Grant.

The Community Short Breaks team would like to thank everyone who took the time to give us their feedback. We are now reviewing and analysing the feedback we have received to ensure we fully understand what is working well and where improvements may be needed. Once this process is complete, we will share a summary of the findings along with our planned next steps.

Residential Short Breaks

In September 2025, 48 children were receiving a Residential Short Break. We received feedback from 22 families, which is 45% of the total number of families receiving a service

- 100% of parent/carers said staff listen to them and their child about the care and support they receive.
- 95% of parent/carers said staff communicate well with them and their child.
- 96% of parent/carers said their child's culture and social background are celebrated and respected.
- 100% of parent/carers said their child enjoys the activities and experiences they take part in.



We are striving to improve the service we offer to your family. Please share any ideas that will benefit your child and family.

- New phones - different ways of getting in touch (maybe WhatsApp).



- Communication.
- Summer holiday clubs, trips out, activities.
- Day trips out with support (group of similar children).
- Day care / clubs would be good during holidays.
- Few weekends with every block booking.
- Photos to be emailed to family.
- Open another provision.
- Trips out.
- More physical activities.
- Prefer weekends.
- More weekends.
- Last minute cancellations can be really frustrating.
- Fewer cancellations.
- Ability for 16+ children to watch adult Netflix profile. They have carers so nothing inappropriate will be put on but I think the children would prefer not to watch cartoons and would like more age-appropriate shows.

What is working well?

- My child is always happy at their stays.
- You bathe my son which really helps as no adaptations at home, so it takes the strain off.
- When there is an issue, it is always resolved quickly.
- Amazing team.
- My daughter loves coming to the Light House.
- The service has been a lifeline for our family; the service is very much appreciated.
- Communication works well.
- My child is happy, it is perfect and my child has fun.
- I wouldn't change anything.
- My child loves their stay.
- Staff are helpful, kind and friendly.
- Very accommodating and understanding.
- My child does not want to leave when I come to pick them up.
- You're all amazing. My son loves his stays (cannot wait to get out of the car).

The Residential Short Breaks team would like to thank everyone who took the time to give us their feedback. We are now reviewing and analysing the feedback we have received to ensure we fully understand what is working well and where improvements may be needed. Once this process is complete, we will share a summary of the findings along with our planned next steps.



How Short Breaks services are developed with you

At any future point when we consider significant changes to our Short Breaks offer, we will consult with children, young people, parents and carers with children with SEND to ensure we co-produce the offer based on the lived experience of the children and families who access the service.

Short Breaks for Carers of Disabled Children's Regulations

The Regulations requires the Council to produce a Short Breaks services statement so that families know what services are available, the eligibility criteria for these services, and how the range of Short Breaks is designed to meet the local needs of children with SEND and their families.

This statement sets out how the Council seek to meet the Short Breaks duty as set out in the Breaks for Carers of Disabled Children Regulations 2011. This section of the statement summarises paragraph 6(1)(c) of Schedule 2 to the Children Act 1989 which requires Local Authorities to provide services designed to give breaks for carers of children with SEND. A copy of Short Breaks for Carers of Disabled Children Regulations 2011 can be found here [Short break care: how local authorities should provide it - GOV.UK](#)

If you are unhappy with the support being offered

Community Short Breaks

Each of the commissioned Specialist Short Breaks Providers will have their own complaints procedures, we expect providers to respond to you to put things right quickly. If you are unhappy with their response, you can email us at communityshortbreaks@derby.gov.uk Information about how to leave feedback is also available here [Customer comment, compliment or complaint](#)

Preparing for Adulthood (Transition)

We want the transition from Children's to Adult Services to be an exciting and optimistic time for young people. We want to support them as they become young adults and take their place in the world. Developing positive activities for young people, allowing them to take part in local community activities, will be linked to our Preparing for Adulthood (transition) programme.

It will mean that we will plan short breaks as part of an overall package of support/care with our colleagues in Adult Services. We want to ensure that short breaks address the 'transition' needs of young people moving from Children's to Adult Services. Short breaks for those in the transition period are focused on activities that are more meaningful for transition to adulthood and community integration post 18.

The Appeals Process

If you disagree with the decision about the level of short breaks that you have been allocated, and you feel that there is important information that should be considered, you can provide additional information, reports and assessments so that the decision can be reviewed by the VCM panel. If the VCM Panel decision is not changed, the decision will then be reviewed by the Head of Service.

Other resources available in Derby City for children with SEND and their families

Derby holiday activities and food (HAF) programme

The holiday activities and food (HAF) programme aim to provide support for families in Derby by providing free activities and meals during school holidays.

The fund aims to achieve the following for children and young people:

- access to enriching activities that they may not otherwise be able to attend
- enjoy learning new skills
- meeting friends and socialising, reducing social isolation during school holidays
- have a healthy and nutritious meal
- take part in physical and creative activities
- build greater knowledge of health and nutrition

[Holiday activities and food \(HAF\) programme - Derby City Council](#)

Family Hub

Derby's Family Hub is here to help you find the right support at the right time for you and your family. We offer a range of activities, sessions, advice and support for families and young people aged from 0-19 years and up to 25 years for young people with special educational needs and disabilities.



What's on offer:

- Fun and interactive groups.
- Learn more about how your child develops during their 0-5 years.
- Infant feeding workshops, breastfeeding clubs and support for new parents.
- Help with well-being, mental health and parent-infant relationships.
- Support for children with SEND and their families.
- Dads, co-parents and other care givers activities.
- Targeted youth support work for young people aged 11 to 19.
- Child and family health activities, healthy eating, oral health and baby clinics.
- Support with managing finances and getting back into work or training.

[Family Hub Derby - Derby City Council](#)

What is the Local Offer?

The Local Offer gives children and young people with SEND and their families, information about what support services will be available in their area. Every Local Authority must talk with children and young people with SEND and their families to find out what sort of support and services are needed. There will be many different types of services that children may need, including support services in school and specialist health services.

Children, young people and their families may also have ideas about what leisure activities should be available, and what services are needed to help young people move towards independence in adulthood.

[Derby's SEND Local Offer - Derby City Council](#)

Derby's Parent Carer Forum

You can make a difference by joining Derby's Parent Carer Forum.

- Are you a parent or carer of a child or young person 0-25 years who has special educational needs and or a disability (SEND)?
- Would you like to be involved in the design, development and implementation of services for your child?
- Would you be interested in how parent carer forums are involved with services locally, regionally and nationally?

[Derby Parent Carer Forum](#)

This Short Breaks Statement will be reviewed annually and updated to reflect any changes to the information contained in this document.

Date of publication: November 2025