

## Disabled Children's Service – Departmental overview.

The Disabled Children's Service (DCS) comprises of a number of smaller units managed by a Service Manager and two Assistant Team Managers.

Early Support manages the following for approximately 170 families:

**Contacts.** These are professionals meeting to look at the needs of children at an early stage and determines any early referrals that need to be made that will support families at the time of diagnosis or shortly after.

**Team around the Child (TAC)** meetings which are held with families and professionals and look at the development of a child and determine any further support or help that can be offered to a family from the range of professionals that know the child.

**Portage.** This is an education service designed to help the development of a child with disabilities from 0 – 3 years of age.

**Sleep Counselling.** We currently have three people who work on a part time basis. They have been trained by Sleep Scotland and can help children and their families gain a more restful night's sleep.

The service also has two **Occupational Therapists** that can advise about aids and adaptations in the home, and a **Complex Health Needs Nurse** who works closely with the Children's Practitioners and social workers and assesses the health needs of children with complex health to determine if a package of health care support can be offered.

The Four **Children's Practitioner's** manage the short breaks packages that are offered by DCS. Short breaks are accessed by 357 families at the moment. This involves receiving CAF's (Common Assessment Framework) forms and Requests for Services, ensuring that they have the right information in them and that they get to the DCS decision making panel which meets fortnightly. They also have to review all of the support packages to be sure that the outcomes are being met. They also work with the small number of families that have overnight short breaks and support the work of the social workers in the team.

The **Children with Disabilities Social Workers** work with families where there are safeguarding and complex concerns where a child may have needs that are not met by their family or where the child's needs are very complex.

Social workers will undertake family assessments which will mean several visits to the family home, seeing the parents and the children separately. There are a wide number of topics that they have to comment on including the child's developmental needs, parenting capacity, and Family and environmental factors (Framework for Assessment). They then have to analyse the information that they have collected and make recommendations about how the family can be helped to make adjustments and about any support that they need so that things can get better for both them and their child. The social worker can call TAC or Child in Need (CIN) meetings and work with the family where improvements to family life are needed and so that the children are able to remain at home safely either without further support or with any support that may be required as an outcome of the assessment and CIN Plan. If this does not improve life for a child or young person other actions may need to be taken. Social workers will always try and get the best outcomes for the child and will work with the family. We aim to work in an open and transparent way so that everyone is clear about the expectations and goals that the social worker and family wish to achieve.

**Transition.** This part of the team looks at the needs of the young person as they reach 18 and whether they will have need for support in adulthood. The workers undertake assessments and will either signpost toward services that the person can access themselves or will proceed to consider further support that will help the young person achieve the aims that they have for themselves. At 18 young person is considered in their own right unless they do not have adequate capacity to decide certain things for themselves, this would be subject to a Mental Capacity Assessment.

Children with Disabilities and Transition are working with 93 families at this point in time.

The DCS is supported by the commissioning framework which is working towards improvement in these five areas:

Challenging Behaviour

Complex Needs

Social Integration

Independence

Family Resilience.

All of this work is supported and expected by legislation such as the Children Act 1980, Children and Families Act 2014 and the Care Act 2014

The Team also have a Carers assessment that a family can complete, however a Family assessment does take the needs of other family members into account and can also be considered as a Carers Assessment.

**icount** is the Children's Register of Disability as required by the Children Act 1980, details of how to register can be found at [www.i-count.org](http://www.i-count.org) . Children who are successfully registered will receive a special card which offers discounts at certain leisure centres. The criteria for registration is on the Sutton website

**AccessPoint:** There are generally two workers available on a daily basis to offer advice on the phone or via email.

All of this information and more can be found on the website – [www.Sutton.gov.uk/disabledchildren](http://www.Sutton.gov.uk/disabledchildren)

For details of local services you can find the Local Offer button on that webpage or go to

<http://localoffer.sutton.gov.uk> .

To contact DCS directly you can either email [AccessPoint@sutton.gov.uk](mailto:AccessPoint@sutton.gov.uk) or telephone 020 8770 4690

This is really only a snapshot of the Disabled Children's service and the team would be happy to answer any questions if you want to contact us. We are located in Zone 1, First Floor Civic Centre near the door that goes to the library.

Cheryl Petty

Head of Children with Disabilities

Disabled Children's Service

30<sup>th</sup> June 2016