
Select Committee on Children's Services – 11th November, 2010

Report of the Director of Children's Services

Aiming High for Disabled Children

Purpose of Report

1. To advise the Select Committee on Children's Services of the Aiming High for Disabled Children programme and to highlight Dudley's progress in achieving the aims of this initiative.

Background

2. Aiming High for Disabled Children is a government programme which was a joint initiative between the Department of Health and the Department of Children, Schools and Families. It was aimed at ensuring that every disabled child can have the best possible start in life, and the support they and their families need to make equality of opportunity a reality, allowing each and every child to fulfil their potential.
3. The programme has been supported by new funding and measures designed to make the system work better and aims to deliver:
 - Access and empowerment for disabled children and their families
 - Responsive services and timely support
 - Improved service quality and capacity
 - The full service offer
4. The full service offer for short term breaks seeks an expansion in the availability, quality, content and experience of short term breaks for disabled children and their families. It seeks to enhance and expand existing residential and family based overnight short term break services to include breaks which may last a few days and could be delivered in a variety of settings at home, in the community or in specialist provision.
5. There is an emphasis upon coordinated approaches to partnership working, parent participation and the need to invest in a wide range of short break opportunities centred on the needs of disabled children and their families.
6. Aiming High aims to support and deliver the outcomes of Every Disabled Child Matters and seeks to achieve transformation by partner agencies working together to deliver.

7. The Core offer sets out national expectations about how services for disabled children, young people and families should be delivered locally. It is based on 5 core elements.

- Information
- Transparency
- Assessment
- Participation
- Feedback

It has an emphasis on parent forums and parental engagement as the critical drivers for change and this is measured by the new national indicator (NI54), which is aimed at capturing parent's experience and views on how local agencies deliver on these 5 elements.

8. Dudley was successful in becoming a pilot site for the programme and gained funding to enable the start of the programme ahead of other Local Authorities.

9. There are 10 work streams to Aiming High for Disabled Children, which are measured and are reported on to Together for Disabled Children (TfDC) who are the government agents for the programme. The governance arrangements are shown at appendix 1.

10. The work streams are:

- Short breaks
- Transition
- Palliative & Continuing Care
- Community Equipment & Wheelchairs
- Individual Budgets
- DCATCH (Disabled Children's Access to Child Care)
- SLCN (Speech, Language and Communication Needs)
- Early Support
- Special Educational Needs- Outcomes and Implementation of the LAMB enquiry
- Participation

Progress against the work streams is shown at Appendix 2

Finance

11. Specific funding has been available for Short Breaks and this ends in March, 2011. Funding has been available for Transition for this year.

Law

12. New legislation was proposed to come into effect in April, 2011, which will give the Local Authority a duty to provide short breaks for Disabled Children we are awaiting further advice regarding the implementation of the legislation.

Equality Impact

13. Disabled children have exactly the same human rights to be safe from abuse and neglect and achieve positive outcomes as none disabled children. They do however require additional action because they experience greater vulnerability as a result of negative attitudes about disabled children and unequal access to services and resources.
14. The Aiming High programme demonstrates a commitment to targeting resources to disabled children to strengthen the capacity of children and families to help themselves and to provide the same opportunities to disabled children and young people as everyone else.

Recommendations

15. That the Select Committee note the excellent progress that has been made in all of the areas of the Aiming High for Disabled Children programme.
16. To note the statutory duty to provide short breaks for disabled children which Local Authorities will need to address from April 2011.



.....
Jane Porter
Acting Director of Children's Services

Contact Officer: Pauline Sharratt (Assistant Director Children's Services)
Telephone: 01384 8145803
Email: Pauline.sharratt@dudley.gov.uk

Other Contact Officer: Su Roxburgh