



Title/Status-	Criteria for Assessment and Support from the Disabled Children's Social Work Service
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## **Leicestershire Procedure for Criteria for Assessment and Support from the Disabled Children's Social Work Service**

**Applies to- Children in Particular Circumstances**

## DISABLED CHILDREN'S SERVICES

### CRITERIA FOR ASSESSMENT AND SUPPORT FROM THE DISABLED CHILDREN'S SOCIAL WORK SERVICE

This guidance is to help to identify children who, through disability, meet the threshold criteria for the Disabled Children's Service and to establish their eligibility for services, including appropriate assessments.

A request for an assessment can be made to Children and Family Services (First Response) for any child with a disability or young person from birth up to the age of 18 years and, who is resident within Leicestershire County.

Following the acceptance of the referral, there will be an assessment of need by a Social Care Services in either Specialist Family Help or the Children's Disability Service by social worker. Services will be provided in accordance with the assessed need.

Where the young person is 17 1/2yrs of age or over, it is expected that consultation would take place between Children and Adult Social Services and, it may be agreed that a joint assessment would be appropriate.

Leicestershire Children and Family Services make a distinction between general Children in Need services and the needs of children with severe or profound disabilities and provide a specialist service for this group.

This criteria for access to an assessment and /or support from the Disabled Children's Social Work Service is based on the definition of disability set out in the Children Act 1989, which states that: -

*"A child is disabled if he is blind, deaf or dumb or suffers from mental disorder of any kind or is substantially and permanently handicapped by illness, injury or congenital deformity or such other disability as may be prescribed."*

Within Leicestershire, to be eligible for specialist support from the Children's Disability Service, a child or young person must have a profound and lifelong disability such as a significant global developmental delay, associated neurosensory needs and/or have complex health needs that have a major impact on their quality of life or is life limiting.

The threshold does **not** include children with

- Mental health disorders, unless in conjunction with a learning, physical or communication disability.
- A diagnosis of ADHD or ASD unless in conjunction with a learning, physical or communication disability.
- A disability or disabilities that are not severe.
- Behavioural problems due to social/environmental factors (i.e., not associated to a disability).



Leicestershire County Council embraces the social *model of disability*, and that Children's specialist needs can create barriers in their lives, this should be challenged to give all disabled children and young people the same opportunities and voice as other children. The social care specialist Disabled Children's Service has an Empowered Futures approach so children progress within their ability and have aspiration to fulfil their potential on their pathway to adulthood. The service promotes the child's voice, this is heard in decision making in line with their form of communication.

The Specialist Children's Disability Service work to the same statutory requirements as other social work teams, and including assessments, safeguarding, children in need plans, child protection plans, children in care planning and work with Disabled Care Leavers in line with their identified needs. In addition, mental capacity act 2005 assessments are completed for young people aged 16/17 where appropriate in line with Deprivation of Liberty Order guidance that prioritises young people living away from home who do not have the capacity to consent to their care and support plan in accommodation provided by the Local Authority.

**Where there are children in the family who are disabled and non-disabled:** In a situation where a family is made up of children, one or more (but not all) of which have a disability and one or more of the children are a child in need/child in need of protection/looked after, then a decision will need to be made about whether the Disabled Children's Service or another social work service within Children and Family Services should provide support. This will depend upon the circumstances of the case, for example, the extent to which there are wider areas of assessed need beyond that of the child's disability.

The guiding principles behind this should be the welfare of the child and the need to see the whole child, within the context of the family and the wider community. N/B: From the perspective of the child and family the issue of 'which team or service' manages the case should not impact upon the quality and type of support to be offered. This should always be based upon the assessed need of the child and family and will be coordinated through a 'team around the family' approach.

Registration on the Disabled Children's Service register is not sufficient evidence that a child meets the criteria for a service from the Disabled Children's Service as the Register includes children with a wide range of special/additional needs.

Where there is uncertainty, the application of concepts "substantial and permanent" could help make good judgements.

- Substantial means considerable or significant factors that are life changing or limiting and might include issues to do with risk and dependency.
- Permanent means existing indefinitely and not expected to improve. However, there must be sufficient flexibility to take account of intermittent or episodic conditions.

All Teams and Services within Children and Families will work with Disabled Children. Disabled Children not meeting the threshold for the Disabled Children's Service can still be considered as children in need of social care or early help support, but they will access support through those teams and service areas.

Where a referral is made to the Children's Disability Service and there is a disagreement between the referring officer and the CDS Team Manager about



whether the referral meets these criteria, the matter should be escalated to the respective Service Managers for consideration and if necessary to the respective Heads of Service. This should be done as quickly as possible to avoid unnecessary delay in the provision of services.

Note: Whenever services are provided to a child with a disability it is important to be clear about the statutory basis underpinning the provision of the service, for example, whether it is through the Chronically Sick and Disabled Person's Act (1970) or through the Children Act (1989).