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**Flexible Funding Scheme**

**What is the Essex Shortbreaks Clubs and Activities Project?**

We support children, young people and their families by providing fun and inclusive clubs and activities across Essex. We work closely with Essex County Council as their lead provider of Shortbreaks clubs and activities to achieve these goals.

Essex Short Breaks, Clubs and Activities provides services for children and young people across Essex, who have special educational needs or disabilities (SEND).

Essex Short Breaks, Clubs and Activities works closely with 27 service providers who deliver a wide range of inclusive clubs and activities across Essex.

These service providers have been selected in response to listening to the needs, likes and wishes of Essex children, young people and families themselves.

There are a variety of integrated clubs as well as specialist clubs where staff working directly with the children and young people. Our service providers are trained in safeguarding, health and safety, equality and diversity, paediatric first aid, autism awareness, behaviour support, moving and handling, epilepsy awareness and various clinical procedures (generic and child specific where needed).

We also work closely with the children, young people and families to identify which of these providers would meet the needs of your family and signpost accordingly.

**Who are the services for?**

If service users are resident within the administrative boundaries of Essex (excluding Southend and Thurrock), are 0-18 years old (or 19-25 and in receipt of a Personal Budget) and have a confirmed diagnosis of a special educational need and/or disability then they are eligible to access a funded place at Short Breaks, Clubs and Activities\*

\*please note children and young people fostered in Essex, but still looked after by another Local Authority, would not be eligible for a Short Breaks passport id number. They can access short breaks clubs, but their Local Authority would need to fund this through their care plan and pay the provider directly for sessions attended.

**Meet the Action for Children Essex Shortbreaks, Clubs and Activities Team**

The Essex Shortbreaks Clubs and Activities Project has been running since November 2015 when the contract to become the lead provider for the clubs and activities part of Essex County Council’s Shortbreaks was awarded to us. We cover the whole of Essex to provide clubs and activities for children and young people with SEND. The team are:

Mike Bowyer – Service Manager

Samantha Noel – Administrator and Business Support Officer

Fiona Paynter – Quality and Development Officer

**What is Flexible Funding?**

Alongside our larger annual awards for funding we have introduced a quicker and bespoke method for organisations, club and activity providers to apply for smaller amounts of funding. The flexible funding application still requires the same robust procedures and outcome indicators. However, the process is straight forwards and can be completed very easily, if all of the required elements are in place. This means that we can respond quickly to an identified gap in provision.

Essex Shortbreaks, Clubs and Activities Flexible Funding support is discretionary and subject to available funding from Essex County Council. We award Flexible Funding over a quarterly period and this is paid in arrears. We always advise that providers of Flexible Funding include within their application, steps that will be taken to ensure that the provision remains viable and sustainable should the funding cease to be available. For example, considering a cost effective and affordable parental contribution towards the clubs and activities offered.

We can consider a new application for Flexible Funding from you prior to the quarter in which you wish to deliver services. You will need to continue to meet all the Flexible Funding eligibility criteria. We review all applications and from time to time may ask you to provide further supporting information.

Flexible Funding is a short term means to providing bespoke services across Essex and to pilot clubs and activities. Service providers can also apply for a longer term via our Application for Funding process, if they wish to see their pilot schemes developed further. Please talk to the team should you require more information about the Application for Funding process and criteria.

**We look at flexible funding applications to see:**

Is there an identified need for a bespoke service to meet individual/ groups of children and young people’s requirements?

Is there a gap in provision across a specific district or borough of Essex that is needed?

Is there a specific type of activity, experience or club that is currently not available to meet a particular SEND need?

How can an existing club or activity become more inclusive?

What added value will the provision bring to families in Essex?

**How you can apply?**

The team are here to support you through the application process should you need it. We are happy to help. Refer to the Draft Template for FFS Proposals in this pack for more information.

Please contact the team if you think you would benefit from applying for our Flexible Fund package. Once you decide to proceed we will complete a Pre-Contract Visit. This is where we look in more detail at the service or planned service and we will be checking to see that you have everything in place which is required. For example, Enhanced DBS checks for staff, appropriate levels or insurance and training.

We will then consider your Flexible Funding proposal, alongside any others received for the quarter, to make an informed decision.

**What happens after you apply?**

We use our Flexible Funding criteria to make sure that we deliver our Flexible Funding appropriately. We may look at an application and feel that some adjustments need to be made to ensure that it fully meets the needs of the children and young people in the suggested delivery area of Essex. If this is the case, we will discuss this with you further.

**What we expect from you in return**

Children and Young People access short break activities using their Essex Shortbreaks ‘Passport number’. To do this, they need to complete an online registration at <https://shortbreaks.essex.gov.uk/>

As part of our commitment to Essex County Council there are certain pieces of information that we need to provide them to show that we are using the Flexible Funding awards effectively. Therefore, we will be expecting some key pieces of information and feedback from you:

* Monitoring returns, including the Passport ID of each young person accessing a funded place, the number of sessions they attended, the number of hours in each session, charges made for parental contributions and details of any funded places which were booked where the young person did not attend.
* Direct feedback from children, young people and families of their experiences of your provision.

All documentation and feedback that we request must be submitted by the given deadline. If we do not receive this by the deadline funding payments and future funding applications may be affected.

**Examples of feedback from the children, young people and families using our Flexible Funded providers services:**

Upwards for Downs Harlow

*“A has a dual diagnosis of Down's Syndrome and ASD.  Despite having some significant sensory issues, A was encouraged and included in all the activities.  He particularly enjoyed physical and musical activities. This was helped by the inclusion and mix of children of all ages and abilities as they helped each other and could work to their ability rather than their age group”*

Essex Outdoors Mersea Island Colchester

*“The Instructor on caving was brilliant with me and my child who loves caves. Allowing us to continue to explore while the other children went off and did circus skills. The children bonded and so did us adults, so success all round. My son was so pleased with himself for doing the zip wire and high ropes!”*

**Terms and conditions**

If your proposal is successful, you will receive a Service Level Agreement with Action for Children containing terms and conditions of your Flexible Funding award. Please make sure that you read these thoroughly, including payment schedule and service specification, before you sign and return your agreement.

**Our contact details:**

Essex Shortbreaks, Clubs and Activities

Spring Day Nursery, Lancaster Way

Braintree, Essex, CM7 5UL

Office numbers: 01376 555260 E-mail: essexshortbreaks@actionforchildren.org.uk

Mike Bowyer- Service Manager: 07540 919616

**Where to find more information about Essex Shortbreaks, Clubs and Activities**

Essex Shortbreaks, Clubs and Activities website: <https://services.actionforchildren.org.uk/essex-short-breaks-clubs-and-activities/>

Essex Shortbreaks, Clubs and Activities Facebook page: [www.facebook.com/short.breaks.clubs.activities.essex](http://www.facebook.com/short.breaks.clubs.activities.essex)

Essex County Council Shortbreaks: <https://shortbreaks.essex.gov.uk/>

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**Flexible Funding Proposal Template**

**Description of Club or Activity**

**Aim**

A description of the club’s aims and objectives

Age range, inclusive or provision for a specific SEND (special educational need or disability)

Aspirations and values of the provider, whether your application is for a new provision by a current or previous provider and any development plans. Location and profile of need in that location

**Description** **to include:**

Number of sessions, number of hours per session

Number of places for eligible children and young people with SEND

Duration (up to 3 months in length)

Cost for families

**Delivery**

Staff and venue for provision of the club / activity, including any facilities or equipment needed.

Plans in place for CYP requiring one-to-one care or additional attention (medical training may be provided, if applicable)

**Outcomes**

Describe any positive outcomes, see examples below:

* CYP gaining skills / independence
* Social interaction and leisure
* Developing self-confidence and self-belief
* Improving life chances for CYP
* Respite for the families and carers of CYP

**Outputs**

* Total hours of delivery x maximum places available for participants with SEND
* Evaluation documents and measurable feedback – please outline the process for collecting meaningful feedback or measuring positive outcomes. **This must be in place at start of delivery**
* Passport ID\* of young people accessing funded places at the club, to be shared with Essex County Council in a pre-agreed reporting spreadsheet.

**\*Children and young people eligible to access Shortbreaks are required to register online at** [**https://shortbreaks.essex.gov.uk/**](https://shortbreaks.essex.gov.uk/) **and provide their Passport ID when booking a place**

**Breakdown of costs**

Expenditure relating to funded places inclusive of:

Activity cost

Staffing

Equipment / Expenses

Set against Income:

Parental Contributions

Other funding resources **= Funding requested**

Successful applicants will receive a Service Level Agreement, Service Specification and Payment Schedule. Please ensure you have the recommended Insurances, Policies and Security checks in place before signing.