



Oldham Borough Council

Short Breaks Statement

2025 - 2026

**For Children and Young People
with
Special Educational Needs
and
Disabilities**



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Introduction

Welcome to the **Oldham Council Short Breaks Statement 2025/2026**.

Under the Children and Young Persons Act, local authorities are required to provide short breaks for families with children or young people with disabilities. This statutory duty, in place since 1 April 2011, ensures that families are informed about available services, eligibility criteria, and how the range of short breaks meets the needs of children and young people with disabilities living in Oldham.

The Children Act 1989 states that a local authority must offer, so far as is reasonably practicable, a range of services which is sufficient to assist carers to continue to provide care or to do so more effectively. Local authorities must provide short breaks services for carers of disabled children and young people to enable them to continue to care for their disabled child and to participate in everyday activities.

This statement has been co-produced with families, professionals, and partners including **POINT**, Oldham's Parent Carer Forum, Barrier Breakers, Oldham's (SEND Youth Voice Forum) and representatives from health, education, and the voluntary sector.

What Is a Short Break Statement?

The Short Breaks Statement is designed for families and professionals supporting children and young people aged 0–19 years with disabilities in Oldham. It outlines:

- The types of short break services available
- Who is eligible
- How to access support

Short breaks are a vital part of Oldham's SEND offer, helping children and young people thrive and families maintain their wellbeing.



What Is a Short Break?

A short break is any activity that gives a child or young people a positive, enriching experience away from their primary carers. These breaks support:

- Children and young people by promoting independence, social development, and reducing isolation.
- Parent carers by offering respite and helping sustain the quality of care they provide.

Short breaks may take place:

- After school
- At weekends
- During school holidays
- Overnight

They can occur in the child or young person's home, an approved carer's home, a community setting, or online. Activities may be group-based (e.g. clubs) or individual (e.g. supported by a personal assistant).

Examples include:

- Youth clubs
- Sports and drama groups
- Local Parks and Adventure playgrounds
- Holiday schemes
- Overnight stays with foster carers or in our residential setting Gemini House



Definition of Disability

Oldham Council uses the **Equality Act 2010** definition:

“A physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.”

More guidance is available on the UK Government website.

Who Can Access Short Breaks?

Support is offered at **three levels**:

Universal Services

Accessible to all children and young people with SEND who require minimal support.

These include:

- After school clubs
- Football and sports clubs
- Youth groups
- Adventure playgrounds
- Brownies, Cubs, and similar activities

Universal services aim to improve outcomes for children and young people with SEND. They aim to be inclusive, being able to make reasonable adjustments to meet children and young people's needs. Families are advised to contact service providers directly to discuss the offer, the eligibility criteria, the availability and costs.

We encourage you to access Universal Services and discuss the support your child or young people's needs with the organisation. This will help providers to increase their knowledge and skills in regards to supporting children and young people with special educational



needs and disabilities.

Some of these activities may be free. Some may have costs for all children and young people who access them. Children or young people with SEND should not be charged more than other children or young people.

Targeted Services

Sometimes universal services cannot meet the needs of children and young people with additional needs, even when reasonable adjustments have been made.

Targeted short break are designed to meet the specific needs of children or young people with special educational needs and disabilities. They might be organised and funded by grants from the council or by registered charities. There is no need to have a Social Care Assessment to access these short breaks, however, some organisations may have their own criteria.

There may be a charge for these activities which would be met by the family. Children and young people with SEND should not be charged more than other children or young people.

Families can use targeted short breaks without an assessment of need. Families can directly contact the service they are interested in and arrange for the child or young people to attend.

Specialist Services

For families needing higher levels of support. Accessed via formal assessment by the Children with Additional and Complex Needs and Short Breaks Team. Services may include:

- Homecare support
- Direct Payments
- Overnight care
- Commissioned care packages



Universal and targeted services would always be the first options for a short break however we recognise that there will be some children and young people whose needs cannot be met through universal or targeted short breaks.

Specialist short breaks are aimed at families who need more support to be able to get the break they need. The type of short break will be dependent on the needs of the child or young person including to what extent a child or young person's special educational need or disability affects their lives and the lives of those who live with and care for them. These needs will be identified by an assessment which will be completed by a Short Breaks Assessor or Social Worker.

Where there is an identified need, it is a legal duty for the local authority to offer short break services for the carers of children or young people with additional needs to enable them to continue to care for their child or young person and to participate in everyday activities.

These activities could include:

- Day time care in the homes of children or young people with disabilities via a Personal Assistant
- Educational or leisure activities for children or young people with disabilities outside their homes via a Personal Assistant
- Overnight care in our overnight short breaks provision: Gemini House

There are a range of services available across universal, targeted and specialist services and the assessment will look at the most appropriate support.

If you feel your child or young person is unable to access a short break through universal or targeted support you can request an assessment.

What is a Specialist Assessment

The Multi-agency safeguarding hub (MASH) will gather information and will consider if there is enough information available to progress to an assessment.

A Short Breaks Assessor or Social Worker will be allocated and they will work with you to complete a Child and Family Assessment (which includes a Carers Assessment) or Short Breaks Assessment (including a Carers Assessment). For children or young people who



have a mild or moderate disability, this assessment is carried out by a Social Worker within the Assessment and Intervention Team. Children or young people who have a severe or profound disability will have an assessment carried out by a Short Breaks Assessor or Social Worker in the Children or young people with Additional and Complex Needs and Short Breaks Service.

The amount of support that you may need to care for a child or young person with SEND can vary significantly and will be influenced by the carer's own health and well-being, other caring responsibilities and the support that is available through family and friends.

Also taken into consideration is whether you have joint or sole caring responsibilities and other matters like work patterns, family finances and housing. You can ask to be assessed at any time for a Specialist Short Break. The options and services available will be discussed through the assessment process.

The Short Breaks Assessor or Social Worker will ensure that children and young people are at the heart of the assessment process and that consideration is given to needs of parents, carers and siblings and should be completed in partnership with children or young people and their families.

The Short Breaks Assessor or Social Worker work closely with Adult Social Care to plan the transition from Children's to Adult Services from 14 years onwards if it is believed your child or young person requires ongoing support.

If your child or young person has an identified need and receives a service from Children's Services, they will have a named allocated worker should your child or young person require a specialist service.

If the Short Breaks Assessment or Child and Family Assessment identifies that your child or young person does not have a need for a specialist service, you will be supported to access other universal or targeted services in your local community.

Depending on the outcome of the assessment, needs can be met through a range of services, including:

- Direct payments that families can use to employ a personal assistant to deliver a short break
- Recommendation that support is accessed by universal or Early Help services
- 1:1 support through a commissioned service
- Family-based overnight short breaks
- Residential-based overnight short breaks at our own overnight short breaks provisions Gemini House



Whilst a child or young person remains open to Children's Social Care, short breaks will be reviewed at a minimum of 12 monthly.

Children's Social Care Contact

Multi-agency safeguarding hub (MASH) - self-refer as a child, young person or parent carer or you can be referred by someone working to support you.

Call 0161 770 7777 Option 1

Monday to Friday from 8:45am to 5pm

Email child.mash@oldham.gov.uk

Adult Social Care

For **young** adults, age 18 to 25, the ARCC Team will gather information and will consider if there is enough information available to progress to an assessment. A social worker will be allocated and they will work with you to complete a Care Act and Carers Assessment. On completion of the assessment, the allocated worker will discuss which services would best meet your young adult's needs and you will be offered a discussion around choices and services that best suit your family.

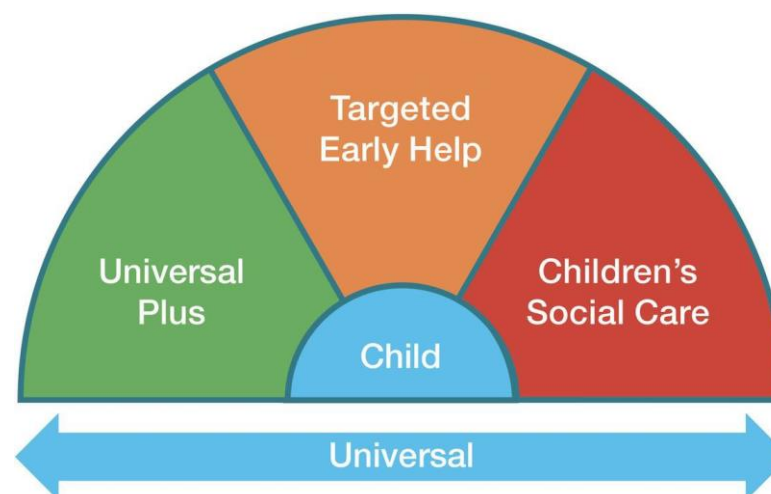
Adult Social Care Contact

ARCC

Call 0161 770 7777 Option 2.

Monday to Friday 8.40am – 5.00pm

Email ARCC@oldham.gov.uk



Universal: The needs of children are met by universal services such as schools, healthcare services, leisure and community services which are readily accessible to all, as well as the love, care and protection from parents and carers

Universal Plus “Earliest Possible Help”: Children who may have unmet or complex needs that requires multi-agency support through an early help response involving two or more agencies. This is led by one agency and the aim is to build a plan of support around the child and family to work together to respond to needs.

Targeted Early Help: Children who have multiple and complex unmet need requiring a targeted Early Help response with targeted intervention from Early Help services led by the local authority, where Universal Plus “Earliest Possible Help” has not enabled change to be made. These unmet needs may be complex and could be impacting on the child and family daily life. Short Breaks Services can be accessed via this route.

Children’s Social Care: Children with acute needs requiring statutory social work level intervention. This could be due to increasing risk or where there is actual or likely significant harm. This will require Social Care to undertake a S17 Children in Need assessment or S47 enquiries. Specialist Short Breaks Services can also be accessed via this route.



Universal – all children and young people

The needs of children are met by universal services such as schools, healthcare services, leisure and community services which are readily accessible to all, as well as the love, care and protection from parents and carers

Children and young people who are making good overall progress in all areas of development. These children receive appropriate universal services, such as health, care and education. They may also use leisure and play facilities, housing or voluntary sector services. These children may have a single identified need that can be adequately met by a universal service. However, if further additional needs are identified, further support should be considered within Universal Plus “Earliest Possible Help” commencing with a partner led Early Help assessment.

Universal plus “Earliest Possible Help” – working together as more than one partner agency

“Earliest possible help” – consent based collaborative approach Children who may have unmet or complex needs that requires multi-agency support through an early help response involving two or more agencies.

This is led by one agency and the aim is to build a plan of support around the child and family to work together to respond to needs.

This support can cover a range of work and services working together focusing on problem solving and supporting families, commencing with a partner led Early Help assessment. This “Earliest Possible Help” within Universal Plus focusses on proactive engagement – working with families and connecting the right people at the earliest possible point. However, if this support is not effective in working with families to achieve change, contact can be made with the MASH to request consideration for escalation to Targeted Early Help led by the local authority or directed to Positive Steps led support.

Targeted Early Help

Children who have multiple and complex unmet need requiring a targeted Early Help response with targeted intervention from Early Help services led by the local authority or directed to Positive Steps led support, where Universal Plus “Earliest



Possible Help” has not enabled change to be made. These unmet needs may be complex and could be impacting on the child and family daily life.

This Targeted Early Help approach will retain the multi-agency working but be led by the local authority or Positive Steps in ensuring a robust plan and any relevant access to specialist services connected with the assessed need for Early Help support. Where support and progress is sustained, return to partner led Universal Plus can take place through a planned approach.

Children’s Social Care

Children with acute needs requiring statutory social work level intervention. This could be due to increasing risk or where there is actual or likely significant harm. This will require Social Care to undertake a S17 Children in Need assessment or S47 enquiries, as outlined within Working Together 2018.

The Child/Children is in need of social work led assessment and involvement because there is a risk of significant harm to a child if support is not provided to consider the following Children’s Social Care role under the Children Act 1989:

- Children considered at risk of or experiencing significant harm from neglect or from sexual, physical or emotional abuse (S47)
- Children subject to a Child Protection Plan (S47)
- Children who require support from social care under S17 (Consent required for CiN).
- Children subject to care proceedings (S31)
- Children accommodated under Section 20
- Children accessing overnight Short Breaks (S17)
- Children ‘Looked after’ due to attending overnight Short Breaks provision over 75 days per year or 17 consecutive days



Eligibility criteria and assessment details are available on the Oldham Council website [Short Breaks Eligibility Criteria | Oldham Council](#)

The Local Offer

Oldham's **SEND Local Offer (OSLO)** is a central directory of services and support for children or young people with SEND aged 0–25. It includes:

- Early years settings
- Health and education services
- Social care
- Short Break providers

Visit the Oldham SEND Local Offer website for up-to-date listings, events, and resources. [Oldham SEND Local Offer](#)

Short Break Play and Leisure Activity Offer

Launched in April 2023, the Short Breaks Play and Leisure Activity offer is provided by **POINT** and are the lead provider for Oldham partnership for targeted Short Breaks. This offer provides a range of activities for children, young people and their families aged 0–19. It is reviewed quarterly in consultation with families to reflect emerging needs.

Referrals can be made via the **POINT** Activities contact page.

Contact POINT



Phone 0161 503 1543

Email activities@point-send.co.uk

Website: [SEND Activities and Short Breaks – POINT](https://www.point-send.co.uk)

Short Breaks Access Breakdown 2024 / 2025

Short Breaks	Number of children and young people
Specialist Short Breaks	Total: 300
POINT Short Breaks Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> total number of registrations into the service 2024/2025 – 128 number of registrations eligible to book activities (eg – haven't been signposted for a PA) 2024/2025 – 97 number of children and young people who have accessed our activities and events 2024/2025 Breakdown: 157 - Activity sessions & 184 - Family trips and events & 415 Ability Wheelz Cycle Centre
Barrier Breakers	Total: 25
HAF	Total: 2631

Oldham Short Break Commissioned Services 2024/2025

Name of Short Break	Type of break	Parental contribution	Age range	When / Where	Duration	How do you access this
POINT - Short Breaks Play and Leisure Activities	Targeted activities tailored to	£2 - £4 per hour (available on	0 - 19	Various/Termly timetable	Various/Termly timetable	Call: 0161 503 1543 Email:



	needs. Various activities available, termly timetable.	request)				<u>activities@point-send.co.uk</u> Website: <u>SEND Activities and Short Breaks – POINT</u>
Youth Service: Barrier Breakers SEND Youth Groups	Targeted Youth Group	Free	11- 25	Rock Street, Oldham	Monday	Call: 0161 770 3116 Email: <u>Dayna.brannick@oldham.gov.uk</u>

Oldham's HAF is a Department for Education funded initiative delivered by Oldham Council, offering free holiday clubs with enriching activities and a nutritious meal to eligible children aged 5–16 across Easter, summer, and Christmas breaks.

Who's Eligible?

- Automatically eligible: Children aged 5–16 who receive benefits-related free school meals (e.g., Income Support, Universal Credit under thresholds, etc.)
- Not automatically eligible: Children in Reception to Year 2 do receive universal free school meals—but these are not part of HAF eligibility.

Please see below all SEND HAF programs available through school holidays.

The Eequ booking system is live and is updated each delivery period. The link is:- <https://eequ.org/oldhamhaf>