

Date: 06/05/2020

Dear Parent/Carer,

I hope this letter finds you and your family well. It is now 5 weeks since social distancing and restrictions on groups and activities started. We all hope that there will be changes soon to this, but in reality we will face a new kind of “normal” it seems. The Bexley Children with Disability Service Short Breaks response to COVID 19 is on the Local Offer. I have included it in this correspondence for you who might not have seen it. We have been working closely with our commissioned services to try and provide some support in the new virtual world we find ourselves in. SNAP and Charlton Athletic are providing online workshops or activities for children and young people. Falconwood have visited families who used their services to provide some more activities and fruit parcels on the doorstep or rather from the front gate. Charlton Athletic have also helped with food deliveries to families who cannot leave the house.

Families have also been fantastically creative in using their direct payments to change some rooms, gardens or little corners in the house into wonderful sensory play areas for the children. We will review the use of direct payments at the end of June to decide whether the more flexible use of this needs to continue to support families during this time. Social workers and social work assistants have been using video calling where possible to undertake their statutory virtual visits and keep up to date with you to review your child’s needs and support plans. Face to face visits in family homes are only occurring on an emergency basis or where children are on child protection support plans and/or visits required by a family at times of crisis. Social care staff is now well versed in the use of PPE if or when they need it.

After much planning and deliberation with our Director for Public Health we can now move into the use of a playground and/or sensory room for our children and young people. This needs to be tightly managed in order to minimise risk of infection to families and children and will be in a specified location in the community which is at the Falconwood centre. The building will remain closed in line with Public Health guidance relating to COVID-19 except the use of the garden space which has safe access to toileting facilities in an emergency as well as the sensory room.

- This will be on an appointment basis only, allowing only one child and/ or household at a time
- The setting will be cleaned between every visit, using household detergents and disposable cloths.
- Workers will follow safe working guidance such as:
 - Anyone in the extremely vulnerable group will be advised to stay at home and shield.
 - Anyone who develops symptoms of Covid-19 (a new, continuous cough or a high temperature), or who lives with anyone with these symptoms must follow the NHS [stay at home](#) guidance on self-isolation.
 - Washing hands regularly with soap and water for 20 seconds or using alcohol-based hand sanitisers where soap and water are not available
 - Catching coughs and sneezes in a tissue, throw the tissue in the bin, and washing their hands for at least 20 seconds
 - Maintaining a distance of 2m from others where this is possible.
 - Staff will be using PPE (masks, gloves and aprons) for your and their safety.

Bookings will be on an hourly basis and can be done via the below.

Telephone number 0208 303 7995

Email mandy.kennedy@aspens.org.uk matthew.eagle@aspens.org.uk

Booking 9.30-4.30 (Mon – Sat), last booking will end at 4.30 giving us half an hour to clean.

A risk assessment will be completed for each family visiting before the booking to ensure safety. Please discuss the risk assessment with your worker before making a booking and let your social worker or social work assistant know if there are any changes to your circumstances after a risk assessment has been undertaken in order to update this.

I know this seems quite onerous but it is worth the effort for everyone's safety and to provide you and your family with a short break outside of the home. You can choose whether you attend as a whole family or if you wish (where possible) for one partner to bring one or more children depending on your needs at that time. If you have a PA who you would prefer to bring your child then please discuss this with your allocated worker during the completion of the risk assessment so we are prepared. Please note that no transport can be provided as per the restrictions on services.

I will endeavour to write to you again next month or sooner if any national guidance changes to the restriction on movement.

Please do not hesitate to contact your allocated worker if you have any questions.

Wishing you and your family well.



MRS H C VAN STADEN
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