

Somerset's Access to Social Care Support for Disabled Children and Children with Additional Needs

February 2016

DRAFT



Introduction

As a parent or professional it is useful to know:

- How disabled children and children with additional needs can be supported to achieve their potential through universal, targeted and specialist services in Somerset **and**
- How services from Children's Services Specialist Services (social care) including the Disabled Children's Team are provided.

This guide seeks to explain how these services work in Somerset.

It is important that disabled children are supported to remain safely and happily with their family and can benefit from activities within the community. The assessed impact of their disability should determine the level and nature of the support they need to enable this to happen.

Legal context and Somerset's definition of disability

The Children Act (1989) defines a disabled child as a child in need (Section 17, 10c); and services including assessments of need can be provided through this legislation, as well as:

- The Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act (1970),
- The Carers and Disabled Children Act (2000)
- Carers Equal Opportunities Act and their supporting guidance.

Additionally, the Equalities Act (2010) sets out the rights and duties of services to address the needs of disabled people.

Meeting the needs of disabled children

Meeting the Needs of Children and Families in Somerset identifies three headings of need for children and young people including disabled children:

- Universal – (Level 1)
- Additional – (Level 2)
- Complex – (Level 3)
- Acute – (Level 4)

Universal Services (Level 1)

Somerset recognises that not all families with a disabled child need social care support and there are a range of universal services available to disabled children and their families including advice, information and guidance, play and leisure activities (mainstream and specialist) and support groups.

Play and leisure activities provided through community groups including sport and leisure providers provide valuable short breaks for families. These are being developed within the **“Short Break Local Offer”**.

Further information about these services is available through the services themselves, or by contacting the Short Breaks Team.

Targeted – Level 2

Where the needs of the child or young person cannot be met by universal services. Somerset provide services, through the Short Break Team as part of the CWD Services and Early Help Assessment. The Short Breaks Team can be contacted via First Response.

Targeted and coordinated Services – Level 3/4

Where the complexity of the child's support needs exceed the services offered through universal and targeted levels, the family may need specialist support including social care involvement to safeguard a child, promote their wellbeing and/or to retain them in their family home.

In order to qualify for a service from the Disabled Children's Team a child/young person must be living in Somerset, have a disability as defined by the Children Act 1989.

The decision about whether a child is disabled within Somerset's agreed definition is always based on a consideration of the impact of the child's condition on their needs when compared to other children of the same age, and not purely on the basis of whether the child has or does not have a particular diagnosis. The impact of the child's condition which is likely to be life long, would be that the disability significantly restricts the child's daily life leading to poorer outcomes for him/her and their family if services were not provided.

Where an assessment of need is required Somerset is guided by government guidance called *Working Together* (2013), this guidance is designed to make sure:

- Of the legislative requirements and expectations on individual services to safeguard and promote the welfare of children; and
- A clear framework for Local Safeguarding Children Boards (LSCBs) to monitor the effectiveness of local services.
- The unique and individual needs of families are paramount throughout the assessment.
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Right Plan at the Right Time

An assessment can lead to a number of different plans, these are:

- 1) No Plan (if eligible, Short Break Local Offer)
- 2) Early Help Plan
- 3) Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plan (CSDPA, 1970)*
- 4) Child in Need Plan (s17, CA, 1989)
- 5) Child Protection Plan (S47, CA 1989)
- 6) Child Looked After Plan (S20/s31, CA, 1989)

* We are developing new ways of working to implement integrated EHC plans.

The response that families should expect from Somerset

Families will be listened to, treated with respect and their information treated confidentially and managed securely.

On receipt of the referral, the case will be allocated to a worker. During the assessment there will be a discussion with the family about their strengths and needs; and to explore how their needs can best be met. This assessment is completed in conjunction, and with permission from parents/ those with parental responsibility to contact other agencies namely school and health, those involved with the child and family.

The service for the child may be through the provision of social work support, short breaks, personal care, direct payments, equipment and Occupational Therapist Support. The care for the child may be in the home or outside of the home. It can also include enabling families to access community organisations such as support groups or specialist health and education resources.

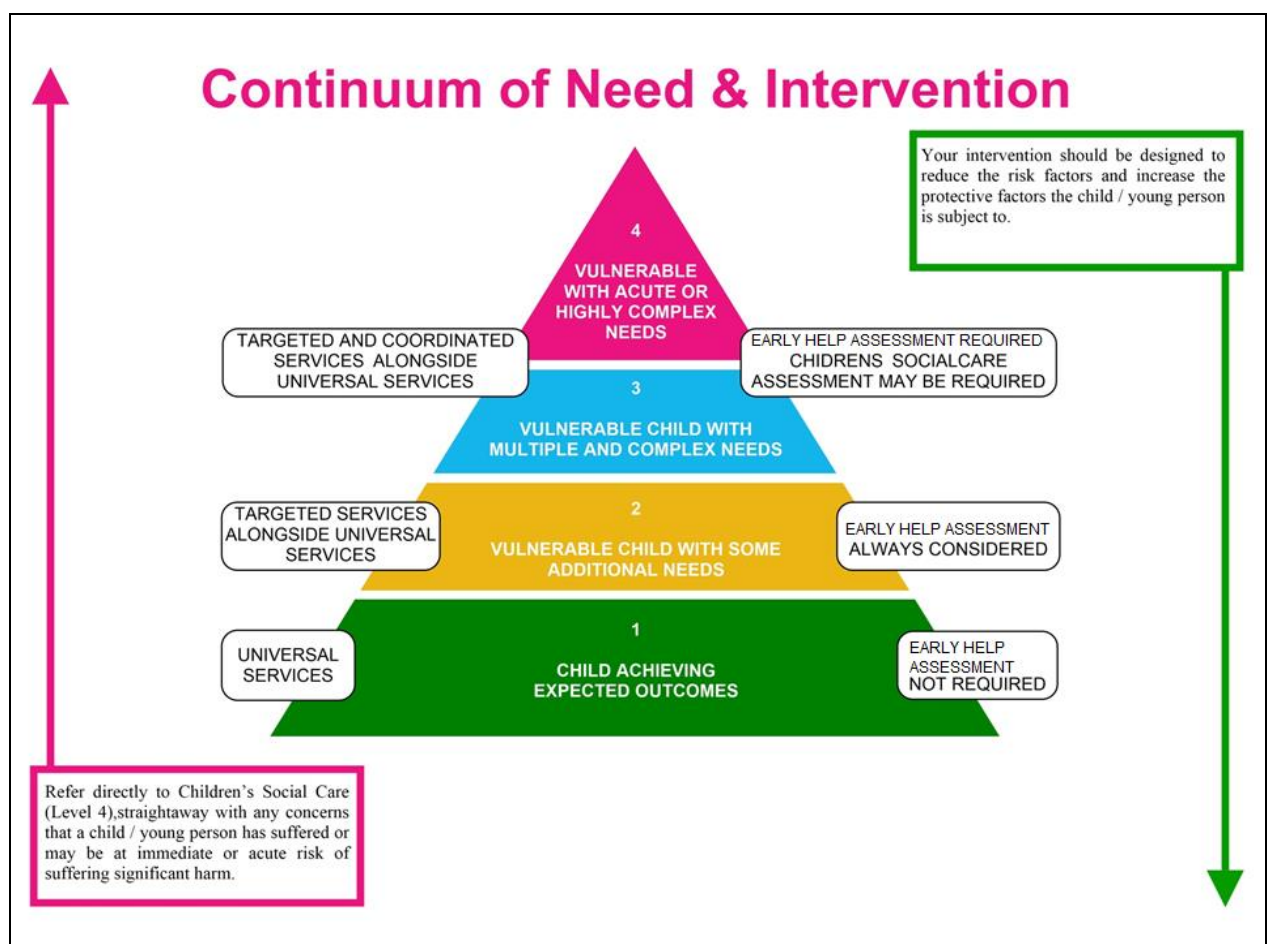
The details of the assessment and the services identified to meet the family's needs will be recorded in a Plan, a copy of which will be shared with the family.

When the Support or Care Plan has been finalised services will be secured to meet identified needs.

A visiting pattern will be agreed with the family and regularly reviewed at intervals of no more than six months.

Somerset values feedback from families on what is working well for them and how services can be improved.

It works closely with **Somerset Parent Carer Forum (SPCF)** which is the county wide Parent Carer Forum for families with children and young people who have special educational needs, disabilities or additional needs. This partnership enables families' experiences and views to be heard; which informs the development and delivery of services.



Level 1 - Universal

Level 1 is aimed at supporting children who have any disability which does not impact significantly on day to day living.

Level 1 provides open access to the following early help and universal services as well as advice and signposting for parents / carers.

Examples of services which may be provided could include

Short Breaks newsletter and calendar (inclusive activity days)
Activity day passes to set locations (eg -animal park, play centre)
Max card for discounted access to local attractions
Youth equipment store (loan of equipment for play, camping,)
Resource Team monthly club (drop in club for young people, parents / carers)
Inclusive and grant funded youth groups

Level 2 - Additional

Level two is aimed at supporting children who have a disability, who are vulnerable and have some additional needs.

These may include children / young people who need additional support to access community facilities, short break activities.

Children / young people may have been recently diagnosed with a disability or may be presenting moderate challenging behaviour as a result of their disability.

Support may be needed to prevent family breakdown or the family becoming isolated in their community.

Promotion of independence in activities of daily living.

A lead professional may support the family alongside 2 or 3 other services under a Early Help Assessment. It provides targeted services as set out below as well as Level 1

Examples of services which may be provided could include

- Early Help Assessment
- Time limited family support from the Short Breaks Team / Short Breaks Coordinator
- Time limited family support from the Children's Autism Outreach Team / Autism Outreach Worker
- Specific Autism training to support the Child / young person and family
- Children's Autism Outreach Team clubs
- Children's Autism Outreach family activities, during the holidays
- 1 to 1 support for the child / young person from a Somerset supporter – following a children and families assessment
- Supported access to a Somerset Supporter youth group
- Supported access to holiday activities
- Direct payments following a children and families assessment
- 12 monthly review of Early Help Assessment
- Carers assessment
- Sessional short breaks
- Occupational therapy assessment and on-going support if appropriate

Level 3 - Complex

Level three is aimed at supporting children who have a disability, are vulnerable with multiple and complex needs or have a life limiting condition.

Developmental milestones may not be achieved without intervention.

The child / young person may need additional support to manage day to day living, beyond which the family can provide.

This can include moving and handling, Occupational therapy advice and provision of equipment for functional activities. (seating, minor adaptations, access curriculum)

Needs may be substantial and support is required to prevent family breakdown.

The child / young person may present challenging or self injurious behaviour due to their disability.

A family with more than one child who is disabled.

A child / young person who has a sudden deterioration of existing condition.

Support may be required in the child / young persons home or away from the home, to provide a family short break.

It provides targeted and coordinated services alongside Level 1 and 2.

Examples of services which may be provided could include

- Children and family assessment
- Continuing health care plan
- Residential short break provision
- Short break Foster care
- Direct payments
- Domiciliary care, home care services
- Overnight Short breaks (up to 30 nights per year)
- Occupational therapy assessment and on-going support if appropriate

Level 4 – Acute

Level 4 aims to support children who have a severe disability, who are vulnerable with acute or highly complex needs which can impact on day to day living. It provides higher support needs which are targeted and coordinated by a social worker alongside care and support in Level 1, 2 and 3.

Complex needs may involve high levels of input from Health, Social Care and Education.

Children and young people may require higher levels of overnight or full time care and support.

A child / young person who is likely to suffer significant harm in the family environment.

A child / young person who has complex medical needs, or challenging behaviour due to their disability.

Occupational Therapy support for sudden deterioration of existing condition, function (activities of daily living / moving and handling changes), carer / family situation.

- *Support for hospital discharge*
- *Terminal illness diagnosis*
- *Safety needs within the home / vehicle/ community*
- *Major adaptations to the home*

Examples of services which may be provided could include

- Children with disabilities who require protection under a care order
- Overnight Short breaks (over 30 nights per year)
- Specialist placements
- Personal health budgets (continuing health care / end of life care)
- Hospice care, overnight and or day care
- Full time residential provision
- Occupational therapy assessment and on-going support if appropriate