

SHORT BREAKS AND RESPITE

This fact sheet has been written by parent carers for parent carers



Having time away from your caring responsibilities is not just good for your wellbeing, it can be great for your child or young person too. While you are recharging your batteries, they can meet new people, enjoy doing things independently and learn to adapt to new situations and experiences. In this fact sheet, we explain what kinds of short break are available, how to get them and how to pay for them.

What is a short break?

A short break can be any organised activity or care (outside of school) that gives your child or young person a chance to have fun and socialise, and you a chance to take a break. This might be an inclusive after school or holiday club, a group for children with similar disabilities; a few hours care in your own home, or an overnight or residential stay if your child has more complex needs.

There are three types of short break available for families with children (under 18) with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND);

- short breaks that any child or young person can access
- short breaks that may have some qualifying criteria such as your child having an EHCP
- short breaks that require a social care assessment

If you have a social care assessment that agrees you need a short break, you may get a direct payment so you can choose and pay for this yourself.

Finding a short break

Your local authority has a duty to provide some short breaks for children with SEND in your area; they are also obliged to tell you about the range of short breaks available, their eligibility criteria and how to apply. Find out what is available in your area by visiting your local authority's Local Offer, Family Information Service or other online directory (see *Ask about* for details below). It's also worth asking other parents or local disability organisations for schemes they might have used.

Short breaks that don't require an assessment

Some short breaks are '**universal**' which means they are open to all children, including those with SEN and disabilities. Others are '**targeted**' and may require your child to meet certain criteria such as getting Disability Living Allowance or having an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP). You may have to pay for (or towards) the cost of these universal and targeted services yourself. Some of these may also be available to 18-25 year olds with SEND.

Clubs, activities and holiday schemes - You can find out what is available, when and how much it costs, etc., via your Local Offer, SEN services directory, or Family Information Service. You may need to contact a provider directly to apply or to find out more about how they will include your child. Be aware that popular activities may have a waiting list. If your child gets free school meals, they may be able to get free activities via the Holiday, Food and Activities (HAF) programme.

Leisure and wellbeing discount cards - Brighton & Hove and East Sussex local authorities offer leisure discount cards to help families with disabled children have fun and relax for less money. In





Brighton & Hove, this is called the Compass Card and it is managed by Amaze. In East Sussex, it's called the i-go card. For both cards, you will need to complete a form and go on your local disability register. You will also need to provide proof of your child's additional needs such as their EHC plan, or award of DLA or PIP. You may also be able to get a Carers' Card with discounts for you.

Childcare - paying for a childcarer or a personal assistant (PA) is one option for organising a break for yourself. Your local council directory or Family Information Service keeps up to date lists of childcarers and nurseries, after-school and holiday clubs. Your council may offer extra support to families of children with additional needs to find the right childcare.

Get contact details for all the directories and websites mentioned here in *Ask about* below.

Short breaks and respite that need a social care assessment

Short breaks such as overnight stays or specialist services may be available for children and young people with more complex needs. You will need a social care assessment of your child and your needs to decide if your family can get this type of short break or respite.

How to get a social care assessment

Brighton & Hove and East Sussex have a children's disability social work team with their own criteria about who they work with, for example, children and young people with severe learning disability. If your child meets the criteria, you can ask to be assessed by this team. We link to their criteria and contact details in Ask About below.

If your child doesn't meet the criteria for assessment via the children's disability team for your area, you can still contact your local council's main 'front door' service for social care support. You will need to explain your family situation and why you think you need urgent support. They may then refer you to a social worker for further assessment.

Some children with long term, complex, health care needs may qualify for care arranged and funded by the NHS instead of, or as well as, social care.

Types of short break that follow from an assessment

If a social care assessment recommends that you need a short break, you may be offered one of the following, depending on where you live and your child's age or needs:

- direct payments (the most common) to enable you to make your own arrangements
- overnight stays in residential accommodation or via a link or foster family
- specialist holiday scheme sessions
- outreach services to help your child or young person access activities in their community
- home support sitting services

Social workers will draw up a care plan that sets out the support your child or young person will get. This plan (which may be part of their Education, Health and Care Plan) will be reviewed regularly.

What happens if you are turned down for a social care?

You cannot be turned down for a social care assessment if you ask for one, but after assessment you may be told that you do not qualify for social care support.





If you feel that you do meet your local authority's eligibility criteria for support you can challenge their decision. SCOPE has lots of useful advice on [Challenging or complaining about social care](#) or you can speak to our SENDIASS advice line to get more individual advice.

Ask about

- **Amaze** – the **Special Educational Needs and Disability Information, Advice and Support Service (SENDIASS)** offers impartial, confidential advice on anything to do with special educational needs and disabilities for 0 to 25 year olds. Parents, carers, children and young people under 25 with SEND living in Brighton & Hove or East Sussex can use the service. Email sendiass@amazesussex.org.uk, call **01273 772289** or visit our website at <https://amazesussex.org.uk>
- **Carers' Card** - discounts on wellbeing and leisure activities across the region for unpaid carers including parent carers. Apply for a **Brighton & Hove Carers Card** here: <https://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/adult-social-care-hub/apply-carers-card-0> Amaze manages the offers for the Brighton & Hove Carers Card. See offers here: <https://amazesussex.org.uk/carers-card/carers-card-offers/> . Get an **East Sussex Carers Card** via Care for the Carers website <https://www.cftc.org.uk/help-and-advice/get-a-carers-card>
- **Carers organisations** – offer a range of services and resources for unpaid carers (including young carers) to improve their quality of life. In Brighton & Hove, contact the Carers Hub at <https://carershub.co.uk> or call **01273 977000**. In East Sussex, contact Care for the Carers on <https://www.cftc.org.uk>
- **Childcare providers** – your local council lists registered childminders, nurseries and after school clubs in searchable directories. In Brighton & Hove, you can search the **Brighton & Hove Childcare directory** at <https://fiso.brighton-hove.gov.uk/Synergy/ChildcareDirectory.aspx> . In East Sussex you can search for childcare in the Family Information section of the **ESCIS** (East Sussex Community Information Service) directory <https://www.escis.org.uk/category/family-information/>
- **Clubs, groups and activities** – You can find out about clubs, groups, activities on your Local Offer website and directory or via family information directories. Search **East Sussex** clubs and activities on the **1Space directory** <https://1space.eastsussex.gov.uk/> or **ESCIS directory** <https://www.escis.org.uk/category/family-information>. Search **Brighton & Hove** holiday clubs, play schemes and activities on the **Local Offer directory** <https://bit.ly/3F641QM> or **Brighton & Hove Childcare directory** at <https://fiso.brighton-hove.gov.uk/Synergy/ChildcareDirectory.aspx>
- **Compass and i-go leisure discount cards** - for 0 to 25 year olds with significant additional needs who live or go to school in Brighton & Hove or East Sussex. Amaze manages the Compass Card and its offers for Brighton & Hove City Council. See <https://amazesussex.org.uk/compass-card>. East Sussex County Council manages the i-go card. See <https://igo.eastsussex.gov.uk/>
- **HAF (Holiday Activities and Food Programme)** – offers free activities and fun (including a meal) during the school holidays for children and young people on benefited related free school meals.
 - **Brighton & Hove HAF** - <https://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/health-and-wellbeing/holiday-activities-and-food-haf>.
 - **East Sussex HAF** - <https://www.eastsussex.gov.uk/children-families/childcare/welcome-to-holiday-food-and-fun>





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- **Direct Payments Advice** (Brighton & Hove only) available from Possability People on **01273 894050** or text **07769 612015**.
- **Personal Assistants (PAs) – Possability People** publishes a noticeboard that matches families who need care with carers who are looking for work. Visit their website: <https://www.possabilitypeople.org.uk/how-we-can-help/care-at-home/pa-noticeboard>
- **Targeted short breaks** - for more about current targeted short break offers in East Sussex see <https://localoffer.eastsussex.gov.uk/send-information-and-services/education-east-sussex/short-breaks> . And in Brighton & Hove see <https://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/special-educational-needs-and-disabilities/targeted-short-breaks>
- **Specialist short breaks and overnight care** - All Local Authorities are required by law to publish a Short Breaks statement. You can read about the eligibility criteria for specialist short breaks services in these statements. See [East Sussex Short Breaks statement \(2022-2027\)](#) and [Brighton & Hove Short Breaks Service Statement](#). If your child meets the stated criteria for a specialist short break, you can ask for an assessment.

In **Brighton & Hove**, contact **Front Door for Families** via on phone 01273 290 400 or email to FrontDoorforFamilies@brighton-hove.gov.uk. In **East Sussex**, you can contact the Single Point of Advice, Tel: 01323 464222 or email spoa@eastsussex.gov.uk.

- **Social care support via your local council** – if your child doesn't meet the criteria for a specialist short break and you are struggling, you can contact your council's social care support team. In Brighton & Hove, this is [Front Door for Families](#); in East Sussex, this is called the [Single Point of Advice](#). You will need to explain your family situation and why you think you need urgent support. They may then refer you to a social worker for further assessment.

Further reading and useful links

- **Choosing childcare** fact sheet. Download from <https://amazesussex.org.uk/resources/fact-sheets>
- Amaze webpage on **Moving to adult social care** for adults <https://amazesussex.org.uk/planning-for-adult-life/adult-social-care/>
- **Contact** - national SEND charity information on short breaks <https://contact.org.uk/help-for-families/information-advice-services/social-care/short-breaks/>
- **Local Offers** – the local authority's online listing of all the services and support that are available to families with children with SEND in the area.
- **Scope** - *Challenging or complaining about social care* information from national disability charity Scope UK—<https://www.scope.org.uk/advice-and-support/challenging-complaining-social-care-needs-assessment>
- **Brighton & Hove Short Breaks information** - See <https://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/special-educational-needs-and-disabilities/find-short-breaks-children-special-educational-needs-and-disabilities-send> and Short Breaks Statement <https://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/special-educational-needs-and-disabilities/short-breaks/short-breaks-service-statement>
- **East Sussex Short Breaks information** - See <https://localoffer.eastsussex.gov.uk/send-information-and-services/education-east-sussex/short-breaks> and Short Breaks Statement <https://eastsussex.pagetiger.com/bcrmaps>

