**Children with a Disability and Those Who May Need Special Medical Help**

**Standards and Regulations**

**Fostering Services National Minimum Standards (England) 2011:**

* [Standard 1 - The child’s wishes and feelings and those significant to them](http://www.minimumstandards.org/fost_one.html);
* [Standard 6 - Promoting Health and Wellbeing](http://www.minimumstandards.org/fost_six.html).

**Training, Support and Development Standards for Foster Care**:

* [Standard 2 - Understand your role as a foster carer](https://www.fosteringhandbook.com/bradford/files/fost_care_tsd_standards_guid.pdf);
* [Standard 3 - Understand health and safety, and healthy care](https://www.fosteringhandbook.com/bradford/files/fost_care_tsd_standards_guid.pdf);
* [Standard 5 - Understand the development of children and young people](https://www.fosteringhandbook.com/bradford/files/fost_care_tsd_standards_guid.pdf).

**Also see:**

* [First Aid and Medication](https://www.fosteringhandbook.com/bradford/firstaid.html);
* [Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice: 0 to 25 years: Statutory Guidance for Organisations who work with and Support Children and Young People with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (2014)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/send-code-of-practice-0-to-25)

1. **Introduction**

This section covers children who with disabilities and / or complex health needs. If you are caring for a child who is disabled or who has complex care needs you will work alongside other involved professionals who will help you to understand any additional support the child needs on a day-to-day basis.

Sometimes children are given labels (e.g. 'autistic') but this might not be accurate, so you need to work with the other people involved with the child to better understand any issues or difficulties that may have.

Disabled people often find that their disabilities are the first and only thing that people notice about them and you must remember that any children or young people in your care should be thought of as children first before the special need that they have.

1. **Caring for a Child**

The sort of help that children with a disability may need includes:

* Help with physical disabilities and mobility issues;
* Help with learning difficulties and social disorders such as those on the Autistic Spectrum;
* Help with sensory impairments (e.g. partial sight).

The sort of help required by children with complex health needs includes:

* Special medication e.g. for epilepsy;
* Help with breathing, eating and other daily functions like using the toilet and bathing.

Some children may need help in both of these categories. Some children who are disabled are entitled to benefits that are not affected by being in a foster home.

Where a child needs help with their physical disability or personal care, you should be in a position to provide this. This means that the following should have been considered before the child moves in:

* You may need special training from a suitably qualified medical professional. This could include giving special medication or treatment and understanding the child’s needs;
* You should be provided with suitable equipment such as a hoist or a special car seat or wheelchair; and
* Where there are risks around manual handling, risk assessments should be completed.

It should also be clarified as to what equipment the child may bring with them and what else they may need.

When considering caring for a child with a disability, you need to be given full information in order to be clear whether you can meet their needs. Once you have decided to take the child, the Placement Planning meeting should detail all the support including medical needs the child has. It should be clear what decisions you can make regarding the child’s day-to-day life including medical decisions.

All children with a disability should have an Education, Health and Care Plan which identifies the help that they need to get the best out of going to school, pre-school and college. You should know what this covers before a child is placed.

Assessments of the child should take a long-term perspective. This will help you, the birth family and professionals to make decisions about the kind of help needed, at different points in time, for example with education, respite or other services.

Your supervising social worker or the child’s social worker should help you to identify appropriate support and advice from other agencies, including how to access social and leisure activities for the young person.

You should make sure they have all they need to reach their potential and lead as full a life as possible.

See also - [Friendship For All (The Children's Society)](https://www.childrenssociety.org.uk/what-we-do/resources-and-publications/friendship-for-all) - this online resource aims to increase friendships for children who are in foster care or who use short break services.

1. **Local Offer**

Local authorities in England have a duty to develop and publish a [Local Offer](http://trixresources.proceduresonline.com/nat_key/keywords/local_offer.html)setting out the support they provide for local children and young people aged 0-25 with [Special Educational Needs](http://trixresources.proceduresonline.com/nat_key/keywords/spec_edu_needs.html) or disabilities (SEND), whether or not they have an [Education, Health and Care Plan](http://trixresources.proceduresonline.com/nat_key/keywords/ed_health_care_plan.html).

[Click here to find out more about Bradford’s Local Offer](https://localoffer.bradford.gov.uk/).

The Local Offer includes information about:

* Special educational, health and social care provision for children and young people with SEND – this should include online and blended learning;
* Arrangements for identifying and assessing children and young people’s SEND – this should include arrangements for [Education, Health and Care Needs Assessments](http://trixresources.proceduresonline.com/nat_key/keywords/ed_health_care_needs.html);
* Education provision and post-16 education and training provision;
* Information about provision to assist in preparing young people for adulthood;
* Arrangements for travel to and from education institutions;
* Childcare, including suitable provision for disabled children and those with SEND;
* Support available to young people in higher education, particularly the Disabled Students Allowance (DSA) and the process and timescales for making an application for DSA;
* Arrangements for resolving disagreements and for mediation, and details about making complaints.

The Local Offer must include provision in the local authority’s area, and also provision outside the local area that the local authority expects is likely to be used by children and young people with SEND for whom they are responsible and disabled children and young people. This could be provision in a school or further education college in a neighbouring area or support services for children and young people with particular types of SEND that are provided jointly by local authorities.