

Short Breaks Grant Offer for Disabled Children or Young People

Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council

1 April 2024 – 30 September 2024

1. A Short Break

Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council recognises that for some families, caring full time for a disabled child or young person with Special Educational Needs (SEND) can be demanding. We want to provide parents and carers with the opportunity to do fun things.

Sometimes families require a little extra support to achieve this, either as a whole family or as something the child or young person wants to do away from the family in an activity solely for them.

A 'short break' can be for an hour, a day or for several days. In most circumstances this would be by accessing specialist activities and in some cases providing additional support for a child to access universal opportunities.

A 'short break' can be a way to achieve this and can be a lifeline for some families and children. The Short Breaks Grant is designed to help with the cost of short breaks and does not need a social worker assessment to be eligible.

2. Short Break Guidance

Guidance issued by the Department for Education in 2010 states that:

'For relatively low levels of short breaks provision, an assessment provided or commissioned by the Local Authority will often not be necessary. An authority may provide some short break provision for disabled children who have been assessed through other processes, for example, access to existing local health or educational facility, receipt of higher-level Disability Living Allowance or locally agreed criteria.'

In recognition to the guidance issued from the Department for Education, Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council has available to parents and carers of children with a disability and/or additional needs a scheme that provides funds to help towards the cost of activities they can apply for through the 'Short Break Grant.'

Applications come directly from parents or carers and **a formal assessment from a professional regarding a need for a Short Break is not required.**

There is however an eligibility criterion that has been developed following consultation with parents and carers for access and the limitations in terms of what the grant can be used for.

3. Eligibility for access to the Short Breaks Grant

If the child or young person you are caring for full time is aged between 3 - 17 years old during this application period and any of the following apply to your situation, you are eligible to apply for a Short Breaks Grant:

- you care for a disabled child or young person who receives a higher-level Disability Living Allowance in either care or mobility components.
- you care for a child or young person who is in receipt of an Enhanced Personal Independent Payment (PIP)
- you care for a child or young person who receives another form of assessed short break that has been provided or funded by the Local Authority. For example, a short break from Foster Care, Outreach, Home Care, or a Direct Payment
- you care for a child or young person who is subject to a **Final** EHC Plan
- you care for a child or young person who has been formally triaged and is currently on the MAAT pathway that will **likely** or has already resulted in a diagnosis of Autism.
- you have returned all unspent monies or proof of spends that has been awarded from a previous grant application. **Receipts for this grant period must be submitted by 12.09.24.**
- the grant is a limited fund, and the Local Authority will close the submission deadline as soon as the number of applications is likely to exceed the available funds, or at 5pm on **31.07.24** if funds have allowed. Keep an eye on the website for updates.
- no more than **one** successful application will be processed in any grant period and the maximum amount of the full award will be no more than £400 or £75 for those already in receipt of other short breaks funded by the Local Authority

You will be required to provide evidence of eligibility to apply for the grant, this should be sent with your application. The evidence must be valid and dated within 12 months of each new application.

There are several ways you can do this, and the following are examples:

- a supporting letter from your child's school, GP, CAMHS worker or other relevant professional
- a photocopy of the letter awarding a higher rate of Disability Living Allowance
- a photocopy of the letter awarding an enhanced Personal Independent Payment
- confirmation that your child is subject to a Final EHCP – we **do not** require you to send the EHCP plan.

4. The Short Breaks Grant Offer 1 April 2024 – 30 September 2024

Following discussions with Stockton Parent Carer Forum and considering feedback from parents throughout the year, we are pleased to offer children, young people and their families who meet the eligibility criteria the following:

A **combination** of any of the following can be used up to a **maximum of £400** (or £75 if the child or young person in your care is already in receipt of a Short Break Service that is provided by the Council to meet needs identified in a Social Work Assessment).

Information to assist applicant and decision maker.

Type of Short Break	How can the funds be spent?	Conditions and limitations	Maximum amount that can be applied for if not in receipt of short breaks services from LA	Maximum amount that can be applied for if in receipt of short breaks services from LA
<p>Specialised Activities</p> <p>Provided specifically for disabled children and young people or those with additional needs.</p> <p>The activities must be for an afterschool or social club.</p> <p>The activity cannot be linked to education or therapy.</p>	<p>This can be used to help with covering the cost of the young person or child's sessions.</p> <p>The grant does not include activities that would normally be delivered on a 1:1 basis, for example music sessions. These would be covered in Universal Activities.</p> <p>The only exception would be where it can be evidenced that the sessions are being provided through a qualified specialised facilitator or instructor.</p>	<p>This does not include travel or spending money for the child or young person.</p> <p>The activity must not be linked to education or therapeutic needs.</p> <p>The Council has established agreements with some specialised providers in the local area, and in many cases can pay the provider direct for sessions.</p> <p>If your application is approved and this is something you wish to take advantage of, please indicate this in the column opposite. The grant does not cover cost of room hire for group activities including children's birthday parties.</p>	<p>£400 max</p>	<p>£75 max</p>

Type of Short Break	How can the funds be spent?	Conditions and limitations	Maximum amount that can be applied for if not in receipt of short breaks services from LA	Maximum amount that can be applied for if in receipt of short breaks services from LA
<p>Specific Equipment</p> <p>Hire or purchase of riding hats or ice boots, football boots, leotards etc.</p> <p>Sensory Equipment is not included.</p>	<p>This can be used to help with the purchasing or hire of essential equipment needed for an activity session(s).</p> <p>The session can be a specialised activity or universal activity.</p>	<p>This does not include the purchase of animals, general clothing, carpets, furniture, garden landscaping or sensory equipment.</p> <p>You cannot use this for the long-term loan of live animals beyond a single session.</p>	<p>£150 max</p>	<p>£75 max</p>
<p>Online subscriptions for activity sessions or tutoring of a hobby.</p> <p>This does not include media subscriptions or television packages.</p>	<p>This can be used to help with covering the cost of any online sessions for example, dance class, music tutoring, exercise class, singing tutoring or other.</p>	<p>Cannot be used for extra tutoring for education and school-based classes i.e., Maths, English, Science etc or media subscriptions or TV packages.</p> <p>Please specify what the online activity is in the column opposite.</p>	<p>£250 max</p>	<p>£75 max</p>

<p>Universal activities</p> <p>None specialist activities and are available for all children and young people.</p>	<p>Can be used to help cover the cost of the child or young person's activity session(s).</p> <p>For example, a trip to the cinema, trampolining, ice skating, football match, theatre etc.</p> <p>It can also be used to help cover the cost of family tickets provided the child or young person is always included in the activity.</p>	<p>This does not include travel, or spending money associated with the activity, sweets drinks and snacks for example.</p> <p>This can only be used to purchase activities or family tickets or membership of a club for the child. The activity must be age appropriate for the child or young person the application relates to.</p> <p>Some examples might be to cover the cost of a family ticket to a theme park.</p>	<p>£200 max</p>	<p>£75 max</p>
<p>Organised residential short break for the young person.</p>	<p>Can be used to provide a contribution towards the cost of a child or young person to take part in an organised group overnight residential activity.</p> <p>Must be organised by a reputable organisation such as school, cadets, etc.</p>	<p>Confirmation of cost from the organiser will be required and payment will be paid directly to provider/organisation.</p> <p>The Grant does not cover spending money or holiday clothes.</p> <p>It is the parent's responsibility to ensure all suitability checks including risk assessments have been conducted prior to consenting to their child or young person taking part.</p> <p>No other funding must be available through other financial bursaries that could be used to cover the costs.</p>	<p>£300 max</p>	<p>£75 max</p>

<p>Financial support to help towards the cost of a support/care worker to go with the child or young person on activities or an overnight staycation in the UK.</p> <p>Where a carer is required to accompany the child on a UK staycation or activity either independently of, or with, the child's family.</p> <p>This does not include Education or Therapy.</p>	<p>Can be used to help with the cost of a carer's travel ticket to and from the UK staycation destination, for example a train ticket or bus ticket.</p> <p>Can be used to help with the cost of accommodation for the carer and with the costs associated with the provision of a carer to support or supervise the child on a day or single session activity.</p> <p>If a person is employed specifically to support with this type of short break, the parents and carers will be responsible as an employer for ensuring all relevant employment statutory laws including adequate liability insurance are met, and for ensuring the suitability of the carer.</p>	<p>This does not include when the carer is staying in family accommodation i.e., family room, caravan, apartment, lodge, villa or tent or other group shared accommodation. This type of accommodation would need to be available regardless of the carer being there.</p> <p>The carer must not reside at the same address or hold parental responsibility for the child. The carer must be over 18 years of age and photographic identification will be required to be submitted with the application.</p> <p>If the grant is intended to be used to pay for the carer's time, a detailed breakdown of cost of the carer will be required on submission of the application. I.e., how many hours and cost per hour the carer will be working. Proof will also be required that all employment law is covered, and checks have been conducted by the parent or carer of the child or young person including DBS checks to ensure safeguards are in place for the child.</p> <p>Can be used to provide up to a maximum of £10 per day to cover any subsistence costs for the carer that are incurred, food, drinks etc. Most activities permit a carer to enter free of charge, only when this is not the case the admission costs can be applied for through the grant.</p>	<p>£400 max</p>	<p>£75 max</p>
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5. Making an application

The Short Breaks Grant is a limited fund and Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council will close the scheme once the number of applications exceed the budget available or at 5pm on 31 July 2024 if funds have allowed.

The grant is popular and each year many families benefit.

Eligible families are encouraged to apply promptly to avoid disappointment.

This Short Breaks Grant period is **1st April 2024 – 30th September 2024**. The **maximum** amount that can be collectively awarded per child, over no more than **one successful application** is **£400 or £75**, for those who are already in receipt of other services provided by the Council following an assessment of need from a Social Worker.

You should consider carefully the Short Breaks Offer and your eligibility to apply, make your selection, and remember you can select a combination of the different types of Short Breaks listed.

There are no restrictions on the combination as long as you **do not exceed the maximum** monetary award eligible per child, i.e., £400 or £75.

Complete the **'Short Break Grant Application Online Form'** via Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council Web Page, Short Breaks Grant.

Any copies of supporting documentation must be upload to your application form.

Stockton Parent Carer Forum

The grant offer has been co-produced with Stockton Parent Carer Forum.

Max Cards are available for purchase from the Forum, you can contact them on **07985 245668** or email info@stocktonparentcarerforum.co.uk

Decision Making

Once eligibility has been established and the amount of grant funds determined by the Short Breaks Grant Co-Ordinator, the request will be forwarded for an outcome decision to the relevant Team Manager.

The Manager's decision and any action will be recorded and returned to you with the details of any funds awarded. Please note that you can only spend the money on the activities the grant has been awarded for.

We aim to complete this process within 14 working days from receipt of your application however during busier periods this may be longer. This does not include any days we are waiting for you to provide additional information that we have requested in order to consider your application.

6. Terms and Conditions

Applicants should fully familiarise themselves and agree to the following Terms and Conditions when submitting their application form:

1. I will ensure that I am not solely reliant on the grant to cover the cost of activities that I have booked prior to confirmation of a grant award.
2. I understand that if the grant is used for any purpose other than the request on my application form, I will be asked to return the funds.
3. I will ensure that activities take place during the grant period of **1 April 2024 – 30 September 2024**.
4. I agree to provide Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council with receipts **within 2 weeks** of any monies being spent.
5. I agree to provide all receipts by **12 September 2024**. Receipts must be emailed to shortbreaksgrant@stockton.gov.uk
6. I agree to return all unspent monies to Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council by **12 September 2024**. I understand if I fail to do so, this will affect any future applications and that Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council may pursue the return of unaccounted monies.
7. If requested to do so, I agree to complete a short questionnaire to contribute to the ongoing monitoring of the Short Breaks Grant scheme.
8. If I accept funds to cover carer's costs, I am confirming that I understand and agree to take full responsibility for the liability of the worker including public liability insurance. I understand and take full responsibility for the completion of appropriate employment checks and will follow all employment laws. I will confirm if asked, that I have obtained a DBS enhanced check and that it is satisfactory prior to the worker being employed.
9. I understand that I am responsible for ensuring the safety and welfare of my child during any Short Break Activities funded through this Grant including those online. www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/coronavirus/digital-safety-and-wellbeing-kit/
10. I confirm that I will not use the grant for any activity during school or college term time unless it is specifically to attend an organised residential activity with school.

Transfer of Awarded Funds

Where possible we pay directly via BACS payment. Please ensure you complete the bank details section accurately on your application form. If for some reason this is not a suitable option, please contact the Short Breaks Co-ordinator who will be able to discuss options with you.

Receipts and Unspent Money

The applicant is responsible for returning any unspent money along with the relevant receipts, proof of purchase or subsistence forms for any monies paid directly.

Receipts and activities that are not related to the award period will not be accepted.

Activities must take place during the award period the monies were awarded for.

Where unspent money or proof of spends is not returned then eligibility for future applications will be affected. If this applies to you and you wish to discuss your individual circumstances, please contact the Short Breaks Co-ordinator.

Unspent money can be repaid using the online payment option www.stockton.gov.uk/short-breaks

No further applications will be considered until outstanding monies are returned.

Where funds have been transferred directly to providers and organisations, you are not expected to provide any proof of spends. We will get this directly from the provider or organisation.

Any delay in the provider or organisation returning proof of expenditure to us will not affect your future applications.

Fair Access to the Short Breaks Grant

Our aim is to be open, transparent, and fair in the way we apply the eligibility for access to the Grant and in the decision making about the funds that are awarded. Each application will be responded to consistently by applying the criteria for decision screening and recorded on a document that will always be returned completed to the applicant.

We are not required to have an appeals process; however, we understand that there may be times when applicants are unhappy or feel they have been treated unfairly. In such circumstances we will always attempt to resolve any issues early through conversations with a member of the team. If you are unhappy, please contact the Short Breaks Co-ordinator in the first instance to resolve matters.

If we are unable to resolve matters with you, and you wish to make a complaint you can do this by contacting the Council's Customer Service Team on **01642 527521**.

We hope that you are satisfied with the service provided and that eligible children and families enjoy using the Grant.

Other Sources of Funding

You can also apply to the following organisations for funding:

1. Family Fund - www.familyfund.org.uk
2. Caudwell Children - www.caudwellchildren.com
3. Merlins Magic Wand - www.merlinsmagicwand.org