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#### **About this document**

Title: 0-25 Disabilities Service - Levels of Need

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#### Purpose

Children or young people with disabilities and their families are entitled to an assessment of their needs under section 17 of the Children Act 1989 and the Chronically sick and disabled persons Act (1970). This assessment also highlights the needs of carers including sibling carers.

This document sets out how support can be accessed for children and young people with disabilities aged 0–18 years old, who reside in the London Borough of Lambeth. It is designed for children and young people with a disability, parents and carers, and professionals working with them and outlines the criteria used by Lambeth Children's Social Care when making decisions about who is best placed to carry out an assessment.

This document aims to clarify how support for children and young people with disabilities, including short breaks, can be accessed in Lambeth at all levels of need, from universal or targeted support to the more specialist support that is provided by Lambeth's Specialist 0–25 Disabilities Service. It takes into account feedback from parents responding to the Children with Disabilities Survey and who attended the Face-to-Face Focus Group event in November 2023 and the focus group to edit the document in April 2024.

The Lambeth Children with Disabilities – Levels of need should be read in conjunction with the Lambeth Short Breaks Statement and the Lambeth Local Offer.

The Local Authority has considered the rights of disabled children and young people in accordance with the Equality Act 2010, as well as the range of relevant legislation pertaining to disability, in setting out this criteria.

This document replaces the Lambeth CYPS Criteria for Services to Children with Disabilities.

### The Legal Framework

The Children Act 1989 (Section 17) states the local authority should recognise a child in need if:

- a) s/he is unlikely to achieve or maintain, or have the opportunity of achieving or maintaining, a reasonable standard of health or development without the provision of services by a local authority under this Part;
- b) her/his health or development is likely to be significantly impaired, or, further impaired, without the provision of such services;
- c) s/he is disabled

The Equalities Act 2010 says that a person has a disability if: 'They have a physical or mental impairment and the impact has a substantial and long term adverse effect on their ability to perform normal day to day activities.'

Children and young people may also be eligible for services under the National Assistance Act 1948, the Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1970 and the National Health Service and Community Care Act 1990.

#### **Definitions**

By 'substantial', the Children Act 1989 identifies that the disabled child or young person will require significant levels of support from another person in order to carry out their basic day to day functions such as eating, dressing, washing, participating in activities in or out of the home, and night time care.

By 'long-term' the Children Act 1989 identifies the disability is expected to be permanent and therefore the service would not support children and young people who have had acute medical problems, illnesses or operations which can be disabling but from which they will recover.

The effect of an impairment is long-term if—

- a) it has lasted for at least 12 months,
- b) it is likely to last for at least 12 months, or
- it is likely to last for the rest of the life of the person affected.
- d) Cancer, HIV and Multiple Sclerosis also immediately count as a 'disability'.



#### **Principles**

- Every child or young person with disabilities has a right to an assessment of their need for support.
- Families will be supported and encouraged to identify their own challenges, needs and solutions and to access local universal and additional services available within the community.
- Our aim is always to build resilience and capacity in children and young people to give them the skills and support to develop in to adulthood as confident individuals.
- We seek to offer early help and support to children, young people and families in a coordinated way responding to health, care and learning needs arising from a disability with advice and information and practical help.
- If a child or young person has needs beyond those that can be met by their family and direct access to universal and additional services, we will talk and listen to that child or young person and their family, offer advice and support to meet that need, and develop a plan of support.
- We will seek to support children and young people to live at home and attend the most suitable local school. Where children

- and young people need to be supported overnight or long-term away from home, we will seek to provide that support in a familial setting such as foster care wherever possible.
- Support will always be provided in proportion to the needs identified. We will seek to provide support that promotes independence and resilience for the disabled young person and their family, and avoids creating dependency.
- Support services will be accessible for all children, young people and families, including if they are from a diverse background.
- Resources will be managed and distributed evenly so that more children, young people and families can access a wider range of services.
- Children's Services staff will be clear about when a child or young person can access the Specialist 0–25 Disabilities Service, other statutory services and when they should access mainstream services.



#### Assessment

To make a referral for an assessment, the parent/carer may call our Initial Referral Hub on **0207 926 5555**. Professionals may call to discuss a referral, but must follow up with a Multiagency Referral Form (MARF) and email it to <a href="mailto:helpandprotection@lambeth.gov.uk">helpandprotection@lambeth.gov.uk</a>

If a referral is made, the Initial Referral Hub will triage to determine which team will undertake the Child and Family Assessment.

Children and young people who are under the age of 18 and who have a disability will have their needs assessed under section 17 of the Children Act 1989 following the Framework for the Assessment of Children in Need and their Families (March, 2000). In Lambeth we use a Child and Family Assessment which is an holistic assessment that looks at the needs of the child or young person and their family.

Assessments will be carried out in an open way and will involve those caring for the child or young person, the child or young person themselves, and other significant persons. The particular needs of the child or young person must be taken into account – that is in relation to health, development, disability, education, religion, racial origin, and cultural and linguistic background. The social worker undertaking the assessment may ask for evidence such as copies of doctor's letters or diagnoses. The assessment will be used to gather information to determine the level of need and what support should be provided and to identify the level and type of resource provision needed.

During the assessment the parent(s) and any siblings will also be considered for assessment of their needs as potential carers or young carers and what their support needs may be.

If the child or young person is approaching adulthood and it recognised that they are likely to have needs for care and support after becoming 18, a "transitions assessment" will be undertaken under section 58 of the Care Act 2014. An adult will be assessed under section 9 of the Care Act 2014. For further information please see <a href="https://www.lambeth.gov.uk/adult-social-care-health/know-your-rights">https://www.lambeth.gov.uk/adult-social-care-health/know-your-rights</a>

Once the child or young person's needs have been assessed and the criteria applied, a decision will be made as to the most appropriate team to support the child or young person and their family. This may be the Specialist 0-25 Disabilities Service or another team within Children's Social Care.

#### The Specialist 0-25 Disabilities Service

Lambeth has a Specialist 0–25
Service which provides support
and services designed to meet
the needs of children and young
people who have complex
disabilities where the disability has
a profound impact on the child
or young person's day-to-day
functioning and on their family life.

Those children and young people who have a severe or complex disability that has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on them, including those with life limiting/life threatening illnesses may also be supported by Lambeth's Specialist 0–25 Disabilities Service. This service is not designed to include the full range of children and young people identified by the definition of disability within the Equality Act (2010). The reason for this is that not all children and young people defined by this Act have needs that would require a service from the Specialist Service and many families will not need this level of support.

The Service has responsibility for children in need, children in need of protection and children looked after, to provide a seamless service to children, young people and their families, including siblings, as children's needs change.

# Who can access the Specialist 0–25 Disabilities Service?

In order to access this Service, children and young people must:

- be resident in the London Borough of Lambeth and aged between 0–25 years and
- have three or more indicators in each of the categories in the Severe or Complex columns (see tables on pages 11–17).

Indicators that suggest social care assessment and support should be provided by the Service are:

- 1. Children and young people who have a diagnosed disability which has been assessed as permanent and severe by a health clinician.
- Children and young people who have multiple disabilities. This might also include a disability and a mental health diagnosis which has been assessed as severe and profound by a physician.
- Children and young people with a sensory impairment, a learning disability, or an autistic spectrum disorder (ASD) with challenging behaviour as a result of their learning disability.
- 4. Children and young people who have a visual or hearing impairment which is severe or profound (deaf or blind) and requires the use of specialist equipment to support their sensory functioning.
- 5. Children and young people who have a physical disability which prohibits their ability to be mobile or confines them permanently to the use of a wheelchair and / or the need to be moved using specialist lifting equipment and OT adaptations within the home.

- Children and young people who have complex health needs (severe epilepsy) and may have a palliative, life-threatening, or life-limiting condition and meet the criteria for Continuing Care funding.
- 7. Children and young people who have needs which can only be met by accessing specialist support or there is a need for additional funding above the local short breaks offer to enable a child or young person to access short breaks click here for information about the Local Offer
- Children and young people with a diagnosed disability whose parent/carer are assessed as requiring overnight short breaks.
- Children and young people who are placed in disability residential education/ health and /or care provision via the Care Episode Panel.

# Family Support and Child Protection Services (FSCP)

Where the child or young person with disabilities does not meet the criteria for support from the Specialist 0–25 Disabilities Service, they may be allocated a Social Worker from the Family Support and Child Protection

Service (FSCP). This worker can support the family under Section 17 of the Children Act 1989 and will contribute to any Education Health and Care Plan that is developed for the child or young person.

#### **Early Help Services**

Early Help services are those services which exist in the community and are provided by a range of organisations including schools, voluntary and community sector and health providers.

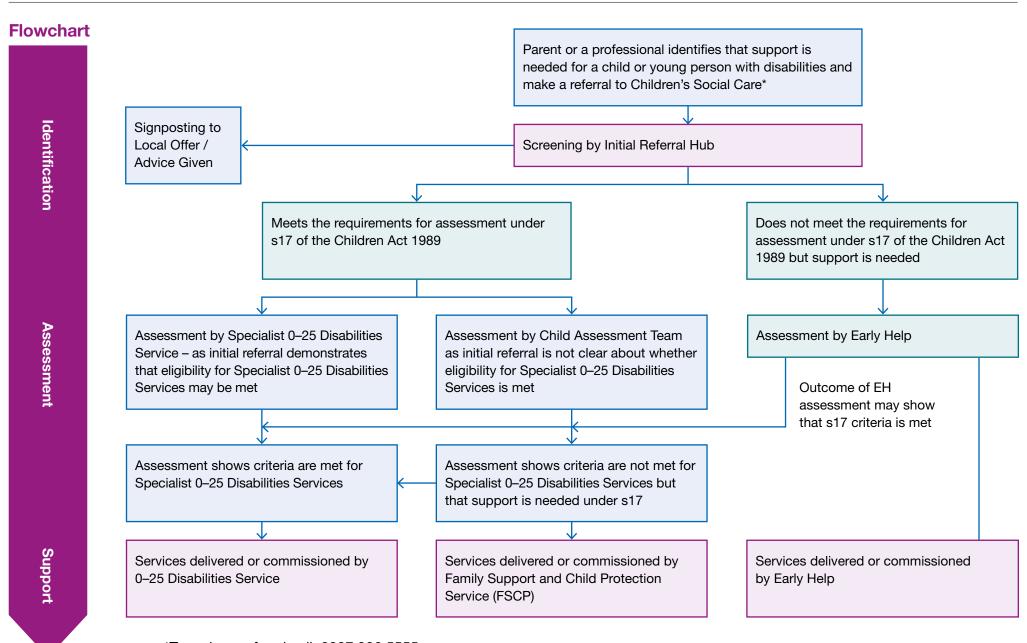
Children and young people whose needs can be met from Early Help or Children Social Care services include those:

- Where challenging behaviour is not linked to a diagnosis of autism or learning difficulties (e.g. a child or young person might be diagnosed with attachment disorder or conduct disorder).
- Where mental health is the primary diagnosis and any resulting impact on behaviour and/or learning are secondary.
- Where children and young people are diagnosed only with ADD/ADHD/ASD and there are no challenging behaviours.
- 4. Where the disability is not permanent or substantial.

## Children Looked After and Care Leavers

The Children Looked After and Care Leavers Services support those children and young people who are disabled who are or who have been subject to Care Orders or who are looked after with the agreement of their parent(s) / carer(s). The majority of the children and young people with disabilities who are looked after in these teams have mild or moderate conditions, where they have severe or complex disabilities and become looked after, the Specialist 0–25 Disabilities Service maintain responsibility for them.

NOTE: If a young person is aged 18 or over and is presenting for the first time, they will be referred into the Initial Contact and Assessment Service within Adult Services. Assessments within Adult Services is based on the Care Act 2014. To contact the Adult Social Care referral hub please go to: <a href="https://www.lambeth.gov.uk/adult-social-care-health/contact-adult-social-care-team">https://www.lambeth.gov.uk/adult-social-care-team</a>



\*To make a referral call: 0207 926 5555

If you are a professional, please complete the multi-agency referral form and email it to helpandprotection@lambeth.gov.uk

### Understanding the Levels of Need

The tables below show the different aspects of a child or young person's circumstances that will be assessed.

These include, Health, Education, communication, behaviour associated with their disability, Family, Social Relationships and Self Care, Safety, Mobility and Specific needs of those under the age of five and any sensory disabilities such as visual or hearing impairments. This is set out with 'indicators' that show the likely behaviours or experiences of children or young people under the headings of Mild, Moderate, Complex and Severe.

If a child or young person has a diagnosed disability, they are entitled to an assessment of their needs, but not all children or young people will be able to receive a service from the Specialist 0–25 Disabilities Service, they may still receive a service from one of the teams listed above.

Where children or young people are referred into Children's Social Care as meeting **three or more** indicators that show they have a

complex or severe disability, the referral team may signpost directly to the Specialist 0–25 Disabilities Service, who will undertake an assessment and determine what support is required or what relevant short breaks are required.

Many children or young people will be assessed as meeting the indicators of mild or moderate disability and will therefore receive an assessment that is from various Children's Social Care Teams, Child and Adolescent Mental Health or from Early Help (all of whom can also signpost to relevant short breaks). Where those assessments show that the child or young person has indicators within the complex or severe categories, they may be referred into the Specialist 0–25 Disabilities Service.

# Levels of Need – Health needs

		· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·		Services Assessment hild in Need Services)
LEVEL	Severe	Complex	Moderate	Mild
Health	Complex health needs prevents participation in social and educational activities without minimum of constant 24 hour 1:1 specialist support.  Condition is unable to be controlled by medication.	Requires daily specialist medical or nursing care.  Regular admissions to hospital for treatment.  Daily use of specialist equipment that needs operational assistance.  Life limiting condition.  Requires intensive therapy programme.  Health needs have a significant impact on development and learning.  Essential care needs of the disabled child or young person prevent parents/carers from attending to siblings' needs for extended periods of time resulting in a significant impairment to their growth, development, physical and/ or mental wellbeing, or where there is a likelihood of them experiencing significant harm or neglect.	Regular nursing care and support (more than once or twice weekly).  Uses specialist equipment that needs operational assistance.  A planned programme of therapy required for the disability.  Complex daily medication.  Unstable health which impacts adversely on child or young person and or family.  Health needs limit ability to perform everyday tasks.	Requires no or minimal nursing care or support.  Routine medical checks only.  Nil or minimal treatment/ medication.  No or little therapy involved with disability.  Uses specialist equipment that does not require operational assistance.  Known health condition which is under control and only occasionally interfering with everyday activities in a minor way.

#### Levels of Need - Education and Communication needs

Disability	Meets Criteria for Specialist Assessment (e.g. Specialist 0–25 Disabilities Service)		Meets Criteria for Children's S (e.g. Early Help Services or Ch	
LEVEL	Severe	Complex	Moderate	Mild
Education	Child or young person has a profound learning difficulty.  Attends educational provision for with severe Learning Difficulties.	Child or young person has a severe learning difficulty.  Attends educational provision for children or young people with complex learning difficulties.	Attends educational provision possibly including 1:1 support / SALT/ OT some of the time or a specialist provision not for complex or severe learning difficulties.  Assessment shows abilities will achieve less than 70% of the expected attainment for age.	Attends mainstream school/ pre-school/college with or without support.  Assessment shows abilities will achieve within 70–80% of the expected attainment for age.
Communication	No verbal communication.  Unable to communicate needs using any method.  Unable to use communication aid.  Severely delayed processing skills.	None or very little communication used but can communicate at least basic needs using any method.  Significantly delayed processing skills.	Delayed or disordered communication including language disorders causing significant difficulty in communicating outside the home.  Reduced ability to understand and process information in comparison to peers.	Marked delay in language development. Requires minimal support to communicate.  Able to use signing or other communication method consistently.

### Levels of Need – Behavioural needs

Disability	· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·		Meets Criteria for Children's S (e.g. Early Help Services or Cl	
LEVEL	Severe	Complex	Moderate	Mild
Behaviour associated with the disability	Profound challenging behaviour which impacts on all aspects of the child or young person functioning and the child or young person poses a severe risk to self or others.  Requires constant monitoring, supervision and a structured programme for managing behaviour overseen by specialist services.  Frequent behaviour that may be of risk to the child or young person or their carers.  No awareness of impact of behaviour on others.	Behaviour demonstrates significant risk to self or others.  Requires monitoring, supervision and a structured programme for managing behaviour overseen by specialist services.  Challenging behaviour which impact significantly on community life and requires specialist provision to function socially/educationally.	Behaviour demonstrates moderate risk to self or others. Requires monitoring/ supervision in some circumstances. Input required to manage behaviour. Has difficulties in relating to peers. Behavioural or management difficulties which may require specialist advice.	Behaviour does not demonstrate to self and others.  Need for monitoring/ supervision appropriate for age.  Minor difficulties in relationships with parents/ peers/others.  Behaviour that can be difficult to manage at times but can be managed without specialist provision.

# Levels of Need - Family and Social Relationship and Self-Care needs

Disability	•				
LEVEL	Severe	Complex	Moderate	Mild	
Family and Social Relationships	Inability to build and maintain friendships and relationships without constant support with all aspects.	Limited ability to build and maintain friendships without significant support with all aspects.  Total dependence on carer for social integration.  Very limited awareness of impact of behaviour on others.	Difficulty building and maintaining friendships and relationships without support.	Able to sustain limited peer relationships and social integration with support.	
Self-Care	Fully dependent on others for all personal care, (eating/drinking/toileting and washing).  Needs physical support with all personal care.  Requires specialist equipment to support all their care needs.	Needs physical assistance with personal care.  Needs high level of supervision with all personal care (eating/ drinking/toileting and washing).	Requires some prompts and supervision greater than that expected for developmental age.	Independent in majority of personal care activities.  Requires occasional supervision beyond that expected for chronological age.	

# Levels of Need - Safety, Mobility and Under Five needs

Disability	·		Meets Criteria for Children's S (e.g. Early Help Services or Cl	
LEVEL	Severe	Complex	Moderate	Mild
Safety	Needs constant supervision both during the day and night.	Needs constant supervision during the day.	Needs some supervision at times.	Occasionally requires more supervision than children or
	Does not have any awareness	Would place themselves	Limited perception of danger	young people of same age.
	of danger to self or others.	or others at risk without supervision.	to self or others.	Some awareness of danger to self or others.
		No awareness of danger to self or others.		
Mobility	Unable to walk. Uses a wheelchair.	Unable to walk. May be able to stand or transfer with support.	Walks but only with aids or assistance.	Able to walk and function independently but with some
	Totally dependent upon carer for mobility.	Able to manoeuvre self at least some of the time.	May use wheelchair for intermittent use.	limitation of function.
Children or young people under the age of five years	Child or young person requires significantly greater care and attention because of the nature of health or learning condition.	Child or young person is functioning around ½ the level expected for their age.	Child or young person is functioning around 2/3 of the level expected for their age.	Child or young person is functioning slightly behind the level expected for their age.
	Significant failure to reach developmental milestones.			

# Levels of Need – Visual and Hearing needs

Disability	·		Meets Criteria for Children's S (e.g. Early Help Services or Cl	
LEVEL	Severe	Complex	Moderate	Mild
Visual impairment	Mobility restricted without special provision.  Requires education by nonsighted methods.  Eligible for registration as blind.	Mobility restricted without special provision. Unable to read large print without intensive educational assistance or aids. Severe visual field defect with impaired visual acuity. Eligible for registration as blind or partially sighted.	Able to read print with simple aid or assistance.  Defect of at least half the visual field.  May be eligible for registration as partially sighted.	Severe or profound problem with one eye.  Less than half visual field loss.  Able to function independently.
Hearing impairment	Total or near total loss of hearing (<95Db).	Severe hearing loss (71–95 Db).	Significant hearing loss but able to function with a hearing aid.  Hearing loss (41–70Db).	Severe or profound hearing loss in one ear.  Moderate hearing loss (20–40Db).

know-your-rights)

### Support that is available at each assessed level

Universal provision are services that are available for all children or young people irrespective of their level of need or diagnosis. This includes school nurses, GP, children's centres, access to play packs, Early Years, nurseries etc. Whilst the provisions below are listed under each of the headings, not all children or young people will require all of the services listed, but they may be available within Lambeth (or commissioned by them) to support families where assessed as required.

Severe	Complex	Moderate	Mild
Continuing Care	Direct Payments	Local Offer www.lambeth.gov.uk/send	Local Offer www.lambeth.gov.uk/send
Direct Payments	Domiciliary Care	Universal provision – early years www.lambeth.gov.uk/childrenscentres	Universal provision – early years www.lambeth.gov.uk/childrenscentress
Domiciliary Care	Short Breaks (see https://www.lambeth.gov.uk/lambeths-send-local-offer/im-parent-orcarer/health-social-care/cwd-short-breaks-send-children)	Universal provision – youth and play	Universal provision – youth and play
Short Breaks (see https://www.lambeth.gov.uk/lambeths-send-local-offer/im-parent-or-carer/health-social-care/cwd-short-breaks-send-children)	Universal provision	Parenting support www.lambeth.gov.uk/parenting	Parenting support www.lambeth.gov.uk/parenting
Universal provision	May be looked after because of a 52 week placement for school	Parent Carer / Sibling carer assessment (as part of C&F assessment)	Parent Carer / Sibling carer assessment (as part of C&F assessment)
Dynamic Support Register	DOLS / Court of Protection	Transitions into adulthood	Transitions into adulthood
May be "looked after" because of a 52 week placement for school	Parent Carer / Sibling carer assessment (as part of C&F assessment)	Care Act Assessment (see https://www.lambeth.gov.uk/adult-social-care-health/know-your-rights)	Care Act Assessment (see https://www.lambeth.gov.uk/adult-social-care-health/know-your-rights)
Deprivation of Liberties (DOLS) orders / Court of Protection	Transitions into adulthood	Direct Payments	
Parent Carer / Sibling carer assessment (as part of C&F assessment)	Care Act Assessment (see https://www.lambeth.gov.uk/adult-social-care-health/know-your-rights)	Early Help	
Transitions into adulthood		Lambeth Contact – Parent Participation and Engagement	
Care Act Assessment (see <a href="https://www.lambeth.gov.uk/adult-social-care-health/">https://www.lambeth.gov.uk/adult-social-care-health/</a>			

# Complaints about Children's Social Care and appeals

If a parent/carer is not happy that the social worker has understood and reflected the needs and circumstances of the child or young person in the assessment, in the first instance they should raise this with the social worker to rectify it. In all cases, if you have any concerns, please speak to the appropriate member of staff as soon as possible. You could also contact their manager to discuss your dissatisfaction.

If you have contacted the service already, or you would prefer to submit a formal complaint, you can complete an online form (click here). We will aim to respond to you within 20 working days.

Make a complaint | Lambeth Council

Telephone: 020 7926 9777

Email: CBSTeam@lambeth.gov.uk

# SEND Information and Advice Support Service (IASS)

The Information that we offer is impartial and confidential. While we are funded by Lambeth Council we operate at "arms-length" from other local authority services. The IASS we provide is varied and it depends on your personal circumstances, but it might include:

Information on the law around SEN, Lambeth Local Offer, Local earlyyears settings, schools, colleges and other post-16 provision, mediation, SEND Tribunal hearings and dispute resolution

Advice about gathering and understanding information, how to get the best from a meeting, how other organisations might be able to help, Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs).

We can also support with preparing for and attending meetings, writing letters, understanding reports EHCP applications and annual reviews.

Email lambethiass@lambeth.gov.uk

Phone: 020 7926 9805 or 020 7926 1831

Website www.lambethiass.org.uk

# Glossary

Term	Definition
Early Help	Services within the community to help families to access the services they need
Developmental milestones	A set of functional skills or age-specific tasks that most children or young people can do at a certain age range
Visual field defect	A visual field defect is a loss of part of the usual field of vision, so it does not include severe visual impairment of either one eye or both. The lesion may be anywhere along the optic pathway; retina to occipital cortex
Visual acuity	A measure of the ability of the eye to distinguish shapes and the details of objects at a given distance
Visual field	Refers to the total area in which objects can be seen in the side (peripheral) vision as you focus your eyes on a central point
Db	The decibel is the unit used to measure the intensity of a sound
Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services	A term for all services that work with children and young people who have difficulties with their emotional or behavioural wellbeing

Term	Definition
MASH	The Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) brings key professionals together to facilitate early, better quality information sharing, analysis and decision-making, to safeguard vulnerable children and young people more effectively
Case management	Case Management is a collaborative process which: assesses, plans, implements, co-ordinates, monitors and evaluates the options and services required to meet an individual's health, social care, educational and employment needs, using communication and available resources to promote quality cost effective outcomes
Safeguarding	The action taken to promote the welfare of children or young people and protect them from harm
Transition assessment	A transition assessment supports a young person and their family plan for the future, by providing them with information about what they can expect, based on an assessment of their needs, wishes and desired outcomes

Term	Definition
Care Act 2014	The Care Act 2014 is an Act of the Parliament. The main purpose of the act is to overhaul the existing 60-year-old legislation regarding social care in England to ensure that care and support is consistent across England
Needs assessments	An assessment carried out by a social worker when it is believed your child or young person is eligible for support
Children Act 1989	Allocates duties to local authorities, courts, parents, and other agencies in the United Kingdom, to ensure children or young people are safeguarded and their welfare is promoted
Congenital deformity	A congenital deformity is a change in the normal size or shape of a body part caused by a condition that a baby is born with

Term	Definition
Statutory	Decided, controlled, or required by law
Specialist Provision	For children and young people who require a highly individualised and personalised programme of work. This group includes children and young people with complex learning and communication needs and those children and young people who are cognitively able and have specific speech, language or communication needs
Inclusive Provision	Children or young people with a broad range of additional needs
Attainment	The act of achieving something
Developmental age	A developmental age is a child's age at which they function emotionally, physically, cognitively and socially
Chronological age	A child's chronological age is their age based on their date of birth