

Short breaks for disabled children 2017-2020 needs analysis

Herefordshire Council has a duty to ensure there is a sufficient range of short break services available to meet the assessed needs of disabled children and their carers in the county. We do this through the 'short breaks offer'. The council's [short breaks statement](#) provides further information about the current offer and eligibility criteria.

There are three tiers of service that can offer a short break:

Tier 1 Universal: These are everyday community services that are accessible without an assessment such as youth clubs, after school activities, uniformed groups (i.e. Cubs, Brownies), leisure centres, nurseries, childminders and activity-based groups. These are not paid for by the council but form part of valuable experiences for children and young people

Tier 2 Targeted: Specific daytime activities for disabled children that families can self-refer to. Some of these services will be paid for by the council

Tier 3 Specialist: Short break daytime or overnight services or direct payments that are designed to meet a specific need following a social care assessment of an individual child and their carers

2016-2017 commissioned short breaks

At each of the levels described above, there will be some services provided or funded by organisations other than the council. Information about these non-commissioned services is available at www.herefordshire.gov.uk/shortbreaks.

The council currently commissions services at the targeted and specialist levels in order to meet the assessed needs of disabled children and families known to the council's children with disabilities team:

	Service description	2016-2017 capacity	Cost	Average unit cost
Tier 2 Targeted	Saturday play sessions (4.5 hours)	18 sessions 234 places	£55,000	£107 per place
	Easter & Summer play sessions (4.5 hours)	20 sessions 280 places		
Tier 3 Specialist	Daytime buddying	74 children 7304 hours	£168,000	£23 per hour
	Overnight family-based	14 children 1200 nights	£180,000	£150 per night
	Overnight residential spot-purchase	6 children 243 nights	£75,000	£308 per night

	Overnight residential block-purchase	15 children 920 nights	£567,000	£616 per night
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Voices of families of disabled children

The council continues to listen to the families of disabled children in order to further develop and improve the short breaks offer in Herefordshire. There have been several recent focussed engagement activities, which are summarised below.

Further consultation activities are taking place over the summer of 2016 so that the voices of disabled children and their families can further inform the recommissioning of short breaks for 2017-2020. This includes writing directly to 800 families to invite them to attend one of a series of drop-in sessions and/or complete an online consultation survey, details of which can be found at www.herefordshire.gov.uk/shortbreaks.

Some of the key themes around short breaks that families say are important for them and their disabled children are:



In May 2016, Herefordshire Council surveyed 55 families that had used short breaks services for disabled children about their experiences and outcomes, and the preferences for the future. A [summary of responses](#) is available online, the main messages were:

- short breaks are achieving good outcomes for most children and families
- children take part in interesting activities and become more independent or confident
- getting to know other families can help, but it isn't the main aim of a short break
- most families feel that their child have fun with carers who understood their needs
- families want more and cheaper breaks, offering socialisation, consistency and choice
- organising and spending direct payments needs to be made easier
- most children prefer to do things with their friends or in organised groups

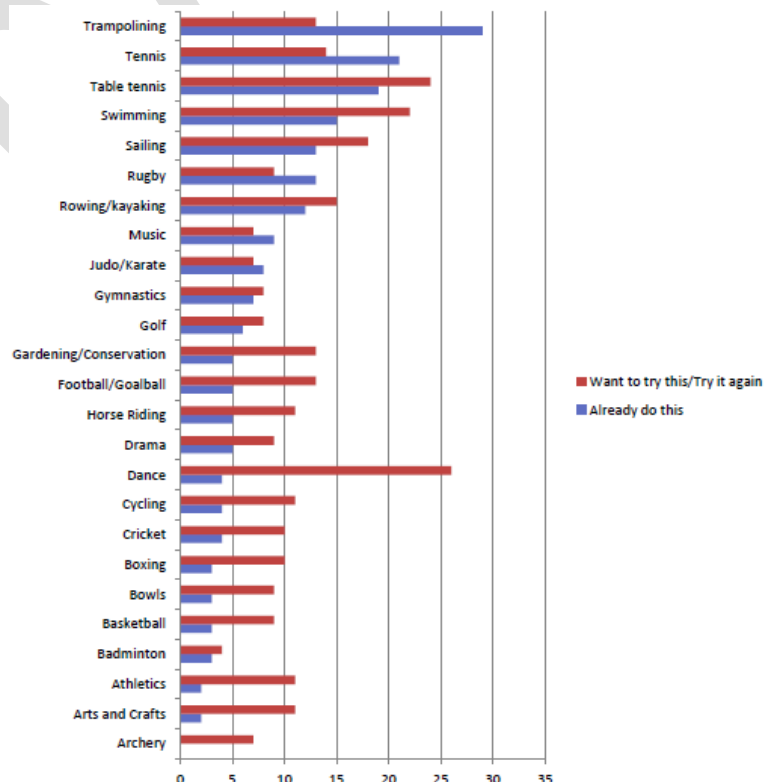
- many families would prefer to choose from a selection of approved providers
- most families want to be kept informed about short breaks in Herefordshire
- better communication is needed about the range of available short breaks
- value for money is an important factor
- stability and long term planning are important

A survey for the [council's children with disabilities childcare sufficiency report](#) received 61 responses in early 2016.

- most respondents found childcare through family and friends, childminder/nursery, buddying or were having respite services for very complex needs
- the most sought after childcare was specialist holiday play schemes and after school clubs
- childcare for disabled children aged 8–11 years with complex needs, was difficult to source in Herefordshire
- trained staff in complex needs/extreme behaviour was very limited
- limited capacity to provide 1:1 and 1:2 support.
- where respondents had trouble finding childcare, the reasons given were; difficulty in finding trained staff, special school does not have after school club, child could not manage in a busy childcare environment (autism) need 1:1 care

In 2015, Herefordshire Carers Support conducted a [survey of parent carer views](#). The types of activities disabled children were interested in is illustrated by the chart below. In relation to short breaks and activities for their disabled children, parents wanted:

- more inclusive activities where children with disabilities could socialise and make friends with other children and develop social and independent living skills
- trained volunteers, mentors, buddies or personal assistants who are flexible with their hours to support access to activities
- outward bound course etc.
- adapted activities in safe environments with 1:1 and sometimes 2:1 support due to complex needs
- support for siblings
- affordable access to childcare after school and during the holidays to overcome some barriers to parent employment



2017-2020 demand

Forecasting future demand is often informed by trend information over several preceding years. However, data around short breaks in recent years relates to historical practice and service models that did not support the overall strategic direction to facilitate take-up of community based activities and services where appropriate to a child's needs. In forecasting the demand for the next three years:

- feedback from families has informed service planning
- overall population increases have been considered
- comparisons have been made with Herefordshire's statistical neighbours
- needs-led SEN data has been considered for targeted daytime activities, rather than data from the usage of the current contracted service alone
- the anticipated needs of children already known to the councils children with disabilities teams, together with an estimation of potential new cases based on statistical neighbour indicators, has informed planning for specialist daytime and overnight short breaks

No data has been made available to indicate any future trends in the size and shape of the overall population of disabled children in Herefordshire. The ONS (office of national statistics) has produced forecasts for the general population in Herefordshire. If the ONS growth rates for 0-18 year olds are applied to relevant local data from the SEN and children with disabilities team, the potential growth in the targeted and specialist populations is small:

	Apr-17	Apr-18	Apr-19
General 0-18 population increase	0.27%	0.27%	0.69%
SEN Tariffs D&E	174	175	176
CWD team short breaks caseload	127	128	129

2017-2020 Targeted daytime activities

These services include activities designed specifically for disabled children, such as holiday clubs. As these services are currently available without a professional assessment, there is limited data available to forecast future need. However, the current play sessions contract has been fully utilised each year by around 70 children.

Access to the current service is by registration with the provider and determined on a mainly 'first come, first-served' basis. Each year, around 70 children access play session places, which are part funded by the council in Herefordshire. There have been some variations in individual take up, ranging from less than 10 to over 100 hours per child per year.

While the service is highly valued by the families that use it, there has been feedback about limited availability/high demand for some sessions and a desire for a wider range of activities to be available. Some families have also reported that the location of sessions presents travel challenges and the family fees can be unaffordable, despite the service being heavily subsidised by the council and other funding streams.

Listening to families, there is clearly a level of unmet demand and a desire for more choice. Other statistical neighbour areas, such as Shropshire, and Wiltshire, operate schemes that could help to address these issues in Herefordshire. Although there are variations in each scheme, they share a methodology for targeting short breaks resources based on a child's level of special educational need (SEN).

In Herefordshire, children with special educational needs are supported through a banded system, which could also be used to improve the targeting of short break services that do not require a social care assessment. The SEN system consists of bands A to F. Children in bands D and E are most likely to have needs of a level that they or their families could benefit from a targeted daytime short break. In May 2016 the primary needs of children in each band were as follows:

	SEN Band					
	A	B	C	D	E	F
Autistic spectrum disorder	8	6	38	14	21	1
Behaviour, Emotional and Social Difficulties	0	0	0	1	0	0
Hearing impairment	0	0	7	0	0	0
Moderate learning difficulty	11	5	32	6	4	0
Other difficulty / disorder	2	2	6	5	0	0
Physical disability	7	2	11	2	2	1
Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulties	0	0	3	1	6	6
Social, emotional and mental health	16	7	58	27	2	0
Speech, language and communication needs	31	11	23	8	1	1
Severe learning difficulty	2	1	24	32	39	9
Specific learning difficulty	1	1	1	0	0	0
Unknown	0	5	7	2	0	1
Visual impairment	1	0	2	1	0	0
	79	40	212	99	75	19

174

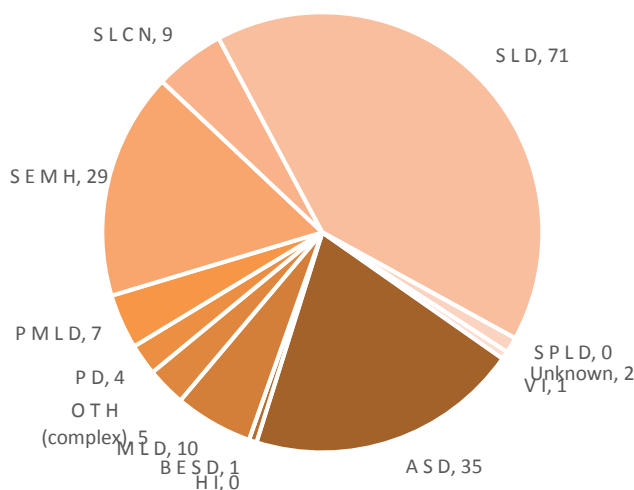
The short breaks needs of band A-C children can usually be met through mainstream community-based activities. Families can still request a social care assessment if they feel there are additional needs that cannot be met by such activities.

Bands D&E children are likely to have additional needs that may benefit from targeted short break activities designed for disabled children. It is likely that many of these children are accessing activities in their local communities without needing to also access a commissioned service. Some families may also wish to request an assessment for further specialist short break services through social care

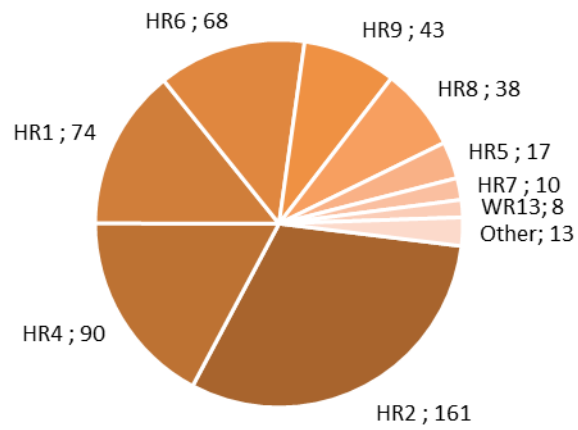
Band F children will have complex needs that are already subject to an assessment, which would address their needs for specialist daytime or overnight short break services as part of a wider package of support.

Primary Needs: SEN Tariffs D-E

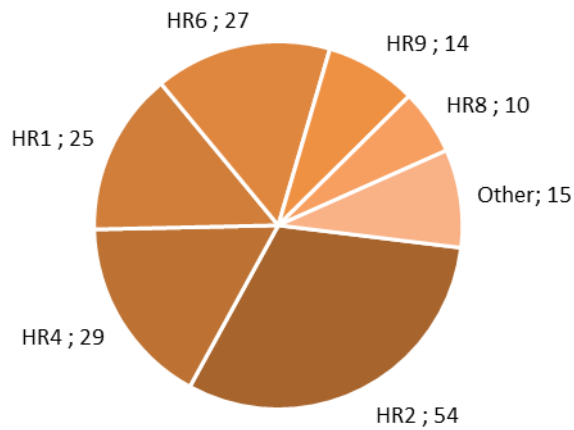
(May 2016)



**SEN Tariffs A-F by postcode
(May 2016)**



**SEN Tariffs D&E by postcode
(May 2016)**

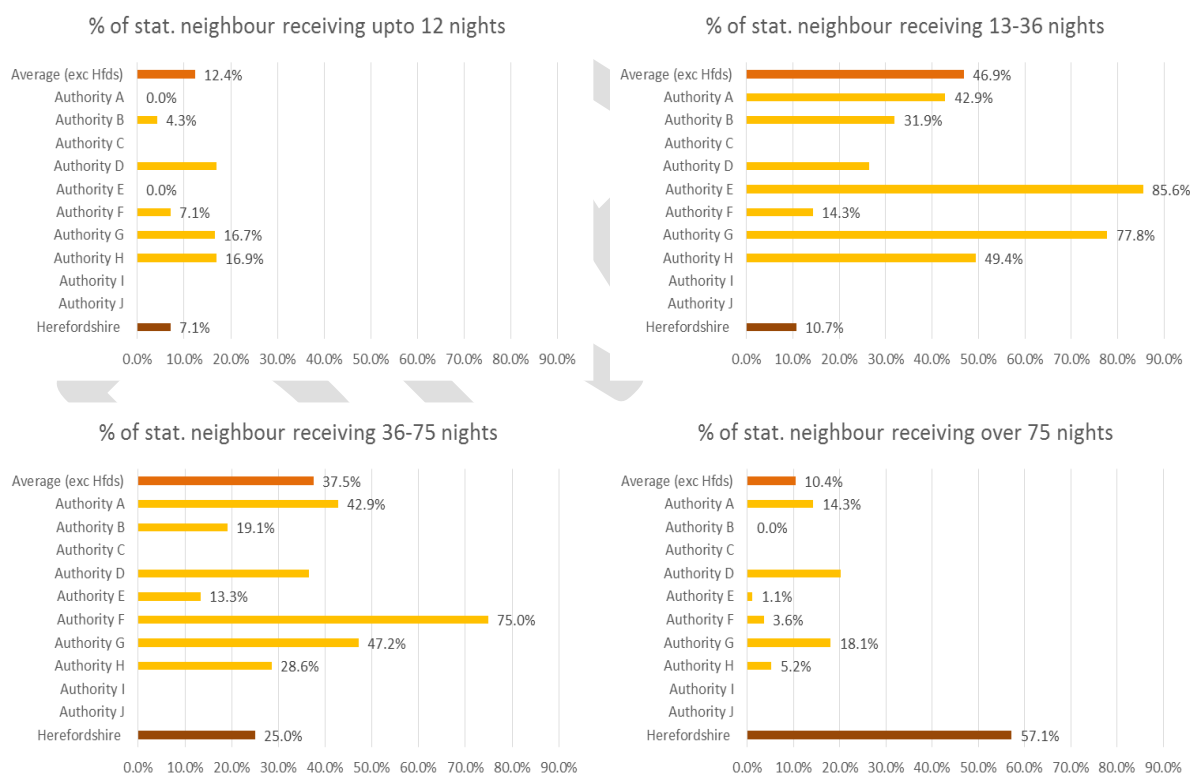


2017-2020 Specialist short breaks

Some children may have a higher level of need that can't be met by universal or targeted services alone. This is why the Local Authority may need to undertake a social care assessment with a child / young person and their family to ensure the right amount of support is provided at the right time. Specialist short break services can be provided to meet a specific need following a social care assessment of the child's and carer's needs. In order to determine the individual needs and identify the most appropriate solutions, the Council's children with disabilities team will work with families to complete their needs assessment. Depending on the outcome of the assessment, the social worker will discuss the different ways in which needs could be met, which could involve needs:

- direct payments that families can use to employ a personal assistant
- buddying delivered by commissioned service providers on a 1:1 or small group basis
- family-based overnight short breaks delivered by the council's in-house fostering service
- residential-based overnight short breaks delivered by commissioned service providers

Until recently, Herefordshire's overnight short breaks offer has been based on a historic model that relied on a single residential setting. For several years, children accessed the service without a comprehensive assessment of their needs. This led to a situation where most children using the service accessed it for 75 or more nights per year, which should have triggered LAC (looked after child) arrangements. Compared to statistical neighbours in early 2016, where most children accessed 13-36 nights per year, Herefordshire was shown to be atypical, as illustrated below.



Since 2015-2016, children using overnight short break services have undergone comprehensive social care assessments and appropriate reviews. Following assessment of the children that were using the service, they are now being supported by a range of services that meet their needs, including direct payments, daytime short breaks, family based short breaks or alternative residential short breaks.

Specialist daytime short breaks

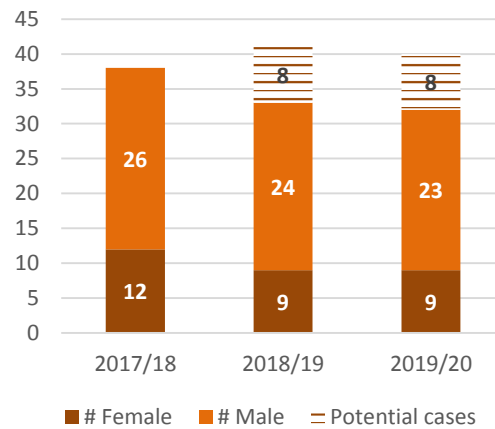
Children may be assessed as requiring a specialist daytime short break when either universal or targeted activities are unable to meet their needs. Specialist daytime services can include child-specific support in order to access universal or targeted activities, or intensive support designed around the child or family because longer or more frequent breaks are required.

Approximately 40 children per year will need specialist daytime short breaks. Most of these are currently supported by a buddy, but a few are supported by domiciliary care services in the home. Other daytime activities may also be suitable. Families would like to see more socialisation or friendship group based activities, for example.

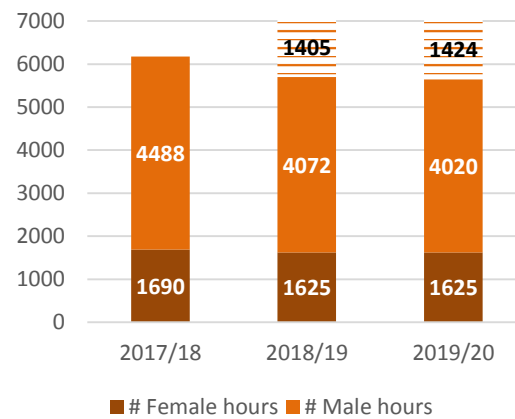
Around 7,000 hours per year are expected to be needed, mostly for males. Total hours expected includes 10%-15% delivered as two staff to one child.

Young people aged 11-15 are expected to need approximately half of the total estimated hours.

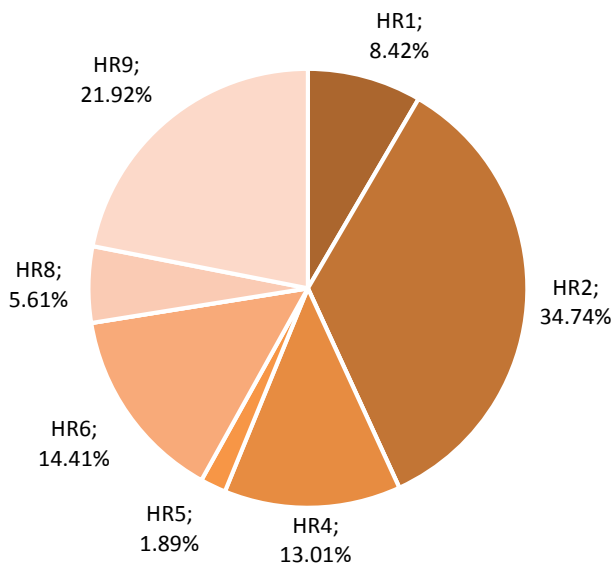
Specialist day-time short breaks population by gender



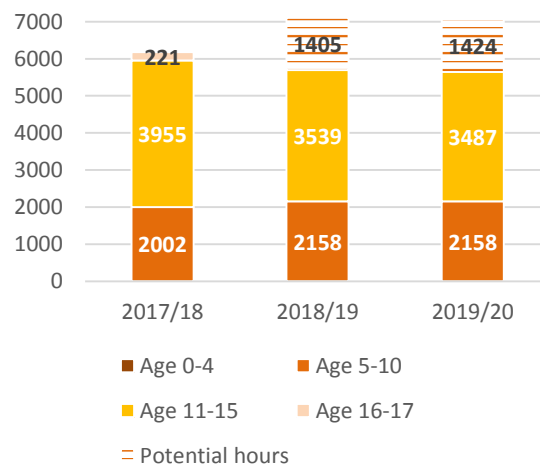
Specialist day-time short breaks hours by gender



2017/18 expected specialist daytime hours by postcode area



Specialist day-time hours by age band



Family-based overnight short breaks

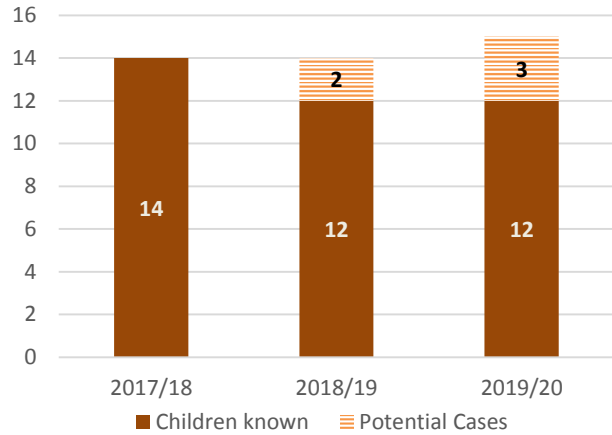
In 2016, Herefordshire is establishing a new family-based overnight short breaks service, a model that has been seen to work well in other parts of the country for several years.

By the end of 2016, it is expected that this new service will be providing short break placements to 6 children. As the service becomes further established from 2017, it is expected that 14-15 children will be supported with up to 600 nights each year. Slightly more nights are expected to be needed for males than females.

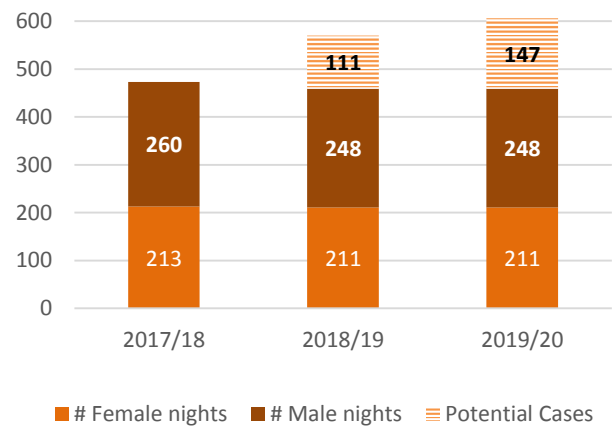
The primary need for children requiring a family-based short break is moderate or challenging behaviour. Some children will also have associated health or physical needs.

Around a half of nights are expected to be required at weekend, and a quarter are expected to be needed for either weekends or as short blocks.

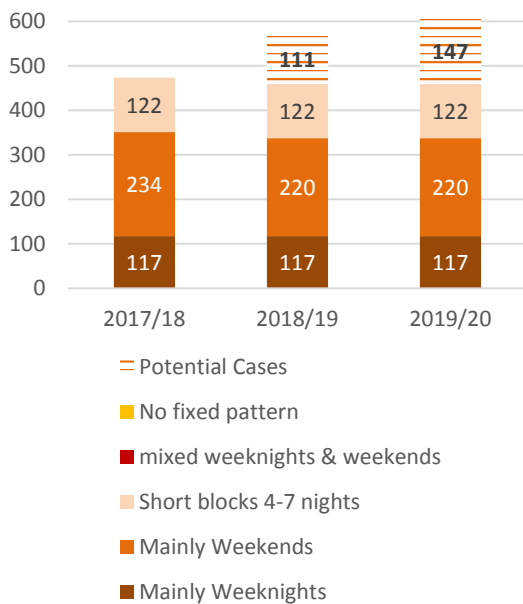
Overnight family-based population



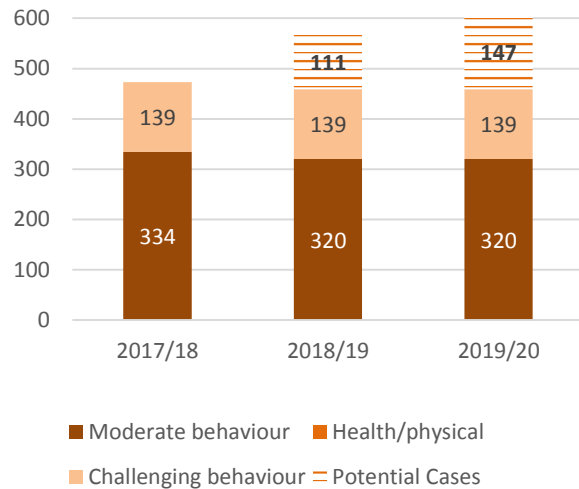
Family-based nights by gender



Overnight family-based nights by pattern



Family-based nights by need



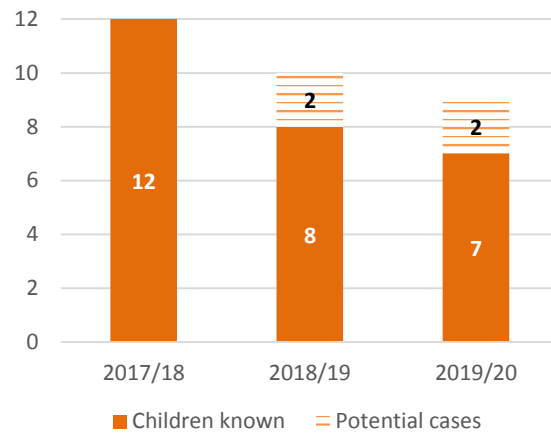
Residential overnight short breaks

The number of children using residential short break services has decreased in recent years as a result of thorough individual needs assessment and an improving range of available short breaks.

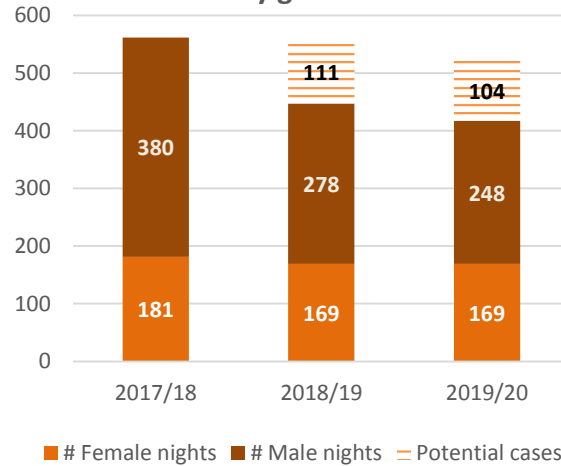
By 2020, it is expected that the number of children requiring such breaks will stabilise at around ten children needing 500-550 nights per year. In 2017-2018, at least 250 of these nights are likely to be a continuation of existing placements.

Around two-thirds of nights will be needed for males. The primary need for children requiring residential nights is expected to arise from their physical or health needs. Challenging behaviour will be the primary need for up to a quarter of children. The majority of children are likely to have a combination of health, physical and behavioural needs. Most nights are expected to be needed at weekends, with scope for some mid-week and blocks of nights.

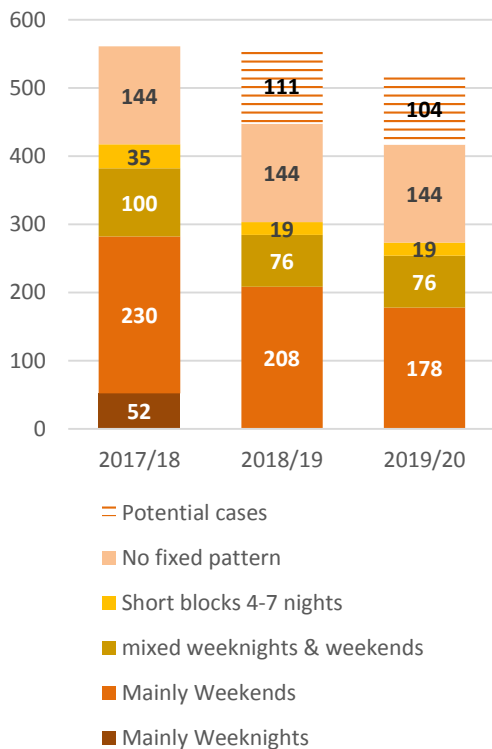
Overnight residential-based population



Overnight residential based nights by gender



Overnight residential based nights by pattern



Overnight residential-based nights by need

