

Criteria for Service:

As one of its range of services for children with disabilities and complex health needs in Worcestershire the County Council provides some specialist equipment to assist with daily living needs.

The Children's Services Directorate has a limited budget for this service and only equipment for those children and families whose needs have been assessed as being of the highest or high priority can generally be met. (See below for definitions).

How to make a request for equipment:

Requests are made to the Paediatric Occupational Therapists via the child's Paediatric Consultant or General Practitioner (GP).

Paediatric Occupational Therapists are employed by Worcestershire Primary Care Trust and based in the Princess of Wales Hospital, Bromsgrove, the Beacon Centre, Worcester and in Lea Castle Centre, Kidderminster.

How are needs assessed?

Requests for assessment for equipment are given high priority by the Paediatric Occupational Therapists. They will undertake a holistic assessment of the child and family situation, working closely with other health professionals involved and also, Children's Services Social Care staff when they are involved.

No assessment is complete until the Team Manager for the Children With Disability Team (Children's Services) has agreed that it meets the threshold for a service.

The Paediatric Occupational Therapists will suggest ways of managing a child's disabilities and/or complex health needs, including promoting independence. The needs assessment may identify that simple items of equipment may help at very low cost. In this case the items may be purchased by the family. There may be a variety of ways of meeting identified needs.

What happens next?

When specialist needs have been identified they are discussed at a monthly meeting of the Paediatric Occupational Therapy Managers together with the Managers of the Children with Disability Social Care Teams. This meeting is called the Paediatric Community Equipment Panel.

A decision will be made about whether the Panel is able to meet the identified needs via the direct provision of equipment or whether other sources of assistance will need to be explored.

Where information is incomplete the request will be deferred until the missing information is available.

Who gets the service?

Budgetary limitations mean that generally only the highest and high priority needs can be met. These are defined as follows:-

Highest priority:

- Where there is a risk of significant harm to self or others
- Where there is a likelihood of imminent breakdown in the current care arrangements.

High priority:

- There is a possibility of serious harm and/or breakdown in current care arrangements within three months.
- Deterioration is likely if services are not provided.
- A child may have multiple needs and assistance is targeted on preventing further/future significant harm and strengthening care arrangements.

Medium Priority:

- There is serious hardship or significant impairment of health and development likely in the next three months and breakdown in the longer term.
- Assistance is targeted on making significant improvement to a child's health and development.

Some items are in stock and these can be supplied quickly. Other items may need to be ordered once approved by the Panel. The local authority does not have to purchase an item of parental or professional choice if it is more expensive than an alternative item that will meet the identified need. Some families consider contributing to the cost of a preferred item rather than have the one identified as meeting the need.

Informing families of the outcome of the Panel:

Families will be informed by their Occupational Therapist when equipment is agreed by the Panel. If equipment is refused for any reason, families will normally be advised in writing.

What happens if we cannot meet your needs?

If this happens, it may be because the request does not come within the highest or high priority category. If you feel that the situation in your family is changing and that this would affect your priority you should inform the Paediatric Occupational Therapist or your Social Worker, if you have one. Paediatric Occupational Therapists can also advise on where items of equipment can be purchased if you do not meet the criteria for direct provision. If you are unable to afford the item some charities may be able to assist with either the full or part cost.

Who provides what Equipment?

This is a general guide to who provides equipment for children in Worcestershire who have disabilities and/or complex health needs

Health: Wheelchairs/pushchairs, standing frames, crutches, walking aids, therapy benches/equipment, sleep systems, orthotics/splints, specialist footwear, prostheses, pressure relief, sensory equipment, specialist medical e.g. nebulisers, syringe drivers, enteral feeding, oxygen, alarms, specialist beds.*

Social Care: Aids to support daily living – bathing, toileting, specialist feeding aids, lifting (hoists & tracking), sleep safety, essential seating, safe environment, specialist beds.*

- *Provision of beds is by negotiation according to priority needs – may be single agency or joint.*

Education: equipment assessed as required by children in order for them to access the curriculum, including communication skills. Sensory support equipment needed to support children in accessing education and training.

If you have any comments about the Panel's decision please use the County Council's Compliments, Comments and Complaints leaflet and send it to the Consumer Relations Officer, County Hall, Worcester.

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*Provision of Equipment to children with disabilities
& complex health needs*

