



Short Breaks Statement 2025-2026

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Introduction

Local Authorities are required to produce and publish a statement of Short Break Services for disabled children, young people, and their families under the Breaks for Carers of Disabled Children Regulations 2011. This regulation applies to Services under the Children Act 1989, however the accompanying guidance makes it clear that the Short Breaks services statement should also include Universal and Targeted Short Breaks.

This Statement is for families living in Cumberland who have a child/young person who has a disability and aged between 0 and 18 years. For the completeness of information, it also includes a section for those aged 18-25, however, this service is provided by Adult Social Care. We will continue to update our statement as our offer changes.

What do we mean by disability?

For Universal and Targeted Short Breaks, the law directs that the definition used regarding disability is that contained in the [Equality Act 2010](#): 'a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to perform normal day to day activities'.

For specialist services the law directs that the definition of disability is the one contained in the [Children Act 1989](#).

What is a Short Break?

Short breaks are part of a continuum of services which support children in need and their families. They include the provision of day, evening, overnight and weekend activities for the child, and can take place in the child's own home, the home of an approved carer, or in a residential or community setting.

Most users of Short Breaks are disabled children and their families but non-disabled children in need may also receive short break services. This guidance applies to disabled children and their families rather than non-disabled children in need and their families.

There are 4 main types of Short Breaks:

- Universal Short Breaks
- Targeted Short Breaks
- Early Help Support Services
- Specialist Services Short Breaks

What are Universal Services?

Universal Short Breaks is the standard term used for any activity or break that is publicly available to all members of the community and are typically provided by individual, private or charitable organisations.

Examples of these may include, libraries, family hubs, youth clubs, leisure centres, scouts, brownies and sport clubs.

These breaks should be accessible for disabled children and young people as all providers have a duty to follow the [Equality Act 2010](#) guidance and make reasonable adjustments to enable disabled children to attend these activities.

How do I access Universal Services?

Universal Short Breaks are open access activities that are accessible to everyone and offer breaks to families regardless of whether they have a disabled child or not.

They are available directly through individual organisations, without the need of a formal assessment or involvement from the Local Authority.

What are Targeted Short Breaks Activities?

Targeted Short Breaks are similar to Universal, but are designed specifically to meet a particular group of people's needs. They recognise that, on occasions, children and young people with disabilities require additional or higher levels of support in order to participate in activities. Targeted Short Breaks Activities in this instance are specifically designed to meet the needs of children and young people with disabilities.

Targeted Short Breaks can be provided via a number of different organisations including schools, charities and the Local Authority. For instance, special school extended activities, after school clubs, breakfast clubs, holiday activities or other organisations that run summer schemes or leisure activities for disabled children would count as Targeted Short Breaks.

Families with disabled children often access a mixture of Targeted Short Breaks Activities and Universal Services. Targets Short Breaks are accessible without a formal assessment.

How can I access a Targeted Short Breaks Activity?

For Targeted Short Breaks that are not run by Cumberland Council, you should contact the organisation that is running that particular service. They may have put information on the local offer, so that may be a good starting point.

Cumberland Council support a number of organisations who offer Targeted Short Breaks. These can be accessed by families without the need for a formal social care assessment to be completed.

Eligible families can access up to 76 hours a year through an online application process. This allows parents to self-refer without having to complete a full assessment of needs with a social worker.

To Qualify you must:

- Be ordinarily resident in Cumberland, and
- Have a disability as defined above, and
- Have an EHCP (Education, Health and Care Plan), and
- Be within the academic year groups Year 1 to Year 13.

Current providers offering targeted short breaks funded by Cumberland Council are;

- [West House](#)
- [Carlisle MENCAP](#)
- [People First](#)

Other providers will be brought on board as a part of the ongoing commissioning cycle. For more information and to register please visit the [short breaks home page](#).

Please note we currently run two Targeted Short Breaks registration windows per year, usually in May and October time. This is subject to review in upcoming months.

Early Help support services

Services for children in Reception or younger are available through the Child and Family Support Service and are delivered at [Cumberland Family Hubs](#), where families can access a range of useful services and support in one place.

The family Hubs are located across Cumberland, your local Family Hub can be located by clicking on the [Cumberland Family Hubs website](#). A range of universal services are also accessible through the Family Hubs including access to Sensory rooms, groups and other activities.

The Portage service is accessed via individual referral from our Family Hubs. This service is provided by Cumberland to provide services for children with disabilities under 4 years of age by offering early intervention and support usually in the child's own home focusing on child led play, family focus and structured teaching. Portage aims to empower parents and practitioners to help children with SEND develop their full potential. Please contact your local Family Hub for more information.

A list of our Family Hubs and links to their relevant pages with contact information is below:

- [Longtown Family Hub in Locality 7, Longtown Ward.](#)
- [Maryport Family Hub in Locality 4, Maryport North Ward](#)
- [Millom Family Hub in Locality 3, Millom Ward](#)
- [Morton Family Hub in Locality 6, Morton Ward](#)
- [Wigton Family Hub in Locality 5, Wigton Ward](#)
- [Workington Family Hub in Locality 2, Moss Bay and Moor Close Ward](#)
- [Whitehaven Family Hub in Locality 1, Kells and Sandwith Ward](#)

Early help maybe able to offer support to families with children over the age of 4, they will determine what support is offered following an Early Help assessment. You can contact our us on **333 240 1727** to discuss Early Help support.

What are Specialist Short Breaks Services?

Specialist Short Breaks provide the most support of available Short Breaks services and aim to assist parents to continue to care for their children/young people or to care for them more effectively.

They may include:

- Day-time care in the homes of disabled children or elsewhere
- Overnight care in the homes of disabled children or elsewhere
- Educational or leisure activities for disabled children outside their homes
- Services available to assist carers in the evenings, at weekends and during the school holidays.

Some families can support their child with disabilities through their own networks and with informal support from friends, relatives, and local support groups. Some families find that they may not have the support available and need additional help, to assist with the specific challenges of caring for a child with disabilities.

How can I access Specialist Short Break Services?

If your child is disabled, you can request a social work assessment at any point. Specialist Short Breaks may be accessed following a Children Act 1989 assessment.

To request an assessment, you should call Cumberland Council's Integrated Front Door on **0333 240 1727** and ask for an assessment.

The assessment or assessments will look at many different factors before deciding whether you or your child is eligible for Specialist Short Breaks, and this will not be judged on disability alone.

Disabilities vary in severity and their impact on family life. Caring for children with profound and multiple disabilities, complex health needs and challenging behaviour may be particularly demanding for families. The impact, particularly on the health and wellbeing of carers and siblings, is hugely variable and will strongly influence the determination of need.

The assessment will take into consideration three key areas:

- the child's developmental needs;
- the parents' parenting capacity;
- family and environmental factors.

How can Specialist Short Breaks Services help me?

Day Opportunities

Day care, evenings, weekends, and holidays play a key role in supporting disabled people to maintain and develop new skills, prevent social isolation, support inclusion and presence in their local communities and provide a break from caring and support for families ensuring they can continue to offer ongoing support.

The Local Authority can commission short breaks from various organisations that offer day opportunities inside or outside of children's homes, following assessment.

Registered, Residential Short Breaks

This provides parents and carers with a longer break where they are tired because of the care they give to their child. This may include facing issues like challenging behaviour or sleepless nights.

Cumberland currently offers overnight short breaks/respite at three children's homes:

- The Elms (West Cumbria coast area of Cumberland)
- Huntley Avenue (North Cumberland area)

Shared Care

This is [the fostering option](#) offered by Cumberland Council. The scheme offers short breaks to families through a Shared Carer who can look after the child in the carer's home.

It aims to match your child with a carer who can care for them on a regular basis; for a weekend, a holiday, or occasional overnight stays, building up your child's trust and confidence over time.

Continuing Care

[Joint Packages of Support](#) are provided by health and social care for those deemed to have complex health needs or those meeting continuing care criteria.

Short Breaks for 18 – 25 year olds

18–25-year-olds Short Breaks are delivered by [Adult Social Care](#) and provide individuals who are eligible under the Care Act with a planned break, which may be facilitated in several different ways to best suit the assessed needs of the Individual and / or their carer.

Day Opportunities

[Day Opportunities](#) play a key role in supporting disabled people to maintain and develop new skills, prevent social isolation, support inclusion and presence in their local communities and provide a break from caring and support for unpaid carers ensuring they can continue to offer ongoing support.

Across Cumberland day opportunities are provided by Cumberland Care and independent sector providers across a range of locations. Support ranges from “traditional” building based services; to work in cafes; shops; horticulture; support into employment and voluntary work and adult education.

Registered, Residential Short Breaks

Registered, residential short breaks provide short term support for adults who are eligible following a Care Act assessment, while their unpaid carers receive a break from their caring role. Short breaks are planned but may also be required at times of emergency.

The current Cumberland wide offer for registered short breaks for adults is provided by:

- West House – Allerdale
- Cumberland Care – Barrow and South Lakes
- Carlisle Mencap – Carlisle

Shared Lives

Shared Lives is a care and support service which provides family-based care provided by host individuals and families for adults aged 18+. Shared Lives Carers are local self-employed people recruited, approved, reviewed, and trained by Cumberland Care. Shared Lives Carers are regulated by the Shared Lives Scheme and can provide range of support including short breaks and day-time support for Care Act eligible adults.

Direct Payments

Direct payments are given in lieu of specialist services that are provided through Section 17 of the Children Act 1989. Direct payments are not a service in themselves. They are a request that the parent makes to have cash payments as a budget so that they can develop their own support plan to have a flexible approach to getting the support they need.

Consultation and Co-production

Our Short Breaks Services are informed by involving a wide range of stakeholders including our strategic partner SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities) Alliance Cumberland (SENDAC).

SENDAC are an independent parent/carers group that represent the views of families of children and young people with additional needs and disabilities. Views are regularly sought through discussion meetings and surveys on a variety of SEND related topics including Short Breaks.

The forum provides an opportunity for parents of disabled children to be involved in planning and evaluating the Short Breaks Services, ensuring that their views help to influence and shape the services for their children.

SENDAC will be the formal route through which the Council consults with parents/carers of disabled children living in Cumberland. Parents/carers can find out how to get involved by visiting the [SENDAC](#) website.

We also collect information on a regular basis from commissioned providers, holding regular contract meetings to evaluate what is working well and what is not. Parent/carers can assist in this process by completing any feedback forms from providers and notifying the Short Breaks team if you are not given any.

Publication and Review

Our Short Breaks Services Statement is published on the [SEND Local Offer](#) website. It is reviewed regularly with our partnership groups, and it reflects the views and

choices of our families. We welcome feedback from individuals as well as via our partnership groups, as we strive for continual improvement.

This statement has been developed in line with the following legislation:

- Equality Act 2010
- Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1970
- Children Act 1989
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018
- Children and Families Act 2014
- Care Act 2014

Further queries

If you have any queries about accessing Short Breaks, further information is available via the [SEND Local Offer](#) or directly from Short Breaks providers.

Glossary

SEND – Special Educational Needs and Disabilities

EHCP – Education, Health and Care Plan

Local Offer – The website that outlines the support and opportunities available to SEND families within the area

Direct Payment – Money paid in lieu of directly provided services for disabled children and their families. Forms a part of a Personal Budget.

Personal Budget – Money paid to families in lieu of directly provided services to deliver an EHC Plan.

Registered – A care organisation registered with the Care Quality Commission and/or Ofsted.