

Cash Boost for Disabled Children

A £340 million package to help families with disabled children has been unveiled by the Government. The three-year funding allocation will go on developing accessible childcare, providing some 40,000 short breaks for young people, and advisory services for dealing with adolescence.

The announcement has been hailed as a “huge step forward” by campaigners and will go towards improving the lives of 700,000 disabled children and their carers across the country.

The funding is due to be split into the following areas:

- £280m over the next three years to fund short breaks for disabled children, enabling them to experience new things and for their parents to have a break. This works out as an extra 40,000 fortnightly short breaks for severely disabled children and their families.
- £35m to fund a pilot project to provide accessible childcare, promote training, and tackle other barriers to accessing childcare. Accessible childcare is vital to help parents, and to improve disabled children's social, behavioural and educational development
- £19m for a Transition Support Programme to promote intensive, wrap around support, and consolidate person-centred planning at the critical transition to adulthood, a key point in the lives of disabled young people.
- £5m to allow parents of disabled children to get involved in shaping services at a local level, including parents forums to ensure that disabled children and their families are supported and empowered.
- Radical reform in the coordination and provision of community equipment and wheelchairs to maximise disabled children's mobility, which allow them to access, schools, leisure facilities and other services more easily (e.g. making access to equipment faster and providing more choice).
- To make disabled children a priority at a local and national level, Government will develop a national indicator as part of the PSA set, underpinned by a “core offer” to help disabled young people and their parents understand what support they can get and how to access it across local services.
- To prevent interventions coming too late at important stages of a disabled child's life or development, the Government will provide specific resources for evaluation and benchmarking good practice on early intervention for disabled children and their families as part of the work of the new Centre for Excellence for Children and Family Services.

For further information got to www.edcm.org.uk or www.mencap.org.uk