

# **London Borough of Waltham Forest**

## **Short Break Service Statement**

### **2022 – 2024**

#### **FOREWORD**

#### **Cllr Alistair Strathern, Waltham Forest Council's Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Families**

Waltham Forest Council's is committed to public service in all its forms, so that we can support our residents through the fallout of the Covid-19 crisis and continue to tackle systematic inequalities. We are committed to a programme of work to improve all our children and young people's life chances. In particular we will support our families with disabled children. We will work to ensure that our children and young people's safety and wellbeing is supported in our community and that families have easy access to inclusive and life-enhancing opportunities.

We are committed to putting the principle of 'nothing about us, without us' at the heart of how we deliver our services. We will continue to work with young people and stakeholders to develop and improve the services available and are grateful for the dedication of parents and other stakeholders in working with us to establish our offer of support in Waltham Forest. We will work to ensure that our families understand the support on offer and how they can access it so that we can promote greater independence for families. I am proud of the work that the SEND service does, day in, day out to involve and support children and families, despite the challenges we face, and of the relationships which have been forged so that our young residents can flourish in the weeks, months and years ahead.

#### **Heather Flinders, Strategic Director, Families Directorate of Waltham Forest Council**

The Local Authority has a duty to produce a short breaks services statement so that families, carers and young people understand the services that are available, the eligibility criteria for these services, and how the breadth of services have been designed to meet the needs of the families in the Borough. It will also link to the local offer website.

The council has always been is committed to offering high quality short breaks and respite services to children with special educational needs and disabilities. This is seen as a vital part of the Corporate Parenting role within the Local Authority, and a key component of our offer to families and young people, and for families to have choice

Our statement sets out the statutory obligations, alongside our ambition and intention, to promote independent and resilient families within our local community. This is a core part of our new strategy: '*Families at the Heart of our Place*'.

In co-production with parents, carers and young people we have reviewed our respite and short breaks offer as well as reinforcing our commitment to high quality and inclusive provisions. Together we have shaped short breaks service eligibility criteria, making sure that our residents understand what is available to them, who is eligible, and how to access it. These changes are part of our continuing improvements as a Local Authority to support our families and young people.

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**Carol Prideaux, Parent Participation Director Waltham Forest Parent Forum**

I hope you will find this statement both informative and interesting and that it will give you a greater understanding of the process for getting short breaks for your child and your family. As a parent of a child with complex needs, I understand how important short breaks are to families. They can be a lifesaver for us as parents and carers, and enable our children to just be themselves, which can be tough in the world today. Families face challenges on a daily basis, so having a document that clearly shows what to do helps to make the task of getting services less of a struggle.

I hope families will continue to feedback to the local authority on the services provided and that we can continue to expand the offer so that it meets the needs of all families in the borough.

**IN WALTHAM FOREST WE AIM TO:**

- Improve the health and wellbeing of disabled children, young people, their brothers and sisters and parent/carers.
- Build up independence to help children/young people to develop their social and life skills and have choice.
- Support disabled children to do new things, have fun, make new friends, and do things without parents/carers.
- Support parents/carers to have a break from caring and strengthen the family's ability to cope, reducing stress and preventing family breakdown.
- Boost community acceptance of disabled children and young people as being equal and essential members of society.
- Increase the availability and choice of activities and services for disabled children.
- Make it easier for families to access short breaks and universal services according to their needs.
- Help families to seek advice and information through the council website and our published local offer.
- Support universal services i.e., leisure centres, clubs etc. to include and support disabled children and young people in their services.
- Give families the information that they need about the services on offer.
- Work together with disabled children and their families, to make sure we are meeting their needs and to see how we can improve what we offer.
- Check and monitor that service providers are offering a good quality service which helps disabled children to achieve positive results.
- Offer training and development opportunities to increase skills in meeting the needs of disabled children, young people and families.

**WHAT IS THE SHORT BREAKS STATEMENT?**

Waltham Forest Short Breaks statement gives parents and carers of disabled children and young people aged 0–25 living in the borough, information about short breaks and how to access them. We define disability in accordance with the Equality Act 2010 as: "Having a physical or mental impairment that has a 'substantial' and 'long-term' negative effect on your ability to do normal daily activities."

**This statement gives you information about:**

- What is available?
- Who can use the service?
- How to access services?
- How short breaks meets the needs of disabled children and young people and their families?

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This statement was developed in partnership with the Waltham Forest Parents Forum, parents and carers, the local authority, local health services, and schools in 2016 and has been revised in 2021 in partnership with the Waltham Forest Parents Forum and our partners.

### **WHY DO WE HAVE A SHORT BREAKS STATEMENT?**

The Breaks for Carers of Disabled Children Regulation (April 2011) require a local authority to provide 'so far as is reasonably practicable a range of services which is sufficient to assist carers to continue to provide care or to do so more effectively.' Local authorities are also required to publish a statement about short breaks. This statement is Waltham Forest Council's response to both these requirements.

Section 25 of The Children & Young Person's Act 2008 made the provision of short breaks a statutory duty for all local authorities.

From 1st April 2011, the Children's Act and the Breaks for Carers of Disabled Children Regulations 2011, has required local authorities to provide short break services that will help and support parents and carers who look after a disabled child or children.

This means that the Council must provide parents (who are entitled to this) with a break from caring and children and young people with short break services.

### **More information about legislation can be found here:**

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2011/707/made>

#### **OUR VISION**

The Vision for children and young people in Waltham Forest was produced with parents, children, young people and professionals. The vision sets out hopes and wishes for a full and happy life and covers the following:

- Living great lives
- Support when we need it
- A cleaner, healthier, greener Waltham Forest
- Safe, accessible communities that we are part of

#### **PRINCIPLES**

- Short breaks to be extra to mainstream provision – where criteria are met
- Short breaks should be preventative – not crisis intervention
- Short breaks should support carers and provide benefits to children and young people.
- Short breaks should improve outcomes for disabled children, young people and their families
- Short breaks should consider siblings as part of the single assessment
- Short breaks are personal to individual need

### **WHAT IS A SHORT BREAK?**

Short breaks provide a chance for children with disabilities to spend time away from their carers, try out new things, have fun and make new friends. Short breaks can also provide families with a chance to have a break from their caring responsibilities and to do ordinary things together.

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A short break can be a few hours, evenings, overnight, weekend, and school holiday daytime activities. It can take place in your own home, at a carer's home or in a number of other settings, for example:

- Overnight residential short breaks at the Local Authority's respite centre at Lester House, 99 Leyton Green Road (this means your child stays away from home for a short while and you get a night-time break). Overnight short breaks are mainly for children and families with high support needs and can only be considered by the Short Breaks Panel once a Child and Family Assessment has been completed.
- Holiday play schemes
- After school clubs and sessions
- Adventure play
- Buddying and befriending
- Disability specific services (for the visually, hearing and mobility impaired)
- Support to access inclusive mainstream services: Most services are happy to accept disabled children and young people, but to get the most out of their time there some children/young people may need additional support. This could be because they need help with using the toilet, or with their behaviour. Some children just need someone to go along with them for the first few times to help the service to understand how to include them successfully.
- Activities for all children such as Girl Guides and Scouts, or summer fun days are run by the local council.

Information about available services can be found on our local offer.

#### **WHAT IS THE ELIGIBILITY FOR A SHORT BREAK?**

You may be eligible if your child:

- has a diagnosed disability or impairment that would define them as a disabled person under the Equality Act 2010 including a physical or sensory impairment, learning disability, Autism Spectrum Disorder, challenging behaviour as a result of a disability, complex health needs and those with palliative, life-limiting or life-threatening conditions.
- is a resident in Waltham Forest
- is aged 0-18 years

#### **SHORT BREAKS FOR PRESCHOOL AGE CHILDREN**

A short break is any break that you get from caring for your child. It could be for just a couple of hours, or a whole day, or a few days. They are aimed at families with a disabled child, to allow them to have 'me time', a chance to do things they want to do without having to look out for their child all the time.

A short break is not the same as childcare. Childcare is when your child is at a school, Ofsted registered nursery/childminder on a regular and/or ongoing basis or is taking up their free early education and childcare place.

**Some 2-year-old children** are eligible for a free early education and childcare place. All Parents/carers requesting short breaks for a 2-year-old would be expected to complete an eligibility check for a free early education and childcare place in advance of applying for a short break, in order for their application to be considered and assessed.

**All 3- & 4-year-old** are eligible for a free early education and childcare place which can provide up to 30 hours of free childcare per week.

Additional SEN inclusion funding (SENIF) is available to childcare providers to enable them to meet the costs of meeting the needs of 2, 3 & 4-year-old children taking up their free early education and childcare place where appropriate.

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When assessing the need for a short break for a child under 5, the LA will take into consideration to what level accessing their child's free early education entitlement facilitates the parent / carer respite or a break from caring responsibilities.

There are legal requirements that must be met by individuals who care for children under 5 who are not accompanied by their parents/carers with regards to registering with Ofsted. Childcare providers have often been trained to support disabled children and are in a good position to support under 5's with occasional short breaks, and in particular childminders and nannies, who can offer care in their home and to smaller groups of children.

#### **WHAT HAPPENS TO SHORT BREAKS WHEN MY YOUNG PERSON TURNS 18?**

- If your young person is 18-25 with an EHC Plan, their social care needs will be assessed as part of a Care Act Assessment. If you are assessed as eligible, you might be allocated direct payments which will enable you to purchase services for your young person. Those who are eligible can still use the short breaks providers list to provide services as part of their social care package.
- In order for your young person to continue to receive short breaks in form of direct payments, your SEN officer or Social worker will have to complete a Direct Payment application to Adult Social care team and provide them with sufficient information for continuation of the services.

#### **MAINSTREAM SERVICES**

All disabled children and young people should be able to access activities and opportunities which are happening in the local area. These can provide disabled children with the same positive results and improvements in their lives as a short break locally. These opportunities can be found at children's centres, through free Early Years childcare, swimming pools, leisure centres, youth groups, parks, playgrounds, and community centres. Wherever possible these opportunities should be used first. These services must follow the Equalities Act 2010 to make reasonable changes and not to treat a disabled person unfairly.

Some are free to use whilst others charge. A reduced cost may be available for families on low incomes. However, not all mainstream services will be suitable for everyone. It is advisable to contact the provider to discuss your needs and what they can offer. Details of available universal services can be found in the Family Information Directory <https://www.walthamforest.gov.uk/content/children-and-family-centres-0> or by contacting the Early Help Service. We also publish this information on our local offer.

There are a range of short break services on offer for disabled children and young people in Waltham Forest aged from 0 to 18 years. The main types of short breaks are detailed below.

#### **Mainstream Activity Support**

If your child/young person need support to be able access mainstream activities contact the Short Breaks officer through SEND team front door on 0208 496 6503 or at [shortbreaks@walthamforest.gov.uk](mailto:shortbreaks@walthamforest.gov.uk) and directly on 0208 496 3515

#### **TYPES OF SHORT BREAKS WE CAN OFFER**

##### **Adventure Playgrounds**

A range of activities are available at two specialist playgrounds with activities designed to meet the needs of children and young people with additional needs. They offer an inclusive and individualised service to each child. They can offer both holiday schemes and weekend activities.

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### **Outreach Service**

The outreach service is designed in to meet the needs of disabled children/young people and their families through planned 1:1 sessions, where the provider facilitates leisure and play activities to help the child/young person expand their interests and explore, new social opportunities and build up positive experiences and skills.

Families are allocated a trained designated short breaks worker who organises regular sessions in partnership with the family. The sessions can be home and community based depending on the needs of the child/young person and their family. Workers can also come along to family outings to provide support.

### **Holiday schemes, Weekend Schemes & After School Clubs**

These are usually group activities that can be run from a base or using community resources. The child/young person needs will be assessed by the provider and allocated either a 1:1 or a 1:4 support worker depending on their needs. Each short break provider has different criteria for the allocation of support . Some may charge a small fee to attend, and some may be able to offer transport to get your child/young person to and from the activity. Should you have any questions, please contact the individual organisations

### **Overnight Short Breaks**

Overnight short breaks are provided at the council's Short Break unit at Leyton Green Respite Centre, Lester House, and are available for children aged 8-18 who have the most complex needs. To access this service, you child/ young person will require an assessment by a social worker. Depending on need, you may receive 12, 24 or 52 overnights per year.

### **Sleep service**

In Waltham Forest we have commissioned sleep practitioners, 2Sleep , who can provide practical help to support families and professionals working with families who have a child with a sleep issue. They specialise in sleep support for children with and without special needs and were trained by Dr Cathy Hill, a senior lecturer in Child Health who heads a multi-disciplinary sleep-based team within Solent NHS Trust, and Scope Sleep Services.

They know from their personal experience with their own children how difficult it can be living with a child who has a sleep problem. Both of them have children with autism and complex health issues as well as other children without disabilities that had issues with sleep. Having dealt with sleep issues in their own children they understand the effects of sleep deprivation and the impact that it can have on all members of the family.

For those families who need it, they can offer 1:1 support , working with them to develop a plan to tackle sleep issues they may have and supporting them to implement the plan. Support can be requested as part of a short break request using the self-referral form or can be requested by any professional working with the family.

### **Haven House**

Haven House is a highly specialist respite provider for children with complex medical needs who need nursing support. if your child is known to the continuing care nursing team you may be eligible for respite overnight stays at Haven House which would be part of your continuing care nursing package. To find out more, contact your nursing team on: wfcommunitychildrens.nursing@nhs.net who can discuss your request with the health commissioning team as part of your support package.

### **WHAT IS NOT A SHORT BREAK:**

- Childcare (regular and ongoing childcare)
- Holidays – in the UK or overseas
- Support for siblings

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- Educational support
- Extra tuition
- Support because the parent ill health
- Carer's assessment/adult services
- Driving lessons
- Cleaning service
- Domiciliary care

### LEVELS OF SHORT BREAKS SUPPORT

For children who are not able to access mainstream services without support and who may also need more specialist services there are 3 levels of short breaks services available as detailed below.

Targeted	Complex	Profound
<p>These services are for a child who requires support for their health or development to stay at a manageable level and to prevent stress in the family.</p> <p>Early Help Short Break</p> <p>Services are targeted support for children and young people provided by the Early Help Service. You can still access Mainstream services.</p> <p><b>Examples of services:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Leisure clubs and activities,</li> <li>- Holiday and/or specialist</li> <li>- playschemes.</li> <li>- Support from specialist</li> <li>- outreach services helping</li> <li>- you to use Universal</li> <li>- activities.</li> </ul>	<p>These services are for a child who may be vulnerable and whose health and / or development may be at risk.</p> <p>Your child has a lead professional i.e. a social worker or someone else who is offering additional support to you/your child.</p> <p>You can still access Mainstream and Early Help services if these are appropriate.</p> <p><b>Examples of services:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Overnight Short Breaks</li> <li>- Your child may be able to stay overnight to give you and your family a break from caring.</li> <li>- Domiciliary Care This is support for your child's</li> <li>- personal care needs.</li> <li>- Direct Payments may be applicable/preferable.</li> </ul>	<p>These services are for a child who may be extremely vulnerable and whose health and /or development is at immediate risk.</p> <p>Your child may currently be living in residential care or be at risk of being placed into residential care.</p> <p>Your child has a lead professional/social worker and a package of support in place which may include other services such as social care, health etc.</p> <p><b>Examples of services:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Overnight Short Breaks (Your child may be able to stay overnight to give you and your family a break from caring)</li> <li>- Domiciliary Care. This is support for your child's personal care needs.</li> <li>- Direct Payments may be applicable/preferable.</li> </ul>
<b>Your child's needs</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Your child may need some support to join in with community activities to aid building new friendships, social skills and to support their development. No requirement for specialist service.</li> <li>- Your child may have SEND</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Your child's disability is more complex and affects them in a way that they need ongoing and additional specialist support from social, education and health care services.</li> <li>- Your child may be known to Waltham Forest SEND service</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Your child's disability is very complex and affects them in a way that they need high levels of intensive specialist support from social, education and health care services.</li> <li>- Your child is known to Waltham Forest SEND service and has an</li> </ul>

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<p>support plan at school or be known to Waltham Forest SEND service and may have an Education Health Care plan in place.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Your child may already be receiving support and may be known to service providers within the Local authority and Health</li> </ul>	<p>and may have an Education Health Care plan in place.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Your child may have or might need a Continuing Healthcare Assessment from Health and support may be in place.</li> <li>- Your child may be amber on the Dynamic Support Register if they have autism and/or learning disabilities with mental health needs and/or behaviour that challenges</li> </ul>	<p>Education Health Care plan in place.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Your child has had or needs a Continuing Healthcare Assessment from Health and support may be in place. Your child may be allocated to the Safeguarding Team or any other social work team.</li> <li>- Your child may be red on the Dynamic Support Register if they have autism and/or learning disabilities with mental health needs and/or behaviour that challenges</li> </ul>
<b>Parent and family's needs</b>		
<p>You need to care for other children or family members and if you were unable to do this it would place them at risk.</p> <p>OR</p> <p>The child's needs are affecting parent's personal or social lives.</p> <p>You may need to have a Carers Assessment to see what other support is needed.</p>	<p>Your child's needs are met but their physical or mental health or your ability to manage their challenging behaviour may suffer if they do not receive additional support.</p> <p>OR</p> <p>There is a risk of family breakdown AND you need support to continue to provide care to your disabled child and other children in the family.</p> <p>You may need to have a Carers Assessment to see what other support is needed.</p>	<p>Your child's essential needs are not being met and their physical or mental health may suffer if they do not receive additional support.</p> <p>OR</p> <p>There is a risk of family breakdown AND you need support to continue to provide care to your disabled child and other children in the family.</p> <p>You may have already had a Carers Assessment and may be receiving additional support.</p> <p>OR</p> <p>You may need to have a Carers Assessment to see what other support is needed.</p>

**How do I find out about the available services?**

Details of all services are available through:

- Short breaks officer on 0208 496 3515 and at [shortbreaks@walthamforest.gov.uk](mailto:shortbreaks@walthamforest.gov.uk) or
- SEND front door at 0208 496 6503 [senteam@walthamforest.gov.uk](mailto:senteam@walthamforest.gov.uk) or
- via the Local Offer website <https://www.walthamforest.gov.uk/content/short-break-services>

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### **HOW CAN I GET A SHORT BREAK?**

You can access a short break in the following ways:

- Through the Local Offer and mainstream services available for children and families in Waltham forest (no assessment or allocation of Short Breaks is required)
- Referral by a professional to the SEND Service at [senteam@walthamforest.gov.uk](mailto:senteam@walthamforest.gov.uk)
- Request and complete a self-referral form and send this to the SEND Service at [senteam@walthamforest.gov.uk](mailto:senteam@walthamforest.gov.uk)
- Through the EHC or annual review process where you SEN officer would refer your child to our short breaks service

### **COMPLETE A SELF-REFERRAL FORM**

The form can be requested by contacting the Short Break officer at Waltham Forest at [shortbreaks@walthamforest.gov.uk](mailto:shortbreaks@walthamforest.gov.uk), our front door at [senteam@walthamforest.gov.uk](mailto:senteam@walthamforest.gov.uk) or by requesting it from a professional working with your child. You can also download the form here: [https://www.walthamforest.gov.uk/sites/default/files/Short%20Break%20Self-Referral%20Form\\_0.pdf](https://www.walthamforest.gov.uk/sites/default/files/Short%20Break%20Self-Referral%20Form_0.pdf)

You will need to sign the form. If you do not have an electronic signature, you can print off the signature page, sign it and scan it back to [senteam@walthamforest.gov.uk](mailto:senteam@walthamforest.gov.uk)

### **HELP WITH COMPLETING THE FORM**

If you need help completing the form, there are several things you can do.

- Use the Short Breaks Guide which shows you, step by step, how to fill in the form. [https://www.walthamforest.gov.uk/sites/default/files/completing\\_the\\_short\\_break\\_self\\_referral\\_form.pdf](https://www.walthamforest.gov.uk/sites/default/files/completing_the_short_break_self_referral_form.pdf)
- Talk to SENDIASS to ask if they could help (contact details below)
- Talk to a professional working with your child to see if they can help. We will be asking that they come and present your case to the short breaks panel.
- If your school has a Family Support team, they may be able to help

Please ensure that the form is signed by a parent or guardian and that you send evidence that your child or young person has a disability. This could be a copy of your child's DLA or PIP letter (which tells you what level of Disability Living Allowance/ Personal Independence Payment has been given to your child/young person) or a letter from the Consultant detailing your child/young person's diagnosis. If you need further advice and help with this, you can also contact the Short Break officer.

### **WHERE DO I SEND MY COMPLETED REFERRAL FORM?**

All completed referrals including supporting documents, should be sent to:  
[Senteam@walthamforest.gov.uk](mailto:Senteam@walthamforest.gov.uk)

### **WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?**

We will put your application through a triage process to ascertain if it is appropriate for short breaks service and inform panel administrator to prepare it for the panel. The panel will then consider your request and make a decision.

### **WHAT IS THE SHORT BREAKS PANEL?**

The Panel is made up from managers from different services and a representative from the Parent Forum and is chaired by a senior member of staff. The panel will ensure that the allocation of Short Break hours and support is

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based on assessed need and will meet the needs of the child or young person. The panel meets monthly to assess new referrals and also to regularly review what individual families receive.

No short breaks hours will be allocated until the request has been presented to the Short Break Panel unless the Social Work/Early Help Assessment results in a recommendation that the needs of the child can be met through universal services.

We might make an out of panel decision in cases requiring complex and immediate support due to significant change in medical condition or sudden breakdown of support in place but those are assessed on case-by-case basis. Should we need to make an emergency out of panel decision, it will be ratified at the next available short breaks panel.

When the Panel have agreed the number of short breaks hours and any other support that is needed, the family can mix and match services from the directory which suits them best.

#### **WHO SITS ON SHORT BREAKS PANEL?**

Short breaks decisions will be made by a multidisciplinary Short break panel. The panel is made up of:

- SEND Service Manager (co-chair)
- A member of the management team from Leyton Green Road (co-chair)
- Short Breaks officer
- Early Help officer
- Representative of the Waltham Forest Parent Forum
- Business Support Officer
- Social worker
- Health – DCO or commissioner
- Representation of the Joint Commissioning Team
- A member of the finance team

#### **HOW ARE NEEDS ASSESSED?**

The panel gathers professionals from various teams who have been involved with providing care and services to your child. We check and seek feedback from lead professionals to help and better inform panel decision. In some instances, the panel might feel that they do not have enough information to make a decision and will request that a professional brings it back to the next panel once required information has been obtained. We might obtain more information by contacting you and asking some more questions and /or by speaking to other professional from SEND Service, Early Help, Social Services, Early Years, CAMHS, Family support from your child's schools etc.

#### **WHAT HAPPENS AFTER THE PANEL DECISION?**

We will write to you in 10 working days to confirm the outcome of the panel decision. If you have been allocated a short break you can mix and match services from the directory which suits you best. We will also attach a list of our commissioned providers and a sheet to help you record how you use your hours.

#### **HOW CAN I USE MY SHORT BREAK ALLOCATION?**

We are trying to give families more flexibility within the choice of short breaks available and recognise that you will be best placed to make the decisions about this.

If a child or young person has been given a short break package, they can use the short break hours with any of the services that Waltham Forest has a contract with to provide services, (we refer to these as commissioned services). The short break package you may receive is usually via a commissioned service with Short Break hours or Direct

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Payments. You will receive an allocation of 'hours' as a package which you can use from April 1<sup>st</sup>- 31<sup>st</sup> March. If you apply part way through the year, you will receive a pro rata amount for the remaining part of the year. Your yearly allocation will then start again from 1<sup>st</sup> April the following year.

You can use your allocated hours at weekends, weekdays or during the school holidays, as long as there is availability. You can mix and match services from the Short Break providers which best suits your needs and wishes.

For example, if a child or young person is allocated 100 hours of Short Breaks the hours can be used in the following manner: 25 hours at ELHAP, 15 hours at Oak Foundation 10 hours at The Limes, 10 hours at The Limes 40 hours at KIDS etc. or the child/young person can use all 100 hours with the one organisation if they so wish. In some cases, there may also be a daily/weekly charge to attend an activity. Check with the provider for details.

Short Breaks are allocated for one year at a time and run from April to March of the following year. This is in line with our financial year.

If child/young person uses up all of their hours before the end of the financial year they will not be able to access the services until April of the following year unless this is agreed by the Short Break Panel or there is an urgent, unavoidable change in a family's situation. Therefore, it is very important to carefully plan how you use your hours. It is the **responsibility of the parents** to keep track of the hours that their child uses each year.

All the specialist short breaks services available in Waltham Forest can be found online at [www.walthamforest.gov.uk/short-breaks](http://www.walthamforest.gov.uk/short-breaks). A printed version is available and can be requested by contacting SEND Service front door on 0208 496 6503 or by emailing: [senteam@walthamforest.gov.uk](mailto:senteam@walthamforest.gov.uk)

#### **IMPORTANT NOTICE:**

- Unused Short Break hours cannot be carried over into the new financial year
- If short break allocation is not used within 12 months from allocation, we might decide to reduce or entirely cancel the allocation.

#### **WHAT IS A DIRECT PAYMENT AND HOW CAN I ACCESS THIS?**

A Direct Payment is an alternative to an allocation of hours. The aim of a Direct Payment is to give more flexibility in how services are provided to people/families who are assessed as needing social services support. The Direct Payment is a sum of money that is paid to the family of a child/young person with a disability so the parents can buy Short Breaks and is an alternative to using the service providers that the local authority has a contract with to provide services (commissioned services). Therefore, you either receive a direct payment or a short break allocation but not BOTH.

Direct payment process is provided through Direct Payment Support Service

Phone number: 020 8496 4671

Email: [Directpaymentsupport@walthamforest.gov.uk](mailto:Directpaymentsupport@walthamforest.gov.uk)

Postal Address: Direct Payments Support Service, Adult Social Care, London Borough of Waltham Forest, Fellowship Square, Forest Road, Walthamstow E17 4JF

Website: <https://www.walthamforest.gov.uk/content/direct-payments-and-personal-budgets>

If you chose to employ a Personal Assistant, the Council have a continuing arrangement with the Citizens Advice Waltham Forest who can provide advice and support about employment responsibilities.

Waltham Forest SEND Service, Wood Street Health Centre, 6 Linford Road, London, E17 3LA

The contact details for the Citizens Advice Waltham Forest are:

Phone number: 020 3233 0279

Email: [dpes@citizensadvicewalthamforest.org.uk](mailto:dpes@citizensadvicewalthamforest.org.uk)

Postal address: 220 Hoe Street Walthamstow, LONDON, E17 3AY

### **SHORT BREAK OFFER DURING COVID19 PANDEMIC**

Due to the impact of COVID 19, a number of children haven't been able to access their usual Short Breaks, either because the carer is unavailable, the Short Break provider has limited availability or because as a family you do not wish to have a Short Break outreach worker in your home during this period.

However, we recognise that some families have been faced with the challenge of keeping children entertained and occupied.

In the exceptional circumstances, we were able to offer families some alternative support to the standard Short Break packages, in the form of opportunity to purchase equipment and toys such as outdoor play equipment, books, arts and craft materials, etc so that they could continue supporting the development, play and stimulation of their children through creativity.

This is considered a temporary intervention and will be open and available should there be a severe disruption to usual short breaks offer. The LA will inform all families and partners should the offer become available. We will also publish this information on our local offer.

### **WHAT IF MY CIRCUMSTANCES CHANGE?**

We understand that family circumstances can change suddenly, or urgent new needs arise. If this happens, you need to tell us as soon as possible as we may need to review your short breaks' package. To do this you will need to contact either:

- Your child's allocated social worker
- Your child's SEND Officer
- The Early Help service if your case has been allocated to them ([EarlyHelp@walthamforest.gov.uk](mailto:EarlyHelp@walthamforest.gov.uk))
- The Short Breaks officer

Your new circumstance will likely have to be taken to the short breaks panel to consider change of services. In exceptional or emergency situations an out of panel decision can be made but those are considered on case-by-case basis.

### **WHAT IF I WANT TO CHANGE SHORT BREAK HOURS TO DIRECT PAYMENTS OR THE OTHER WAY AROUND?**

Should the current type of short break allocation no longer work for you or your child, please send your request in writing to [senteam@walthamforest.gov.uk](mailto:senteam@walthamforest.gov.uk) and provide as much detail as possible, so it can be considered in the decision-making process. Please be advised that we might also speak to any professional involved in your child's support to ensure, what we provide, meets your child and family needs.

### **TRANSPORT AND SHORT BREAKS.**

We are unable to provide transport to access short breaks however if your child is currently receiving transport through assistance with travel and requires overnight stay during the school week at Leyton Green road respite, we might consider providing transport to and from school. Please liaise with Assistance with travel colleagues and Leyton Green Road to ensure this is considered for your child.

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Your child may be able to have a Freedom Pass which is for people with disabilities and gives reduced cost or free travel on most public transport in London. For further details see [www.freedompass.org](http://www.freedompass.org)

Alternatively, if your child is severely disabled and cannot travel on public transport you may be able to receive Dial A Ride, Taxicard or Capital Call cheaper travel, for more information see [www.tfl.gov.uk/gettingaround](http://www.tfl.gov.uk/gettingaround)

### **WHAT CAN I DO IF I AM UNHAPPY WITH THE DECISION OR THE PROCESS?**

You can choose to deal with your dissatisfaction in an informal or formal way. Here's how to do this:

#### **Informal process:**

This is a 2-stage process consisting of a review of the initial decision made and then further appeal.

1 Review - you can contact short breaks officer and request a Review of the panel decision. You will be provided with a request for a review form where we will be asking to provide the panel with additional information that might have impact on the decision made. The panel will consider additional information provided and make a decision. We will then write to you again to let you know what the reviewed decision is. We will also inform you what are your rights to appeal.

2 Appeal – Should you remain unhappy about the reviewed decision; you have the right to appeal. Please contact short breaks officer and request an Appeal form. We will convene independent panel of professionals, who have not previously been involved in decision making, to consider all information available initially, any further discussions leading to the previous decisions, any further information you provide and will make a decision. You will be informed about this decision in writing. This stage exhausts any informal routes within the SEND Service.

#### **Formal process:**

If you think formal process is what suits your circumstances better, you can log a formal complaint through the council's formal complaint process that can be found here:

<https://www.walthamforest.gov.uk/content/complaints-compliments-and-comments>

### **REVIEWS AND CONSULTATIONS TO HELP SHAPE OUR SHORT BREAKS OFFER**

We recognise and understand that circumstances change over time and that families' and children's view and needs also change and develop. For this reason, it is vital that services are regularly reviewed. This will also help to ensure that services are provided to families with fairness. We want to make sure that our Short Break services focus on improving outcomes and life opportunities through working together with parents, children and young people, our providers and partners. For this to happen, we will:

- Ask children, young people and families for their views about services provided, services missing and services that are missing, we can do this via online surveys or by asking you to complete feedback forms we will send to you.
- Ask service providers to collect feedback from families and young people using their services so we can work jointly on shaping the best offer possible
- Meet with service providers and manage our contracts efficiently to ensure the services they provide make a positive impact on or children and young people as well as their families
- Annually consult parents and carers through Waltham Forest Parent Forum survey- I think this needs to be a LA survey as we don't capture everyone with SBs
- Reach out to other organisation in borough for more feedback from families, i.e.: through SENDIASS (more information about this service can be found on our local offer)

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- Receive and analyse feedback from WFPF short breaks survey  
<https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/L88G69J>
- Collate and analyse complements and complaints data received by the service via formal and informal routes

#### **A GUIDE TO LEGISLATION (THE LAW):**

Following legislation applies to our Short break services. More information and links can be found on our local offer.

- Disability Discrimination Act 1995
- Section 25 Of the Children and Young Persons Act 2008
- Equalities Act 2010
- The Breaks for Carers of Disabled Children Regulations 2011
- The Children and Families Act 2014

#### **PLEASE TELL US WHAT YOU THINK**

This statement will be formally reviewed again in November 2023. In addition, it will be annually reviewed for accuracy. We will keep parents, carers, children, young people and professionals advised and involved with this process.

If you want to make a comment or suggestion at any time you can do it in one of the ways listed below:

- Write to us at [senteam@walthamforest.gov.uk](mailto:senteam@walthamforest.gov.uk)
- Contact our Breaks officer, SEN officer, Social Worker
- Contact Service Manager responsible for short breaks services and offer
- Provide feedback using the feedback link on our local offer page
- Feedback through Waltham Forest Parent forum Survey at  
<https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/L88G69J>

#### **LIST OF MAIN CONTACTS AND INFORMATION ABOUT OTHER SUPPORTING SERVICES IN WALTHAM FOREST:**

##### **Waltham Forest SEND Service front door:**

Telephone: 0208 496 6503

Email: [senteam@walthamforest.gov.uk](mailto:senteam@walthamforest.gov.uk)

##### **Short Breaks officer**

Telephone: 020 8496 3515

[shortbreaks@walthamforest.gov.uk](mailto:shortbreaks@walthamforest.gov.uk)

##### **London Borough of Waltham Forest – Children and Families’ Services,**

Telephone: 020 8496 2310 (Monday to Thursday 9am to 5.15pm, Friday 9am to 5pm)

Out of hours telephone: 020 8496 3000

Email: [MASHrequests@walthamforest.gov.uk](mailto:MASHrequests@walthamforest.gov.uk)

##### **Early Help Service**

Telephone: 020 8496 3511

Email: [EarlyHelp@walthamforest.gov.uk](mailto:EarlyHelp@walthamforest.gov.uk)

##### **Direct Payments Advice**

Direct Payments, Citizens Advice Waltham Forest, 220 Hoe Street, London, E17 3AY

Telephone: 0203 233 0279

## **Families and Homes Directorate**

Heather Flinders: Strategic Director Families



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Waltham Forest SEND Service, Wood Street Health Centre, 6 Linford Road, London, E17 3LA

Email: [directpayments@citizensadvicewalthamforest.org.uk](mailto:directpayments@citizensadvicewalthamforest.org.uk)

### **SENDIASS (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Information Advice and Support Service)**

Telephone: 020 3233 0251

Email: [wfsendiass@citizensadvicewalthamforest.org.uk](mailto:wfsendiass@citizensadvicewalthamforest.org.uk)

Website: <https://www.walthamforestsendiass.org.uk/>

### **Waltham Forest Parent Forum (support for parents and carers).**

Lester House, 99 Leyton Green Road, London, E10 6DB

Email: [walthamforestparentforum@live.co.uk](mailto:walthamforestparentforum@live.co.uk)

Website: [www.walthamforestparentforum.com](http://www.walthamforestparentforum.com)

### **Carers First**

Carers First is a UK registered charity working with unpaid carers to provide practical information and advice. They are commissioned by Waltham Forest to provide support to carers

Telephone: 0300 303 1555

Email : [hello@carersfirst.org.uk](mailto:hello@carersfirst.org.uk)

Website: <https://www.carersfirst.org.uk/waltham-forest>