



Short break fostering:
supporting disabled
children and their families



Families of children with a disability sometimes need a break and time alone for themselves or their other children.

We're there to support them.

We are family.

Call 0116 305 05 05

Leicestershire
**Fostering
& Adoption**

Leicestershire Fostering & Adoption service provides short breaks in the homes of carers to support disabled children and their families.

Short break fostering offers children with a disability and/or complex behavioural needs a safe place to build relationships outside of their family and join in activities with another family. It's an opportunity to make new friends, experience new activities and encourages their independence. A child might stay for one or two nights a month giving their family an opportunity to recharge their batteries, safe in the knowledge that their child is enjoying the experience of being with trustworthy people.

We carefully match carers to children, reflecting their skills and interests and cultural factors. As well as meeting the child's physical and emotional needs, our carers will find out what the child likes and provide enjoyable activities. They spend quality time with the children and young people building relationships. Because we are matching families, the service can be tailored to meet the needs of the child.

The service offers day care, overnight stays, regular weekends, weeks or longer periods if needed. Placements are in the homes of assessed and approved foster carer families who have come forward because they are motivated to care for children with disabilities and additional needs.

Can I become a short break carer?

If you have a spare bedroom, can offer at least one weekend per month and have relevant experience, then with our excellent on going training and dedicated support, you could be one of our much valued short break carers.

Our carers come from a variety of backgrounds and are of different ages. But all have experience of caring for and working in an environment with children who have additional needs.

What happens during a short break?

Short breaks provide a valuable life-line to some of Leicestershire's families and their children with disabilities. After careful matching and introductions, the child would come to stay with you for a weekend every month.

You will be fully supported in terms of equipment, training and support to enable you to provide a positive experience for the young person. Families using the service get a great sense of comfort that their children are being safely cared for, giving them time to recharge their batteries and maintain the level of care they continue to provide to their children.

As a vital service, we know our short break carers help to prevent family break down in some cases where families find themselves under enormous pressure.

Who are the children?

We look after children and young people from Leicestershire with a wide variety of disabilities. Our service is about putting the child first, and seeing the whole child rather than their disability. We will find out about their unique selves to make sure that the child enjoys the time that they spend with the short breaks carer and the child is encouraged to say what they would like to do during their stay. We will ensure that our carers have an understanding of the additional needs of the child and can meet these.

Eligible children are disabled children who have:

- a physical disability
- a severe learning disability
- a sensory impairment (severe)
- complex needs which may include health needs
- autism
- or a combination of the above.

What will I be paid?

There are two levels of Short Break carer payments and these are based on the complexity of the needs of the child. For more information and a breakdown on the payments received, please visit our 'payments and allowances' webpage.

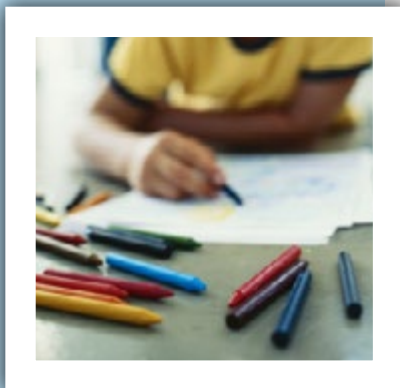
Any mileage incurred due to your role will also be covered.

What support will I get?

Leicestershire County Council's short break carers have full access to our excellent training programme and a great deal of support too. You will be allocated your own supervising social worker, who will support you in your role and carry out regular visits. Our foster carer support groups are held in the community, so there will be one near you. We also have a dedicated 'short breaks carers' support group who meet regularly too. We run events for foster carers, such as our 'family fun day', giving you and your family a chance to enjoy a fun day with other carers as well as our ever popular annual 'celebration events' where all our carers enjoy our opportunity to thank you for all you do for Leicestershire's children.

A child's STORY

James* is an energetic 11 year old who likes to be 'on the go'. He has regular breaks with Leicestershire County Council's short breaks scheme, so we asked him about it.



What works well...

- I like to help. Always include me I am a great helper.
- I like my routine and clear boundaries.
- I am kind to animals and other children.
- I like school and try hard. I am great at Maths and I am House Captain. I really try hard with my behaviour and apologise if I do something wrong.
- I am a good eater and am willing to try new foods.
- I really look forward to staying at Kath and Lee's each month.

What I need help with...

- Sometimes I talk really fast and need reminding to slow down so others can understand what I am saying.
- When asked a question, it sometimes seems like I am going off the subject and talking about something else but this is just my brain processing the information.
- I need reminding of the importance to have a bath and wash my hair as sometimes I pretend I have had a bath and really I haven't.



I have a passion for food and want to be a chef when I grow up.

OH YEAH



James

Take the next step

If you would like to find out more
about our short break carers role,
then we'd love to hear from you.

Call 0116 305 05 05

Email fostering@leics.gov.uk

**WE
ARE
FAMILY**

Leicestershire
**Fostering
& Adoption**



FosteringLeicestershire.com