



Activities Unlimited Service Strategy

I can access supportive services where my development is nurtured, and my social skills are encouraged. I can choose from a range of after-school, weekend, and holiday clubs, where I can have fun and make new friends.

When I am older, I can access age-appropriate provision and services in my local community alongside my peers. Through my teens and into my early twenties I can access fun educational resources which suit my interests and support my transition to adulthood.

All of these services are available not far from my home. I can go along to activities with my family and friends if I wish. They encourage my network of support. They recognise my preferences, needs and aspirations. I am safe. They do not exclude me. They know me, and I know them.

I am not about the services.

They are about me.

[Short Breaks duty statement - Suffolk SEND Local Offer](#)

The map below shows distribution of children and young people registered with the service and our grant funded providers:



Short breaks and respite form part of the continuum of services giving disabled children and young people positive experiences, whilst, at the same time, giving a break to their primary carers. The breaks are designed to contribute to the young person's personal and social development, reducing social isolation and supporting greater family cohesion. Short breaks can refer to a wide range of activity types – for instance; an after-school club, weekend activity, a holiday club or an overnight service.

Short breaks and respite services are essentially the same – they allow parents and carers to have a break from their caring responsibilities and give children and young people the opportunity to participate in an activity, alongside their peers. As such, short breaks and respite services will now be described as part of the same continuum of service delivery and the term 'short breaks' will be used throughout this strategy in order to describe all service provision, including respite care.

The Activities Unlimited service strategy aims to achieve the full service offer against an agreed set of criteria, as described within the original Aiming High for Disabled Children Implementation Guidance and subsequent legislation. The strategy recognises existing provision and highlights the gaps in service. When working to bridge those gaps, the Activities Unlimited service will follow these underpinning principles:

- Short breaks to be additional to universal provision, where universal provisions are unable to meet the need.
- Short breaks should be preventative, not just crisis intervention.
- Short breaks should support carers and provide benefits to children and young people.
- Short breaks should improve outcomes for disabled children and their families.
- Short breaks should consider siblings as part of a family assessment.
- Short breaks should effectively support individual need.
- The short break offer should focus on impact upon family life, not eligibility dependent entirely upon conditions.
- Short breaks should provide specialist provision for those who require a higher level of care and targeted intervention.

Our approach to creating a marketplace of appropriate provisions for short breaks starts with the existing mainstream/universal market. We have a universal support offer to any provision that are ambitious to deliver short breaks. This includes:

- Advice and guidance around short breaks, including good practice when working with additional needs, funding, and quality assurance.
- Free promotion via the Suffolk's SEND Local Offer website.
- Sign posting to appropriate and cost-effective training solutions.

This universal offer is used to encourage mainstream providers to make reasonable adjustments and develop their service provision to ensure that it meets the needs of customers with additional needs.

Where there is an identified gap in services, we are able to ensure that the right provision is available through the use of our grants. Activities Unlimited grants are given on an annual basis. Organisations are invited to apply in writing, with all applications being scrutinised by a multi-disciplinary Grants Panel. In addition to the underpinning principles outlined above, we take account of a wide range of quantitative and qualitative data to guide our decision-making regarding grant allocations. The data fields we use include:

Family/Users related data:
Stakeholder feedback / Activity Preferences
Assessed levels of support required
Locality and age ranges of users.
Frequency and timing of activities.
Activity Provider related data:
Quality assurance: High quality, safe provisions, that evolve in line with stakeholder needs.
Fit to customers' requirements (as above)
Cost: The subsidy required per customer, per hour.
Prior performance: Places filled, QA reports and customer feedback
Customer outcomes: For instance; skills development or fun activities.
Viability: Ongoing ability to reduce reliance upon grant funding
Customer fees charged: Value for money, comparable to mainstream leisure market.
Added Value: For instance; Positive partnership working within communities.

Activities Unlimited Service Offer

We aim to provide the following outline service offer:

- Access to provision for all ages, for those with complex needs.
- Specialist Early Years services offering progression towards appropriate provision. (0-5)
- A range of after school and weekend provision in the locality that provides choice, supports individual needs, wants and wishes.
- A clear focus on school holiday provision.

- A range of age-appropriate short break options for young adults and those in transition to adult services. Which support users to better progress into adult hood and services that are available in their local communities.
- Family activities that support community participation and family unity.

Identified Gaps in Provision

We are keen to encourage applications offering high quality, good value, innovative services, particularly those who can evidence they have worked with related research, or directly with families/ young people, to inform their proposal.

Our long-term strategy is to create a commercial, fit for purpose marketplace of short-break provision across Suffolk. Services that achieve a high level of customer attendance are well positioned to receive grant subsidies in future years. We are aware that there are fluctuations in the take up of many of the activities we offer, with some being more popular than others, and other considerations, such as weather coming into play. We are also aware that for certain sections of our user group we need to develop specific types of short breaks and again we hope to address this through the grants process.

Specific development areas that we have identified 2026/27 include the delivery of:

- Groups that support children with complex health, behavioural and/or care needs.
- Wrap around and holiday groups delivered through Special Schools and Specialist Education Units.
- Groups that support children and young people with their emotional health and wellbeing.
- Effective volunteering strategies, to underpin short break service delivery.
- Whole family activities and groups that support younger children.
- Groups that support SEND in Early Year activities.
- Develop services in the Forest Heath and Waveney Area's.

We welcome your interest in applying for an Activities Unlimited grant. If you require any clarification of the information provided or additional help and guidance, please feel free to contact the Activities Unlimited Team on the contact details below:

- By Email: AUProvision@suffolk.gov.uk
- By Phone: 01473 260026