

## **Have your say – a review of services to support children and young people impacted by disability**

This consultation is about how services for children and families impacted by disability should be provided in Swansea in the future to ensure the right support at the right time in the right place to the children, young people and families who need it.

This document gives you a summary of the options the Council is considering for redesigning these services in the future.

If you require more information head to <???> (web address) or contact (phone number)

### **What services are we talking about?**

This consultation is about some of our services supporting children and families impacted by disability.

Approx. 6% of children and young people in Swansea have a disability or impairment that limits their day-to-day activities.

They and their families are potentially vulnerable, have complex needs, and are at higher risk of social isolation, and economic disadvantage.

Services include play services, direct payments (which enable families to purchase care independently) and home care.

Services are provided by us, sometimes jointly with the NHS and sometimes by other organisations such as charities.

### **Why are we doing this?**

Swansea Council is modernising to provide the services our residents need not just today, but in the future too.

We have been talking with the parent carer forum, staff, partner departments and organisations about what is working and what we could do better to improve services and other options for children with disabilities and their families.

To get better outcomes we need to redesign services to meet modern needs and work better with partners to improve children's pathways through care.

We recognise that we've been responding to crisis and we need to tackle the shortage of services which prevent families needing higher levels of care, and embrace the latest national guidance and legislation.

Although the Council is facing challenging budgetary pressures, this review is not being asked to meet any saving targets. We just want to make sure we spend the money we have in a way that makes the most positive difference to children and their families.

### **What are the options?**

We are letting you know our preferred options which have been developed out of our discussions with the parent carer forum, staff, partner departments and organisations. We also reviewed services provided in other parts of Wales and England.

We are telling you about the options we considered to reach our preferred way forward so you can have your say on whether that is right.

No decisions have yet been made. This consultation will inform the recommendations made to the Council's Cabinet, which is responsible for making decisions.

We have asked ourselves questions like: Which options get the right results for children and their families? Can we do them? Are they financially viable and sustainable? Do they help us offer the right support to the right groups at the right time in the right place? Do they reflect national guidance and/or good practice?

## **1. Play and Leisure Opportunities (including Community Short-breaks)**

### **What is it?**

Play and leisure opportunities for disabled children are aimed at improving the health and wellbeing of children, allowing them to enjoy the right to play, to socialise, to exercise and have fun. Some of them may also provide parent/carers with some respite during the day. Examples include activity clubs, afterschool clubs and child sitting services.

### **What do we do now?**

The majority of the money we spend is on specialist services for a relatively small group of children who have been assessed by a social worker as in need of care and support. Most other children access activities that are not directly funded by the council such as Swansea City Bravehearts Disabled Football Club, Swansea Stingrays and Surfability.

### **Why are we considering change?**

We want to ensure that we are spending our money as fairly as possible, reaching as many families as possible to improve the quality of life and outcomes for disabled children, giving them choice, and enabling them to be part of their communities.

We need to look at what we do again because many of the organisations we use already have had to reduce what they can offer because of lost funding due to changes in what charities are asking for. This presents a risk of reduced services in some areas and increased travel and transport issues for families.

**Option 1:** Continue with what we do now.

**Option 2:** The Council continues to jointly work with a range of different agencies as they do now but ensures it supports them to be able to financially provide services that consistently meet the needs of children and their families, working towards outcomes for them, and ensuring services are value for money.

**Option 3:** The council jointly develops a grant scheme to give money/vouchers to eligible families to access play/leisure activities or a community short break for disabled children that is of their choice. This approach is a model used by Wiltshire Council that gives children and families greater choice and control and has proved to be very successful. This model could mean that family's needs are met in the community without the need for a social worker.

**Our preferred Option is Option 3.**

## 2. Parent/Carer Participation

### What is it?

Ways parent/carers can get information, advice and support and have a valid say in how services are developed, shaped and moved forwards.

### What do we do now?

The Council provides a Family Information Service to offer advice, information and signposting to all families in Swansea, whether they have a disability or not.

The Council funds Swansea Council for Voluntary Services (SCVS) for a Development Worker. Among their responsibilities is to run a parent carer forum to encourage participation of parent/carers of children and young people with disabilities.

### Why are we reviewing these services?

Many parent carers report not knowing what support and activities are available and have difficulties finding their way through some of the complicated processes. There are also reports that parent/carers do not believe they have a strong voice in decisions about the shape of services. The Council is also mindful that the number of parent/carers who currently engage in consultation activity is low.

### Options

**Option 1:** Continue what we do now.

**Option 2:** Fund an independent Parent Carer Council to perform two key roles:

- 1) Provide a single information, advice and assistance service for families with a child / young person with a disability.
- 2) Energise and manage the development of a more active parent/carers forum. This Parent Carer Council would be expected to capture the views of greater numbers of parent/carers so it could have a more effective voice in decision-making and identification of unmet need.

It would need to have good working relations with the local authority and other partners.

As the central point of contact, a well-resourced Parent Carer Council would be ideally placed to keep the information on the needs of children with a disability and families accurate and up-to-date.

It would be expected to advise parent/carers on the various services and processes they may encounter and provide a comprehensive list of 'what's going on' in Swansea for children and young people with a disability.

### Preferred Option 2

### **3. Home Care**

#### **What is it?**

Home care or 'domiciliary care' is supportive care provided in the home which may include completing personal care tasks. Only used in a small number of cases involving children and young people, it is much more common in Adult Services for older people living in their own homes. Where provided it's a key service for some families and provides parent/carers with much needed respite.

#### **Why are we reviewing it?**

The number and size of the providers who are registered to work with children and young people is currently very limited. As a result, there are concerns that it cannot be considered as an option despite the fact it would have been the best way of supporting the family. Current provision is not always reliable and there can be problems with the same carer(s) not always being available.

#### **What do we do now?**

The in-house Flexible Home Support Service is one of two registered providers and offers short term intervention up to 12 weeks to support families who are at risk of breakdown.

#### **Options**

**Option 1:** Continue what we do now.

**Option 2:** Expand the Flexible Home Support Service and change their criteria so it can support more families and potentially for a longer period of time. We know that by doing this it will address the issues of reliability and consistency of carer.

**Option 3:** Encourage the independent domiciliary care market to increase capacity and availability for children and young people.

**Preferred Option is Option 2.**