

## Children With Disabilities: Covid 19 Fact Sheet

<p><b>My child has a social worker what will happen?</b></p> 	<p>If your child has a Social Worker, we will continue to visit children who are subject to a Child Protection Plan or for those children who we are undertaking the first assessment of need in accordance with the Government guidance around self-isolation.</p> <p>For children who receive services as a Child In Need we will remain in contact with you by virtual means – by phone call, skype or similar methods.</p> <p>Where a child is under a Child Protection Plan, we will have individual discussions with families to ensure we continue to fulfil our statutory obligations to safeguard children, this will include face to face visits in your home. Child Protection reviews and core groups will take place using remote resources such as Microsoft Teams which your social worker will discuss with you and explain how you will be able take part in your child’s review.</p> <p>Children in Need reviews will not be able to take place in the normal way but we will seek to continue with reviews using remote resources such as Skype / Face time or Microsoft Team wherever possible which will ensure that parents are able to be included in their child’s review whilst continuing to observe social distancing. Your Social Worker will explain to you how you can join these meetings and be able to take part in your child’s review.</p>
<p><b>What if we have to self-isolate?</b></p> 	<p>We appreciate that some of you may take a decision to self-isolate to keep your children and your family safe.</p> <p>Where your children are open to us as a child in need, we will work creatively with you to ensure that we support your decisions.</p> <p>We will work individually with you to set up telephone calls at a frequency which feels most supportive to ‘check in’ with you and will set up reviews and meetings via Skype; Face time; or other methods which work best for you.</p> <p>However, if your child is subject to a child protection plan or if we need to undertake a child protection enquiry, we will still undertake a face to face visit following Government guidance about how to do this safely.</p>

<p><b>Arrangements for children who are looked after</b></p> 	<p>Where we have children who are looked after, we will continue to fulfil our statutory duties to provide care for these children. We will seek to ensure the minimal disruption to their care but may need to respond to individual crises in circumstances where foster carers are unwell and/or residential homes experience staffing crises. We will, of course, liaise with you if any disruption is unavoidable to ensure you are included in contingency planning for your child.</p>
<p><b>Community Inclusion and Activity Team (CIA Team)</b></p> 	<p>The Community Inclusion and Activity Team will not provide grant funded and planned activities, drop in clubs, and will not provide activity passes or Max Cards, due to the government advice to socially distance and not meet in large groups. Our Short Break Development Officer has been working with the Somerset Parent Carer Forum to devise a virtual calendar of activities that can be accessed remotely and will refresh this if still required for the May Spring holiday week.</p>
<p><b>Somerset Supporter Service</b></p> 	<p>Somerset Supporter Services may still be available but may be impacted by individual staff either becoming unwell or needing to self-isolate. We will work with you to look at how we can support your child whilst observing social distancing rules.</p>
<p><b>Direct Payments</b></p> <p><b>Employees</b></p>  <p><b>Activities</b></p>	<p>Direct Payment staff are employed by you as a family. This means it is up to you to make decisions around whether you wish to continue using this resource. You will need to talk to the people you employ to make arrangements that work for you all during this time. Government guidance is that Direct Payment workers should continue to be paid during this period. It may be that your Direct Payment worker may be able to assist your child in a different way than usual. They may be able to assist you with collecting shopping or medications for example rather than providing direct support to your child.</p> <p>If you need to make any changes to who you are able to employ during this time, please contact your child's allocated worker to discuss who this may be. We want to ensure that you still able to receive the support that you have assessed as needing during the Covid19 crisis so please do talk to us if any changes are required to who you are using as a Direct Payment worker.</p> <p>We do recognise that it may not be possible, or you may not wish, to use your direct payments to employee staff due to social distancing rules. Or the activity that you purchase with your direct payment may no longer be available. In many circumstances we may be able to agree a temporary</p>

 <p>activities</p>	<p>change to the way that you use your direct payment during the Covid 19 crisis for example to use your weekly allowance to purchase activity materials.</p> <p>Please do contact your allocated worker if you wish to discuss any changes to how you use your direct payments and we can advise you on the additional steps that you will need to take regarding keeping receipts etc. We want to work with you to ensure that we are able to continue to support you in the best way for you and your child during the Covid 19 crisis.</p>
<p><b>Agency Staff</b></p> 	<p>Agency staff are currently continuing to provide individual social care packages are in place, but this could be impacted in the coming weeks by staff shortages or the decisions taken by the Agency Managers individually.</p>
<p><b>Health Funded packages of support</b></p>  <p>HEALTH</p>	<p>We are liaising with our health colleagues to monitor the situation regarding health funded packages of support to children with complex health needs. If you have any concerns regarding your health provided care package you will need to discuss this with your Community Nurse.</p>
<p><b>Short Breaks overnight provision</b></p> 	<p>Short Breaks with foster carers are currently continuing but may be affected by individual ill health or self-isolation.</p> <p>Overnight Short Breaks at Local Authority residential homes are currently suspended but we are linking with colleagues in Education services to ensure that wherever possible children can attend school during the day or if this is not possible to look at how we can provide support in an alternative way.</p>