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Planning

Provision of Community Short Breaks for Children with Disabilities and their Families in Bedford Borough 2026

Bedford Borough Council

UK2: Preliminary market engagement notice - Procurement Act 2023 - [view information about notice types](#)

Notice identifier: 2025/S 000-077133

Procurement identifier (OCID): ocds-h6vhtk-05e8ef

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Scope

Reference

BBC CH 04069

Description

Bedford Borough Council provides a range of Short Break Services that are designed to assist individuals who provide care for CYP with Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities (SEND). The provision of short breaks is a statutory requirement under the Children and Families Act 2014. Local authorities are required to provide access to services that are designed to assist individuals who provide care for children with SEND to continue to do so, or to do so more effectively, by giving them breaks from caring. Local authorities must offer short breaks as part of a preventative model in keeping families together, preventing family breakdown and preventing CYP with SEND becoming children looked after.

Short Breaks Services have been defined as services that give CYP with SEND enjoyable experiences away from their primary carers, thereby contributing to their personal and

social development and reducing social isolation; and services that provide parents and families a necessary and valuable break from their caring responsibilities.

Short Breaks Services can include day-time or overnight care in the homes of CYP with SEND or elsewhere, educational or leisure activities outside their homes, or services available to assist carers in the evenings, at weekends and during the school holidays.

Contract dates (estimated)

- 1 April 2026 to 31 March 2028
- Possible extension to 31 March 2030
- 4 years

Main procurement category

Services

CPV classifications

- 85312100 - Daycare services
- 85312110 - Child daycare services
- 85312120 - Daycare services for disabled children and young people
- 85320000 - Social services
- 98000000 - Other community, social and personal services

Engagement

Engagement deadline

10 December 2025

Engagement process description

Invitation to Market Engagement Event - Activities in the Community (Short Breaks) Recommissioning

Since 1 April 2011, local authorities have had a duty to provide Short Breaks for children and young people with SEND who meet the eligibility criteria within this duty.

Short Breaks are opportunities for children and young people with a disability to spend time away from their primary carers, contributing to their personal, social and emotional development. They also provide families, parents/carers and siblings with valuable time for rest and other responsibilities.

Activities in the Community (Short Breaks) is Bedford Borough Council's offer to children and young people with SEND who reside within the Borough. These activities take place during evenings, weekends and school holidays, providing educational and leisure opportunities outside the home. Current services are delivered by SSG, Autism Bedfordshire and Embrace, with contracts due to end in March 2026.

As part of our recommissioning process, we are pleased to invite you to an Activities in the Community (Short Breaks) Market Engagement Event:

Date: Monday 15th December

Time: 10:00am - 11:30am

Location: Committee Room 1, Borough Hall, Cauldwell Street, Bedford, MK42 9AP

This session will introduce our vision for the future of community-based activities (short breaks) and outline our intentions for the upcoming recommissioning process.

We welcome attendance from current providers, prospective providers, voluntary and community organisations, and any organisation interested in delivering high-quality support for children and young people with SEND.

During the session, we will:

- Share Bedford Borough's vision and priorities for the next commissioning cycle

- Present insights from local families, young people, and recent engagement work
- Outline the proposed commissioning and procurement timeline leading up to April 2026
- Invite providers to share their insights, experiences and innovative ideas
- Explore how different organisations may contribute to a varied, high-quality local offer
- Begin shaping the future model for Activities in the Community (Short Breaks)

What to expect

The session will include a short presentation followed by discussion and Q&A. Providers will leave with a clearer understanding of the future direction for short breaks, the likely commissioning approach, and forthcoming opportunities to engage in the process.

If you have accessibility needs or require adjustments to participate, please let us know when booking.

For further information and to register your organisation's place please email: SENDEvents@bedford.gov.uk and cc Henry.masih@bedford.gov.uk

Please note there will be a maximum of 2 attendees per organisation if attending Borough Hall. If you are unable to attend in person this session will also be held virtually, please specify your attendance route when registering interest.

Participation

Particular suitability

- Small and medium-sized enterprises (SME)
 - Voluntary, community and social enterprises (VCSE)
-

Procedure

Special regime

Light touch

Contracting authority

Bedford Borough Council

- Public Procurement Organisation Number: PLCV-4616-VTHL

Borough Hall, Cauldwell Street

Bedford

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United Kingdom

Email: Commercial.Hub@bedford.gov.uk

Region: UKH24 - Bedford

Organisation type: Public authority - sub-central government