

# Swindon's Short Breaks Statement

Updated November 2022

Social and leisure activities for children and young people with disabilities in Swindon



This Short Breaks Statement is for families living in Swindon who have a disabled child or young person aged 0 to 18th birthday. It sets out Swindon Borough Council's vision of short break services and explains who can access short breaks and how.

Short breaks provide opportunities for children and young people with disabilities to enjoy social and leisure activities outside of school hours. This could be during evenings, weekends, school holidays or overnight (overnight short breaks are **only** available if assessed as a need via a social care assessment). For example, a youth club, a holiday play scheme or a sports activity.

Short breaks also offer parents and carers a break from their caring responsibilities.

More information about short breaks can be found on Swindon's Local Offer website:

<https://localoffer.swindon.gov.uk/shortbreaks>

# Contents

Introduction.....	3
How to access short breaks.....	4 – 5
The Aiming High Local Offer.....	6
The impact of short breaks.....	7
Contact details.....	8



# Introduction

The Council provides a range of short breaks for children with disabilities under the Breaks for Carers of Disabled Children Regulations 2011. The law says that a local authority must provide, as far as is reasonably practicable, a range of services which is 'sufficient to assist carers to continue to provide care or to do so more effectively'.

The regulations require local authorities to produce a Short Breaks Statement to explain the range of short breaks support available, any eligibility criteria and how the range of service is designed to meet the needs of disabled children and their families.

## Consultation and Participation

This Short Breaks Statement has been updated in partnership with [Swindon SEND Families Voice](#), the recognised parent carer forum for children with additional needs in Swindon.

During 2021 we worked with Swindon SEND Families Voice to review Swindon's Aiming High Short Breaks service. The review aimed to ensure a fair and sustainable short breaks offer and look at how demand and waiting lists could be managed as fairly as possible.

The review identified proposals for potential changes to the service (you can read more about the proposals in the link below). A public consultation was then held from 13 April to 11 May 2021, to gain a wide range of views about the proposals from families who use short break services now, those who may use short breaks in future and a range of other stakeholders. The consultation was circulated widely and virtual consultation sessions were held. We also worked with [STEP Swindon](#) to obtain the views of children and young people with disabilities directly.

In total 108 people responded to the consultation, a mixture of parents, carers, young people and practitioners. The results of the consultation were then analysed with Swindon SEND Families Voice.

Following the consultation feedback, it was agreed that not all of the proposals we consulted on should go ahead.

The consultation has identified additional work required to further develop Swindon's short breaks services and we will continue to work with families to develop and consult on any future proposals for 2023/24 and beyond.

You can see more details about the consultation outcomes and future updates on the local offer webpage:

<https://localoffer.swindon.gov.uk/shortbreaks> or contact Aiming High on 01793 464080 or: [aiminghigh@swindon.gov.uk](mailto:aiminghigh@swindon.gov.uk).



# How to access short breaks

We recognise that all children and families are different and may require different types and levels of short breaks support. We also understand that needs may fluctuate over time. Swindon aims to offer a graduated, transparent and proportionate response, to ensure that children with disabilities and their families have the right short breaks support. For some short break services we may need to assess your child and family to ensure that we provide the right level of support.

Short breaks support for children and young people aged 0 to 18th birthday who are Swindon residents and have a disability as defined by the Equality Act 2010\*:



Level 1. Mainstream and targeted activities	Level 2. Aiming High Local Offer	Level 3. Social Care response
<b>Criteria:</b>		
<p>The child has a disability, but this doesn't prevent them from accessing social / leisure activities.</p> <p>The child does, or could, access at least one social or leisure activity where a parent / carer doesn't have to stay.</p> <p>Staff may require some advice and awareness-raising in order to support the child appropriately.</p> <p>The family may need information, advice and signposting about what is available.</p>	<p>Child / family meet <u>all</u> of the following criteria:</p> <p>The child is unable to access any other social or leisure activity without a parent / carer staying.</p> <p><u>Child falls into a or b (or both):</u></p> <p>a. Specially trained / qualified staff are required to safely meet the child's needs and we are unable to identify a setting with staff sufficiently trained / confident to meet those needs.</p> <p>b. The child requires a higher staff ratio.</p> <p>Parent / carer requires breaks from caring in order to continue to provide care or to enable them to provide care more effectively.</p>	<p>If a child needs more support than that available through the Local Offer, and requires a statutory assessment to explore needs that result from the child's disability, you should contact the <a href="#">Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub</a> (MASH).</p> <p>The Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub will determine the appropriate level of response, as defined by the <a href="#">Swindon multi-agency thresholds document</a>.</p>

\* You are disabled under the Equality Act 2010 if you have a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term negative effect on your ability to do normal daily activities. 'Substantial' is more than minor or trivial. 'Long-term' means 12 months or more.

## Type of assessment:

<p>No assessment is required to access many of these services; contact providers directly.</p>	<p>Anyone can make a referral to Aiming High including parents and carers or anyone working with or supporting the family. Complete the online form: <a href="#">Make a referral to Aiming High</a></p> <p>Or contact Aiming High: 01793 464080 <a href="mailto:aiminghigh@swindon.gov.uk">aiminghigh@swindon.gov.uk</a></p> <p>An Inclusion &amp; Outreach Officer will contact you to discuss your referral. Due to high demand, this may take up to 12 weeks. This is not an assessment, but an opportunity to discuss your child's needs and look at the type of short breaks support that would be most suitable.</p>	<p>This could be through receipt of Early Help services or it could be an assessment completed by a social worker. This may be a social worker from the Disabled Children's Team or it may be a social worker from another Children's team.</p> <p>MASH normal office hours: 8.30am to 4.40pm Mon to Thu 8.30am to 4.00m on Fri</p> <p>Call 01793 466903 and choose option 2, or email: <a href="mailto:swindonmash@swindon.gov.uk">swindonmash@swindon.gov.uk</a></p>
--	--	--



## Level of support offered:

<p>Many disabled children will be able to access social and leisure activities available for all children in their local community, alongside some targeted activities designed for children with disabilities or additional needs.</p> <p>For example, Brownies, Cubs or a holiday club. You can find more information about activities in the <a href="#">local offer</a>.</p> <p>Aiming High will provide information, advice and signposting to all families of disabled children and work with settings to support inclusion.</p>	<p>Aiming High Local Offer:</p> <p>A maximum of <b>80 hours</b> of Aiming High support per year (1.5 hours per week, which can be used flexibly).</p> <p>The types of support available include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inclusion Funding</li> <li>• Direct Payments</li> <li>• UET Short Breaks</li> <li>• Specialist group activities</li> </ul> <p>There is more information about these options on the next page.</p>	<p>This could be through receipt of Early Help services: the Early Help Hub will contact the family to discuss signposting and targeted support.</p> <p>Or it could be an assessment completed by a social worker; this may be a social worker from the Disabled Children's Team or a social worker from another Children's team.</p> <p>The assessment will identify if there is an assessed need for short break services and how the need will be met through an individual package of support.</p>
--	---	--

We recognise that every family is different and that needs may change over time. Children and families can and will move between these levels according to their particular circumstances. For example, you may no longer require a service from Aiming High, or your needs may increase and require further assessment at level 3 (above).

# The Aiming High Local Offer

The Aiming High Local Offer (Level 2 in the table on pages 4-5) offers a low level of support without assessment for children and young people with disabilities who meet the criteria. Children who are eligible for the Local Offer are offered a maximum of 80 hours of support per year (1.5 hours per week, which can be used flexibly). The types of support available through the Local Offer include:

---

<b>Inclusion Funding</b>	Funding for 1:1 support to enable a child to access a mainstream or targeted social or leisure activity (e.g. swimming lessons, dancing or martial arts). The setting would need to be able to provide the worker. Aiming High pay a maximum rate of £10 per hour and do not fund the cost of the activity itself.
<b>Direct Payments</b>	Aiming High provide support and funding to enable parents or carers to employ a 1:1 worker to support their child. The family need to identify a worker. Aiming High pay a maximum rate of £10 per hour and do not fund the cost of any activities attended. A Direct Payment Support Advisor provides ongoing support.
<b>UET Short Breaks</b>	Funding for a child to attend Uplands Enterprise Trust (UET) Short Breaks, based at Upper Shaw Ridge Farm. For age 5 and up. Soft play, outdoor games, sports, arts and craft, baking and more. After school, weekends and school holidays.
<b>Specialist Groups</b>	Aiming High provide a range of specialist groups based on need. Groups run during evenings, Saturdays and school holidays. For age 5 and up. Activities include arts and craft, outdoor play, go-karts, sports, gaming and walks, depending on the needs of the children. There are currently long waiting lists.

---

## Charges

We aim to ensure that families of disabled children do not pay more than families of non-disabled children for Council short break activities. **From 1 April 2023, the charge for Aiming High group services will increase from £2.50 to £3.00 per hour.** This must be paid in advance. Sibling reductions apply (first child full price, subsequent children half price). If this charge is a barrier to accessing the service, please contact Aiming High to discuss concessions.

## Transport

We know that transport to and from activities is an important issue for many families. Parents and carers are expected to transport their children to and from short breaks. The Council provides transport in exceptional circumstances only.

**From 1 April 2023, there will be a charge of £3 per session for children who receive Council-funded transport to and from groups (no charge before 1 April 2023).** This must be paid in advance. Transport will still only be provided in exceptional circumstances. Sibling reductions apply (first child full price, subsequent children half price). If this charge is a barrier to accessing the service, contact Aiming High to discuss concessions.

# The impact of short breaks

Families have told us that short breaks have huge benefits for children and young people with disabilities, their parents, carers and siblings. Here are some of the things parents, carers, children and young people have told us are important to them about short breaks:

## A chance for children and young people to:

- Enjoy a fun activity and try new things
- Make friends and socialise
- Develop skills, independence and build confidence

## A break for parents and carers:

- Time to recharge
- Spend time together or with other children
- Know their child is safe and having fun

“My son greatly values and enjoys the group he attends, it is a chance for him to be away from us, independently (as well as being a child with additional needs he is also a young carer too.)”

“Aiming High is the only support my child will access due to her anxiety. The staff have always supported her and encouraged her to do activities.”

“I value his access to groups highly and he loves going (which is unbelievably nice to be able to say as he struggles so much with so many things).”

“Aiming high is an absolute life saver of a service, my kids love going to group especially in holidays they have made new friends.”

“Aiming High has been a life saver for our family! Even 4 hours a month makes so much difference for my son. He is so happy to go there! The staffs are friendly and very nice too. I wished they provided longer other kinds of sessions/ respite too.”

Families have told us that we need to do more to make sure families know about Aiming High:

“Aiming high and shorts breaks needs greater visibility in the SEND community. Lots of parents not aware of them.”

Families have also told us that there are still some gaps in short break activities for disabled children. For example, the need for more community services to be inclusive, and opportunities for developing social skills and independence in the local community. The views of families are essential to ensuring our short break services meet the needs of children with disabilities and their families in Swindon. We will continue to work with children and young people with disabilities, their families and service providers to monitor and review our short break services, as part of our cycle of continual improvement.





## Contact details:

If you have any questions about short breaks please contact Aiming High:

Tel: 01793 464080

Email: [aiminghigh@swindon.gov.uk](mailto:aiminghigh@swindon.gov.uk)

There is more information about short breaks in Swindon's Local Offer:

<https://localoffer.swindon.gov.uk/shortbreaks>

The information in this Statement can be produced in a range of languages and formats (such as large print, Braille or other accessible formats) by contacting Swindon Borough Council Customer Services on 01793 445500 or: [customerservices@swindon.gov.uk](mailto:customerservices@swindon.gov.uk) .