



Short Breaks Grant Scheme for Children and Young People with Disabilities in Medway

1. What is a short break?

Medway Council understands that for some families, caring full time for children and young people with disabilities can be demanding. We want to provide parents and carers with opportunities to relax and have fun.

There are a range of universal services available in Medway, which whilst not specifically designed for or aimed at children with disabilities could appropriately support and include children with disabilities in an inclusive way that allows them to take part alongside their peers, and siblings.

However, The Council recognises that some parents and carers may require a little extra support to take a necessary break from caring. The Council offers the Short Break Grant scheme that is available to parents and carers of children with a disability and/ or additional needs. The scheme provides funds to help towards the cost of activities for the whole family or as something the child or young person wants to do away from the family in an activity solely for them.

A short break can be for an hour, a day or for several days. In most circumstances this would be by accessing specialist activities and in some cases providing additional support for a child to access universal opportunities. A 'short break' can be a way to achieve this and can be a lifeline for some families and children.

The Short Breaks Grant is designed to help with the cost of short breaks, and you do not need a social worker assessment to be eligible.

More information about the existing Short Breaks offer in Medway is outlined in our [Short Break Services Statement](#).

2. Who are short breaks for?

Primarily short breaks are aimed to give families who have a disabled child (3-17 years) a break; but they should also be fun and stimulating for the children and young people who use them.

Families eligible for short breaks may have children with:

- Complex physical disabilities
- Severe learning disabilities
- Severe or profound sensory impairment (which significantly impact their care needs),
- Autism Spectrum disorders (which significantly impact their care needs)
- Children who may have challenging behaviour because of their learning disability or autism
- Children who have complex healthcare needs and who may have palliative, life limiting or a life-threatening condition.

3. Eligibility criteria for the Short Break Grant

How Medway determines whether you are entitled to help and support available in the form of a Short Break Grant is set out below.

If the child or young person you are caring for full time is aged between 3 - 17 years old during this application period and any of the following apply to your situation, you are eligible to apply for a Short Breaks Grant:

1. You are the parent or carer of a child who lives in Medway
- 2a. You care for a child with a diagnosed disability **and/ or**
- 2b. You care for a disabled child or young person who receives middle or higher-level Disability Living Allowance in either care or mobility components or you care for a child or young person who is in receipt of an Enhanced Personal Independent Payment (PIP)
4. You have returned all unspent monies or proof of spends that has been awarded from a previous grant application.
5. No more than one successful application will be processed in any grant period and the maximum amount of the full award will be no more than £1000
6. You are not already accessing another short break or respite service or a Direct Payment for that individual child (or you can agree to stop using the other service if you want to use this one)

We recognise that every child and family are different and unique. This is why we have developed an [self-assessment](#) form.

You will be required to provide evidence of eligibility to apply for the grant, this should be sent with your application. The evidence must be valid and dated within 12 months of each review.

There are several ways you can do this, and the following are examples:

- a supporting letter from your child's school, GP, CAMHS worker or other relevant professional
- a photocopy of the letter awarding a middle rate or higher rate of Disability Living Allowance (DLA) or
- a photocopy of the letter awarding an enhanced Personal Independent Payment (PIP)

1. The Short Break Grant Offer

The self-assessment questionnaire asks several questions about the impact a child's disability has upon the family. The assessment is designed to assist Medway in deciding if a family meets the eligibility criteria for short breaks and what level of payment it can award.

Following an extensive review of the offer in Medway and research into the offer available from other local authorities, we are pleased to offer children, young people and their families who meet the eligibility criteria the following:

Table 1: Summary of the targeted offer available to children and families in Medway

Level	Criteria	Offer
1	Child's disability has little or no impact on family and/or minimal risk of family breakdown	Priority access to universal services and support to identify suitable activities
2	Child's disability has a moderate impact upon family and/or possible risk of family breakdown	£750 Short Break Grant
3	Child's disability has a significant/major impact on family and/or significant risk of breakdown	£1000 Short Break Grant

To provide a meaningful break from caring, the Grant must be used effectively and proportionately. The Council has developed this guidance to assist the applicant and the decision maker to understand how the funds can be used.

We understand that every family has their own unique needs, and this guidance cannot cover every scenario. If an activity that you would like to access is not listed in the table, please speak directly with the short breaks co-ordinator who completed your assessment to check if the activity can be funded using the grant. A senior officer will consider each request in line with the family's

individual circumstances. However, this is not confirmation that all requests will be granted. Please do not book or pay for activities that fall outside of scope before checking with The Council as we cannot guarantee that expenditure will be approved. Where discretionary expenditure has been agreed this must be set out in the support plan and signed by the head of service. If you do not agree with the decision, you have the right to appeal as set out in section 10.

This guidance has been designed to ensure children and families get the most from their short break. Where expenditure is not in line with advice and guidance, Medway Council reserves the right to deduct the funds from your grant in the upcoming year.

The table provides guidance on how the grant can be used to access a combination of activities. This information will be used when forming the support plan and associated expenditure. The guidelines are not intended to restrict your flexibility. They are designed to support families and co-ordinators in forming a plan that delivers regular and effective respite throughout the year.

Table 2: Guidance on how the short break grant can be spent, including any limitations

Type of Short Break	How the funds can be spent	Conditions and limitations	Suggested expenditure for this activity
<p>Community Activities</p> <p>Activities that are available to all children and young people such as</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leisure activities • Theme parks • Theatres • Sporting events 	<p>Can be used to help cover the cost of the child or young person's activity session(s).</p> <p>For example, a trip to the cinema, trampolining, ice skating, leisure swimming, football match, theatre, theme park etc.</p> <p>It can also be used to help cover the cost of tickets/ attendance for the parent/ carer to attend with their child or young person.</p>	<p>The activity should last for an hour or more to achieve respite outcomes.</p> <p>This does not include travel, or spending money associated with the activity such as sweets, drinks and snacks.</p> <p>The activity must be age appropriate for the child or young person the application relates to.</p> <p>Funding should not be spent on siblings or other family members. However, it can be used for a carer to take part.</p>	50%

Type of Short Break	How the funds can be spent	Conditions and limitations	Suggested expenditure for this activity
		<p>The activity must not be linked to education or therapeutic needs (e.g. tuition or counselling sessions).</p> <p>Swimming lessons are usually delivered in under an hour and therefore do not qualify as a short break. Shorter activities can be funded using DLA or household income, and PAs could be employed to chaperone children to shorter activities providing parents with a meaningful break.</p>	
Targeted Activities	Can be used to help cover the cost of specialist play schemes such as ROCC,	This does not include travel or spending money for the child or young person.	100%

Type of Short Break	How the funds can be spent	Conditions and limitations	Suggested expenditure for this activity
<p>Specialists play schemes, afterschool clubs and daycare services that are provided specifically for children and young people with disabilities and/ or additional needs.</p> <p>The activities should be after school, at weekends or during the school holidays to serve as respite.</p>	<p>activities organised by Medway Puzzles and Club Ausome for example.</p> <p>Where children are home educated or receiving an EOTAS package for example, requests to spend the funding during 'typical' school hours will be considered on an individual basis.</p>	<p>The activity should not be linked to education or therapeutic needs. If these are identified in a child's EHCP they will be implemented by education services.</p> <p>The grant does not cover cost of room hire for group activities including children's birthday parties.</p> <p>The grant does not cover activities that would normally be delivered on a 1:1 basis such as music lessons. This would be covered by the Universal Offer. The only exception would be where the child's interests cannot be</p>	

Type of Short Break	How the funds can be spent	Conditions and limitations	Suggested expenditure for this activity
		<p>met by a mainstream activity without specialist input.</p> <p>The Council has established agreements with some specialised providers in the local area, and in many cases can pay the provider direct for sessions if this service has been identified in a social work assessment. If targeted and specialist activities are identified as necessary by a social worker, the value of the short break grant is incorporated into their assessment. Families are not eligible to</p>	

Type of Short Break	How the funds can be spent	Conditions and limitations	Suggested expenditure for this activity
		receive both. Existing arrangements are being phased out.	
Organised residential trip for the young person	<p>Can be used to provide a contribution towards the cost of a child or young person to take part in an organised group/overnight residential activity.</p> <p>Must be organised by a reputable organisation such as school, cadets, scouts etc.</p>	<p>Confirmation of cost from the organiser will be required.</p> <p>The Grant does not cover spending money or holiday clothes.</p> <p>It is the parent's responsibility to ensure all suitability checks including risk assessments have been conducted prior to consenting to their child or young person taking part.</p>	50%

Type of Short Break	How the funds can be spent	Conditions and limitations	Suggested expenditure for this activity
		<p>No other funding must be available through other financial bursaries that could be used to cover the costs.</p> <p>The Grant does not cover activities that take place during the school day.</p>	
Pursuing child's interests and hobbies	<p>This can be used to help with covering the cost of activity sessions or fulfilling a specific hobby; for example,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • dance class • music tutoring • exercise class • singing lessons 	<p>The activity must be for an hour or more in order to serve as respite.</p> <p>Cannot be used for extra tutoring for education and school-based classes i.e., Maths, English, Science.</p>	50%

Type of Short Break	How the funds can be spent	Conditions and limitations	Suggested expenditure for this activity
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • horse riding • youth clubs • beavers/ scouts etc 	<p>This does not include media subscriptions or television packages.</p> <p>You will need to specify the activity and provider in your application/ review.</p> <p>The activity must be delivered by a reputable organisation/ instructor.</p>	
Specialist equipment Hire or purchase of specialist equipment linked to a hobby, such	<p>This can be used to help with the purchasing or hire of essential/ specialist equipment needed for an activity session(s), such as musical instruments, tap shoes and ice boots.</p>	<p>This does not include the purchase of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • animals • general clothing • carpets, furniture, white goods and other household essentials 	25%

Type of Short Break	How the funds can be spent	Conditions and limitations	Suggested expenditure for this activity
as riding hats, football boots, leotards etc.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> garden landscaping. <p>You cannot use this for the long-term loan of live animals beyond a single session.</p> <p>You should provide evidence that the purchases are related to a specific activity or hobby.</p> <p>Other equipment such as tablets, sensory equipment and specialist equipment will be funded by exception only, providing that all other options such as the family fund have been explored. Purchases of this type will</p>	

Type of Short Break	How the funds can be spent	Conditions and limitations	Suggested expenditure for this activity
		require a recommendation from a professional and signed off by a senior officer.	
Financial support to help with the costs of a carer or personal assistant to support the child	<p>Can be used to employ a Personal Assistant, which could be from a professional agency or a member of the child's extended family. The PA might:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support the child to access community, and universal activities. 	<p>The carer must not reside at the same address or hold parental responsibility for the child. The carer must be over 18 years of age and photographic identification will be required to be submitted with the application.</p> <p>If the grant is intended to be used to pay for the carer's time, a detailed breakdown of cost of the carer will be required on submission of the</p>	100%

Type of Short Break	How the funds can be spent	Conditions and limitations	Suggested expenditure for this activity
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chaperone the child to and from activities (paid for by the parent, such as a swimming lesson) so that the parent gets a longer break). • Accompany the child on a family day out or holiday to provide parents/ carers with a break from caring. • Care for the child whilst the parents/ carers have a night away on their own. <p>Can be used to help with the cost of a carer's travel costs, such as a fuel</p>	<p>application. i.e., how many hours and cost per hour the carer will be working. Proof will also be required that all employment law is covered, and checks have been conducted by the parent or carer of the child or young person including DBS checks to ensure safeguards are in place for the child.</p> <p>Most activities permit a carer to enter free of charge, only when this is not the case the admission costs can be applied for through the grant.</p> <p>This does not include when the carer is staying in family accommodation i.e.,</p>	

Type of Short Break	How the funds can be spent	Conditions and limitations	Suggested expenditure for this activity
	<p>expenses, bus or training ticket to and from the UK staycation destination.</p> <p>Can be used to help with the cost of accommodation for the carer, e.g own hotel room.</p> <p>Can be used to provide up to a maximum of £10 per day to cover any subsistence costs for the carer that are incurred, food, drinks etc.</p> <p>If a person is employed specifically to support with this type of short break, the parents and carers will be responsible as an employer for ensuring all relevant</p>	<p>family room, caravan, apartment, lodge, villa or tent or other group shared accommodation. This type of accommodation would need to be available regardless of the carer being there.</p> <p>The Grant should not be used to pay accommodation fees for parents/ carers to have a night away on their own. Parents/ carers are expected to pay for this themselves. The Grant covers the cost of paying a carer to look after the child whilst the parents are away.</p>	

Type of Short Break	How the funds can be spent	Conditions and limitations	Suggested expenditure for this activity
	<p>employment statutory laws including adequate liability insurance are met, and for ensuring the suitability of the carer. Support with how to do this will be provided.</p> <p>The grant may be used towards the costs involved when a carer travels to the family home to help take care of the child during the school holidays for example. This request would be considered on an individual basis.</p>		

2. Making an application

The maximum amount that can be awarded per child, over no more than one successful application/ review per year is £1000 or £750 to families who meet level 2 criteria.

You should consider carefully the Short Breaks Offer and your eligibility to apply, make your selection, and remember you can select a combination of the different types of Short Breaks listed. There are no restrictions on the combination as long as you do not exceed the maximum monetary award eligible per child, i.e., £1000 or £750.

The grant will not be awarded to families who are already in receipt of other services provided by the Council following an assessment of need from a Social Worker. For example, if your child has a personal assistant (PA) or accesses a daycare scheme that is directly funded by the Council, you will not receive the grant as well. If you are currently receiving the grant in addition to services funded directly by the Council as part of a social work assessment, the grant amount awarded will be reduced gradually over 2 years. Therefore, you will receive the full amount in the year the assessment takes place, and you will receive 50% in the 2nd year.

Complete the 'Short Break self- assessment Form' via Medway Council [webpage](#). Any copies of supporting documentation must be sent to sbgrant.assessments@medway.gov.uk

3. Decision making and timescales

We'll consider your application against the standardised scoring system and contact you about the outcome using the details provided. Our short breaks team will discuss with you, how you would like to spend the grant, and this will be documented in your support plan. The support plan will be record and returned to you for your records.

Please note that you can only spend the money on the activities the grant has been awarded for as set out in your support plan.

We aim to complete this process within 16 weeks from receipt of your application. However, due to the significant increase in applications, are experiencing delays of up to 52 weeks. We are working hard to address this and are recruiting more staff to help reduce the length of time that families are waiting. This does not include any time that we are waiting for you to provide additional information that we have requested to consider your application.

4. Terms and Conditions

Applicants should fully familiarise themselves and agree to the following Terms and Conditions when submitting their application form:

1. I will ensure that I am not solely reliant on the grant to cover the cost of activities that I have booked prior to confirmation of a grant award.

2. I understand that the grant is a preventative service. It has been explained to me that the grant cannot be awarded in addition to other services that are organised and funded by Medway Council, such as a direct payment for PA services.
3. I understand that the grant is a one-off annual payment, whereas other services, such as overnight respite operate all year round.
4. I understand that grant expenditure will be reviewed in line with proof of eligibility, and the support plan annually. The support plan can be updated annually.
5. I will ensure that activities take place during the grant period. Any unspent funds will be deducted from the grant to be awarded in the following year.
6. I agree to provide Medway Council with receipts for any transactions made in relation to the short breaks grant.
7. I understand that if the grant is used for any purpose other than the request on my application form, this amount may be deducted from the grant amount to be awarded in the following year.
8. I understand that if I do not return evidence within 28 days of the short break grant review, my account may be closed, and I may have to reapply for the grant. Receipts must be emailed to sbgrant.assessments@medway.gov.uk.
9. I understand that inappropriate use of the grant can affect any future applications, and that Medway Council reserves the right to deny future applications.

10. I understand that the amount to be awarded may reduce if my child's level of need reduces.

11. If I accept funds to cover carer's costs, I am confirming that I understand and agree to take full responsibility for the liability of the worker including public liability insurance.

12. I understand and take full responsibility for the completion of appropriate employment checks and will follow all employment laws. I will confirm if asked, that I have obtained a DBS enhanced check and that it is satisfactory prior to the worker being employed.

13. I understand that I am responsible for ensuring the safety and welfare of my child during any short break activities funded through this grant including those online. More information about how to keep children safe when online is available from the children's commissioner.

14. I confirm that I will not use the money for any activity during the school or college term when a child or young person would normally be education.

15. In view of the information provided to me, I confirm that I wish to receive the short break grant.

5. Transfer of awarded funds

Where possible we pay the funds into an 'all pay' account. If for some reason this is not a suitable option, the short breaks team will be able to discuss alternative options with you.

6. Receipts and unspent money

- The applicant is responsible for returning the relevant receipts, proof of purchase or subsistence forms for any monies paid directly.
- Receipts and activities that are not related to the award period will not be accepted.
- Activities must take place during the award period the monies were awarded for.
- Where unspent money or proof of spends is not returned then eligibility for future applications will be affected. If this applies to you and you wish to discuss your individual circumstances, please contact the short break Co-ordinator.

7. Fair Access to the Short Breaks Grant

Our aim is to be open, transparent, and fair in the way we apply the eligibility for access to the Grant and in the decision making about the funds that are awarded.

Each application will be responded to consistently by applying the criteria for decision screening and recorded on a document that will be recorded online.

We understand that every family has their own unique needs, and this guidance cannot cover every scenario. If an activity that you would like to access is not listed in the table, please speak directly with the short break co-ordinator who completed your assessment to check if the activity can be funded using the grant. A senior officer will consider each request in line with the family's individual circumstances. However, this is not confirmation that all requests will be granted. Please do not book or pay for activities

that fall outside of scope before checking with The Council, as we cannot guarantee that expenditure will be approved. If you do not agree with the decision, you have the right to appeal as set out in section 13.

8. Right of appeal

We are not required to have an appeals process; however, we understand that there may be times when applicants are unhappy or feel they have been treated unfairly. In such circumstances we will always attempt to resolve any issues early through conversations with a member of the team. If you are unhappy, please contact the short break Co-ordinator in the first instance to resolve matters.

If we are unable to resolve matters with you, and you wish to make a complaint you can do this by contacting the [Council's Customer Service Team online](#). We hope that you are satisfied with the service provided and that eligible children and families enjoy using the Grant.

9. Accessibility information

If you require this information in another format or you need support completing the self-assessment form, please contact sbgrant.assessments@medway.gov.uk

10. Other Sources of Support

You can also apply to the following services and organisations for funding:

1. [Medway Household Support Fund](#)
2. [Medway Council Support for disabilities](#)
3. [Carers Allowance](#)
4. [Carers Credit](#)
5. [Family Fund](#)
6. [Motability Scheme](#)
7. [Merlins Magic Wand](#)
8. [CEA card](#) for cinema experiences (accepted in 90% of UK cinemas)