

# SOCIAL CARE REVEALED

## DISABILITY SERVICES GUIDE

WE KNOW FROM CALLS TO OUR NATIONAL NURSE HELPLINE THAT FAMILIES CARING FOR A DISABLED OR TERMINALLY ILL CHILD DON'T ALWAYS KNOW WHAT LOCAL SOCIAL CARE SERVICES THERE ARE, WHAT THEY'RE ENTITLED TO OR HOW TO ACCESS THEM. FAMILIES ARE OFTEN PUT OFF INVOLVING SOCIAL SERVICES BECAUSE OF THE STIGMA ATTACHED TO CHILD PROTECTION. HOWEVER SOCIAL SERVICES HAVE A MUCH WIDER ROLE IN MAKING SURE THAT THE FULL NEEDS OF A DISABLED CHILD AND THEIR FAMILY ARE MET.

We've therefore put together this helpful guide to provide information on the sort of services available and how to get them. Taking full advantage of services available to support your child and enable you to fulfil your role as carer, can be extremely beneficial for the health and wellbeing of all.

If you would like to speak to Newlife's Care Services Team about anything in this brochure call **0800 902 0095** (free from UK mobiles and landlines) or dial **01543 468 400** (normal call charges apply) Monday – Friday, 9.30am – 5pm and until 7pm on Wednesdays.

Alternatively you can email **nurse@newlifecharity.co.uk** or go to the website, **newlifecharity.co.uk/contact** to use our 'Live Chat' service.

***Please note that verbal translation services are available through the Nurse Helpline.***

## Need support or information?

### Want to speak with a Newlife Nurse?

Newlife's Care Services Team readily use confidential translation services. We want you to feel comfortable when raising sensitive questions or discussing important matters.



# 0800 902 0095

Simply call (free from UK mobiles and landlines) and inform a Nurse of your preferred language.

Newlife Nurses will provide caring emotional support and useful information regarding:

- rare & complex conditions;
- local & national services;
- rights & benefits;
- access to health & social care professionals;
- delivery of care in the community.



## INTRODUCTION

All children have the right to be safe and live without fear or pain. A right to learn, to develop skills, talents and abilities and a right to live a full life – this does not and should not exclude disabled children.

Local authorities have a legal responsibility to help families with disabled children – providing not only health care support, but social care too. However, there is a common misconception that social care services are predominantly concerned with safeguarding children, protecting them from harm and abuse.

Because of this, many families are reluctant to explore how social care services can support them in case it opens their family up to unwanted scrutiny by social services.



And yet, social care can provide vital support services to enable you to fulfil your caring responsibilities and help your child live as fulfilled a life as possible.

This guide explains your rights to help you get the social care support you are entitled to from your local authority.

“ I had no idea about the full extent of social care services available to us. ”

## WHAT IS SOCIAL CARE?

Social care is usually provided through the Child with Disabilities Team, although it may have a different name in your area. Social service departments in local authorities are legally responsible for providing social care support for disabled children, their siblings and carers by:

- **Maintaining a register of disabled children;**
- **Providing information about the services available;**
- **Assessing the needs of disabled children and their carers;**
- **Providing a range of services to meet these needs.**

Social care is generally defined as any support or practical assistance that enables a child with a disability to take part in daily activities, develop their independence, interact with their peers and protect them from vulnerable situations. Provided in many different forms, social care ranges from extra help around the house through to help with building positive relationships and gaining access to specialist equipment.

Health bodies and local authorities are expected to work together to meet the needs of disabled children. As such social care can often also include support provided through the local health services. Any social care support package will be tailored to meet the specific needs of the disabled child and their family.

# WHAT AM I ENTITLED TO?

## If you live in England:

Under the Children and Families Act (2014) local authorities in England are required to publish what is called a 'local offer' – information about the type of social care services available to children with special educational needs and disabilities in their area. The local offer will also include details of how parents and young people can request an assessment of their needs – the first important step in getting help from your local authority.

You should be able to find the local offer for your area by going to your local authority's website and searching for 'local offer'.

*Contact your local authority in the first instance: <https://gov.uk/find-local-council>*

## If you live in Wales:

Under sections 19-29 Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 and Care and Support Assessment (Wales) Regulations 2015 there is a duty on the local authority to assess a child who appears to need care and support in addition to, or instead of, the care and support provided by their family. The assessment should include the child's wellbeing outcomes as identified by the child (according to their age and understanding) and their parents. The child must be seen by the assessor and involved, according to their level of understanding. There is a presumption that a disabled child will have needs under Part 3 Code of Practice. Information on disability needs is [here](#).

The Framework for the Assessment of Children in Need is still the basis of any assessment, as modified in the Code of Practice on Part 3. The relationship between assessment of children in need and of children who may be at risk of harm is covered by Working Together guidance (Chapter 8) and the All-Wales Child Protection Procedures.

### *A child is eligible for a service when:*

- **The need arises from circumstances such as their age or health;**
- **It relates to their personal well-being outcomes;**
- **It cannot be met by their parents, wider family or community services;**
- **It can only be met by their local authority arranging or providing the service or making direct payments.**

If the child is eligible for a service, a Care and Support Plan will be agreed.

In Wales, extra support for families where children may otherwise be at risk of abuse or neglect may be available through referral to the Integrated Family Support Service Teams. Each local authority also has a Families First programme that is funded to support children and families in poverty.

## If you live in Scotland:

Under the Children (Scotland) Act 1995 Section 23 local authorities have a duty to safeguard and look after the interests of a child in need. As in England, a child with a disability is defined as a 'child in need'. This means that under Section 23 of the act your local authority must provide your child with an assessment if you request one. Social work departments are responsible for arranging support for children and those who care for them.

*Local authorities must provide a range and level of services to:*

- **Safeguard and promote the welfare of children in their area who are in need;**
- **Promote the upbringing of children in need by their families.**

*Local authorities' services for children in need must:*

- **Be designed to minimise the effect of the disability on a disabled child (or child adversely affected by the disability of another family member (Section 23));**
- **Be designed to give children affected by a disability the "opportunity to lead lives which are as normal as possible" (Section 23).**

The first step is to get in touch with your local authority <https://mygov.scot/find-your-local-council>

## If you live in Northern Ireland:

Section 4 of the Disabled Persons (NI) Act 1989 creates a duty in relation to assessments of people who come within the definition of chronically sick or disabled under the CSDPA 1978. An assessment must be carried out when requested by a person with a disability, their authorised representative or their carer, in the context of the provision of services under S.2 of the Act.

For more information visit NI Direct Government Services.

If your child is being assessed for a Statement of Special Needs or an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHC Plan) then your local authority should ask you if you already receive help from social services and, if necessary, make sure the social care team carry out a social care assessment, which should also consider the needs of parents and other family members. If social care help and support is identified as a result of the social care assessment, support should be provided as soon as possible and not wait for the completion of the EHC Plan.

In March 2015 the government published guidance which explains the principles governing children in need assessments, including assessments of the needs of disabled children for additional social care services and support. Updated in August 2018, Working Together is a very useful resource for parents wanting to know more about child in need assessments and how they should be carried out. Indeed the law requires local authorities comply with Working Together guidance.

## THE ROLE OF A SOCIAL WORKER

Social workers provide support to ensure a disabled child is protected and safe and are required to maintain professional relationships with other health and social care professionals. Social worker key responsibilities include:

- Conducting interviews to assess and review a child or family's situation;
- Carrying out assessments (sometimes in collaboration with other professionals);
- Offering information and support to families;
- Organising packages of support that enable disabled children to live as full a life as possible;
- Recommending and making decisions about the best course of action for a disabled child or family;
- Liaising with, and making referrals to, other agencies;
- Participating in multi-disciplinary teams and meetings about the welfare or safety of a disabled child.

There is a misconception that social workers' responsibility is centred only on safeguarding children in terms of protecting those at the highest risk of harm as a result of maltreatment or abuse. However, social workers responsibility extends beyond this to include the wider definition of safeguarding in terms of protecting the health, wellbeing and human rights of all children. As such social workers can:

- Take action to enable all children to have the best outcomes;
- Ensure children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care;
- Prevent impairment of children's health and development;
- Protect children from maltreatment.

**“MY SOCIAL WORKER RECOGNISED THE NEED FOR SPECIALIST CLOTHING TO PREVENT MY SON FROM CONSTANTLY PULLING OUT THE FEEDING TUBE IN HIS STOMACH, AND SUPPORTED AN APPLICATION TO NEWLIFE WHO PROVIDED THE CLOTHING THROUGH ITS EQUIPMENT GRANT SERVICE.”**



## GETTING HELP EARLY – ACCESSING UNIVERSAL SERVICES

Getting help and support as early as possible, at the point when issues arise can sometimes prevent or reduce the need for more specialist interventions further down the line. This can sometimes even be before a child has been born and refers to any problem or need that the family may be unable to deal with or meet on their own. Referred to as Universal Services, this initial level of support can be accessed through your local GP, health visitor or child's educational setting and can include counselling, parenting programmes, support for dealing with a specific condition through other schemes.

A range of health and social care services can be provided through Universal Services and often involve multiple organisations working together to ensure a disabled child has access to the right kind of support and services, from the right people at the right time, such as speech and language therapy.

Having a social care assessment is a good starting point to identify the needs of what is required to enable and empower parent/carers to fulfil their role and promote the wellbeing of the child.

## HINTS AND TIPS

► *Services cannot be denied on the basis that a child does not have a diagnosis. If your child has additional or emerging needs they are considered by law to be a child in need and as such are entitled to an assessment of their needs. Treatment, therapy and specialist support services should be tailored to your child's assessed needs and not be dependent on their condition.*



# THE FIRST STEP - GETTING AN ASSESSMENT

## If you live in England:

Social care departments have a duty under Section 17 (10) of the Children Act (1989) to safeguard and promote the interests of 'children in need'.

**Section 17 (11) of the Children's Act 1989 states that a child is disabled if they:** *are blind, deaf, non-verbal, suffer from a 'mental disorder of any kind', or are 'substantially and permanently handicapped by illness, injury or congenital deformity, or such other disability as may be prescribed'.*

The law recognises a child with a disability as a 'child in need'. This is irrespective of whether the child has a recognised diagnosis.

You therefore have a legal right to an assessment of your child and family's whole or 'holistic' needs by social services because having a disability means your child is in need.

Getting an assessment is the start of the process to decide if social care services are needed and is an opportunity for you to tell a professional about your child and family's needs.

The assessment is a vital piece of the puzzle as it can lead to a number of services being provided, like practical help in the home, specialist equipment provision and access to respite. You should be able to find the local offer for your area by going to your local authority's website and searching for 'local offer'.

Contact your local authority in the first instance: <https://www.gov.uk/find-local-council>.

## If you live in Wales:

Extra support for families is available through referral to the Integrated Family Support Service Teams. Each local authority also has a Families First programme.

<https://familypoint.cymru/families-first-wales>

## If you live in Scotland:

The first step is to get in touch with your local authority

<https://mygov.scot/find-your-local-council>

## If you live in Northern Ireland:

Contact NI Direct Government Services in the first instance <https://www.nidirect.gov.uk>

## HINTS AND TIPS

► In some cases the local authority may offer to provide social care services without carrying out a section 17 assessment. Although this seems like a good option, by side stepping the formal assessment process the local authority may actually limit the full range of support services that you're entitled to. For example, when support services are identified through a section 17 assessment the local authority has a duty to fund these services in line with the Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act (1970).



## HOW DO I REQUEST AN ASSESSMENT?

Write to your local authority's children's services department requesting a social care assessment of the needs of your child and your family. Note – some children's services have slightly different names depending on where you live.

You can also ask a professional involved in the care of your child, such as GP or health visitor, to make a request to the local authority on your behalf.

In either case, you should explain the problems or issues that the child is having and what you would like help with, and if possible, the type of help you believe is needed.

The letter to the local authority should explain that your child has a disability (including any diagnosis). If you have a written confirmation of your child's diagnosis, include a copy of this with the letter. If you don't have this, then your GP should be able to provide one. Explain that because your child has a disability and is therefore legally recognised as a 'child in need' under section 17 of the Children Act 1989, they have the right to an assessment of his/her needs.

We have included a letter template for you to use on the next page.

### HINTS AND TIPS

► *Ensure that you consider if your child's rights are being met – not just in terms of keeping them safe from harm or maltreatment, but aspire for them to be able to live as full a life as possible, in spite of their disability.*

### HINTS AND TIPS

► *A local authority may refuse to carry out an assessment of your child's needs in the absence of a medical diagnosis or not enough information. A clear statement from a medical professional of your child's condition and disability can be invaluable for getting the right support for your child. The local authority should, at the very least, consider whether your child is disabled, seeking input from health professionals as required. However, an insistence on a formal diagnosis may give rise to grounds for a complaint, or even legal action. Similarly, if a local authority refuses to carry out an assessment altogether despite being requested to do so, or fails to keep you informed of when it will take part and progress, you may have grounds for a complaint with the Local Government Ombudsman.*

## WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

The local authority should inform you whether it intends to carry out an assessment within one working day of receiving the formal request from you. It is therefore important to include the date of submission and the date you require a response, along with full contact information (address, email or telephone) so the local authority can respond by return.

There is a legal requirement for local authorities to assess children in need. It is therefore really important to specify in the request for an assessment why your child is a 'child in need' (as a result of their disability). Additionally it is also important to emphasise not only the essential needs but wider aspirations for your child to be able to be the best they possibly can be.

Once an assessment is agreed the local authority has 40 days to complete it. In some cases local authorities may carry out an initial assessment and make referrals in to certain services, such as an occupational therapist. Although this course of action is likely to speed up what can be a lengthy process, it does mean that the wider more holistic needs of the child and the family are likely not to be taken into account, and therefore services to support in these areas not provided.

# EXAMPLE SECTION 17 LETTER

**PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL**

**Insert your address**

**Telephone number**

**Email address**

[Insert name and address of local authority]

[Insert date]

**- REQUEST FOR A S17 ASSESSMENT -**

Dear Sirs

**INSERT NAME OF CHILD OR YOUNG PERSON AND DOB/INSERT ADDRESS**

I am writing to request an assessment of need on behalf of [insert child/young person's name] pursuant to s.17 Children Act 1989.

*[Set out details of the child's disability and needs]*

**We are therefore bringing [insert name] to your attention as we consider that she is entitled to an assessment of her needs by you, pursuant to section 17 of the Children Act 1989 ('CA 1989').**

## **Legal Framework**

Under the CA 1989, local authorities are required to provide services for children in need for the purposes of safeguarding and promoting their welfare.

You will be aware that under s.17 of the CA 1989, the local authority has an obligation to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in need within their area who are in need, by providing a range and level of services appropriate to those children's needs.

s.17(10) states that a child shall be taken to be in need if:

- (a) The child is unlikely to achieve or maintain, or to have the opportunity of achieving or maintaining, a reasonable standard of health or development without the provision of services by a local authority under Part III of the Children Act 1989;
- (b) The child's health or development is likely to be significantly impaired, or further impaired, without the provision of such services; or
- (c) The child is disabled.

Under section 17, having regard to the results of the assessment carried out, the local authority has the responsibility for determining what services should be provided to a child in need.

## EXAMPLE SECTION 17 LETTER CONTINUED

### Process for undertaking an assessment

We would be grateful if you could now undertake a s.17 assessment of [insert name] in line with statutory guidance entitled "Working Together to Safeguard Children, a guide to inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children – March 2013". The assessment process is set below:

1. Within 1 working day of a referral being received, a local authority social worker should make a decision about the type of response that is required and acknowledge receipt to the referrer.
2. The social worker should then lead on an assessment and complete it in line with the locally agreed protocol according to the child's needs and within 45 working days from the point of referral into the local authority children's social care;
  - a. See the child within a timescale that is appropriate to the nature of the concerns expressed at referral, according to an agreed plan;
  - b. Conduct interviews with the child and family members, separately and together as appropriate...;
  - c. Record the assessment findings and decisions and next steps following the assessment;
  - d. Inform, in writing, all the relevant agencies and the family of their decision and, if the child is a child in need, of the plan for providing support; and
  - e. Inform the referrer of what action has been or will be taken.

In addition, I/my son/my daughter qualify/ies as 'deafblind' and so am/is entitled to have my/his/her needs assessed by someone who is specifically trained and experienced in deafblindness, to comply with the statutory guidance 'Social Care for Deafblind Children & Adults'.)

### Steps you are required to take

Please confirm by return that our request has been processed and ensure that we are also provided with a copy of the needs assessment within a reasonable timeframe, and in any event by no later than 45 working days of the date of this letter.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Yours faithfully

**[Insert name]**

“

IN THE PROCESS OF PLANNING FOR CEILING TRACK HOISTS AS PART OF OUR DISABLED FACILITIES GRANT IT BECAME CLEAR THAT JOHN'S MANUAL HANDLING NEEDS IN THE COMMUNITY WERE NOT BEING MET, NEWLIFE GRANTED US A MOBILE HOIST SO HE WAS ABLE TO ACCESS THE LOCAL COMMUNITY. ”

## EQUIPMENT MATTERS

Newlife can fund essential disability equipment such as beds, portable hoists, wheelchairs, seating systems, and much more. Equipment can improve child health, reduce risk of injury and pain, as well as support delivery of care – while enabling positive childhood development and encouraging independence. Equipment needs should be considered alongside housing adaptations, so liaise with local health and social care services to ensure that the equipment is appropriately assessed prior to application. Please visit our Equipment Grants page to make an application.

***<http://newlife.support/EGSApply>***



## WHAT WILL THE ASSESSMENT INVOLVE?

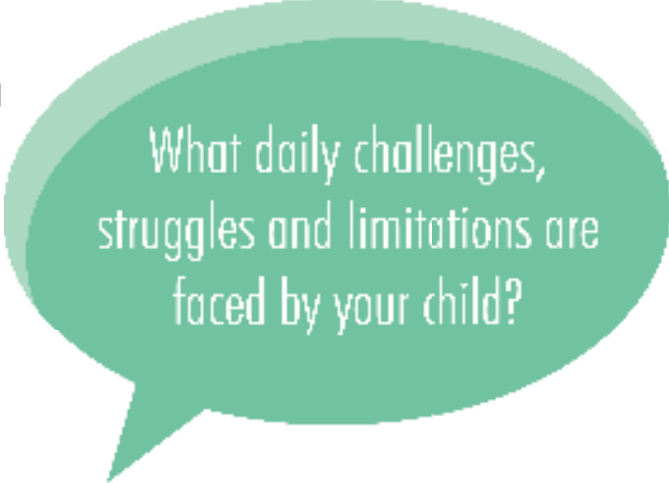
The assessment aims to explore what type of support may be required to ensure your child is safe, has the opportunity to access education and live as full a life as possible. The assessors are not trying to identify failures in your ability to parent, but to identify any 'gaps' that social service support can fill. It's important, throughout the assessment process, to be open and honest about the daily challenges, struggles and limitations faced by your child, and you as their carer, so you can access the full range of services that your child and you need.

### ***An assessment consists of three phases:***

1. **Gathering information – this will include talking to you and your child and any other key people involved in their life;**
2. **Reviewing and considering the information gathered during phase one and making a decision on whether the local authority feels that your child and family's needs require additional social care support services;**
3. **Publishing a 'detailed care plan' where services are provided by the local authority or payments made directly to you to cover costs of arranging the required support services yourself.**

The assessment enables the professionals to find out what needs your child and family have and what, if any, social care services and support should be provided to meet those needs and who is best to provide them.

Although the local authority will co-ordinate the assessment, other agencies are often involved. You should be informed about the different organisations and people likely to be involved in the assessment so you understand what is needed and why. Generally the assessment should take place, if practically possible, at the child's home.



What daily challenges, struggles and limitations are faced by your child?

The assessment must be as unintrusive to the child and family as possible and will consider a range of issues, primarily:

- **Your child's development needs (this may include health, education, emotional and behavioural development, family and social relationships and self-care skills);**
- **You capacity as parent to respond to and meet your child's development needs;**
- **Impact and influence of wider family, community and environmental circumstances, such as housing, employment, household income. It should also take into account whether any other children in the household should be considered as part of this;**
- **The impact of your child's condition and whether it affects his or her growth and physical or mental wellbeing.**

## WILL I HAVE A CHANCE TO INPUT INTO THE ASSESSMENT?

Absolutely. Your views as parent are of vital importance – no one understands your child and their needs better than you. If you want a friend or family member to support you through the assessment then this can also be arranged. Alternatively, consider approaching organisations that offer practical advocacy services such as:

- **Citizens Advice**
- **Carers UK**

Where possible the child should also be involved in the assessment process and should be observed in their home or school setting.

In preparation for the assessment it's useful to give yourself some time to think about how caring for your child affects you and your wider family and what difference any help would make.

The local authority must provide information about the assessment to you in advance. This could include a list of likely questions they will ask and will help you to prepare your responses. It's a good idea to prepare statements (and where possible include evidence) regarding the extent to which you feel more support is needed with:

- **Understanding and managing your child's condition/disability;**
- **Knowing which local professionals to contact if you are concerned about your child;**
- **Planning to meet your child's future needs;**
- **Issues related to finances, legal entitlements, rights and/or work;**
- **Sourcing equipment to help deliver care;**
- **Practical help in the home;**
- **Providing personal care to your child (eg. dressing, washing, toileting);**
- **Looking after your own health;**
- **Having time for yourself in the day;**
- **Your beliefs or spiritual concerns.**

## WHAT ABOUT MY NEEDS?

Your needs are as important in the assessment process as those of your child. The assessment is 'holistic' which means it should also take into account your needs, as well as the wider needs of other family members, such as siblings or grandparents. In our experience, it can be really difficult to identify your own additional needs without having time to step away from your caring responsibilities. It may be worthwhile reflecting on the shared experiences of other parent carers to identify if you have additional physical and mental health needs.

### HINTS AND TIPS

► *If your child has a diagnosed condition then local and/or national support groups and charities may offer condition-specific advocacy services that can be used to get the most from assessments.*

More information can be found here:

- **Carers UK**
- **Waving not Drowning Project For Working Families**
- **Wellchild**
- **Contact**
- **Together for Short Lives**
- **National Network of Parent Carer Forums**





**BEING ABLE TO LOAN A SAFE BED FOR CHARLIE THROUGH NEWLIFE'S EMERGENCY EQUIPMENT LOAN SERVICE MEANT WE WERE ABLE TO MINIMISE THE DISRUPTION TO HIS NIGHT-TIME ROUTINE AND KEPT US ALL SANE."**

## **EQUIPMENT EMERGENCY**

Newlife understands that some children just don't have time to wait for assessments and urgently need equipment to maintain their health and keep them safe.

Newlife provides the UK's only rapid response equipment loan service for children who are at significant risk of injury or in urgent need because of their shortened life expectancy. We can act immediately, often delivering equipment within 72 hours of terms and conditions being agreed, to meet the short-term crisis.

Where appropriate, we will then offer to work with your family and local health and social care services to make sure your child receives long-term, permanent provision. Families can make multiple applications as is necessary – we don't put limits on your child! Apply online at:



***<http://newlife.support/EELApply>***



# PARENT CARERS NEEDS ASSESSMENT

A parent carer is someone over the age of 18 who provides care to a disabled child for whom they have parental responsibility.

All parent carers are entitled to a 'Parent Carer Needs Assessment' by their local authority under the Children and Families Act 2014 amendment to the Children's Act 1989. We have included a letter template to request an assessment [here](#).

Parents can request a Parent Carers Needs Assessment directly from their local authority. The authority must initially assess whether a parent has needs for support and what those needs are and whether they can provide care for the disabled child, in light of any needs for support being identified. Additionally, the Parent Carers Needs Assessment must also consider:

- **The wellbeing of the parent carer;**
- **The need to safeguard and promote the welfare of the child and any other children that they have parental responsibility for.**

A non-parent carer is someone who provides care for a child but does not have parental responsibility, such as grandparent or other relative.

Unfortunately non parent carers don't have the same rights to an assessment as parent carers, however their can still request a carer's assessment and will need to show they are providing, or intending to provide, regular and substantial care to a disabled child.



**I DIDN'T THINK THAT ANYONE REALLY CARED ABOUT ME BUT THEY DO – IT'S SO GREAT TO HAVE SUPPORT."**

## YOUNG CARERS

If other children in your home are affected as a result of their siblings' additional needs, they may also be entitled to help and support. Any child that helps with practical tasks around the home, is providing emotional support, or helping with personal care tasks then they could be eligible for support from local young carers or sibling carers' support groups.

A young carer is someone under 18 who helps look after a child in their family, or a friend, who is ill, disabled or misuses drugs or alcohol. Being a young carer can impact on many aspects of everyday life. It can affect health, social life and self-confidence, and many young carers struggle to juggle their education and caring responsibilities which can cause pressure and stress.

Local authorities must take reasonable steps to identify young carers within their area and all young carers have a right to an assessment of their own needs regardless of who they care for, what type of care they provide, or how often they provide it. The right to a young carers assessment is governed by the Children and Families Act 2014 under part 5, Section 96 and in line with the Young Carers (needs Assessments) Regulations 2015.

*For more information visit <https://carers.org/know-your-rights-support-young-carers-and-young-adult-carers-england>*

*To find your local carers group visit <https://carers.org/about-us/about-young-carers> or search online.*

## CHILD IN NEED PLAN/CARE PLAN

The local authority will produce a detailed care plan (child in need plan) based on the findings of the assessment. The plan will outline the provision of social care services and support identified as being needed to meet your child and family's needs. You should be given a copy of the plan too.

In addition to prescribing the social care services and support required, it will also include what actions need to be taken, by whom and for what purpose. It should also include agreed objectives for your child, such as health and development objectives, and how progress will be measured – this is necessary as it ensures that the services and support provided are right for you and your child. The plan should set out:



- What is working well within the family;
- What support is required and why;
- Which agencies will provide the required services;
- What the child and/or family agree to do;
- What the expected outcomes are;
- What the timeframe of the plan is and when it will be reviewed. The first review should be held within 3 months of the start of the child in need plan and further reviews should take place at least every 6 months thereafter.

## WHICH TYPE OF SUPPORT CAN BE PROVIDED WITHIN A CHILD IN NEED CARE PLAN?

The local authority can provide a range of social care services to support a child in need, including:

- Specialist equipment;
- Day care facilities for children under 5;
- Advice, guidance and counselling;
- Occupational, social, cultural and recreational activities;
- Assistance for the child and family to have a holiday;
- Family centres, where parents can receive family support and practical parenting advice, while children have a safe space to play;
- Financial assistance, which may be in the form of a loan, cash payment or payment in kind, for example, vouchers for a particular shop or an item of food, clothing or furniture;
- Respite care (temporary relief care for the family, where the children are placed with a carer on a regular or one-off basis); and
- Accommodation and adaptations.

## ACCESS TO SERVICES:

Following an assessment of your family's needs, you may be offered referrals into supportive services and/or offered a package of ongoing support from your social worker. Depending on your expectations before the assessment and extent to which you identified needs that you believe require local authority support, you may feel disappointed by the outcome.

It is often best to enter into an assessment with an open-mind to possible solutions and supportive strategies rather than with specific requirements because the social care services in your county may have different thresholds and different funding priorities. This does not mean that assessed needs won't be met, but it will often result in being signposted to external service providers and charitable services to exhaust their resources in the first instance.

## CAN I ARRANGE THE SERVICES MYSELF?

You may be able to ask your local authority to make direct payments to you so you can purchase the services for your child, but note this option isn't universally available so speak to your local authority once the need has been identified to see if this is possible. Additionally, if you are not satisfied with the local authority service provider (for example, respite centre) then you may be able to request an alternative.

Direct payments can cover the cost of a wide range of services, although they cannot be used to buy services actually provided by the local authority, nor can they be used to buy long term residential care.

You will be entitled to direct payments if the local authority is satisfied that:

- **You are capable of managing the direct payment by yourself or with assistance;**
- **Your child's need for a particular service can be met by way of a direct payment;**
- **Your child's welfare will be safeguarded and promoted by a direct payment for the service he or she needs.**

There are some restrictions on how you use direct payments, for example, you cannot pay a relative who lives with you for caring services. The payments also cannot be used to pay for residential respite care for more than four weeks or 120 days during a twelve month period.

You have a right to insist on a direct payment in order to purchase the services which have been assessed as necessary to meet your child's needs. If your child is already receiving services from the local authority, you can ask for these to be replaced by direct payments, or request a 'mixed' package whereby some services are provided directly by the local authority and you use direct payments to purchase others.

In some cases a local authority may expect you to use any existing benefits received to pay for social care services. It is therefore very important to be able to show clearly how those benefits are spent in order to purchase the essential items and services your child needs.

“

WE REALLY APPRECIATE ALL YOU DO AND YOU HAVE HELPED GRAYSON SO MUCH WITH ALL THE TOYS IN HIS POD. WE WILL BE SAD TO GIVE IT BACK AND HAPPY IT WILL BE GOING TO ANOTHER CHILD AFTER US!”

## PLAY THERAPY POD

At Newlife, we understand the power of play and the impact it can have on a child's physical and social development, and cognitive abilities. We also know how hard it can be for families to get hold of specialist toys, which often come with a specialist price tag. Families frequently have to prioritise purchasing practical equipment for their child and toys are pushed to the bottom of the list. Apply online at:

<http://newlife.support/PTPApply>



Our dedicated team of nurses can be contacted through our national FREE helpline. Newlife's Nurses routinely receive helpline calls about the challenges parents face when trying to prioritise quality family time while also being expected to become an expert on their child's health.

If you want caring support and individualised information that could help improve quality of life for your whole family on any of the points below:

Call the Care Services Team on **0800 902 0095** (free from UK mobiles and landlines) or dial **01543 468 400** (normal call charges apply) Monday – Friday, 9.30am – 5pm and until 7pm on Wednesdays.

Alternatively you can email **nurse@newlifecharity.co.uk** or go to the website, **newlifecharity.co.uk/contact** to use our 'Live Chat' service.

***Please note that verbal translation services are available through the Nurse Helpline.***

***Disclaimer:*** While we have made every attempt to ensure that the information on this in this publication has been gathered from reliable sources and is up-to-date, accurate and complete, Newlife is not responsible for any errors or omissions or for the results obtained from the use of this information. This publication may link to other websites/publications maintained by third parties over whom Newlife has no control. Newlife makes no representations as to the accuracy or any other aspect of information contained on other websites/in other publications. In no circumstances will Newlife, its employees or any individual or organisation associated with the charity, be liable to you or anyone else for any decision made or action taken using information from this publication.