



Short breaks targeted allowance scheme Frequently asked questions

Which children are included in the scheme?

Children who live with their own family and have an education, health and care (EHC) plan and are supported in 'Tariffs D and E'.

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 council web page for [universal activities](#).

Remember, if your child is not in receipt of SEND support in tariffs D and E, you may still be able to apply for funding. Please see our [Special Circumstance](#) statement.

Why is my foster child not eligible for the scheme?

As a foster carers the allowance you receive from your fostering agency, includes funds to support your foster child to access clubs and activities. Responsibility for ensuring you, as a foster carer, has a break lies with the agency you are registered with, whether this is an independent fostering agency or the Council's fostering service.

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 directly into a prepaid card account which you will need to sign-up for.

How do I apply for a targeted short breaks allowance?

You can apply on line (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.

How will I know if my application has been successful?

Once your application arrives, the process takes up to four weeks. We will contact you to confirm whether your application has been successful, and if so, the amount of allowance your child will receive. Once set up, the card provider will post the prepaid card directly to you.

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

If your application has been agreed you will receive an email attaching a “card holder agreement”. This will need to be signed and returned before the process of applying for the card and funds can be actioned. This will take up to three weeks once the signed “card holder agreement” has been returned to the Short Breaks team (shortbreaks@herefordshire.gov.uk).

What if my application is not successful?

The email informing you that your application was not agreed will include the reason why. If you disagree with this the reasons given, please email the short breaks team explaining why you would like this decision to be reviewed and include any additional further information that you would like to be considered. The supporting information can include for example a letter from the school or a consultant or other Health professional, or copy of the letter confirming your child in is receipt of a DLA (Disability Living Allowance).

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 notes provided

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 is a “travel expenses” card, but it is the one used for the short breaks allowance and can be used in line with the terms and conditions.

Are there terms and conditions I would need to follow?

Yes. Terms and conditions are included in the application process which you signed up to. You can also access these from the Council’s Short Breaks website <https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/family-support/short-breaks-scheme/3>

How can we use the allowance?

Families can choose what activities they spend their allowance on and book places directly with the provider and pay by using the prepaid card as you would a bank card.

The funding can be used to pay for the named young person to access activities such as youth clubs, leisure centers, 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 how much is left on your card at an ATM but you will not be able to withdraw any cash from an ATM.

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 what other ways you can pay.

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?

If you are taking your child to an activity of which you are not taking part in, such as swimming lessons / horse riding / climbing / trampolining (to name a few) then yes. But only if you are not participating with your child and taking the lesson time to have a break.

Can we go to the cinema?

The funds cannot be used for a family activity, such as going to the cinema / bowling / ice skating etc. The funds are for you as a parent carer to have a "short break". Therefore you will need someone outside of your household to take the child to activities such as these.

What can't the allowance be used for?

The allowance can't 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 disabled child. However, if asked, some service providers may be able to include siblings or friends for an additional cost.
- Someone outside of the family household to take the child for a meal.
- Someone outside of the family household to take the child "shopping" to buy any form of goods such as toys / clothes / games etc.

Why has my card been declined?

There could be a number of reasons.

- 1) It could be down to putting in 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. Families remain responsible for any transport costs for their child to attend activities and return home and incidental 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. 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 way.

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 an 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 the excess amount 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 Herefordshire Council may request you to provide invoices, receipts and timesheets to be either uploaded to your online account on a regular basis or, if requested, posted in for auditing purposes.

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.

What if my question hasn't been answered here?

Click on the link for full details of Herefordshire's [short breaks offer](#) or 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 the questions asked to update this document and other published information.