



demelza



# Specialist short breaks

## **For eligible families, we provide day care and overnight short breaks within the hospice, as well as offering day care in the home and the community.**

Many of the families we support say that at times, they become physically and emotionally exhausted. This is where our short breaks can be of benefit to the whole family, as they enable everyone to have a much-needed rest. For a child, a short break can be an exciting opportunity to have a break in an environment where they can get one-to-one care, play and do activities.

### **In our hospices**

Day care and overnight breaks for your child are offered at our Kent or South East London hospices where they will be looked after by our specialist nursing and care teams. Our experienced teams will provide one-to-one, individualised support for the whole of your child's stay, giving them the opportunity to enjoy new experiences and take part in activities tailored to their needs.

Children and young people who come for a break may also have the chance to enjoy the facilities at Demelza (subject to availability) which include sensory areas, gaming consoles, art and music therapies. Facilities at Demelza Kent also include an adapted outside play area, a cinema room, hydro pool and soft play.

#### **How do I make a request?**

Short breaks are requested several months in advance of the stay. You will need to complete the short break request form online which will be sent to you by email or post periodically throughout the year.

When completing the form you will need to provide a selection of dates; we aim to offer you one of your preferred choices however this

may not always be possible. There is a minimum of a two night stay for residential breaks due to the amount of time it can take parents, carers and the nursing team to prepare for each admission to ensure safe clinical care is provided.

#### **Can I stay with my child?**

We will do our best to accommodate this, however, please note this may not always be possible.

If your child has not been to the hospice to access a short break before, a parent or carer will be required to stay for your child's first night or you may come for a day care session with your child before their overnight break. This is to allow our staff to get to know your child and for you and your child to feel comfortable with our staff.

#### **What happens after I submit my request?**

After the closing date, we will allocate spaces on a fair and equitable basis. Once this is complete, we will be in touch with you again to let you know what dates we have allocated your family. If we have not been able to allocate one of your preferred dates, we will do our best to offer you an alternative.



You will be contacted again around two weeks prior to your short break, to answer any queries that you have regarding the admission process and a registered nurse will complete your child's care plan with you. Completing the care plan can take between 30 minutes – two hours depending on when your child last stayed with us or if there have been any changes to your child's care since their last stay.

When allocating breaks, we will prioritise any young people approaching their 18th birthday as our care services are only able to offer care for children and young people up to the age of 18. Our transition team can offer advice, information, practical support and signposting up to age 25.

#### **What happens on arrival?**

Please ensure that you arrive promptly to avoid any delay in admission.

On arrival, your child's care plans and medication will be checked by a registered nurse so please ensure that prescribed medications are labelled correctly with a pharmacy label which clearly shows your child's name. If the dose on the bottle differs from the current prescribed dose, please bring confirmation of the dose change with

you i.e. confirmation by email/letter from the healthcare professional that changed the dose.

Please check the medication does not expire before the end of your child's short break. You will also need to bring all medical equipment relevant to your child's care. We will be unable to administer the medication without this information and may have to cancel your short break.

#### **Can my short break be cancelled?**

We will always prioritise end of life care and sometimes this may sadly mean that we must cancel bookings that have been made for short breaks. We will only do this if necessary and with as much notice as we can, therefore all short break bookings are subject to cancellation at short notice.

If you are planning a holiday more than a two-hour drive away from the hospice, please get in touch as there will be some extra information that we need from you. There will need to be another adult who is able to care for your child if they need to be collected from Demelza or your short break booking has to be cancelled at short notice.

If you need to cancel your short break, we would appreciate as much notice as possible so we can offer the space to another family.

### **A note on internet safety**

Whilst on our premises, connection to the Demelza Wi-Fi is recommended. Demelza Wi-Fi will block internet searches and inappropriate content being accessed or downloaded via the internet. However, the way your device is set up and managed (i.e. with parental controls), will dictate what your child or young person is able to view, access or download to the device and the Demelza Wi-Fi would not block this. If you want your child to remain using their own data, you should be aware that no content can be blocked by our IT system.

## **In the home**

Our community nursing teams provide support in the family home.

You can request sessions lasting between 2-4 hours where one of our specially trained healthcare assistants will visit you to play and support your child or young person in the home environment. It may also be possible for the healthcare assistant to take your child out for the session. We will personalise each session with fun activities and sensory aids, centred around your child's specific needs.

Our experienced nurses also work with other healthcare professionals to provide clinical care at home, which we can discuss with you. If you would like to know more, please email [careadministration@demelza.org.uk](mailto:careadministration@demelza.org.uk) and a member of the team will be in touch with you.

### **Infection prevention and control**

We ask that anyone that has had a case of diarrhoea or vomiting within the past 48 hours or is currently displaying symptoms of a respiratory illness does not visit a Demelza site.

If any of these symptoms are present during a short break visit, you will be asked to collect your child/ren and take them home if possible.

If you are being visited by a member of the community care team and experience any of these symptoms, please contact them to rearrange the visit.

### **Who can I contact?**

For any queries relating to short breaks or other services in general please call our service administration team on 01795 845270 (10am-4pm, Monday - Friday) or email [careadministration@demelza.org.uk](mailto:careadministration@demelza.org.uk).

For emotional support, social support, therapies or family events, please call our family support team on 01795 845280 (10am-4pm, Monday - Friday) or email [familysupportdepartment@demelza.org.uk](mailto:familysupportdepartment@demelza.org.uk).

If you need to contact us during your child's short break in the hospice, the nursing team can be contacted on 020 8859 9800 (South East London) or 01795 845201 (Kent).

If you are unable to complete the form online, or have any trouble doing so, then please contact us and we'll be happy to help.

Find out more



If you would prefer to chat over the phone about short breaks then please ring

**01795 845270**  
**demelza.org.uk**

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