

Lambeth Children with Disabilities Service Eligibility Criteria

Purpose

The purpose of this document is to set out how support can be accessed for disabled children and young people aged 0-18 who reside in the London Borough of Lambeth. It is designed for disabled young people, parents and carers, and professionals working with them and will outline the criteria used by the Children with Disabilities Service (CWD) when making decisions about whether to carry out an assessment.

The CWD Service is a specialist service that supports the most severely disabled children and young people and many families will not need this level of support. This document also aims to clarify how support for disabled children and young people, including short breaks, can be accessed in Lambeth at all levels of need, from universal or targeted support to the more specialist support that is provided by the CWD Service, the latter of which will require a social work assessment.

This document is a result of extensive work done throughout 2016 and 2017 involving the re-tendering of existing short breaks services in Lambeth and a period of consultation with parents and carers facilitated through *Contact* (formerly known as *Contact a Family*).

Parents and carers' views have therefore been considered in producing this document.

The *Lambeth Children with Disabilities Service Eligibility Criteria* should be read in conjunction with the [Lambeth Short Breaks Statement](#) and the [Lambeth Local Offer](#).

The Local Authority has considered the rights of disabled children and young people in accordance with the Equality Act 2010, as well as the range of relevant legislation pertaining to disability, in setting out this criteria.

This document replaces the '*Lambeth CYPS Eligibility Criteria for Services to Children with Disabilities*' which was in place from 2004.

Eligibility Criteria for accessing a service from Lambeth CWD

Disabled children and young people are eligible for an assessment from Lambeth CWD if they:

- Reside in Lambeth
- Are between the ages of 0-18
- Have a diagnosed physical or mental impairment which is likely to have a substantial and long-term adverse effect on his or her ability to carry out normal day to day activities
- This could include children with a sensory impairment, a learning disability, or an autistic spectrum disorder (ASD) with challenging behaviour as a result of their learning disability.
- It also includes children with complex health needs and those with palliative, life limiting or life threatening conditions.

Definitions

By 'substantial' we mean that the disabled child or young person will require significant levels of support from another person in order to carry out their basic day to day functions such as eating, dressing, washing, participating in activities in or out of the home, and night time care. As an adult, it is expected that they will continue to require this.

By 'long-term' we mean that the disability is expected to be permanent and so the service would not support children and young people who have had acute medical problems, illnesses or operations which can be disabling but from which they will recover.

How we look at referrals

When screening referrals to CWD, the disabled child or young person's *functional* ability will be as important as their diagnosis. There is a wide range of ability across the autistic spectrum range from very high functioning mainstream children and young people, able to access the national curriculum, to more severely autistic children and young people who are in specialist schools, are non-verbal, doubly incontinent, and who may have very challenging behaviour.

Likewise, physically disabled children may be accessing mainstream education and apart from requiring some adaptations to their family home, may not require additional support. Whilst a diagnostic report will be needed to evidence the disability, it will also be important to understand the impact on the child or young person of their disability, the impact on their parents or carers, and the impact on any of their siblings.

Carer's assessments

In Lambeth, we do not carry out separate carer's assessments but would consider the needs of carers as part of a holistic *Child & Family Assessment* (see below).

During consultations parents have often expressed that social isolation is a major factor for them, that they find it hard to access mainstream community resources with their disabled child, or accessing the community together as a family can be very challenging. As such the family's capacity to access mainstream community activities will be considered when deciding on eligibility.

What we do?

The Children with Disability Service (CWD) offers information, support and practical help to families with children and young people who have a severe and permanent disability which impacts on their day to day functioning.

Statutory responsibilities

We carry out assessments in accordance with our duties under S17 Children Act 1989 where it has been deemed that there is a *child in need* in our area. Allocated social workers in the service also carry out child protection investigations, work with Looked After children and young people, and offer a range of support including short breaks care packages. We also signpost to other more targeted or universal services.

Short Breaks

The Service also oversees *targeted short breaks* in Lambeth. These are short breaks activities which may include after school clubs, Saturday clubs or holiday clubs for disabled children and young people who require less support and which can be accessed without the need for any social work assessment. They are accessed directly by parents through contacting our Short Breaks Co-Ordinator,

There has been a change in the way targeted short breaks are administered. They were formerly part of block contracts (sum of money paid directly to provider) and parents could contact the providers directly who would offer places to families.

Places on these different schemes are now managed by the Short Breaks Co-ordinator in the Children with Disabilities Service. Families can still contact the provider directly but it is now the CWD Service that decides whether places can be offered. The purpose of this was to ensure more families with disabled children in Lambeth could access targeted short breaks services.

Currently there are 7 providers on the framework for targeted short breaks and information on these can be found via the following link: [Lambeth Short Breaks Service](#). Alternatively, you may contact the Lambeth Short Breaks Co-ordinator on lambethshortbreaksservice@lambeth.gov.uk or 0207 926 1513. These spaces are subject to availability.

These targeted short breaks are aimed at all disabled children and young people in Lambeth *who have a physical or mental impairment which is likely to have a substantial and long-term adverse effect on his or her ability to carry out normal day to day activities.*

Early Help

In some cases, upon receiving a referral, we may consider that an *Early Help assessment* is more appropriate where some early intervention is considered to meet the needs of the child and family in question. This will be carefully considered at the point of referral and explained to you clearly. It may be that your child has a disability which is severe and permanent, however, the nature of the support you need does not require a statutory social work assessment.

It may be appropriate for an Early Help assessment but at the same time this would not exclude your disabled child from being able to access some of the targeted short breaks at the same time.

Who are we?

The CWD service comprises of two teams of six social workers each managed by a team manager. There is service manager that oversees the work of the two teams. There is also a direct payments manager, a short breaks co-ordinator, an advanced practitioner (senior non-case holding social worker) and two dedicated business support officers (BSOs).

We are based at International House though we will be moving to the new Brixton Civic Centre in Spring 2018.

Referrals

Requests by parents or carers for assessments from CWD should be directed to the Lambeth Integrated Referral Hub (IRH) by calling 020 7926 5555.

Professionals may also call the same number. If you are a professional, please also follow up your referral in writing by filling in the [Multi-agency referral form](#) and send it to helpandprotection@lambeth.gov.uk

Advice will be sought from a team manager in CWD on whether the referral meets the team's eligibility criteria. You will need to provide supporting evidence of your child's disability, usually a diagnostic report or a relevant medical report.

What will the assessment involve?

If accepted for assessment, a qualified social worker in CWD will carry out a *Child & Family Assessment* which will be based on a holistic approach and will aim to gather relevant information about the disabled child's needs and those of their family, including any siblings. The assessment will look at the impact on the disabled child's day to day functioning, what it is like caring for them, how their siblings may be affected, or how family life is impacted. The assessment may also focus on any safeguarding issues that formed part of the referral or which may arise during the assessment.

The allocated social worker will do this by talking to you and your children and, with your permission, will liaise closely with professionals involved with your disabled child and your other children. This may include teachers, health visitors, school nurses, paediatricians or any other involved professionals.

The following will be taken into account when carrying out an assessment (the list is not exhaustive):

- The extent to which the disabled child's disability impacts on their own day to day lives
- The strengths and abilities of the disabled child
- How the disability impacts on parents and carers
- The capacity of parents or carers to meet the needs of their disabled child
- Other factors which may affect a parent or carer's capacity to meet the needs of their disabled child eg mental ill health, physical health issues, substance misuse problems or domestic violence

- The number of children in the household
- The level of support from extended family or friends/community
- Any concerns about the disabled child's safety or well-being
- Other supports available from other professionals eg CAMHS
- Disability related benefits which are also aimed at supporting a parent with the additional care needs of a disabled child
- Information from professionals involved with the disabled child or their siblings

CWD Resource Panel

Following an assessment, if a care package is being recommended by your social worker, they will need to present your child to the CWD Resource Panel which takes place on a fortnightly basis. This panel is chaired by the Service Manager in CWD and is attended by a multi-agency group including a CWD commissioning officer, the direct payments manager, the short breaks co-ordinator, an occupational therapy manager and members of the CWD management team.

Decisions of panel will be fed back to you by your social worker and you will also receive a follow up letter from the panel administrator.

If you are unhappy with the decision of panel, you should in the first instance speak to your social worker. However, if you remain unsatisfied, you can write an appeal to the chair of the panel within two weeks of the panel decision. Letters may be addressed to:

**FAO – CWD Resource Panel Chair,
Children with Disabilities Team,
International House,
7th Floor,
6 Canterbury Close,
Brixton,
London SW9 7QE.**

Or by email to: CWDTeam@lambeth.gov.uk using the subject line 'FAO – CWD Resource Panel Chair'

Transitions

Young adults in receipt of a service from Lambeth CWD start to be transitioned from the age of 17 in preparation for the Adults Transitions Team accepting case responsibility when they turn 18. At the age of 18, the Transitions Team will become responsible and will undertake a Care Act assessment. In some more complex cases, transition planning may commence sooner.

There is already work being undertaken to improve the quality of transition planning. Transitions attend the Tripartite Funding Panel in Lambeth where jointly funded care packages (Education, Health and Social Care) are discussed and agreed. There is also a monthly meeting that takes place between CWD and Transitions to look at young people's transition plans and a manager from Transitions also attends the

CWD Resource Panel, all of which is leading to more of a focus on earlier transition planning.

Key contacts and links

Lambeth Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) Tel: 0207926 5555 (new referrals)

Lambeth Children with Disabilities Service Tel: 020 7926 6916

Lambeth Short Breaks Co-ordinator, Tel: 020 7926 1513

Lambeth Disability Register, Tel: 020 7926 9140

Lambeth Special Educational Needs Department, Tel: 020 7926 9460

[Local Offer](#)

[Targeted short breaks](#)

[Lambeth Short Breaks Statement](#)