

## **Integrated Additional Services Panel Information for parents**

### Information about how decisions are made to allocate short breaks to families where there are children with complex health care needs and/or disabilities

A new panel has been set up called the Integrated Additional Services Panel. The people who attend the Panel are managers in the health, social care, and education services. The aim of the Panel is to make sure that the needs of children who have complex health needs and/or disabilities are assessed as early as possible and that services across the different disciplines are coordinated and planned to try to reduce duplication and simplify things for parents/carers.

One of the areas that the Panel will consider is whether a child or young person would benefit from a short break service and, if so, whether they meet the criteria for the service. A short break service can be offered in a number of different ways. It can be in the form of Social work support; help in the home; day activities or after school activities; overnight stays; or direct payments. The aim is to give children/young people the opportunity to enjoy leisure activities, to provide practical support to families, and to give parents/carers the opportunity for rest and relaxation without the responsibilities of caring. The services can be for a short period of time in a family crisis or for a longer period of time. The service can be offered by a social care provider, your child's school, health services, or by an independent provider. Your child may already be getting one of these short break services.

The Integrated Additional Services Panel will make a decision about the eligibility of your child for a short break service and the type of short break offered by looking at the information sent by the person making the referral on your behalf. This could be your key worker if you have one or anyone in your child's professional network. The person making the referral must get your permission to make the referral and will ask you to sign the referral.

The Panel has a responsibility to make sure that the short break services available are fairly distributed and that it is easy to understand how decisions are made. Some families will need more support than others because of their needs and circumstances. Because every child/young person and their family is different, we provide short breaks with three different levels of support. We have consulted parents and young people and they have agreed this is fair and sensible. The information contained in the referral is used to help the Panel make this decision.

The decisions made about short breaks will be reviewed regularly because the needs of children/young people change as they get older. The person who made the original referral or the group of professionals involved with will

normally be involved in the reviewing process and the views of the parent/child views will be part of this process.

The following is a brief description of the information that is used to help the members of the Panel make a decision

### **How decisions are made**

Consideration is given to the child and family's assessed needs in a number of different areas. Not all families will experience all of the difficulties listed below but the assessment gives an overall picture of each family's needs. The areas that are considered are listed below.

#### The child or young person's disability

These include

- The severity of the child or young person's disability and their care needs. For example a higher weighting will be given to a child or young person who needs significant help with all their personal care tasks such as feeding, washing, and toileting as opposed to those who need help with one personal care task or who need less assistance. Similarly a higher weighting will be given to those children or young people who require constant monitoring because of their medication or health needs, or where the person administering their medication requires special training.
- The impact of the disability on a child or young person's ability to communicate. A child or young person who is unable to communicate even with support will have a higher weighting than those who can communicate with support or communication aids.
- The impact of the disability on the child or young person's behaviour. A child or young person who requires constant supervision when in company will receive a higher weighting than one who needs occasional supervision. A child or young person who behaves unpredictably will receive higher weighting than one whose behaviour is more manageable.

#### The family circumstances

These include

- A higher weighting will be given to households where there are other young children of school age or where other children have a disability.
- A higher weighting will be given to households where an adult has a diagnosed disability.
- The suitability of the accommodation is also considered.

- Consideration is given to the family's extended network. More weighting will be given to single carers or families who are isolated with little support, or where there has been bereavement or parents have separated.

#### The impact on the family of caring for a child or young person with a disability

This includes a number of factors. The list below is not exhaustive. Any of these could be present and included in the assessment of need

- Consideration is given as to whether the child or young person is awake at night. Higher weighting would be given in circumstances when the child or young person needs attention on a regular basis at night.
- Consideration is given as to whether the child or young person can use public transport or whether their behaviour makes it difficult for the family as a whole to use leisure facilities.
- Consideration is given to the emotional impact of caring for a child or young person with a disability and how this affects the parent's ability to give time to any other children. This would include considering whether another child in the family has had to take on a caring role.
- Consideration is given as to whether the child or young person needs the sort of care that makes it difficult for friends and family to take over the caring role so it is difficult for the parents to have a break.