

# Walsall Children's Services

## Disabled Children & Young Person's

### Team Eligibility Criteria



#### Purpose:

This document sets out the eligibility criteria for how the Disabled Children and Young People's Team will support disabled children and young people including guidance to alternative sources of support that may be available to them.

Consultation - The criteria document has been shared with Early Help Group Manager, Children's Commissioner, Adults services Managers and Group Manager, Adults Commissioner and with parent carers at Walsall Face.

#### Content:

- Purpose of the criteria
- Our Ambition and Principles
- Statutory responsibilities
- Education, Health and Care Plan.
- Disability Register
- Disabled Children and Young People's Team criteria
- Level of Need – taken from Walsall Safeguarding Partnership – 'Right Help Right Time' document.
- Preparing for Adulthood
- Short Breaks
- Support services for children and young people with additional needs

Updated September 2022

## Purpose of the Criteria

The purpose of this document is to describe who is and is not eligible for support by the Disabled Children and Young People's team and to provide information on support services and how to access them. The basic needs of disabled children and young people are no different from those of any other child or young person. A disabled child is however automatically a 'Child in Need' under s17 of the Children Act 1989. All Universal services are expected to be accessible to all children and their families and they should provide services which are inclusive of a wide variety of need. Children and young people with impairments and additional needs are more appropriately supported through universal services where this is possible.

Where a more intensive targeted approach is required this can be co-ordinated via the Early Help Service. The Early Help service provides targeted support for families across Walsall within the four locality areas of North, West, South Central and East.

We seek to provide a whole family approach and to support successful transition into adulthood. We want all disabled children and young people up to the age of 17 to get the support and services they need to lead fulfilling lives and we want to be clear about what services are available and how to access them.

The majority of children and young people in Walsall, including those who are disabled, will receive services through health, education and universal or targeted provision within their local community. It is recognised that in order to access community resources, families of disabled children and young people may require access to information and advice which can be obtained from SENDIASS – Special Educational Needs Information, Advice and Support Service and SEND Local Offer which can be accessed on Walsall Council website using the link - [Walsall SENDIASS - Family Action \(family-action.org.uk\)](http://family-action.org.uk) and [The SEND Local Offer \(walsall.gov.uk\)](http://walsall.gov.uk).

Where services are required that cannot be met through universal and early intervention services, and a disabled child or young person is in need of specialist support which meets the threshold for children's social care as outlined within the 'Right Help Right Time' document, or where there is a safeguarding concern, contact can be made via the multi-agency safeguarding hub (MASH).

All referrals to the Disabled Children and Young People's Team should be made via the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH), this includes requests for short breaks.

All safeguarding and early intervention referrals should be submitted to the MASH via a Multi-Agency Referral Form (MARF Form), which can be found on the Walsall Safeguarding Partnership website.

## Our Ambition and Principles

The Disabled Children and Young People's Team will work in partnership with families, education services and other agencies such as health and the voluntary sector to ensure that best use is made of all local and available resources to meet the identified needs of individuals and families.

This work is underpinned by the following principles:

- Promote inclusion and participation for disabled children and young people
- Recognise families as the experts of their circumstance
- Treat all people as individuals and with respect
- Work in an open, honest and transparent and fair way
- Provide reliable and timely information about services to enable families to access appropriate support.
- Provide access to specialist services where this is needed.
- Where appropriate, to support access to local, inclusive mainstream services

## Statutory responsibilities

The Care Act 2014 places a duty on Local Authorities to carry out an assessment of anyone who appears to have care and support needs regardless of their eligibility and state funded care.

Where the definition of a disability within the Children Act 1989 applies to a child or young person they are automatically considered a *child in need* and eligible for assessment.

## Education, Health and Care Plans

Most children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) will have their needs met in local mainstream educational settings. Schools and other settings must try to meet the special educational needs of these children and young people.

At times, despite these efforts to identify, assess and meet the special educational need/s some children and young people may not make the progress expected. In these cases, schools or parents should consider requesting an EHC plan needs assessment.

This assessment involves a process of gathering information from the relevant people or agencies, including the views, interests and aspirations of the parents and child or young person. The needs assessment will help to determine whether we need to make additional provision through an EHC plan. When deciding whether to issue an EHC plan the local authority will take into account whether the needs of the child or young people can reasonably be met from resources normally available to settings.

An EHC needs assessment will not always lead to an EHC plan. However, it may help to inform how the education setting can meet the child or young person's needs without an EHC plan. It should not take more than 20 weeks from receiving a request for an assessment, to a final EHC plan being issued. [Education, Health and Care plans \(walsall.gov.uk\)](http://walsall.gov.uk)

## Registration

Local Authorities are required by law to maintain a register of children and young people with impairments and additional needs in their area, all children are entitled to be on these registers. Registration alone does not equate with eligibility criteria for Early Help or Disabled Children and Young People's Team.

If you wish for your child's name to be held on Walsall Council's register a form needs to be completed. If you provide your email address you will be added to the mailing list so that you can be updated with relevant news about short breaks, parent support or training.

For further advice access [Children and young people's disability register \(walsall.gov.uk\)](http://walsall.gov.uk/children-and-young-people-disability-register).

## Disabled Children and Young People's Team Criteria

Walsall Disabled Children and Young People's Team is a Specialist Social Work Team which works with children and young people aged 0-18 who have a complex disability and are permanent residents in Walsall Local Authority Area including Children in Care placed out of area. The team is based at the Goscote Centre and located alongside the Adult Transition Team and other services within the All Age Disability Hub. The team provides a borough wide service working closely with many other services such as Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) Special Educational Needs and Disability Service (Education) and Health services.

The team offers a social work assessment and care planning service to children and young people aged 0 -17 years who have a permanent and substantial impairment and who are requiring additional social care resources in respect of their disability, where the disability has an adverse impact on their ability to undertake ordinary everyday activities. The child or young person may have been born with a disability or become disabled as a result of an illness, accident or injury.

In order to meet the criteria for a service from the team children and young people will be under the age of 18 and must firstly meet the requirements of section 17(11) of the Children Act 1989.

Not all children who are defined as having a disability under s17 of the Children Act 1989 will meet the threshold for a service from the team. For children and young people who have a degree of disability that is not outlined in the threshold for the team but who are in need of social care intervention, a child and family assessment will be provided by our children's locality teams. However if after assessment it is deemed a specialist service is needed and the Team manager is in agreement that the team is best placed to meet the child or young person's needs the child or young person will transfer to the team. If an agreement cannot be reached at Team manager level the final decision lies with the Group Manager for the Disabled Children and Young People's Team.

The team can provide consultation, advice, guidance and support to other professionals regarding a disabled child or young person, including safeguarding issues, impact on siblings, the child or young person's support need, the support can also, where required include a co-working relationship.

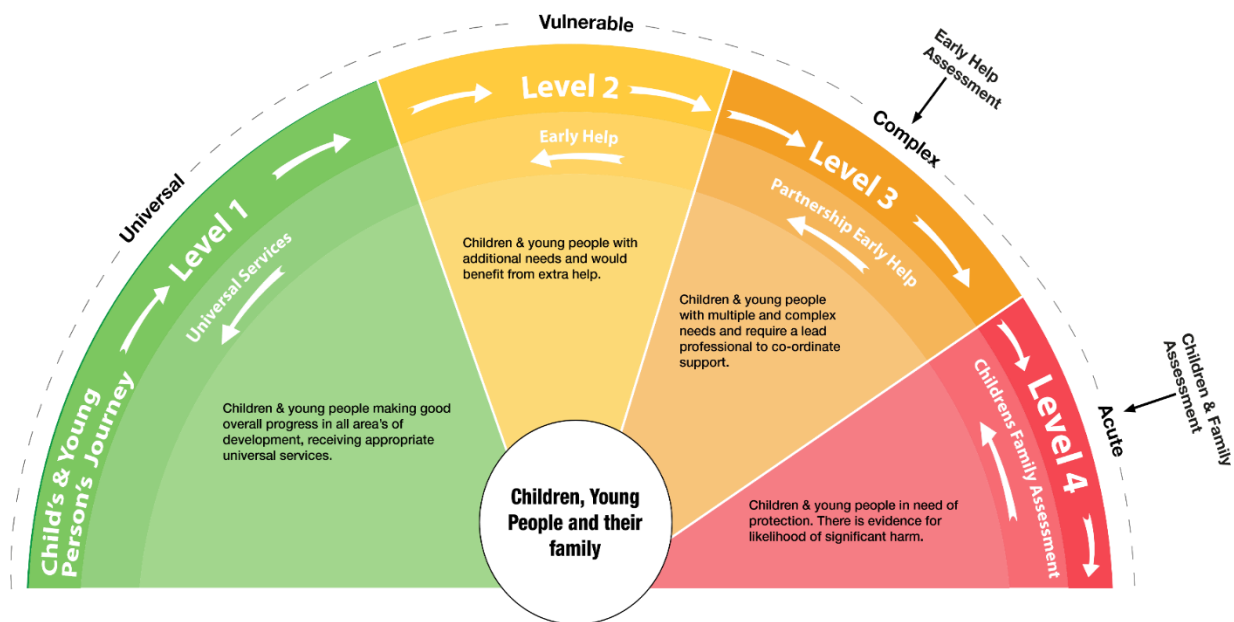
Referrals to the team include children and young people aged 0 to 17 with a diagnosed disability who require significant support with most daily tasks, such as mobility or self-help. This also applies where their communication skills are severely limited or where the nature of the disability is such that the child or young person has significant health related difficulties, such as but not limited to:-

- Profound and enduring disabilities, including severe learning disability; multiple disabilities and complex health needs.
- Severe developmental delay in motor or cognitive functioning.
- Acquired disabilities resulting in severe physical and/or learning disabilities/communication disabilities.
- Complex and severe health problems that are potentially life limiting, chronic and/or degenerative conditions.
- A physical or sensory disability when the child has additional needs directly related to their disability; and / or cognitive functioning.
- Severe sensory impairment where they are registered blind and have a profound hearing impairment.
- Children and young people diagnosed with autistic spectrum condition where this has a significant impact such as persistent ongoing emotional and / or behavioural difficulties for the child or young person and they require an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP).
- Children and young people with moderate learning difficulties where in addition the child has significant additional needs e.g. sensory impairment, autistic spectrum condition or severe epilepsy.
- Mental health concerns if this is within the context of a diagnosed disability and at Tier 4 level, can also be where a young person is having a mental health assessment and is not already open to a Social Worker and when a child or young person with a disability is detained under section 2 or section 3 of the Mental Health Act.

It is expected that the child's disabilities will have been diagnosed by a Community Paediatrician or similar health professional.

The above would need to be considered alongside the practitioners' guide to determining need outlined in appendix 2 of the Walsall Safeguarding Partnership Right Help right Time document which can be accessed on [Right Help Right Time Guidance \(walsall.gov.uk\)](https://www.walsall.gov.uk/right-help-right-time-guidance).

## Continuum of Need from the Walsall Safeguarding Partnership 'Right Help Right Time' document.



Every level of need offers a different service level.

## Continuum of need

### Level 1. Universal: yours, mine, every child

Children and young people making good overall progress in all areas of their development and receiving appropriate universal services such as health and education.

This is where children, including disabled children may have one or two low level needs, which can be met by one agency or referral to one other agency. Agencies such as GP, health visitors, school nurses, schools and youth services. Walsall Local Offer and Walsall Family Information Services.

### Level 2. Single Agency Early Help

Children, young people and their families are experiencing emerging problems, or have additional needs that require some targeted support. They are likely to require early help for a time limited period, to help them move back to Universal (level 1) and reduce the likelihood of needing level 3 more targeted support.

This is where Children, including disabled children are likely to have a number of additional needs. These children are likely to require a Lead Professional and co-ordinated support services of more than one agency. They are likely to require early help for a time limited period to help them move back to universal services at level 1.

Child or young person eligible for a short break passport.

Agencies such as GP's, health visitors, family support, schools, schools nurses and counselling. Specialised holiday play schemes can be accessed with a short break passport, family event days could be accessed.

### **Level 3. Partnership Early Help**

Children, young people and families with identified vulnerabilities who are experiencing multiple and complex needs and are likely to need a more targeted, multi-agency coordinated approach. They are likely to require longer term help.

Children and young people who on the continuum of need are **at level 3 Partnership Early Help at the complex level of need** will have an *Early Help assessment* completed.

This is children with high level additional needs, including disabled children, with complex and profound impairments. Harm may have been averted or risks managed, specialist support is still required through a multi-agency coordinated approach.

Services that could be accessed are:

Specialised Holiday play schemes

Weekend and after school clubs - Early Help assessment required

Activity workers

1:1 short breaks worker

### **Level 4. Statutory Support – In need of protection, likelihood of Significant harm**

Children, young people and their families who are experiencing very serious or complex needs that are having a major impact on their expected outcomes or there is serious concern for their safety. These acute needs may require statutory intensive support for children and young people for protection. This may be as children in need - CIN (Section 17 of the Children Act 1989) or as children in need of protection- CP (under section 47 of the Children Act 1989). Children, young people and families receiving intervention for level 4 need are helped, where possible, in reducing the seriousness and complexity of need and are then enabled to access Early Help or Universal services as appropriate.

Children and young people who are at **level 4 statutory support at an acute level of need** will require a more in depth assessment and a *Statutory Child and Family Assessment* will be undertaken by a Social worker.

Children with complex health needs/disabilities, including life threatening needs, where parents/carers unable to provide care and having an impact on their expected outcomes. Children who are in need of protection and there is a concern for their safety. Referral to MASH for a child and family assessment under S17 and or S47 Children Act 1989. Needs assessed at this level will require a multi-agency children and family assessment.

Services that could be accessed are:

Weekend and afterschool clubs

Activity workers

Personal care in and outside the home

Fostering short breaks

Residential overnights at Bluebells (Internal Residential Home) or independent fostering agencies and residential homes

Personal Budgets/Direct Payments

Specialised Holiday play schemes

Specialist education provision

Specialist CAMHS and/ or health services or a combination of both

## Preparing for Adulthood and Transition

The local authority is currently developing an all age disability model. As part of this work an operational preparing for adulthood Policy has been written with an all age approach. The policy identifies key professionals that will work collaboratively to embed the approach towards helping young people to prepare for adulthood.

The service areas responsible for the statutory duties across children and Adult Social care have co-located and are on site at the Goscote Centre, alongside Adult Assessment and care management team's internal provider resource for children, young people and adults, with a range of disabilities.

The aim of the model is to improve co working, service provision, time limited support, signposting and coordinated commissioning when young people are transitioning from a young person to an adult. This is to ensure there is a timely, proportionate and evolving plan developed with the person, for the person, inclusive of the importance of local connections, universal offers, community inclusion, local education, health, where the person will live, leisure, family, friendships, income and work.

The purpose of the model is to improve the transition experience of disabled young people, adults and their families and ensure there is an open, honest and young person centred approach whereby their needs are identified, assessed and prepared for as part of a strength based package of support.

It will ensure that planning will commence from a much earlier age to maximise opportunities of successful planning and preparation for adulthood prior to their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday and minimise the risk of a young person and their family not receiving timely assessment and an agreed plan. Ensuring the outcomes will be aspirational, sustainable and proportionate to need.

## Short Breaks

The 2010 guidance was issued as part of a suite of statutory guidance which together with the Care Planning, Placement and Case Review (England) Regulations (2010) ('the Regulations') set out how local authorities should carry out the full range of responsibilities in relation to care planning, placement and review of Short Breaks provision. This is in recognition of the particular vulnerabilities disabled children.

The 2010 Regulations define a Short Break as:

- Day-time care in the homes of disabled children or elsewhere
- Overnight care in the homes of disabled children or elsewhere
- Educational or leisure activities for disabled children outside their homes, and Services available to assist carers in the evenings, at weekends and during the school holidays.

Children open to the team may have short break resources as part of their plan. These would be assessed and provided for up to a twelve month period.



Short Breaks provide disabled children and young people with an opportunity to spend time away from their parents or primary carers, relaxing and having fun with their friends, whilst engaging in a range of activities that also work to promote independence, choice and skills wherever possible. This enables them to experience the same range of activities and environments as non-disabled children and young people. In addition Short Breaks provide parents/carers with a 'break' from their caring responsibilities, giving them a chance to rest, spend time with partners and other children. Short Breaks can include day, evening, overnight, weekend and holiday activities. Making Short Breaks possible can range from supporting children and young people to join children's activities and services, ordinary activities and local resources in the communities, to providing specialist services, or a mixture of both.

Disabled children and young people not assessed by or open to the team can consider access to community short breaks provided by either the council or other local organisations.

All children and young people with a diagnosed disability in Walsall are able to access any available holiday schemes without the need for assessment. Some organisations may charge for these and any provided by the Council would be free. Information can be accessed on our Local Offer -Short Break web page [Short breaks \(walsall.gov.uk\)](https://www.walsall.gov.uk/short-breaks) or by contacting [shortbreaks@walsall.gov.uk](mailto:shortbreaks@walsall.gov.uk) for details about filling in a Short Breaks Passport.

## Support services for Children and Young people with additional needs:

**Early Help Service** – information can be obtained on the local offer pages on the link [Early Help \(walsall.gov.uk\)](https://www.walsall.gov.uk/early-help).

### **Children's Occupational Therapy Service:**

Children's Occupational Therapy Team offers a service to children with identified co-ordination and/or fine motor difficulties that are clearly impacting upon function at home or school and cannot be attributed to their level of learning. Also for physically disabled children within mainstream school where the physical disability is affecting function, and children in a special school where their functional abilities are below that of their level of learning.

Children's Occupational Therapists in Walsall aim to maximise a child or young person's abilities and independence. We offer advice and support to children and young people up to the age of 19 who have a co-ordination, visual perceptual or sensory processing difficulty or a physical disability that impacts upon their daily life skills but where their skills are below that of their overall developmental level. These might include difficulties doing all the usual things that you would expect to. These may include using both hands together to play with toys, doing written work at school, dressing and self-care activities, or co-ordinating your movements to be able to carry out leisure activities or school work.

For further information follow the link [Children's Occupational Therapy Service | Walsall Community Living Directory \(wcl.d.co.uk\)](https://www.walsall.gov.uk/childrens-occupational-therapy-service)

## SEND Local Offer

Walsall's Local Offer provides information in one place for children and young people aged 0-25 years with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), their parents/carers and professionals.

The Local Offer includes information on local services to help children, young people, parents and carers make choices about the support they receive.

We have developed Walsall's Local Offer with parents, carers, young people with SEND, and professionals in order to make sure that the Local Offer meets your individual needs.

The Children and Families Act 2014 requires us to produce and publish a Local Offer, which sets out in one place information about the provision available across education, health and social care for children and young people in the area who have SEND. Local offer can be accessed – [The SEND Local Offer \(walsall.gov.uk\)](http://walsall.gov.uk)

## SENDIAS

Walsall's SENDIASS service provides free, impartial advice and support to parents of children and young people with Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities (SEND). This service is also offered directly to young people. It is a confidential service providing information and advice about many areas including: EHCP process, local provision in schools and offers support when things go wrong.

Phone: 0808 802 6666

Email: [Walsallsendiass@family-action.org.uk](mailto:Walsallsendiass@family-action.org.uk)

Website: [Walsall Information Advice and Support \(SENDIAS\)](http://walsall.gov.uk)

## NHS

The NHS has a duty to meet the health care needs of all people, including children and young people with impairments and additional needs and disabled children and young people. Access to NHS support is through the person's GP who will be able to refer to specialist health provision where appropriate.

