



**WOKINGHAM  
BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**Children with Disabilities Service  
Continuum of Need Document**

PUBLIC

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| Version     | Date          | Description                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
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| Version 1   | March 2021    | Children with Disabilities Service Continuum of Need Document – first version.                                                                                                                                                                             |
| Version 1.1 | May 2021      | Family Based Short Breaks please contact number corrected on page 16.                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| Version 2   | May 2022      | Review and refresh of policy.                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| Version 3   | December 2023 | Review and refresh of policy.                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| Version 4   | December 2024 | Review and refresh of policy - Updated web links and minor amendments to team information for FIRST, Saturday Club, Bridges, Children and Young people's Continuing Care, Sensory Needs Service and Integrated Early Help Service.                         |
| Version 5   | December 2025 | Review and refresh of policy - Minor amendments to team information for ASSIST. Link to Children's Services procedures updated. CAN Network mobile number removed. Link to Short Break Self-Referral form updated                                          |
| Version 5.1 | July 2026     | Update to the Occupational Therapy Service Section to include link to Assessment of Occupational Therapy Need Document. Amendment of document to reflect the changes to delivery in children's services through the introduction of the Family Help model. |

*If you have any questions or concerns about the contents of this document, in the first instance please contact the Quality Assurance and Policy Team via email at: [ImpactAndInspectionTeam@wokingham.gov.uk](mailto:ImpactAndInspectionTeam@wokingham.gov.uk).*

## Contents

|                                                                                     |    |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----|
| Introduction.....                                                                   | 4  |
| The Legal Framework.....                                                            | 4  |
| The Definition of Disability.....                                                   | 5  |
| The Continuum of Need .....                                                         | 6  |
| The Children with Disabilities Service.....                                         | 8  |
| Services for Everyone.....                                                          | 9  |
| The Local Offer .....                                                               | 9  |
| Children with Additional Needs Network (CAN Network) .....                          | 9  |
| Additional Help - Targeted Services.....                                            | 10 |
| Short Breaks & Early Help Team .....                                                | 10 |
| ASSIST (Autism Spectrum Service for Information, Support & Training) .....          | 11 |
| FIRST (Family Intervention, Resources and Support Team) .....                       | 13 |
| Saturday Club .....                                                                 | 15 |
| Family Based Short Break Scheme .....                                               | 16 |
| Intensive and Specialist Services.....                                              | 18 |
| Children with Disabilities Team (Social Work) .....                                 | 18 |
| Children with Disabilities Team (Occupational Therapy Service).....                 | 20 |
| Bridges .....                                                                       | 21 |
| Further Support and Signposting.....                                                | 23 |
| Special Education Needs and Disability Service .....                                | 23 |
| Children and Young People's Continuing Care .....                                   | 23 |
| Further Advice and Support for Practitioners within Wokingham Borough Council ..... | 24 |
| Sensory Needs Service .....                                                         | 24 |
| Housing Needs and Tenants Services.....                                             | 25 |

# Introduction

Children with disabilities and their families require different levels of help and support to achieve their full potential, through a graduated response from universal, targeted, intensive or specialist services. In addition, the needs of a child with a disability are not static and will change with age and as a result of additional factors, such as family functioning or the environment they live in; specific factors directly related to their disability may also have an impact.

The approach of Wokingham Borough Council's Children with Disabilities Service is underpinned by the principle that children with disabilities are first and foremost children, with their disability being a vital but secondary consideration. As such, it is imperative that so far as possible, children with disabilities have the right to access services that any child can access, and that universal provisions work to make their offer as open as possible to them.

For many children with a disability, access to universal services will be sufficient to meet their needs. For some however, these services will not be able to provide the level of support that is required and there may be a need for the child and their family to access services that provide additional (targeted) support. For a few with more complex needs, an intensive/specialist service will be required. To ensure that children with disabilities and their families receive the right level of support, at the right time and from the right people, Wokingham Borough Council will complete an assessment, adopting the use of a holistic assessment tool proportionate to the presenting needs and which respects the right to a private family life.

The Children with Disabilities Service also works using relational, strengths-based and systemic approaches, through which they seek to support families and their wider network at all levels of presenting need, to utilise the resources they have available to them to resolve issues and build future resilience.

All the teams that form the Children with Disabilities Service work to these principles. Viewed as a whole, the service is designed to support children across the continuum of needs that may be experienced throughout their childhood and adolescence. This Continuum of Need document has been designed to provide families and practitioners with a clear understanding of the services available to support children with disabilities across this continuum in Wokingham. The document offers a description of each team and their support criteria, to ensure that children and families receive the most proportionate, timely and helpful response. Some of the services can be accessed directly by families whilst others require a referral. Details of these processes have also been outlined.

## The Legal Framework

The services that Wokingham Borough Council deliver to children with disabilities are provided within the context of a range of legislative frameworks. These include:

- Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act (1970): Section 2 sets out a duty to make arrangements which are assessed to be necessary in order to meet the needs of the individual child.
- Children Act 1989: Section 17 provides a general duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children 'in need' (which includes a child with a disability); Section 20 contains a power to provide accommodation to a child in order to safeguard and promote their welfare (for example, by way of respite).

Also relevant are the following statutory provisions and guidance:

- Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act (1996).
- Childcare Act (2006).
- Equality Act (2010).
- Breaks for Carers of Disabled Children Regulations (2011).
- Fostering Services (England) Regulations (2011).
- Children and Families Act (2014).
- Children's Homes (England) Regulations (2015)
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (2026).

## The Definition of Disability

The accepted definition of disability in Wokingham is taken from the Equality Act 2010, which is:

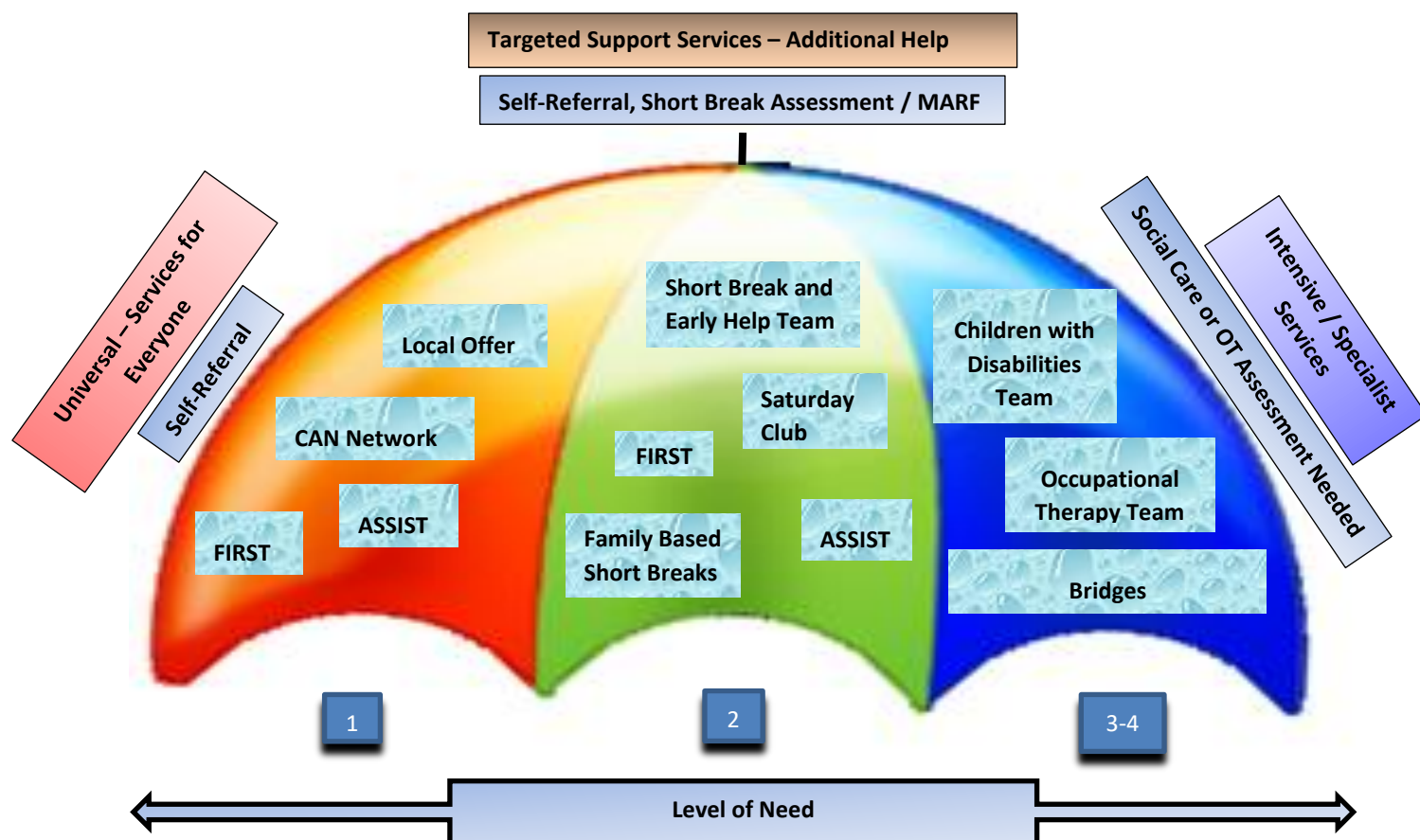
*"A physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term negative effect on your ability to do normal daily activities".*

There is an important distinction to be made between issues arising as a result of the child's disability and issues that may arise as a result of parenting or environmental concerns. Services for children with disabilities will address presenting issues being experienced by the child and their family that relate specifically to the child's disability. If however, the issue is predominantly linked to the need to develop parenting skills or is caused by other environmental factors, support can be provided from other teams within the Council as appropriate.

It should also be noted that where children's needs are predominantly related to mental health, a medical condition or known side effect of a medication the child is taking, advice should be sought from CAMHS or the relevant Health practitioner, who will be best placed to offer the appropriate support. There is a signposting section at the end of this document which provides details of where such support can be obtained.

## The Continuum of Need

Children with disabilities and their families will require different levels of help and support to achieve their full potential, through a graduated response from universal, targeted, intensive or specialist services. Our approach to providing this support is demonstrated below in *Diagram 1 - The Continuum of Need*. As the diagram demonstrates, there are varying levels and types of support that children with disabilities and their families can require at different points.



**Diagram 1 - The Continuum of Need**

The levels of need in the diagram are explained in full in Wokingham Borough Council's current Threshold Document<sup>1</sup>. These can be summarised as follows:

### Level 1: Services for Everyone (Universal Services)

Many children, young people and their families will have their needs met through accessing universal services. These services can be accessed directly by the child and their family without the need for involvement from the Local Authority.

<sup>1</sup> Wokingham's current Threshold Document can be read in full via the Berkshire West Safeguarding Children Partnership website here:

<https://www.berkshirewestsafeguardingchildrenpartnership.org.uk/scp/wokingham/wokingham-threshold-guidance>

**Level 2: Additional Help (Targeted Services)**

Some children, young people and their families will require additional help and support to meet their child's needs. This will take the form of a Short Break and/or Early Help Support. Some support services are accessible via self-referral, whilst others require a Short Breaks Assessment to be undertaken by the relevant team within the Local Authority.

**Level 3: Intensive Help (Intensive Services)**

A few children, young people and their families will require more intensive help and support to meet their child's needs. This group of children will usually have quite complex needs.

**Level 4: Specialist Help (Safeguarding Services)**

A few children, young people and their families will require specialist help to ensure that the safety and well-being of their child is maintained. These children are likely to be having adverse experiences as the result of family functioning or the environment they are living in; sometimes the complexity of the disability need can be a compounding factor in this.

Any child who is at risk of significant harm, regardless of their existing level of support, will be subject to safeguarding procedures as set out by Wokingham Borough Council.

**To Note:** Our safeguarding procedures are set out in full and can be accessed via the following link [Welcome to the Pan Berkshire Safeguarding Children...](#) and the [Welcome to the Wokingham Children's Services Procedures...](#). Although this Continuum of Need Document does not detail these processes, it should be noted that any child with a disability who is subject to safeguarding procedures and requires ongoing support will have this provided to them by a Social Worker.

# The Children with Disabilities Service

The remainder of this document will explain how the Children with Disabilities Service is configured to meet the differing needs of children across the continuum of need, the support criteria that apply at each level, the services the different teams offer and how they can be accessed.

An overview of this configuration can be seen in **Table 1: Children with Disabilities Service Configuration** below:

**Table 1: Children with Disabilities Service Configuration**

| Level of Need                                                                                                    | Services                                                                                                                            |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>1. Services for Everyone – Universal Services</b>                                                             | Local Offer<br>Children with Additional Needs (CAN) Network<br>ASSIST (Universal Offer)<br>FIRST (Universal Offer)                  |
| <b>2. Additional Help - Targeted Services</b>                                                                    | Short Breaks and Early Help Team<br>ASSIST (Targeted Offer)<br>FIRST (Targeted Offer)<br>Saturday Club<br>Family Based Short Breaks |
| <b>3. Intensive Help – Intensive Services</b><br><br><b>4. Specialist Help – including Safeguarding Services</b> | Children with Disabilities Team<br>Occupational Therapy Team<br>Bridges                                                             |

## Services for Everyone

### The Local Offer

The Local Offer is an online resource, which provides information about the support that is available in the local area for children and young people aged 0-25 with special educational needs or disabilities and their families. It includes information on a range of services and provides details on how to access them.



[www.wokingham.gov.uk/lo](http://www.wokingham.gov.uk/lo)

### Children with Additional Needs Network (CAN Network)

The CAN Network is an information and support service for children with additional needs. It can provide advice and support on clubs and activities taking place locally and events and attractions further afield. The CAN Network can also signpost families to support groups, training opportunities and other sources of disability-focused information which they may benefit from.

Children do not have to have a formal diagnosis in order for information and signposting support to be accessed, or for their parents to be included on the CAN Network contact list. Joining the contact list will also mean that the child and their family receive regular emails about what is happening locally i.e., events, activities, training and consultations that may be of interest. Families can unsubscribe at any time by emailing and asking to be removed from the bulletin list.<sup>2</sup>

The CAN Network also acts as the service which maintains the Council's Register of Children with Disabilities, which is a legal requirement under the Children Act 1989. The Register acts as a tool to help with the planning and monitoring of services. Unlike the CAN Network contact list, children who join the Register must have a formal diagnosis.

To encourage people to join the Register, the CAN Network also offers a CAN Card to eligible children. The CAN Card acts as proof of eligibility for concessionary rates at a range of local attractions and settings.

#### Contact Details

Should you require further information about the CAN Network please contact them:

By phone: (0118) 974 6000

By email: [can.network@wokingham.gov.uk](mailto:can.network@wokingham.gov.uk)

Web: [Wokingham Directory | CAN \(children with additional needs\) Network and CAN Card](#)

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<sup>2</sup> Being registered with the CAN Network does not enable access to other services which require children to have a **substantial** and **long-term** disability, as the register includes children with a wide range of additional needs.

## Additional Help - Targeted Services

### Short Breaks & Early Help Team

#### Aim of the service:

To support children with disabilities and their families where additional assistance is required to meet their need (i.e., where this is more than universal services can provide), at the earliest opportunity, preventing the need for escalation to Social Work support services.

The service will work with families to provide:

#### Short Breaks and Early Help support:

- Assess the need for and help identify short break provisions or other forms of help / assistance required by the child and their family.
- Develop a Short Break Support Plan with the family.
- Review the Short Break Support Plan at appropriate intervals to ensure it still meets the needs of the child and their family.
- Support the child and family with issues connected to the child's disability and direct to services who can assist as required.

#### Criteria: Who is this service best placed to support?

*Short breaks provisions being delivered via this service are covered by the Breaks for Carers of Disabled Children Regulations 2011 & the Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act (1970). Early Help provisions being delivered by this service are supported by the Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018 guidance, as referencing Early Help Provision.*

In summary, these services are available to:

- Children aged 0-18 with a substantial and long-term disability, as identified by Short Break and Early Help Assessment.
- Children who live in the Wokingham Borough.
- Children who require additional support to access short breaks and need targeted or specialist services
- Families that need additional help as a result of their child's disability to prevent escalation to Social Work support services.

#### Referral Process:

Referrals to the Short Break and Early Help Team must be made via the MASH Team. Phone: (0118) 908 8002 Email: [triage@wokingham.gov.uk](mailto:triage@wokingham.gov.uk).

#### Professionals should complete a **Multi-Agency Referral Form (MARF)**

Referrals for Short Breaks can be made directly by parents using the Short Breaks Self-Referral form which can be found here: [Short breaks explained](#)

Further information about Short Breaks can be found in our Short Breaks Statement: [Short breaks explained](#)

#### **Contact Details:**

Should you require further information about the Short Break and Early Help Team please contact them:

By phone: (0118) 974 6000

By Email: [ShortBreaksCo-ordinator@wokingham.gov.uk](mailto:ShortBreaksCo-ordinator@wokingham.gov.uk)

Web: [Short Breaks and Early Help Team](#)

### **ASSIST (Autism Spectrum Service for Information, Support & Training)**

#### **Aim of the Service:**

The aim of the ASSIST service is to work in a proactive, supportive and preventative way with families and providers, so that autistic children and young people living in the Wokingham Borough can be the best they can be and thrive.

The approach to intervention is holistic, creative and directed by the needs of the individual and those around them. The service provides information, support and training to assist children, young people and their families both pre and post diagnosis.

The primary focus is to work with parents and carers. A key aim of the service is to look at and consider the requirements of the whole environment at home, at school and at play regarding autism understanding and acceptance, skills and knowledge.

#### **Criteria: Who is this service best placed to support?**

*Early Help provisions being delivered by this service are supported by the Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018 guidance, as referencing Early Help Provision.*

#### **Universal**

- Anyone who has an interest in autism or feels that the strategies shared might be relevant and useful are welcome to attend a workshop.

#### **Targeted**

- Children and young people up to their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday, with an autism diagnosis or who are on the pathway for an autism assessment and are resident in the Wokingham Borough.
- Parents and carers of children and young people with an autism diagnosis or who are on the pathway for an autism assessment or who feel that an autism approach and strategies might be relevant and would like to attend parent programmes and parent / carer sessions.

- Wokingham families living with or caring for a child or young person who has an autism diagnosis, focused support can be offered following an assessment completed by the referrer where 1 to 1 intervention and guidance has been identified.
- ASSIST clubs for diagnosed autistic young people aged 12 to 18<sup>th</sup> birthday.

## Referral Process:

### Self-Referral – direct to the service

1. **Autistic people** and their families can access universal services, information and support in relation to autism e.g., health and education services for all, post-diagnostic information, support groups and workshops.
2. **Some autistic people** and their families may like more in depth support to understand and implement an autism approach within their family, e.g., support groups, autism specific parent programmes and workshops, 1 to 1 autism advice via email, arranged telephone call and parent/carer sessions. Full details of the support groups, workshops and parent programmes can be found via the [Wokingham Directory | ASSIST Team \(Autism Spectrum Service for Information Support and Training\)](#)

**To Note:** If a practitioner is supporting a family to self-refer, the family should be aware of and give consent to their information being held by the ASSIST service who co-ordinate autism parent programmes in Wokingham. ASSIST can then inform families of autism specific events in Wokingham.

Information leaflet and details of forthcoming programmes, workshops and support sessions will be sent to family once contact information is received.

The National Autistic Society programme is offered FREE, although we do ask for a voluntary contribution towards the cost of the parent workbook which accompanies the programme. If a workbook is purchased, it is then your resource to keep. If you would like a workbook and finance is an issue, please talk directly to ASSIST.

All members of the ASSIST team are National Autistic Society Licenced trainers.

There is a charge to attend a workshop.

There is no charge to attend a parent/carer support session.

### Referral required - Via Duty Triage and Assessment

Referrals for ASSIST to work as part of a team that includes family and practitioners, advising and guiding from an autism perspective, must be made by completing a MARF (see below) and forwarded to the MASH Team. Phone (0118) 908 8002 Email: [triage@wokingham.gov.uk](mailto:triage@wokingham.gov.uk).

### Professionals should complete a **Multi-Agency Referral Form (MARF)**

**A few autistic people** and their families will want and/or need focused work and intervention to enable the child/young person to access and manage in the different environments where they live, learn and play.

Where identified through an assessment provided by the referrer, ASSIST will use an autism perspective framework based on the social model of disability i.e. **why** might an autistic individual be encountering a challenge and **how** might adults implement autism friendly approaches to promote and support positive outcomes for the child/young person and their families.

### Contact Details

Should you require further information about ASSIST please contact them:

By email: [assist@wokingham.gov.uk](mailto:assist@wokingham.gov.uk)

By phone: (0118) 908 8053 (answer machine – please leave a message and we will contact you)

Web: [Wokingham Directory | ASSIST Team \(Autism Spectrum Service for Information Support and Training\)](#)

## FIRST (Family Intervention, Resources and Support Team)

### Aim of the service

The aim of the Family Intervention, Resources and Support Team (FIRST) is to provide information, workshops and training around sleep, (including anxiety), and distressed / dysregulated behaviour. The team comprises of Sleep Practitioners, Therapeutic Thinking and Foundations for Attachment Practitioners and a Family Support Worker. The team can offer parents / carers who reside in the Wokingham Borough an opportunity to explore different ways of thinking about sleep, anxiety and distressed behaviour and can provide strategies to support their child.

In the first instance, parents are required to attend one of the courses. If following attendance additional support is required, a more detailed assessment will be arranged to identify focused outcomes to meet the child's particular needs. It should be noted that FIRST work collaboratively with families and that the success of outcomes relies heavily on parents or carers implementing the strategies that are shared. Whilst support is available to help with this, families and referring professionals need to ensure that the family are open and willing to work in this way.

### Criteria: Who is this service best placed to support?

*Early Help provisions being delivered by this service are supported by the Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018 guidance, as referencing Early Help Provision.*

- Anyone in Wokingham Borough who is supporting a child with a disability and has an interest in sleep hygiene or understanding distressed / dysregulated behaviours is welcome to attend

a workshop. If there is additional capacity available on a workshop, spaces can be accessed by people with an interest in the subject matter who are not supporting a child with a disability.

- Parents of children with a disability, (or on the pathway for an autism assessment), aged 3-18 who live in the Wokingham Borough, can access formal sleep and behaviour courses.
- Families who have completed a formal sleep or behaviour course delivered by FIRST and are identified as requiring additional support, will be offered this on a 1:1 basis. FIRST will also accept referrals for urgent work where this has been identified via a Social Care assessment (without attendance at the course) or where the needs of the parent dictate that group work may not be the most suitable method of delivery. Once a family has been identified as needing 1:1 support, FIRST will carry out an assessment and develop a bespoke plan of time limited support with the family.

### **Referral Process:**

#### **Self-Referral – Direct to the service**

1. **All people** who are supporting a child with a disability and who may benefit from information and support in relation to sleep and understanding distressed / dysregulated behaviour, can attend **workshops**.
2. **Some people** who are supporting a child with a disability and who would like more in depth support to understand and manage sleep and/or understand distressed / dysregulated behaviours, can attend a **formal course** on the subject.

If supporting a family to self-refer, the family should be aware of and give consent to their information being held by the FIRST team. FIRST can then inform families of specific events.

An information leaflet and details of next programmes will be sent to family once contact information is received.

Full details of the support groups, workshops and parent programmes can be found via the [Family Intervention Resources and Support Team \(FIRST\)](#) To self-refer to FIRST, please contact the service using the FIRST team contact details listed below.

#### **Referral required – Via the MASH Team**

Referrals to FIRST for focussed 1:1 support must be made via the MASH Team. Phone (0118) 908 8002  
Email: [triage@wokingham.gov.uk](mailto:triage@wokingham.gov.uk).

#### **Professionals should complete a [Multi-Agency Referral Form \(MARF\)](#)**

3. **A few people** supporting children with disabilities will want and/or need **1:1 focused in-depth support**. Where identified through attendance at a FIRST course or where an urgent need is identified as part of an assessment, FIRST will either work directly with a family or alongside other professionals where appropriate, to support them to implement strategies to help their child's sleep or behaviour.

### **Contact Details**

Should you require further information about FIRST please contact them:

By phone: 0118 974 6000

By email: [First@wokingham.gov.uk](mailto:First@wokingham.gov.uk)

Web: via the [Family Intervention Resources and Support Team \(FIRST\)](#)

## Saturday Club

### Aim of the Service:

Saturday Club aims to provide children with disabilities who require a higher level of support, the opportunity to attend a club that might not otherwise be available to them in the mainstream. The focus is on building friendships and undertaking a range of fun activities and experiences, whilst promoting independence, community safety skills and learning.

Saturday Club operates from Addington Special School in Woodley. Children attend the club one Saturday a month and are carefully matched with a group of children where opportunities to form positive relationships and share similar interests exist.

The club undertakes a range of activities on site but also accesses activities and places of interest within the community when possible, enabling the children to have a wide range of experiences. Ideas are generated from the children and young people who attend wherever possible.

Saturday Club runs four Saturdays a month, except for August when the school is used to deliver a summer play scheme. Sessions run from 10am – 4.30pm.

Saturday Club ask for a voluntary £5 contribution, which is used to fund activities. Parents are requested to provide their child with a packed lunch.

### Criteria: Who is this service best placed to support?

*Short breaks provisions being delivered via this service fall under the legal constructs of the Breaks for Carers of Disabled Children Regulations 2011 & the Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act (1970). Both Saturday Clubs are registered with OFSTED in accordance with the Childcare Act (2006).*

- Children with a disability aged under 18 who live in the Wokingham Borough.
- Children who as a result of their disability are not able to easily access mainstream alternatives (without voluntary support or without reasonable adjustments being made by the programme provider). The need for Saturday Club must be identified via a Short Break and Early Help Assessment (from the Short Break and Early Help Team) or a Child and Family Assessment (from a Social Worker).
- Children can attend from the August following their 5<sup>th</sup> birthday, as Saturday Club is not registered as an Early Years Provider to 18 years old, provided it continues to meet their needs and those of their family.
- Groups are arranged based on age and interests to ensure children attend in a positive peer group.

## Referral Process

- To attend Saturday Club, children will have been assessed by a Short Break and Early Help Co-ordinator or a Social Worker in the CWD Team as requiring this service.
- Requests for service are considered at the disability-specific Children with Additional Needs Multi-Agency Panel (CANMAP) which is held fortnightly.

If agreed in principle at CANMAP, a home visit will be undertaken and/or a visit to Club arranged to establish whether the service is appropriate in meeting the child's needs. It may be necessary to add the child to the waiting list if a suitable space is currently not available.

## Contact Details

Should you require further information about Saturday Club please contact them:

By phone: 0118 974 6000

By email: [saturdayclub@wokingham.gov.uk](mailto:saturdayclub@wokingham.gov.uk)

Web: [Saturday Club website](#).

## Family Based Short Break Scheme

### Aim of the service:

The Family Based Short Breaks Scheme aims to provide regular short breaks for children with disabilities with approved Carers in the Carer's family home - including day care and overnight stays.

Short Break Carers undergo a detailed Form F assessment, which is in line with the Fostering Service (England) Regulations 2011. This assessment is used to assess the suitability of the applicants. Once the assessment and relevant checks have been completed, the applicants are presented to the Fostering Panel, where the decision regarding approval is made.

It should be noted that although the recruitment process is stringent, Short Break Carers carry out their role on a voluntary basis, receiving an allowance for expenses (unlike paid Foster Carers). Most Carers have other employment, and the emphasis is on short breaks, with children matched to their level of skills and experience.

Carers usually provide short break care in their own home and undertake activities with the child within the local community.

### Criteria: Who is this service best placed to support?

*The Family Based Short Breaks Scheme sits under the auspices of the Children Act 1989 and the Fostering Service (England) Regulations (2011).*

*Short break provisions delivered by this service are governed by the Breaks for Carers of Disabled Children Regulations (2011) and the Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act (1970).*

- Children with a disability aged under 18 who live in the Wokingham Borough, where the need for a service from the scheme has been identified via a Short Break and Early Help Assessment (from the Short Break and Early Help Team) or a Child and Family Assessment (from a Social Worker).
- Children (and their families) who would benefit from a short break in a family environment, as opposed to a club/group-based activity or support from a personal assistant or residential short break setting.

### **Referral Process**

- For an overnight service, children will have been assessed by a Social Worker in the Children with Disabilities Team (CWDT) as requiring this support.
- For day care, children will have been assessed by a Short Break and Early Help Co-ordinator or a Social Worker in the CWDT as requiring this support.
- Requests for service are considered at the disability-specific Children with Additional Needs Multi-Agency Panel (CANMAP) which is held fortnightly.

If agreed in principle at CANMAP, a home visit will be undertaken to establish whether or not the service is appropriate in meeting the child's needs. It may be necessary to add the child to the waiting list if a suitable space is currently not available.

### **Contact Details**

Should you require further information about Family Based Short Breaks please contact them:

By phone: 0118 974 6000

By email: [familybased@wokingham.gov.uk](mailto:familybased@wokingham.gov.uk)

Web: [Family Based Short Break website](#)

## Intensive and Specialist Services

### Children with Disabilities Team (Social Work)

#### Aim of the service:

To provide statutory Social Work services to children with disabilities who are:

- *Children In Need (Section 17 of the Children Act 1989;*
- *Looked After (Section 20, Section 31 and Section 38 Children Act 1989); Or*
- *Subject to Child Protection safeguarding arrangements (Section 47 Children Act 1989)*

#### A Child in Need is defined by Section 17 (10) of the Children Act 1989 as:

(a) He/she 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 for him of services by a local authority under this part;

(b) His/her health or development is likely to be significantly impaired, or further impaired, without the provision for him of such services; or

(c) He/she is disabled.

Social Workers within the team undertake a Child and Family Assessment (CAFA) and will use this to identify the needs of the child and develop a Child's Plan. This plan may include Short Break Support, in which case a Short Break Support Plan will also be developed.

Social workers will support the child and their family to address the issues identified in the plan. If following the completion of the work identified as requiring Social Work support, there is an ongoing need for assistance through targeted provision or if there is a Short Break Support Plan in place, then the child and their family will be offered this support from the Short Breaks and Early Help Team.

It should be noted that due to the complexity of some children's disabilities or family circumstances, there may be an ongoing need for long term Social Work support in some instances.

#### Criteria: Who is this service best placed to support?

- Children from birth to 18 years who live in the Wokingham Borough and have a **severe** or **profound** disability that is having a **substantial** and **long-term** negative effect on daily functioning.

#### Parent Carer Needs Assessments:

A parent carer is someone over 18 who provides care to a child with a disability for whom they have parental responsibility.

Under section 17ZD of the Children Act 1989, Local Authorities are required to assess parent carers on the appearance of need or where an assessment is requested by the parent. This is called a parent carer's needs assessment. This assessment can be combined with one for the child and can be carried out by the same person at the same time. It can also be undertaken as a stand-alone assessment.

Currently in Wokingham, the needs of parents and carers are considered as part of a Child and Family Assessment undertaken by a Social Worker, which holistically looks at the need of the child and their primary caregivers through the lens of the Parent Carer Need Assessment framework.

Parent Carer Needs Assessments are not exclusively delivered by the Children with Disabilities team and are a function applicable to all Social Work teams. The decision as to who carries out the Parent Carer Needs Assessment is based upon a consideration of which team is best placed to support the child and their family, in line with their presenting needs.

In order to conduct a Parent Carer Needs Assessment, the following areas should be explored:

- Whether a parent carer has needs for support and what those needs are;
- Whether it is appropriate for the parent to provide, or continue to provide, care for the child with a disability, in light of the parent's needs for support, other needs and wishes.

Parent Carer Needs Assessments must also consider;

- The wellbeing of the parent carer;
- The need to safeguard and promote the welfare of the child being cared for, and any other child for whom the parent carer has parental responsibility.

### **Referral Process**

Referrals to the Children with Disabilities Team or requests for a Parent Carer Needs Assessment, can be made by parents directly through contacting the MASH Team or by Professionals via a MARF.

**Phone:** (0118) 908 8002

**Email:** [triage@wokingham.gov.uk](mailto:triage@wokingham.gov.uk)

### **Contact Details**

Should you require further information about the Children with Disabilities Team please contact them:

By phone: (0118) 974 6000

By email: [cwdduty@wokingham.gov.uk](mailto:cwdduty@wokingham.gov.uk)

Web: [Children with Disabilities Team](#)

## Children with Disabilities Team (Occupational Therapy Service)

### Aim of the Service

To provide Occupational Therapy services to promote and maintain the independence of children with disabilities and to assist their carers to provide safe and effective care in the family home. This may include the provision of assistive equipment, adaptations to the home, (which could include supporting rehousing applications), and advice on the use of different techniques of care.

*Specialist Occupational Therapy input to children with a disability who require a service to achieve or maintain a reasonable standard of health and development or to prevent this being impaired/ further impaired, is delivered in line with Section 17 of the Children Act 1989. Occupational Therapists can also provide equipment in accordance with Section 2 of the Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1970 and may be able provide access to financial assistance to adapt the home under the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act (1996).*

### Criteria: Who is this service best placed to support?

- Children from birth to 18 years who live in the Wokingham Borough and have an Occupational Therapy need that requires assessment and possible Occupational Therapy intervention. This may include the provision of equipment and adaptations to the home that are necessary and appropriate to meet the child's ongoing needs, arising as a result of their disability which is **severe** or **profound** and having a **substantial** and **long-term** negative effect on daily functioning.

### Referral Process

Referrals to the Occupational Therapy Service can be made by parents direct, via contact with the MASH Team or by external professionals via a MARF.

Phone (0118) 908 8002

Email: [triage@wokingham.gov.uk](mailto:triage@wokingham.gov.uk)

### Contact Details

Should you require further information about the Occupational Therapy Service please contact them:

By phone: (0118) 974 6000

By email: [cs.ot@wokingham.gov.uk](mailto:cs.ot@wokingham.gov.uk)

Web: [Children with Disabilities Team](#)

You can also refer to the Children with Disabilities Service Assessment of Occupational Therapy Need Document, which can be found [here](#).

## Bridges

### Aim of the service:

Bridges is a short break care setting for children who have complex needs, or a learning and/or physical disability. The children and young people who access Bridges can require personal care, medication, behavioural support and support with learning and achievements.

Bridges is registered with Ofsted to accommodate up to five children aged between 8-18 years, at any given point in time. It has five bedrooms, meaning that a maximum of five children or young people can stay overnight. A further three children can attend for tea or day visits. The combination of overnight and day visits cannot not exceed eight children.

The service aims to provide children with disabilities and their families with high quality short break support. Quality, individualised care is provided to the children who attend Bridges, which adopts a child first approach. Bridges also works with other teams within Wokingham Children's Services to deliver support to the whole family, including work with sleep, behaviour and personal care.

The ethos of the service is that every child is an individual with the right to enjoy life within the community, appropriate to his or her age, and to be treated with respect and dignity. Bridges strives to create a positive environment which promotes a culture where children and young people are offered experiences, opportunities, and choices to assist them with achieving their aspirations and promote independence.

### Criteria: Who is this service best placed to support?

*Short breaks provisions being delivered via this service fall under the legal constructs of the Breaks for Carers of Disabled Children Regulations 2011 & the Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act (1970) as well as Section 17 and Section 20 (in relation to Short Breaks) of the Children Act 1989.*

*Bridges Resource Centre is regularly inspected by OFSTED under the Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015.*

- Children from 8 to 18 years who live in the Wokingham Borough and have a **severe** or **profound** disability that is having a **substantial** and **long-term** negative effect on daily functioning. The need for Bridges must be identified via a Short Break and Early Help Assessment (from the Short Break and Early Help Team) or a Child and Family Assessment (from a Social Worker) as set out in the referral process below.

### Referral Process

- Referrals to Bridges can be made by Social Workers in the Children with Disabilities Team (CWDT) or Short Break and Early Help Coordinators
- Children in receipt of an overnight service will be allocated a Social Worker in the Children with Disabilities Team (CWDT)
- For a Tea Visit or Day Care service, children will be allocated either a Short Break and Early Help Coordinator or a Social Worker in the CWD team, dependent on their presenting levels of need.

- Requests for service are considered at the disability-specific Children with Additional Needs Multi-Agency Panel (CANMAP), which is held fortnightly.

If agreed in principle at CANMAP, a home visit will be undertaken and/or visit to Bridges arranged to establish whether or not the service is appropriate in meeting the child's needs. It may be necessary to add the child to the waiting list if a suitable space is currently not available.

#### **Contact Details**

Should you require further information about the Bridges Resource Centre please contact them:

By phone: 0118 969 5977

By email: [csbridgesresource@wokingham.gov.uk](mailto:csbridgesresource@wokingham.gov.uk)

Web: [Wokingham Directory | Bridges: short breaks service for disabled children and young people](#)

## Further Support and Signposting

### Special Educational Needs and Disability Service

The Wokingham Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Service undertakes the Education Health and Care (EHC) needs assessment for children and young people between the ages of 0 - 25 years. It arranges the provision required to meet the needs identified on an EHC plan. The annual review is the statutory process of looking at the needs and provision specified in an EHC Plan and deciding whether these need to change.

Every child with an EHCP must have an annual review. The first review of the EHC plan must be held within 12 months of the EHC plan being finalised. Subsequent reviews must be held within 12 months of the previous review.

The legal requirements are set out in the Special Educational Needs and Disability Regulations 2014, and there is also statutory guidance for local authorities ("LAS"), schools and colleges in the SEN and Disability Code of Practice (the "Code").

#### Referral Process

For further details of the SEND Service and how to apply for an EHC plan please see the [Education and special educational needs and/or disabilities website](#).

#### Contact Details

Telephone: 0118 974 6216

Email: [sen@wokingham.gov.uk](mailto:sen@wokingham.gov.uk)

Opening hours: Monday - Friday 09:00 - 17:00

### Children and Young People's Continuing Care

Continuing Care is a **health funded package of care** that some children (aged up to 18) are entitled to receive as a result of disability, accident or illness. A continuing care package will be required when a child or young person has needs arising from disability, accident or illness that cannot be met by existing universal or specialist health services alone.

#### How to apply

If you think your child may be eligible for NHS Continuing Care, support please contact your community children's nurse and/or social worker or any other health or social care professional involved in your child's care for advice. If appropriate, they will make a referral to the NHS Integrated Care System that covers Berkshire West, Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire (ICS BOB) who are responsible for assessing this support

## Further Advice and Support for Practitioners within Wokingham Borough Council

The Continuing Health Care/Section 117 (CHC/s117) Team supports practitioners who may require assistance with health applications for children and young people. It is not designed to be over-prescriptive, and they are available to discuss cases to reach agreement on who would be best to lead on the process and progress applications in more complex and challenging circumstances.

A step-by-step guide to the Children's Process and Pathways is available and will help you to complete the process.

If you require support or guidance from the CHC/s117 team, then please contact the CHC team using the email address below. They will respond within 24 hours subject to team availability.

NB: The Step-by-Step guide has been distributed to WBC practitioners but can also be requested from the team using the email address below.

### Contact Details:

Email: [chcsupportservices@wokingham.gov.uk](mailto:chcsupportservices@wokingham.gov.uk)

## Sensory Needs Service

The Sensory Needs Team supports people in the Wokingham Borough with:

- Sight loss
- Hearing loss
- d/Deaf[1]
- Dual sensory loss

The Sensory Needs Service provides assessment and specialist support services to people with sensory loss to enable them to continue living as independently as possible.

The Sensory Needs Team has:

- A Rehabilitation Worker for the Visually Impaired (ROVI)/Level 3 Deafblind Assessor
- 3 Sensory Needs Social Care Practitioners/Level 3 Deafblind Assessors
- 2 Social Care Practitioners

### Contact Details

Telephone: 0118 974 6896

18001 0118 974 6896 - Text relay service

07714 226 789 - SMS service

Email: [sensoryneeds@wokingham.gov.uk](mailto:sensoryneeds@wokingham.gov.uk)

## Housing Needs and Tenants Services

For all matters relating to Housing needs, homelessness and Tenants Services please visit: [Housing and tenants | Wokingham](#)

On this site, there is detailed information covering a wide range of services provided via the Council.

These teams can be contacted via phone:

Phone us

9am - 5pm: 0118 974 6000

Emergency out of hours: 0800 212 111