

**Harrow Children's Services
Children with Disabilities Service**

**Children's Disabilities
Strategy 2015-2018**

Harrow Children's Services Core Strategies

Harrow's 'Our Plan: Children & Families, 2013 to 2018' describes how the Council is committed to doing the best with limited resources, and shows how partners such as Harrow Council, NHS Harrow, the Police and other providers will work together with children, their families and local communities. The plan also includes high level outcomes that everyone is signed up to, as well as the overarching needs of Harrow's children and young people, and actions that will be taken to commission and redesign services.

'It's in our hands: We promise our children and young people the best start in life'.

Further information regarding the Children and Families Plan and shared vision can be found at; www.harrow.gov.uk/children

Within Children's Services, Harrow's Children with Disabilities Service shares its vision of meeting the needs of the most vulnerable children, which will ensure that the inherent dignity, the right and freedom to make choices and to aspire towards independence is respected. Services are provided in a non-discriminatory manner that respects diversity and identity of the children involved and in a manner that empowers them to participate and be included in the planning for their care.

Our Vision

The Children with Disabilities Service has a vision of optimising the outcomes for children with disability in a manner that recognises their rights as human beings who should be treated with respect and sensitivity that they deserve. A vision that sees childhood as a journey that passes through stages of rapid and slow, complex and simple, insightful and instinctive and cooperative and conflicting changes. Changes through which we empower and enable children and their carers to navigate a path that transitions to adulthood.

The purpose of the Children with Disabilities Service is to empower children with disabilities and their families to meet their needs in a manner that supports them remaining an integral part of their families and to participate in the life of their community. It is our aim to do this, through working in partnership with children and their family members in order to assess need and identify how this may best be met; to empower children and facilitate their development in order that they can socialise, enjoy and participate in family life in a manner most appropriate for the individual child.

The aim of Harrow Council's Strategic Plan; 'Our Plan: Children and Families, 2013 to 2018' is to improve the lives of children, young people, families and carers who have special educational needs or a disability.

Families will be helped to be more independent and have more choice and control over their lives and assurances that their needs will be properly met.

This Strategy is for all those involved in the planning, design and delivery of services for children and young people with a disability and their families. The Strategy supports the vision and mission

statement of Harrow Children's Services, building upon the existing relationship between Harrow Children's Services statutory partners and the developing partnerships with parents and carers and disabled children and young people. It also sends a strong message to those children and young people that their needs and wishes are important.

The Children and Families Act 2014 and Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) legislation highlighted that, 'too many children and young people who are disabled or are who identified as having additional educational needs (SEN) have poor outcomes in life and they and their families can struggle to get the support that they need'.

This new legislation radically reforms systems for identifying, assessing and supporting children and young people who are disabled or have SEN and their families. Children, young people and their families will now have greater control over the support that they receive.

Transforming existing services and expectations from all parties is the key to delivering our vision to ensure that disabled children and young people will have the same opportunities to develop and fulfil their potential as all other children. We recognise that the individual needs of disabled children and their families are best met through a personal and tailored response from both universal and specialist services.

Keeping our disabled children safe

As the key agency in safeguarding children we intend to ensure that a sensitive and inclusive response is made wherever potential harm and/or allegations of concern for a child with disability arise. Irrespective of whether the child can verbalise or not an intervention will be made, be it an assessment of need or of a safeguarding nature, in a manner such that the welfare of the disabled child will always be considered of paramount importance: and all reasonable effort made to ascertain the child's own wishes and feelings.

We will ensure sound safeguarding practices and procedures are implemented as appropriate and will adhere to the Harrow Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) Procedures, which can be found at; www.harrowlscb.co.uk

Relationship to other plans or strategy

- Harrow Council's Strategic Plan; 'Our Plan: Children and Families, 2013 to 2018'
- SEND Strategy, 2015
- Learning Disability and Autism Commissioning Strategy, 2015-2018 (draft)
- Transition Plan
- Safeguarding Board Business Plan
- Individual Service Plans

What Children and Young People, their parents/carers experience now

This Strategy has been produced to support the vision and objectives of Harrow's Children with Disabilities Service. It builds upon the existing relationships between Harrow Children's Services statutory partners and the developing partnership with parents and carers and disabled children and young people.

Our aim is to ensure that families with a disabled child have the support they need to lead 'ordinary family lives as a matter of course' (Aiming High for Disabled Children 2008).

Disabled children and their families feel the effects of disability throughout their lives and its impact on all aspects of living. Their disabilities may range from mild to severe and from straightforward to complex. Without appropriate or effective intervention disabled children and those with complex health needs are at risk of living in poverty, facing social exclusion, discrimination, poor health and preventable early death.

There is a wide range of support that can be required by children and young people with a disability and their families from being able to access the same universal services as their peers to requiring bespoke packages of care and support to meet very specific and often complex needs. In respect of all services and support provision families need to have confidence that the support is responding to their needs and have confidence in the provider and staff to ensure that activities are accessible and effective.

We know that there is significant diversity experienced by families and indeed significant diversity of expectation amongst parents & carers and through this Strategy we seek to address both.

Children and young people tell us that they want to be able to use mainstream leisure and social activities, with their friends, siblings and families. Parents and carers often perceive significant barriers to enabling their child to access mainstream facilities and worry that the providers of any activity have the right understanding and sufficient skills and expertise to enable the parent/carer to develop a trusting relationship. Locally commissioned research has highlighted that many parents experience a tension between their desire for full inclusion of their child in the mainstream of life, and a pragmatic need for services to be tailored to their particular (special) needs. Furthermore, many parents experienced a dilemma of whether to disclose their child's disability, when accessing mainstream provision, due to concerns over stigmatisation bullying and exclusion.

Levels of access can vary depending on individual child's age and the nature of their disability. Young children with intellectual disabilities tend to use specialist provision. Children and young people across all age groups with physical disabilities experience restricted access to many mainstream providers. Some of these are perceived restrictions on the part of parents; some are very real with some mainstream provision lacking the necessary equipment or arrangements such as hoists, adult changing facilities, staff/child ratio or staff and parental confidence, all of which inhibit the use of facilities.

Recent key legislative changes contained within the Children and Families Act (2014) for children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), places duties on all

agencies involved to ensure services for disabled children and young people and those with special educational needs are planned and commissioned jointly. Since September 2014 we have been actively working to implement the requirements of the reforms, and Harrow parents/carers have been involved in working with us on this.

We are continuing to work hard on developing collaborative working arrangements with social care, education and health services, in order to improve outcomes for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities.

This collaborative working will also be strengthened by our commitment to signing up to the principles outlined in the Disabled Children's Charter for Health and Wellbeing Boards. In working with our health partners we will be signing up to ensuring that we are committed to improving the quality of life and outcomes experience by disabled children, young people, their families and carers. This includes those children with special educational needs and complex health issues. We will be agreeing to work in partnership with families to improve universal and specialist services provision. The Charter will also help to set the strategic direction for commissioning in health, social care and public health and joint commissioning and developing integrated services across health and social care. For information regarding the Disabled Children's Charter go to; www.edcm.org.uk/hwbcharter

Participation, engagement and co-production with parents/carers

We work closely with parents/ carers, children, young people, and our partners and stakeholders to shape the design of the service. It is important to us to seek ongoing feedback in order to measure the effectiveness of the services provided and to follow up accordingly to ensure that the level and types of services still reflect the needs of disabled children and their families.

We work to ensure that children and young people who have a disability are supported as equal partners in decision making we recognise that each child is a unique individual and that all have the right to be treated with respect. Children, young people, their families and their communities will be engaged as true partners in both learning and in the planning and development of services. This means we will ensure there is good communication and ensure that knowledge and learning is shared with families and between colleagues so that everyone is fully aware of what is available.

We recognise that all of us we will not always 'get it right' but we will all commit to ensuring continuous listening and learning to ensure that the partnerships between professionals, children, young people and their parents/carers are mutually beneficial to all

Harrow parent/carers have been actively involved in helping us to implement the key legislative SEND reforms. This includes the development of the Harrow SEND Local Offer. Previously many parents expressed limited awareness of and information about services for their disabled child. In September 2014, Harrow launched its on-line Local Offer, as a requirement of the new legislation for children and young people. The Harrow Local Offer can be found at; www.harrow.gov.uk/localoffer

The Harrow parent/carer group, Harrow Parents 4 Disabled Children (HP4DC) have also produced a parent to parent SEND Information Directory as a guide for Harrow's parent and carers of children with SEND.

Parents, carers and young people are encouraged to give on-going feedback about the local offer website, to ensure that it remains accessible and up-to-date.

Harrow Children with Disabilities Service pledge to disabled children and young people and their families

We are committed to working in partnership with families and local communities to enable children and young people with a disability to lead ordinary lives by:

- creating understanding
- removing barriers
- creating capacity through innovative, flexible, responsive and cost effective services
- developing a skilled workforce who will provide proactive early support

Our Strategic Objectives

We have identified six broad strategic objectives, with related actions, which form the basis for Harrow's Strategy for Disabled Children, Young People and the families:

1. Families of disabled children and young people are informed regarding the range of services available
2. Disabled children, young people and their families are supported to become equal partners in making decisions about service developments and commissioning
3. We will offer a range of services to meet the needs disabled children and young people in Harrow
4. Data intelligence will highlight the needs of disabled children, young people and their families which will inform effective, sustainable, service planning, development and delivery.
5. Promoting independence and effective transition to adulthood
6. Skilled workforce able to offer good quality services for disabled children and young people.

What Children and Young People, their parents/carers will experience in three years

In 3 years time we expect all disabled children and young people and their families to experience a difference in their lives through meaningful participation and access to universal services that are genuinely inclusive, including for those

children and young people with complex needs with additional support provided when and where needed. All provision will be provided within the framework of any entitlement criteria.

All professionals responsible for planning services for children and young people will have an understanding of the importance of transition at key stages in a child's life, particularly at early years and when a young person begins to plan for their entry into adulthood. Pathway's into the next phase of life, particularly adulthood, will be clear and planned well in advance so that all parties, but particularly the young person, is clear about what will be happening, when and is fully involved.

Outcomes for children and young people with a disability will have improved, allowing them to benefit from equality of opportunity; increasing their involvement and inclusion will assist them to achieve more as individuals and will bring benefits to our wider communities.

We will continue to work directly with young people who have a disability on issues of importance to them, including: educational & employment aspirations; leisure and social opportunities; the shape and type of additional support available to them and critically how that is provided and by whom.

We will continue to develop effective data collection that provides robust measurements of the outcomes for children. We will share this data safely and securely to enable us to plan with colleagues what is needed and where it is needed ensuring that all children and young people who have a disability understand their entitlement and are able to access services accordingly.

We will develop protocols to ensure information is available to children & young people with a disability, parents and carers when it is required by them. We will promote the active involvement of children and young people with a disability and their families/carers to ensure their voices are heard and taken account of in the review of all existing services, building on their experiences to develop and re-design services as appropriate.

We will champion the rights of all children and young people with a disability to ensure their access to all universal services with additional support as required and within the entitlement criteria.

We will ensure continuous improvement in understanding, knowledge and skills of the wider workforce to provide safe and appropriate services. We will engage with parents, carers, children and young people to develop our joint understanding of realistic and reasonable expectations in using the resources available to us.

We recognise there remain considerable challenges ahead for the service over the next few years as a result of the Council having to make unprecedented savings from its budgets over the next four years. Alongside which, there will be the on-going implementation of the SEND reforms and service re-design to meet the requirements.

We therefore pledge to ensure that we manage our limited resources more effectively in order to support those disabled children, young people and their families most in need.

	<p>agreement will be sought to the joint health and social care sign up to the pledges in the Disabled Children's Charter, including an action plan</p> <p>1.4 The CWDS will meet with the parent/carer forum, HP4DC to ensure their views are reflected in development of the services including the local offer and short breaks statement.</p> <p>1.5 A Guide for parents, carers and professionals on the Children with Disabilities Service, will be developed, and accessible on line and in hard copy format.</p>	<p>Joint Commissioning Officer, Health and Social Care, Harrow Health and Wellbeing Board</p> <p>CWDS, HP4DC</p> <p>CWDS</p>	<p>Autumn 2015</p> <p>Termly Meetings</p> <p>July 2015</p>
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Objective 2 : Disabled children, young people and their families are supported to become equal partners in making decisions about service developments and commissioning

<p>2. In the spirit of co-production, there will be the increased participation of children and young people with a disability and their parent/carers in decision making regarding their individual care, policy development, consultation and commissioning of services.</p>	<p>2.1 A disabled youth champion will be identified and be a representative on the Harrow Youth Council.</p> <p>2.2 A named link social worker will be identified for each of the special schools in Harrow.</p> <p>2.3 Disabled young people will be engaged in consultation processes. Services will be commissioned to undertake this work, if required.</p> <p>2.4 The CWDS will ensure there are regular participation forums between CWDS, parents, partners and stake holders.</p> <p>2.5 A quality standards tool (parental satisfaction, feedback sheet) will be developed to evaluate the effectiveness of CWDS intervention in the lives of disabled children in Harrow.</p>	<p>CWDS</p> <p>CWDS</p> <p>CWDS, disabled young people</p> <p>CWDS, HP4DS, SENDIST, and other Parent/Carer forums</p> <p>CWDS</p>	<p>ASAP</p> <p>September 2015</p> <p>September 2015</p> <p>To be established - termly</p> <p>September 2015</p>
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	<p>2.6 Contract monitoring will be improved and quality assurance frameworks will be in place, to ensure quality, value for money services are being delivered from commissioned services.</p> <p>2.7 Parents/carers will continue to be engaged in reviewing the commissioning of provision for disabled children and young people.</p>	<p>CWDS Commissioning Service</p> <p>CWDS Commissioning Services Parent/Carers Forums</p>	<p>From September 2015</p> <p>On going</p>
Objective 3: Offer a range of services to meet the needs of disabled children and young people in Harrow			
<p>3. Services will be provided which are sustainable and support children and young people with disabilities most in need.</p>	<p>3.1 A CWDS Transformation Project Team, will be established to plan and prepare a consultation process. This will include the proposals to review eligibility criteria, service entitlement for CWDS and the introduction of a resource allocation tool (RAS). This process will ensure the delivery of more sustainable service in order to meet need.</p> <p>3.2 A working group is to be established, to develop a RAS, based on the Adults Services model; aligning the personal budgets systems and processes.</p>	<p>CWDS Transformation Project Team</p> <p>CWDS, Adults Services</p>	<p>Planned consultation process (October 2015). A GANT timeline has been developed.</p> <p>September 2015</p>

	3.3 The CWDS and Children's Commissioning Service will work with providers to establish a range and choice of short breaks provision for disabled children.	CWDS Children's Commissioning Third Sector Providers	On going
<p>Objective 4: Data intelligence will highlight the needs of disabled children, young people and their families which will inform effective, sustainable service planning and delivery.</p>			
4. a) Service provision will be based on an accurate understanding of current and future needs of the local population based on shared intelligence.	<p>4.1 The CWDS will contribute to the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) for disabled children and ensure that the JSNA clearly outlines the needs of Harrow's disabled children and is a document that informs future service planning and the work of commissioners.</p> <p>4.2 The Health and Wellbeing Board Disabled Children's Charter (DCC), pledges to ensure that data sharing protocols are in place; the action plan outlines how this will happen.</p>	<p>CWDS Public Health</p> <p>CWDS, Harrow, CCG</p>	<p>August 2015</p> <p>DCC to be agreed at the Health and Wellbeing Board- Autumn 2015</p>
b) The LA and CCG's will place children and young people at the centre of their planning, and work to develop co-ordinated approaches to securing better outcomes, developing a shared vision and strategy which focuses on aspirations and outcomes.	4.3 A Joint Commissioner has recently been appointed and working relationships are being developed which will ensure a joint commissioning arrangement will be adopted wherever that approach	CWDS CCG	On going

	<p>can be shown to best meet the needs of children, young people with a disability</p> <p>4.4 Explore a range of alternative and new options with providers such as adult's providers who may want to provide children's services, in order to develop a market place of choice. In response to the development of personal budgets.</p> <p>4.5 Data will be used to evaluate service performance and overcome the barriers to information and data sharing. Data information sharing protocols will be in place between education, health and social care. (This is also a pledge outlined in the Disabled Children's Charter)</p>	<p>CWDS Children's Commissioning Service</p> <p>CWDS Children's Services Performance Team CCG Public Health Schools Performance Team</p>	
<p>Objective 5: Promoting independence and effective transition in to adulthood.</p>			
<p>5. The CWDS will ensure a seamless transition of services for disabled young people moving from Children's to Adults Services. This is in line with the Children and Families Act 2014, SEND reforms, and provision of services up until the age of 25 for young people with SEND.</p>	<p>5.1 A SEND Preparing for Adulthood Group has been established in order to implement the requirements of the SEND reforms and 'Pathway to Adulthood'.</p>	<p>Adults Transition Commissioning Lead</p>	<p>Monthly</p>

	<p>5.2 The Transition Pathway Protocol (2011) and Transition Pathway for young people is currently being revised and updated.</p> <p>5.3 In line with the SEND reforms the CWDS is working closely with the SEN Assessment and Review Service, and Post16 Officer, in ensuring integrated working practices. This includes attendance at 16+ SEND/residential meetings and panels.</p> <p>5.4 The CWDS will work closely with SENAR and commissioners to ensure that young people with a physical or learning disability aged 16-25 are able to access education, training or employment, opportunities.</p>	<p>Adults Transition Commissioning Lead CWDS Joint Commissioner, Health and Social Care</p> <p>CWDS SENAR/Post 16 Officer</p> <p>CWDS Children's Commissioning</p>	<p>From September 2014 and on going</p> <p>On going</p>
<p>Objective 6 : Skilled workforce able to offer good quality services for disabled children and young people</p>			
<p>6. Staff across all partner agencies working with or in contact with children and young people who have a disability to recognise the additional vulnerabilities of this group of children to abuse, neglect and bullying.</p>	<p>6.1 Harrow's Workforce Development Plan, incorporates specific training for staff working with children and young people with disabilities this includes; Disability</p>	<p>The CWDS will ensure that all agencies, schools, governing bodies and universal providers are aware of the mechanisms</p>	

	<p>Training, Autism Training, Safeguarding Disabled Children, Level 1,2,3.</p> <p>6.2 The training needs of the CWDS will be identified through supervision and appraisal, in order to ensure competency in assessment of need, safeguarding and court skills</p> <p>6.3 Staff across all partner agencies will be aware of the referral pathway for disabled children’s services. This will include referrals via the MASH. A clear protocol will be established between MASH and CWDS to outline the referral pathway and responsibility of the safeguarding response to disabled children with a sibling. This will ensure a consistent approach.</p> <p>6.4 Staff across all partner agencies will have an increased awareness on Domestic Abuse and referral to Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) and Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPP), where a disabled child is involved.</p>	<p>for referral, assessment and safeguarding disabled children and their Duties under the Equality Act 2012.</p> <p>CWDS, Senior Practitioners and Staff</p> <p>CWDS MASH</p> <p>CWDS</p>	<p>Autumn 2015</p>
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