

Taking a break is normal:

Many parents and children need a break from each other from time to time. For a child with a disability such breaks must be arranged with special attention to her/his individual needs.

We appreciate that you need to have confidence in any alternative care arrangements for your child and all our providers are signed up to agreed standards.

The range of short breaks services in Worcestershire:

Within Worcestershire there are a range of short breaks services specially provided to meet the needs of children with complex health needs and/or permanent and substantial disabilities.

Children's Services, Health trusts and Barnardo's all have services in the County. All these services work and plan together so that they can make the best use of their resources and can match a child's needs to the most appropriate service, bearing in mind the choices which families and young people themselves make.

Social Care provision:- 2 residential units.

One unit is designed to meet the needs of children who have severe learning disabilities and challenging behaviour. The other unit is designed to meet the needs of children with permanent and substantial learning and physical disabilities.

Health provision:- 2 residential units.

One unit is designed to meet the needs of children with complex health needs. The other is designed to meet a range of disability needs, including challenging behaviour.

Barnardo's short breaks

In partnership with the County Council Barnardos provides a range of services including:-

- Overnight stays with foster carers

- Home support or a sitting service
- Supporting children with access to community activities through the provision of a regular support worker or befriender.
- Group work with young people.

Surestart/Early Years and Childcare Service:

The Early Years and Childcare Service (EYCS) can advise on the availability of after-school activities and leisure services. Their groups support the inclusion of disabled children and young people into mainstream play schemes and leisure activities. The EYCS also arranges play schemes designed specifically for children with the most complex disabilities. Children who are known to social care services currently have priority for access to the schemes, though an open-access scheme operates at Easter in Wyre Forest, Kidderminster and Worcester. Advice on other providers offering play schemes across the County is also available.

Advice and information is accessed directly through the service at:-

Children's Information Service (CIS) Tel 01905 790560 or via

www.childcarelink.gov.uk/worcestershire.

www.barnardos.org.uk

Important Note

All requests for a short break service involve an assessment by the children's social care service, even when the needs may have been identified by a health or education professional as this enables us to collate all relevant information. Parents know the most about their child's individual needs and our aim is to work with the family to make a plan which identifies the needs of everyone in the family. Meeting the family also gives the social care workers the opportunity to provide information about other relevant services and organizations.

How do I make a request for a short breaks service?

Your child's Health Visitor or Teacher, your family G.P., or any other professional, can make a referral to social care services on your behalf. You can also make a referral direct to the County Council's **Access Centre Tel 0845 607 2000**. Calls are at local rates.

What will happen then?

You will be given some information and asked questions about your child and your family situation. An Initial Assessment may then be made by the Duty & Assessment Team who are social care staff. This assessment is then passed to the Children with Disability Team which covers your area. A member of the team will usually meet with you to finalise the details of the assessment and at this stage we also like to make sure that we have a profile of your child which gives us full details of his/her care and health needs.

Once your assessment is complete and with your agreement, your request will then be discussed at the monthly Short Breaks Panel. Your child may be offered a service at this point or, because of high demand, you may have to wait for some time. Occasionally you may be offered an alternative service if we feel this is more appropriate. If you find that you have to wait for a service please contact the social care team if your circumstances change. The teams will also endeavour to keep in touch with you.

More information about the general services available to children with disabilities and their carers is being created within the County Council website at www.worcestershire.gov.uk. There are also useful links to other organizations from this website.

Short breaks for children with disabilities in Worcestershire.

