



## Report of the Cabinet Member for Care Services

### Child and Family Services Scrutiny Performance Panel – 24<sup>th</sup> January 2023

#### Child Disability Team

<b>Purpose</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To provide an overview of the Child Disability Team</li> </ul>
<b>Content</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This report includes a summary of the recent changes and developments of the Child Disability Team</li> <li>The report concludes that there have been some positive developments which have enhanced knowledge and understanding of working with children/young people with disabilities and their parents/carers</li> </ul>
<b>Councillors are being asked to</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Endorse the report and its conclusions</li> </ul>
<b>Lead Councillor(s)</b>	Cllr Louise Gibbard, Cabinet Member for Care Services
<b>Lead Officer(s)</b>	David Howes, Director of Social Services Julie Davies, Head of Child and Family Services
<b>Report Author</b>	Helen Williams, Principal Officer for Adolescent and Young People Services  Helen.williams3@swansea.gov.uk
<b>Legal Officer</b>	N/A
<b>Finance Officer</b>	N/A
<b>Access to Services Officer</b>	N/A

#### 1. Background

- 1.1 The Child Disability team (CDT) works directly with children/young people who have diagnosed disabilities and their parents/carers. In Swansea Child and Family Services, we have adopted the social model of disability to understand the challenges that children and families

face. This means that we aim to understand the barriers in society which may make it harder for children and young people to reach their full potential.

- 1.2 The Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014 places an emphasis on the child or young person's strengths and capabilities (what can I do/how can I get help), to support children and young people to overcome any barriers they may be facing. These could include issues within their families or barriers that society places on them in their everyday life. The aim is to enable them to work towards/achieve their personal outcomes and goals.
- 1.3 The Child Disability Team offers an assessment of any child/young person where it appears that the child/young person may have needs for care and support as described in the Social Services and Wellbeing Act 2014.
- 1.4 For the purpose of assessing the needs of a child/young person, Section 21(7) of the Social Services and Wellbeing Act 2014 says, a disabled child/young person is presumed to 'need care and support in addition to, or instead of, the care and support provided by the child/young person's family'.
- 1.5 The following report will outline the recent changes to the Child Disability Team in Swansea and the key areas of practice and development which will enable the team and wider service to effectively meet the needs of children, young people and families accessing the service.

## **2. Briefing/Main Body of Report**

- 2.1 There has recently been a re-structuring of the Child Disability Team with a number of staff members from the team, moving into the newly established Academy. The Academy is responsible for assessing cases where there are child protection or safeguarding worries about a child or young person or where there are identified eligible care and support needs. The Child Disability Team pod within the Academy is responsible for case managing all existing Child in Need of Care and Support (CINCS) cases and undertaking single assessments for all new referrals for children with disabilities and their parents and carers. In addition, these staff members will be using the knowledge and expertise they have gained from working with children/young people with disabilities to upskill and support newly qualified staff entering the service.
- 2.2 In addition to the placement of Child Disability Team staff within the Academy, a Senior Social Worker with experience of working with children/young people with disabilities is also based within our front door service. This staff member is leading the work for Child and

Family Services in respect of carer assessments. There is a duty imposed on the local authority within the Social Services and Wellbeing Act to assess any carer where it appears that they may have needs for support in their own right. There is a right to request an assessment for both the child/young person and the carer(s) (jointly or separately) depending on individual choice. Carers can be parents, siblings, grandparents, or any person unpaid who provides care to a child/young person.

- 2.3 Having a dedicated staff member leading on this piece of work within our front door service means that carers requesting assessments are able to access this at the first point of contact and any ongoing support can be identified at the earliest opportunity.
- 2.4 The Child Disability Team also provide a consultation and advice service, in relation to the wide spectrum of disability issues, to all teams across Child and Family Services. The knowledge and experience of the team is recognised as an invaluable resource across the wider service area.
- 2.5 The Child Disability Team have recently worked in partnership with our Parent/Carer Forum to review the eligibility criteria for the service. This has been created in line with the continuum of need from universal services (tiers 1 and 2) through to statutory services (tiers 3 and 4). The Child Disability Team are now offering specialist support across all areas of Child and Family Services and with the presence of these staff within the Academy it is envisaged that children and young people with a disability will be effectively supported at the appropriate tier.
- 2.6 The Child Disability Team itself, is a dedicated social care service for children/young people with disabilities and their families at Tier 4 of the continuum of need, and they can work with children from birth until 18 years of age, and their families/carers.
- 2.7 The Child Disability Team will work with any child/young person and their parents/carers if transitional planning for adult services is required or if they are receiving a statutory response from Social Services, for example if their name is included within the child protection register or they are a looked-after child. There is a positive working relationship with Adult Services in relation to transition and this is an area of work that is continually developing to ensure transitions and ongoing support continue to meet the needs and identified outcomes for young people approaching adulthood.
- 2.8 The Swansea Parent/Carer Forum provides invaluable scrutiny for the service and support in terms of how the service develops. In order to reflect the importance of this partnership the Head of Child and Family Services and Education colleagues have been attending coffee mornings with members of the forum to enhance and continually develop our working relationship.

- 2.9 The Child Disability Team works closely with specialist partner agencies/charities to provide the support required by children/young people and their families. These provisions are identified and commissioned to form part of care and support plans following assessment. Some examples of the support that can be accessed are briefly outlined below:
- 2.10 Through Action for Children we commission Ty Laura a residential short breaks provision in Newton. Ty Laura is commissioned to offer overnight respite in addition to daytime respite which can be invaluable support for families.
- 2.11 Through Action for Children there is also the offer of Family Link which provides short breaks with panel approved Foster Carers and more recently there is the opportunity for families to use accessible caravans at Llanrhidian Holiday Park.
- 2.12 Action for Children and Local Aid (another local charity) also offer weekly groups which can be accessed through the Child Disability Team, and also outside of the service should families require the support. One of the groups Local Aid run is a weekly group offered to teenagers called "Buddies".
- 2.13 Interplay provide some groups but also integrated play schemes during school holidays.
- 2.14 Facing The Challenge provide parent/carer group work and intensive support to produce positive behavioural management plans for children and young people with diagnosed learning disabilities who display challenging behaviour.
- 2.15 Flexi home support (a team in Child and Family Services) also provide short term support for families working with the Child Disability Team.
- 2.16 Direct payments are a key service utilised by many families as it provides the family with the flexibility to identify their own staff and also for the support to take place at a time that suits them as opposed to according to service availability.
- 2.17 All the care packages are reviewed in six-monthly child in need of care and support (CINCS) reviews and also through the child and family resource panel which is attended by those that provide these services. The panel considers the needs of the child/young person based on assessment and services identify where support can be offered.
- 2.18 It is recognised that the Child Disability Team has recently gone through significant changes since the Academy was established. It has been agreed that the service would benefit from re-assessing the

purpose and value work that it contributes to the children, young people and families/carers that it works with.

- 2.19 As a result, a systems review will be considered to enable the service to think holistically about the sort of support it can offer for the children, young people and families/carers that need its help. This review will give the leadership and the staff an opportunity to review themselves against what matters to their service users, with a view to understand the systemic and cultural things getting in the way of achieving this. A potential redesign will follow this review exercise where developments are identified as being needed to achieve what matters to the children, young people and families that it serves
- 2.20 Children/young people and their parents/carers will be central to this review. The review will also consider the views of partner agencies to identify where improvements can be made in how agencies work together to assist children/young people to achieve their outcomes.

### **3. Conclusions/Key Points Summary**

- 3.1 There have been recent positive developments across Child and Family Services to ensure that children/young people with disabilities and their parent/carers receive the appropriate support at the right level.
- 3.2 The expertise of the staff within the Child Disability Team is being effectively utilised across Child and Family Services to upskill and share knowledge.
- 3.3 The upcoming system review will provide a key opportunity for evaluation of the Child Disability Team and will assist us to understand the service from the perspective of the children/young people and parent/carers who access the service. Through this greater understanding we will be able to consider key areas of development for the service and ensure that the work undertaken continues to focus on what matters.
- 3.4 Following the system review we would like to bring an update report to Scrutiny to share the outcome and learning and any developments that will be taking place.

### **4. Legal implications**

- 4.1 None

### **5. Finance Implications**

5.1 None

**6. Integrated Assessment Implications**

6.1 None

***Glossary of terms:* None**

**Background papers: None**

**Appendices: None**