

Staffordshire Short Breaks Statement

2026 - 2027



Staffordshire Short Breaks Statement 2026 - 2027

This statement is for families and professionals who support and care for children and young people aged 0-18 years with special educational needs and/or disabilities living in Staffordshire. It provides information about the available Short Break services.

The Breaks for Carers of Disabled Children regulations, effective from 1 April 2011, mandate each local authority to offer a variety of short breaks for disabled children and young people (under 18 years old), as well as their parents and carers.

As part of this duty, each Local Authority must produce a short breaks statement that includes the following information:

- The range of short breaks available
- How to access the short breaks
- How our short breaks have been designed to meet local needs

Local Offer for Special Educational Needs and Disability

The Children and Families Act 2014 requires each Local Authority to produce and publish a Local Offer. This offer consolidates information about the provisions available across education, health, and social care for children and young people with special educational needs or disabilities in the area.

We developed the Staffordshire Local Offer in collaboration with parents, carers, children, young people with special educational needs and disabilities, and professionals to ensure it meets your needs. All information and advice about services for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities are centralised, making it quick and easy to find.

Staffordshire Connects | Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Local Offer



Children and Families Act 2014

The Children and Families Act 2014 aims to integrate Education, Health, and Social Care to support children and young people in achieving positive outcomes.

Key objectives include:

- Ensuring the Education, Health, and Care Plan (EHCP) is comprehensive and cohesive
- Providing a clear and transparent Local Offer detailing the services, provisions, and support available within the local area
- Ensuring the voices of children, young people, parents, and carers are central to our work, including in the shaping of local services

Welcome to our Short Breaks Statement

In Staffordshire, we collaborate with children, young people, and their families to achieve the best possible outcomes in all areas of their lives. We believe that with the 'right support at the right time,' this is achievable. By working together, children and young people with disabilities can and will reach their full potential.

This Short Breaks Statement outlines our statutory duties regarding the provision of short breaks in Staffordshire.

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Staffordshire Connects

Have your say ...



Legislation:

Short Breaks Regulations

The Short Breaks regulations guide Staffordshire Council's Short Breaks Service offer. These regulations require all local authorities to produce a statement explaining the available Short Breaks services for children with disabilities and their families, and how to access them. The council must publish this statement online and review it regularly to ensure the information is up to date. You can view the Short Breaks Regulations 2011 in full here. www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2011/707/contents/made

The Breaks for Carers of Disabled Children Regulations, effective from 1 April 2011, legally mandate each Local Authority to provide a range of short breaks for disabled children and young people (under 18 years old) and their parents and carers.

The Legal Framework used in this statement includes Breaks for Carers of Disabled Children Regulations 2011; Children Act 1989 (Section 17 (1)); Children and Young Persons Act 2008; Children and Families Act 2014; Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1970; Equality Act 2010; NHS Act 2006 (Amended 2012); Care Act 2014;

In summary, local authorities must provide Short Breaks services that are:

- Flexible, reliable, accessible, and regular to meet changing family needs
- Available to all parents/carers in Staffordshire with a child who has SEND
- Build on universal services
- Promoting greater levels of confidence and competence for transitioning to adult life
- Including day-time care, overnight care, and respite
- Promoting participation in activities
- Culturally and age-appropriate, supporting a child's development
- Fun and engaging, allowing children to spend time with peers, make new friends, and have new experiences
- Safe and delivered by trusted providers who are well-trained and understand a child's needs

They should also enable:

- Parents/carers to have clear information on their children's entitlements
- Parents/carers to choose from a range of services and activities that best suit their children
- Parents/carers to access both emotional and practical support from other parents/carers and staff
- Siblings to know their sibling is enjoying activities and to join in some activities (depending on the activity and provider)
- Siblings to spend time with their parents/carers away from caring responsibilities



What do we mean by disability?

Staffordshire County Council uses the legal definition of disability as defined in the Equality Act 2010.

This includes a physical and/or mental impairment that has a “substantial” and “long-term” negative effect on your ability to do normal activities.

This definition encompasses children with moderate to severe disabilities, as well as those with complex health needs or palliative or life-limiting conditions. Having a disability does not automatically mean that you or your child need to access social care support; you may instead be directed to access ‘universal services’. This statement aims to show you what support may be best for you based on your child’s needs.

Definition of disability under the Equality Act 2010 - GOV.UK

What “substantial” and “long term” mean

- **“Substantial” is more than minor or trivial, e.g., it takes much longer than it usually would to complete a daily task like getting dressed**
- **“Long term” means 12 months or more, e.g., a breathing condition that develops as a result of a lung infection.**

There are special rules about recurring or fluctuating conditions, such as arthritis.

What is not counted as a disability

There is guidance on conditions that are not covered by the disability definition in the Equality Act 2010. A copy of the Equality Act 2010 and accompanying explanatory notes can be found on GOV.UK.

Equality - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)



What about the Children and Families Act 2014?

The Government introduced the Children and Families Act in 2014, which aims to integrate education, health, and social care to support children and young people with SEND in achieving positive outcomes. One of the key changes includes the publication of a clear and transparent Local Offer detailing up-to-date services and support mechanisms. Many parents and carers have expressed a preference for using the term "SEND" within our short breaks statement, rather than "additional needs" or "disability," in line with our response to implementing this act.

For children and young people with special educational needs or disabilities, the Act aims to:

- **Ensure education, health, and social care services work together**
 - **Inform children, young people, and their parents/carers about their disability or special educational needs**
 - **Ensure families know what help is available when a child or young person has special educational needs or a disability**
 - **Facilitate collaboration among different organizations to support children and young people with special educational needs**
 - **Give children, young people, and their parents/carers more say about the help they receive**
 - **Establish a comprehensive assessment to determine the special help a child or young person needs for their education, health, and social care needs simultaneously**
 - **Provide a single plan for meeting a child or young person's education, health, and social care needs, which can extend from birth to age 25 if councils agree that more time is needed to prepare for adulthood**
- **Ensure children, young people, and their parents/carers can choose some of the help they need**
 - **Offer ways to resolve disputes if a child, young person, or their parent/carer needs to appeal about the help they receive**



Staffordshire **SENDIASS** is jointly commissioned by Staffordshire County Council and the Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Integrated Care Board. It operates independently as a confidential, impartial, and free service for parents and carers of children and young people (0-25) with special educational needs and disabilities, as well as for the children and young people themselves. **SENDIASS** provides information, advice, and support covering education, health, and social care issues. You can contact them through the service helpline or by email.

Contact Information:

Telephone Helpline: 01785 356921
(Monday to Thursday 9am - 5pm, Fridays 9am - 4:30pm)

E-Mail: sfps@staffordshire.gov.uk

Website: <https://www.staffs-iass.org/home.aspx>

Facebook Staffordshire SENDIASS

Twitter StaffsIASS

The Local Picture

Staffordshire’s Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) provides the following insights:

- Children aged between 0 – 15 years constitute the smallest age group (151,613) within the total Staffordshire population (886,284).
- As of January 2024, more children and young people are being identified as having SEND, with 7,490 (3% of the 0–25 population in Staffordshire) having an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) and over 15,800 (13% of the school pupil population in Staffordshire) receiving SEN support - both figures similar to national averages and representing significant increases from a decade ago.

Research by the Department for Education suggests that 7-10% can be used to estimate the number of children with disabilities within the child population and that 1.2% will have complex or significant needs.

Education Health and Care Plans

Within the last 12 months, there have been 2362 initial requests received for Education, Health, and Care Needs Assessments (EHCNA), with 60% proceeding to assessment.

The primary need of children and young people in Staffordshire with an Education, Health, and Care Plan (EHCP) is:

Primary need	Children and young people
Speech, Language & Communication needs	2757
Autistic Spectrum Condition	2416
Social, Emotional & Mental Health needs	2004
Moderate Learning Difficulty	1495
Physical Disability	458



What is a short break?

Short breaks are activities designed for children and young people with SEND, allowing them to have fun, spend time with friends, and build confidence and skills in a safe environment. These activities typically take place outside the child's home, often in locations such as leisure centres, community spaces, provider buildings, parks, and recreational areas. Some short breaks are provided in specialist resource centres or the homes of approved carers, such as disability fostering. The specific setting depends on the needs of the child or young person with SEND and their family, and access to this type of short break is granted following a full assessment of need.

Short break activities usually occur outside of school hours, meaning they can take place in the evenings, on weekends, or during school holidays. The duration of these activities can vary, such as 2-hour sessions as part of the Aiming High activities.

Short Breaks offer can include:

- Time for the child or young person to attend an activity without their family
- Activities for siblings and families to attend together
- Different durations to suit various needs

Who are short breaks for?

Our short breaks programme is accessible to children and young people who:

- Have a disability as defined by section 6 of the Equality Act 2010
- Have SEND and may require support to participate in activities, with or without an EHCP
- Are aged 0-18 years
- Reside in Staffordshire (excluding Stoke-on-Trent residents)





The Staffordshire Aiming High programme is for children and young people who live in Staffordshire (not Stoke-on-Trent), except in exceptional circumstances. For example, if a child lives in Stoke-on-Trent but is in the care of Staffordshire (a Child in Care), they can still take part in the Staffordshire Aiming High programme. This is part of our agreement with Stoke-on-Trent City Council, which follows the same approach.

We understand that each family and child/young person is unique, and some families may need more support. Children and young people with complex needs may require additional assistance to access services and have a short break. These services will require a Child and Family assessment completed by an allocated social worker, often but not exclusively conducted by the Children’s Disability Team.

Information about Aiming High Short Breaks

Information about the Aiming High short breaks can be found on the EEQU booking platform, the Staffordshire Local Offer and the main Staffordshire County Council webpage:

- [Staffordshire Aiming High · Eequ](#)
- [Staffordshire Connects | Aiming High - Activities and short breaks](#)
- [Aiming High - Staffordshire County Council](#)

Levels of support offered

Not all children with disabilities and their families need the same level of support. In Staffordshire, there are three levels of short breaks offers, tailored to the impact of your child’s disability on day-to-day life and each family’s individual circumstances.



Universal Services

Universal services are open to all members of the community who choose to use them. These services include:

They may include:

- Libraries
- Youth Clubs
- Cinema's
- Leisure Centres
- Family Hubs
- Scouts, Brownies, Rainbows, Guides, Cubs
- Sports groups

Universal plus services are those where reasonable adjustments have been made to meet additional needs, particularly when a disability has a lesser impact on day-to-day life. They offer activities that enable all children and young people, including those with SEND, to have fun, enjoy themselves, and make friends. Many children and young people with SEND access quality universal services and/or a mixture of targeted short breaks services.

Aims of these activities are:



The child or young person's family feels supported



The child or young person needs support to build relationships and social skills with others in their community



The young person needs support to prepare for adulthood

How do I access them?

Many universal services advertise their activity opportunities within the local community.

Can universal services support my child?

We recognise that children and young people with SEND can have specialist support requirements. We encourage parents and carers to access universal services and work with these providers to improve access for children and young people with SEND, increasing their knowledge and skills.

We need to continue to work in partnership with universal services to enable greater access for children and young people with SEND and their families, ensuring the provision of appropriate support.

Where can I find universal services?

You can contact your local council or visit their website and take a look at [Enjoy Staffordshire Official Tourist Information For Staffordshire](#).

Staffordshire Connects is an online directory of local care, support, and wellbeing services, activities, and events across Staffordshire, aimed at the whole family. Staffordshire Connects makes it easier to find support and wellbeing services from hundreds of organizations, all in one place. There is a wide variety of services and activities for children and young people and their families, including those with special educational needs and disabilities.

The site is regularly updated, and new organisations are added all the time, so please check the site regularly.

Enjoy Staffordshire



Short Breaks in the Heart of Britain

EnjoyStaffordshire.com is the official tourism site for Staffordshire, with everything you need to know, including things to do, what's on, places to stay and where to eat. It also details disabled friendly activities and venues.

[Enjoy Staffordshire Official Tourist Information For Staffordshire](#)

Targeted Preventative Support

Preventative Level Support is for children and young people where disability has a moderate impact on day-to-day life, such as:

- The child or young person and their family is isolated
- Caring for the child or young person has a moderate impact on the health (including mental health) of their parent/carer and/or the family unit
- The child or young person needs a moderate level of supervision and care to ensure their safety and wellbeing
- The young person needs additional support to prepare for independence in adulthood

Service Examples:

- Autism Hub
- SEND Local Offer
- Occupational Therapy
- Aids and Adaptation
- Targeted short breaks activities such as Aiming High
- Family hubs



Targeted Short Breaks – Community Based

These activities are specifically designed for children and young people with SEND and are funded by the Local Authority.

What are targeted short breaks?

Targeted short breaks differ from universal services as they are specifically designed for and targeted at children and young people with SEND. We deliver our targeted short breaks through our Aiming High programme.

Activities over the last 12 months have included:



- Horse riding
- Football and games
- Chill out sessions
- Wildlife sessions
- Yoga
- Trips to museums and activity parks
- Theatre trips
- Farm and safari trips
- Cooking and crafts
- Groups and youth clubs

Aiming High is a

programme of activities and short breaks for children and young people aged 0-18 years old with a special educational need/disability (SEND) who live in Staffordshire. Activities are available to anyone with a need, and an EHCP is not required. Some activities are open to the whole family, while others are suitable for children and young people to attend independently.



Family Activities

These activities are planned and delivered by providers, allowing families to attend together. Parents/carers and siblings can join in, with activities designed for the child/young person with SEND to enjoy and participate in.

Independent Activities

These activities are planned and delivered for children/young people to attend independently. Children/young people can be dropped off with the provider and then collected later. Parents/carers can also choose to stay nearby to chat with other parents/carers, as this helps to build support networks among parents/carers and provides time for socialising.



Who delivers our activities

We have 9 providers offering activities to children, young people and families:

Action for Children, Caudwell Children, Chase Aqua Rural Enterprise, Chuckle Productions, Doves Care and Support, Gartmore Riding School, Let Us Play, Staffordshire Wildlife Trust and Stoke City Foundation.



How do I access Aiming High – Short Breaks?

Many of our targeted community-based short breaks are open to children and young people with SEND, who need extra support to participate in activities. You do not need to have a confirmed diagnosis or Education, Health & Care Plan (EHCP) to access these services.

Information on Aiming High activities is available on the Local Offer website and on the EEUQ booking platform. Full details can be found at:

[Eequ](#) · [After school](#) · [In place of school](#) · [Beyond school](#)

Staffordshire Connects | Aiming High - Activities and short breaks

To book activities, please visit the **EEQU booking platform** or call our telephone enquiry team on

Phone: **0300 111 8007** (option 2, then option 3)

Email: sendreferrals@staffordshire.gov.uk

For any further questions about Aiming High, please contact the Aiming High team at: aiminghigh@staffordshire.gov.uk



Free Activity Offer

Children and young people can access two free activities each month through the Aiming High free activity offer. After the 15th of the month, a third free activity can be booked, pending availability of places.

How do I book places?

To book, please visit the **EEQU booking platform**.

You don't need to do anything in advance, you just need to book. When you make your first booking, your EEQU account will be automatically created. All you need is a name, email and password. The activity provider will then confirm your place in due course.

Here is a quick and easy guide to help you get started with EEQU. The article includes a short 3-minute video that walks you through the process step by step: **How parents book a SEND Short Break | Eequ Help Centre**

Or if you prefer, you can call us on: 0300 111 8007 – option 2 and then option 3*

Lines are open: Monday to Friday 9:00am – 5:00pm

*Please note that only those with parental responsibility can book activities via the telephone booking line. If parents/carers wish for someone else to book activities on their behalf, the best option would be to book via the EEQU booking platform, where the person making the booking must commit to sharing all booking information with the parents/carers

When do bookings open?

Bookings open on the first day of each month at 7.30am (including weekends and bank holidays), for activities taking place the following month. But you can browse activities even before they open for booking on the **EEQU website**.

You will find further information about using the booking platform, as well as some Frequently Asked Questions, on the the Local Offer website: **Staffordshire Connects | Aiming High - Activities and short breaks**

Community Support

Lifeskills and Independence

The 1-1 Life Skills Programme comprises a maximum of sixteen 4-hour sessions (64 hours annually) of 1-1 support from commissioned providers. This programme focuses on achieving specific outcomes to help the young person prepare for adulthood.

To qualify as a Lifeskills and Independence opportunity, any support period must last a minimum of 2 hours and be facilitated outside of the school day. This can include evenings, weekends, or during school holidays.

Referrals can be received for any child or young person aged 11-25 who has a formal diagnosis of SEND. However, for those aged 18-25, only those who are not eligible to receive paid services from Adult Social Care (18+) will be deemed eligible for support. Referrals can be made by any member of the public via telephone or email. There is no requirement for a member of the social care team or health professional to be involved with the family or make the initial referral.

The programme is focused on achieving specified outcomes, which are to be agreed upon with the child or young person and their family.

To find out more visit: [Staffordshire Connects | Lifeskills & Independence information](#)

Specialist Support

Further support can be offered following a Social Care Assessment, with the child/young person meeting the requirements of the Children Act 1989, Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1970, and subsequent legislation.

This support can come in the form of:

Residential and Overnight Provision

In Staffordshire, residential and overnight provision for children with special educational needs and disabilities is available through resource centres in Cannock, East Staffs, and Newcastle. These centres provide overnight Residential Short Breaks, which are overnight stays at weekends or during school holidays, as well as community short breaks offering activities both in and outside of the resource centre.

Support includes overnight provision, based on assessed need. The resource centres in Cannock and East Staffs are in-house, provided by the Local Authority. The resource centre in Newcastle is a commissioned service provided by Action for Children.

More information can be found here:

[Staffordshire Connects | Children's short breaks in South Staffordshire Chestnut Lodge | Action For Children](#)

Domiciliary Care, Community Support and Sitting Services

Community and Home Care Support and Socialisation aims to help families stay safe and well together at home, preventing an escalation of needs.

The Sitting Service ensures parents/carers are supported to take a short break from their caring role and responsibilities when caring for a child or young person aged 0 – 18 with SEND.

Complex and Urgent Care

The Council has a statutory duty to provide complex and urgent care to children and young persons aged 0-18 with complex needs and/or disabilities (including learning disabilities, Autism Spectrum Conditions, or both, and challenging behaviours) and their families in their own home.



Summary

The Staffordshire Short Breaks Statement 2026-2027 provides comprehensive information for families and professionals supporting children and young people aged 0-18 years with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) in Staffordshire. The statement outlines the range of short break services available, how to access them, and how they are designed to meet local needs.

Key highlights include:

- **Universal Services:** Services open to all community members, with adjustments made to meet additional needs.
- **Targeted Short Breaks:** Activities specifically designed for children and young people with SEND, delivered through the Aiming High programme.
- **Specialist Support:** Additional community support following a Social Care Assessment, including domiciliary care, community support, and residential and overnight provision.

Publication and Review

Our Short Break Service Statement is published on the council's local offer website. The Statement will be reviewed annually. The review will continue to reflect the views and choices of disabled children, young people and their families.



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