

Disabled Children

How Sandwell
Children's Trust
supports Disabled
Children



The Children Act 1989 places a duty on Local Authorities to provide or coordinate the provision of services to all disabled children, as children 'in need'. In addition, for disabled children the Children Act 1989 duties are supplemented by section 2 of the Chronically Sick and Disabled Person Act (CSDPA) 1970, which creates a specific duty to provide certain support where a local authority considers, following assessment, that it is necessary to do so to meet a child's needs.

The services which are available under the CSDPA 1970 include care at home, short breaks in the community and assistance with adaptations to the child's home. Disabled children can also be provided with accommodation away from their family home, a service which is provided under the Children Act 1989.

The overall provision of these services is a responsibility across all areas of Children's Services, and associated health and voluntary sector services.

Parents have the right to have an assessment, of their disabled child, conducted upon their request under section 17 of the Children Act 1989. This is because all disabled children are automatically children 'in need'.

All referrals relating to disabled children should be made via MASH [Multi-agency safeguarding hub], this includes requests for short breaks. The MASH consists of relevant partner agencies, to include Health, Police, Education, who are able to access wide ranging information and form a multi-agency analysis to determine the appropriate assessment process for the child or young person. The MASH can be contacted on 0121 569 3100.

Once a request has been received, the Trust will carry out an assessment of the child. The assessment will be conducted by one of the Early Help or social care teams and will seek to establish the need[s] of the disabled child. The assessment will be carried out by the team that is best placed to identify the child's needs within [Children's Social Care](#)

Sandwell Children's Trust has organised its social care and early help teams to provide the right service at the right time. The Children with Disabilities Team is one of many teams within the Trust that work with children, young people and families. Those disabled children whose assessment shows a profound or severe disability and a requirement for specialist services will be supported by the Children with Disabilities Team. Appropriate services are available to all children in line with their eligible assessed needs, regardless of which team supports the child. Packages of support will be determined by the child's assessment of need and will be set out in their plan, not by which team they sit under. The support which may be provided may include, but is not limited to, support at home, in the community, or overnight stays and/or the management of short breaks.

Upon completion of the assessment, and depending upon the needs identified, the child will receive the appropriate support, intervention and/or signposting to ensure that there is appropriate provision being made for the child to meet their eligible needs. The Trust may provide all or part of this support itself, or it may be that the child's needs are met by a third-party organisation or via a [direct payment](#) paid to the family (where this is appropriate).

Social workers across all teams work together to share knowledge, experience and training to ensure each child receives the right support based on their eligible assessed needs. All assessments are conducted by qualified social workers, including those in the Children with Disabilities team, and all workers have access to equal training and support to ensure service standards are maintained across children's social care.

Parent carers of disabled children are entitled to an assessment of their own needs; this is called a 'parent carers needs assessment' and is carried out under sections 17ZD-ZF of the Children Act 1989. Other carers, including young carers are also entitled to an assessment under different legislation. The Trust typically undertakes a combined assessment of the child and their carer's needs; however, a separate carers assessment can be undertaken upon request. The outcome of the carer's assessment will be fed into the decision making as to the package of support the family requires

What services do Sandwell Children's Trust provide?

- Assessments of need in conjunction with Health, Education and other agencies (voluntary and statutory)
- Service provision to children, based on the assessment of their individual eligible needs, which may include support at home, in the community or overnight. The support can be via an Agency or Direct Payments.
- Provision of information on activities, clubs, playgroups and play schemes;
- Provision of advice and information about other organisations which may be able to offer help and support;
- Management of Short Breaks.

Transition Services (age 14-18) are also provided in collaboration with the relevant Children's Services team and are provided to all eligible children and young people in receipt of services, who will have an assessment at the age of 17 as a mechanism to assess their eligibility for Adult Social Care Services.

For those families where it is agreed that the assessed needs require Short Breaks, this can be through a named provider or by Direct Payments.

Families can be referred to other services for support and early help, for example, play schemes, leisure activities and voluntary organisations. The Sandwell SEND Local Offer <https://fis.sandwell.gov.uk/kb5/sandwell/directory/localoffer.page> details the information, support and services that are available in the local area for children and young people aged 0-25 years of age with special educational needs and disability (SEND). Further information can also be found on the Family Information Service Hub <https://fis.sandwell.gov.uk/kb5/sandwell/directory/home.page>

Where services are not required, advice or referral to other services or signposting may be offered.