

Reading Families' Forum

A voice for families of children and young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities

GETTING SOCIAL CARE SUPPORT IF YOU HAVE A CHILD WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND/OR DISABILITIES

Produced by Reading Families' Forum for parent carers with the help of Brighter Futures for Children

Children who have a disability, their parent carers and siblings may be entitled to support from a range of services, such as equipment to enable the child's independence and breaks from caring, such as holiday and term-time clubs. This support will depend on an assessment of the child and his/her family's needs.

Who provides this support?

A number of organisations can provide support to families of disabled children, including local authorities.

In Reading, children's services are delivered by an independent company called Brighter Futures for Children (BFfC) on Reading Borough Council's behalf.

BFfC provides social care support to children up to the age of 18 through its Children and Young People with Disability team as well as other Social Work Teams. Reading Borough Council provides social care support to disabled young people aged 18 and over.

BFfC's Special Educational Needs and Disabilities team supports children and young people up to the age of 25 who have, or may require, an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP).



Types of social care support that might be available

Local authorities provide support to children in need, including disabled children, to help with their health and development. The types of support provided are dependent on an assessment of need, called a Child in Need (CiN) or Single Assessment.

An additional assessment by an occupational therapist may be required to determine what adaptations or equipment a child needs outside of school to maximise their health and development.

The Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1970 sets out the kinds of support that should be provided when a local authority is satisfied that there are needs that must be met. The kind of services that may be needed include:

- Practical assistance in the home, such as help with the personal care of your child. This could be, for example, help getting in and out of bed and specialist seating
- Recreational equipment such as a TV, radio or computer
- Leisure facilities (this could mean outings or a day centre placement)
- Education facilities (this could mean home-based education or funding for the personal care requirements of students so they can study)
- Travel and other assistance, such as travel to and from a day centre
- Home adaptations and disabled facilities, such as handrails or hoists. Some equipment and adaptations may be provided directly by the occupational therapist, and you may be eligible to apply for a Disabled Facilities Grant to adapt your home. There are also charities who will fund adaptations and equipment: for more information, see the Reading SEND Local Offer website <http://www.reading.gov.uk/sendlocaloffer>



- Short breaks (where a child can enjoy a fun activity while their parent or carer has a break). See BfFC's short breaks statement for more details on this on the Local Offer above.
- Meals, telephone and other related equipment.

Other services may be provided by the local authority, such as advice and guidance, laundry services and, in exceptional circumstances, financial help.

Services should be designed to:

- minimise the effect on disabled children of their disabilities,
- give such children the opportunity to lead lives which are as normal as possible, and
- assist individuals who provide care for such children to continue to do so, or to do so more effectively, by giving them breaks from caring (Children Act 1989, schedule 2, paragraph 6).



Parents and siblings

Local authorities must also assess parents of disabled children (parent carers) and this should include consideration of their well-being, including health and safety, and commitments, such as care of other children, relationships and employment. Support could include arranging short breaks to

give the parent carer time to relax and/or spend time with siblings.

If you need support or advice on a Parent Carers Needs Assessment or would like to request a PCNA please contact TuVida,(Carers Hub), who conduct assessments on behalf of BFFC.

The contact details are below.

Telephone: 0118 324 7333

E-mail: berkshire@tuvida.org

Website: www.tuvida.org

Brothers and sisters of disabled children may help care for their disabled sibling and also may be affected by their disabled sibling's needs. In these cases, local authorities must assess the needs of young carers and their needs should also be included in the assessment of the disabled child.



Siblings can also be assessed separately as a young carer. BfC offers support specifically for young carers, through their Early Help team. This could include youth clubs, courses aimed at siblings and/or support to reduce a child's caring role. <https://brighterfuturesforchildren.org/for-parents-carers/early-help/>

Who is entitled to support?

If your child has a disability, your child and the family are entitled to an assessment of need.

Section 17 (11) of the Children Act 1989 states that a child is disabled if they:

- are blind
- deaf, or
- non-verbal, or
- 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'.

Autism and Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder come under the above.

Your child does not need a diagnosis.

Remember, you are entitled to an assessment of your child's needs and your needs as a parent carer, even if you get disability benefits or have a child with autism.

The threshold document for support from children's care is at:

https://www.berkshirerwestsafeguardingchildrenpartnership.org.uk/assets/1/reading_threshold_guidance_booklet_-_autumn_2020_updated_dec_20.pdf

The eligibility criteria for the Children and Young People's Disability Team CYPDT are: <https://bit.ly/3Cmqfsa>

How do you get support?

There are a number of ways to seek support:

- There is a lot of useful information in the Ordinarily Available statement that is on the Reading SEND Local Offer website <https://bit.ly/3pN97H4>
- If your child is put forward for an Education Health and Care Needs Assessment, BfFC will gather information about your child's social care. If your child is not already getting support from a social worker, you can ask for a separate assessment to be carried out of your child's social care needs as part of the EHC needs assessment.



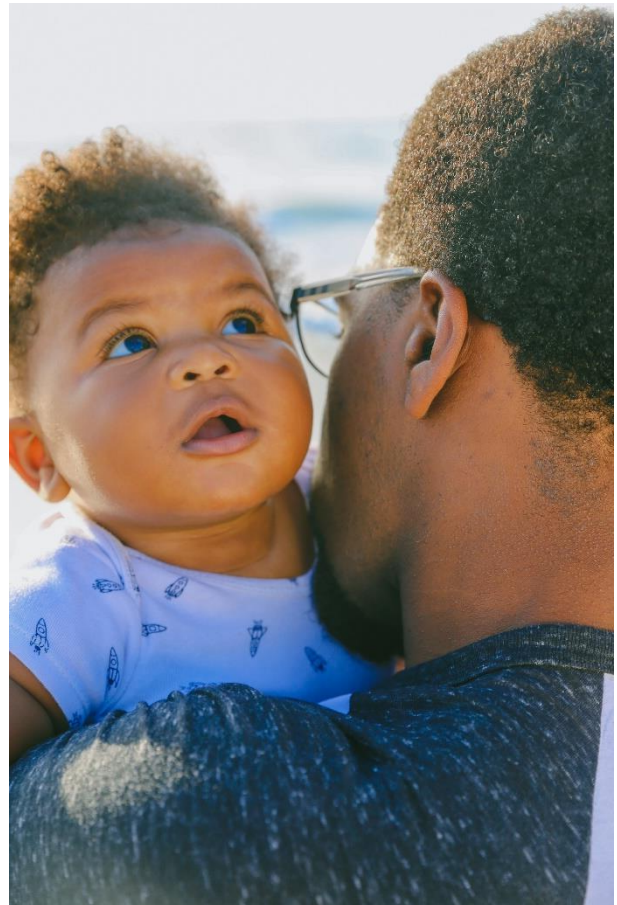
The assessment should also consider the needs of parents and other family members, part of the procedure for the Children's Single Point of Access Team.

- Social care assistance and support should be given to the child and family as soon as a need is identified. You do not have to wait until the EHC Needs Assessment is finished and the EHCP finalised. Your family may still be entitled to the support, even if BfFC does not agree to issue an EHCP. (Information about appealing this decision if you disagree with it will be included in the decision letter.)
- Again, you do not need your child to have an EHC assessment to get support for your child and your family. You, or anyone else working with you, can refer your child to the Children's Single Point of Access and ask for an assessment.

- If you urgently need support, you can ask for support straight away. For example, if you are struggling to cope with the demands of caring for your child.

What happens after the request for social care support?

- The Children's Single Point of Access (CSPoA) should let you know within one working day whether they will assess your child.
- If your child is disabled, you cannot legally be refused an assessment. If they have not got a diagnosis but your child needs support to maintain health and development, an assessment should be undertaken.
- You should be involved in the assessment of need and be given the opportunity to comment and check that it accurately represents your child and your family's needs. The assessment should be completed in 45 working days and families should be sent a copy of the Child in Need plan. This will be reassessed at least every year.
- If you are eligible for services, a support or care plan will be produced following the assessment which sets out how the needs, identified in the assessment, will be met. Remember, BFFC does not need to wait for the plan to be produced to put support in place.
- Your social worker will visit your child and family to check how things are. The frequency will depend on your child's needs.
- Review timescales are dependent on the plan and the child's needs. 6 months would be the longest a Short Break only plan could go without review. All other plans should be reviewed every 4-6 weeks by your



social worker or family support worker to check the identified needs are still being met.

- The Care Act 2014 gives rights both for families with a child who may need support to prepare for the transition to adult services, and for young carers. Services that are in place before a child's 18th birthday to meet their assessed needs can continue after their 18th birthday until support from adult services is in place.
- You can ask for your needs as a parent carer to be considered alongside the assessment of your child's needs. If you would like a separate assessment, you can ask for this. Currently, TuVida are commissioned to complete parent carer needs assessments and then these are sent to CSPoA. There is a flowchart and an explanation of this process on BfFC's website here: <https://brighterfuturesforchildren.org/for-parents-carers/send/pcna/>

Who provides support in Brighter Futures for Children?

There are many different teams within BfFC including the Children's Single Point of Access (CSPoA) which takes all new referrals, Early Help, Assessment and Action teams, Family Intervention teams and the Children and Young People's Disability team (CYPDT). You may be seen by a social worker or family support worker.



Whichever team assesses your family and provides support, you should expect assessments to be holistic and person centred. This means that assessments of a child's needs should include their health and development as well as their wishes and feelings, the wishes and feelings of siblings, your needs as parents and wider family and environmental factors, such as housing and support networks. It also should include consideration of their needs for support under the Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1970 above.

Help with seeking social care support

The Reading IASS (Independent Advice and Support Service) can advise and support families in getting their child's SEND and social care 0 – 18 met. The website

<https://www.readingiass.org/>



IASS Helpline: 0118 937 3421

email: iass@brighterfuturesforchildren.org

Facebook: www.facebook.com/Readingiass

Reading Mencap has family advisors who can support families to get support. You can find these on their website: <https://www.readingmencap.org.uk/>

Autism Berkshire also has a range of information and advice on their website:

<https://www.autismberkshire.org.uk/>

For more information, you can visit the national charity Contact's website:

<https://contact.org.uk/help-for-families/information-advice-services/social-care/>

Compliments and complaints

In the first instance, talk to the social worker or family support worker dealing with your family or their line manager. If you have not been able to resolve concerns, you can make a formal complaint –

<https://brighterfuturesforchildren.org/about/compliments-and-complaints/>

What else?

The local authority has to keep a register of disabled children and young people. It is up to the person(s) with parental responsibility to decide whether the child's name is included in the register. The register is maintained by the Reading SEND Local Offer and can be found on this link:

<https://bit.ly/3pIRMPI>

The register's aim is to ensure BfC plans enough services for disabled children in their area.

Your child will get a free Max card giving them money off many family attractions and days out. You can also choose to fill in a care plan that you can print off and give to holiday and after school clubs, so they have all the information they need to care for your child.



Other sources of help and support for families

Reading's Local Offer details lots of services available to families of children with additional needs including activities for disabled children, parent support groups, parenting support adapted to children with additional needs, charities and practical support. <http://www.reading.gov.uk/sendlocaloffer>

Contact is a charity which supports families with disabled children. They have more information about social care for disabled children on their website:

<https://contact.org.uk/help-for-families/information-advice-services/social-care/what-is-social-care/>

The Reading Families' Forum is a local charity that works with families and service providers, including Brighter Futures for Children, to develop services. It runs regular coffee evenings and a SEND youth forum so that families can talk directly to senior managers from Brighter Futures for Children about local services <http://www.readingfamiliesforum.co.uk/>

Prepared February 2022

Notes

