

Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council

Short Breaks Grant Offer for Disabled Children or Young People

1 April 2021 to 30 September 2021

1. A Short Break

In Stockton-on-Tees we recognise that families caring full time for a child or young person with a disability and or Special Educational Needs (SEND) can benefit from a break from caring, while the child they are caring for has opportunities to do fun things. Sometimes families require a little extra support to do this and to enjoy the same activities and experiences as other families do.

A 'short break' from the caring role can be a lifeline for some families and can provide children with the opportunity to take part in social opportunities and activities that otherwise may not be available.

A 'short break' can be for an hour, a day or for several days. For some children this can take place for them as a family group, for other children the 'short break' could be away from their family in community settings. In most circumstances this would be by accessing specialist activities and in some cases providing additional support for a child to access universal opportunities.

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 have available to parents and carers of children with a disability and or additional needs, a scheme that provides funds towards the cost of activities that they can apply for through the 'Short Break Grant'.

Applications come direct from parents or carers and **a formal assessment from a professional in regards to a need for a Short Break is not required**. There is, however, an eligibility criteria 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 for the child or young person:

- You care for a disabled child who receives a higher level Disability Living Allowance in either care or mobility components.
- You care for a 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 for by the Local Authority, or via Home Care or where families have chosen to access support to meet assessed need themselves through the use of a Direct Payment.
- You care for a child or young person who is subject to an EHC Plan.

- You care for a child or young person who has been formally triaged and is currently on the Autism Assessment 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 application to the Short Breaks Grant.
- Your application is submitted prior to the deadline of **1st July 2021 at 5pm** and you have not already had **1 successful** application in this period (and limited budget for the scheme has not been exhausted).

You will be required to provide evidence of eligibility to apply for the grant, this should be sent in with your application. The evidence must be valid and dated within 12 months of each new application. There are a number of 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.
- Evidence your child is subject to an EHCP.

4. **The Short Breaks Grant Offer 1 April 2021 – 30 September 2021.**

Following the consultation and considering the feedback 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 £600 or £75 if the child or young person in your care is already in receipt of an assessed Short Break Service from the Council.

Type of Short Break	How can the funds be spent?	Conditions & Limitations	Amount is limited to:
Creative/ Craft items activities/ Equipment/ Books/ Indoor play	Paints, Playdough, Colouring Pens, Glitter, Chalk, Paper Baking equipment Board Games Sand, Printer Ink, Paper, Imaginary play and reading books etc.	This does not include large electrical equipment such as microwaves or ovens, nor does it cover ingredients for baking	£300
Specialist Equipment	LED light sensory toys Fidget Toys Calming & Distraction Toys	This is not an exhaustive list however must be <u>sensory based</u>	£300

	Musical Instruments		
General Equipment	Contribution towards: Scooters, Bikes, Trampolines, Garden Games, Sand Pit, Portable hot tub, Paddling pool, balls, etc	Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council is not responsible for the installation or risk assessment for the use of any equipment parents or carers purchase with the grant. <u>Parents and carers are fully responsible for the supervision of children using the equipment</u>	£300
TV Online Subscriptions	Music (Amazon) TV (Children's Channels, Movies, Netflix) Internet Access Online Game Subscription	Subscriptions must be age appropriate, it is the <u>parents' and carers' responsibility to monitor what children are accessing on line and to ensure children are safeguarded on line</u>	£150
Online Subscriptions for Activity Tutoring	Dance Lessons, Music Tutoring, Exercise Class	Cannot be used for education tutoring eg Maths, Science, English or other school based classes	£600
Electrical Equipment	Contribution towards iPads, Laptops, TVs. Mobile Phones	It is the <u>parents and carers responsibility to monitor what children are accessing on line and to ensure the child is safeguarded and only have access to age appropriate apps and games</u> Please note this is for the purchase of a mobile phone only, not a contract.	£300

	<p>Head phones Games Consoles (XBOX, PlayStation)</p> <p>Children's Game Apps</p>		
<p>Specialised Activities provided specifically for children with disabilities and or additional needs.</p>	<p>The cost of the child's session.</p>	<p>This does not include travel, subs or spending money associated with the activity</p> <p>Does not cover room hire for universal group activity i.e. birthday parties etc.</p> <p>Does not include activities that would be considered to be delivered on a 1:1 basis, unless it can be evidenced that additional resources are required to enable the child or young person to access the activity.</p> <p>Does not include the costs associated with educational activities or therapies.</p>	<p>£600</p>
<p>Universal Activities (none specialist activities)</p> <p>cinema, theatre, football matches, trampolining, horse riding, swimming Family Tickets</p>	<p>Admission cost for the child and or family ticket into the activities of their choice.</p>	<p>This does not include travel, memberships, subs or spending money associated with the activity, sweets drinks and snacks for example. This will include the cost of a family ticket.</p>	<p>£300</p>

<p>Supported Overnight Staycation.</p> <p>Where a carer is required to accompany the child on a staycation either independently of, or with, the child's family</p>	<p>Towards the cost of a carer's travel ticket to and from the staycation destination</p> <p>Towards the cost of accommodation for the carer</p> <p>Costs associated to the provision of a carer to support or supervise the child on a day or single session activity</p> <p>Costs to cover any employment checks including an enhanced DBS check</p> <p>Cost to cover expenses for the carer</p>	<p>Cost of travel on bus, train or flight ticket for a carer to and from a specific staycation destination.</p> <p>This does not include when the carer is staying in family accommodation i.e. a 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 18 years or over and photographic identification will be required to be submitted along with the application.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>You will be responsible as an employer for ensuring you meet with all relevant employment laws and for ensuring the suitability of the carer.</p> <p>Monies can be applied towards the cost of an enhanced DBS check and any relevant employment checks.</p> <p>Up to a maximum of £10 per day to cover any subsistence costs for the carer that are incurred, food, drinks, etc.</p> <p>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>£600</p>
--	---	--	-------------

5. Making an Application

The Short Breaks Grant is a limited fund and Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council reserves the right to close the scheme if the available budget is exhausted.

The grant is popular and last year over 450 families benefited. Eligible families are encouraged to apply promptly and ensure that funding has been secured in advance of activities that are solely reliant on the grant, or any purchases have been made.

This Short Breaks Grant period is **1 April 2021 – 30 September 2021**. The **maximum** amount that can be collectively awarded per child, over no more than **1 successful application** is **£600** or **£75** for those children and young people 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 so long as you **do not exceed the maximum** monetary award.

If you are reliant on the grant to fund an activity that requires a booking and you are reliant on the grant for this funding, remember to check you have been successful before you make the booking.

Complete the **'Short Break Grant Application Form'** online on the Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council web page: Short Breaks Grant.

Any copies of supporting documentation must be emailed with your form.

If you do not have facilities at home to do this, please contact Frances Selby for advice at frances.selby@stockton.gov.uk or the Parent Forum at info@stocktonparentcarerforum.co.uk

The closing date for applications in this period is 5pm 1 July 2021 no further applications for this period will be considered after this date.

Stockton Parent Carer Forum

The grant offer has been co-produced with Stockton Parent Carer Forum and if you have any feedback you can contact them on 07985 245668 or email them at info@stocktonparentcarerforum.co.uk

Max Cards are available for purchase for £3.00 directly from Stockton Parent Carer Forum or online at www.stocktonparentcarerforum.co.uk for £4.00 (to include postage and packaging).

Decision Making

Once eligibility has been established, the request will be forwarded for a decision to a Manager within the Resource Team where an outcome and amount of Grant will be determined.

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 Short Break it has been awarded for.

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

5. Terms & Conditions

Applicants should fully familiarise themselves and agree to the following terms and conditions when submitting a signed application form:

1. I will ensure that I have been awarded the grant in advance of booking activities I intend to use it for and I will only use the Grant awarded for my child to access activities as specified in my application.
2. I understand that if the Grant is used for any purpose other than as agreed in the application, this may impact on any future applications and the Local Authority will request the funds be returned.
3. I agree I will provide the Local Authority with relevant receipts **within 2 weeks** of the money being spent. Receipts to be emailed to shortbreaksgrant@stockton.gov.uk
4. I agree to return all unspent monies to the Local Authority at the end of the award period. I understand if I fail to do so this will affect any future applications and the Local Authority may pursue the return of unaccounted monies.
5. If requested, I agree to complete a short questionnaire to contribute to the ongoing monitoring of the Short Breaks Grant scheme.
6. If you have requested funds to cover a Support Worker, I understand and agree to take full responsibility for the completion of appropriate employment checks and laws, including the completion of a DBS enhanced check.
7. I understand that I am responsible for ensuring the safety and welfare of my child during any Short Break funded through this Grant including those online that are funded through this Grant - www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/coronavirus/digital-safety-and-wellbeing-kit/
8. The Grant cannot be used for any activity during school or college term time, unless it is specifically to attend an organised residential activity with school, however exceptions have been applied during COVID-19.

6. Transfer of Awarded Funds

Where possible we prefer to 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.

7. 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 that are not related to the award application will not be accepted. Where unspent money or proof of spends is not returned then eligibility for future applications may 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 quickly using the online pay for it option at Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council web page. Please follow the following [link](#) and select '**other payments**', then use the drop down box to take you to **short breaks**. No further applications will be considered until 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 and any delay in them returning this proof to us will not affect your future applications.

8. 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 decision screening and 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 and ask that the Short Breaks Co-ordinator is contacted in the first instance in an effort to resolve matters.

If we are unable to resolve matters with you early 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 on a fun activity for the child while providing carers with a Short Break.

