

Short Breaks for disabled children and young people from birth up to their eighteenth birthday and their families

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Introduction

The Wandsworth Short Breaks* offer is designed to give families of disabled children and young people access to a range of different short break opportunities, wherever possible without the need for further assessment. It continues to be kept under review. This short breaks service statement is designed to tell you about the current range of short breaks available in Wandsworth and how they can be accessed. In accordance with our duties, the Council publishes this statement online and makes sure that it is kept up to date.

What is a short break?

Short breaks are hugely beneficial to families as they give disabled children and young people the chance to take part in fun activities and develop new interests, skills, relationships and greater independence, whilst giving their parents a break from their caring responsibilities. There is a great variety in short breaks in terms of:

- when they happen i.e. evening, overnight, weekend, holiday periods;
- where they happen i.e. in the family home or away from the family home;
- how they happen i.e. independent of other family members, as a family, with other families; and
- who provides them i.e. Council, voluntary or private sector.

Who can have a short break?

The Wandsworth short breaks offer is designed for families living in Wandsworth who are caring for disabled children and young people aged between birth and their eighteenth birthday. A child or young person is considered to have a disability if their condition has a substantial effect on their ability to carry out day to day activities. This may mean that they have a learning or physical disability; an autistic spectrum disorder; a hearing or visual impairment; complex health needs; or that their behaviour may be challenging as a result of their physical or mental impairments.

The Council will assess any disabled child in response to a request from a parent or professional. However, some children and young people may have needs that require a high level of support to have a short break, or their families might need more help because of their particular circumstances. In these cases, the Council's Supporting Disabled Children's Service will carry out an assessment so that children and young people can have a package of support that is individually tailored to their needs.

If you would like more detailed information about the short breaks' eligibility criteria, please click on the link below:

[Wandsworth Council Short Breaks Eligibility Criteria](#)

What short breaks are available in Wandsworth?

The following sections give you some general information about the types of short breaks available in Wandsworth. The Family Information Service Wandsworth can provide more information and advice about the range of short breaks available, and which services may be best suited to your needs. You can contact them through their website www.wandsworth.gov.uk/localoffer, by email fis@wandsworth.gov.uk by ringing on 020 8871 7899 or by visiting the Combined Reception, Wandsworth Town Hall Extension, SW18 2PU, between 9.00am and 4.00pm. Please call or email to make an appointment if you need an interpreter or translator.

Some examples of the types of services available in Wandsworth are given below. For a full list of the short breaks' services available in Wandsworth, with a brief description of the services offered and contact details, please click below.

[Short Breaks Guide](#)

Universal services

Many families with disabled children and young people can use the same services used by all families, to have a break. This could mean that children and young people attend their local children's centres, after school clubs, holiday play centres, youth groups, or leisure centres. If you would like to use a universal service, you should approach the provider direct.

In Wandsworth we aim to increase the ability of all play and leisure services and local community organisations to include disabled children and young people. For example:

- [The Council's Youth Service](#) provides an offer across sites in Roehampton, Tooting and Battersea. The Service is committed to cultivating a culture of inclusion enabling all to access a mainstream provision, or if needed, a specialist youth group for disabled young people.
- [Wandsworth Schools' Music Service](#) supports disabled children who are keen to take part in musical activities.
- [Free recumbent cycling sessions at Battersea Park](#) for young people with a disability and a carer or sibling.

Targeted services

Some children and their families need more specialist provision to enjoy a short break. In Wandsworth we fund a wide variety of specialist services that can offer short breaks to families of disabled children and young people without the need for an additional assessment. We have tried to ensure that there is a mix of provision including holiday schemes, weekend provision and after school opportunities.

Specialist services may cater for children and young people of different ages and disabilities. Examples of the services include:

- [Kids Lady Allen Adventure Playground](#)– adventurous play after school, on Saturdays and during school holidays.
- [Unique Youth at George Shearing Centre](#) – a youth club for disabled young people after school and during school holidays.
- [Generate Opportunities Ltd](#) – a youth club for disabled young people during evenings and the school holidays.
- Specialist holiday play schemes at Greenmead and Linden Lodge Schools.
- Specialist after school clubs at Greenmead and Linden Lodge Schools.

- Wandsworth Enable Sports Development Team has developed the following range of sporting and leisure activities for disabled children and young people:
 - swimming clubs for children with disabilities;
 - a disability sports session at Caius House, run by Disability Sports Coach;
 - dance sessions for disabled young people;
 - water sports sessions for disabled young people.

Further information about these is available on the Local Offer website www.wandsworth.gov.uk/localoffer or by contacting Enable on 020 3959 0038, khall@enablelc.org, www.enablelc.org.

Targeted services will usually require some evidence of your child's disability. Examples include Disability Living Allowance, Personal Independence Payment, Education, Health and Care Plan, or support from a professional who knows your child.

Parents, children and young people have told us about their experience of targeted services:

Generate Opportunities Ltd

'The Generate team helped to make my son's summer holidays enjoyable, interesting and varied, and of course, enabled me to get some respite.'

'It's like a second home. There are loads of people that know me. They know what conditions I have got. They are friendly. I just like being with them.'

'His experience of working with his Buddy for independent travel training has changed his life! In less than 2 months he was able to travel independently and not just independently but most of all confidently and that's where the Buddy's experience has really made the massive benefit.'

Unique Youth, George Shearing Centre

‘It’s great! I like football sessions, youth club, residential and the new banner in the large hall!’

‘The staff are nice and friendly! I like going on the computers and listening to music on YouTube.’

‘I like coming to the disco on Friday’s and dancing with friends and having a good time.’

Services and support across universal and targeted

The Council gives funding opportunities to organisations to provide both universal and targeted short break opportunities.

The Council funds schools, specialist services and parent groups to organise days out and activities for disabled children and their families that enable them to have fun together as families, sometimes with other families with disabled children.

Details are publicised through Newsletters from the Disabled Children’s Register. Those with names included on the DCR can apply for [a WAND card](#) (or, once they are over 18 and up to 24, [a WAND+ Card](#)) if they meet the eligibility criteria.

The WAND or WAND + Card serves as an identifier which indicates that the holder has a special educational need and/or disability that impacts on their ability to access services/activities in the community. We have a number of participating organisations who offer concessions or discounted services/activities for WAND and WAND Card + card holders and/or their parents/carers.

Details of these have be found at [Wand Card Discounts & Offers](#)

Families have told us about their experiences of family days out:

Go Ape free session for DCR members

‘I took my 14-year-old son, who is a WAND card holder, to the tree top adventure today and it was great. I took his sister who doesn’t have a Card and they let both her and me on for free. Everyone was really kind, and it was a really good experience.’

‘We’ve just done our Go Ape session and the kids LOVED it! We would never be able to afford it otherwise and we just feel so blessed to live in Wandsworth and have such amazing support from the council.’

If you would like more information on the DCR and WAND Cards please contact the Family Information Service Wandsworth. You can contact them through the website www.wandsworth.gov.uk/localoffer, by email at fis@wandsworth.gov.uk by ringing on 020 8871 7899 or by visiting the Combined Reception, Wandsworth Town Hall, SW18 2PU, between 9.00am and 4.00pm.

Services which need to be accessed using an additional assessment

Supporting Disabled Children’s Service (from birth to eighteenth birthday)

Some children and families need more help than is available through general specialist services. If you think that this applies to your family then you can request a social work assessment by ringing the integrated Front Door on 020 8871 6622 and asking for a Children and Family Assessment, with a view to accessing short breaks. You may also be referred to the Supporting Disabled Children’s Service by a professional working with you. Unless there are concerns about your child’s safety, this will be with your consent. A social worker will carry out an assessment and will

discuss with you a range of issues that may affect whether you will be able to receive a service, these may include:

- Family breakdown, either imminent or likely in the future, which is due to the additional stresses caused by bringing up a disabled child, which would be eased by the provision of a service.
- Severe challenging behaviour from a disabled child which impact on all aspects of the child/young person's functioning or pose a risk to themselves or to others.
- A disabled child who occasionally needs more supervision than children of the same age.
- Single carer, particularly if there are other children in the household.
- The effect of disturbed nights on the carer and their family.
- A child who has speech and language impairment.
- The impact Moving & Handling a disabled child has on the wellbeing of the carer.
- The health of the carer.
- Number of children in the household their ages and needs.
- The family's own resources and/or Universal and Targeted services are unable to provide the required level of support.
- Disabled children who have recently been subject to a child protection plan and who remain in need of ongoing specialist services.
- No or a limited extended family network.
- Opportunities for a young person to gain skills and experience to support independence appropriate to their ability are not available.

The Supporting Disabled Children's Service use Formulate, a tool to assist in providing guidance about the services that would benefit a disabled child and provide an indication of the hours needed and the cost. It is used to make sure that children with a similar level of need receive similar care packages and reduces the possibility of worker bias. [How we work out your funding.](#)

This information will be used to decide whether you need additional services and what additional services should be provided. These services might include:

- support in the home/community;
- overnight breaks, either at [Oakdene](#), the Council's overnight short breaks centre, [with a short breaks foster carer](#), or if necessary with a specialist provider;
- extra staffing to enable your child to attend a short breaks provider if they have very complex needs or challenging behaviour; or
- [direct payments](#) to enable you to purchase the services that you need. <https://www.vibrance.org.uk/>

Here is some feedback from a parent who uses direct payments:

My son is 13 and has severe learning difficulties and visual impairment. He attends a local special school. We have received direct payments for Short Breaks. We accessed these through a Social Worker. Direct payments meant that we employed carers for our son, rather than the council. This gave us control over who we used to look after our child. It works best if you have a potential supply of workers – e.g. school contacts or people studying courses like education and physiotherapy.

Having services available across these three levels (universal, targeted and specialist) allows the different needs of disabled children and families to be met effectively.

Moving on – short break services for young adults and their carers

Planning for a young person's transition into adulthood is done to maximise personal independence and choices, and includes consideration of possibilities around housing and support, day support and opportunities within the community including help to obtain employment, leisure opportunities, and short breaks for carers.

Young people likely to need support as adults will be added to a tracking list from age 14 and discussed at the regular meetings between the Supporting Disabled Children's Service and the

Preparation for Adulthood Service to make sure key pieces of work are completed and that they are on the right pathway for their needs. Adult's social care services will work with other teams to identify young people with Education, Health and Care Plans who are likely to require support from Adult Services.

Once a young person reaches 16 years old, referrals are made to Adult Social Care for young people already identified on the tracking list by the relevant teams in Children's Services. At aged 17 young people referred are allocated to a social worker/assessment officer in the Preparing for Adulthood Service for completion of a Care Act Transitions assessment. If the outcome indicates the young person is eligible, a Care and Support Plan will be developed, taking into account the young person's strengths, abilities and wishes and a funding application submitted to the Preparing for Adulthood Panel. This will be no later than 3 months before the young person's 18th birthday. A mental capacity assessment will also be completed if there are concerns that the young person lacks capacity to make decisions about their care and support. If the Adults Services package is ready to start, case management responsibility transfers to a social worker/assessment officer in the Preparation for Adulthood Service when the young person becomes 18. This is reviewed after six weeks, then annually thereafter or when there are changes in needs or circumstances warranting a review sooner.

[Transitions Pathway – Moving from Children's to Adults' Services](#)

The Council offers a range of services to carers of disabled adults. More information can be found at www.wandsworth.gov.uk/carers. Services include a care at home scheme and some residential respite. Access to these services is via a Care Act assessment and some from Wandsworth Carer's Centre.

There are a number of organisations in the borough working with disabled young people over the age of 18 years. Some of these may already be known to you – for example Unique Youth at the George Shearing Centre works with young people aged 13 to 25 years. Further information about the services available can be found at www.wandsworth.gov.uk/acis.

More options have been provided for the 18 and over age group, with the introduction of [the WAND+ card](#).

Consultation and working in partnership

The range of short breaks on offer continues to be developed in consultation with disabled children and young people and their families. This is done either on a small scale where short break providers seek the views of their service users to influence their future planning; or on a large scale where the Council consults all interested parties and gives them the opportunity to influence the Council's short breaks commissioning decisions and ensures the offer continues to meet the needs of Wandsworth families and provides value for money.

We will continue to ask users what they think of our services and how we can improve them. We also expect organisations we fund to provide short breaks services to seek feedback from families and young people about the services offered to them and how they could be improved.

Parents/carers and young people can continue to have a say in Wandsworth's short breaks offer through contacting the SEND Local Offer Team. Feedback on the Short Breaks offer is welcome by phone or e mail at dcr-wand@wandsworth.gov.uk. 0208 871 8907.

The Council has [a Disabled Children's and Young People's Register \(DCR\)](#). If you join you will receive regular information about events and services, newsletters, and if you are interested, you can receive consultations about service developments.

Appendix

*Regulation 5 of the Breaks for Carers of Disabled Children Regulations 2011 provides:

‘5.— Short breaks services statement

- (1) A local authority must...prepare a statement for carers in their area (a “short breaks services statement”) setting out details of—
- (a) the range of services provided in accordance with regulation 4,
 - (b) any criteria by which eligibility for those services will be assessed, and
 - (c) how the range of services is designed to meet the needs of carers in their area.’