



Media Release

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Short Break Care for children with disabilities and their families

HSC is looking to expand the family based Short Break Scheme for children with disabilities and their families. This is a service that gives families plenty of options, ranging from the young person being taken out for a few hours, or perhaps being looked after by a carer in their own home, to regular overnight stays with short break carers.

Family Placement Service Social Worker Vicki Tennant said:

"Schemes such as this are extensively used in the UK. They can make all the difference to a family, allowing parents of children with disabilities to do some of the things which most of us take for granted, such as getting to the shops, giving their other children some attention or just winding down and relaxing once in a while. But the children will benefit as well with a change of carer who will give them some time and energy and broaden their world. We know that there are many children and families who will be able to benefit from Short Break Care and therefore are currently looking to recruit more carers."

The scheme relies on recruiting good quality carers who are prepared to give some time and space to a child with a disability on a regular basis.

Vicki Tennant explained:

"If people have time to spare on a regular basis, perhaps for a few hours or maybe one or two weekends a month, after school hours, at weekends or during the school holidays, then we would love to hear from them. We are looking for people to assist in all areas of short break care, especially those who can help during school holidays or care for pre-school aged children during the week. We are also looking for carers in Alderney."

A short break carer has summarised her experience of the service:

"I was approached to look after a very complex young lady; at first we didn't go out as she was reluctant to. I would pick her up from school and take her home where we would play. I would assist her with a bath and give her dinner before her parents arrived home.

Over time we have built up a trusting relationship and are now able to go out and about. We go into a variety of shops and also for long walks, go to the park or local events; this she really enjoys. In the early days we were unable to do this as she would refuse to walk and if we entered a shop she would become distressed as didn't know what was happening or how to behave.

I think she looks forward to our time together as this is always quality time which we spend and she is the main focus. I spend 2.5 hours a week which isn't much to me but makes a huge difference to her. To see how far she has come is amazing!"

If you are interested please contact the Family Placement Service on 713230 or contact us via email on change@guernseyfostercare.com "

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