

Children With Disabilities Team Criteria for Social Work Support July 2014

There are many families who have a child who has additional needs, but for many these can be met without a Specialist Social Worker.

This would include:

- **Families who need information and advice** - a good range of information and advice is available to families from such sources as schools, health visitors, the **Family Information Service**, and the **Children with Disabilities Team Information Service**.
- **Families who need a low level of support** – families can access some short break services without the need for an assessment, and can also access support with tasks such as completing DLA forms.
- **Families whose child may have a diagnosis, and/or may be in receipt of DLA**, but where the condition is well controlled, or the impact on the child is not substantial and does not make their needs very different to other children (this might include conditions such as epilepsy, diabetes, cerebral palsy, autistic spectrum disorder, sickle-cell anaemia, developmental delay, low muscle tone, mild to moderate learning disability).
- **Families whose child may have a learning “difficulty”**. A learning difficulty is not the same as a learning disability. A difficulty makes it hard for a child to learn, and might include for example: emotional or behavioural problems, or specific learning problems such as dyslexia. With support from school these might be overcome. A **Learning Disability** is different and means that the child/young person has an impaired intellectual function, which has probably existed since birth.

Social Work support from the Children with Disabilities Team is for children who are aged 0 – 14 and who have a **medium to high** level of support needs because they:

- Have a learning disability or
- Have a physical disability, which may include a sensory support issue or
- Have complex health needs or
- Have social, communication, sensory or consciousness difficulties

And because of this the child/young person:

- Is likely to need ongoing support from specialist services throughout their life
- Is not able to do many of the things that a child their age would be able to do
- Needs a higher level of supervision than a child of their age would usually need

Access to the Social Work Support from the Team is as follows:

1. Directly following a contact for cases not currently open to a social work team where the reason for the contact is a family's need for a medium/high level of support in connection with their child's disability. This does not include cases where:

- It is not clear that the child has a disability
- A previously healthy child has suffered an injury/accident and the prognosis is not clear
- Fabricated or Induced Illness is suspected
- The presenting issue is not the child's disability
- The family are not aware of the referral and have not given written consent

A discussion with the CWD Social Work Manager, or (in her absence) the Manager for Resources and Development should take place and they will determine whether the team accepts the referral.

If it is not accepted they may arrange for a member of the team who has disability specific knowledge (not necessarily a social worker) to assist in the assessment, or they may suggest that the family are signposted to other support or services.

(If the outcome of the request is disputed, the Service Manager for the CWD Team is to be approached)

2. When a team, following an assessment, conclude that they are working with a child who meets the criteria for a Social Worker from the Children with Disabilities Team.

The social worker who currently holds the case should contact the CWD Team Clerk and arrange for the case to be discussed at the Multi-agency Resource Panel for children with disabilities which takes place fortnightly. The panel will either:

- Agree that the case is appropriate and confirm transfer arrangements
- Consider that the case is not appropriate, and suggest alternative services/resources.
- Agree to appoint an involved worker where there are siblings open to social work for other reasons

(If the outcome of the request is disputed, the Service Manager for the CWD Team is to be approached)

Other Support from the Children with Disabilities Team

The team provides a range of support services for children from 0 – 18 with a range of disabilities and difficulties. This includes:

- Short breaks (formally known as respite care) and now including:
 - Direct Payments
 - Individual Budgets
 - Supported Activities in the Community
- Key working
- Playschemes
- Family based activities
- Information and advice
- Adaptations and Equipment
- Assistance with DLA claims
- Domiciliary Care Support
- Advice with regard to sensory support issues

There will be many children and young people who do not meet the criteria for a Social Worker from the Children with Disabilities Team, but who are eligible for support and services.

Any social worker can complete a referral to Resource Panel (with a current assessment and plan) and request advice, or a support service from the Team.

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