

Cheshire West &
Chester Council



Short breaks statement



Cheshire West
and Chester

Short Breaks Statement

Introduction

Welcome to the Short Breaks Statement which sets out Cheshire West and Chester Council's Short Breaks offer to children and young people aged 0-18 years with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). As a Council, we have the responsibility to let you know what services are available to children and young people to provide you as parents/carers with a short break from your caring role under the following legislation:

- Schedule 2, Paragraph 6(1)(c) of the Children Act 1989
- The Breaks for Carers of Disabled Children Regulations 2011
- Section 26 of the Children and Families Act 2014
- Section 2 of the Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1970

This guide provides information on the range of services and support available to you and your family and how to access it and has been developed with representatives from the Parent Carer Forum and Cheshire West Voluntary Action.

Vision

Our vision in Cheshire West and Chester is to support children, young people with SEND and their families to have inclusive opportunities, to have their needs met at the right place at the right time and ensure they are happy, healthy and safe.

With many voices it is our commitment that children and young people are at the heart of everything we do; build trust together; have clear pathways with open doors; and we shape it together.

What are Short breaks?

These services support families with a child or young person with SEND by offering short breaks. They provide children and young people with SEND up to the age of 18 years who reside in the borough the opportunity to spend time away from home, make new friends, and enjoy fun activities, while providing families with valuable respite from their caring responsibilities. Short Breaks may take place outside of school hours; during evenings; weekends; school holidays; and sometimes overnight. They are designed to meet different levels of need.

Short break services in Cheshire West and Chester

The local authority works with different organisations to provide help and support to families through short breaks. When the local authority pays these organisations to deliver support, these are called "commissioned services" and form part of our statutory duty to provide short break services.

There are also lots of other services that can support families which the local authority does *not* fund. These are usually run by voluntary or charitable groups, and these are known as "non-commissioned services".

Cheshire West and Chester Council currently commissions the following short breaks services: **Targeted Community-based Group Activities**, known as Energise, and delivered by Endorphins Group Limited, offer engaging and inclusive group sessions. These sessions include:

- **Themed activities, games and sports** tailored to all abilities.
- **A safe and supportive environment** to have fun, learn, build confidence, and make friends.
- **Free access**, either through families booking directly or via referrals from Children's Social Care, for those with an assessed need.

Targeted Brokerage Service, known as Community Connections and delivered by Disability Positive, helps families access community-based Short Breaks through:

- **Information and advice** to help identify universal activity services within the community.
- **Practical support** to enable children or young people to participate in new activities – a support worker is provided for a limited time to help the child or young person settle into the group.
- **Individual Payments** of up to £1,000 per year, per child or young person, are available to pay for activities that meet their needs and provide a short break for parents, carers, or siblings. The criteria require children or young people to be in receipt of either middle or higher rate of Disability Living Allowance (DLA) and/or standard or enhanced Personal Independence Payment (PIP). They must also **not** receive funding from Social Care Services.

More information on these services can be found through the Live Well Cheshire West website through the following link: [What are Short Breaks? | Live Well Cheshire West](#)

Levels of services

Not all children, young people and their families will need the same level of support; some will need more than others because of the nature of their child or young person's disability and their individual circumstances.

Universal services – my child/young person needs little or no level of care and support in day to day activities

Services include: Before and After School Clubs, Community groups, Early Years services, Holiday activities, Play groups, Sports, Youth Services. This offer is open to all children/young people; there is no eligibility applied and can be accessed through a self-referral route. Providers are encouraged to make reasonable adjustments to reduce barriers for children or young people with SEND to be able to access universal services. Examples of this in practice could be offering sensory support or creating quiet zones; visual timetables or picture cards; or modifying the building such as installing ramps.

Targeted services – my child/young person needs a higher level of care and support in day to day activities such as support with personal care; my child/young person needs space and time to manage their behaviours; my child/young person needs more sensory activities; my child/young person needs support to eat and drink

Note: There may be a charge for some of these activities

Services include: commissioned targeted community-based activity groups through Energise by Endorphins Group Limited which provide a mixture of free Saturday, After School and Holiday sessions. These activity groups are open to children and young people in two age groups aged 4-11 and 12-18 years of age. Children and young people must live in the Cheshire West and Chester area, but do not need to have a formal diagnosis to access sessions. There are other services available to families through non-commissioned services such as After School Clubs for children and young people with Autism, targeted Youth Clubs (Choices), Activity groups, Youth and play groups, Summer holiday activity groups. There is also a Holiday Activities and Food Programme ([HAF - Edsential](#)) available for families to access who are eligible for benefits-related Free School Meals. There is no assessment required for groups, clubs or Holiday Activities and Food Programme. Further information about activities available can be found on the Live Well website: [Home | Live Well Cheshire West](#)

Short Breaks Individual Payments: commissioned through Disability Positive and known as Community Connections. This service provides support to families to pay for targeted activities that their child or young person would like to attend.

Direct Payments: are a way for families to have more choice, flexibility and control over their child or young person's care and support. Instead of the council arranging services for families, direct payments allow families to use the money in their child or young person's personal budget themselves. This means they can choose and arrange support to help their child access the community or take part in activities that match their interests and meet their assessed needs or desired outcomes. To access direct payments, an assessment will be required to be carried out by a Social Worker or Family Case Worker, this can be done through calling the Integrated Access and Referral (iART) Team on 0300 123 7047. Direct payments are designed to be used in a flexible way by families, examples of this in practice could be paying for a Personal Assistant to take the child or young person out into the community to enjoy activities of their choice such as walks in the park; cinema trips; eating out; or swimming. Direct Payments can be used in many ways and it is best to explore the options with your social care professional.

Complex/specialist services – my child/young person needs a high level of support and care during the day and possibly overnight; there could be a risk of family breakdown due to the impact of our caring responsibilities on the family; or our family is under stress due to not getting enough sleep

Services include: Daytime nursing care, Direct Payments, Overnight nursing care, Specialist out of school provision, Sponsored day care, Outreach in the community and community groups. Residential short break care for overnight care for children and young people can be provided at Pinewood [Short breaks | Cheshire West and Chester Council](#) which is one of our specialist provisions. An assessment is required to be undertaken by a Social Worker which can be done through calling the Integrated Access and Referral (iART) Team on 0300 123 7047. Referral for this can be made by a Social Worker or Family Case Worker depending on the outcome of the assessment.

Eligibility criteria to access Complex / Specialist Services

Eligibility criteria will apply where disabled children / young people require additional services over and above those provided under the Universal or Targeted services and priority for these services will be as follows:

- Children and young people with Autism who have co-occurring needs such as severe learning disabilities or have behaviour which is challenging
- Children and young people with complex health needs which includes those with disability and life limiting conditions who require palliative care services and children with complex health needs and physical, sensory, or cognitive impairments
- Children and young people with moving and handling needs that will require equipment and adaptations
- Children and young people where challenging behaviour is associated with other impairments (e.g., severe learning disability or mental ill health).

Services will be allocated on the basis of need which has been identified through an assessment. It will not be the degree or level of disability alone that determines eligibility for services, but the interplay of this with parenting capacity, family and environmental factors. Assessment will be undertaken via a Team Around the Family (TAF) Assessment), or a Single Assessment.

How we will listen to you

By listening to the views and aspirations of children and young people and their parents/carers, we will strive to ensure short breaks are available to enable and empower children and young people

with SEND to lead fulfilling lives, have access to enriching activities and have opportunities away from their parents and/or carers. These views are essential to support positive outcomes.

We will use feedback we receive from children, young people, parents, and carers and we will continue our work to help children and young people with SEND to enjoy opportunities to reach their potential and fulfil their ambitions. This will assist the Council with developing a cycle of continual improvement and ensuring responsive and timely services, which are accessible.

By working alongside families, we want to make sure short breaks really work for children, young people and families in Cheshire West and Chester and we can't do that without you. Your views, comments and thoughts are really important in making sure we get this right.

If you would like to provide any feedback on our short breaks services, this can be done by completing our survey by clicking on the following link: <https://forms.office.com/e/y8f7RR9TQV>

If you would like to be involved in the design and development of the Short Breaks Statement going forward please contact: shortbreaks@cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk

Useful links



Live Well website

For more information on the local offer visit the Live Well website:

[Home | Live Well Cheshire West \(cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk\)](https://www.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk)



Cheshire West and Chester Parent Carer Forum

For more information visit the Cheshire West and Chester Parent Carer Forum website:

[Parent Carer Forum | Cheshire West | Chester \(pcfcheshirewest.org\)](https://www.pcfcheshirewest.org)



Disability Positive

For more information on Community Connections visit the Disability Positive website:

[Home - Disability Positive](https://www.disabilitypositive.org.uk)



Endorphins Group Limited

For more information on targeted community-based activities visit the Endorphins Group Limited website:

[Home - Endorphins Group UK](https://www.endorphinsgroup.co.uk)

Who to contact if I need help?

For more information about activities for all children please look on the Live Well West Cheshire or contact admin@livewell.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk