**Short breaks for children and young people with disabilities**

As some of you may know, in 2019 we started to look into our short breaks support for children and young people with disabilities and their families, with a view to improve what offer and ensure all children and young people have access to breaks and experiences that they enjoy, to make and meet friends, feel confident, and to thrive with a good family life.

Short breaks are designed to give children an opportunity to enjoy different experiences and activities whilst giving their families a break from caring.

They can last a few hours, a whole day, evening, overnight or for a whole weekend, or during the school holidays. They can take place at home, in the community or in a residential setting. Childcare settings can sometimes be used as venues for short break activities too and they can include support to access different activities like sport and music, youth clubs or holiday clubs – this might happen through support from individuals, often called enablers.

We started by engaging with parents and carers, children and young people and professionals to find out what you think works well, and what we can do better. We held a survey, workshops, attended coffee mornings and meetings to gather a diverse range of views and opinions.

The COVID-19 pandemic unfortunately meant that we had to pause that work in May 2020, but we’re pleased to let you know that we have now committed to move forward again.

We learnt a lot about how people feel about short breaks before the COVID-19 pandemic, but we’re keen to talk to more people, to find out if your feelings have changed over the past 18 months, or if you have had any experiences (good or bad!) that you want to tell us about.

We will soon be launching a survey and will hold some interactive sessions to gather more feedback. We will combine this feedback with what we’ve already learnt, so that together we can reshape our offer and provide a fair, inclusive, exciting and efficient offer that gives children and young people with disabilities the opportunity to thrive both at home and within their communities.

[More information about this will be available on our website](https://www.devon.gov.uk/educationandfamilies/special-educational-needs-and-disability-send-local-offer/support-education-health-and-care/short-breaks/shortbreakscodesign).