

# ACTIVITIES UNLIMITED



Chris Southwell: Service Provision & Family Support

# What are Short Breaks?

Short breaks are:

- A way of getting a break from your caring responsibilities
- An opportunity to recharge batteries, spend time with others or pursue a particular interest.
- An opportunity for your child to have a change of scene, try different experiences, have fun and make friends

Every Local Authority has a duty to provide a Short Breaks Service, and Activities Unlimited is Suffolk County Council's Short Break Service.

- We are a web-based service: [www.activities-unlimited.co.uk](http://www.activities-unlimited.co.uk)
- We support the families of children and young people with SEND, aged 0-25yrs.
- We support families to have short breaks in two main ways:
  - We fund Short Break providers directly, to help them develop and maintain inclusive provision
  - We give Personal Budgets to eligible families, to help with the cost of short breaks

# Developing Inclusive Short Break Provision

- You might see us described as a “brokerage model”. This means that Activities Unlimited don’t deliver the physical services ourselves – we work with, and fund external service providers (such as Mencap and Achieving Aspirations).
- We provide grants to service providers on an annual basis, to help them meet the additional costs associated with SEND services: higher staffing, equipment & environment.
- It is a condition of the grant that services do still charge a reduced fee, our aim is to keep the fees realistic and manageable.
- We are constantly looking for new providers to work with, and to develop a range of provision across the county that appeals to children with different interests, from fishing to gaming, musical theatre, outdoor activities, etc.
- You can find details of all the provision we currently fund on our website: [www.activities-unlimited.co.uk](http://www.activities-unlimited.co.uk)

# AU Short Break Personal Budgets

AU Short Break Personal Budgets offset the cost of short breaks for eligible families (currently around 30% of AU users are eligible for Personal Budgets)

Historically there have been 3 levels of offer (£0, £500 and £1000) but we are moving towards a new 7 band system ranging from £0-1200 in £200 increments). This will enable us to support families with a wider range of needs.

Families who do not qualify for a Personal Budget are still able to access our subsidised groups and activities and welcome to contact us for advice and resources.

Application is via our online self assessment tool; which can be accessed via the “Join Now” button on our homepage.

Flexible spending guidelines, most budgets issued via PrePaid card.

# What else does AU offer?

## Holiday Activity & Food Fund

- \* For children & families who are eligible for Free School Meals.
- \* Free Holiday Club activities during the Easter, Summer and Christmas school holidays.
- \* A range of universal and SEND-specific provision available.

## Family Support

- \* Support to access Activities Unlimited: Support with self-assessment, with identifying and accessing the right short break services.
- \* Behaviour support resources and training for parent carers.

## Young Carers & Siblings

- \* Contracted county-wide service via Suffolk Family Carers
- \* Grant-assisted Young carers clubs/groups, sibling access with AU providers
- \* Behaviour support training for siblings

# Keeping in touch, or if you need a hand

- \* [www.activities-unlimited.co.uk](http://www.activities-unlimited.co.uk) / [www.suffolklocaloffer.org.uk](http://www.suffolklocaloffer.org.uk)
- \* Facebook: [www.facebook.com/activitiesunlimited](http://www.facebook.com/activitiesunlimited)
- \* Twitter: [www.twitter.com/activitiesunltd](http://www.twitter.com/activitiesunltd)

Sign up to receive our newsletter or let us know your feedback on [info@activities-unlimited.co.uk](mailto:info@activities-unlimited.co.uk)

For help or advice in accessing Activities Unlimited:

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