

Camden Short Breaks Statement

2024 – 2025



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In April 2011, UK Government legislation introduced the Short Breaks Duty- this states that local authorities must provide Short Breaks for disabled children and young people who are eligible.

The provision of Short Breaks services is part of Camden's statutory duty to protect and support disabled children and young people, and their families under the following UK legislation:

- Children & Young Person's Act 2008
- Short Break Regulations 2011
- Equality Act 2010
- SEND Reforms 2014
- Children's & Families Act 2014
- Care Act 2014

Short Breaks are designed to support families so that they do not reach crisis point.

The Short Breaks Statement explains:

- what are Short Breaks and the range of Short Breaks services in Camden,
- how Short Breaks services and activities can be accessed.

This document is for disabled children and young people (0-18 years old) living in Camden and their families.

What are Short Breaks?

Short Breaks are:

- Activities for disabled children and young people (usually aged 5 to 18 years) that provide an enjoyable break away from parent carers, while giving parent carers a break from their caring responsibilities.
- Enable parent carers time to do the things they can't do while looking after their child, including looking after themselves. Short Breaks can and should be positive experiences for everyone involved.
- Can take place outside of school hours during evenings, weekends, school holidays and sometimes overnight.
- Provide a range of activities including those that are universal (available to everyone) and those that are specialist, involving trained staff and equipment.
- Can be delivered in families' homes, at centres, or out in the community.



Short breaks can include:

- Day time activities – accessing swimming pools, local parks, play centres, after school or weekend clubs, access to playschemes during school holidays or term time.
- Support with personal care in the family home, for those with complex social care and medical needs.
- Accessing the community with support, to develop independence in for example: travelling, cooking, arts and crafts, sports, understanding safety and budgeting, making new friends and learning new skills.
- More specialist care in settings that can provide daytime or overnight support, for those with complex social care and medical needs.
- Support for parents to access local groups for a walk, yoga sessions, coffee mornings.

***“Although we need more -
the services we receive work
well for our child and for us
as a family”***

Universal Offer and Activities

There are different types of Short Break activities on offer. Some are part of the targeted and specialist Short Breaks offer, whilst other “universal” activities can be accessed in the local community directly without intervention from social services. The universal offer is available for everyone in the community and there are a wide range of youth activities on offer across Camden. This includes activities at leisure centres, libraries and local parks that run inclusive activities for disabled children and young people such as dance and performance classes, adapted cycling sessions, swimming lessons, arts club, and lots more.

Sports and Physical Activity - Young disabled people interested in sports can find a range of activities available to all age groups. [The Camden Physical Activity Map](#) provides more details.

Camden Libraries - Offer a great range of accessible resources and activities for children aged 0-5 years and upwards, young people and adults. Find your local library [here](#).

Green Spaces - We have lots of parks and open spaces in Camden, many of which have play areas. Find out more about parks in Camden [here](#).

Outdoor Gyms - These are great to try out, free to access and are suitable for people of all ages and fitness levels. Find your local outdoor gym [here](#).

Children’s Centres and Family Hubs - Offer a range of fun stay and play sessions and short courses for parents and children under 5. The sessions are specially designed to encourage children’s early learning and development. Find your local centre [here](#).

Reactive - Any young disabled person aged 13 -19 can join this forum to have their say about how to improve services for disabled children and young people in Camden. [Click here](#).

Young People for Inclusion - A youth project supported by The Big Lottery Fund for 16-25 year olds who are disabled, learning disabled or neurodivergent. This organises a variety of activities and supports young disabled people in Camden to create change in their community. [Click here](#).

Targeted Offer and Activities

For disabled children and young people and their families who may need additional support for a period of time, there are other targeted activities, play/sensory sessions, and support groups that can be accessed following an assessment. These are offered as part of the Early Help offer in Camden. For more information, contact the Children and Families Contact Team on 020 7974 3317 or [click here](#).

Specialist Short Breaks and Activities

There are specialist services for disabled children (usually aged 5-18) with complex needs who cannot access universal or targeted services like their peers, as they require a higher level of support.

Specialist short breaks are provided by Camden's Children and Young People's Disability Service (CYPDS). To be eligible, a child or young person must have a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial long term effect on their ability to carry out daily tasks.

Camden uses the [Functional Needs Assessment](#) to work out the eligibility for the specialist short breaks provision. A Child and Family Assessment can also be completed with the child, young person and their family, if the child is under the age of 5 and/ or in order to determine eligibility for a specialist short breaks provision more information about child needs and functioning is required.

The Specialist Short Breaks include two elements: Core Short Breaks Offer and Enhanced Short Breaks Offer.

Core Short Breaks Offer

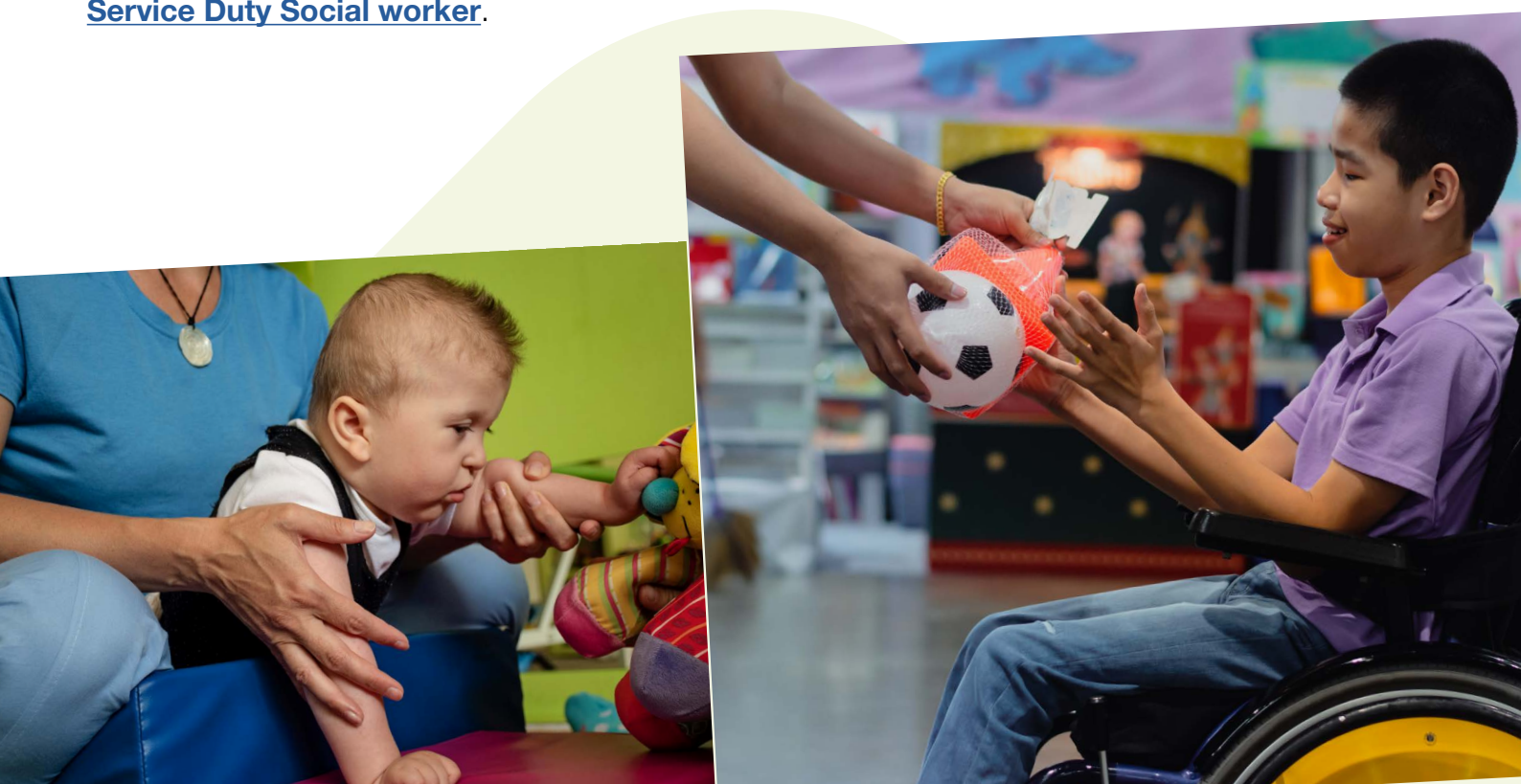
The core offer for children aged five years to their 18th birthday will be:

- Term time: One weekly after-school club or one alternative weekend activity.
- School holidays: One session during the school holidays, or
- Direct Payments: Up to 5 hours per week as Direct Payment to use for a carer or support during an activity.

Families will be given a choice of services which their children can access from the core offer.

To request access to a Specialist Short Breaks service, **the parent needs to complete an assessment form, the self assessment referral tool (SART)** available on the Camden Local Offer website section on [Short Breaks](#). The form is designed to be completed by parents whose children and young people require Specialist Short Break services due to their additional needs. Parents can also ask other professionals involved with the child for a copy of the tool and for help to complete the form i.e. school staff or someone in a Family Hub.

For any questions about eligibility, please contact the [Children and Young People's Disability Service Duty Social worker](#).



Enhanced Short Breaks Offer

Enhanced Short Breaks are for disabled children, young people and their families or carers who may need a higher level of Short Breaks with specialist care. A child and family assessment is always to access this level of support, which will be undertaken by a **CYPDS Social Care officer**.

This offer may include personal care support, overnight stays, specialist short breaks in term-time and the school holidays.

About the assessment:

- It includes a minimum of one home visit by an allocated social worker and network checks by professionals involved with the child/young person and their family.
- It reviews the child's needs and considers parental and family capacity as well as environmental factors. For example, parents with significant health needs of their own, impact on siblings, children with complex medical needs, and families with more than one disabled child. The Short Breaks provided will be in addition to the core offer as outlined above.

Important to note:

- Disabled children aged under five will be assessed based on their individual and family circumstances, and their particular needs before a service is offered.
- Families can request to change the Short Breaks services they receive at any point during the year if a disabled child's and their family needs are changing.



“My son has been going to play provision since he was 6 and this is a fantastic service. It enabled him to have fun and socialise, and for me to have a break”



Receiving a Core or Enhanced Short Breaks Offer

Families can choose to receive the **specialist core offer or enhanced short breaks offer** in one or more of the following ways:

Direct Payments – this is when the money is paid directly to families so that they can buy short breaks themselves, instead of Camden Council arranging them. This gives families more choice, control and flexibility. For example, based on the core offer, direct payment hours could be up to five hours per week throughout the year.

Commissioned Specialist Short Breaks - these are arranged by the Council and are with trained staff and specialist equipment. They also include a small number of overnight Short Breaks during the summer holidays.

Short Breaks Panel

To agree the packages of support for an enhanced specialist shorts break offer, individual cases are presented to a Short Breaks Panel. The process is as follows:

- Before the panel, a social worker or short breaks practitioner will meet the family to complete an assessment and write up a plan of suggested short breaks. They will present the proposed plan at the panel for agreement at an agreed date/time.

- Parents and young people are invited to attend the panel to give their opinions including those about the short breaks services they already receive.
- All enhanced short breaks care plans are regularly reviewed, depending on the level of needs, and changing circumstances of the family.

About the panel

The panel comprises of a multidisciplinary team, of social care, health and education professionals from the different services that provide support. This group looks at the best ways of providing and funding short breaks for the children and young people with the highest levels of need. The panel considers the opinions of the family and specialists who work with the child or young person and brings everyone's ideas together to agree the right short breaks package for the child or young person and their family.

“Youth Services have been very supportive of my son giving him a gym membership & opportunities to record music”



Short Breaks Appeal Process

If parents, carers or young people do not agree with the decision that the panel has made, regarding the enhanced short breaks offer they can make an appeal through the following process:

- Initially discuss any concerns with the social worker / short breaks practitioner who completed the plan, or their manager.
- If the issues are not resolved at this stage, the parent will need to officially appeal the panel decision in writing. This needs to be received by the social worker/short breaks practitioner within **14 days of the panel outcome letter** that will be sent to the parent following the panel meeting. Details on how to appeal the outcomes of the panel will be included in this letter.
- The proposed short breaks care plan will be reconsidered by the next available panel.
- This panel will have at least one different member from the panel which made the original decision. Parents, carers and young people are invited to attend, and any further information will be considered.
- If the issue is unresolved at the panel, the parent, carer or young person can make a complaint in the first instance by email to the [duty officer](#) or follow the [Camden Complaints Process](#).

Review of Shorts Breaks

We will review the Short Breaks enhanced offer support at least once a year to understand if the support being offered meets the needs of the child/young person receiving the service. The voices of disabled children and young people and their families are important to capture in the review.

CYPDS will make a home visit as part of our statutory duty when carrying out an assessment or a review of an Enhanced Short Breaks package to understand parent's views and support the child to contribute to what they wish to receive from their care plan. Parents will receive a copy of this in advance of the assessment and be able to comment on it prior to the panel.

At age 14 and 16 we will contact the parent to arrange a Preparing for Adulthood assessment, and the CYPDS will seek to align this assessment with the young person's Education Health Care Plan (EHCP) review.

For more information, please see the [Preparing for Adulthood booklet](#)



Health funding

- Children assessed by the relevant health professionals as having complex medical needs may have a health contribution towards the funding of their care packages. This will be outlined in the child or young person's care plan.

Transport

- Parents are responsible for transporting their children to Short Breaks. Families who receive mobility allowance through Disability Living Allowance can use this to support their child's transport needs. Some commissioned providers have transport included to support activities which are not taking place on their site. Please check this directly with the provider.

Feedback Your Views

Disabled children and young people and their families can share their views on Short Breaks services through the Short Breaks Panel, [Special Parents' Forum](#) meetings and the [Reactive](#) disabled young people's Forum, as well as other events for disabled children and their families. Our aim is to work together to meet the needs and improve outcomes for this group of children and young people.

We always strive to improve the experience of our service and engage regularly with the below forums to obtain feedback:

- [Camden Special Parents Forum](#)
- [Swiss Cottage School parents forum - for parents of young people at this school](#)).

CYPDS in Touch Newsletter

The Children and Young People's Disability Service (CYPDS) produces a quarterly newsletter called CYPDS InTouch Newsletter (Spring, Summer, Autumn, and Winter).

It includes news and updates from the team, offers information on current activities for children and young people with disabilities, and support for their families available in Camden. If you receive a service from CYPDS, this newsletter will be sent to you by post with information on how to apply for a disability card for your child.

Contact Details

- [CYPDS](#)
- Parents forum at Swiss Cottage School (For parents of Young People at Swiss Cottage School)
- [Camden Local Offer Website – Short Breaks](#)

If you would like a copy of this document in another format such as large print, easy read, Braille or audio tape, or in another language, please contact [CYPDS](#).

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