



Brokerage enquiries 2010



Hampshire Childcare and Family Information Team



Hampshire
County Council

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We're here to support families

The Hampshire Childcare and Family Information Team (CFIT) is a free, confidential and impartial information service for parents, carers and professionals working with families.

We provide information on childcare, early education and related services in Hampshire for children and young people aged 0 -19 (including those with additional needs).

Our childcare brokerage service is available to parents and carers who have been unsuccessful in securing childcare or early education services, or need help taking the first steps. Our outreach workers liaise with these families one-to-one, offering support and guidance by:

- talking through the childcare options available;
- contacting childcare providers and arranging visits;
- researching childcare costs and how to access financial support;
- liaising with other support agencies; and
- signposting to other support services to assist with the wider family needs.

This booklet offers a selection of case studies that illustrate the extent of the service the outreach workers provide and how we can adapt our service to each family's individual needs.

We always welcome feedback from parents, carers, colleagues and partners regarding the services we provide and how we can develop these to meet the ever changing needs of our families. Please contact us (details on the back page) with any comments and suggestions.

The Hampshire Childcare and Family Information Team is a part of Services for Young Children, Children's Services Department, Hampshire County Council.



Carey Owen

Childcare Information Officer

June 2011

North Hampshire

Case study 1

“I was contacted by the mum (our client) of two young children whose partner died very suddenly the previous year.

Our client’s two year old daughter had been in nursery full time until our client had another baby and left work. The daughter loved nursery so she continued to attend, but for less hours.

Now, our client had decreased her daughter’s sessions to 15 hours per week but was running out of money to continue paying for the nursery. The daughter’s behaviour had changed in light of her father’s death and she was having grief support. The grief support practitioner (along with other health professionals) advised our client not to withdraw her daughter from nursery because she was happy and settled.

Our client wasn't getting very much support in the way of benefits, but was in constant contact with the nursery and receiving a lot of emotional support from them and it was the nursery that suggested she contact CFIT.

Our client was without any family locally and was struggling to get support or have a break. I asked if I could help by seeing if another single mum I had helped a couple of months ago, who was also new to the area, could be approached on her behalf as someone to meet up with and just chat to.

Our client was also open to seeking work of 16 hours plus per week in order to access the working tax credit and childcare element of that, so I suggested she contact the Lone Parent Advisor at Jobcentre Plus for help with this. This was more of a long term solution, however, and I was aware it wouldn't happen quickly enough to help with paying the nursery fees in the immediate future.

Unfortunately the Early Years Education (EYE) funded hours wouldn't begin until after the daughter was three years old which was a while off yet. So, in the meantime, although there was no funding that could be sourced to pay for childcare directly, I located a support network who could help with funding for other essentials such as living costs and household items which would then free up money from the family budget to continue paying for childcare.

This has meant that our client’s two year old daughter can remain at nursery for the foreseeable future and allows mum to find herself a job and wait for the EYE funded hours to start.”

North Hampshire

Case study 2

“The grandmother (our client) of two young boys contacted me because she wanted to know if I could help her to find a music therapist and someone who could teach Makaton.

Our client explained that she had adopted the boys, that both had additional needs and she wanted to help them in any way she could.

This was a little more unusual because she wanted these services to be provided in her home. Our client explained that she had previously had problems when trying to take the boys to group sessions.

I started to research home visiting options and I kept in contact with our client. She quickly found someone herself to provide Makaton training (through her engagement with various services) so I was able to concentrate on the music therapy.

I found that there are lots of music groups but not many fall into the therapy category, and even fewer who will consider home visits. After several telephone calls I did find a company who could potentially offer that service, although we had to wait until a music therapist in the area became available. I arranged for a meeting at our client’s house to discuss the options and to see if it could benefit the children. The visit went well and it was interesting to hear how the therapist could help. A day each week was agreed for the sessions.

I followed up with the music therapist and the client to see how things were progressing. They were both happy and our client is delighted with the therapist, and with our service – helping her to secure the support she needed.”



North East Hampshire

Case study 1

“I was sent a referral from a Locality Team worker where mum’s (our client’s) partner lives abroad, effectively making her a lone parent for the majority of the time.

Our client had no-one else to look after her children if she wanted to go out and she was beginning to feel trapped.

She wanted me to discuss with her some childcare options. She has three children and the middle son, aged 10, was diagnosed with Aspergers Syndrome. Our client was therefore anxious that a suitable child carer would need some background in caring for children on the Autistic Spectrum.

Our client was currently working as an apprentice and she informed me she was getting a carers allowance for her 10 year old son.

She did have a childminder for her children and was using the childcare element of working tax credit to fund this but the childminder unfortunately could not do evening work for her.

I asked about the level of need her son has and if there were any triggers or techniques that a potential carer could use with him.

We agreed together that a home childcarer might be the best solution. Someone who could come into the home on an ad hoc basis would be the least unsettling option for her son with Aspergers and would give her a degree of flexibility. I also established with Her Majesty’s Revenue and Customs (HMRC) that because our client’s partner lived away, she is a lone parent and is therefore entitled to an increased level of working tax credit.

I sent a detailed list of the home carers to our client because she said she was happy to work through these herself.

I let our client know that if she needed any more information or support, she could contact me.”



North East Hampshire

Case study 2

"I received an enquiry from the National Childminding Association (NCMA) Co-ordinator (our client) who could not find a suitable childminder to care for a six year old boy who had been diagnosed with a particular form of atypical Autism.

He was attending an education centre two days a week which closed at 2.20pm but both parents worked so could not collect their child at that time. The rest of the week he was in mainstream education and as that closed later it was not a problem to ensure he was picked up from school.

Team Around the Child (TAC) meetings were taking place and relations with the school were strained. The parents had no other family support.

I contacted a number of childminders in Hampshire, and also tried in Surrey, but there was no one suitable who could help and no childminders that collected from the education centre.

There was, however, an after school club that could provide suitable support and ensure he was looked after until his parents finished work.

The issue was now one of transporting him from the education centre to the club and there were concerns about leaving the child in a taxi unaccompanied to get to the setting.

A transition meeting was arranged with the setting and a number of other professionals who were already involved due to the child's complex needs and issues.

I spoke to my Area Inclusion Co-ordinator in order to arrange ChiF (Childcare Inclusion Funding) for the after school club to ensure they had everything in place to support the child.

Fortunately, the manager of the after school club agreed to facilitate the child being there for two afternoons so we all agreed to move forward with a transition for the boy to the after school club. This was the option that best suited everyone."



North West and Central Hampshire

Case study 1

“I received a referral from Hampshire County Council’s Children’s Services for a parent (our client) of four children who was returning to work and due to start in 3 weeks time.

It was shift work so the family would need childcare that was able to work around this for full days in the school holidays as well as after school during term time.

The eldest child was 12 and at secondary school, the middle two children were aged 6 and 11 years old and were currently at junior school, although the 11 year old (who was on the Autistic spectrum) was due to start at a private school about 4 miles away from the family home. The parents had decided that this school could better support his disability.

The fourth child, a 2 year old, was attending a day nursery so their needs were already being met.

We established that ideally our client would like to find a holiday scheme that would take the three older children together as she felt this would help support the 11 year old’s autistic needs (being wary of strange surroundings and new people).

I therefore had a look to see what holiday schemes were available for the summer holiday in the local area that covered ages 6 to 12 and that would be comfortable accepting a child with autism.

I also investigated childminders who collected from the junior school and who might collect from the private school after September. I also checked if there were any after school clubs that collected from the junior school and looked at the options for the 12 year old, namely, whether he could walk to a childminder after school to prevent him being left alone for too long.

Luckily there was sufficient childcare available so I was able to locate suitable options for all these different requirements. The parent was very pleased to hear about a holiday scheme that could accommodate all her children and I agreed that I would email her one of our CFIT ‘Childcare Checklists’, which gives suggestions of questions parents can ask when visiting a potential out of school childcare setting.

This was a case with a lot of different elements and needs that had to be met so it was great that we managed to arrange something suitable for each of our client’s children and ensure she could start her new job without the extra worry of having to juggle childcare needs.”

North West and Central Hampshire

Case study 2

“I received a referral from Hampshire County Council’s Children’s Services for a lone father (our client) who was in urgent need of childcare for his two sons aged 11 and 8 years who had just returned to the UK and were not yet in school. Our client needed full time childcare for at least a couple of weeks so that he could return to work.

The father was open to all childcare options but as it was during school term time the only real option was for a childminder. Talking things through, we established that the ideal childminder should live reasonably close to our client’s home or work, and that they should have the experience and capacity to take older children full time for at least 2 weeks.

We discussed any barriers there may be to accessing childcare, and addressed how our client would get his children to the childminder and collect them. I told him about support available from the government towards the cost of childcare, the childcare element of working tax credits, but this would take time to set up and fortunately, our client was in a position to finance the childcare.

We also discussed if the children had any additional needs or dietary requirements, which they did not. Our client did feel that because the children had been living with their mother outside the UK for a year, they may be a little disorientated and need support in re-acquainting themselves with everyday life here.

I then started researching available childcare in the area. I knew from previous experience a very good community childminder in the area who had older children herself who might be in a position to take on these two boys. I gave her a call and she said she would be willing in theory to offer the father the childcare solution he was seeking. I also researched our childcare database to see what other childminders would collect from the school that it was hoped the children would attend.

After doing the research I called our client and passed on all the details. He seemed very pleased with the help I had been able to give him and was keen to follow things up as quickly as possible.

After a couple of weeks I contacted our client again. He responded to say how pleased he had been with the childminder he had secured. He disclosed more information about the family situation and asked about support that might be available around contact with his children now that they had gone back to live with their mother. I undertook some further research and discovered that there was a local Child Contact Centre which I was able to provide him with a link to. I also provided him with links to organisations that offer help and support to lone dads. In the mean time he had been in contact with Children’s Services and they were supporting the family too.

I also researched ideas for places to take his sons when he had contact time with them. Our client was very pleased with all the information and support that our service had been able to provide. He said that it had really helped him out in a crisis that had come upon him very suddenly.”

South East Hampshire

Case study 1

“I received a referral from Children’s Links (a charity which is grant funded by Hampshire County Council to provide business support to childcare services) for a parent (our client) who was looking for holiday care for her 15 year old disabled son.

Once I made contact with our client, she expressed to me that she had contacted the Hampshire Children’s Information Service (now CFIT) several years ago when looking for nursery care and had been told that we couldn’t give information for children “like that”. Obviously she had been extremely put off by this reaction and wasn’t holding out much hope for us to provide any information for her this time around.

I started by establishing the requirements our client had: all day care for at least 2 weeks during the holidays, located either near her home or on the way to her job, previous experience of caring for disabled children, and something that was age appropriate for him.

I set to work (with help of the National Childminding Association Co-ordinator for the area) in finding a suitable childminder. I also contacted the local Childcare Development Worker (CDW) to find out what suitable play schemes may be in the area.

We soon found a play scheme very close to where the family live that catered exclusively for disabled teenagers. We also found a childminder located on the way to our client’s workplace who had a 12 year old disabled son herself and so had the appropriate experience to care for our client’s son.

Our client chose the childminder and now has someone else on call to care for her son on an ad hoc basis throughout term time.

She is much happier with the experience and the help she received from CFIT this time around.”



South East Hampshire

Case study 2

“A client contacted me after getting my details from her local Sure Start Children’s Centre. She had recently moved to Leigh Park from Southsea and was looking for a childminder for her 14 month old son when she went back to work part-time in September.

She was a first-time mother and expressed her confusion about what to consider when looking for a childcarer. She was nervous about leaving her son in the care of someone else as he had only ever been looked after by her.

I sent her a list of childminders and recommended that she set up visits to a couple of them. I offered to attend the visits with her to highlight what she should be looking for and what questions she should ask to find out more about each childminder and their suitability for her son.

A week or so later we went to visit a childminder and I provided the client with one of our ‘childcare checklists’ so she could ask some questions.

The visit went well and I called the day after to see what the client had decided. She said she was going with the childminder we had visited and was going to set up regular times for her son to start visiting the childminder, to help him settle before she started back at work.”



South West Hampshire

Case study 1

“I received a referral from Jobcentre Plus (JCP) to help a lone father (our client) who wanted to get back into work but needed childcare for his 8 year old son before he could consider working.

A long discussion with our client established that his son has some behavioural difficulties and consequently our client was concerned about the type of childcare that would be available to him.

Paying for childcare was also a concern for our client as he did not yet have an income. I discussed childcare options with him and our client liked the idea of a childminder to care for his son.

After liaising with the local National Childminding Association Co-ordinator and several childminders, a suitable childminder was found. This childminder had experience of dealing with children with behavioural difficulties and this reassured our client that his son would be well cared for whilst he was at work.

Further discussion followed with Jobcentre Plus about paying for the childcare. Jobcentre Plus were able to pay for initial childcare until our client received his first wage and would then be able to claim working tax credit to continue paying for the childcare.

Shortly after this our client found employment and a follow-up call established that the he is very happy and that his son is enjoying his time with the childminder whilst he is at work.

Our client was very pleased with the help that he received from both CFIT and Jobcentre Plus, and the confidence it gave him to move forward with his life.”



South West Hampshire

Case study 2

"I received a referral from a local Sure Start Children's Centre with a request to contact a parent (our client) who was looking for an out of school club or activity for her son.

Our client stated that she was separated from her husband and has three children aged 5, 10 and 16 years.

Her 10 year old has learning difficulties and was a year behind at school and it was for him that she was looking to find an activity. Our client felt that he needed the socialisation and discipline that joining an out of school club could bring.

During an initial discussion, our client mentioned that she was clinically depressed and was on medication because she was finding it hard to cope. Our client explained that she had panic attacks, financial difficulties and no access to transport. She had been involved with the children's centre but now that her youngest child was at school she could no longer attend groups, and although she had some support from her children's school, our client felt that she did not know where to turn for help. She was particularly worried about her financial difficulties and the problems she has feeding three growing children on a tight budget.

I spoke with our client about the possibility of finding employment as a way to help with financial difficulties and she was keen to pursue this but had not been to her local Jobcentre Plus because she did not have transport and quite often no money for public transport. On her behalf, I later contacted the Lone Parent Advisor (LPA) at Jobcentre Plus to ask if they could telephone the client and discuss her available options, which they were happy to do.

I found out that Extended Services could support our client's son and finance his place at a club and they were able to put a support package in place for our client to help with her depression and panic attacks.

I also arranged for the local Parent Support Advisor (PSA) to contact our client to talk about her son and see if there was any further help available for him.

I discussed with the client the possibility of a food parcel to help her out with feeding her family on such a tight budget. I arranged with a local church organisation for a food parcel to be delivered to the client as soon as possible.

When I followed up with our client, she had received the food parcel and was very happy with it. She was also very happy with the support now being given to her son in an out of school club.

Our client said that she now felt much more positive and although she knew things would not change overnight for her, she felt that some of the burden she had been feeling had been lifted. Our client thanked us for our support and was very pleased that someone could help her at such a difficult time."

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Glossary of terms (A-Z)

Area Inclusion Co-ordinator	Develop and enhance the inclusive practice of all early years and childcare practitioners throughout Hampshire in their care of children aged 0-19 years.
Childcare and Family Information Team (CFIT)	Team within the SfYC who are responsible for helping parents to access childcare and childcare funding.
Childcare Development Worker	A member of the local borough council responsible for developing and sustaining out of school provision in that council's area.
Childcare Inclusion Funding (ChIF)	For children with additional needs attending early years and childcare settings. This funding is not intended to pay for the child's placement but can be used as a contribution to support the setting with their inclusive practice or additional costs, such as increased staffing, access to specialist training or specialist resources.
Children's Information Service (CIS)	Previous name of the Childcare and Family Information Team.
Common Assessment Framework (CAF)	Is used as the baseline assessment tool for anyone who is working with children or young people and feels that additional needs are not met by existing universal services.
Contact centre	A place where a non-resident parent may have supervised (or supported) contact with his or her children.
Early Years Education (EYE)	All three and four year olds in England are entitled to 15 hours of free learning per week for 38 weeks of the year. This can take place in nurseries, pre-schools or with a childminder.
Education centre	A centre for children who are not able to attend a mainstream or special school.
Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC)	The government department in Britain that collects taxes.
Home childcarer	An individual who provides care in a child's own home, rather than anywhere else.
Inclusion	The process of removing barriers to participation and learning so that everyone benefits fully from educational opportunities.

Jobcentre Plus (JCP)	Government agency for working-age people in Great Britain providing help and advice on jobs and training for people who can work and financial help for those who cannot find employment.
Locality Team	Are a key part of running, advising and brokering access to services throughout the CAF process.
Lone Parent Advisor (LPA)	A personal advisor at JCP who is responsible for assisting lone parents find work.
Makaton	Uses signs, symbols and speech to help people with learning and/or communication difficulties to communicate.
National Childminding Association (NCMA)	Promotes and supports quality childminding expertise and provides information for childminders and parents.
Ofsted	Inspect and regulate to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages.
Parent Support Advisor (PSA)	Helps organisations, including Sure Start Children's Centres, schools and community groups, to provide support to parents in a variety of different ways.
Services for Young Children (SfYC)	New Hampshire County Council team within the Children's Services Department, joining together the Early Education and Childcare Unit and Children's Centre Services teams.
Team Around the Child (TAC) meetings	A way of working with children and young people who (through the use of the Common Assessment Framework or an Initial Assessment) have been identified as having unmet needs, and require support from more than one agency/service to meet these needs.



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