Disabled Children’s Service

Eligibility Threshold for Short Breaks, Specialist and Occupational Therapy Services from the Disabled Children’s Service April 2014

Introduction

This paper has been written with parents to help parents and carers, young people and professionals to have a clear idea of how services and support is provided by the Disabled Children’s Service for disabled children, young people and their families in Leicester.

If your child has additional needs and or a disability what rights do you have?

All disabled children and young people have the right of access to universal health, education and community based support services. They also have the right of assessment for specialist health, education and social care services. These rights are enshrined in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and Children Act 1989. They are reinforced by the Disability Discrimination Acts, 1995, 2005, Equality Act 2010 and the **SEN Code of Practice in the Children and Families Act 2014.**

What do we mean by disability?

The Equality Act 2010 defines disability as:

A person has a disability for the purposes of the Act if he or she has a physical or mental impairment and the impairment has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on his or her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities (Section 6 subsection 1).
This means that, in general:

- the person must have an impairment that is either physical or mental
- the impairment must have adverse effects which are substantial
- the substantial adverse effects must be long-term
- the long-term substantial adverse effects must have effects on normal day-to-day activities

Guidance on the Equality Act can be found at **https://www.gov.uk/equality-act-2010-guidance**

What is the Disabled Children’s Service?

Up until April 2014 there were two teams that provided support and services to disabled children and their families, the Disabled Children’s Service and the Disabled Children’s Team. The two teams offered support and services at different levels of need and therefore eligibility was confusing.

In April 2014 the two teams integrated and the new Disabled Children’s Service now provides support and services across a wide continuum of need. The new service comprises a range of differently skilled and qualified staff who can respond to a diverse range of need.

The Disabled Children’s Service is committed to supporting disabled children, young people and their families to make sure that they have the same opportunities and experiences as other children and young people.

The Disabled Children’s Service works alongside **Children and Young People’s Services** regarding other support and statutory duties, including child protection

Why do we have threshold eligibility?

As with all services, we have limited resources and it is important that these are distributed fairly and targeted to provide the highest support to those most in need. There are many other agencies and organisations that can provide support and we will ask you to make use of these when these agencies can provide what is identified for your child.

Types of support available

There are a variety of support and services available in Leicester City that everyone has the right to access. These are called Universal Services and include such things as Education, Health Services, Sports and Leisure facilities. There are also targeted services for those whose circumstances may need additional and relevant support, these are often but not always run by voluntary organisations and include; Young Carers Projects, projects to help the long term unemployed and others.

The Leicester City Local Offer holds a database containing information about support and services in Leicester and can be found on **www.localofferleicester.org.uk.**

If the family's circumstances are such that universal and targeted services alone cannot meet your needs and you can't find support through the Local Offer website, the Disabled Children's Service will aim to offer additional support. The Local Offer Website contains details and the direct link to the Disabled Children's website is **dcs.leicester.gov.uk**

Can you get support from DCS?

Parents, carers and all disabled children and young people can contact us directly for support and information but there are some rules about what levels of support can be offered. This means that, depending on the cumulative impact of a child's or young person's disability, the support we can offer will be different. We will need to ask questions about your family's circumstances and the needs of the child, and we will talk to you about what options are available, including those not provided by ourselves. On page 6 there is more detail about how we can support you.

We will ask you for information to help us understand your needs and help you to find suitable support and services for your child/young person. All children and young people eligible for support will have additional needs and or a disability as defined by the Equality Act 2010.

What does the Disabled Children's Service provide?

- We complete assessments with you to identify your family's needs, these can include assessments for short breaks, help in the home, Occupational Therapy Services and social work support
- We can give you information about disability services
- Participation - We welcome and want families to become involved in the planning, design, delivery and evaluation of our services and we work with parents, carers and young people to make sure we understand your views
- We work to improve the services for disabled young people who are preparing for adulthood
- We support providers to ensure they include all children in their services and activities by providing advice, equipment loan or support workers to support access.
- We have a legal duty to hold a Disabled Children's Register: this helps us to identify gaps and develop future support.
- We loan specialist equipment and accessible vehicles to support short break activities
- We provide small grants to providers to help them develop their provision
- We are developing the use of Assistive Technology to support independence

What happens when you contact the Disabled Children's Service?

Anyone can contact us including parents, carers, young people and professionals. If the parent or carer is not making the referral, we will need to ask that they know about it and are in agreement with the referral (the only exception to this is when the child's safety may be at risk).

If information is all you need, that will be given or sent out directly.

If this is the first time you have contacted us we will need to ask you a number of questions about your family's circumstances. If we are to offer you the right kind of support, we will need enough information to be able to do this. This may take some time and we can always call you back.

Assessments of Need

All assessments will be completed with you and the child or young person. They will take into account the additional need and disability of the child but the severity of the condition is not the key factor that will determine the level of support that is offered, rather how your family can meet the child or young person's needs and the impact those needs have upon the carers and family.

We may also need, with your consent, to talk to other professionals involved: this could be a health visitor, teacher, doctor, other members of your family or other people that are providing support. All assessments will be person-centred, meaning that, at the centre of all assessments, will be the child, their needs, views, wishes and aspirations. They will have a strong focus on empowering and enabling young people to develop opportunities that will promote independence

The assessment will identify the support each family already has when determining the level of need: is anyone else providing support and what universal services could meet the need? This type of support will be taken into account when we determine what support can be offered.

What is an Assessment?

Children in Need Assessment

This assessment collects information and determines the level of need that disabled children and young people or their parents and carers have. The nature of the assessment will be determined by the complexity of the support that is requested or needed.

Occupational Therapy Assessment

An assessment that looks at special equipment and adaptations, based on need.

Carers Assessments

Parents and carers have a right to request a Carers Assessment where they are providing regular and substantial support for a disabled child or young person. A Carers Assessment is your opportunity to tell us about the things that could make caring easier for you and the impact that caring has on you. If your child's needs have been assessed, then your role as their carer should have been taken into account. However, you can request a separate assessment, if you feel you need one.

Support Plans

A support plan is based on assessed need, the support you may already have and what you as a family are hoping to achieve for your child or young person. We advise what we can offer to you; how long the support will be in place and agree outcomes of what is trying to be achieved. This plan will be put together with you and the child or young person. All support plans will be reviewed on a minimum six monthly basis. All children and young people can move between the levels detailed in the chart on page 6 according to their particular circumstances and the positive impact of advice, help and support. Service and support responses will be flexible to address the changing needs of children and their families.

Assessments make the best use of multi-agency consultation to ensure that the right kind of support and services are put in place. This can include, with your permission, referring you to another organisation that might be better at meeting your individual need. The amount of support can change depending on the child or young person's development and whether the agreed outcomes are being met.

What if my child or young person has an Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plan?

From September 2014, The Children and Families Act will come into force. It will: "introduce a more streamlined process for assessing the needs of those with more severe and complex needs, integrating education, health and care services".

The EHC Plan will replace statements and Learning Difficulty Assessments with a plan that can start from birth and will continue up to the age of 25 years or earlier if the outcomes in the plan are met. There will be greater parent and child's or young person's involvement in the plan, and there will be support to coordinate it.

Where the child or young person has any educational, health or social care needs and these cannot be met by the Local Offer (**www.localofferleicester.org.uk or dcs.leicester.gov.uk** for details of the new EHC process) there will be an assessment that will look at how the child's or young person's needs can be met**.**

If there are no additional educational needs an EHC plan will not be issued. There may only be education and or health needs in the plan but, if there are social care needs, support can still be provided through the usual process for DCS. Those children and young people with EHC plans who are eligible for level 4 social care support will be entitled to a personal budget as part of the plan and this can be taken as a direct payment. Link to DP Guidance.

What we expect from families

All parents will provide for their child's needs to the best of their ability and the Disabled Children's Service expects that this parental responsibility is met. We would not normally offer support to a family to meet ordinary, everyday tasks but some parents and carers of children and young people with additional needs and/or a disability face extra caring responsibilities. Assessments will take into account not only the parental responsibility, but the disability and how your family can manage the impact that arises from the disability.

Each child's or young person's and family circumstances will be different and each situation will be looked at on an individual basis. The following chart gives an indication of how referrals will be responded to:

Levels of need and what support can be offered

Level 1 **Universal Support and Services**	The child or young person will have some additional needs and/or a disability. They can access universal services but may need some information about what is available. Information about universal and targeted services can be provided by contacting the Disabled Children's Service or the Local Offer: **dcs.leicester.gov.uk** **www.localofferleicester.org.uk** The DCS website has a service directory which is updated regularly and information about activities can be searched for there. We will not need to carry out an assessment for you to receive information alone.

Level 2 **Targeted Support and Services (short-term) activity based breaks** **Level 2 (continued)** **Targeted Support and Services (short-term) activity based breaks**	The child or young person will have additional needs and/or a disability. They will not be accessing any out-of-school activity and will need support to do so (DCS will support to find one activity). Once a child or young person is accessing one short break we can provide information about other ones, but we will not be able to support the young person to attend more than one activity. This is to ensure that we can support as many children and young people as possible. The case will close after a support offer but if the activity is not seen as suitable, or comes to an end and the child or young person still needs support, a further referral can be made. Allocation to a Support Worker. a) Short assessment and 'Supporting Me' plan to identify what support is needed. b) Identification of an activity: this could be any sort of activity break - sports, dance youth club, swimming and other activities, and will be based on the individual's preferences. c) Short term support can be provided to attend the activity until the child or young person can go independently. d) Travel training where appropriate. e) Loan of equipment or training to providers to support inclusion.
Level 3 **Targeted Support and Services (medium to long term) activity based**	The child or young person will have additional needs and/or a disability, plus the child or young person will not be able to continue attending the activity without ongoing support. As level 2, with medium to long term support to continue to attend an activity. This may be a worker to support or a referral to a specialist service.
Level 4 **Specialist Support and Services, including at home**	The child or young person will have additional needs and/or a disability and the child's or young person's needs are complex and having a significant impact on the family. These families are likely to be allocated a Social Worker or Occupational Therapist.

Level 4 (continued) **Specialist Support and Services, including at home**	A range of support may be offered including: a) support to meet personal care needs in the home b) overnight short breaks to avoid family breakdown c) specialist equipment or adaptations to the family property d) where there are significant concerns about the child’s or young person’s welfare and safety e) Provide Carers Assessments A Single Assessment will be completed to identify need and support services will be offered depending on the outcome, or sooner, if the situation is urgent. An Occupational Therapy Assessment to support needs in relation to moving & handling, specialist equipment, adaptations and housing. A Carers Assessment to look at the impact of caring for a disabled child or young person can be requested. The type of support will be discussed and agreed with the family and reviewed on a regularly basis - at least 6 monthly. Where there are concerns for the child’s safety, Child Protection Procedures may be applied but the social worker will make the parents aware of these concerns. Where the need is for adaptations to a property or specialist equipment, an Occupational Therapist will be allocated. They will undertake an assessment and, where eligible, will arrange for advice, equipment and or adaptations.

Summary

The DCS aim to help families and their children and young people to achieve the very best outcomes.

The most appropriate and relevant service for a disabled child or young person is based on what is in the best interests of the child or young person, within our capacity. The aim is to ensure that the DCS resources are targeted to benefit those children in most need, including those at risk, and that proper consideration is given to equity of provision.

Children can, and most likely will, move between these levels of need according to their particular circumstances and the positive impact of advice, help and support. Service responses need to be flexible to address the changing needs of children, young people and their families. The different levels of need trigger different assessments and service responses. Assessments make the best use of inter-disciplinary and multi-agency consultation to ensure that appropriate services are put in place.

Contact Information

Information can be found by contacting the Disabled Children's Services on:

☎ **0116 4544710** 📱 **07815 701 790** **Email:** DCS@leicester.gov.uk **Website:** dcs.leicester.gov.uk

Roles

Title	Role
Business and Admin Support Officer	Providing information and admin support
Support Worker	Taking referrals, assessing up to level 3 and supporting at levels 1 – 4
Assistive Technology Worker	Providing information and support about equipment that can promote independence
Social Worker	Assessing at level 4, commissioning services and child protection
Occupational Therapist	Assessing at level 4 for specialist equipment and adaptations. Also supporting re-housing into adapted properties, where this is identified as a need.
Service Coordinators	Developing universal and services, supporting providers, developing the workforce, organising support workers, short break services and participation
Team Managers	Determining eligibility, overseeing service delivery and outcomes
Service Manager	Overall responsibility for running the service and development
Assessment Panel	There will be cases where it may be difficult to determine eligibility or support. These cases will be reviewed by a multi-professional panel to determine how to proceed
Dispute, Resolution and Complaints system	We want to try and offer the best service we can but if you are not happy after speaking to us, please look at the procedures to follow at: **http://www.leicester.gov.uk/your-council-services/education-lifelong-learning/problems-or-complaints/**

Glossary

Assessment	An assessment collects information and determines the level of need that disabled children, young people and their parents and carers have. Types of assessment include single assessments and carers' assessments.
Education, Health and Care Plan	The EHC Plan will replace statements and Learning Difficulty Assessments with a plan that can start from birth and will continue up to the age of 25 years, or earlier if the outcomes in the plan are met. EHC Plans will include the education, health and care needs of a child or young person where previously only educational needs were covered.
Support plan	A support plan sets out the support based on assessed need, the support you may already have and what you as a family are hoping to achieve for your child or young person.
Disabled Children's Register	The Disabled Children's Register brings together the information about disabled children and young people in Leicester so that services can be developed to meet need. Information from the register is used by a wide range of professions and service providers across different sectors to inform and develop support, services and opportunities. Only statistical data is shared and no personal information is passed to anyone.
Universal services	These are services that available to anyone, for example: doctor, dentist and hospitals, and include social activities like youth clubs, leisure centres and others.
Targeted support	These are services that are identified as needed to support disabled children and young people.
Specialist support	Services that are provided where support issues may be complex and more universal, or targeted support is not appropriate or available.