



Halton's Personal Budgets Guidance for Short Breaks



Halton Local Offer



Short Breaks and Personal Budgets - Where can I find more information?

The Short Breaks Statement can be found on [Halton's Local Offer Leisure section](#) under 'Short Breaks'.

Halton Borough Council's Personal Budget Policy can be found on [Halton's Local Offer Education, Health & Care Plan](#) under 'Education, Health & Care (EHC) Plan'.

Halton Borough Council provides a range of Short Breaks services, details of these can be found in Short Breaks Service Guide on [Halton's Local Offer Leisure](#) section under 'Short Breaks'.

Delivering a Short Break Service using a Personal Budget

Once it has been established that your family is eligible for Short Breaks, your worker will discuss all of the options available to you including a Personal Budget. You might prefer to arrange your own service as this may offer greater flexibility and choice of activities that may be better suited to your child and family's needs.

The budget is provided **instead** of a service delivered via Halton Borough Council contracted Short Breaks services not in addition to those services. However, it is possible for you to use part of your Short Breaks allocation of hours for your child to attend one of the contracted services and then utilise a personal budget for the remainder of the Short Breaks service.

The process for accessing a Personal Budget is the same as any other Short Breaks service and is explained in the Short Breaks Statement in the section Assessment, Planning and Review of Short Breaks.

Halton has 2 types of Personal Budget available for Short Breaks, these are:

- A Community Activity budget which can be used to purchase activities in the community for your child to access;
- An Individual Support budget which can be used to employ a Personal Assistant to support your child either in the home or outside in the community.

If the Lead Professional for your family is a Social Worker, they will complete a Single Assessment. This will establish the level of support that is appropriate for your child and family which will include consideration for Short Breaks services. They will discuss appropriate services which may include a Personal Budget.

If the Lead Professional is a Family Worker from the Disabled Children Service, the number of hours of short breaks service is established by the completion of a Short Breaks Support Allocation Document (RAS).

The worker will use the information from your child's assessment of their needs i.e. EHCP, CAF or other individual assessment to identify the number of hours of short breaks support

available to your child and family each week. This is then linked to a **maximum** allocation of funds to be made available to provide a short breaks service.

The Short Breaks Support Allocation Document (RAS), Short Breaks Support Allocation Document Guide and relevant documents can be found on [Halton's Local Offer Leisure section](#) under 'Short Breaks'.

Each child that receives a Short Break via a Personal Budget will have an individual plan, this will state the:

- Short Break service to be provided;
- Outcomes that should be delivered;
- Person responsible for co-ordinating the service, ensuring that it is safe and delivers the outcomes in the plan;
- Specific details about what service or activity is to be provided and by whom;
- How the use of funds is to be monitored and how the service is to be reviewed.

It is possible for a young person aged 16+ to manage their own budget if it is agreed with carers and the Lead Professional that this is appropriate. The young person must understand their responsibilities and everyone should be confident that they can cope with this. Support is available from Disabled Children Service for young people to do this as part of them gaining skills towards independence.

You must keep receipts, invoices etc. as evidence that the money has been spent as agreed in your child's plan. You will be required to provide these on request either by the Disabled Children Service or Halton Borough Council's Direct Payment Service.

Halton Borough Council's Direct Payment service will:

- Manage the payments and ask you to sign an agreement to use the funds as agreed in the plan;
- Audit the account and will need to see receipts, tickets for events and activities etc.

Any funds that are used in a way that has not been agreed in your child's plan will be reclaimed by Halton Borough Council, the budget will be suspended and alternative short breaks services may be provided instead.

Budgets are regularly audited by Direct Payments who will discuss any concerns about the use of funds with the Disabled Children Service. If it is found that families have not been using the funds and money accrued in the bank is increasing, then these funds will be reclaimed by Halton Borough Council. Your worker will contact you to discuss the situation and the option of an alternative service.

Community Activity Personal Budget

Community Activity budgets are often used to support families of disabled children who may struggle to access regular community activities and events without a small amount of additional support. Many families have used them and have found that they have been hugely beneficial to their child and family.

Once the Short Breaks Support Allocation Document (RAS) has been completed to establish how many hours of Short Breaks are available to your family each week, your worker will advise you on the range of specialist group activities provided by one of Halton Borough Council's contracted services. However, your child may have other interests which may not be available and you would prefer to use a budget to provide them with a positive experience and allow them to access community activities.

The activities that are to be provided will be agreed in your child's individual plan including specific details about how the money will be used to support your child to attend activities and how this will be monitored and reviewed. The budget can only be used to fund items and activities listed below and should not be used for anything other than those items or activities detailed in the plan.

- Small items of equipment that the child may need to participate in a chosen activity e.g. camera for photography club, guitar for guitar lessons;
- Activity costs such as guitar lessons, dance class, horse riding;
- Public Transport costs for disabled young person and 1 carer;
- Entrance fee for disabled young person and 1 carer e.g. concert ticket, zoo entrance fee, ticket for football match, cinema ticket;
- Refreshment costs for disabled young person and 1 carer – snack only e.g. drink and biscuit/cake/crisps etc.;
- Small gift voucher or gift to give to carer in appreciation of their time and support. (NOTE: this should be occasional and not exceed £10).

The funds will be allocated for 50 weeks per year and are usually provided every 3 months so you can plan activities in advance. In certain circumstances, it may be agreed to provide the payments every 6 months if it is necessary to purchase a course of activities or a specific piece of equipment. The Disabled Children Service will ask you to provide evidence of your child's experiences such as scrap book, photos, videos, etc., which we will use to measure if they are doing activities as agreed in their plan.

The activities will usually take place on a regular, weekly, fortnightly basis but occasionally it is possible to arrange to save some hours to be used to provide more activities in school holiday times. This should be agreed with your worker and specified in the plan.

If your child no longer wants to attend the activities agreed in the plan or if your child's needs or family circumstances change, you should contact your worker who will discuss this further with you to agree if the Community Activity budget is still suitable for your family's needs or if an alternative service is required. Your child's plan will be amended to reflect the changes and if necessary a new Short Breaks Support Allocation Document (RAS) will be completed.

Individual Support Personal Budget

The Individual Support Personal Budget is available in those cases where the assessment and Short Breaks Support Allocation Document (RAS) has established that your child requires individual support and you as parents have decided that you wish to arrange your own service. It may be that you know a close friend or relative who knows your child and has agreed to be trained to meet their care, health or behavioural needs.

Alternatively, you may wish to recruit a Personal Assistant or use a worker from a registered care agency but the costs vary from one company to another and some may charge a rate outside of Halton Borough Council's Direct Payment rates.

The Lead Professional will advise you on appropriate checks to ensure that the Personal Assistant you employ is both safe to work with your child and can meet their care needs. This will include how to obtain a DBS check to ensure that there is no information of concern or convictions held for that person that would prevent them from working with your child.

In respect of agency workers you would be advised to:

- Confirm that the agency are in possession of a current DBS record for their staff;
- View the Agency's safeguarding policies;
- View the Agency's most recent Care Quality Commission report which would alert you to any concerns raised about the quality of their service.

Key issues for families to consider when they manage their own service are:

- Ensuring that your child is safe;
- Ensuring that the worker has the correct skills, training and experience to meet your child's needs;
- Being able to manage the budget, receipts, payroll and employment issues;
- Ensuring that the service delivers the outcomes detailed in your child's plan.

Halton Borough Council's Direct Payment service will:

- Visit you to set up the Direct Payments;
- Ask you to sign a contractual agreement to manage the money as per the plan agreed;
- Complete regular audits to check evidence of the funds being used e.g. invoices and receipts etc.

They can also arrange for the funds to be managed via a managed account in situations where it is agreed that this is appropriate for your family.

The Direct Payment will be monitored as part of the review of your child's plan, however, you can contact the Lead Professional to discuss any difficulties with the service and how it is being delivered at any time.