

Kent County Council Disabled Children's Service.

Practice Guidance Note for Social Workers – Children Staying Overnight in the home of a Personal Assistant.

N.B This Guidance Note is to be used in conjunction with 'Parent's Guidance for Overnight Stays by a child in the home of a Personal Assistant', and you need to familiarise yourself with this document.

This practice note gives guidance on how to respond to a request from a family for a child to stay overnight in the home of a Personal Assistant who is employed through a direct payment provided by KCC. It can also be used to inform a response to any family who request advice on a private funding arrangement of this nature, where the family are not in receipt of a direct payment but employ a Personal Assistant (PA) using their own financial resources.

A care arrangement of this nature will only be approved in exceptional circumstances: it is not a standard item on the menu of overnight care options for disabled children in Kent, but rather it is a last resort for meeting the needs of a child when all other overnight care options have been considered. The welfare of the child is paramount, and in supporting this arrangement you must be certain that it is an appropriate element of a care plan for meeting the assessed needs of the child.

Any arrangement of this nature can only be agreed by a Disabled Children's Service Panel: you cannot agree to the request, but you can make a recommendation to the DCS Panel.

This arrangement cannot be used for children under the age of eight years unless the Personal Assistant is also a registered childminder.

You must ask the child if this is what they want and tell the child about other options for overnight care.

1. If the DCS Panel agree in principle to your request, you must issue the parent/carer with a copy of 'Parent's Guidance for Overnight Stays by a child in the home of a Personal Assistant', and ensure that they know and understand its contents.
2. You must visit the home of the Personal Assistant with the parent/carer to ascertain if it is a safe environment for the child. To guide you, you must use the home assessment procedures that KCC's Adoption and Fostering services use.
3. You must check how long the child has known the Personal Assistant for and see evidence of this. This arrangement will only be agreed if there has been a minimum of 20 short break episodes previously provided by the PA. unless there are exceptional circumstances.

4. You must check with the Direct Payments Support Service to ensure that the Personal Assistant has the appropriate enhanced and lists check under the Disclosure and Barring Service (formerly 'CRB' check) and ask to see evidence of this.

5. Where this has been carried out, you also need to see evidence that all other household members over the age of 18 years have the appropriate enhanced and lists check under the Disclosure and Barring Service.

6. You need to ensure that the child has an up to date communication passport and you must see this.

7. A child must not have a short break for more than 7 consecutive nights or over 75 nights in any short breaks setting within a 12 month period.

8. You must review this arrangement with the parent/carer after the first stay, and thereafter at least six monthly intervals.
