

MIDDLESBROUGH BOROUGH COUNCIL

Children with Disabilities Service

Eligibility Criteria for Social Work Support and Short Breaks

Introduction

Many children have additional needs that can be met without involvement with a Specialist Social Worker. These may include:

- Families who require information and advice – a good range of information is available to families from sources such as schools, health visitors and the Local Offer.
- Families whose child's needs can be met through unpaid support or universal provision – this may include extended family support or services available at low/no cost through the Local Offer.
- Families who need a lower level of paid support – families can access a lower level of paid short break services, without the need for a social work assessment, through a Short Break Application.
- Families whose child may have a diagnosis, but where the condition is well controlled or the impact on the child is not substantial – this may mean that their needs are not very different to those of other children of that age.
- Families whose child has a learning difficulty – a learning difficulty is not the same as a learning disability. A learning difficulty may make it harder for a child to learn, but with support from school these problems may be overcome. A learning disability means that a child has an impaired intellectual function which has probably existed since birth. A child will be said to have a learning disability if they have been assessed as having an IQ of less than 70.

Support from the Children with Disabilities Service is for children ordinarily resident in Middlesbrough aged 0 – 17 who have support needs because they:

- Have a learning disability and/or;
- Have a physical disability (which may include a sensory support issue) and/or;
- Have complex health needs and/or;
- Have social communication difficulties

And because of this the child:

- Has profound or severe impairments under the attached threshold criteria and;
- Is likely to need ongoing support from specialist services throughout their life and;
- Is not able to do many of the things that a child of their age would usually be able to do and;
- Needs a much higher level of supervision than a child of their age would usually require

A child will usually require a diagnosis of a specific condition to be accepted into the Children with Disabilities Service. However in exceptional circumstances a referral may be accepted where it can be shown clearly and beyond doubt that the above points apply to that child's specific circumstances. The Children with Disabilities Service do not accept children with emotional and behavioural difficulties only, unless there is a diagnosed accompanying disability. Referral to CAMHS can be made for these children.

Eligibility for support does not mean a paid support service is guaranteed. Workers will always try and support families in seeking extended family support where possible, and in accessing universal provision if this is felt to be appropriate.

Access to Social Work Support from the Children with Disabilities Team

Case management responsibility will only rest with the Children with Disabilities Social Work Team (CWD) if the primary reason for social care involvement is that the child has needs arising from 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 family are not aware of the referral and have not given consent
- The child has a mental health issue (unless there is a diagnosed accompanying disability)

Support from the Children with Disabilities Team can be accessed in two ways:

- Multi-Agency Children's Hub (MACH) – professionals or families may make a referral to MACH. Where it is clear that the eligibility criteria are met, MACH will send the contact record to the CWD Team Manager for consideration. Should there be any doubt about whether the eligibility criteria are met, a discussion should be had with the CWD Team Manager (or Assistant Team Manager in the absence of the Team Manager).
- Team Transfer – where the Assessment Teams or Child in Need/Child Protection Teams (CIN/CP) have a case that they feel would be appropriate for the CWD Team, their Team Manager should discuss the case with the CWD Team Manager. If the case is accepted, the transfer process on LCS should be followed. The Assessment Team or CIN/CP Team will remain involved for a period of at least 4 weeks to ensure all recording is up to date and handover visits are completed. If cases are to transfer the other way from CWD to CIN/CP Team, the same process will be followed.

Dispute resolution

If there is any dispute as to case responsibility, this should be resolved wherever possible through discussions between the respective Team Managers. If the issues cannot be resolved, the Service Manager/Head of Service responsible for CWD and Assessment/CIN/CP should be informed. They will make a final decision on case responsibility in that instance, and inform the Team Managers of that decision.

Safeguarding cases

The CWD Team deal with all child protection issues on cases already open to the Team. For new safeguarding referrals, the Team would not usually pick these up as the presenting issue would not normally be the child's disability. These cases would be picked up by the ACP Teams. The CWD Team may provide a co-worker where appropriate to assist with the disability issues.

Other support from the Children with Disabilities Team

- The CWD Team have two Occupational Therapists who assist children and young people aged 0 – 17
- The CWD Team will work with children with hearing and/or visual impairments from age 0 – 17, providing that these impairments are profound or severe under the attached threshold