



HEALTH, SOCIAL CARE & WELLBEING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 25TH MARCH 2014

SUBJECT: SERVICES FOR DISABLED CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

REPORT BY: CORPORATE DIRECTOR SOCIAL SERVICES

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To update Health, Social Care and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee on the improvements made to service delivery for disabled children and young people in Caerphilly and inform Committee of proposals to further integrate services across the County.

2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 This report provides an update for Scrutiny Committee on the remodelling of services for disabled children and young people that was originally agreed back in 2011.
- 2.2 In addition to direct Social Work support, Children's Services provides services which can be grouped as follows:
- Family Link Service offering short breaks foster care placements.
 - Blackwood Resource Centre offering short breaks residential care.
 - Early Years Provision – pre-school assessment and nursery provision.
 - Community based play and leisure services
 - Shared Care services – sitting service and outreach support
- 2.3 This report outlines the key changes made to services to improve the quality of services together with improved efficiency and cost effectiveness. In addition, the report outlines the potential areas for future development of services including a proposal to work with key partner agencies to establish a multi agency Integrated Disability Service for children and young people, building on good practice and ensuring families receive the support they need.

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 ASD Strategic Action Plan for Wales (Welsh Assembly Government)

4. THE REPORT

- 4.1 Children's Services historically contracted the majority of services outlined above from the Voluntary Sector. However, a review of all contracts identified reduced levels of funding

contributions made by the Voluntary Sector agencies, increased management fees and charges for providing services on behalf of the Council, increasing overheads and increasing requests for additional payments from the Local Authority and as a result it was agreed that:

- The Family Link Service and Blackwood Resource Centre would be brought in-house and delivered by Children's Services.
- Early Years Provision would be consolidated and provided at the Caerphilly Children's Centre.
- Play and leisure services would remain with Trinity Fields School but the contract would be reviewed.
- The Shared Care contract would remain with Action for Children and be reviewed.

5. UPDATE ON CURRENT SERVICES

5.1 Family Link short breaks fostering service

5.2 This service provides weekend respite to families through the provision of foster carers who are trained to care for disabled children and young people. The service was brought in-house in October 2011 on the basis that the Council already had an established infrastructure in place to support and deliver high quality fostering services. The return of the service in-house achieved savings on the management fees being charged by the voluntary sector provider.

5.3 Through consultation with parents of disabled children, it was recognised that short breaks services needed to be increased and offer more flexibility. At the time of transfer, there were 5 families offering short breaks. The service has subsequently increased to 10 families with ongoing recruitment plans in place.

5.4 Carers continue to be provided with ongoing specific training in managing and supporting the children they are linked with and receive monthly supervision from the Short Breaks Co-ordinator.

6. BLACKWOOD RESOURCE CENTRE

6.1 Blackwood Resource Centre provides residential short breaks for children and young people who, in the main, have complex physical disabilities or challenging behaviours. The service is available to children and young people between the ages of 5 and 18 years and is provided at weekends and during every school holiday.

6.2 Blackwood Resource Centre was managed through a contract with Action for Children. However, following a review of the service there were compelling reasons for the service to be provided directly by Children's Services including:

- Considerable financial savings
- Improved quality of the service provided
- Reinvestment in the service for the benefit of children and their parents
- Possible joint provision of services with health
- Further utilisation of the building and the provision of new services during weekdays

6.3 The service transferred back to Children's Services in July 2013 and working with HR and Finance colleagues, a range of staffing and budget issues have been addressed. To the credit of all staff and officers involved, there has been no disruption to service delivery during the transfer.

7. EARLY YEARS – PRE-SCHOOL ASSESSMENT AND NURSERY PROVISION

- 7.1 In July 2012, following consultation with parents, the pre-school assessment and nursery provision was realigned to ensure all new referrals are made through the ISCAN Project based at the Caerphilly Children's Centre.
- 7.2 Children referred through the ISCAN Project and who meet the criteria are offered an assessment placement in the Children's Centre Early Years Nursery to determine their suitability to access existing community based pre-school play groups with the aim of assisting their development in preparation for statutory nursery. Those children with the most complex needs are offered ongoing placements in the Children's Centre Nursery.
- 7.3. Children who are assessed as being able to access community based play have been offered one to one support from the Llaw Yn Llaw service which to date has been funded by Children's Services. Although this additional support has been successful, it is not a core service for Children's Services and is currently being reviewed in the context of the budgetary pressures faced by the Service.
- 7.4 Discussions are currently taking place with Education and Families First regarding the future funding and provision of this service.

8. PLAY AND LEISURE SERVICES

- 8.1 Children's Services have historically provided play and leisure services for disabled children and young people during school holidays and at weekends through contracts with the third sector and with Trinity Fields School.
- 8.2 The existing contracts have been reviewed and given the budgetary constraints future services will have to be targeted for those children and young people in greatest need. Through this review savings have been identified and the contract with Trinity Fields School will be renewed.

9. SHARED CARE

- 9.1 Shared Care consists of two discrete services: a Sitting service provided in families homes in the evenings and at weekends and an Outreach service supporting children and young people to access community based leisure services and activities. Both services are currently provided through a contract with Action For Children and are based in the Caerphilly Children's Centre.
- 9.2 Twenty additional shared care places were contracted in the last financial year, this meant 10 additional sitting and 10 outreach places were made available on top of the contracted Share Care places.
- 9.3 To date this service is fully utilised with a waiting list that is being reviewed with the Children with Disabilities Team Manager to ensure that children who access the service have plans that will enable them to move on from this service giving places available to new service users.

10. OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY SERVICES:

- 10.1 The integration between Local Authority Occupational Therapists and Health continues to progress and there are two pilot projects currently running:

- 10.2 **Sensory or Behavioural Project** – This project looks at working with children and young people with ASD to determine whether the behaviours they exhibit have a sensory base, are purely behavioural or a mixture of both. This involves the Senior Occupational Therapist and a skilled Childcare Support Worker, both of whom have received specialist training, completing in-depth assessments on individual children/young people to identify the right form of intervention needed to support parents with their child's care. Once the assessment is completed, the relevant work will then be carried out by either the Occupational Therapist if sensory, or the Childcare Support Worker if behavioural.
- 10.3 **Leaving Care/Sixteen Plus** – This involves the Occupational Therapists working to improve the independence skills of young people supported by the Sixteen Plus team who have additional learning needs.
- 10.4 Both these projects are being evaluated in terms of their effectiveness and outcomes and relevant reports will be completed at the end of the pilots.

11. SOCIAL WORK TEAM DEVELOPMENTS

- 11.1 In order to provide a more seamless service for disabled children and their families, the Children with Disabilities Team now also works with siblings of the disabled child where this is necessary. This has been welcomed by parents as it:
- Prevents duplication of work
 - The family have just one social worker visiting.
 - The social worker has the opportunity to complete a more holistic assessment of the child/families needs as a whole and subsequent plans become more outcome focused.
- 11.2 The Children with Disabilities Team have presented their work to a range of internal and external agencies to raise awareness and ensure referrals being made to the team are appropriate.

12. FUTURE SERVICE DEVELOPMENT

- 12.1 Through reviewing current service delivery, Children's Services have identified the possibility of delivering services on a multi agency basis, in a more streamlined and co-ordinated way. Discussions have commenced with Aneurin Bevan Health Board and Education to consider the potential to develop an Integrated Disability Service and a multi agency workshop is being arranged to develop a service specification that can then be shared for consultation with parents and families.
- 12.2 The services provided across Caerphilly are recognised to be high quality by families and partner agencies and these services need to be enhanced. The proposal will be based on the Children with Disabilities Team being co-located with Health colleagues, Action for Children services and the ISCAN Project in the Caerphilly Children's Centre. Building on the successes to date, the proposal will improve services by providing the potential to develop:
- a 'one-stop-shop' for families with disabled children
 - one point of access for all services
 - co-ordination of appointments and assessments
 - social work support at health clinics
 - enhanced services through independent fund raising and maximising grant funding opportunities

13. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 13.1 This report is for information purposes, so the Council's EqIA process does not need to be applied.

14. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 14.1 There are no financial implications as a result of this report. Savings have been identified through the review of all contracts and the return of some services in-house. Existing services and the service development proposals will all be delivered within budget.

15. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

- 15.1 There are no HR or personnel implications arising from this report.

16. CONSULTATIONS

- 16.1 Parents and families have been fully involved in the redesign of services since 2011. There are plans in place to re-commence formal consultation events when proposals for an Integrated Disability Service are developed.

17. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 17.1 For Scrutiny Committee to note the contents of this report and support the plans to continue to improve the delivery of services for disabled children and young people in Caerphilly.

18. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

- 18.1 To ensure Elected Members are informed of the services being provided to disabled children and aware of the proposals for future developments.

19. STATUTORY POWER

- 19.1 Children Act 1989 – 2004
19.2 The Carers (Equal Opportunities) Act 2004
19.3 The Children and Family (Wales) Measure 2010

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