

November 2020

Nottinghamshire County Councils Children's Short Breaks Offer Update – Covid-19

Due to the ongoing Coronavirus pandemic (Covid-19), a significant number of children and young people have not been able to access their usual Short Break provision for a variety of reasons:

- ❖ Personal assistants are unavailable
- ❖ Families who are identified as clinically extremely vulnerable and shielding
- ❖ Short Break providers are unable to offer the continued level of support
- ❖ Families are unable to spend Direct Payment on activities.

Nottinghamshire County Council has again reviewed how it can support families receiving a Short Break allocation during the ongoing pandemic. In these unprecedented circumstances, we will be offering families who are unable to utilise their Short Break allocation a further opportunity to purchase equipment and toys such as online sensory support, outdoor play equipment, books, arts and craft materials, etc. so that they are able to continue supporting the development and stimulation of their children or young people through play and creativity.

Who will be eligible?

This offer is **only** available to children or young people who are known to the Short Break service and have been allocated Short Break hours and have them as a direct payment for activities only, or families unable to use their Personal Assistant (PA) or Provider Service due to them being unavailable as a result of Covid-19. Please note this will also include new eligible applicants.

Hours will not be able to be transferred from PA or Provider Service agreements if the PA or Provider Service is still offering support.

The offer is as follows:

- ❖ you may use your direct payment money more flexibly to support the development and stimulation of your child or young person, through play and creativity
- ❖ you may pay for an item in full or part pay towards a more expensive item
- ❖ any monies spent will be deducted from your **current Short Breaks allocation**
- ❖ you can use up to 3 months' worth of your current allocation flexibly in this offer
- ❖ all purchases must be specifically for the child or young person awarded the Short Break allocation
- ❖ This offer applies to each child or young person within a family, receiving a Short Break allocation
- ❖ if the Short Break allocation was awarded through an assessment the purchases must help to achieve the specified outcomes
- ❖ **you must have enough hours left in your current Short Break allocation**, you may not use hours from your next annual allocation
- ❖ any purchases must be complete by 31st January 2021
- ❖ this offer will be reviewed at the end of January 2021 subject to government guidelines

What do I need to do?

If you want to proceed with this offer and have the funds available, you can proceed with purchases ([please note the list of 'What can I buy and what can I NOT buy?'](#))

- ❖ All purchases must be completed by 31st January 2021
- ❖ you must submit the original receipt/invoice by 28 February 2021 and keep a copy for your records
- ❖ send your invoices/receipts to commissioning.team@nottsc.gov.uk with your child's name and Date of Birth in the subject bar or upload receipts to your PFS account. The offer must not be utilised without a valid invoice/receipt.
- ❖ handwritten receipts will **not** be accepted
- ❖ all items must be purchased from a reputable retailer (including online retailers)
- ❖ there will be no cash alternatives

How do I work out what hours I will I be entitled to?

To work out the 3-month pro rata for your allocation, divide your annual allocation by 4. See examples below:

Allocated hours	Sum	Offer
200	$200 / 4 = 50$	50 hours x £9 = £450
96	$96 / 4 = 24$	24 hours x £9 = £216
24	$24 / 4 = 6$	6 hours x £9 = £54

What do I need to do if our Short Breaks are with a PA or Provider Service?

If you currently use your Short Break allocation through a PA or Provider Service and they have informed you they are unable to offer support due to Covid-19, you are eligible to take up this offer. Further payments to a PA must stop until they are available to work again. Please contact the Children's Commissioning Team at commissioning.team@nottsc.gov.uk to arrange for payments to be made to a pre-paid debit card. This will take several weeks to process, you may use your own money to purchase items while we process your request and reimburse yourself when you receive your pre-paid card. You must keep any receipts for purchases. The Children's Commissioning Team will work out the hours to be deducted from your PA or Provider Service and inform you and your provider of these.

Hours will not be able to be transferred from PA or Provider Service agreements if the PA or Provider Service is still offering support.

What if I don't have enough funds in the account?

If you do not have enough funds in your account to cover this offer please contact the Children's Commissioning Team at commissioning.team@nottsc.gov.uk.

What can I buy?

You may purchase items such as: (this list is not exhaustive)

- ❖ sensory services e.g. toys/equipment/on-line
- ❖ virtual activities and support
- ❖ outdoor play equipment such as a trampoline, swing set, scooter, bike, sand box
- ❖ books (including e-books)
- ❖ musical Instruments
- ❖ arts and craft materials
- ❖ board games/puzzles
- ❖ outdoor growing equipment- seed etc

- ❖ suitable electronic aids, such as an age appropriate tablet / printer (excluding games consoles)
- ❖ cooking and baking equipment

What can I NOT buy?

You cannot use the funding to purchase the following: (this list is not exhaustive).

- ❖ any subscription services such as Sky Television, Netflix, etc.
- ❖ Games Consoles or accessories
- ❖ any large electronic items (televisions)
- ❖ any white goods
- ❖ items for siblings
- ❖ tuition services
- ❖ clothing and footwear
- ❖ furniture
- ❖ pets or pet related items
- ❖ food, drink, from Supermarkets, Deliveroo, UberEats etc. (i.e. excluding items specifically for cooking and baking activities)

If your chosen item is not included in the above lists, please contact the Children's Commissioning Team at commissioning.team@nottscc.gov.uk to check before purchasing.

The purchase **must** be for the child or young person awarded the Short Break allocation. You cannot make the purchase on behalf of someone else.

Important Information

You do not have to accept this offer. If you would prefer, you can keep your Short Break hours, but unused hours (pro-rata) will not be carried forward to the next years allocation. If you would like to continue with your current Short Break please take no further action.

Any Short Break hours remaining once the current restrictions are lifted and children and young people can access their commissioned package again, hours will be pro-rata to either the end date or review date.

This is a temporary change to the Short Break offer due to the Covid-19 outbreak and may not be repeated later in the year.

After 31st January 2021 Short Break funding must not be used for the continued supply of resources following any purchases made, e.g. ink and paper for printers.