

Short Break Services

Medway



What is a short break/ respite?

- All local authorities must provide a range of [short break services](#) for children (under 18) with disabilities, which are sufficient to assist parents/carers to continue to care for their children effectively, because breaks from caring provide parents/ carers with the time to:
 - Have a break from caring
 - Rest and recuperate
 - Undertake education, training or regular leisure activities
 - Spend time with other children and family members
- Short break services provide opportunities for disabled children:
 - To have enjoyable/ new experiences away from their parents/carers
 - To relax and have fun with their peers
 - To develop independence and skills for adulthood
 - To increase confidence
- A short break can be for an hour, a day or several days. In most circumstances this would be by accessing specialist activities and in some cases providing additional support for a child to access community activities such as sports clubs or leisure services.

Who are short breaks for?

- Primarily short breaks are aimed to give families who have a disabled child (0-18 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.

What does Medway offer?

Every family and child are different and unique. Not all families will need the same level of short breaks. Some may need more support than others for different reasons;

- The impact of the child's disability on the wider family
- The absence of support from extended family members
- Or because of a family/ personal crisis.

Services in Medway are organised into 3 categories:

Level 1 – Universal services

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. Universal services include [Medway Sport](#), [Medway Go](#), [Child Friendly Medway](#), and [Medway Youth Services](#). They are open to all.

The Council recognises that some parents may require a little extra support to take a necessary break from caring. Therefore, an enhanced offer is available for these families.

Level 2 – Targeted services

We provide **targeted** services, such as the short break grant. The grant can be used to help with the extra costs of specialist day care schemes or to employ a personal assistant (PA) who takes the child out in the community. You do not need to be referred. These are accessed by completing a self-assessment, and eligibility is reviewed by our short break team.

Level 3 – Specialist services

We also provide **specialist** services such as overnight respite at Parklands residential short break home or direct payments that can be used to fund a personal assistant (PA) who can take your child out in the community. You will need to have a child and family assessment to access specialist services.

More information can be found on [Medway Council's Local Offer page](#)

Medway Short Break Grant

**New eligibility and inclusion criteria for
2025/26**



Short Break Grant Review Findings & Actions

Findings:

- The number of applications has increased by 85% since 2016.
- Many families are receiving the grant in addition to specialist support services.
- The review identified huge variability in how grant eligibility and inclusion criteria is interpreted and applied
- The length of time that families are waiting to receive their grant has been increasing (12 months for new applications/ 4 months for reviews).

Actions

- So, The Council has recently agreed to expand the team who co-ordinate the short break grants.
- There will be 2 new members of staff. Plus, other members of staff will be trained to provide cover.
- This will allow us to reduce waiting times.
- We have drafted clear guidance, and terms & conditions to ensure consistency, equity and transparency.

Short Break Grant Scheme for children with disabilities

- The Short Break Grant/ Funding is paid to disabled children and their families annually. It can be used throughout the year to purchase services such as a personal assistant (PA) to provide support in the home or community, or spent specialist day care schemes, community activities or specialist equipment .
- You do not need to be referred.
- A [self-assessment form](#) is used to confirm your eligibility for this funding.
- Medway short break co-ordinators review responses to the self-assessment questionnaire and work with families to help them make the most of the funding.

Self assessment eligibility screening questions

- Are you a foster carer for the child you're applying for?
- Does the child get any direct payments?
- Does the child use any other short break services?
- Has the child been diagnosed with a disability?
- Does the child get DLA or PIP?
- What DLA component does the child receive?
- What rate of care DLA does the child get?
- What rate of mobility DLA does the child get?

Short Break Grant Eligibility Criteria

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 (foster parents are not eligible to apply)
 - 2a. You care for a child with a diagnosed disability (and your child's disability is assessed as having a moderate or significant impact on the family) **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**
 - 2c. You care for a child or young person who is in receipt of an Enhanced Personal Independent Payment (PIP)
3. You have returned all unspent monies or proof of spends that has been awarded from a previous grant application.
4. 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
5. 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)

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.

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.

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:

Criteria	Offer
Child's disability has little or no impact on family and/or minimal risk of family breakdown	Families will be supported to get priority access to universal services and support to identify suitable activities
Child's disability has a moderate impact upon family and/or possible risk of family breakdown	£750 Short Break Grant
Child's disability has a significant/major impact on family and/or significant risk of breakdown	£1000 Short Break Grant

How do I apply?

You should consider carefully the Short Breaks Offer and your eligibility to apply.

You will be asked to upload evidence of eligibility.

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.

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

What happens next?

- The short break coordinator will review your self assessment and evidence to determine your eligibility and the amount that could be awarded.

What can I spend it on?

Short break co-ordinators work with families to put together a support plan that will achieve reliable respite at regular intervals throughout the year.

- ✓ **Community activities** – that last an hour or more, e.g. leisure activities (swimming/ bowling), theme parks, theatre tickets, cinema, and sporting events. For the child or young person and their carer only.
- ✓ **Targeted activities** such as specialist play schemes (such as ROCC, [club ausome](#) or [Medway puzzles](#)) and after school clubs that are specifically for children with additional needs.
- ✓ **Organised residential trip** for the young person with beavers or cubs for example.
- ✓ **Pursuing the child's interests and hobbies** – activities that last an hour or more such as horse riding, singing lessons, beavers, scouts etc. Cannot be used for extra tutoring or education.
- ✓ **Specialist equipment** – such as riding hats or football boots needed to pursue a particular hobby.
- ✓ **Financial support** to help with the costs of a carer or personal assistant who may take the child out for activities or accompany the family on holiday so the parents can take a break.
- ✓ **Contribution towards a family trip or holiday** – the grant can be put towards the cost of a family holiday. The grant can only be used to cover the cost of the children and their carer, not all family members.

What is not included?

- ❖ Swimming lessons. However, you can use the grant to fund a PA to chaperone the child to their swimming lessons.
- ❖ Therapy, extra tutoring or education.
- ❖ Costs associated with community activities such as travel (fuel, train fare etc), spending money, food or drinks.
- ❖ Room hire for birthday parties.
- ❖ Purchasing animals or long-term loan of live animals.
- ❖ General clothing
- ❖ Garden landscaping, carpets, furniture, white goods and other household equipment.
- ❖ Media subscriptions or television equipment.
- ❖ Spa breaks or overnight stays or the parents/ carers without the children.

See the guidance document for full list and explanations.

Requests for sensory equipment and media devices will be considered by exception only.

Activities that take place during the school day will be considered by exception only.

Terms & Conditions

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 not awarded in addition to services that are organised and funded directly as part of a social work assessment.
3. 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 if needs change.
4. I understand that the amount to be awarded may reduce if the level of need reduces.
5. 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 award in the following year.
6. I understand that inappropriate use of the grant can affect any future applications, and that Medway Council reserves the right to deny future applications.
7. 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.
8. I agree to provide Medway Council with receipts for any transactions (such as cash withdrawals) on the 'all pay card' that cannot be accounted for.
9. I agree to provide all receipts within 2 weeks of the short break grant review.
10. 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 and DBS check. I understand and take full responsibility for the completion of appropriate employment checks and will follow all employment laws.
11. 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.
12. I confirm that I will not use the grant for any activity during school or college term time.

Alternatives to short break grants

https://www.medway.gov.uk/info/200307/local_offer/1908/send_activities_2024



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SEND activities 2024

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- [Medway Puzzles - Chatham Town Puzzlers Football for SEN children](#)
- [Medway Puzzles - messy play and coffee morning](#)
- [Ninja Warriors - Get Up and Go Ninjas! \(SEN session\)](#)
- [SOAR Trampoline Park](#)



How to contact us

<https://www.medway.gov.uk/SENDSocialCare>

Medway Short Break Grant Team

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