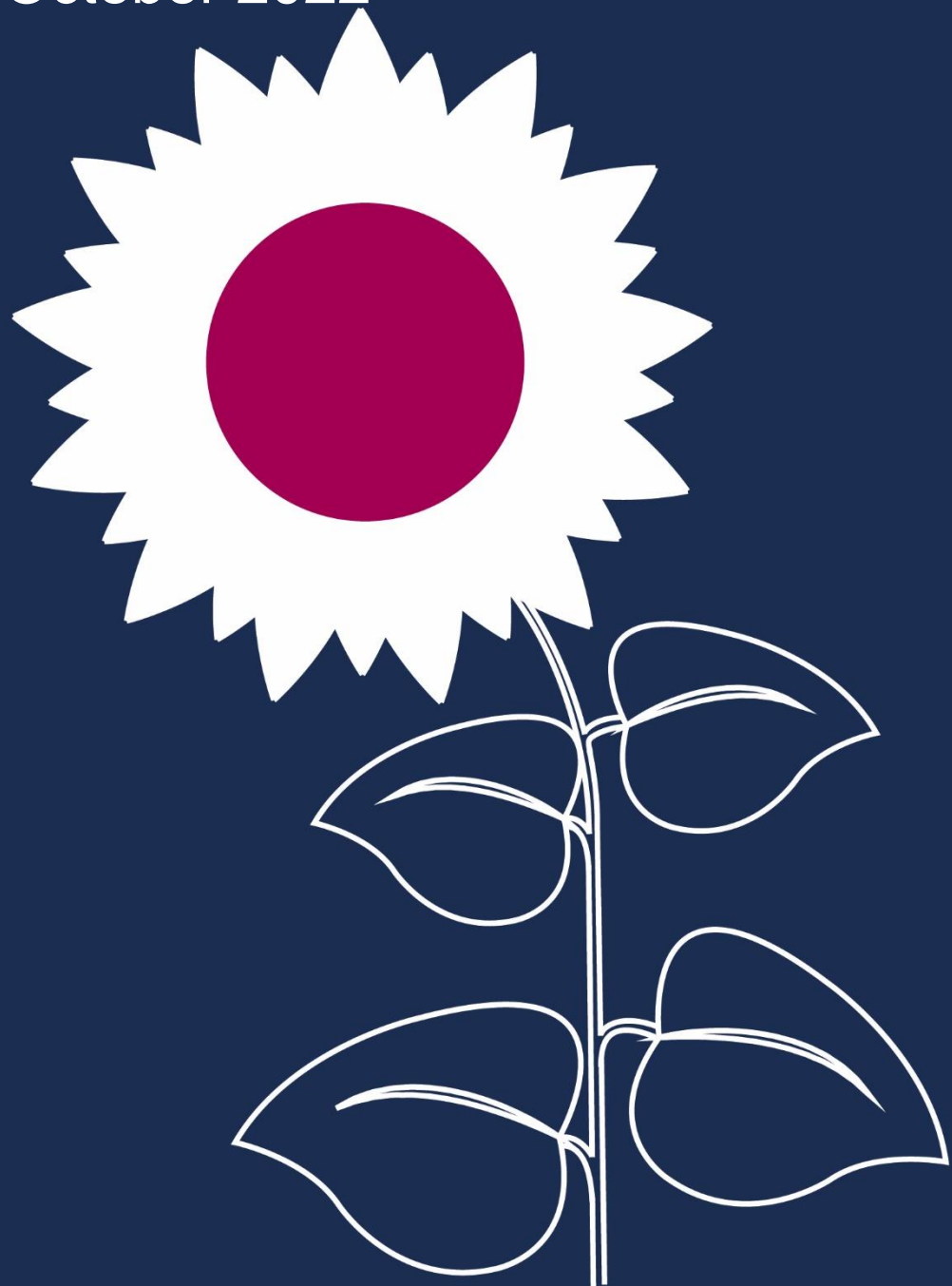


Children with Disabilities

Referral, Assessment and Planning

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1 Introduction

- 1.1 Early Intervention and Children's Social Care, Children with Disabilities Team provides services at Level 4 of Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire Threshold Criteria for children with more complex needs related to disability and substantial impairment:

'Child has highly complex needs related to disability and requires a multi-agency response including social care services'
- 1.2 The **Referral and Assessment Procedures** give detailed information regarding EICSC referral and assessment processes. These processes apply to assessments in respect of children with disabilities.
- 1.3 However there are additional factors to be considered in respect of referrals and assessments concerning a child with disabilities that are covered in these procedures.

PRACTICE GUIDANCE

Assessment is a process of gathering information about the health, education and social care needs of a child. Assessment should also identify the disabling social and physical factors which are inhibiting the child's access to a good quality of life and what support agencies can provide to help tackle some of these barriers. For those children with special needs it is important that the process of assessment is supportive of the child and the family, particularly recognising the needs of siblings.

2 Referrals

- 2.1 EICSC referrals in respect of children and young people with disabilities are received via the CHAD Service. If the referral meets the threshold criteria the case will be transferred to CWD for a Child and Family Assessment.
- 2.2 Many referrals will concern families where only one of a group of siblings has a disability. If the child's disability is the dominant issue in the presenting problem the referral should be allocated to the Children with Disabilities Team - otherwise allocation should be to one of the Safeguarding and Support Teams.

PRACTICE GUIDANCE

The sharing of professional expertise is encouraged, and should be negotiated between Service/Team Managers.

3 Child and Family Assessment

- 3.1 Assessments should be based on the uniqueness of each child and family and take full account of any factors that may serve to hinder the well-being of disabled children.
- 3.2 The assessment should consider the needs of the child, the strengths and needs of the parents/carers and how looking after the child impacts on their lives, the environment within which the child is living and how safe and suitable that is, and the support networks for the child and the family.
- 3.3 The assessment is completed in partnership with the family and other professionals, and will include the views of the child and their carers. It is important therefore that the assessment and the provision of services that follows from the assessment are undertaken in a transparent and fair way.
- 3.4 A separate **Carers Assessment** should always be offered to eligible carers when completing the single assessment of the child's needs. A parent may not wish to access a Carers Assessment, and this should be recorded within the Child and Family Assessment.
- 3.5 As part of the Child and Family Assessment, a Needs Assessment Matrix and Allocation of Resources Tool will be completed. (Appendix A). This will be used as part of the assessment process to evaluate the level of need and establish the support to meet the child's needs.

PRACTICE GUIDANCE

Eligible carers are carers who undertake over 35 hours of care a week. Parents/carers of children with disabilities are therefore always likely to be eligible carers.

4 Planning

- 4.1 Following the assessment, a Child in Need Plan will be completed for children with a moderate and high level of need. This Plan will be regularly reviewed and levels and types of services provided may be changed to respond to the changing needs of the child and family.
- 4.2 The assessed needs of the child may be that a Short Break Plan will be needed to support the child. A child will be supported via the Short Break Pathway, and the Short Break will be reviewed on a regular basis.