



# Short Breaks Questions and Answers

**Chair: Seema Islam**

**Panel members: Sue Roberts, Matt Gratton, Clare Redrupp, Caroline Fanning**

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## Introductory points

Sue Roberts explained that the Short Breaks Panel won't be responding to questions about individual circumstances on children of parents / carers.

Parents / Carers can contact Cheviots directly by emailing: [Cheviots@enfield.gov.uk](mailto:Cheviots@enfield.gov.uk) or calling Cheviots on 0208 363 4047. One of the team members will get back to them to discuss their individual issues.

All need to understand that "one size doesn't fit all", either during this time, or any other time, and so, the answers given at the videoconference will be more generalised. Cheviots are in the process of contacting everyone known to them to have these discussions.

## Explanation of Short Breaks Grant

There are two elements to the grant

- Service grant - £1,000 used to fund play-schemes etc. (which are often around £50-£60 per day)
- Activities grant - £500 used to fund activities like cinema trips, swimming, gyms

Parents have limited pots of money and so need to think about how best to use them. Hopefully, the play schemes will be running in October and over Christmas, as well as half terms and so, parents need to retain funding for these if they want to use them.

## Availability of Short Breaks provision over summer

### **1) Will Cheviots be open for our children during the summer holidays? If not, what provision will be made in place of Short Breaks for this summer?**

Yes, Cheviots is open this summer for play schemes. However, they have had to dramatically restrict numbers of Children and Young People (CYP) they are able to have, at any one time. This is so that they can comply with social distancing measures in the best way possible. Last year 1200 sessions were provided and this year 720 will be provided across the whole summer (approx.). This means they are not able to offer it to every CYP who usually come to the summer play scheme.

As an alternative, if a child is in receipt of a Direct Payment, they are being offered the equivalent hours in the form of a direct payment so that families can pay for carers etc.

If a child is not in receipt of Direct Payment, Cheviots are trying to offer £300 in the form of a Short Breaks Grant. This grant can be used to pay for activities, toys or equipment for the CYP.

Group based activities need to be limited and the priority is to keep children and staff safe and well. If there is a case of Covid at Cheviots, they need to be able to minimise impact this has on the

service that is being delivered. Cheviots wants to work with parents to look for alternatives to group based activities.

**2) How are you prioritising who gets to go on the play scheme at Cheviots over summer?**

A system has been put in place as to how CYP are prioritised for the summer play scheme. This includes factors like safeguarding concerns, looked-after children, number of disabled children in each family, levels of behaviour of concern, parental health issues, individual family circumstances, etc.

**3) Can none of the children, who normally have Short Breaks have any days over the summer?**

Answered above

**4) I would like to know more about family breaks and any help available for families and kids with autism.**

Normally lots of help is available which can't be provided this year e.g. SENDIASS and ENAS. Certain groups are running such as VIPS, but they (VIPS) are currently looking for a bigger venue to increase provision.

The Summer Uni scheme is also running over the summer. However, this will be socially distanced, and over the internet - [Enfield Summer Uni 2020](#)  
ECYPS are running some schemes and virtual coffee mornings. This changes each week, and they send their updates on ECYPS Facebook page, but you have to be a member of the group to access this scheme - <https://www.facebook.com/ECYPScharity/>

ALWA (managed by Tiudane Richards) has got spaces available for children with Autism and learning difficulties, aged 8-15. For further details on ALWA, parents / carers can contact Cheviots, Our Voice, or ALWA directly: Contact email - [info@abundantlivingwithautism.org.uk](mailto:info@abundantlivingwithautism.org.uk); Contact telephone number - 07940380819

**5) I would like to know what help can be given to kids with autism during the summer holiday. I am a single mum with 2 kids and I have used my grant to get him toys. I am now thinking what is going to happen during the holidays? I am really stressed thinking about summer holiday. I would need help with him, so that I can look after his little one as well.**

Answered as above. In addition, at the moment, the Social Work team are doing increased numbers of Short Break Reviews. This is their process to ensure that the Short Break package that is currently in place for a particular family meets the family's needs. If a family feel that the Short Breaks package they have is not meeting their needs, they can request of a review of their package by contacting Cheviots (Contact details supplied at the top of this document). This was usually a lengthy process in the past, pre- Covid 19. However, in the midst of the pandemic, this has been reconsidered and a lot of these reviews are being done over the phone to make it quicker and more efficient, thus ensuring that the care packages continue to meet needs.

**6) Is there someone we can speak to or go to so as to get advice on support for a child with Global Delay?**

Locally, one should go to [Local Offer](#) website. There is a page on here, entitled "[worries about your child's health and development](#)". This has lots of information on who to contact, who to speak to and where to go to for support. Nationally, other sites have Q&A sections on their website, e.g. [Mencap](#).

Educational Psychologist service can advise on general learning and development areas too. They are currently running a [Family Telephone Support line](#) as part of their response to Covid-19.

**7) Why is there such poor awareness about the availability of short -breaks to families of disabled children?**

This is a challenge for all, including parents. This has been worked on for some time with Our Voice. Each of the sections on the Local Offer needs to be looked at. Suggestions are welcome from parents if they know of ways in which this can be shared more widely.

Terminology, in terms of referring to is as 'Short Breaks' may be confusing for some. Short Breaks is anything from a play scheme, to an after-school club, or any leisure activities that a child may enjoy. It is a term that is used nationally, and is in the legislation. The Cheviots team are open to suggestions if parents feel that this isn't a helpful term.

## Eligibility criteria for Short Breaks

**8) How can my child be eligible for Short Breaks? Is there a criteria?**

Yes, there is a criteria. [Enfield Local Offer](#) or [Enfield Children's Portal](#) sites both take you to the eligibility criteria.

The [online portal](#) is where referrals are made to the Joint Service for Disabled Children. This is broken up into different gateways, e.g. gateway for Early Intervention Support Service, or if requests are particularly for Short Breaks

This portal is usually filled by the professional (e.g. from Health, Education) working with the CYP. This portal referral now goes directly to the Special Services panel, once it has been triaged by one of the team managers.

**9) If my child doesn't meet eligibility criteria for Short Breaks, what are the other available support services or activities?**

Parents can access any other groups and activities that are available independently. There is also a lot of information about other activities that are available in the borough, that are accessible. Please click [here](#) to go to the Local Offer page for local activities.

**10) Does my child's EHCP enable him to get funding for short breaks?**

Not necessarily. There are different thresholds and criteria for eligibility. Having an EHCP doesn't automatically entitle a child to Short Breaks. The process of being referred through the portal still needs to be followed.

## How to use Short Breaks Grant during the Covid-19 Pandemic

**11) Can we use the service grant to purchase play equipment? Perhaps up to a limit of £200?**

If families are receiving a Short Breaks grant, they should have received communication from the team about it.

In April, when nothing was running parents could use up to £200 of their funding.

Over, summer families can use up to £300 of their grant money. This limit is suggested to ensure there is sufficient money in place to use for the rest of the financial year for play schemes, which will hopefully begin to run in October and December. Funding cannot be used for fast food, clothing, etc. The Short Breaks grant is not intended to fund therapies at present.

Families can also (as always) spend up to £200 towards holiday costs with the child.

Parents are responsible for managing the money by being creative and flexible, e.g. ensuring enough funding from the grant is available for play schemes later in year.

If there is a larger item which some families feel may benefit their child, then do contact Cheviots to have this discussion.

Payments will hopefully be made into the bank accounts by the 24<sup>th</sup> July.

**12) I have respite care via CrossRoads but have not been able to use this currently as my child is shielding. Can I use the unused money towards care later on?**

This is an individual circumstance. One of the issues with a care agency may be that they can't deliver those care hours in a block at another time. The idea is to provide ongoing support and so, contact the team directly to have this discussion.

## **Other options /Issues with regards to Short Breaks**

**13) There are no swimming pools, soft play centres, adventure playgrounds, trampolining centres open. But hey pubs and restaurants are open. 7 weeks of complete school closure, with no specialist facilities or playgroups. How on earth are we supposed to care for our hyperactive autistic children safely and remain sane?**

Some facilities are now beginning to open up and so, there will be opportunity to access these facilities Please see the latest [government guidance](#) on the reopening of sports and recreation facilities

David Lloyds have currently got an offer on. Pay £50 for 3 months to use their facilities (e.g. tennis, indoor/outdoor swimming pool). Further information can be found on the [David Lloyds](#) website, or by contacting them on 0208 364 4332.

The Cheviots team are also looking at the possibility of opening a school playground over the summer, on some of the Sundays, when play schemes are not going to be running. Our Voice will be kept in the loop about this.

**14) It is great having the activity grant for my child. However, this is not enough. What are the other facilities or activities that my child can do bearing in mind that not all families meet the criteria for short breaks?**

Would recommend that people in this position get in touch with Cheviots to review their Short Breaks package (as answered in one of the previous questions).

Refer to Local Offer for those not able to meet short breaks criteria. Click on the link: [Things to do in Enfield](#) . This link will open up to a range of activities and services in Enfield, accessible playgrounds that are designed and developed for children with disabilities, etc.

**15) During Covid-19, can someone use the grant money or direct payments to employ her husband to work with the children, if the husband hasn't got another job?**

No – Short Breaks grant can't be used to employ someone. This is the Local Authority's money and therefore public liability, National Insurance, pension contributions etc. needs to be paid. The short breaks grant would be insufficient to cover all of these expenses. Short breaks grant can be used to employ someone from a home care agency, as all the above-mentioned costs are covered in the agency costs.

The government guidance is that you cannot employ someone who lives in the family home. Although these conditions are currently relaxed because of the extraordinary circumstances with Covid-19, it is not appropriate to employ a parent. This is in line with other Local Authorities too. Families need to consider the possible impact on household / housing benefits this scenario would cause. Individual circumstances would be considered by contacting Cheviots for discussions on this.

**16) How do I use a direct payment or personal budget for respite for my 7-year-old if there is no place available in a play scheme?**

A direct payment would usually be used to pay for a carer, either to support a child in the family home or to take the child out. A Short Breaks grant can be used for a play scheme. An activities grant would be used for activities like cinema, gym membership, to purchase toys and equipment in the current situation, or to fund a proportion of a family holiday, etc.

**17) I would like to know what is particularly available for my 3 and 1/2-year-old son? Any play schemes over the summer holidays? If so, do they take siblings? My 5-year-old is struggling to understand his disability. Is there anything open to her to help her understand the difficulties?**

Under normal circumstances, there is hardly anything for children under the age of 5. Cheviots rarely take under 5s, except if there are exceptional circumstances. A different Ofsted registration is needed to take children under 5. Normally, family fun days are run over summer, for younger disabled children, e.g. 4 family fun days with coach trips to seaside, etc. Unfortunately, these coaches won't be provided this summer due to the current situation (because of social distancing rules, etc). 'Stay and Play' sessions are also usually run over summer at Cheviots. However, Cheviots are having to maximise the capacity of the building to run their own play schemes, and so don't have the ability to have space for additional 'Stay and Play' sessions which are usually run for under 5s.

With regards to the sibling, it is best to contact the [Educational Psychology helpline](#) which is going to remain open throughout the summer, where the relevant questions can be asked.

**18) I usually use VIPS for the holidays. How long will it be before a venue is confirmed and bookings can be made?**

VIPS have currently got a small site set up, and will be running to a certain level. They are looking for a bigger site, to accommodate more children. If not, they will continue running at a smaller level and Cheviots will keep Our Voice updated on this. VIPS (Lorraine) can be contacted on [loraine.vips@gmail.com](mailto:loraine.vips@gmail.com) or 07810 485126. They have no website for the children's age service, unfortunately.

**19) Where can a 13-year-old with Asperger's / higher functioning autism go?**

The youth service are trying to be very inclusive. There are a number of youth centres, found on the council website, which will have some activities running. Additionally, all the commissioned providers will be able to support this young person. [Sticky Fingers](#) is another organisation that provides after school clubs and holiday play schemes.

Tottenham Hotspur Foundation are also looking at providing something over summer. Our Voice will be kept updated on this. *Note – subsequently advised that neither Sticky Fingers nor THFC will be providing a scheme this summer.*

**20) It is a known fact that there is a significant gap in the provision of services for the Under 8s. Who is responsible for delivering this service and / or making sure there is enough services within the borough?**

This information can be sent to Cheviots directly or via Our Voice (who would then liaise with Cheviots). The team at Cheviots would then look at what is needed in the borough, and whether or not it can be provided.

There aren't resources available within the council to provide bigger services, and so organisations outside of the council have to be relied on. These organisations can provide a service, but are limited because of the Ofsted regulations. Cheviots requires their providers to be Ofsted registered to keep the children safe, which limits the play schemes that can be provided. The Cheviots team are more than happy to hear about other organisations that families may know of, or other ideas they may have in order to work with them to provide what is needed in the borough.

## Useful links and contact details

| Name of organisation                  | Email address and contact telephone number  | Website   |
|---------------------------------------|---|---|
| Cheviots                              | <a href="mailto:Cheviots@enfield.gov.uk">Cheviots@enfield.gov.uk</a><br>Tel 0208 363 4047                         |   |
| Our Voice                             | <a href="mailto:info@ourvoiceenfield.org.uk">info@ourvoiceenfield.org.uk</a><br>tel 07516 662315                  | <a href="https://www.ourvoiceenfield.org.uk/">https://www.ourvoiceenfield.org.uk/</a>   |
| Every Parent and Child (EPC)          | enquiries@epandc.org.uk<br>tel 020 8373 6243  | <a href="https://epandc.org.uk/">https://epandc.org.uk/</a>   |
| Educational Psychology (EP) Service   |   | <a href="#">Family Telephone Support line</a>   |
| Enfield Local Offer                   |   | <a href="https://new.enfield.gov.uk/services/children-and-education/local-offer/">https://new.enfield.gov.uk/services/children-and-education/local-offer/</a>   |
| Enfield Children's Portal             |   | <a href="https://new.enfield.gov.uk/services/children-and-education/childrens-portal/">https://new.enfield.gov.uk/services/children-and-education/childrens-portal/</a>   |
| Things to do in Enfield (Local Offer) |   | <a href="https://new.enfield.gov.uk/services/children-and-education/local-offer/short-breaks-and-activities/#1">https://new.enfield.gov.uk/services/children-and-education/local-offer/short-breaks-and-activities/#1</a> |
| Summer Uni                            |   | <a href="https://new.enfield.gov.uk/news-and-events/summer-uni-returns-as-lockdown-eases/">https://new.enfield.gov.uk/news-and-events/summer-uni-returns-as-lockdown-eases/</a>   |
| ECYPS Scheme                          | Tel 020 8373 2711   | <a href="https://www.facebook.com/ECYPScharity/">https://www.facebook.com/ECYPScharity/</a>   |
| ALWA Playscheme (Tiudane Richards)    | <a href="mailto:info@abundantlivingwithautism.org.uk">info@abundantlivingwithautism.org.uk</a><br>tel 07940380819 | <a href="http://www.abundantlivingwithautism.org.uk">www.abundantlivingwithautism.org.uk</a>  |
| Sticky Fingers Play Scheme            | Tel 07732 385 075   | <a href="http://stickyfingersenfield.co.uk/">http://stickyfingersenfield.co.uk/</a>   |
| VIPS playscheme                       | <a href="mailto:loraine.vips@gmail.com">loraine.vips@gmail.com</a><br>tel 07810 485126                            | None available  |
| David Lloyds                          | <a href="mailto:enfield@davidlloyd.co.uk">enfield@davidlloyd.co.uk</a><br>0208 364 4332                           | <a href="http://davidlloyds.co.uk">http://davidlloyds.co.uk</a>   |
| Family Fund                           |   | <a href="https://www.familyfund.org.uk">https://www.familyfund.org.uk</a>   |