

**SOFT MARKET QUESTIONNAIRE**

**Overnight Short Break Services for Children with Disabilities**

**Please note that this soft market questionnaire is for information only and does not form part of the formal procurement exercise and completion of this document will not affect your right to bid in the procurement opportunity or the resultant contract.**

The Council has a duty to provide a range of short break services to support children with disabilities and their families. Short breaks are part of a continuum of services, which support disabled children and their families. They include the provision of day, evening, overnight and weekend activities for the child or young person, and can take place in the child’s own home, the home of an approved carer, or in a residential or community setting. **This questionnaire relates to the provision of overnight short break services in an Ofsted registered, residential setting only.**

To engage with providers and ensure that families have access to services, the Council wishes to explore how overnight short break provision can be further developed within Northumberland.

The aim of the service will be to offer a specialist short break service to children and young people aged from 6 – 18 years old who have moderate to severe learning disabilities and additional complex needs including challenging behaviour, Epilepsy, Autistic Spectrum Disorder, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, physical disabilities, communication difficulties and complex health needs such as gastrostomies.

Whilst individual need will differ the objective of the service will be to:

* Enable children and young people to access social and leisure opportunities.
* Support children and young people to develop their life skills and independence as well as developing personal safety skills and managing self-care.
* Enable family carers to take a break from their caring role.

As Northumberland are reviewing our sufficiency in this area we would like to seek views from the market to help us to overcome some of the challenges that we are facing. These include:

* Levels of assessed need for services (demand) is outstripping supply.
* A limited number of providers operating within Northumberland and the wider area who can offer a service to children.
* Providers experiencing recruitment and retention difficulties.
* The ability to support complexity of presenting need safely and appropriately
* Meeting the needs of children across a wider geographical footprint.

The information provided will help us to identify whether a procurement exercise would attract sufficient interest in the provision of Overnight Short Break Services for Disabled Children and if so, what this model would look like.

We would welcome your views in response to the questions shown below by no later than **Wednesday 30th July 2025. Please email your completed questionnaire to Leanne.Stewart@Northumberland.gov.uk**

Thank you for taking the time to respond to this questionnaire.

**Overnight Short Break Services for Children with Disabilities**

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| Soft Market Questionnaire | | |
| 1. | Name of Organisation: |  |
| 2. | Address of Main Site: |  |
| 3. | Ofsted Registered: | Yes/No |
| 4. | Current Ofsted Grade: |  |
| 5. | Do you have experience of offering an Ofsted registered Overnight Short Break Service for children with disabilities. If yes, please describe. | |
| 6. | If no, do you have experience of offering a Children’s Home provision and/or other services to support disabled children and would you consider diversifying? | |
| 7. | Would you be interested in developing a service to meet the needs of children and families in Northumberland? | |
| 8 | Do you have an existing property that would support the development of an overnight short break service. If yes, then please provide details including what level of refurbishment would be required. | |
| 9. | What support would you need to begin to deliver an Ofsted registered Overnight Short Break provision in Northumberland? | |
| 10. | Are there any barriers that would prevent you from offering an overnight short break service within Northumberland. If yes, what support could be offered to help you overcome this? | |
| 11. | How many beds and “bed nights” would you consider offering? For example, 3 beds over 362 days of the year | |
| 12. | Would a block contract, approach support you to offer an overnight short break service in Northumberland. Please describe both the advantages and disadvantages of such an approach. | |
| 13. | What would be a realistic timescale for developing an overnight short break service? | |
| 14. | How would you propose to recruit and retain sufficient staff to offer an overnight short break service? | |
| 15. | Please estimate the rate required to deliver a sustainable service to children? This should be provided as either an annual contract value with details of the number of beds to be provided or a bed night price. | |
| 16. | Are your prices aligned to other contract rates? For example other overnight short break respite or children’s home provision? Please provide details. | |
| 17. | Any other comments? | |

Please reply via email to Leanne.Stewart@Northumberland.gov.uk by no later than **Wednesday 30th July 2025**.