In April 2011 the **Breaks for Carers of Disabled Children Regulations 2011** came into force. Under this Duty, local authorities are legally bound to provide a range of short breaks services including:

- day-time care in the homes of disabled children or elsewhere
- overnight care in the homes of disabled children or elsewhere
- educational or leisure activities for disabled children outside their homes
- services available to assist carers in the **evenings, at weekends** and during the **school holidays**.

Local Authorities must also produce a Short Break Statement which

- details of the **range** of local services available
- any criteria against which **eligibility for services** will be assessed
- how the range of services has been **designed to meet the needs** of local carers.

Detailed information about Short Breaks can be found in Cumbria’s Short break Statement. This document is intended to provide a summary of that statement.

Information about other services and other short breaks which may be available without meeting eligibility criteria or having an assessment is available on Cumbria’s Local offer.
Eligibility
The basic eligibility criteria for access to fully funded short breaks will be that the child has been assessed as requiring an Education Health Care plan (EHCP). However, the authority will always be mindful of its duty to apply criteria flexibly and to take into account all the circumstances surrounding a family to ensure that parents/carers are supported to meet the needs of their children.

Until 2018 all authorities are in a transitional phase where some children will have an EHCP while others continue to have a Statement of Special Educational Need. During this period families who present as requiring access to short breaks will follow one of three possible pathways.

1. Children with a current EHCP
Where a child has recently been issued with an EHCP the plan should identify the need and provision for short breaks. If this should not be detailed in the plan, the allocated worker will review the paperwork and if necessary carry out an assessment and short break provision will be added to the plan.

2. Children with a current statement of SEN
The allocated worker will review the Statement paperwork and where necessary carry out an assessment to identify the need and provision for short breaks. This will be recorded in the child’s SEN file so that it can be reviewed and where appropriate added to the plan at the point of conversion to an EHCP.

3. Children with neither an EHCP nor a Statement of SEN
The other route to a Short break for Disabled children is through Social Care. This will require an assessment. In most cases this will be via a referral for a Child and Family Assessment. Parents/carers may make this referral themselves or they may ask a professional with whom they are involved to make the referral for them. The referral is to the Cumbria Children’s Safeguarding Hub. Some children, for example, those receiving overnight short breaks will require this assessment and the involvement of a social worker as it is a requirement in legislation. The Child and Family Assessment includes a Carer’s Assessment but parents/carers also have the right to request a stand-alone carer’s assessment. This assessment could also lead to the provision of a short break.
**What short breaks may be identified?**

Short breaks that could be identified could include:
- Group activities
- Holiday activities
- 1-1 Support
- Overnight breaks

**OR**

Parents/carers may be provided with a Personal Budget (also known as Direct Payments), enabling them to purchase services independently. This provision can include a Managed Package Service.

**Meeting Needs**

An Advisory Panel will be established in each district, consisting of representatives from the Local Authority, parents/carers and providers. The panel will meet regularly to review provision to ensure it continues to meet need in the local area. The panel will oversee allocation of small amounts of funding where appropriate to organisations seeking to make provision where needs are not being met through existing provision. More detail about the Advisory Boards can be found on the Local Offer.

**How can Personal Budgets be used?**

Personal Budgets for short breaks are paid directly to parent/carers so that they can purchase care to provide them with a short break and support their disabled child’s development. Some examples are given below.

- **Julie** is a disabled teenager who has an active family. Her family used her personal budget to enable a carer to join them on activity holidays so they could pursue their hobby without Julie being unable to participate.

- **John**’s family enjoy eating out as a family but John needs 1-1 support to be able to cope in this sort of environment. They used his personal budget to enable a carer to come with them for a meal out, so that they could enjoy this as a family and John could be supported to learn to cope with the environment.

- **Peter** had reached an age where his peers were able to go out and engage in activities without an adult but he was not yet able to do this safely. He felt frustrated at having his parents with him when he went out. He used his personal budget to find a carer who could support him to engage in community activities and develop greater independence.
How can I access a short break for my disabled child?

**Does your child have an Education Health care plan or a Statement of Special Educational Needs?**

Yes → Contact your Plan key worker to discuss short breaks – it may be possible for them to be provided through your child’s plan

No → You can make a request for Statutory Assessment. You can ask a professional (such as your child’s school) to do this or you can write to your local Inclusion team

**Do you receive any support through Social Care?**

Yes → Ask your Social Worker about Short Breaks

No → You can request a Child and family Assessment or a Carer’s Assessment which may confirm eligibility for Short Breaks. You can do this yourself by contacting the Hub on 0333 240 1727

If you have been unable to access a short break through these processes but feel you are in need or if you need help with the process please contact your local SEND manager:

- Carlisle & Eden
  - Ann Hayward
  - 01228 221701

- Barrow & South Lakes
  - Kirsty Parry
  - 01539 713306

- Allerdale & Copeland
  - Guy Short
  - 01946 505557