



# SUPPORT FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

**Caring for a disabled child** can be very rewarding but also extremely challenging. However, advice and practical support is available to help you cope with everyday hands-on caring, as well as the wider medical, emotional and financial issues. This is particularly important if your child has complex needs.

Many disabled children and their parents will need practical support at home. This factsheet explains the type of support that you and your child may be entitled to. Health and Education and Social Work teams are responsible for arranging support for children and their carers. You have a right to have your child's and family's needs assessed by social work and other departments and your needs assessed as a carer.

## What services are available?

Local authorities have a duty to provide certain services to disabled children. The kind of services that may be offered include:

- ▶ practical assistance at home or in school
- ▶ recreational facilities outside the home and help to use educational facilities



- ▶ home adaptations and equipment or something to help your child in school
- ▶ short breaks / respite care

If you think you or your child need any of these services, then you should contact your local Children's Services team or the Borders Carers Centre. In the Borders, support for children with additional needs is the responsibility of the Children's and Young People Department in Scottish Borders Council.

Each locality office has a dedicated Social Work service for children affected by disability (CHAD). This service manages the same statutory duties as other locality social workers, but with a specialised focus on providing advice and services for children and young people with disabilities or life limiting illnesses and their families.

In order to decide what services you and your child may be entitled to the social work team will carry out a needs assessment for your child. Under the Children in Scotland Act this is known as a Section 23 assessment.

During the assessment, a social worker will usually come to your home to talk to you.

They should ask you for information about your child, for example sleeping patterns, eating habits, mobility and how your child communicates, and whether you have any other children to look after. The assessment should always

*“Before the assessment I kept a diary for a few days, I really wanted the social worker to get a feel for what it's like to look after a child with additional needs.”*

be based on your needs and those of your child, rather than what services are available.



*“I sometimes think people forget that my son’s disability impacts on the whole family.”*

You can prepare for an assessment by making a list of questions before you meet with the social worker. You are entitled to have a friend or advocate with you.

For information about the process and timescales, or to request an assessment, contact your local social work office or speak to your child’s teacher. You can also ask your GP, health visitor, community nurse, paediatrician or a voluntary organisation to contact social services on your behalf.

### **Carers Assessment/Support Plan**

You are also entitled to a Carer’s Assessment in your own right and independent of the assessment for your child.

The aim of a Carer’s Assessment/support plan is to give you a chance to talk to a Carers Liaison Worker about the things that could make looking after your child easier for you. A Carer’s Assessment focuses on you as a carer and your needs, your well-being, health and safety issues and important commitments like relationships, education and employment.

If you would like a Carers Assessment/Support Plan, please contact the Borders Carers Centre on and we will work with you to look at what could be put in place to support you in your caring role.

## Grants for Adaptations

In some circumstances, you may find that an adaptation to your home is required such as an accessible bathroom, additional bedroom or ramp access to meet the needs of your disabled child.

Grants may be available for this, subject to an assessment of need. For further information, you can speak to someone at the Carers Centre or contact Scottish Borders Council.

## Short breaks

At times, you may feel that you need a break away from caring responsibilities in order to recharge your batteries. Local authorities now have specific duties to provide short break services and make clear how families can access these.

Short breaks can include:

- ▶ Care at home – when someone comes to the home to give your support, this might include taking care of your child to allow you some time out
- ▶ Day care away from home - includes nurseries, playgroups and out of school clubs and, during school holidays, access to play schemes such as Aberlour playscheme, if your child is eligible.

*“I was really worried about respite - I thought it meant my daughter would have to stay away overnight but in the end someone came to the house and I took my other children out for the day. It was great for all of us.”*

- ▶ Respite breaks – this may include a short stay in a specialist residential unit for children with additional needs or family based respite, where your child stays with a family on a regular basis.

School clothing grants are available if you are on a low income, contact Scottish Borders Council for more information.

### **What is a MAC?**

This is a “Meeting Around the Child”. It will normally involve everyone involved with your child to discuss their progress and plan for the future.

### **What is a CSP?**

This is a “Co-ordinated Support Plan”. It is a plan drawn up with your input to make sure all the services that are involved with your child are working together and that everyone knows what is happening and when.



*Notes*





# Borders Carers Centre (SCIO)

*Supporting carers throughout the Borders*

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