

# SHORT BREAKS (formerly SBLO): STATEMENT OVERVIEW May 2024



## 1. SHORT BREAKS STATEMENT INTRODUCTION

Our short breaks statement explains how we, Hertfordshire County Council, support parents and carers of disabled children and young people to get a break from caring.

In Hertfordshire we have approximately 30,000 children and young people registered as requiring SEN support, and around 12,500 with EHCP.

Our short breaks provision is part of a wider network of services and support available to parents/carers of children with disabilities and special educational needs (SEND) called the 'Local Offer'. The SEND Local Offer sets out what families can expect to be available for their children and young people with SEN and disabilities across education, health and social care. More information on Hertfordshire's SEND Local Offer can be found at: [www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/localoffer](http://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/localoffer). Parents have told us that our Local Offer needed to list all the services, location, what they provide, and for which age group. We have done this and also provided links to Provider websites. We commission Short Breaks in the local community, ensuring that all districts of Hertfordshire have a service.

## 2. WHAT IS A SHORT BREAK?



- Short breaks give parents or carers of a child or young person with a disability the opportunity to have a break from their caring role.
- Short breaks provide the child or young person with an opportunity to join in with fun activities that they could not ordinarily engage in because of their disability.
- Short breaks vary in length, they can last for one hour or a whole day.

- There are a variety of short breaks on offer across Hertfordshire, some can be accessed directly, and others will require a Social Worker assessment. Our short breaks include:
  - Weekend activity clubs
  - School holiday clubs
  - 1:1 Buddying
  - Overnight stays (with an approved shared carer or in a residential unit [Short Breaks \(hertfordshire.gov.uk\)](#))
  - Support in the home (known as Homecare)

A short break is not the same as childcare. Childcare is when a parent/ carer requires their child to be cared for when they are working. The childcare can be provided at a Day Nursery , Pre school , Childminder , Out of school club or Holiday playscheme. The parent/carer usually pays a fee for this service. For more information please visit [www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/parents](http://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/parents)

Additional support for families of children with SEND is offered by the Hertfordshire DSPL (Delivering Special Provision Locally) service. They offer a variety of advice and information on all SEND related matters. [Delivering Special Provision Locally \(DSPL\) \(hertfordshire.gov.uk\)](#)

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**SHORT BREAKS PROVIDE FAMILIES WITH THE OPPORTUNITY TO:**

- Feel better able to manage their caring responsibilities and help to reduce family stress and breakdown.
  - Improve their well being
- Rest and have time to do other things (e.g. leisure, spending time with other children, undertake household tasks)
  - Feel that the home life is more sustainable
  - Feel an improved quality of life

**SHORT BREAKS PROVIDE CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE WITH THE OPPORTUNITY TO:**

- Have fun and enjoy the activities that they are doing
  - Engage in positive activities
    - Learn new skills
  - Meet with, and make new friends
- Improve emotional health and well-being by being active and engaged in positive activities
  - Become more confident
- improved physical health through participating in physical activities

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### 3. WHO IS ELIGIBLE FOR A SHORT BREAK?

SEND children and young people may get up to 40 hours of short break activities if they:

- live in Hertfordshire
- are aged between 5 – 18 years old (up to 19<sup>th</sup> birthday) with SEND
- receive a middle or higher rate disability living allowance (DLA) or any personal independence payment (PIP), **or**
- have a letter from their GP, their school's special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO) or another professional, confirming that their need means they require access to targeted services for disabled children and young people. Evidence of a formal diagnosis won't be needed, just evidence that their needs are of the level to be in receipt of the above benefits, or that a professional feels a short break activity is appropriate.



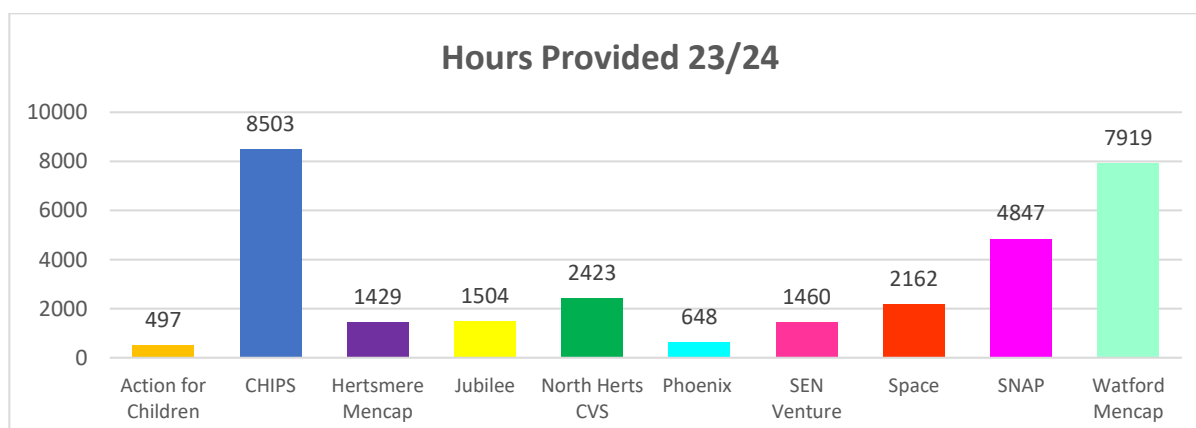
Sometimes, SEND children and young people and their families need access to more than 40 hours or an overnight residential short break which need to be arranged by a social care worker. This is because we want to make sure that carers of children living with the most complex disabilities do not miss out on a short break. Information on the 0-25 Together Service can be found here: [Deciding if the 0 – 25 Together Service can help you \(hertfordshire.gov.uk\)](https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/0-25-together-service).

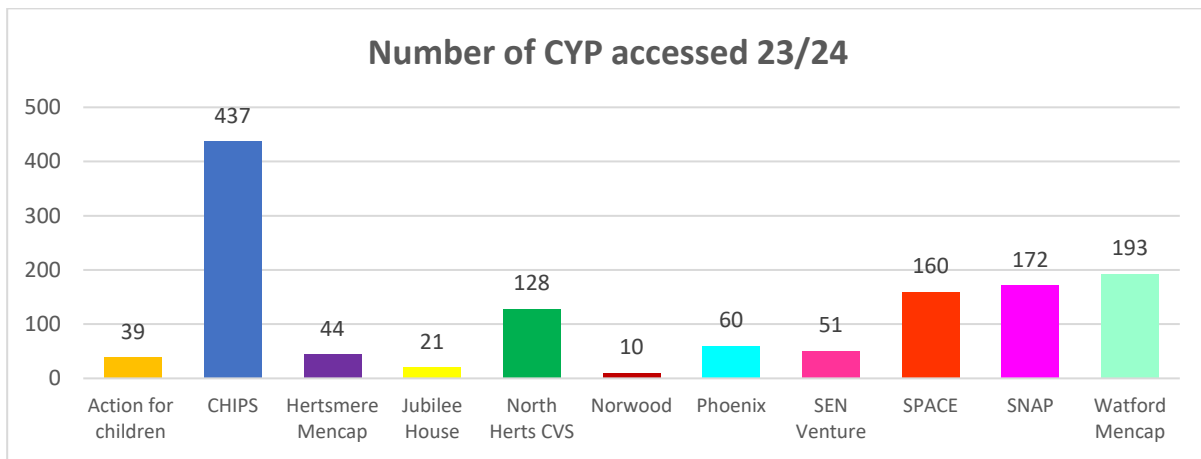
#### 4. WHO OFFERS SHORT BREAKS IN HERTFORDSHIRE AND WHAT IS AVAILABLE?

Hertfordshire County Council has commissioned the following Providers to provide Short Breaks. The following Providers are commissioned to deliver holiday activities and activity clubs across the county, with some also offering 1:1 buddying. Please refer to the table below:

Provider	Location	Website Link
Space	Countywide	<a href="#">SPACE</a>
CHIPS	East Herts and Broxbourne	<a href="#">CHIPS contact</a>
Noah's Ark	Hertsmere	<a href="#">Noahs Ark contact</a>
Jubilee House Trust	Countywide	<a href="#">Jubilee House</a>
Action for Children	Countywide	<a href="#">Action for Children</a>
North Herts CVS	Stevenage	<a href="#">Breakaway playschemes</a>
Phoenix Group	Countywide	<a href="#">Phoenix activities</a>
SNAP	Dacorum, St Albans, Welwyn Hatfield and Hertsmere	<a href="#">SNAP contact</a>
Watford Mencap	Watford, Hertsmere and Three Rivers	<a href="#">Watford Mencap Facebook</a>
SEN Venture	Dacorum and St Albans	<a href="#">SENventure bookings</a>
CathARTic Arts (New provider from May 2024)	Watford	<a href="#">cathARTic C.I.C.</a> <a href="#">(catharticcic.com)</a>

Each provider is commissioned to deliver a certain number of hours per year and the following shows those hours together with the approximate no. of CYP who have accessed that provider over the last 12 months (April 2023 – March 2024).





#### 5. SEN Community Activities Directory (new from June 2024)?

[Special Educational Needs and Disabilities | Hertfordshire Directory](#)



SEND Commissioning within Hertfordshire County Council have launched a Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Community Activities Directory. This directory promotes a wide range of community activities for families and young people with SEND, a comprehensive resource for families and professionals.



Tailored for children and young people aged 0-25, and their families, this is a valuable tool for finding local activities and support groups in the community. The directory will create opportunities for families to discover, engage, and participate in a wide range of activities, some activities will also include discounts for families registered on our Hertfordshire Additional Needs Database (HAND).

#### 6. APPLYING FOR SHORT BREAKS

##### How to apply

Families can [register for an account online](#). They can create an account following the guidance provided and upload proof of eligibility. The SBLO year runs from **1 April - 31 March**. Families are required to be flexible if they wish to take up the full amount of hours. They will need to renew their application every year.

If they need help they can contact:

- Their [local Family Centre](#)
- Their chosen SBLO provider
- [SENDIASS](#)

Families can email: [SBLO.Online@hertfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:SBLO.Online@hertfordshire.gov.uk) for help with registering, passwords or any additional information they may need.

Once they have completed their application their chosen short breaks provider(s) will contact them and ask them to show proof of their eligibility. Their application cannot be approved until this has been confirmed.

Most families accessing Short Breaks activities pay a fee for their child to attend a club or group, the charge does not cover the full cost of providing activities. Activities are usually £3.50 per hour to attend, but they might need to pay a little more, for example entrance fees to external activities, theatre trips and wildlife parks. Families are expected to pay the charge at the same time as they book a place to avoid last minute cancellations which could have meant another child missing out on a place. It is important to note that non-payment for short breaks could mean that a child's place is offered to another family. Providers have discretion to offer their own policy in regard to financial hardship.

Parents and carers will be expected to transport their children to and from our short break activities. Our short breaks service providers try to ensure the location of their activities can be easily accessed by public transport, where appropriate and possible.



## 7. EXTENDED SHORT BREAK OFFER

### **Direct payments**

If families receive a personal budget for their child, a direct payment is one way to manage the funds. Children eligible for specialist services through a Social Care plan for disabled children or an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) can receive direct payments instead of using commissioned HCC services. Direct payments allow families greater control and flexibility to employ their own workers to meet individual needs. Further information on direct payments can be found [here](#).

### **Homecare**

Children with very complex needs may be eligible for help paying for the cost of some homecare services. There are two different types of homecare available:

- **Personal Care** - Help at home for families who need extra support for their disabled child or young person with things such as showering, toileting, changing and feeding. This service can also support in dealing with challenging behaviour.
- **Community Enablement** - Support for a child or young person to get out and take part in activities in their local community. Activities could include sports, clubs,

interest groups, or visits to local attractions. The benefits of this type of support include developing independence, social skills, a sense of personal achievement, fun and enjoyment. It could also provide well-needed and safe respite breaks for parents and carers.

Further information on homecare can be found [here](#).

## **Overnight Short Breaks (OSB)**

Some young people with disabilities and complex health needs, may be eligible for an overnight short break especially if they require support throughout the night. The OSB service provides a break for parents and carers, whilst their children stay, for a short amount of time, in a safe and suitable setting. Having access to this support has important benefits for both carers and their children, helping the carer continue to care for their child and providing the child with a change from daily routine and an opportunity to develop new skills, stay away from home without their parents and mix with their peers. Further information on OSB can be found [here](#).

### 8. DID FAMILIES HAVE A SAY IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE SHORT BREAKS SERVICE?

Parents were involved in the development of Short Breaks (SBLO) back in 2015, however more recently in 2021 and 2022 we asked parents, carers, children and young people what they thought of the current short breaks service, what they would like to see in the future, and their opinion on changing elements of the service to make it more sustainable for the future. Parents told us that:

- They value short breaks
- They need most help during school holidays
- Regular club activities at weekends
- They want short break services they can feel confident in
- Short break services need to be affordable
- They would like to be able to directly refer themselves
- Concern over waiting lists
- Too many able or lower needs children accessing

A group of young commissioners were integral to the recent recommissioning of the overnight short breaks service by setting a question in the tender documentation and



then scoring the responses, this will be replicated in the SBLO service review that is currently underway.

#### 9. HOW WE CONTINUE TO DEVELOP SHORT BREAKS?

The short break service is consistently monitored to ensure all providers are delivering a high-quality service to the families of Hertfordshire. Over the years there has been an increase in the numbers of children and young people accessing the services and it has been difficult to meet the increasing demand. Due to this, the service is currently under review, and we are working with stakeholders, including parents and carers, to ensure any future model is accessible to the most vulnerable CYP in Hertfordshire.

The Young Commissioners have also participated in the monitoring of services in the past by visiting playschemes and feeding back.



#### 10. PARTICIPATION AND ENGAGEMENT OF CYP WITH SEND

As part of the regular monitoring of services, providers always ensure the voice of the child is evident in all their work. Our providers capture this in a variety of ways including, but not limited to:

- Likes and dislikes of the child in various areas such as nutrition, play and sensory needs listed on care plans
- Activities are planned based on CYP feedback
- A variety of different activities being on offer at clubs so that CYP can choose
- Feedback from families via surveys
- CYP are visited at home and school prior to accessing a club or activity
- 121 support at a club enabling play scheme leaders to take children around the venue and ask their favourite thing to do

## **What are the outcomes of including the voice of the child?**

- CYP are able to choose their own activities and do this at their own time
- Both social and independence skills are developed
- Families feel confident about the support provided and can benefit from the breakaway time
- Children feel listened to which boosts self-esteem and motivation
- Families know their child is safe and being cared for
- Facilitate integration in the whole group
- Strengthens relationships between staff and children in their care
- Planning can be more focused which helps to engage the child and parents are aware of any concerns/interests voiced by the child.
- Staff can adapt ways of communicating where necessary and make sure children are able to access activities of interest.

## 11. WHAT ABOUT WHEN MY CHILD BECOMES AN ADULT?

Young people with disabilities can access our short breaks service up to their 19<sup>th</sup> birthday. We will continue to work alongside our other local authority teams and services that support young people with disabilities in order to make sure that their transition to adult services is as successful as it can be. The years in which a young person is approaching adulthood should be full of opportunity. Things they may want to achieve such as paid employment, good health and choice and control over their lives need to be taken into account so that any care and support needs are based around what matters to that person. At the age of 16, young people can be referred to Adult Care Services if they have care and support needs into adulthood. The 0-25 Together Service is there to help young people who are most in need to ensure that the right care and support is in place when they move to adult care and support.

More information about activities for adults with disabilities can be found [here](#).

More information about clubs and friendship group support when moving into adulthood be found [here](#).

All young people face big changes when they leave school. But for some people with learning disabilities, their physical or emotional needs can make moving into adulthood more challenging. Further information is available to help young people with SEND

achieve employment, independent living, good health, friendships and community inclusion [here](#).

- Independent Living describes the skills needed to live independently e.g. cooking, housekeeping, travel, and handling money. There are a lot of things that can be done to help prepare for the future and life as an adult. [Independent Living \(hertfordshire.gov.uk\)](#)
- There are a number of learning options for post-16, which offer a range of courses and job-related skills. They can offer support to meet the needs of students of all abilities. This support can include specialist teaching support, personal helpers, specialist equipment and so much more. [Further education \(hertfordshire.gov.uk\)](#)
- All young people should continue in education or training until they are 18. If your young person is looking to move into employment rather than further education, they might benefit from work skills training or support to enter the world of work. [Employment and training \(hertfordshire.gov.uk\)](#)
- Caring for your health into adulthood is about knowing how best to look after yourself and how to prepare for any changes in the health services you currently receive. Moving from children's health services to adult health services is a gradual process, starting around 13-14 years old and finishing by the time you turn 18. Feeling confident about this changeover makes things easier and avoids any gaps in the services you receive. [Caring for your health into adulthood \(hertfordshire.gov.uk\)](#)