

Name of meeting: Children's Scrutiny Panel

Date: Monday 12th November 2018

Title of report: Children's Disability Service Update

Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to provide an overview of the work that has been undertaken in response to improving the quality of practice, and the safeguarding of children and young people with additional needs including those with a disability.

Key Decision - Is it likely to result in spending or saving £250k or more, or to have a significant effect on two or more electoral wards?	Yes/ no or "not applicable" No If yes give the reason why .
Key Decision - Is it in the Council's Forward Plan (key decisions and private reports?)	Yes/ no or "not applicable" <i>Not applicable</i> If yes also give date it was registered
The Decision - Is it eligible for call in by Scrutiny?	Yes/ no or "not applicable" Not applicable If no give the reason why not
Date signed off by Strategic Director & name	Elaine McShane 1/11/2018
Is it also signed off by the Service Director for Finance IT and Transactional Services?	N/A
Is it also signed off by the Service Director for Legal Governance and Commissioning Support?	N/A
Cabinet member portfolio	N/A

Electoral wards affected: All

Ward councillors consulted: All

Public or private: Public

1. Summary

- 1.1 The report updates members on the new arrangements that have been put in place and the proposed considerations that improve the quality of practice, and the safeguarding of children and young people with additional needs including those with a disability.
- 1.2 *Aiming High for Disabled Children (AHDC): Better support for families* was established in 2009 to improve service provision across the board for disabled children and their families, and enhance equality and opportunity for them. The programme focused on three priority areas to improve the lives of disabled children and their families which included access and empowerment: clear standard of service provision; responsive services and timely support: health, social care and education providing coordinated, timely, integrated service provision and improving quality and capacity: increasing the provision and quality of key services including short breaks and childcare provision
- 1.3 On the 1st September 2014 the Children and Families Act came into effect and with it a raft of reforms and new duties on local authorities for how services and support are delivered for disabled children and young people and those with Special Educational Needs (SEN).
- 1.4 In 2016 following consultation with disabled children, young people and adults, and their parents and carers had told us that joined up services across all ages would help improve support to disabled people, work began on developing an All Age Disability Service.
- 1.5 In April 2018 agreement was given for the operational and strategic direction of Children's Disability Service (CDS) to be realigned to children services with accountability to return to the Service Director, Child Protection and Support however the key principles that underpinned the decision taken in 2016 would remain through the governance structure of 'All Age Disability' strategic board chaired jointly between adult and children service directors.
- 1.6 To ensure all opportunities for improvement are identified and actioned a project has been established to review the service with an intent to create a children's disability service that puts the voice and needs of children and young people at the heart of practice and provides a learning environment that gives staff the confidence and skills to make the right decisions.
- 1.7 The review will be delivered using the following principles:
 - ❖ Working with People (Not 'doing to' or 'for')
 - ❖ Working with Partners
 - ❖ Working for Outcomes
 - ❖ Business-Like
 - ❖ Accountable
 - ❖ Collaborative and 'Joined up'

- 1.8 To achieve these objectives we will consider review of the following areas
- a) Children's Disability Service (CDS) staff work in accordance with Children's Service Practice Standards ensuring statutory requirements for children subject to Children In Need (CIN), Child Protection (CP) and Children Looked After (CLA) are met
 - b) Sufficient numbers of appropriately qualified and trained staff are employed to deliver a CDS that is fit for purpose
 - c) Referrals to CDS are relevant and appropriate and families can see clear pathways for support
 - d) Children, young people and their families receive the right service and support at the right time

New enquiries relating to children with disabilities returned to Duty and Advice team in July 2018, enabling a consistent and timely response to families and professionals. Children who required consideration for legal intervention and/or permanency planning were aligned with Assessment & Intervention (A&I) and Looked After Children teams through the Legal Gateway and Permanency Planning meeting chaired by the Heads of Service.

- 1.9 The service changes will improve the quality and timeliness of service provision to children who have a disability and their families. The service change will enable staff to have access to the same level of support and development opportunities within their current roles but also in supporting career development to move into other areas of children services should they wish to do so. Improved managerial oversight and decision making will ensure workers feel safe to practice and appropriate plans are in place for children. The service changes also provides a clear line of accountability from social worker to director.
- 1.10 The review will consider the breadth of social care interventions that could appropriately support families which reflects their needs and circumstances where a family may not wish to approach a social work team, whilst acknowledging that the Children Act 1989 definition of a Child In Need and the right of assessment through this process.
- 1.11 The review will support more joined up responses to the delivery of outcomes for children and young people that represents their holistic needs and can be appropriately linked to the range of plans in place but specifically in relation to good quality education, health and social care plans (EHCP)
- 1.12 The review will ensure that any short breaks offered to children, young people and their families is placed within any required statutory framework, for example, if children are accommodated outside of the family home that we provide understanding to parents about our statutory responsibilities to their children and the limitations of our interventions, such as child who requires accommodation in excess of 75 nights, would be considered a Child Looked After but the amendments that can be made that ensure their parental responsibilities are maintained.
- 1.13 The review will provide data and projections for services to disabled children which will support how resources are distributed. This will include the financial implications for the service for forthcoming years to ensure successful transitioning and service delivery into adulthood

2 **Implications for the Council**

- 2.1 The Council will continue to apply eligibility criteria and the right to assessment and access to services will continue to be determined via assessed need.

3. **Consultees and their opinions**

- 3.1 We are currently consulting with PCAN (parent carer forum), partner agencies are represented throughout our discussion and attend the Project Board, and trade unions.

Our current actions are being met positively

4. **Next steps**

- 4.1 The review will progress and will provide recommendations and authorisation of any changes in practice through the formal flight path arrangements

5. **Officer recommendations and reasons**

Not applicable

6. **Cabinet portfolio holder's recommendations**

Not applicable

7. **Contact officer**

Christine Bennett

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8. **Background Papers and History of Decisions**

- 9.1 Not applicable

10. **Service Director responsible**

Elaine McShane

Service Director

Family Support and Child Protection