

WIRRAL COUNCIL

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 17 SEPTEMBER 2009

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES

AIMING HIGH FOR DISABLED CHILDREN

Executive Summary

This report provides an update on progress on the Wirral Local Area Implementation programme for Aiming High for Disabled Children in relation to Short Breaks provision. The approach seeks to transform services across sectors to provide support to achieve the best outcomes for children and young people with disabilities and enable children and their families to live ordinary lives.

The Government are requiring the Council and Primary Care Trust to provide a stepped change to short breaks services and to deliver on what is termed the Full Service Offer, (See Appendix 1) designed to meet the needs of all groups of disabled children. The report advises on action taken in meeting the reporting and performance requirements set out by Together for Disabled Children, who are administering the programme on behalf of the DCSF; prior to April 2009 and the further steps required over the next two years to March 2011.

1. Background

1.1 Context

Aiming High for Disabled Children supports and delivers the aims of Every Child Matters and the Children's National Service Framework (NSF) and more recently the Child Health Strategy. Central to all of these initiatives is an emphasis on joined up working and services which are centred on children and their families. The Government recognises that the individual needs of disabled children and their families are best met through a personal and tailored response from both universal and specialist services. The Government also knows that until now, too many families with disabled children have struggled to get the support they need, rather than having 'the system' meeting their needs effectively.

1.2 Vision

The national vision behind Aiming High for Disabled Children is "for all families with disabled children to have the support they need to live ordinary family lives as a matter of course".

To deliver this vision, Aiming High for Disabled Children has three priority areas:

Access and empowerment

The national expectations of the Core Offer will help make services more accessible. Children, young people and their families will be actively involved in the planning and delivery of services in their local area.

Responsive services and timely support

All professionals responsible for planning services for children, both locally and nationally, will focus on the services disabled children and young people need, particularly at key life stages such as the early years and in transition to adulthood.

Improving quality and capacity

Significant new funding has been allocated to the services families want and need, in particular short break services which families have described as their key priority.

1.3 Making the system work better to deliver better outcomes

Measures to make the system work better are an important feature of the Aiming High for Disabled Children programme. Together, these measures reflect a new national and local priority for disabled children. They include:

- A new national indicator on services for disabled children which will be used to measure the experience of families with disabled children, and help us better understand the performance of local authorities and the NHS across England.
- A Core Offer to disabled children and families – a national set of expectations around information, transparency, participation, assessment and feedback. These standards will help shape local services.
- Work to improve the quality and quantity of information held locally and centrally on disabled children, their families and the services they need.

Over the next two years, as the funding and programme reforms take effect, the Government expects local authorities to realise the ambition that:

- Disabled children will have the same opportunities to develop and fulfil their potential as all other children.
- Families with disabled children will get the support they need, when they need it.
- Universal children's services will be more genuinely inclusive of disabled children, including those with complex needs.
- Disabled children will be at the heart of the ongoing change programme for children's services.

2.0 Aiming High Short Breaks

2.1 Funding allocation

The Short Breaks funding allocation for Wirral is:

	Revenue	Capital
2009/10	500.9k	252.2k
2010 /11	1615.7k	588.5k

The other National funding streams for the programme are:

- **Child Care** - £35m – The Government has set up pilot sites and will provide funding in the next financial year
- **Transition Support** - £19m – Wirral received £10,000 in 2008/9 to undertake a self assessment of current arrangements, and a similar sum in 2009/10 to develop its action plan further.
- **Parents Forum** - £5m – Benchmarking guidance has been provided as part of the initial assessment. Local priorities are the development of the Family Information service and adoption of a Carer Consultation Strategy by the Council and the NHS. Wirral Family Consultation Forum has been supported to secure a further £10,000 grant from the Government to support the development of parent forum support and structures in Wirral.

All funding is channelled through the Sure Start, Early Years and Childcare Service Grant under the Aiming High for Disabled Children Funding Block.

2.2 Funding Conditions:

The memorandum of Grant makes clear that the Government will reduce or withdraw funding at any stage throughout the programme if progress is not made in line with reporting requirements or sufficiently evidenced. The Council have been provided with a new Local Authority Implementation Plan format which it is required to submit on a 3 monthly basis to evidence progress in improving services. (See 2.3)

- Expenditure will not be rolled forwards into future years, this includes all of the capital expenditure which must be spent within the financial year.
- The funding must be used for new activity – and must not be used to substitute for existing preventative services or current short breaks activity.
- Funding out turns for previous years will be interrogated to ensure previous expenditure patterns are enhanced.
- The capital element must not be used to fund *reasonable adjustment* activity within Children`s Centres and Sure Start – and not to substitute replacement of existing residential provisions
- The expectation being that new services will be provided, not just to respond to critical needs and families in crisis, but also to improve quality of life.

- There is no indication of the level of funding from 2011/12 onwards.

2.3 Reporting requirements

Together for Disabled Children published what it termed Readiness Criteria Standards in January 2009, with the requirement that evidence of planning should be submitted across nine key areas. This step was critical in so far that the Government has indicated that where Councils failed to meet these standards, funding may be withheld. A detailed portfolio of information was submitted to the Local Programme Advisor who confirmed that the Council meets all of the standards.

In late April, Together for Disabled Children published a new set of reporting requirements, called the Staged Progression Framework, with expectations that the Council and NHS will evidence progress in working towards meeting the Full Service Offer for Short Breaks.

This sets out 4 key objectives with 4 stages to be met, in terms of:

- Completion of an Initial Needs assessment and embedding consultation
- Evidencing via the Delivery Plan and effective data management, increased levels of provision
- Producing revised eligibility criteria for short breaks provision which parents feel are fair, and are consistently communicated and applied
- Providing a Workforce Plan which addresses the needs of universal service providers and specialist service providers

Together for Disabled Children wrote to each Director of Children Services in July 2009, to confirm the level of support required; they confirmed that Wirral is assessed as requiring medium support at this time. There is no indication within the letter of what support will be provided, or when the level of support will be reviewed. The distribution of authorities at the current time stands at: Intensive (4), High (26), Medium (44), Low (78). Further evidence logs were submitted in July and the Council is on target with reporting deadlines. Now the Project Manager is in post we would also expect to confirm further improvements in our performance over coming months.

2.4 Short Breaks Development Strategy and Delivery Plan

A Short Breaks Development Strategy is at an advanced stage of development. It confirms our needs assessment, vision and key objectives and our strategic direction, within the overarching frameworks of the Childrens Plan and requirements of the Aiming High programme. It is proposed that this will be presented to the Childrens Trust Board and Cabinet during September. The key principles are:

2.4.1 Early intervention and prevention

We know that disabled children do best when they and their families are enabled to lead as ordinary lives as possible. We also know from families that regular and reliable short breaks for carers; make a significant difference in their ability to cope.

Early intervention means intervening soon after the identification of a need. It does not necessarily mean intervening in the early years of a child's life, although frequently the two go together. Early intervention and prevention has been central to our redevelopment of residential and family support services over a number of years.

2.4.2 Personalisation / equipping young people for independence in adult life.

Direct Payments, individualised budgets and supported living initiatives indicate that social policy is moving in the direction of enabling disabled people to manage their own care, choose how they lead their own lives and control the services they need. The aim is to improve outcomes for people, and ensure that they are treated with greater dignity, are safer and lead more fulfilling lives rather than be passive recipients of services.

This policy shift, whilst predominant in adult social care, is also relevant to the strategy for disabled children and young people in three ways:

- Many parents who use carer support services benefit from being in control of these services;
- Some parents also receive support from adult services in their own right
- Equipping young people with the skills and mindset to achieve their potential for independence and fulfilment as young adults must start long before the transition to adult services.

2.4.3 Engagement and Involvement

These principles permeate all strands of the Aiming High programme. Paragraph 2.7 set out our actions in this area

2.4.4 Financial sustainability

Successful implementation of this Strategy depends on managing the twin pressures of rising demand for services and severe financial constraints for the Council and the NHS. Long term pressures remain in terms of rising numbers of children with more complex health needs and Autistic Spectrum Disorders (ASD) specifically, which will continue to require fundamental changes to the commissioning and delivery of services.

The additional Government funding for short breaks, in the region of £2m revenue and £0.75m capital, is a significant boost for services. This

programme was first announced in May 2007 and has been accompanied by significant publicity since then. With the new money has come greater expectations from an increasing number of families, who may feel their needs have not been met over time, and having been consulted, are keen that they receive increased support.

In essence meeting the needs of disabled young people is a three-way responsibility between parents, universal services for all children, and specialist disability services. For this programme to achieve the right balance, it will involve:

- ensuring commissioning rigour by the Council and NHS, working in partnership;
- increasing choice by removing the barriers to universal services for all disabled children and young people. With suitable support, participating in universal services can be a more cost-effective, as well as child-centred, way of supporting families;
- taking children with lower levels of need out of bureaucratic processes to access “ordinary” services, and removing the requirement for them to have an assessment or care plan for this purpose;
- making sure arrangements are equitable, whereby parents who can afford to do so, contribute to the cost of services.
- a continued shift of resources from residential short breaks services to home and community based support; with improved early intervention, parenting and specialist family support services working in a more co-ordinated fashion,
- reducing “life-time costs” by making sure that disabled people have every chance when young to develop their potential for economically active and independent adult lives.

The Delivery Plan attached, sets out how we will deliver short break service transformation (Appendix 2)

2.5 Governance arrangements

A new governance structure has been submitted and approved by the Strategic Partnership Board. This structure has now been introduced, with terms of reference and group membership confirmed. (Appendix 3a, 3b).

The Executive Group will be extended to include representation from the Link Forum and a parental representative, and will oversee all elements of the Aiming High programmes. The Learning Disability and Difficulty (LDD) Plan for 2009- 2010 will need to be modified to respond to the emerging themes of the Core offer of the wider Aiming High programme.

2.6 Project Management

A Project Manager has been appointed for the 2 year period to oversee the delivery of the programme and Transformation Plan. Three further posts have been created within the Project Team to provide capacity to ensure the

programme now moves forwards at pace, in line with reporting requirements. All of these posts are fixed term contracts at this time.

- *Inclusion and Development Officer (Specialist services)* the post incumbent will focus on ensuring young people are consulted, that specialist services continue to develop person centred models of working and to set up an emergency support scheme. This post has been filled by a temporary secondment from the residential service into this position.
- *Inclusion and Development Officer (Universal services)* the post incumbent will focus on ensuring that new activities are developed and that young people are readily able to access universal provision. The post incumbent will also ensure effective monitoring of contracted activity. This post has been filled after both internal and external advertisement.
- *Team Support Officer* – this post holder will support the team in all administrative functions and support the team in improved data management, and information provision. This post has now been filled by after both internal and external advertisement.

2.7 Consultation and Engagement

The views of children, young people and parents/carers are at the heart of the funding proposals. A comprehensive consultation process has been undertaken to develop our Short Breaks vision and understand the needs of children and young people and parents/carers. This involved:

- A Consultation event in October 2008 to start developing the vision and understand needs from a parent and carers focus;
- A Children and young people's event during October inclusion week;
- A Questionnaire sent to all parents (whose children have Special Educational Needs (SEN) in November 2008;
- A feedback event in January 2009 – to confirm the vision and develop the priority areas in developing the Delivery Plan;
- Fun days were organised in July for young people and their families to talk to parents and young people further;
- Further consultation has been undertaken with groups of young people – across the range of special schools and youth groups. Consultations are planned across several mainstream schools in September;
- A newsletter is being produced every 2-3 months to keep parents and carers up to date with developments.

A Consultation Strategy has been developed with parents, which members are asked to note (Appendix4). The newly formed Engagement & Involvement Group is developing our consultation activity further. Wirral Family Consultation Forum has been supported to secure a further grant from the Government.

A training programme for parents and carers in engagement has been delivered and is currently being evaluated. Ongoing consultation throughout

the next two years is a requirement of the programme, to evidence that change is being driven by children and families, and truly reflects their needs.

2.8 Improving data management

The Secretary of State has written to all Councils to reinforce the need for effective data management to drive forwards the increased investment in services. The Local Programme Advisor has been provided with an action plan which confirms our commitment to improvement in this area.

3.0 Commissioning Intentions & Indicative Funding Proposals

3.1 Revenue objectives

Revenue proposals have been developed to:

- Address gaps in services, thus offering a greater range of options for children, young people and parents/carers;
- Strengthen systems for the involvement and engagement of children, young people and parents/carers;
- Improve access to child care for disabled children, and to universal services: extended schools, children's centres, leisure, youth and play services;
- Improve information for children, young people and parents/carers;
- Invest in developing and supporting the workforce to meet the needs of all children, including children with disabilities;
- Expand direct payments and pilot individual budgets;
- Develop an emergency support scheme, as a matter of priority;
- Increase the financial sustainability of provision throughout and following the programme;

3.2 Outline expenditure

Within the Aiming High programme we have been required to confirm our Delivery Plan and provide an initial outline of our intentional spend in relation to both capital and revenue. (Appendix 5)

3.3 Capital

Proposals continue to be developed via the Capital Sub Group of the Aiming High programme with a key requirement that any offers to enhance service provision in universal services must be over and above Disability Discrimination Act requirements. At this stage a number of potential options are being evaluated by the Capital sub group, and firmer proposals will be submitted in relation to spend across both years.

- **Adaptations** – A nominal allocation has been proposed at this time based on providing several larger schemes of work and a number of smaller schemes

- **Equipment** – It is proposed to reserve funding for the purchase of hoists and beds which might permit other family members to offer support. Currently children are only allocated one set of equipment
- **Transport** – it is proposed to fund new vehicles for the family support and residential provision to improve community access
- **Play equipment** – Within the Play Strategy it is proposed to develop 4 play sites with enhanced facilities across the Borough. It is also proposed to allocate some funding to enhance Leisure services / other providers specialist equipment to improve the offer for young people with physical disabilities
- **Sports and leisure facilities** - it is proposed that schemes of work be considered at the Europa Pools, and other key sites. This will in both circumstances provide enhanced changing facilities which would be accessible during leisure activities and to improve community access for children with continence issues.
- **Community based provision.** - it is proposed to investigate the funding of a minor scheme of works with voluntary sector providers. A bidding scheme has been developed similar to that for the Extended schools
- **Residential and Resource Centre** – these items are purposely allocated to year 2 of the programme, whilst a service review is conducted. Spend will also be linked into the Capital programme for children`s homes

3.3 Increasing community based provision

In view of the timescale required to undertake a comprehensive commissioning process, existing holiday scheme provision for this summer, has been offered additional funding and support., to provide for the immediate increase in provision required within the programme.

3.4 Commissioning Brief

New services have now been commissioned using the Joint Strategic Commissioning Framework ; designed to ensure that services are planned and secured to meet the needs of children, young people and their families and provide best value (considerations of quality and cost). Within the programme requirements we have been able to evidence rigour with regards to establishing the principles of contestability and in stimulating the market.

Existing service level agreements for play schemes were reviewed within this process, including those for Wirral Play Council, Crossroads and Merseyside Autistic Childrens Society, which are to run to December 31st 2009, unless renewed.

A Provider Event was held to share with new and existing providers our Vision, our Commissioning intentions and processes. This was followed by a Procurement workshop within the commissioning process.

A report on the process and outcomes will be presented to the next Cabinet later this month.

3.5 Community Grants

Within the programmes it is proposed to make money available to community organisations and parent led groups who provide short breaks for disabled young people and their families. The purpose is to stimulate activity within this sector; this approach is viewed as good practice within this programme. It is proposed that these grants would be between £500 and £5,000 per year. This process will be less demanding than that of the commissioning brief, and more proportionate given the lower level of grant funding. Organisations would also be offered further advice within the process of other funding streams which they could apply to for funding. We are currently evaluating requests for grants by using a panel approach, to bring key stakeholders into the decision making process. This approach has been used by other Councils, and is seen as good practice within the Aiming High programme. Clear criteria will be attached to this funding to ensure it meets the targeted groups of young people. It will also be the expectation that groups receiving funding will support the programme by acting as a conduit for information distribution and to support consultation activity.

3.6 Service Review

It is proposed that a service review programme is instituted, beginning with residential short break provision. The Government published a review by Price Waterhouse Cooper (2007) "*Market for Disabled Childrens Services – A Review*" in which it reinforced its view that there should be a clearer separation between the commissioning and provision of services within both the Council and NHS. Within Aiming High guidance the Council will be expected to review it's provision to ensure we consider whether services should be commissioned with an external provider, or develop a service level agreement with such services. A more robust approach to the monitoring of costs and outcomes is similarly required.

In addition the NHS are proposing to review it's nursing services which will include :

- Tertiary
- Continuing Care
- Hospital to Home
- End of Life
- Palliative
- Hospice from Home

4.0 Analysis of the Transformation Plan: Implications and Challenges

4.1 Residential provision

The Children with Disability residential service has, over a number of years, changed from providing long term provision and a dependency model, to one of shared care and short breaks services to ensure children can remain happily within their families.

The need for long term provision has reduced over the last few years and numbers of children looked after and / or placed out of Borough has

significantly reduced, by the delivery of improved parenting support. Following concern expressed in the 2007 Annual Performance Assessment about the lack of placement choice for long term placements, a tendering exercise was completed last year which has identified a number of local providers who could respond to this need within the private sector, as and when the need arose.

A number of young people are also shortly to move into Adult provision which will leave significant capacity within the residential service at Rosclare House. It is proposed that a thorough review should be undertaken of both Willowtree and Rosclare to determine the future configuration of residential short break provision within Wirral, which reflects the further shift in balance to providing increased family based short breaks and family support. An increased alignment between the Children with Disabilities Service (CYPD) with the Learning Disability CAMHS service will underpin this approach, and reinforce effective parenting strategies.

The service review will scope out the next stages of this development, and a further report will be presented to Cabinet, which provides recommendations for the structuring and best positioning of these services.

4.2 Fostering provision

The programme provides an opportunity to increase capacity in family based short break provision by developing a Contract Carer scheme within Wirral, and should also provide opportunity to review the structure of current fostering provision for children with disabilities provided by the Council.

A Contract Carer is a person who is paid a professional rate to provide support in their own home across the full year. Each Carer would typically provide 230 nights support each year. Both of these elements will be critical in our meeting the full service offer, and should, over time, reduce the demands on residential provision, support greater choice and provide better value for money. The Shared Care Network is indicating a 60% lower unit cost for overnight care within a Contract Carer placement than residential care.

In relation to the capital element of the Aiming High programme, this will support the adaptation of properties for the Contract Carers and the provision of equipment. The Council will need to put in place legal agreements with families where significant adaptations are made. It is envisaged that a several schemes of work will need to be undertaken, which should be able to be managed in a timely fashion given our current adaptation expertise in the Council. The use of *pod* designs are also being considered, as they offer a quick and ready adaptation which can be put in place in weeks, and moved if the foster carer does not want to continue with the scheme.

The Contract Carer scheme has been put within the commissioning process to allow a full consideration of best value for money. This will provide the fostering service for children with a disability, opportunity to consider the

benefits of applying to increase their staffing compliment, review payment structures and promotional activity.

4.3 Family Support Provision

The children with disabilities service provides a team of family support workers who work with children with complex needs. They provide planned and emergency support to children and families to prevent family breakdown by implementing various programmes, including parenting strategies and home based work to understand the child's condition. From first level discussions approximately 20 young people with severe disabilities and a cohort of 20—25 young people with Social Communication have been identified who would benefit from a wrap around approach. The teams will provide short breaks tailored to the young person's needs. The indicative spend proposals look to increase the capacity of these specialist teams, or other specialist providers in a phased approach. The NHS are also considering the extension of these teams by also funding several posts in this area

4.4 Workforce Development

The Aiming High programme envisages significant workforce development – which Council services will need to support. A Workforce Group has been established with the remit to ensure a coherent workforce plan, and a set of recommendations which will need to be considered jointly by the Council and NHS.

4.5 Direct Payments

Through our approach to developing and managing the market, we will look afresh at the provision of Direct Payments; to ensure that parent / carers' directly employing personal assistants remains a positive option. A number of new service providers have entered the market; who are offering support with the recruitment and training of personal assistants. Direct Payments workshops have focused up on improving support to parents with an information package ready for launch, and offering parents support on administrative and employment processes. Another key area for development will be in relation to the numbers of young people taking up payments at 16-17 years of age. With the enhanced project capacity it should be possible to create good links with the Transition Person Centred Review Group – which will be important in creating a new vision for young people as they reach adulthood.

4.6 Individual Budgets

Individual Budgets focus on a resource allocation process to improve the transparency of assessment decisions and choice of provision. The shape of schemes also envisage the potential to use different funding streams within the process, and some degree of flexibility being offered in how funds are used, to ensure that the specified outcomes of the care plan are met . At this

time there is a pilot scheme being run within the Department of Adult Social Services. Nationally there are a number of new Pathfinders who are piloting an Individual Budget scheme, and they are committed to providing leadership in developing schemes for children. Locally we have a number of families who would be keen to join a pilot scheme.

4.7 Emergency Support scheme

Within the Delivery Plan it is proposed to develop this scheme as a key priority. The Inclusion and Development Officer will develop an outline scheme for submission.

Work has been undertaken to consider what constitutes an emergency, which focuses mainly on the hospitalisation of close family members, or one off events such as funerals. The proposed scheme envisages a registration process to be set up, and following this an emergency plan to be developed with carers, which includes drawing together a support plan.

Within the Commissioning Brief providers are being sought who will be able to arrange for staff to support families at short notice

5 Financial implications

The Aiming High for Disabled Children programme is grant funded. The revenue and capital allocations for 2009-10 and 2010-11 are shown in paragraph 2.1.

The indicative spend plans are included in Appendix 5.

There are no indications of the level of funding from 2011-12 onwards; although it is likely financial commitments for Short Breaks will increase.

6 Staffing Implications

6.1 The programme has required increased Project Management capacity within year 2 to drive the Delivery Plan forwards.

6.2 The service review may recommend changes to the residential and family support teams.

7 Equal Opportunities Implications

7.1 The changes are driven by the imperative that disabled youngsters should have personal and developmental opportunities and be supported to lead an ordinary life as valued members of their community.

7.2 Short breaks should therefore not just be used as a crisis intervention, but should also be used routinely to help parents and carers to maintain and improve the quality of care they naturally wish to provide.

- 7.3 Within the first stages of the Transformation Plan a needs analysis will be undertaken to identify if there are groups of disabled children who currently do not receive effective support.
- 7.4 Involving parents in the design of services is a critical part of this programme and the delivery of the Core offer.
- 7.5 Young people with disabilities have more significant difficulties in communicating their preferences and will need more imaginative and individualised approaches in ensuring their involvement.

8 Human Rights Implications

Decisions on all aspects of the proposed changes will be informed by the Convention on Human Rights to ensure that the rights of children in our care and our employees are protected.

9 Local Agenda 21 Implications

No specific implications emerging from this report.

10 Community Safety Implications

Improved commissioning of care provision should reduce the vulnerability of disabled young people to bullying and for some young people to being engaged in or subject to crime.

11 Planning Implications

There are none arising from this report.

12 Local Member Support Implications

Disabled young people live in all wards.

13 Background Papers

Aiming High for Disabled Children

Updates on these and other measures are available at

www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/ahdc

Recommendations

1. To note the content of this report
2. To note the Consultation Strategy for Parent Carers
3. To note the Commissioning Brief

Howard Cooper
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