



ACTIVITIES
★ ★ **UNLIMITED**

AU Personal Budgets

An Introduction

Short breaks and activities for children and young people
in Suffolk with additional needs and disabilities

www.activities-unlimited.co.uk

Why have I been sent this leaflet?

You are receiving this leaflet because you have successfully applied to receive a personal budget for short breaks. This leaflet gives you an overview of how our personal budgets work, and some of the things you need to be aware of.

What is a Short Breaks Personal Budget?

Sometimes families who have disabled children benefit from a break from their caring responsibilities. These are called "short breaks", and can range from traditional respite to after school clubs, hobbies or whole family days out.

We recognise that every family's short break needs are different and so in Suffolk, we fund short breaks in two ways:

- By giving grants to activity providers to develop inclusive provision, and
- Via personal budgets to families, so they can choose their own activities

A personal budget is a sum of money given to to the families of disabled children and young people who have moderate-higher level needs and require additional support to be able to access services.

How will I receive my Short Breaks Personal Budget?

There are three ways you can receive your Personal Budget: prepaid card, bank transfer and personal allowance. If you are not sure what option would suit you, we can talk this through with you. The main differences are:

Prepaid Card

- You can access your account and make transactions 24/7
- You can add a "Companion Card" (16+) to your account
- You do not need to submit a spending record, but must keep your receipts in case of queries

Bank Transfer

- We will transfer your budget directly into your bank account
- You must submit a spending record with receipts at least every 12 weeks

Personal Allowance

- We manage your award on your behalf
- Providers can invoice us for breaks your child attends
- You must submit a spending record with receipts at least every 12 weeks

How much is a Short Breaks Personal Budget?

We use a multi-band financial model for our personal budgets, which enables us to support families with as wide a range of needs as possible. The amount of your personal budget will vary and is calculated based on the answers you gave in your self-assessment application form. The amount is set for each financial year. [You can read more about our financial model here.](#)

If you apply partway through a year, the amount you receive will be reduced on a pro rata basis depending on how many months in that financial year are left. [Click here for more information about pro rata budgets.](#)

What can I spend my Short Breaks Personal Budget on?

Your Personal Budget is intended to help you feel more able to cope and have time for leisure and other activities, to help your child feel confident and try new activities, and for your family to be able to enjoy activities and trips together. Please note any spend with your personal budget must include the child(ren) for whom you have applied for.

We believe that short breaks work best when you can tailor them for your family, and so we aim to be as flexible as possible, however there are some things you **cannot** spend your award on. These include (but are not limited to) activities that take place during school hours (unless your child is pre-school age), gambling, debt repayment, alcohol, tobacco, clothing (unless activity-specific) or household expenses (utilities, groceries, repairs, and maintenance etc).

[Click here to view the most up to date version of our spending guidelines.](#)



Please note: if you spend your budget on items we cannot cover, your account may be suspended, and you may be required to repay the monies involved.

How long is my Short Breaks Personal Budget valid?

Each Personal Budget lasts for one financial year (April-March), and must be spent within that year. At the end of each financial year you will be invited to reapply for the following year if you would like to.

Activities Unlimited Personal Budgets are available until your child's 18th birthday, subject to entitlement. For young adults with high levels of need, funding may be available after that age from Adult Social Care. [You can find more information on transitioning into adulthood here.](#)

Additional Information

Before you return your Agreement Form to us, you should make sure you have read and understood all the terms and conditions associated with receiving your Short Breaks Personal Budget. If you are viewing this leaflet digitally, [click here to view all our policies and useful documents.](#)

If you are reading a paper copy of this leaflet, you can find all the policies at: <https://www.suffolklocaloffer.org.uk/short-breaks-and-leisure-activities/activities-unlimited/activities-unlimited-short-breaks-personal-budgets/activities-unlimited-useful-documents>

If you do not have access to the internet, you can contact us and ask for paper copies to be sent to you.

I have a question that wasn't answered

If you have a query that we haven't covered above, you are welcome to contact us using the details below. We are a small team and so whilst we respond to queries as quickly as we can, if you can access the internet you may find it quicker and easier to get the answer to your question via the following links:

[Spending record templates and other useful documents](#)
[What AU groups and activities are available in my area?](#)

You can also find information about a range of topics relating to SEND in Suffolk on the Local Offer website: www.suffolklocaloffer.org.uk

Keep In Touch!

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Activities Unlimited is part of Suffolk County Council.

