

HEALTH, SOCIAL CARE AND WELLBEING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - 10TH JULY 2012

SUBJECT: SERVICES FOR CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES

REPORT BY: CORPORATE DIRECTOR SOCIAL SERVICES

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To update the Health Social Care and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee on the progress of re-modelling services for Children with Disabilities in Caerphilly County Borough Council.
- 1.2 To update the Health Social Care and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee on the progress of the Children's Services Occupational Therapists Integration with Health Occupational Therapists.

2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 On the 15th February 2011 a report was provided to the Health Social Care and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee seeking support to progress the re-design of services for Children with Disabilities in Caerphilly County Borough Council. The Health Social Care and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee gave approval to progress the re-design services for children with disabilities living in Caerphilly County Borough Council with agreement that any savings made would be reinvested to both improve and extend service provision for children with complex and significant disabilities and their families including children with Autistic Spectrum Disorder, with a further update on the re-design as requested being presented to the Health Social Care and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee on the 25th October 2011.
- 2.2 In June 2011 a service specification was drawn up between the Occupational Therapy (OT) Directorate for the new Aneurin Bevan Health Board and the Children's Division of Caerphilly County Borough Council that sought to clarify both the operational management and the professional leadership and supervision arrangements that underpin the delivery of an integrated occupational therapy assessment and treatment service as part of the overall service provision for children with disabilities and developmental difficulties living in the borough of Caerphilly.
- 2.3 In order to ensure progression of this re-design an Implementation Group and Project Board have been set up. There are three parent representatives on both the Children's with Disability Implementation Group and Project Board. These parents have brought a fresh insight from a parental perspective, which has been extremely useful in the planning for these services. Parents and carers have continued to indicate high levels of satisfaction with current services and Children's Services will continue to enhance those services that are currently provided.

3. LINKS TO STRATEGY

- 3.1 Children With Disabilities Commissioning Strategy.
- 3.2 National Services Framework for Children, Young People and Maternity Services in Wales.

3.3 Autistic Spectrum Disorder Strategic Action Plan for Wales (Welsh Government).

4. THE REPORT

4.1 Over the last 5 years, the Directorate of Social Services has evidenced a change in the needs of children with disabilities, with an increase in complex disabilities including highly challenging behaviour amongst those children diagnosed with Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and children with a Learning Disability.

4.2 Children's Services reviewed the services currently provided, which can broadly be grouped into the following five areas:-

- Family Link short break foster care service
- Blackwood Resource Centre short break residential care
- Early Years – Nursery provision and Community Based Pre-School Play
- Play and Leisure Services
- Shared Care

4.3 One of the proposed changes that has now been fully implemented is the new revised Children's with Disability Eligibility Criteria introduced in October 2011. This change in the Eligibility Criteria for the Children With Disability Team was as a direct result of views expressed by many parents and carers and now allows children with diagnosed ASD to access support and service provision through this specialist team.

4.4 From January 2012 to March 2012, 36 new referrals were received by the team, of these 9 referrals were in respect of children with diagnosed Autistic Spectrum Disorder. All referrals to Children With Disabilities Team continue to be monitored and further updates will be provided.

5. FAMILY LINK SHORT BREAK FOSTER CARE SERVICES

5.1 This service provides respite through the provision of foster carers for children with disabilities.

5.2 The Family Link Foster Care Service had been managed through a contract with Action for Children but following a review and evaluation of this service this resource has successfully transferred to the management of the Family Placement Team and the re-registration of the remaining foster carers was completed in October 2011. A part time social worker who has been recruited to manage the service has been in post since January 2012. Further development of the service is underway.

6. BLACKWOOD RESOURCE CENTRE

6.2 Blackwood Resource Centre is a short break respite residential home established in 1998 and in the main offers residential short breaks to children with complex physical disabilities between the age of 5 and 18. It is fully equipped with specialised moving and handling equipment. The service is available at weekends and school holidays only and is currently managed under a contract with Action For Children. Although the service is run by Action For Children the building is owned by Caerphilly County Borough Council.

6.3 As previously agreed rather than going out to the external market via a tender for this service draft plans are now in place for Children's Services to transfer this service into Local Authority management. In doing this Children's Services plan to widen the use of this purpose built resource to enable it's use during the week as well as at weekends. The expansion of these services will be funded through savings made on central management charges that have been paid to Action for Children along with other savings made.

- 6.4 Children's Services will be managing this centre and plans are currently being looked at through multi-agency collaboration with the Aneurin Bevan Health Board around the possibility of jointly commissioning additional beds for respite use during the week.
- 6.5 Plans are currently being considered with the Health Board that will look at the possibility of re – modelling the use of some of the downstairs rooms into additional bedrooms and looking at a more flexible use of the centre during the week with the focus on ensuring that the children who attend Blackwood Resource Centre have an enjoyable experience whilst attending this resource.

7. NURSERY PROVISION/COMMUNITY BASED PLAY

- 7.1 Plans have now advanced in respect of the current Early Years Nursery provision in Blackwood Resource Centre. Children's Services had financed this resource on a yearly basis for the last 3 years due to Action for Children being unable to continue to fund this resource. In consultation with parents it has been agreed that this nursery provision will be realigned by July 2012.
- 7.2. Children who need a service in the future will be offered a place in the fully equipped Children's Centre Early Years Nursery and will undergo a play assessment over a period of approximately six weeks in order to assess their suitability to be able to access community based play. Children with complex needs who are assessed as being unable to access this service will be offered a long-term place in the Children's Centre Nursery.
- 7.3. Children who are identified as being able to access community based play will be offered one to one support. This will mean that a nursery placement within the child's own community will be identified and they will be matched with their own individual support worker who will accompany them during the time in the resource.
- 7.4 Parents of the five children currently attending the Blackwood Resource Nursery and who will still need a placement in a nursery provision from September 2012 have been offered the opportunity of meeting with members of the Implementation Group to discuss this change and have also visited the Children's Centre Nursery to meet with the staff and see the facilities.
- 7.5 To date all of these parents have been extremely happy with what they have seen and have advised that they are more than happy for their children to make this move and to look at the suitability of their children being able to access community based play in their own communities. It is clear from consultation with parents that integration for their children within their own community is high on their agenda's. Good consultation and engagement has made this possible.

8. PLAY AND LEISURE

- 8.1 Children Services provide services for children with disabilities to have play and leisure opportunities during the school holidays and weekends. Currently there are two-school holiday play provisions, one at the Action For Children Caerphilly Children's Centre for under 8's and at Trinity Fields School for over 8's. Both providers have developed a high degree of expertise. Support is also provided by the Paediatric Nursing Service to the Trinity Fields Holiday Play service to allow children who continually use medical equipment to attend.
- 8.2 Following a review of services the Directorate do not propose to change these services and will continue to fund provision with the current providers.

8.3 Having reviewed these services and streamlined some contracts more placements will be made available for children who need services or require additional sessions per month. Additional placements will be made available at the Saturday Club for less complex children and 3 placements available for very complex children in the specialist respite service. The expansion of these services are to be funded through a reduction of management charges and other costs at Trinity Fields.

9. SHARED CARE

9.1 Shared Care has been contracted to Action For Children over 10 years and has a base within the Caerphilly Children's Centre. It consists of 2 distinct services: Sitting and Outreach.

9.2 Sitting is a domiciliary care service in the family home and is available mainly in the evenings and weekends. This provides the parents or carers with a short respite period every two weeks when they can do things within the home or go for short outings. At least 25 children are able to access this service. Due to their high needs a small group of 5 children receive a weekly service with 2 workers. The Service Is registered under National Minimum Standards For Domiciliary Care Agencies In Wales and receives annual inspections.

9.3 Outreach is a leisure service for children and young people with disabilities which utilises community based resources but also makes use of facilities within the Children's Centre such as the hydro pool, play room and specialised trampoline. Children and young people can also elect to do community based activities like swimming, bowling, visits to the cinema and shopping. Young people also have the opportunity of developing independence skills by accessing community facilities like shops and cafes. Outreach provides a service for 35 children and young people once a fortnight.

9.4 20 additional shared care places will be contracted this financial year; this will mean that 10 additional sitting and 10 outreach places will now be available on top of the contracted places.

10. OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY INTEGRATION

10.1 Through the collaboration with the Health Board and the CCBC's Children's Services, an 'Integrated' occupational therapy service' has been established, which will ensure a joined up, seamless service approach to OT assessments and interventions.

10.2 The benefit of creating an integrated service which will span health and social care boundaries and where possible provide a seamless service to children, young people and their families, include:-

- Improving professional development
- Providing Joint training and study days
- Joint OT meetings
- Improved communication on joint casework
- Cut down on duplication of work

10.3 Janet Kelly, Head of Occupational Therapy Services Aneurin Bevan Health Board met with the OT's in the Children with Disabilities Team for a half day in early January 2012 to discuss what 'integration' means and to look at some shared cases with a view to understanding their workload and finding a way forward with managing the work in a more integrated way.

10.4 At this meeting all agreed the following as a way forward:-

- Caerphilly Local Authority OTs to attend the all Gwent health and social care children's OT meeting in March 2012 and will now meet as a whole Gwent children's and young person's OT team on a bi-monthly basis. This meeting is specifically to discuss issues of working practice that are common to health and social care OTs.
- Janet Kelly to meet with Senior Occupational Therapy staff in the Children with Disabilities Team for ongoing professional supervision.
- Janet Kelly to meet with the Caerphilly health and social care OTs in April 2012 at the children's Centre to discuss joint working and shared casework and to begin the process of 'uniting' both teams into a 'single team' in terms of working practices.
- Janet Kelly would hold a workshop in May 2012 with health and LA OTs from across Gwent to progress the 'single team' approach to managing referrals and on-going workloads.

10.5 It is also envisaged that a single assessment form can be developed for OT services and that some assessments and delivery of service can be achieved by one OT rather than two.

11. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

11.1 The Implementation Plan is on target to achieve the re-investment with the result of improved services that are robust, flexible and will meet the needs of a wider range of children, including those with complex/significant needs.

12. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

12.1 The Directorate of Social Services is committed to ensuring a continuity of services for children and their families. Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) implications regarding Blackwood Resource Centre and staff employed by Action for Children will need to be resolved prior to transferring this service into Local Authority management. There are no other TUPE implications.

13. CONSULTATIONS

13.1 The views of those consulted have been incorporated in this report.

13.2 During consultation with parents and carers of children with disabilities there have been consistent themes raised, focusing on 3 key areas. Parents and carers require that services are of a high quality, reliable and flexible and able to meet their needs for regular planned breaks and during time of crisis are available to children with significant disabilities not just those with the most complex needs. Parents and carers again substantiated these themes during all consultation events.

13.3 Ongoing consultation with parents is something that is high on the agenda, in order to ensure that parents are updated on the progress of service redevelopment.

13.4 Parent feedback is important to the future planning of services – dates for the next round of consultation meetings are being planned to meet and update parents.

13.5 There are also representatives from Education on the Childrens With Disabilities Implementation Group and Project Board. With the involvement of Education the re-design of services have been jointly planned and taken forward. Parents have also seen this partnership as invaluable to the re-design.

14. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 14.1 It is recommended that the Health Social Care and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee notes the improvements made and requests a further update in 12 months time.

15. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

- 15.1 The Directorate of Social Services remains confident that this plan will provide a broad range of quality and inclusive support services which will be delivered to children and their families and meet their current needs. Feedback from consultation with parents and young people who will be using these services, as well as the views of partner agencies has been very positive. This plan will afford the opportunity to further develop services for those children and young people with highly complex needs and significant disabilities.

16. STATUTORY POWER

- 16.1 Children Act 1989.
- 16.2 The Carers (Equal Opportunities) Act 2004.
- 16.3 The Children and Family (Wales) Measure 2010.

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Shaun Watkins, Principal Personnel Officer, Children's Services
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Bev Mills, Planning Manager
Bev Lane, ISCAN Manager
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