

# **West Sussex Social and Caring Services - Children's Services**

## **STRATEGY FOR SERVICES FOR CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES**

### ***THE AIM OF THIS STRATEGY***

The overall aim, as part of a multi-agency approach, is to ensure that families with severely disabled children in priority need have access to an appropriate range of services, which support them in caring for their children. This is based on our strong commitment to the principle that, as for all children, the needs of children with disabilities are likely to be best met if they can remain living within their own families and within their local communities. In striving to improve and develop services it needs to be appreciated that this has to be done within the available budget. New developments will be achieved through either reconfiguring services or accessing other sources of funding.

### ***STRATEGIC CONTEXT***

This Strategy needs to be considered in the context of the following: -

- The continuing development of the West Sussex Children's Trust, with the Children's Multi-Agency Support Panel, which seeks to co-ordinate joint funding of services for children with complex needs, and the setting up of a strategic group for children with special needs & disabilities.
- The Integrated Services Programme being taken forward by Families and Schools Support which seeks to achieve a multi-agency approach to the co-ordination, commissioning and provision of services based around schools.
- The recommendations from the Members' Scrutiny Project on Transitional Arrangements.
- The Joint Education and S&CS Best Value Review of Services for Children with Special Needs which made a series of recommendations including the need for a multi-agency strategy, clear protocols and pooled budgets, etc.
- The challenges presented by the Social Inclusion Agenda.
- The need to respond to the Children Act 2004.
- The National Service Framework for Children and Young People which sets clear standards for meeting the health and social care needs of children with disabilities.
- The requirement to keep spending within budget. In 2003/04, Social and Caring Services spent £5.7 million on services for children with disabilities against a budget of £5.1 million - a shortfall of £0.6 million. To help address the budget shortfall, £5.4 million has been allocated for 2004/05.
- West Sussex compared with similar Local Authorities has an average spend on services for children with disabilities
- Opportunities for accessing other streams of funding and resources.

### ***OBJECTIVES***

- 1. To provide and develop a range of family support services to enable children to remain with their families and to reduce the need for high cost residential placements**
- 2. To seek the active involvement of parents and carers in the development of this strategy and most importantly in the way that future services are shaped, working closely with other statutory and voluntary agencies**
- 3. To make sure that within the overall Children's Services budget we have allocated the right level of resources for services for children with disabilities and that these are being used in the most effective way**

## **PRIORITIES**

- 1) Considering the implications of the National Service Framework for Children & Young People and beginning the process of implementation in partnership with other agencies.
- 2) Implementing the Transitional Arrangements Action Plan working closely with young people, their parents, Adult Services, the West Sussex Health and Social Care Trust, Education, Connexions and other key agencies in the Transitions Planning Group
- 3) Implementing the Action Plan responding to the recommendations of the Best Value Review of Services for Children with Special Needs
- 4) The replacement of Cissbury Lodge in the context of the development of special schools in the South of the County.
- 5) Further developing a mental health (CAMHS) service for children with learning disabilities, to focus on resolving behaviour problems that lead to a demand for increased and more intensive services.
- 6) Building the capacity of specialist Family Support Services
  - After school activities provided by the three Residential Units
  - Sitting Service
  - Family Care Worker
  - Family Aides/Personal Assistants
  - Buddy Scheme
  - Direct Payments Scheme
  - Holiday Playschemes
  - Respite foster care provision
- 7) Ensuring the active engagement of parent carers and representative groups through the Parent Carer Planning Group with links to the 'Wellspring' website to improve access to information and communication
- 8) Having better data to aid the future planning and commissioning of services
- 9) Finding out how our services compare with other Local Authorities

## **HOW WE WILL KNOW IF WE ARE SUCCEEDING**

***Most importantly, we hope parents will be saying that they feel they are being listened to and are having a say in how services are being developed***

### ***By March 2005***

- We will have agreed protocols with other agencies in respect of the Transitional Arrangements Action Plan and clearer transition arrangements with Adult Services
- We will have started to introduce person-centred plans for young people through the new worker funded through the Learning Difficulties Development Fund
- The new strategic group for children with disabilities and special needs will be taking forward the recommendations of the Best Value Review and the implementation of the National Service Framework
- The pilot special school inclusive play-scheme will be on schedule for the Easter holiday
- The plans for the replacement of Cissbury Lodge will have been confirmed and in progress
- The second CAMHS worker will be in post and providing a service
- The number of families benefiting from the Sitting Service will have increased to 70
- We will be developing the Direct Payments service subject to available budget

- We will be able to provide more respite foster care placements particularly in the North of the County
- Parent will be actively engaged with the Parent Carer Planning Group and having an impact on service planning
- We will have agreed arrangements with the NHS for meeting children's continuing health care needs

**By the end of 2005**

- Multi-agency transition protocols will have been fully implemented
- Plans for inclusive holiday playschemes to extend across West Sussex will be in place
- The number of families benefiting from the Sitting Service will have increased to 80
- Construction of the replacement for Cissbury Lodge will have started
- We will have better information about the needs of children and their families to enable the better commissioning of services
- The CAMHS behaviour management pilot will have been evaluated and plans agreed for further development

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October 2004