



Targeted Short Breaks (TSB) Allowance Scheme 2025/26 Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Which children are eligible in the scheme?

Children who live with their parent/s, have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) and are supported by tariff D or above.

How do I know if my child is in the target group?

Your child's school will be able to confirm which SEN tariff your child is supported on. If you require this information during a school holiday period, you can also contact the SEN Team on 01432 261756 or email senteamdiary@herefordshire.gov.uk (please note there's an underscore at start of the email address).

What if my child isn't in the target group?

Information is available on the Herefordshire Council website for [universal activities](#). If your child is not in receipt of SEND support in tariff D or above, you may still be able to apply for funding. Please see our [Special Circumstance Criteria](#).

Why is my foster child not eligible for the scheme?

As a foster carer you will already receive funding from your foster agency to support your foster child with access to clubs and activities. Respite from your caring duties is also arranged and provided by your agency whether it be an independent agency or through Herefordshire Council Fostering.

How much is the allowance?

Up to £375 for 12 months (April-March). For applications approved after April, or if your child reaches their 18th birthday during the year, the amount received will be **pro-rata**.

How will families receive the allowance?

Allowances will be paid on to a pre-paid card which you will need to activate. The card will be sent via post to the address on your application and will include activation guidance.

How do I apply for targeted short breaks (TSB) allowance?

You can apply online via the [Herefordshire Council website](#) (you will need to register) or you can call the short breaks team on 01432 260123 to request a paper application is posted to your home address for you to complete and return.

Do I need to complete separate applications for more than one child?

Yes, as each child will have their own individual needs.

Will we have to apply each year?

Yes, you will need to apply each year.

Are there terms and conditions I would need to follow?

Yes. Terms and conditions are included in the application process which you have agreed to. You can also access these on the [Herefordshire Council website](#) these are revised every year.

How will I know if my application has been successful?

Once your application arrives, the process can take up to six weeks.

We will contact you to confirm whether your application has been successful. If so, the amount of allowance your child will receive and a card holder agreement for you to check and agree. The pre-paid card provider will post the pre-paid card directly to you.

How long does it take to receive the card if successful?

Once you have signed and returned the card holder agreement to the short breaks team at shortbreaks@herefordshire.gov.uk. You should receive the card within 14 working days with your allowance amount on.

What do I do once the card has arrived?

First you need to sign the signature strip on the back of the card, as you are managing the money on behalf of your child. You then need to activate your card as detailed in the pre-paid card guidance provided with the card.

When I telephone the card provider's helpline, why am I told this is a "travel expenses" card when it cannot be used to pay for travel?

The general name given to the card by the card provider is a "travel expenses" card, but it is the one used for the TSB allowance and can be used in line with the terms and conditions you have agreed to.

What if my application is not successful?

If you have applied for TSB allowance as a special circumstance and your application has been unsuccessful, you will receive an email with the reasons why.

Your application will be considered against the special circumstances criteria and only the information you have provided with it. If you disagree with the decision and reasons why please email shortbreaks@herefordshire.gov.uk and provide any further information that you would like to be reconsidered by the Short Breaks Resource Panel. Find appeal details [here](#)

How can we use the allowance?

Parents can choose what activities they spend their child's allowance on. Book sessions directly with the provider and pay by using the pre-paid card either online when booking or at the activity via card machine.

The funding can be used to pay for the young person to access activities such as youth clubs, leisure centre's, cinemas, holiday clubs, soft play, swimming, pet farms, gardens & parks, food to feed the animals while there.

How often can I use the card?

The card can be used up to a maximum of five times a day. If you try to use it any more than this, it will be declined.

Can I use the card at an ATM?

You can check the cards balance at an ATM but you **will not** be able to withdraw any cash.

Can I make a bank transfer using the card?

No, you will not be able to use the card to make a bank transfer

Can I use the card to set-up a regular payment?

No, you will not be able to use the card to set up a monthly standing order, direct debit or subscription.

If this is how you have previously paid for the activities, please talk to the activity provider to find out other ways you can pay.

Can I give the card to someone else to use?

Like with normal bank cards we advise against giving the card for someone else to use, as you will be responsible for any potential misuse of the allowance. Activities can often be booked and paid for in advance so if another person is taking your child to do the activity and give you a break, they will not need the card.

Can the allowance be used to access short break activities outside of Herefordshire?

Yes, if these meet your needs. However the card cannot be used to pay for activities outside of the UK.

Can parents take the child to activities?

The spirit of the TSB allowance is to provide you, as a parent/carer with a short break from your caring responsibilities. For that reason we would encourage you to use the card to book activities where you are not required to participate.

Can we go to the cinema?

The allowance can be used to pay for your child's admission to a cinema. Some cinemas will allow a parent/carer to accompany children with SEND free of charge. Check with the cinema to see if this is possible, as many cinemas and leisure providers will offer free entry to carers accompanying a child with SEND.

What can't I use the allowance for?

The allowance cannot be used to:

- Fund family activities, outings or holidays or to purchase items, goods or services that do not provide activities for your child and a break for you, as parent/ carer.
- Pay for siblings and/or friends to join in the activities or refreshments, as the funding is relative to the child who the allowance is for. However, if asked, some service providers may be able to include siblings or friends for an additional cost.
- To purchase any food items
- Pay for transport to and from activities – unless the activity is going on a train, bus etc.

Why has my card been declined?

There could be several reasons, which could include.

- 1) Entering a wrong pin number and or CCV number (the last three numbers on the back of your card) or
- 2) You have tried to use the card to pay for a service that is not within the accordance with the term and conditions, for example for travel and food.

Do I have to pay for anything?

Yes. Please check with your chosen provider about their charges before booking a place for your child on an activity. As the parent, you are responsible for paying for any transport required for your child to attend and return home from activities and any additional costs such as refreshments.

What if the allowance is not enough to pay for the activities my child wants to attend?

You will not be able to add any more money to the card.

But for example, if there is £50 left on your card and the activity costs £75, you can use the card to pay the £50 but you will have to pay the remaining £25 using a different method of payment.

Not all children and families will need the same type or level of activity or short break. Some will need more specialised support than others because of the nature and severity of their child's disability. This is why the Local Authority may need to assess a child/ young person and their family, to ensure the right amount of support is available at the right time.

If you feel that the TSB Allowance is not sufficient to meet the needs of your child or yourselves, and would like to know more about the children with disabilities assessment process, please contact the Herefordshire Disabled Children's Social Care Team on **01432 261584** or email DutyChildrenwithDisabilitiesTeam@herefordshire.gov.uk to discuss.

Do I have to use the allowance by 31st March?

Yes. Any allowance unspent by 31st March each year, may not be carried forward to the next financial year. If there is a remaining balance at the end of March, the team will contact you and any unspent allowance may be recouped.

Will I have to keep any records to show how the allowance is spent?

Yes. You are responsible for using the allowance appropriately, and the council may request you to provide copies of invoices, receipts or timesheets etc at any time as per the terms and conditions for audit purposes.

What do I do if I am asked to provide evidence of spend?

You will receive an email from the short breaks team and it will detail the transaction/s they require more information on. You will need to email a copy of any receipts or invoices you have for these transactions. If you do not do this within the timescale specified, the team will contact you again. Failure to provide any information requested could impact future allowance applications.

What do I do if I have a complaint about an activity and/ or provider?

If you have any comments, complaints or compliments about activities that you or your child have accessed with their allowance, you need to go to the service provider in the first instance.

Can I use the allowance to employ someone as a personal assistant (PA)?

You cannot employ a PA using TSB allowance due to additional employment costs incurred and regulations that need to be followed.

However the TSB allowance can be used for one off additional support hours along side a direct payment if you receive one for your child.

More information about direct payments can be found [here](#) on our website

Please note – targeted short breaks allowance is not the same as a direct payment, but they are both loaded on to a pre-paid card.

What if my question hasn't been answered here?

Click on the link for full details of Herefordshire's [short breaks offer](#). You can send questions by email to shortbreaks@herefordshire.gov.uk, or call the short breaks team on **01432 260123**.

Where appropriate, we will use any questions asked to update this document and other published information.