

## **Consultation on the Introduction of a Equipment Offer for Children and Young People in Hertfordshire**

### **Background**

Hertfordshire County Council want to introduce a Children's Equipment Offer, which explains to families what equipment support is available to them. The Offer will be a set of guidelines which will indicate the types of equipment families can get, and describe how these can be obtained.

The families of children and young people who need community equipment should know and understand how they can get this. Families should feel that they have been treated fairly, so that as many families as possible can benefit from community equipment support.

The community equipment which the County Council provide to children and young people with SEND includes: specialist chairs (excluding wheel chairs), specialist beds, hoists, standing supports, bathing and showering aids and toileting supports. An Occupational Therapist or Physiotherapist will carry out an assessment to identify what sort of equipment a child or young person needs and then the equipment will be delivered by Hertfordshire Equipment Service (HES).

The County Council want to be clear that neither this consultation nor the Children's Equipment Offer is meant to reduce the amount of money which is spent on community equipment.

### **Why are we consulting with you?**

Introducing the Children's Equipment Offer might mean that your experience of the equipment service could change. This means it is important that we consider your views before any decision is taken.

### **The Children's Equipment Offer we are proposing for children and young people in Hertfordshire**

In this section we will outline what we propose that the future equipment offer should say. These proposals will be our general position, but we recognise that there will be times when we need to be flexible and will look at the individual assessed need of each case. The County Council's proposals are:

- 1. Children's Services will fund equipment for all children and young people up to the age of 18.**

This would mean:

- When a young person turns 18, they will be supported by the council's Adult Care Services department.
- There is a separate equipment policy for people aged over 18. A young person's equipment needs after they turn 18 would be met through this other policy.

**2. When a child or young person has equipment needs identified, they can get one set of equipment to meet those needs for home, and one set to meet those needs at school.**

This would mean:

- A 'set' of equipment, is the equipment which an OT prescribes in order to meet a child or young person's needs. There might be more than one piece of equipment in one set.
- This will reduce the number of children and young people who receive the same piece of equipment at multiple locations.
- If a child or young person had parents or guardians who lived in different addresses, then only the house in which they usually live would receive equipment.
- A child or young person could only receive one set of equipment to support their needs at school.

**3. That all equipment needs which require 'non-standard stock' equipment worth more than £500, must be authorised by a panel of specialists.**

This would mean:

- That all orders for expensive items of equipment will be reviewed so that we know they are needed to meet a child or young person's specific needs.
- That all children and young people will be treated equally when decisions are made, and that decisions will be based on need.
- That there will be a fair decision making process about providing expensive equipment.

**4. Equipment which is required to help a young person at a school will be funded through the current arrangements, which will be clearly stated in the Equipment Offer.**

This would mean:

- We continue to apply our current guidelines for mainstream and special schools (this includes both state funded special schools as well as independent and non-maintained special schools).
- That mainstream schools will access equipment through HES.
- That special schools will source equipment themselves and fund this through their top-up payments.

We want to know what you think about the above proposals. You can let us know your views by completing the online questionnaire at [www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/equipmentconsultation](http://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/equipmentconsultation). The consultation will be open **from** 12<sup>th</sup> March to 1<sup>st</sup> June 2018.