

Statement - Acorn Way Respite Provision from 1st January 2021



Statement from Care Tech – operators of Acorn Way

Working jointly with Telford and Wrekin Council we are proposing a new respite provision system is introduced from January 2021. The need is to ensure Acorn Way continues to operate in Telford and Wrekin in a sustainable way and for the long term as well as to ensure families benefit from their total respite allocation in their support plan which delivering a high quality of care for each child and to ensure that the service is used in a meaningful way.

Why are these changes happening?

Acorn Way was becoming financially unsustainable due to a high vacancy rate. However, at the same time, parents were informing us that they were often unable to book their child in. This issue was due to the duty to match children as not all children can receive respite together due to their differing needs including specific bed requirements. Bookings were being made mainly for weekends.

The very short respite periods being booked further complicates the ability of Acorn Way to match children's needs and evidence from other respite provision suggests longer respite periods are more beneficial for both the child and the family.

The current rate charged to Telford and Wrekin families is relatively low and with increased staff training and wage costs which includes the national minimum wage implemented 1st April 2020 this has been reviewed and to maintain a low fee we are looking at a strategy that maximises the use of staffing hours.

What is the new respite offer?

Care Tech and Telford and Wrekin Council's Children with Disabilities team will ensure all planned respite is taken, avoiding any family from missing out. This will schedule, three months in advance, the respite dates offered to families. Families will be informed in advance, their next three months respite dates.

This will be on the basis of:

- The respite nights individually allocated in the support plan,
- Matching with other children,
- Offer a balance of mid-week and weekend bookings.
- Respite periods will ideally be longer periods (3 or 4 nights) enabling better benefits to the child/family

Your respite allocation will then be checked with you.

Any remaining vacancies can be booked (matching conditions apply) for private use.

Should a unique/emergency situation arise we would endeavour to provide a respite bed, this would include consulting with our sister service in Dudley or liaison with our parents to see if we could offer alternative dates to free up a bed, however, it is rare that we hold a full occupancy in both services throughout each month.

Day Care Offer at Acorn Way – see flyer over

Statement from Telford and Wrekin Council



Council officers have been working with Care Tech to ensure Acorn Way continues to operate in Telford and Wrekin. This has led us to consider many options for how we can do this, resulting in the option described above. We feel this is the best way to enable Acorn Way to operate. The following Frequently Asked Questions seeks to answer the most common questions people have.

I thought direct payments were all about flexibility and choice?

This new system affects only Acorn Way overnight respite nights and is considered to be the best way to enable it to remain available to families in Telford and Wrekin. This system is intended to enable all allocated respite to be used, but in a fair and balanced way across all families. Care Tech have raised the price of overnight respite and personal budgets have had a corresponding increase - this is another way of ensuring Acorn Way continues to operate locally.

Does this change the direct payment I operate?

You can choose whether to retain the whole direct payment and be billed for the respite used by Care Tech, or you may choose for this part of your direct payment to be managed directly by the Local Authority. You retain any remaining direct payment to continue to use as per your support plan.

What about families that don't use Acorn Way for their overnight respite?

Families that use other overnight respite provision may choose to continue to use the respite provision of their choice.

Statement from PODS Parent Carer Forum

"PODS parent carer forum have continued to ensure families experiences are shared regarding overnight respite offers over the last year including at our AGM, surveys, individual conversations, workshops held in the community and in school. The most important message from families is the vital importance of overnight respite opportunities which are safe and sustainable, and for this offer to work alongside wider options where appropriate.

We welcome that the CareTech service has reflected on the different experiences of families and are committed to offering a respite provision that meets these needs. PODS has continued to work with the LA and CCG, with local partners and providers to ensure services are available.

The situation with COVID has been extra challenging for parent carers and we have continued to share their experiences to ensure that processes work in a co-productive manner and we work together to make the best of available resources. We continue to work on the wider short breaks agenda and the reporting over the last year is regularly reviewed, to ensure we don't lose sight of what is important to our families"



Acorn Way

We don't see limitations but an opportunity for innovation

Acorn ways shortbreaks come in a variety of formats and can last from a few hours, a day or two or a couple of weeks. We provide support for young people with learning disabilities or complex health needs from ages 3 to 18 years old, we are registered to accommodate five young people for overnight stays and we are fully wheelchair accessible. We offer 1:1 staffing support for young people, enabling our team to be able to plan activities specific to individual interests and needs. Our dedicated staff team work with children and young people's families to ensure every young person's visit is memorable and enjoyable. Our priorities are safeguarding the children in our care, addressing their needs and making sure, they have fun during their stay.

Additional Support

Acorn Way has a child centred approach, where each young person has a unique care plan that outlines his or her specific needs, we offer:

- 2:1 staff support (at additional cost)
- Hoists and specialised equipment
- Profiling and safe space beds
- Fun days out
- Adapted vehicles on site
- Specialist staff training
- Key working sessions
- Continuation of independence skills

Day Care

Day care is a 6-hour session that gives children and young people an opportunity to explore their interests away from the family home.

- Confidence building
- Promotes independence
- Educational learning through play or supporting school.
- Opportunity to join in with a variety of activities
- Snacks and lunch included

£117 per 6-hour session
All meals and activity costs are included

Tea Visits

After school, teatime visits provide an opportunity for children and young people to join in and experience a variety of different fun activities.

- Builds confidence
- Promotes independence
- Make new friends and socialise
- Fun time with other children and young people

£58 per 3 hour session
which includes a snack and meal

To find out more call 01952 253173

