**London Borough of Waltham Forest**

**Short Break Service Statement (Ages 0-18 Years)**

**2024 – 2026**

**IN WALTHAM FOREST WE AIM TO:**

* Improve the health and wellbeing of disabled children, young people, their brothers and sisters and parent/carers.
* Build up independence to help children/young people to develop their social and life skills and have choice.
* Support disabled children to do new things, have fun, make new friends, and do things without parents/carers.
* Support parents/carers to have a break from caring and strengthen the family’s ability to cope, reducing stress and preventing family breakdown.
* Boost community acceptance of disabled children and young people as being equal and essential members of society.
* Increase the availability and choice of activities and services for disabled children.
* Make it easier for families to access short breaks and universal services according to their needs.
* Help families to seek advice and information through the council website and our published local offer.
* Support universal services i.e., leisure centres, clubs etc. to include and support disabled children and young people in their services.
* Give families the information that they need about the services on offer.
* Work together with disabled children and their families, to make sure we are meeting their needs and to see how we can improve what we offer.
* Check and monitor that service providers are offering a good quality service which helps disabled children to achieve positive results.
* Offer training and development opportunities to increase skills in meeting the needs of disabled children, young people and families.

**WHAT IS THE SHORT BREAKS STATEMENT AND WHY DO WE HAVE IT?**

Waltham Forest Short Breaks statement gives parents and carers of disabled children and young people aged 0–25 living in the borough, information about short breaks and how to access them. We define disability in accordance with the Equality Act 2010 as: “Having a physical or mental impairment that has a ‘substantial’ and ‘long-term’ negative effect on your ability to do normal daily activities.”

The Breaks for Carers of Disabled Children Regulation (April 2011) require a local authority to provide ‘so 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.’ Local authorities are also required to publish a statement about short breaks. This statement is Waltham Forest Council’s response to both these requirements.

Section 25 of The Children & Young Person’s Act 2008 made the provision of short breaks a statutory duty for all local authorities.

From 1st April 2011, the Children’s Act and the Breaks for Carers of Disabled Children Regulations 2011, has required local authorities to provide short break services that will help and support parents and carers who look after a disabled child or children.

This means that the Council must provide parents (who are entitled to this) with a break from caring and children and young people with short break services.

**More information about legislation can be found here:**

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2011/707/made>

**This statement gives you information about:**

* What is available?
* Who can use the service?
* How to access services?
* How short breaks meets the needs of disabled children and young people and their families?

This statement was developed in partnership with the Waltham Forest Parents Forum, parents and carers, the local authority, local health services, and schools in 2016, revised in 2021 and reviewed again in 2023 in partnership with our local area partnership including Waltham Forest Parent Forum.

**OUR VISION**

The Vision for children and young people in Waltham Forest was produced with parents, children, young people and professionals. The vision sets out hopes and wishes for a full and happy life and covers the following:

* Living great lives
* Support when we need it
* A cleaner, healthier, greener Waltham Forest
* Safe, accessible communities that we are part of

**PRINCIPLES**

* Short breaks to be extra to mainstream provision – where criteria are met
* Short breaks should be preventative – not crisis intervention
* Short breaks should support carers and provide benefits to children and young people.
* Short breaks should improve outcomes for disabled children, young people and their families
* Short breaks should consider siblings as part of the single assessment
* Short breaks are personal to individual need

**How do I find out about the available services?**

**MAINSTREAM SE**[￼](https://www.walthamforest.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2023-01/WFPF%20Activities%20Booklet%20Jan%202023.pdf)**RVICES**WFPF Activities Booklet Jan 2023.pdf (walthamforest.gov.uk)

All disabled children and young people should be able to access activities and opportunities which are happening in the local area. These can provide disabled children with the same positive results and improvements in their lives as a short break locally. These opportunities can be found at children’s centres, through free Early Years childcare, swimming pools, leisure centres, youth groups, parks, playgrounds, and community centres. Wherever possible these opportunities should be used first. These services must follow the Equalities Act 2010 to make reasonable changes and not to treat a disabled person unfairly.

**Here are links with services available in Waltham Forest:**

**Youth services in Waltham Forest:** <https://www.walthamforest.gov.uk/families-young-people-and-children/youth-services-directory>

**Family hubs and family hubs offer:** <https://www.walthamforest.gov.uk/families-young-people-and-children/family-hubs>

**Waltham Forest events page:** <https://www.walthamforest.gov.uk/events>

Some of the invents include:

<https://www.walthamforest.gov.uk/events/send-friendly-swimming-session>

<https://www.walthamforest.gov.uk/events/family-cookery-club>

<https://www.walthamforest.gov.uk/events/play-session-chingford>

<https://www.walthamforest.gov.uk/events/story-time-leytonstone-library>

<https://www.walthamforest.gov.uk/events/stories-and-songs-lea-bridge-library>

**Local offer:** <https://www.walthamforest.gov.uk/schools-education-and-learning/local-offer-special-educational-needs-and-disability-send/things-do>

<https://www.walthamforest.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2023-01/WFPF%20Activities%20Booklet%20Jan%202023.pdf>

London borough of Waltham Forest have a range of universal offers available for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities. These can be found on the Waltham Forest pages above, which include our local offer, things to do, activities advertised by Waltham Forest Parent Forum and other events pages.

Activities for all children such as Girl Guides https://www.girlguiding.org.uk/ and Scoutshttps://www.scouts.org.uk/ or summer fun days which are run by the local council. Information regarding council events is available at <https://www.walthamforest.gov.uk/events>

[￼](https://www.walthamforest.gov.uk/schools-education-and-learning/local-offer-special-educational-needs-and-disability-send/things-do)Some are free to use whilst others charge. A reduced cost may be available for families on low incomes. However, not all mainstream services will be suitable for everyone. It is advisable to contact the provider to discuss your needs and what they can offer.

**SPECIALIST SERVICES** are offered through short breaks:

<https://www.walthamforest.gov.uk/schools-education-and-learning/local-offer-special-educational-needs-and-disability-send/social-care-and-short-breaks/short-breaks>

**WHAT IS A SHORT BREAK?**

Short breaks provide a chance for children with disabilities to spend time away from their carers, try out new things, have fun and make new friends. Short breaks can also provide families with a chance to have a break from their caring responsibilities and to do ordinary things together. A short break can be a few hours, evenings, overnight, weekend, and school holiday daytime activities. It can take place in your own home, at a carer’s home or in several other settings, for example:

* Holiday playschemes
* Activities after school or during weekends that are not regular childcare\*
* Adventure play
* Youth clubs (commissioned services)
* Buddying and befriending
* Family days (commissioned services)
* Provider organised trips (commissioned services)
* Disability specific services (for the visually, hearing and mobility impaired)
* Support to access inclusive mainstream services: Most services are happy to accept disabled children and young people, but to get the most out of their time there, some children/young people may need additional support. This could be because they need help with using the toilet, or with their behaviour. Some children just need someone to go along with them for the first few times to help the service to understand how to include them successfully. Currently this is only available to families receiving short breaks allocation through direct Payments.
* Overnight residential short breaks at the Local Authority’s respite centre at Lester House, 99b Leyton Green Road (this means your child stays away from home for a short while and you get a night-time break). Overnight short breaks can only be considered once a Child and Family Assessment has been completed.

\*You could purchase an afternoon or activity with an OFSTED registered childcare provider on an ad hoc basis. Regular childcare falls outside of the remit of short breaks services.

**WHAT IS NOT A SHORT BREAK\*:**

* Educational support (any education related support must come from your child’s EHC or SEND support plan)
* Childcare (regular and ongoing childcare i.e. every day after school clubs)
* Holidays – in the UK or overseas
* Holiday activities abroad
* Holiday spending money
* Support for siblings
* Therapies, i.e.: OT, Speech and Language, Music therapy, ABA, etc.
* Extra tuition
* Support because of a parental ill health (adult social care)
* Carer’s assessment (adult services)
* Domiciliary care including feeding support and personal care

\*This is not an exhaustive list and is subject to change

**WHAT IS THE ELIGIBILITY FOR A SHORT BREAK?**

You may be eligible if your child:

* Is Resident in Waltham Forest and has one of the below:
* a diagnosed disability or a physical or mental impairment that has a ‘substantial’ and ‘long-term’ negative effect on their ability to do normal daily activities
* Known to a specialist health pathway; i.e.:
	+ Child development clinic
	+ Social and communication clinic
	+ Visual Impairment
	+ Joint assessment clinic
	+ Neuromotor clinic
	+ Clinic for children with Down Syndrome
	+ CAMHS
	+ Child is not currently known to Social care and in receipt of an ongoing care package
* And falls into one of the following categories A or B:

A: Children and Young people with ASD and or learning disabilities or behaviour which is challenging) or those children and young people with mental health and or behaviours that challenge and with other impairments such as learning disabilities

B: Children and young people with complex health needs including those with physical and/or learning disabilities and those with associated sensory impairments. Complex health needs include children and young with profound and multiple learning difficulties

* Is aged 0-18\* (the package will stop at the end of the term of the academic year when the young person turns 18)

\*For eligible young people over the age of 18 the need for a social care package will have to be identified through asocial care screening tool sent out to the family before the 18th birthday. Screening form is then assessed by Assistant Social workers and where eligibility is met, a RAS assessment will be completed for a young person.

**SHORT BREAKS FOR PRESCHOOL AGE CHILDREN**

For many families taking up their child’s statutory entitlement to a free early education and childcare place can provide a regular break from caring for your child/ren for up to 30 hours per week and offer parents/carers an opportunity to do things they want to do and/or spend time undertaking activities that could support her own well-being.

Free early education places are provided by schools and quality Ofsted registered childcare providers (including Childminders) who can offer various models for example school hours (9am to 3pm) full day (8am to 6pm) or morning and afternoon sessions. These options are subject to availability and would need to be agreed with the childcare provider. Childcare providers often undertake additional training to support the needs of children with SEND.

**Some 2-year-old** children are eligible for a free early education and childcare place. All Parents/carers requesting short breaks for a 2-year-old would be expected to complete an eligibility check for a free early education and childcare place in advance of applying for a short break, for their application to be considered and assessed.

**All 3- & 4-year-old** are eligible for a free early education and childcare place which can provide up to 30 hours of free childcare per week.

From September 2024 the free early education entitlement will be extended to some families with children from nine months old.

You can find full details of the free early education and childcare entitlement here <https://www.gov.uk/find-free-early-education>

Additional Special Education Needs Inclusion Funding (SENIF) is available to providers who offer free early education places to eligible children to enable them to meet the additional costs of meeting the needs of 2-, 3- & 4-year-old children taking up their free early education and childcare place where appropriate.

It is the LA’s is expectation that all families who are eligible for a free early education place will have taken up their full entitlement prior to any application for Shorts Breaks funding. When assessing the need for a Short Break for a child under 5, the LA will take into consideration to what level accessing their child’s free early education entitlement facilitates respite or a break from caring for the parent/carer.

**TYPES OF SHORT BREAKS WE CAN OFFER**

**Adventure Playgrounds**

A range of activities are available at two specialist playgrounds with activities designed to meet the needs of children and young people with additional needs. They offer an inclusive and individualised service to each child. They can offer both holiday schemes and weekend activities.

**Outreach Service**

The outreach service is designed in to meet the needs of disabled children/young people and their families through planned 1:1 sessions, where the provider facilitates leisure and play activities to help the child/young person expand their interests and explore, new social opportunities and build up positive experiences and skills. The sessions can be home, and community based depending on the needs of the child/young person and their family. Workers can also come along to family outings to provide support. All commissioned outreach providers deliver services within Waltham Forest, though may be based outside of the borough.

**Holiday, Evening and Weekend Provision**

These are usually group activities that can be run from a base or using community resources. The child/young person needs will be assessed by the provider and allocated either a 1:1, 2:1, 1: 2 or 1:4 support worker depending on their needs. Each short break provider has different criteria for the allocation of support. Some may charge a small fee to attend, and some may be able to offer transport to get your child/young person to and from the activity. Should you have any questions, please contact the individual organisations.

**Family Days**

Some of our commissioned providers offer family days out. These are usually group activities either on provider site or as organised trips. The child/young person needs will be assessed by the provider and allocated either a 1:1, 2:1, 1: 2 or 1:4 support worker depending on their needs. Each short break provider has different criteria for the allocation of support. Some may charge a small fee to attend, and some may be able to offer transport to get your child/young person to and from the activity. Should you have any questions, please contact the individual organisations.

**Overnight Short Breaks**

Overnight short breaks are provided at the council's Short Break unit at Lester House Short Break Service, Leyton Green Road, and are available for children aged 8-18 who have the most complex needs. To access this service, you child/ young person will require an assessment by a social worker.

**Sleep Service**

In Waltham Forest we have commissioned sleep practitioners, who can provide practical help to support families and professionals working with families who have a child with a sleep issue. They specialise in sleep support for children with and without special needs.

**Equipment Offer**

In the event of short breaks commissioned services stopping due to unforeseen circumstances I.e., pandemics, an Equipment Offer may be made available to parents in receipt of Waltham Forest Commissioned Services. There will be a communication issued from the Short Breaks service should this provision was made available in the event of emergency. Otherwise, it is not regularly available.

**LEVELS OF SHORT BREAKS SUPPORT**

A self-assessment form and evidence led application system will allocate children and young people to one of the groups:

Group 1: those who can access mainstream and universal services but are unable to do so and require financial support to help them overcome these barriers.

Group 2: those who are complex and profound and require access to specialist commissioned services or equivalent in Direct Payments.

This group will also include some of the complex young people with significant support needs beyond short breaks and respite where care at home would be compromised if wrap around social care support package was not put in place. Support could include short breaks and respite, overnight stays, support at home through domiciliary care and support packages from health including community nursing team and Social Services OT support through home adaptations and personal care. Where these needs require multi-disciplinary support, cases will be taken to Complex Needs panel or ad hoc Short breaks panel, to ensure appropriately constructed package of support is put in place.

**Service allocations:**

Group 1 (scores between 0 – 39) a personal annual budget of up to £500 for activities accessible through local offer or up to £250 for equipment to support child’s development. Funding will be received through a prepaid card subject to regular audits.

Group 2 (scores between 40 – 64) an allocation of specialist commissioned services of up to 156 hours a year or equivalent in direct payments to employ a Personal assistant. Within this group families would also be able to access a specialist provision at Leyton Green Road through afterschool clubs, holiday clubs and overnight stays (if this was a recommendation of the completed child and family assessment). Should you choose to receive this support through direct payments, the funds will be manged through a fund holding account only. Pre-paid card option is not available for this allocation.

For young people with complex health and medical needs we will be consulting specialist services (i.e. Occupational therapy, Speech and Language, Nursing team, Hospital discharging teams, Social Care, schools and any other professional involved in providing care and support) to recommend individualised packages including short break activities, respite, home support and domiciliary care with broader social care package and health support forming part of the package.

**HOW ARE NEEDS ASSESSED?**

Parents, carers and professionals must complete a short break referral form. This form is for the local authority to assess Need and Disability. The referral form will direct you to provide evidence of the needs and disability, other members of your family in household, how your child sleeps, daily care, behaviours, current services and impact on family, It will then take you to area for you to evidence and give a score (between 1 and 4) for your child in the following areas: Be Equal: to achieve, stay safe and family section.

Using the scores will enable the local authority to use the evidence you submit and scores on a matrix to accurately assess your child’s needs and allocation of appropriate provision. This may be by way of signposting you to universal offer/local offer or for appropriate provision of short breaks/respite.

A copy of the short breaks guidance notes providing support with application form will be sent to you along with referral form. Both can also be located on short breaks local offer page: [Short breaks | London Borough of Waltham Forest](https://www.walthamforest.gov.uk/schools-education-and-learning/local-offer-special-educational-needs-and-disability-send/social-care-and-short-breaks/short-breaks)

**HOW CAN I GET A SHORT BREAK?**

You can access a short break in the following ways:

* Through the Local Offer and mainstream services available for children and families in Waltham Forest (no assessment or allocation of Short Breaks is required)
* You can download or request an application form and send this to the SEND Service at senteam@walthamforest.gov.uk
* A professional working with your child might propose to refer your child to short breaks service

The form can be requested by contacting the Short Break officer at Waltham Forest at shortbreaks@walthamforest.gov.uk, our front door at senteam@walthamforest.gov.uk or by requesting it from a professional working with your child. You can also download the form here:

Please remember to sign your form before you submit it.

**HELP WITH COMPLETING THE FORM**

If you need help completing the form, there are several things you can do.

* Use the Short Breaks Guide which shows you, step by step, how to fill in the form.

<https://www.walthamforest.gov.uk/sites/default/files/completing_the_short_break_self_referral_form.pdf>

* Talk to SENDIASS to ask if they could help (contact at the end of this statement)
* Talk to a professional working with your child to see if they can help.
* If your school has a Family Support team, they may be able to help
* Early Help Voluntary Support Hub Between 09:45am and 11;15am
* Tuesdays: Leyton Family Hub, 215 Queens Road, E17 8PJ
* Wednesdays: Chingford Family Hub, 5 Oaks grove, E4 6EY
* Thursdays: Walthamstow Family Hub, 313 Billet Road, E17 5PX
* Fridays: Leytonstone Family Hub, 2-8 Cathall Road, E11 4LF

Please ensure that the form is signed by a parent or a guardian and that you send evidence that your child or young person has a disability. This could be a copy of your child’s DLA or PIP letter (which tells you what level of Disability Living Allowance/ Personal Independence Payment has been given to your child/young person) or a letter from the Consultant detailing your child/young person’s diagnosis. If you need further advice and help with this, you can also contact the Short Break officer on 0208 496 3515 or at shortbreaks@walthamforest.gov.uk

If we identify missing information in your referral, we will get back to you for more information or supporting evidence. This might delay our decision making.

**WHAT HAPPENS AFTER THE DECISION?**

We will write to you in 10 working days from the day we receive your referral to confirm the outcome of your application. We will also attach a list of our commissioned providers and a sheet to help you record how you use your hours.

**HOW CAN I USE MY SHORT BREAK ALLOCATION?**

We are trying to give families more flexibility within the choice of short breaks available and recognise that you will be best placed to make the decisions about this.

If your child was awarded activities budget here’s the information how this could be used Finding suitable and accessible leisure activities can be a challenge for parents of a child with SEND. That is why we’ve created guide below to help.

Accessible and fun activities include:

Children’s centres and play Culture and heritage

Cinemas and theatre Days out and holidays

Creative fun Fun evenings and nights

Outdoor fun Sports

Useful links: https://www.walthamforest.gov.uk/schools-education-and-learning/local-offer-special-educational-needs-and-disability-send/things-do/useful-links

If a child or young person has been given a short break package in a form of allocation of hours or Direct Payments, they can use the short break hours with any of the services that Waltham Forest has a contract with to provide services, (we refer to these as commissioned services). The short break package you may receive is usually via a commissioned service with Short Break hours or Direct Payments. You will receive an allocation of ‘hours’ as a package which you can use from the date of your application approval.

You can use your allocated hours at weekends, weekdays or during the school holidays, if there is availability. You can mix and match services from the Short Break providers which best suits your needs and wishes however, you need to make sure you do not exceed your annual allocation.

For example, if a child or young person is allocated 100 hours of Short Breaks the hours can be used in the following manner: 25 hours at ELHAP, 15 hours at Oak Foundation, 20 hours at Resources for Autism, 40 hours at KIDS etc. or the child/young person can use all 100 hours with the one organisation. In some cases, there may also be a daily/weekly charge to attend an activity. Check with the provider for details.

**Short Breaks are allocated for one year at a time and run from the date of our decision for 12 months.**

Short break allocation should be treated as annual allocation of supported and planned carefully for 12 months to ensure, you get the support, when you need it the most. If child/young person uses up all of their hours before the end of the financial year they will not be able to access the services until the allocation is reviewed before the 12-month anniversary and package is confirmed for the next 12 months. Therefore, it is very important to carefully plan how you use your hours. It is the **responsibility of the parents** to keep track of the hours that their child uses each year.

All the specialist short breaks services available in Waltham Forest can be found online at **www.walthamforest.gov.uk/short-breaks.** A printed version is available and can be requested by contacting SEND Service front door on 0208 496 6503 or by emailing: senteam@walthamforest.gov.uk

**IMPORTANT NOTICE:**

* Unused Short Break hours cannot be carried over into the following year.
* If short break allocation is not used within 6 months from allocation, we will close your allocation and you will need to reapply should short breaks be required.

**WHAT IS A DIRECT PAYMENT AND HOW CAN I ACCESS THIS?**

A Direct Payment is an alternative to an allocation of hours. The aim of a Direct Payment is to give more flexibility in how services are provided to people/families who are assessed as needing social services support. The Direct Payment is a sum of money that is paid to the family of a child/young person with a disability so the parents can buy Short Breaks and is an alternative to using the service providers that the local authority has a contract with to provide services (commissioned services). Therefore, you either receive a direct payment or a short break allocation but not BOTH.

Direct payment process is provided through Direct Payment Support Service

Phone number: 020 8496 4681

Email: Directpaymentssupport@walthamforest.gov.uk

Postal Address: Direct Payments Support Service, Adult Social Care, London Borough of Waltham Forest, Fellowship Square, Forest Road, Walthamstow E17 4JF

Website: <https://www.walthamforest.gov.uk/content/direct-payments-and-personal-budgets>

**Direct payments for the following:**

* To employ a Personal Assistant
* To access specialist activities that cannot be otherwise accessed through universal local offer
* Respite for parents of children under the age of five years – services of Ofsted registered providers can be used to access ad hoc support (if available – please refer to page 4 – section: “What is short break”)

Direct payments are used to employ a personal assistant. The council have a continuing arrangement with Care in Finance and Vibrance. Care in Finance and Vibrance are fundholders who support you in managing finances related to direct payments.

In addition to this, if you are employing a Personal Assistant, you will need advice in relation to your responsibilities as an employer, i.e. payroll, insurance, taxes, annual leave and redundancy payments. In some cases, you might be given a pre-paid card. Direct Payments team will also provide you with information about how to access and manage your card.

**Short breaks budget – activities and equipment**

The short breaks budget will be received as an annual payment to cover a 12-month period. Please refer to sections on page 3 and 4 of this statement to ensure the funding is used appropriately to support you and your child. Please note, we reserve the right to audit how the funds are being spent throughout the lifetime of your package. All budgets will be reviewed annually to ensure they continue to meet the needs of your child.

Activities funded through this allocation should include services available on our local offer or locally to support you and your family however should ensure they fall withing the remits of what is considered a short break (page 3 and 4 of this statement)

Equipment you could consider purchasing can include sensory equipment, books (including e-books), games/puzzles, outdoor play equipment and suitable electronic aids which promote your child's development, arts and crafts, physical health and mental health.

**What short break money cannot be used for\*:**

* Driving lessons
* Cleaning service or domestic service
* Transport
* Parking charges
* Subscriptions i.e., gym memberships and; leisure centres including online subscriptions i.e., Netflix, Amazon or any others
* Shopping
* Meals, eating out and take aways

\*This list is not exhaustive and is subject to change

**How do we ensure the allocation continues to meet the needs of your child**

Your short breaks allocation is for 12 months and at the end of the 12 month period it will be subject to a review through either the annual review of your EHC plan, review of your social care plan I.e. Child in Need Plan or Child Protection plan; it might be a result of a new child and family assessment, change in your circumstances, new diagnosis, etc. In case of your child not having and EHC plan or an allocated social worker, the review will be carried out by SEND Assistant Social workers before the anniversary of your allocation.

Please note a review might result in reduction or increase in your package or in a recommendation to move you onto the universal services available through local offer.

**SHORT BREAK OFFER EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES (I.E A PANDEMIC)**

In the exceptional circumstances, for example another pandemic, we will consider offering families some alternative support to the standard Short Break packages, in the form of opportunity to purchase equipment and toys such as outdoor play equipment, books, arts and craft materials, etc so that they could continue supporting the development, play and stimulation of their children through creativity.

This will be considered a temporary intervention and will be open and available for a limited period should there be a severe disruption to usual short breaks offer. The LA will inform all families and partners should the offer become available. We will also publish this information on our local offer.

**WHAT HAPPENS TO SHORT BREAKS WHEN MY YOUNG PERSON TURNS 18?**

If your young person is 18-25 with an EHC Plan, their social care needs will be assessed as part of a Care Act Assessment. To access this assessment, you will need to complete and return Social Care screening tool form sent to you before your child’s 18th birthday. If you are assessed as eligible, you might be allocated direct payments which will enable you to purchase services for your young person. Those who are eligible may still be able to use the short breaks providers list to provide services as part of their social care package (subject to provider being able to provide services to adults) using direct payments.

**WHAT IF MY CIRCUMSTANCES CHANGE?**

We understand that family circumstances can change suddenly, or urgent new needs arise. If this happens, you need to tell us as soon as possible as we may need to review your short breaks’ package. To do this you will need to contact either:

* Your child’s allocated social worker
* Your child’s SEND Officer
* The Early Help service if your case has been allocated to them (EarlyHelp@walthamforest.gov.uk)
* The Short Breaks co-ordinator

**WHAT IF I WANT TO CHANGE SHORT BREAK HOURS TO DIRECT PAYMENTS OR THE OTHER WAY AROUND?**

Should the current type of short break allocation no longer work for you or your child, please send your request in writing to shortbreaks@walthamforest.gov.uk and provide as much detail as possible, so it can be considered in the decision-making process. Please be advised that we might also speak to any professional involved in your child’s support to ensure, what we provide, meets your child and family needs.

**TRANSPORT AND SHORT BREAKS.**

We are unable to provide transport to access short breaks. Your child may be able to have a Freedom Pass which is for people with disabilities and gives reduced cost or free travel on most public transport in London. For further details see [**www.freedompass.org**](http://www.freedompass.org)

Alternatively, if your child is severely disabled and cannot travel on public transport, please check our local offer for available options: [Transport and getting around | London Borough of Waltham Forest](https://www.walthamforest.gov.uk/schools-education-and-learning/local-offer-special-educational-needs-and-disability-send/transport-and-getting-around)

**WHAT CAN I DO IF I AM UNHAPPY WITH THE DECISION OR THE PROCESS?**

You can choose to deal with your dissatisfaction in an informal or formal way. Here’s how to do this:

**Informal process:**

This is a 2-stage process consisting of a review of the initial decision made and then further appeal.

**1 Review** - you can contact short breaks officer and request a Review of our decision. You will be provided with a request for a review form where we will be asking to provide us with additional information that might have impact on the decision we made. We will consider additional information provided, review our scoring and decide. We will then write to you again to let you know what the reviewed decision is. We will also inform you what are your rights to appeal.

**2 Appeal** – Should you remain unhappy about the reviewed decision; you have the right to appeal. Please contact short breaks officer and request an Appeal form. We will convene independent panel of professionals, who have not previously been involved in decision making, to consider all information available initially, any further discussions leading to the previous decisions, any further information you provide and will decide. You will be informed about this decision in writing. This stage exhausts any informal routes within the SEND Service.

**Formal process:**

If you think formal process is what suits your circumstances better, you can log a formal complaint through the council’s formal complaint process that can be found here:

<https://www.walthamforest.gov.uk/content/complaints-compliments-and-comments>

We do however encourage you, to contact the service directly, as we believe many issues can be involved with the service.

**REVIEWS AND CONSULTATIONS TO HELP SHAPE OUR SHORT BREAKS OFFER**

We recognise and understand that circumstances change over time and that families’ and children’s view and needs also change and develop. For this reason, it is vital that services are regularly reviewed. This will also help to ensure that services are provided to families with fairness. We want to make sure that our Short Break services focus on improving outcomes and life opportunities through working together with parents, children and young people, our providers, and partners. For this to happen, we will:

* Ask children, young people and families for their views about services provided, services missing and services that are missing, we can do this via online surveys or by asking you to complete feedback forms we will send to you.
* Ask service providers to collect feedback from families and young people using their services so we can work jointly on shaping the best offer possible
* Meet with service providers and manage our contracts efficiently to ensure the services they provide make a positive impact on or children and young people as well as their families
* Annually consult parents and carers through Waltham Forest Parent Forum survey- I think this needs to be a LA survey as we don’t capture everyone with SBs
* Reach out to other organisation in borough for more feedback from families, i.e.: through SENDIASS (more information about this service can be found on our local offer)
* Receive and analyse feedback from WFPF short breaks survey

<https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/L88G69J>

* Collate and analyse complements and complaints data received by the service via formal and informal routes

**A GUIDE TO LEGISLATION (THE LAW):**

Following legislation applies to our Short Break services. More information and links can be found on our local offer.

* Disability Discrimination Act 1995
* Section 25 Of the Children and Young Persons Act 2008
* Equalities Act 2010
* The Breaks for Carers of Disabled Children Regulations 2011
* The Children and Families Act 2014

**PLEASE TELL US WHAT YOU THINK**

This statement will be formally reviewed again in November 2025. In addition, it will be annually reviewed for accuracy. We will keep parents, carers, children, young people and professionals advised and involved with this process.

If you want to make a comment or suggestion at any time you can do it in one of the ways listed below:

* Write to us at senteam@walthamforest.gov.uk
* Contact our Short Breaks officer, SEN officer, Social Worker
* Contact SEND Provisions Manager or Service Manager responsible for short breaks services and offer
* Provide feedback using the feedback link on our local offer page
* Feedback through Waltham Forest Parent forum Survey at

<https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/L88G69J>

**LIST OF MAIN CONTACTS AND INFORMATION ABOUT OTHER SUPPORTING SERVICES IN WALTHAM FOREST:**

**Waltham Forest SEND Service front door:**

Telephone: 0208 496 6503

Email: senteam@walthamforest.gov.uk

**Short Breaks officer**

Telephone: 020 8496 3515

shortbreaks@walthamforest.gov.uk

**London Borough of Waltham Forest – Children and Families’ Services,**

Telephone: 020 8496 2310 (Monday to Thursday 9am to 5.15pm, Friday 9am to 5pm)

Out of hours telephone: 020 8496 3000

Email: MASHrequests@walthamforest.gov.uk

**Early Help Service**

Telephone: 020 8496 3000

Email: EarlyHelp@walthamforest.gov.uk

**Direct Payments**

Email: directpaymentssupport@walthamforest.gov.uk

Telephone: 0208 496 4681

**SENDIASS (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Information Advice and Support Service)**

Telephone: 07494 280073

Email: wfsendiass@citizensadvicewalthamforest.org.uk

Website: <https://www.walthamforestsendiass.org.uk/>

**Waltham Forest Parent Forum (support for parents and carers).**

Lester House, 99 Leyton Green Road, London, E10 6DB

Email: walthamforestparentforum@live.co.uk

Website: www.walthamforestparentforum.com

**Carers First**

Carers First is a UK registered charity working with unpaid carers to provide practical information and advice. They are commissioned by Waltham Forest to provide support to carers

Telephone: 0300 303 1555

Email : hello@carersfirst.org.uk

Website: <https://www.carersfirst.org.uk/waltham-forest>