

**Local Offer
Frequently Asked Questions
May 2018**

Q: I am worried about my child's development – where can I get information?

A: As a parent, you know your child best. If your child is not meeting the milestones for his or her age, or if you think there could be a problem with the way they play, learn, speak, act or move, talk to your child's doctor or health visitor and share your concerns.

You can use the NHS Birth-to-five development timeline www.nhs.uk/Tools/Pages/birthtofive.aspx to see when your child may gain certain skills and learn new things. The ages given are averages and a lot of children will gain one skill earlier than another.

The learning and development stages for children as they grow from birth to five years are also explained in a guide called *What to expect, when?* Visit www.foundationyears.org.uk/files/2015/09/4Children_ParentsGuide_Sept_2015v4WEB1.pdf

To find out how to get a diagnosis for your child, and who to talk to, visit www.brent.gov.uk/services-for-residents/children-and-family-support/the-brent-local-offer/my-child/

For more information about health visiting, GPs, speech and language therapy, occupational therapy and other specialist services that support children and young people with SEND, visit www.brent.gov.uk/services-for-residents/children-and-family-support/the-brent-local-offer/health-and-wellbeing/

To find local and national voluntary organisations that can offer help and advice about children's development visit www.brent.gov.uk/services-for-residents/children-and-family-support/the-brent-local-offer/send-local-offer-directory?categoryids=33184

Q: Where can I get more information about my child's diagnosis and how to get support?

A: When a child's disability or additional need is identified at birth (or even in the womb) your doctor or midwife will refer you to a specialist at the hospital who can help you understand the implications of your child's diagnosis. You will be told how the disability or additional need will affect the development of your child and how best to accommodate their needs during early life. This is typical of conditions like Down's syndrome.

Other types of disability, special educational need or medical condition are not immediately obvious and are identified later in a child's life - for example a hearing or visual impairment or learning difficulty.

Your first point of contact in helping you to understand your child's diagnosis is your GP and any specialist services your child has been referred to speech and language therapy, occupational therapy and community paediatric teams.

As a parent, you should receive ongoing support from these services to help you understand how your child's additional need or disability will affect their daily life, what kinds of educational provision they may need and what services are available to you as a family. Visit www.brent.gov.uk/services-for-residents/children-and-family-support/the-brent-local-offer/health-and-wellbeing/ to find out how to access specialist support services.

For more information about different types of SEND and how to get post-diagnosis support visit www.brent.gov.uk/services-for-residents/children-and-family-support/the-brent-local-offer/my-child/post-diagnosis-support/

If you'd like to talk to someone who has first-hand experience of a child with SEND you can contact Brent Parent Carer Forum on 0114 213 4912 or visit their website at www.brentpcf.org

Q: How do I find the right specialist equipment and services that I may need to support my child?

A: You may need specialist equipment to help manage your child's needs and disabilities. Health professionals such as occupational therapists, speech and language therapists and physiotherapists may recommend a particular piece of equipment for your child after an assessment has been carried out and it is agreed that they meet the criteria for support.

It might include minor adaptations such as handrails around the house or a calling entry system for those who cannot reach the front door, or major adaptations such as a chairlift, wheelchair access ramps or a level access shower. Specialist teachers for children with visual and hearing impairments may also recommend equipment for use in schools. To find out more about home adaptations visit <https://www.brent.gov.uk/services-for-residents/children-and-family-support/the-brent-local-offer/send-local-offer-directory/home-adaptations/>

You may be able to get help with the cost of making changes to your home. Further information is available at <https://www.gov.uk/disabled-facilities-grants>

Children and young adults who have permanent walking and seating difficulties, and who are registered with a Brent GP, may also be eligible to receive support from Brent Wheelchair Service. For further information visit <https://www.brent.gov.uk/services-for-residents/children-and-family-support/the-brent-local-offer/send-local-offer-directory/brent-wheelchair-service/>

My child has got sleeping issues, who can I talk to?

Sometimes children with long-term illnesses or disabilities find it more difficult to sleep through the night. This can be challenging both for them and for you. It can take patience, consistency and commitment, but most children's sleep problems can be solved.

If your child is still having problems sleeping, you should talk to your health visitor. Visit www.brent.gov.uk/services-for-residents/children-and-family-support/the-brent-local-offer/send-local-offer-directory/brent-health-visiting-service/ for details about how to contact the service.

The health visitor may have other ideas or suggest you make an appointment at a children's sleep clinic, if there's one in your area. Help and advice is also available from the following organisations:

https://contact.org.uk/media/1183103/helping_your_child_sleep.pdf

<https://sleepcouncil.org.uk/>

<https://www.thechildrenssleepcharity.org.uk>

<https://www.scope.org.uk/support/families/sleep/tips>

What is an education, health and care (EHC) plan?

An education, health and care (EHC) plan is a legal document that describes a child or young person's special educational, health and social care needs. It explains the extra help that will be given to meet those needs and how that help will support the child or young person to achieve what they want to in their life. The plan is drawn up by the local authority after an EHC needs assessment.

EHC plans are for children and young people aged 0 to 25 whose special educational needs require more help than would normally be provided in a mainstream education setting (a college, school, nursery). Although the plan can include health or social care needs, your child will not get a plan if they *only* have health or social care needs that do not affect their education.

For more information about how to request an EHC plan in Brent, the assessment process and how to get help and support if you feel your child's educational needs are not being met, visit <https://www.brent.gov.uk/services-for-residents/children-and-family-support/the-brent-local-offer/education-health-and-care/>

What are my childcare options?

Using childcare can bring many benefits for children's development, learning, play and social skills. For parents and carers, using good quality childcare means you can work, train, or just have a break.

When it comes to childcare for a child with additional needs or a disability, a lot of the considerations are the same as for any other child. However, there are also extra things to think about, such as finding a carer with specialist training or making sure a child's medical needs will be supported.

All providers of early years education, such as day nurseries, pre-schools, playgroups and registered childminders, are required to follow the Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice 0-25 years. They must also have arrangements in place to identify and assess children with SEND.

If you would like to talk to someone about your options, Brent's Children and Families Information Service (CFIS) holds details of all registered providers in the borough including nurseries, childminders, out of school and holiday clubs. The service will also be able to give you details about specialist council-run nurseries for children with SEND, as well as providers who have experience of caring for children with additional needs. Visit <https://www.brent.gov.uk/services-for-residents/children-and-family-support/childcare/> or call/email the CFIS on 0208 937 3001/cfis@brent.gov.uk

For more information about funded early education places for two, three and four-year-olds and help with childcare costs click on <https://www.brent.gov.uk/services-for-residents/children-and-family-support/childcare/help-with-childcare-costs/>

Q: What does transition from child to adult services mean?

Preparing for adulthood, also known as transition, begins when young people are in Year 9 at school (13 or 14 years old) and carries on until they are 25. Early transition planning is very important, particularly, for young people with SEND who may have additional support needs as they get older.

Yearly transitions assessments to help identify a young person's adult needs, and any support services they may require as they get older, will continue until they leave school in year 11 or Year 14

When young people with ongoing social care needs are 17.5 years old, their transition assessment is reviewed again to see if they will need, and be eligible for, adult social care services when they reach 18. This is done alongside the young person's current EHC plan. Assessments such as adult continuing healthcare are also completed at this stage.

All of this work is done in partnership with young people and their families to ensure that they remain at the heart of the decision-making process as they approach this important time in the lives.

For further information about we support young people as they transition to adulthood visit <https://www.brent.gov.uk/services-for-residents/children-and-family-support/the-brent-local-offer/becoming-an-adult-and-preparing-for-the-future/>

Q: What is a short break and how can I access one in Brent?

Short breaks are services that families with a disabled child or young person in Brent can access, some of which are subject to an assessment. They aim to:

- Give parents and families a break from caring and time to recharge their batteries or spend quality time with their other children.
- Help children and young people enjoy different experiences, make new friends and increase their personal and social development

Some families will require more support than others because of the nature of their child's disability and their individual circumstances.

Brent's short breaks services include:

- Universal (also known as mainstream) services, which can be used by anyone
- Targeted provision for children and young people who have been assessed as needing a higher level of support
- Specialist short break services for children and young people with a permanent and substantial disability that effects their daily life who need the most intensive level of support and intervention

Full details of our leisure and short breaks services and eligibility criteria (where applicable) can be found at:

<https://www.brent.gov.uk/media/16410747/7927-short-breaks-statement-may-2018.pdf>

<https://www.brent.gov.uk/media/16410677/eligibility-criteria-for-the-disabled-children-and-young-peoples-service-april-2018.pdf>

Q: Where can I get more information about housing support as my child reaches adulthood?

Young people with SEND may start thinking about living independently as they get older.

It is very important that they have choices and control when making decisions about their lives. For young people with an education, health and care (EHC) plan, independent living options will be discussed with them as part of their transition planning from Year 9 onwards. For more information about what this involves visit <https://www.brent.gov.uk/services-for-residents/children-and-family-support/the-brent-local-offer/becoming-an-adult-and-preparing-for-the-future/transition-planning-for-young-people-with-send/>

Young people with SEND will be supported to live as independently as possible and there are a number of housing options available. For more information visit <https://www.brent.gov.uk/services-for-residents/children-and-family-support/the-brent-local-offer/becoming-an-adult-and-preparing-for-the-future/>

Q: What benefits and support am I entitled to and how can I access them?

There are a number of benefits and tax credits that you may be entitled to. Some benefits can be paid because your child is disabled while others may be paid to you for other reasons. For example, you may be getting Disability Living Allowance (DLA) for your child and Carer's Allowance as their carer. Depending on your income and certain other factors, you may also be able to claim benefits such as income support, child tax credit and housing benefit.

There is detailed information about disability allowances and grants and how to apply for them at <https://www.brent.gov.uk/services-for-residents/children-and-family-support/children-with-disabilities/disability-allowances/>

The following organisations in Brent can also give you confidential advice and support about any benefits and grants you may be entitled to claim.

Brent SEND information, advice and support service (SENDIASS)
<https://www.brent.gov.uk/services-for-residents/children-and-family-support/the-brent-local-offer/information-advice-and-support-service/>

Brent Carers Centre <https://www.brent.gov.uk/services-for-residents/children-and-family-support/the-brent-local-offer/send-local-offer-directory/brent-carers-centre/>

Brent Parent Carer Forum <https://www.brent.gov.uk/services-for-residents/children-and-family-support/the-brent-local-offer/send-local-offer-directory/brent-parent-carer-forum/>

Q: How do I know that the school I chose will support my child's needs?

All schools must have a special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO) who is responsible for arranging and co-ordinating extra help for pupils with SEND. In small schools the head teacher may also take on this role.

Some children and young people who have been identified as having more complex educational needs will receive support at their setting through an education, health and care (EHC) plan.

Other children who do not require an EHC plan, but have special educational needs, may receive extra help in school through a programme called SEN Support, as well as specialist services from outside their school/college including educational psychology, Brent Outreach Autism Team (BOAT) and Brent Sensory Support Service.

All schools and colleges are legally required to make arrangements to support children with additional needs and receive funding to do this. They must also publish a SEND Information report on their website which shows how they identify, assess and make provision for pupils with SEND.

For further information about how children and young people with SEND are supported in school visit <https://www.brent.gov.uk/services-for-residents/children-and-family-support/the-brent-local-offer/education/>

How are my benefits and income affected when my son/daughter is 16+?

As a general rule, you can claim Child Benefit, tax credits and other payments for a young person until the September after their 16th birthday. These payments include:

- Child Benefit.
- Child Tax Credit
- Additional amounts for a dependent child or young person paid with Universal Credit.
- Additional amounts for a child or young person paid with Income Support or income-based Jobseeker's Allowance.
- Additional amounts included in the assessment of any Housing Benefit and Council Tax support you claim.

After that, whether you will be able to continue getting these payments depends on the young person's circumstances.

From the September following a young person's 16th birthday, you can only carry on getting payments for them as a dependant if they are attending a course of full-time, non-advanced education, or are in certain types of approved training.

Payments can then usually continue until their 19th birthday, unless they stop attending the course or training before that date. Payments can be extended to their 20th birthday (September after their 19th birthday for Universal Credit) if they're completing a course they started, or were enrolled on, or offered a place on, before they turned 19.

For comprehensive information about benefits for young people aged 16 to 24 visit <https://contact.org.uk/advice-and-support/benefits-financial-help/benefits-and-tax-credits/benefits-at-16/>

If I need support at home due to a crisis or change in my circumstances who can I contact?

If the child or young person has an allocated social worker you should get in touch with them. If you are unsure how to do this contact Brent Family Front Door on 0208 937 4300 or email family.frontdoor@brent.gov.uk You could also speak to your child's teacher or the school's special educational needs co-ordinator. If you need emergency childcare, our Children and Families

Information Service (CFIS) will be able to advise you. Call 020 8937 3001 or email cfis@brent.gov.uk If you are concerned about a child or young person's welfare get in touch with us via the Brent Family Front Door (see details above).

Q: Where can I find more information about mental health and wellbeing?

There is lots of information about mental health and wellbeing services for children and adults on Brent's Local Offer. Visit <https://www.brent.gov.uk/services-for-residents/children-and-family-support/the-brent-local-offer/health-and-wellbeing/>

Q: Where are safe places my child can play?

Visit the activities, sports and things to do section of our Local Offer at <https://www.brent.gov.uk/services-for-residents/children-and-family-support/the-brent-local-offer/activities-sports-and-things-to-do/> for lots of ideas both in Brent and further afield.

To find your nearest park, open space, playground or sports ground go to <https://www.brent.gov.uk/services-for-residents/sport-leisure-and-parks/parks/park-finder/>