

Over recent months, two key English government plans have been launched, covering children's services and the NHS. Both these plans have disabled children as a key priority group - the first time this has happened with such high-level, mainstream plans.

The government's Children's Plan recognises disabled children and children with special educational needs (SEN) as a new priority. It confirms:

- An additional GBP90 million to be invested for the provision of short breaks (on top of GBP340 million previously allocated from funding in Aiming High for Disabled Children this May).
- Increased funding of GBP8.4 million that allows the Family Fund to make additional grants to disabled young people aged 16 and 17.
- GBP18 million new investment over the next three years, designed to improve training and data collection and reduce bullying and exclusions.
- That Ofsted (who inspect and regulate services for children, and education and skills for learners of all ages) will conduct a review of SEN provision in 2009.

In addition, during December last year it was announced that the NHS operating framework would have disabled children included as one of four local priority groups for service improvement in the NHS. (The NHS operating framework sets priorities for NHS bodies in England, including Primary Care Trusts).

For more information on both plans visit the news section of Web:

<http://www.edcm.org.uk>

### **Every Disabled Child Matters**

EDCM are delighted to announce that the government responded to EDCM's calls for a right to short breaks, by creating a new legal duty on local authorities to provide short breaks to support families with disabled children.

The duty has been described as a 'historic moment' in improving services for disabled children and their families - and EDCM would like to say a huge 'thank you' to all the supporters that have backed our calls for a clearer right to short breaks. Read the news story for more detail:

<http://www.edcm.org.uk/shortbreaksduty>

While this is a huge step forward, the new duty is not likely to go as far as creating a new legal right to short breaks for individual families. EDCM will continue to campaign - with your support - for further changes to the law.

EDCM would also like to say thank you to all those that have taken part in the winter fuel action by emailing their MP. Although the extension of winter fuel payments to families with young disabled children was not announced as part of the budget statement last week, EDCM is meeting with the Director of the government's Child Poverty Unit this week to take this forward. We will keep you posted...

You can find out more at: <http://www.edcm.org.uk/winterfuel>

The progress on short breaks shows that your involvement in EDCM campaign actions has a crucial impact on government policy.

Please visit the Get Involved page at <http://www.edcm.org.uk/getinvolved> to see how else you can help make change happen for disabled children and their families.

All supporters are also encouraged to email your MP through The Children's Society website, asking them to support calls for disabled children in care to have access to independent advocacy, to ensure they can get their views across. Please go to:

<http://www.childrensociety.org.uk/campaigns>

## More from Every Disabled Child Matters

Find out if your local authority has signed up to the EDCM charter at  
<http://www.edcm.org.uk/lacharterlist>

Find out if your Primary Care Trust has signed up to EDCM PCT charter at  
<http://www.edcm.org.uk/pctcharterlist>

News story: Balls - families must be at heart of 'Aiming High' delivery  
[http://www.edcm.org.uk/Page.asp?](http://www.edcm.org.uk/Page.asp?originx_6194zg_3964931243299s67e_2008327422b)  
originx\_6194zg\_3964931243299s67e\_2008327422b

News story: Short breaks - a legal duty  
[http://www.edcm.org.uk/Page.asp?](http://www.edcm.org.uk/Page.asp?originx_2772ll_9104461369662k41g_20083183027r)  
originx\_2772ll\_9104461369662k41g\_20083183027r

News story: EDCM welcomes child poverty measures in Budget  
[http://www.edcm.org.uk/Page.asp?](http://www.edcm.org.uk/Page.asp?originx_8517nb_90592704720430z48g_200831248)  
originx\_8517nb\_90592704720430z48g\_200831248

### Good News for Families

Thanks to concerted lobbying by the Every Disabled Child Matters Campaign - including Contact a Family - Ed Balls MP, Economic Secretary and Lord Adonis, SEN and Disability Minister within Department for Educational Skills have recently announced the most substantial funding package ever for families with disabled children living in England. From 2008 to 2011, £340m will be invested in services for disabled children, with the lion's share, £280m, being spent on short breaks for families who have children with severe disabilities.

The package will also include:

- £35m for accessible childcare (to be piloted in 10 Local Authorities);
- £19m to ease transition from child to adult services;
- £5m to involve parents in shaping local services.

The measures were announced as part of the Treasury's Aiming High for Disabled Children report, which followed a ground-breaking review of services and took heart-rending evidence from parents, as well as talking to professionals.

"As founder members of the Every Disabled Child Matters campaign, we've lobbied long and hard for this funding, so it's very good news," said Contact a Family Chief Executive Francine Bates. "The pot's large enough to begin a transformation of families' lives - but now the challenge is to make sure the money is spent where it is most needed in consultation with parents, disabled children and young people."