
May 2014
Introduction

As a parent or professional it is useful to know:

- How disabled children and children with additional needs can be supported to achieve their potential through universal, targeted and specialist services in Hertfordshire and
- How services from Children’s Services Specialist Services (social care) including the Disabled Children’s Team are provided.

This guide seeks to explain how these services work in Hertfordshire.

It is important that disabled children are supported to remain safely and happily with their family and can benefit from activities within the community. The assessed impact of their disability should determine the level and nature of the support they need to enable this to happen.

Hertfordshire has developed a framework: ‘Meeting the Needs of Children and Families in Hertfordshire’ which describes the continuum of needs and services that has been agreed between Health, Education and Social Care to ensure that they are met.
Legal context and Hertfordshire's definition of disability

The Children Act (1989) defines a disabled child as a child in need (section17,10c); and services including assessments of need can be provided through this legislation, as well as:
- the Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act (1970),
- the Carers and Disabled Children Act (2000),
- Carers Equal Opportunities Act and their supporting guidance.
Additionally, the Equalities Act (2010) sets out the rights and duties of services to address the needs of disabled people.
The definition of a disabled child, as agreed in Hertfordshire’s Joint Disability Strategy, is that a child should be regarded as disabled if he or she has special needs in the area of health, education, physical, intellectual, emotional, social or behavioural development due to:

- Multiple and complex health needs;
- Special sense impairments: hearing loss, visual impairments, deaf-blind etc.;
- A significant learning disability;
- A physical disability;
- A chronic physical illness;
- Autism (Autistic Spectrum Disorder) and Communication Disorders;
- Significant pre-school developmental delay.

Meeting the needs of disabled children

‘Meeting the Needs of Children and Families in Hertfordshire’ identifies three headings of need for children and young people including disabled children:

- Universal – emerging needs (Level 1)
- Targeted – additional and or complex needs (Level 2)
- Specialist – specialist needs and safeguarding (Levels 3 &4)

Universal

Hertfordshire recognises that not all families with a disabled child need social care support and there are a range of universal services available to disabled children and their families including advice, information and guidance, play and leisure activities (mainstream and specialist) and support groups.
Play and leisure activities provided through community groups including sport and leisure providers provide valuable short breaks for families. These are being developed within the ‘Short Break Local Offer’.

Further information about these services is available through the services themselves, or by contacting the KIDS HUBs.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>KIDS HUB (East)</th>
<th>KIDS HUB (West)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Divot Place, Hamels Drive</td>
<td>Albanwood, Newhouse Crescent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hertford, SG13 7SP</td>
<td>Watford, WD25 7BZ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phone(s): 01992 504013</td>
<td>Phone(s): 01923 676549</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>email:<a href="mailto:kirsty.russell@kids.org.uk">kirsty.russell@kids.org.uk</a></td>
<td>email: <a href="mailto:hollie.hunt@kids.org.uk">hollie.hunt@kids.org.uk</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Targeted**

Where the needs of the child or young person cannot be met by the Universal Services, Hertfordshire is developing the Short Break Local Offer in recognition that some families need only limited additional support to enable their children to take part in activities. Information about Eligibility and Access is available. Further information will be in place from September 2014.

Where the needs of the child relate to other aspects of their health, education or social development, families should contact their child’s school; health worker or the Customer Services Centre on 0300 123 4043

**Illustrative Need at Targeted Level**

The illustrative needs below act as guidance only and are not a prescriptive or exhaustive list of need.

The child:

- Can meet most of their own, age appropriate personal care needs i.e. dressing and bathing with limited supervision
- Has a health condition which requires some specialist aids or equipment
- Requires a limited or minimal medical procedure that can be performed by the child themselves or by the parent/carer
- Behaviour presents little or no risk to self and/or others but may require supervision and behavioural management to be safe
- Has limited, age appropriate understanding of risk situations or danger
- Is attending school/education provision which may include additional support
- Participates in leisure and social activities that are available in the local community with minor support
• Is able to understand and express their views, wishes and feelings

The parent carer:
• Understands the child’s disability and makes use of guidance, information and advice to assist them in meeting their child’s needs
• Can provide a safe and appropriate care within existing support networks
• Is able to identify when they need help with tasks and decisions
• Parent carer’s personal and social life is not significantly impacted by the disabled child’s care needs

The siblings:
• Have positive relationships with the disabled child and their parent/carers
• Are achieving their potential in their own development and wellbeing at home

Specialist

Where the complexity of the child’s support needs exceed the services offered through universal and targeted levels, the family may need specialist support including social care involvement to safeguard a child, promote their wellbeing and/or to retain them in their family home.

In order to qualify for a service from the Disabled Children’s Team a child /young person must be aged between 0 – 19 years, be living in Hertfordshire and have a disability as defined by the Children Act and Hertfordshire’s Joint Disability Strategy.

The decision about whether a child is disabled within Hertfordshire's agreed definition is always based on a consideration of the impact of the child's condition on their needs when compared to other children of the same age, and not purely on the basis of whether the child has or does not have a particular diagnosis. The impact of the child’s condition which is likely to be life long, would be that the disability significantly restricts the child’s daily life leading to poorer outcomes for him/her and their family if services were not provided.

Illustrative Need at Specialist Level.

The child:
• Some disturbance to child and parent carer’s sleep due to impact of child’s disability
• Child shows signs of distress in one or more settings on a regular basis
• Child needs regular supervision and support to meet their personal care needs
• Child requires specialist aids or equipment and needs support to use it
• Child requires regular medical procedures that can only be performed by a parent carer
• Child’s behaviour presents a significant risk to self and/or others; and requires some additional monitoring, supervision and /or behavioural management to be safe
• Child has a limited understanding of risk situations or danger
• Child’s physical or learning disabilities impact on their daily living where they are at significant risk of social exclusion, harm abuse or exploitation
• Child has a poor level of attendance at school and/or is at risk of exclusion. Child is not achieving to their potential
• Child is unable to access any Community Short Break Extra Activities without additional support
• Child has limited ability to understand and express their views, wishes and feelings at a time when important decisions about their welfare are required

The parent carer:
• Parental stress affecting the day to day lives and may impact on the child and wider family’s well being
• Parent carer has significant health concerns
• Accommodation which, despite adjustments, does not meet some of the needs of the disabled child
• Limited support networks and/or limited access to local community and universal services
• Relationship difficulties within the family that negatively impact on the disabled child and the family as a whole
• Parent carer has limited understanding of the impact of their child’s disability
• Issues such as domestic violence, mental ill health, alcohol or substance misuse are present

The siblings:
• Siblings have emerging support needs of their own e.g. social isolation and attention seeking behaviour
• Siblings are providing a level of care; which makes them young carers

Where an assessment of need is required Hertfordshire is guided by government guidance called Working Together (2013), this guidance is designed to make sure:
• of the legislative requirements and expectations on individual services to safeguard and promote the welfare of children; and
• a clear framework for Local Safeguarding Children Boards (LSCBs) to monitor the effectiveness of local services.
• The unique and individual needs of families are paramount throughout the assessment.

Hertfordshire are beginning to apply a Resource Allocation System (RAS), to make sure that resources are allocated fairly and proportionately towards those children most in need. The RAS is a questionnaire which determines a child’s social care personal budget. This will form part of the person centred support planning aimed at helping the child and family meet their aims.

Personal budgets are a way of planning the care and support that children and families might need and offer families increased choice and control in decisions that are taken. A personal budget is an amount of money that can be paid to a family with which to organise the agreed care and
support activities themselves, rather than the council making those arrangements on behalf of the family. Families do not have to take up personal budgets. You can find out more about personal budgets in *Hertfordshire’s Guide to Personal Budgets*. The funding identified by the RAS questionnaire may be adjusted when the plan is agreed. There may need to be less or more funding to meet the child’s assessed needs.

**Right Plan at the Right Time**

An assessment can lead to a number of different plans, these are:

(i) No Plan (if eligible, Short Break Local Offer)
(ii) *Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plan (CSDPA, 1970)*
(iii) Child In Need Plan (s17, CA, 1989)
(iv) Child Protection Plan (s47, CA 1989)
(v) Child Looked After Plan (s20 / s31, CA, 1989)

*We are developing new ways of working to implement integrated EHC Plans. The format for assessment will initially follow same process as CIN*

**The response that families should expect from Hertfordshire**

Families will be listened to, treated with respect and their information treated confidentially and managed securely.

Where a family requests or is referred to social care (specialist services), the referrer will be contacted within 1 working day either to ask for more details or to advise them of what will happen next.

During the assessment there will be a discussion with the family about their strengths and needs; and to explore how their needs can best be met. This may be through the provision of social work support, short breaks, personal care, direct payments, equipment or other services. It can also include enabling families to access community organisations such as support groups or specialist health and education resources.

The details of the assessment and the services identified to meet the family’s needs will be recorded in a Plan, a copy of which will be shared with the family.

When the Support or Care Plan has been finalised the Brokerage Service Provision Team (BSPT) will arrange the services agreed in the Plan. Although the length of time this takes will vary
according to complexity of the Child or young person’s needs and the availability of an appropriate service; the Team would expect to arrange services within 4 weeks; and to keep families informed on the progress of the arrangements.

The BSPT will contact the family 7 weeks after the service has been set up to check that the service is being provided and to see how things are going. If necessary the service will be adjusted or another organisation commissioned to provide the service. Families can contact BSPT directly on 01438 844254 at any time if there are difficulties arising with the care package provided.

Families will need to contact their DCT worker if their needs have changed and the service is no longer meeting needs,

If families are not satisfied with the service that they have received from the Social care/DCT or the BSPT they should in the first instance contact the service who will work with them to resolve the issue. However, if the concern cannot be resolved families can make a complaint using Hertfordshire's Complaints Procedure;

Hertfordshire values feedback from families on what is working well for them and how services can be improved. It works closely with Hertfordshire Parent Carer Involvement (HPCI) which is the county wide Parent Carer Forum for families with children and young people who have special educational needs, disabilities or additional needs. This partnership enables families' experiences and views to be heard; which informs the development and delivery of services.

**Useful contacts**

Children’s Services Specialist Services and the Disabled Children’s Service is available on the Local Offer

Referrals to the service by families or organisations are made via the Customer Services Centre on 0300 123 4043

Brokerage Service Provision Team can be contacted on 01438 844254

Hertfordshire Parent Carer Involvement, can be contacted on 07840 360245 or visit their website at: http://www.hertsparentcarers.org.uk/