Children with Disabilities Team Eligibility Criteria

1. Eligibility for an assessment by a Children with Disabilities Team Social Worker

1.1 The Children with Disabilities Team offers a social work assessment and care planning service to children and young people aged 0-18 years who have a ‘permanent and substantial’ (Equality Act 2010) disability and who live within the Walsall Local Authority Area.

1.2 The majority of children in Walsall who require services will receive them through universal provision within their local community. The same should be true of any child with a disability. Only when it has been identified, via the Multi Agency Screening Team (MAST) that the impact of a permanent and substantial disability on the child’s life is too great to be addressed by universal provision or targeted Early Help provision, should a referral for an assessment be made to the Children with Disabilities Team.

1.3 Walsall Council has decided to use the Equality Act 2010 definition of a disability.

A Child has a disability if:

- they have a physical or mental impairment and
- the impairment has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to perform normal day-to-day activities

These words have the following meanings:

- substantial (that is, more than minor or trivial); and
- adverse; and long term (that is, it has lasted or is likely to last for at least a year or for the rest of the life of the person affected).

Physical or mental impairment includes sensory impairments.

1.4 Considering this definition we will use the following statement and criteria to decide which children are eligible, using the The Children with Disabilities Team Assessment of Need Matrix (see attached) to ensure accurate and fair identification of need.

In order to achieve outcomes appropriate to their potential and as a result of their disability, the child requires total or substantial support, appropriate to their age, from another person, which is not available within the family network.
A child or young person is eligible for a service from the Children with Disabilities team if he or she has:

- A profound or severe learning disability; those children who tend to need significant support with most daily tasks.
- A profound and multiple learning disability; the child has more than one disability with the most significant being a learning disability.
- Severe physical disabilities.
- Severe developmental delay in motor and / or cognitive functioning.
- Autistic spectrum where this has a significant impact on the child: persistent ongoing emotional and / or behavioural difficulties.
- Severe sensory impairment (registered blind / profoundly deaf).
- Complex and severe health problems that arise from disability, that are life threatening, degenerative or organic resulting in severe disability.
- Mental illness only if this is within the context of a diagnosed disability.

It is expected that the child’s disabilities will have been diagnosed by a Community Paediatrician or similar health professional.

1.5 Where the matrix assessment tool identifies that a child does not meet the criteria for a service from the Children with Disabilities team the threshold may be met for Early Help support or a service from the Vulnerable Children’s Service.

1.6 The Children with Disabilities Team will offer advice and guidance to the Early Help Services and any other children’s social work team where they are managing a case and there is a child with a disability in the family. Initial enquiries can be made to the Children with Disabilities duty officer. For more detailed support/advice the Team/Practice Manager from the relevant team should contact the Team/Practice Manager at the Children with Disabilities Team to discuss the advice and support required.