



Short Breaks for Disabled Children: A Parent/Carer & professional's guide to applying for Short Breaks

Pathway One and Two

This guide is to be used by families & professionals wanting to apply for a short break from Nottingham City Council.

April 2024

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1. What is a short break service?

Parents/carers of disabled children are often required to provide intensive support 24 hours per day. This can often leave little time to deal with other aspects of day to day life. A short break is designed provide opportunities for disabled children and young people to spend time away from their primary carers and enable their carers to take a 'break' from care. During a short break, young people have the opportunities to learn new skills, meet new people and become more independent. Short breaks do not always mean spending time apart though. In some situations, a little extra help to do things as a family is needed. This is also considered to be a short break.

Short breaks can be provided in many different ways and are designed to be flexible to meet the needs of individual families. For example, a short break for one family may be that a befriender provides support to enable a young person to access their local youth group without having to go with their parent/carer. For another family a short break may be in the form of providing Direct Payments to allow the family to purchase sessions at an inclusive group activity.

Nottingham City Council aims to provide flexible short breaks that meet the needs of each individual family. An application for short breaks can be made for children and young people, through Pathway 1 or Pathway 2, from the age of 5 to 17 years old.

2. How Pathway One and Two work

Pathway One:

Families are able to apply for a grant to access a personal budget of up to £1,664 per year through Pathway One Short Breaks. This grant can be used on any Short Breaks Services detailed in this document; however, the amount you apply for may vary.

Grants will run for a full year only. This will start from when the application is approved (unless a shorter period is requested e.g. 6 months) and can be agreed at any point throughout the year. For example, if a family applies for a budget in the beginning of July and it is approved, the grant will run until the following June.

The grant will need to be re-applied for if families wish to receive a service for the following year. Aims and outcomes will be focussed on and evidence will be required to demonstrate how these have been met or worked towards.

****NB families applying for Pathway One grants are encouraged to identify flexible and innovative short breaks. Whilst traditional services can be accessed in this way they can often take time to set up. Families are therefore encouraged to explore alternatives that may achieve the same outcomes****

Pathway Two:

Families applying for support on Pathway 2 can access a personal budget of up to £6,656. The level of funding available will be determined by the completion of a Resource Allocation Questionnaire (RAQ) once it is deemed that the candidate meets

the criteria for Short Breaks. This budget can be used on any Short Breaks Services detailed in this document. **You cannot apply for regulated overnight care on Pathway Two. If you require this level of support, you will need contact the Whole Life Disability Team, as this will require an assessment.**

You will still be required to have an assessment in order to access Pathway Two. However, this can be an existing assessment already completed within the last 6 months. Assessments can include an Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCP), a Children's Assessment (CA) – through the Whole Life Disability Team, an ongoing Common Assessment Framework (CAF), a Priority Families Assessment or any other Multi Agency assessment. The assessment will need to identify a need for Short Breaks services.

The personal budget is approved on an on-going basis, subject to annual review and can be agreed at any point throughout the year. The review will include a Personalisation Officer meeting with you to complete a new Resource Allocation Questionnaire (RAQ) to see if the level of need has changed. As part of the review, aims and outcomes will be focussed on and evidence will be required to demonstrate what has/hasn't been met.

The service will continue for the following year if it is demonstrated that the level of service/support is still required and it is still meeting the needs of the young person and their family appropriately. Please note support may stay the same, reduce, end or increase as part of a review.

Please note:

Children with very complex health needs; called continuing care, will need an assessment by the Whole Life Disability Team and continuing care nurse. Their needs would not be able to be met through Pathway One or Two support and would require a higher level of support via other pathways i.e. Pathway Four.

3. The application process

What information/evidence do I need to provide?

Applications for short breaks support must be made online. The application can be found by following the link below.

www.nottinghamcity.gov.uk/ShortBreaks

An application can be submitted by the parent/carer or it can be submitted by the supporting professional on the parent/carer's behalf.

You will need the following before you attempt to submit an application.

- Professional sign off. One of the professionals detailed below must countersign the application form, confirming the accuracy of the content and supporting the application for a Short Break. These professionals can include:
 - Paediatrician

- School Senco
 - Education psychologist
 - Social Worker
 - CAMHS Practitioner
 - Any other registered health or social care professional accountable to a professional body
- A supporting letter from the above professional detailing further information about the applicant's support needs and the benefit a short break could provide.
 - Evidence of the applicant's diagnosed/identified disability. For example letter from a Paediatrician or diagnosing medical professional.
 - Evidence that the child or young person cannot access universal/targeted support services.

If you are applying for Pathway Two, you will also need to provide a copy of any current assessment of the child/young person (see 'How Pathway Two works' – above), which identifies that the family are in need of a Short Break.

Without all of this information attached to the submitted online application, we will not be able to process your application.

If you have any questions about the application process you can contact the Short Breaks team using the details below.

Email address personal.budgets@nottinghamcity.gov.uk

Postal address Nottingham City Council, Short Breaks, Loxley House, Station Street, Nottingham NG2 3NG

Telephone 0115 876 2745

What are universal/targeted services?

The outcomes and goals of many disabled children can be met through universal/targeted services. These services are designed to be inclusive and enable children and young people with disabilities to be able to access them. A universal service, is a service that we use in everyday life such as schools, doctors, dentists, nursery's but also extends to groups and activities that all children should be able to access such as beavers/brownie groups, football clubs, netball clubs and after school clubs amongst others. Each organisation or group has a responsibility to make them inclusive and accessible; however sometimes the needs of children with disabilities may mean that they cannot attend, without specialist one to one support.

Where those groups are not accessible, targeted services are designed to enable young people to still achieve the same outcomes, however, they may just need a little more support to do it. In Nottingham, Inclusive Youth and Play Support groups run across the City and enable children and young people with disabilities to be able access fun play activities. These groups can offer additional support in terms of staffing, specialist equipment or specialist training.

Where children and young people are unable to access inclusive services, families may wish to consider accessing a short break. These breaks enable young people to access their community.

4. Am I eligible to access short breaks?

Disabled Children and young people are entitled to a short break service if they have a permanent and substantial disability and are **unable** to access universal and additional services without requiring additional specialist support. If this cannot be evidenced, (i.e. demonstrated that universal services have been tried prior to the application), then the application will be declined. We will signpost you to and ask you to attempt to access these services. If it is then clear that the child/young person's needs cannot be met, then an application will be considered.

Whilst all disabled children are entitled to some support, the needs of many disabled children can be met through additional support available via universal services. The level and type of support that can be provided will therefore depend on a range of factors. These include the unique combination of disability, the circumstances of the child's home life and the wider social environment.

5. What services can I access?

The services that you can access through a Pathway One or Two short breaks are listed below. Regulated overnight support **cannot** be provided via the Pathway One or Two application form and must be assessed by a Social Worker from the Whole Life Disability Team.

The age criteria for these services may be different from the age criteria for Pathway One or Two; however, in order to apply for these services through Pathway One or Two, the child or young person must be 5 or over and under 18 years of age.

Direct payment – This is a cash payment in lieu of a direct service, which can be used to purchase a short break. Direct Payments allow you to be more flexible and creative in meeting your child and family's needs and achieving outcomes. However, Direct Payments are not used to replace informal networks of support or to pay for the things that most parents would be expected to cover the costs of for their child, for example travel, food drink costs. Please refer to the examples section for an idea on how a Direct Payment may support you.

Befriending service - Supports disabled children and young people who require 1:1 support in order to access their own community. A person-centred matching process identifies a befriender (with the relevant skills, qualifications, experiences and interests) to provide the young person with the opportunity to become involved and included within their local community. This is outcome focussed support to assist children and young people to for example gain new skills, meet new people, become more independent, socialise or learn about money management.

Commissioned group sessions – Our current commissioned provider, Mencap provide two group sessions called M8s and Gener8. They cater for different age groups and provide access at weekends to new social experiences, sports, opportunities to develop new skills and outings/daytrips.

Sitting Services – provides care for the young person at home enabling the family to undertake day to day activities following an assessed need. This also enables parents/carers to spend quality time with other family members which may not be possible without specialist support.

Nottingham City Council's Short Breaks Personalisation Service understands that support needs to be flexible therefore you are able to choose a combination of the options above in order for the support to flexibly meet your needs.

6. Planning your short break

Pathway One - The maximum grant that can be allocated is **£1,664** for the whole year. A large number of applicants ask for less than this and look to access £500-£1,000. Some are even smaller, for example £75 to fund a specialist trip which is run by an autism charity, or £200 to hire an adapted vehicle to enable a family holiday to take place. We encourage families on Pathway 1 support to look at innovative ways of using a Direct Payment that would not involve the employment of staff.

Pathway Two - The maximum budget that can be allocated is **£6,656** for the whole year. Your budget is dependent on your score in the Resource Allocation Questionnaire (RAQ) that will be completed with you by an allocated Personalisation Officer.

Your personal budget can be accessed through a Direct Payment or through a service either provided directly by the Council or commissioned on your behalf by the Council.

If you want to employ a Personal Assistant (PA) through the provision of a Direct Payment, the Council will provide enough to provide your PA a rate of £11.44¹ per hour, plus holiday pay. A Direct Payment can also be used to purchase a service, such as a befriending service from a charitable organisation. In this case, you will simply be invoiced by the organisation for the number of hours they provide.

When employing staff through a Direct Payment there is a deduction made to your budget as a contribution towards the cost of employment support services, such as payroll, etc. In addition to this, the maximum amount of hours that can be funded via Pathway 1 is 104 per year (2 hours per week), and the maximum amount of hours that can be accessed via Pathway 2 is around 10 hours per week.

Nottingham City Council provides a range of services all of which are priced below:

- | | |
|--|-----------------|
| • Befriending service | £16 per hour |
| • Sitting Services | £16 per hour |
| • Commissioned group sessions | £50 per session |
| • Commissioned group sessions (with 1:1 support) | £64 per session |

Where you choose to use some of your grant/budget for the services detailed above, Nottingham City Council will hold the grant/budget on your behalf. This is referred to as a notional personal budget.

¹ Rate correct at time of publication

Your short break can be made up of both a Direct Payment and the services above to ensure that it is meeting your needs and also outcomes identified for the child/young person.

7. Help completing the form

If you feel that you need some assistance completing the form, you should contact the professional that is going to support your application, for example a SENCO, Social Worker, Family Support Worker. The Short Breaks Personalisation Service can provide advice on criteria and what documentation may be needed but cannot assist you to complete the application as it would compromise our ability to assess the application objectively.

8. Frequently asked questions

Question 1

I am applying for Pathway One. What if I feel that I need more than £1,664?

Answer

If you feel that you need more than £1,664 to meet your needs then please look through the guidance to see if you meet the criteria for Pathway Two. If further information is required to make a decision on your application, a Personalisation Officer will be in touch with you to help work out the level of support you need.

Question 2

My application has been submitted - when will I get a reply?

Answer

For Pathway One applications you should receive a decision within 4 weeks of receipt of an accepted application. For Pathway Two applications you should receive a decision within 6 weeks of the receipt of an accepted application. You may be asked for additional information or we may arrange for someone to visit and discuss your application. Once the review of your application is complete it will be referred for a decision on whether to approve or decline the support requested. Decisions are made by the Short Breaks Manager.

Question 3

Can I challenge a decision if I don't agree with it?

Answer

Yes – For Pathway One applications, should you not agree with a decision then this can be reviewed by the Short Breaks Manager. For Pathway Two applications; if you are not happy with the decision made, then the Short Breaks Manager can ask for the application to be reviewed by the Senior Short Breaks Officer. This may involve a re-scoring of the Resource Allocation Questionnaire (RAQ) by the Senior. Should the Senior agree with the initial recommendation of the Personalisation officer and the family/applicant is still not satisfied, a request can be made to Whole Life Disability Team for an assessment by a qualified social worker.

Question 4

I have a relative or friend and I would like to pay them to take my child out or to help me take my child/children out. Can I do this?

Answer

Yes. A friend or a relative (who does not live in the same house) can be employed to take your child out or to help you take your child/children out. Your personal budget would be used to access a Direct Payment to employ the friend or relative as a Personal Assistant (PA). You would be helped to do this, once your application had been accepted. Payroll services and other support costs would be deducted from the personal budget.

Question 5

I would like my child to attend a local youth club/sports club/activity group, as they cannot currently do this without support. Can the money be used for this?

Answer

Yes. If your child could attend such a group, with some support in place, your budget could be used to pay towards the admission cost or other additional cost. Tell us what you are wanting to do and we will try to help. Please note that a Direct Payment is not used to replace informal networks of support or to pay for the things that most parents would be expected to cover the costs of for their child.

Question 6

The application form says I can apply up to £1,6664 on Pathway One but I only want £5 per week to pay for an after school group at my school. Is this OK?

Answer

Yes. £1,600 is the maximum amount on Pathway One - but you can apply for less. Requests for the full amount would clearly have to demonstrate the need for this level of support.

Question 7

I only need support in school holidays. Can my grant be used to have support at these times?

Answer

Yes. The grant can be used for a worker to support in school holidays, or for groups. You will need to work out how many hours support you would like and calculate this over 13 weeks per year if you want support in each school holiday.

Question 8

I wish I could go on holiday with my family. We cannot go as we cannot afford someone to help or the cost of the larger accommodation we would need due to my child's disability. Can the money be used for this?

Answer

Your budget can be used to support your family on holiday by providing for example:

- You can evidence that you have approached and applied for alternative charitable funding prior to requesting this through Pathway One/Two.

- Additional cost of accommodation if specialist/additional accommodation is needed because your child is disabled.
- Payment to a support worker who is going to go with you.
- Contribution towards the cost of the holiday – this must be in line with any limits set within the Nottingham City Council Direct Payment Policy. A maximum of £600 can be accessed.

Question 9

My child already has a Whole Life Disability Team Social Worker and other support. Can I use this service as well?

Answer

No, you cannot. This is a way of accessing support for people who do not already have a service in place. BUT if you think that you do not need the support of a social worker and you would prefer this way of accessing support, please discuss this with your allocated worker/lead professional.

Question 10

I don't know how I'd like to use my budget, and I want to find out more information on services available.

Answer

A Personalisation Officer can speak to you before you make an application and outline what services might be available and they can support you to plan your short break as part of appraising your application.

9. Examples of short break support which could be provided using this application form.

Example of planning your short break 1 (Pathway 1):

Mohammed is 16 and needs support to access the community. He would like to become involved in a musical theatre group however doesn't want his parents there embarrassing him:

Mohammed knows the group closes in school holidays so only wants to fund the groups for 39 weeks per year. The musical theatre group costs £12 per day.

Breakdown - mixture of a Direct Payment

Musical theatre	39 days x £12 per day	<u>£468.00</u>
	Total grant spend	<u>£468.00</u>

Example of planning your short break 2 (Pathway 2):

Alan is 15 years old and has Autism and Epilepsy. He takes regular medication for his epilepsy; however, he still has regular seizures. He is prescribed emergency/rescue medication that he needs to have with him at all times.

Alan is not able to go out of the house on his own due to a number of reasons, one being high anxieties around people and crowds. This also causes him to display behaviours that challenge. Alan has a keen interest in photography as this is quite a solitary hobby where he doesn't need to particularly talk to anyone (he struggles in social situations and has very high anxieties) and he likes to take photographs of animals and nature. Someone has to go with him when he does this. His knowledge in this area though is very limited and he has identified a photography club that would help him to learn new skills. Due to his lack of social skills (in relation to his Autism), he is unable to access this club alone. Alan is hoping to become a photographer when he reaches adulthood. This would support him throughout his transition period.

The photography club is 4 hours per week and costs £40 per month (all year round). The family have identified a family friend who is willing to be employed to take Alan to the club.

Breakdown – Direct Payments

Photography club	£40 per month x 12 months	£480.00
Personal Assistant (PA)	4 hours per week x £12.82* per hour x 52 weeks	£2,508.48
Payroll service and insurance		<u>£340.00</u>
	Total personal budget	£3,328.48

* £12.82 per hour includes an allowance for holiday pay.

Example of planning your short break 3 (Pathway 1):

Mark is 13 and has autism - he loves trains. He needs someone with him all the time. His family would like some time to do things with their other children now and again and also some time for Mark to have fun doing what he enjoys.

They employ someone they know to care for Mark for 6 hours per month – and pay them a rate of £12.82 per hour. Once a month Mark goes out for a special treat on the train. They have a budget of £20 per month to pay towards the fares - (£240 a year).

Mark has a great day, which he helps plan, and his parents have a day out with their other children.

Breakdown – Direct Payments

Personal Assistant	6 hours per month x £12.82* per hour	£868.32
Payroll service and insurance		£340.00
	Total personal budget	£1,155.76

* £12.82 per hour includes an allowance for holiday pay.

Example of planning your short break 4 (Pathway 2):

Nadia is 14 years old and has had an assessment which has highlighted a need for 1:1 support in order for her to access the community safely and for the safety of others as she can display some complex challenging behaviour. Nadia also has limited verbal communication and uses Makaton. She has 3 other siblings all living at home, one of which also has a diagnosed disability.

Outcomes identified for Nadia are that she would benefit from support to play/socialise alongside other young people as she can get frustrated easily, targeting her peers. Her parents are not able to take her out easily due to the difficulty in managing her behaviours alongside her siblings.

Nadia requires a Link Worker to take her out on a Saturday for 3 hours per week. This will be in term time and school holidays (52 weeks per year).

Breakdown – Link workers

Link Workers	3 hrs per week x 52 weeks x £16	<u>£2,496.00</u>
	Total personal budget	£2,496.00

Example of planning your short break 5 (Pathway 1):

Jordan is 5 years old and is diagnosed with epilepsy and Pathological Demand Avoidance. She has 3 older siblings (10, 13 and 15 years), and the nature of her disabilities mean that her Father, who is a single parent.

Jordan’s Father would like to have a short break to enable him to give some quality time to his other 3 children due to the demand on his attention from Jordan when they are all together. He would like to spend quality time with his other 3 children once per fortnight and undertake tasks he is ordinarily unable to do.

The family would benefit from a sitting service to enable this to happen safely and for Jordan to be appropriately cared for.

Breakdown - sitting service

Short breaks Sitter	4 hours per fortnight x 26 weeks x £16	<u>£1,664.00</u>
	Total personal budget	£1,664.00

Example of planning your short break 6 (Pathway 1):

Charmaine is a 10-year-old girl on the autistic spectrum, with global developmental delay and ADHD. She is an only child and does not see many other children outside of school because family friends struggle with her behaviour. Parents are seeking more support for her but an application for an Education, Health and Care Plan is still ongoing. They want her to be able to make new friends and enjoy herself more as she gets quite down, particularly during the holidays, and they cannot afford to take her too many places that she would enjoy.

The family have identified an autism charity who provide a play group one Sunday a month and also provide activities during school holidays.

Breakdown - Direct Payments

Play Group	1 session per month @ £20 per session	<u>£240.00</u>
School holiday activities	Various activities throughout the year	<u>£600.00</u>
	Total personal budget	£840.00