

Short break offer

for families of children and young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities



Life has been very different for families over the last 6 months due to the covid-19 pandemic. We have made the most of the summertime with staycations, meeting up with friends and family at a distance, and now children and young people have returned to education.

However, we know that some people have found this time very difficult. You may have felt alone, been worried or stressed, and may feel less able to look after your emotional and physical health.

As new restrictions become part of our everyday life we want to help you to get the most out of the services that are available to you and to support you through another time of change.

Online activities and support



There are still lots of activities that can be accessed online visit www.durham.gov.uk/article/23129/Online-activities for ideas of things to do at home, or visit www.activedurham.org.uk/active30durham for lots of fun physical activities.

Parents and carers can get advice and support on how to look after their physical and mental health from the [Wellbeing for Life Service](#), or use the [my wellness app](#) to help you stay healthy and active. It offers daily workouts with step by step instruction on how to complete the moves at home, and monthly challenges.

To get the app

- [Register online](#)
- Download the 'MyWellness' app available from the app/play store.
- Log in and enjoy workouts in the comfort of your own home or garden.

The Local Offer



Lots of groups are starting to offer 'in-person' activities across the county. Visit the Local Offer for information on groups that provide activities for children and young people with SEND. You will need to contact them to find what they have on offer at the moment.

www.countydurhamfamilies.info/localoffer

Durham County Carers Support

If you are a parent/carer of a child/young person with SEND Durham County Carers Support can help you find the information you need to care for someone and inform you about other services to help you look after yourself.

You can contact them on **0300 005 12 13** or visit their website www.dccarers.org



Short Breaks Solutions

If you are struggling to find suitable activities for your children to allow you a short break from your caring role, do not worry, our Short Breaks Solutions service will work with you to find options that suit your family's needs.

We know that some children/young people may not be able to access what is on offer or these may not meet your needs. To help reduce stress on family life and improve your wellbeing we have developed a menu of options which will hopefully meet your individual family's needs.

Short Breaks Solutions can refer you to some tailored opportunities for children and young people with SEND that will benefit them and their families outside of their education. These include:



Physical Activity Group Programmes

Local physical activity programmes for children and young people with SEND who are unable to take part in other physical activities on offer. Each programme will be made up of small groups and will run for 2.5 hours each

Saturday for 5 weeks. A virtual group will be set up at the end of the programme and will run for a further 5 weeks to maintain the social contact and physical activities whilst at home.

Spaces are limited and will be allocated to those families most in need.

Community Enablers

A 5 week programme where your child will be allocated a community enabler who will work with them to understand their needs and provide 1:1 support to enable them to safely access their community, for example to visit a local park or shop. At the end of the 5 weeks the community enabler will link your family with virtual and community networks who can provide ongoing support.

Virtual Communities

Taking part in physical and community activities will not always be possible or the preferred option for some families. However, we know that some children and young people still want to be part of a community. We will be working with families to build virtual communities around the hobbies and interests of your child/ren, to help keep them connected and make a difference.

Keeping Families Connected

The last few months have been hard on families, and some of you may have felt more like teachers than parents. We are organising activities for you to do as a family that can bring some fun back into your family relationships. These will include activity packs, ideas of things to do together, challenges etc.

We also know that when families feel connected to other families in similar circumstances it provides opportunities for them to share their experiences and support one another, which can in turn help to reduce feelings of stress and loneliness. We will be providing opportunities to connect families with similar interests, such as virtual book clubs, quizzes, competitions etc.

We are also offering a pen pal service to help children and young people to connect with each other.

All activities will be risk assessed to make sure they are Covid safe.

Parent/Carer Activities

We know that some parents/carers struggle to look after their own physical health due to childcare. There are various physical activities that you can do while your child/young person is taking part in an activity. This could include walking, running or cycling.

Please let the Short Breaks Solutions service know if this is something that you may be interested in.



Please contact Short Breaks Solutions:
Email shortbreakssolutions@durham.gov.uk
Telephone: 03000 260 270