

Eligibility criteria for assessment by the Children with Disabilities Service

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1. Introduction and Purpose

The Children with Disabilities Service offers an assessment for disabled children and their families. Following this, families will be supported to access the most appropriate resources to meet their identified needs.

2. Scope of Policy

This document describes the referral and assessment process within the Children with Disabilities Service. It also describes the level of need and potential interventions that may be available to a family following an assessment taking place.

3. Legal Background

Assessments for disabled children are undertaken with regard to the Children Act 1989 section 17, which includes disabled children and those with complex health needs:

- who are unlikely to achieve or attain a reasonable standard of health and

- development without provision of services;
- whose health and development is likely to be significantly impaired without the provision of services;
- who are disabled;

Services for these children and their families are provided under the provisions of the Children Act 1989 or the Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1970

4. Referral process

Professionals who assess that support from Children with Disabilities service is required must complete an Early Help Assessment and submit through Somerset Direct.

Families can self-refer via Somerset Direct.

5. The assessment process

A child is eligible for an assessment from the Children with Disabilities service if a child who lives in Somerset is affected by one or more of the following:

- Physical disabilities that are substantial and permanent;
- Learning disabilities that have a significant impact on social functioning;
- sensory impairments affecting hearing and/or sight;
- Needs that are on the autistic spectrum, or if the child is on the pathway for an autism diagnosis;
- A complex health, life limiting or life threatening condition which significantly impacts on their or their families daily living arrangements.

An assessment will be carried out by one of the Children with Disability Teams. This will be a holistic assessment that will include assessment of both the child's and the parent's or carer's needs.

Where the referral suggests that the child and family's needs could be met by targeted services, an Early Help Assessment will be carried out by one of the Children with Disabilities Early Support Teams or another agency professional. However where

a family specifically request an assessment is carried out by a social worker this will be offered.

Where the referral suggests that the child has more complex needs a Child and Family Assessment will be carried out by a social worker.

Where there is reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering or is likely to suffer significant harm a child protection investigation will be carried out by a social worker under s47 of the Children Act 1989 followed by a Child and Family Assessment.

Please note: if at the point of referral the disabled child is part of a family group who all require an assessment due to child protection concerns, then this assessment will be led by an area Children's Social Care Assessment Team supported by a social worker from the Children with Disabilities Team who will provide specific expertise and knowledge in respect of the disabled child's assessment.

The assessment may identify a range of needs for the child and family. The table that starts on page 4 of this document sets out what sort of support may best meet your child's needs.

Parent Carer Assessments

The parent carer assessment can be combined with the Child and Family Assessment and will be carried out by the same person at the same time so families only have to tell their story once.

The Children and Families Act 2014 amends the Children Act 1989 and requires local authorities to assess parent carers on appearance of need or where an assessment is requested by the parent. As this guidance relates to disabled children and their families all relevant children will be children in need and a parent carer assessment can be completed in each case.

The Local Authority will assess:

- Whether a parent carer has needs for support and, if so, what those needs are;
- Whether it is appropriate for the parent to provide, or continue to provide, care for the disabled child, in the light of the parent's need for support, other needs and wishes
- the wellbeing of the parent carer;

- the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of the disabled child cared for, and any other child for whom the parent carer has parental responsibility.

6. Level of need: Level of intervention

The table below provides information about how professionals match assessed need with services and gives an indication of the types of services that may be available but it is not exhaustive and should only be used for guidance.

The table is formatted so that the lowest level of need (and the corresponding services available) is detailed at the top of the table with the greatest level of need and possible services available at the bottom.

The first column details the level of need through identification of factors in the child's life such as sleepless nights, the complexity of care needs etc.

The second column details the range of possible services available to meet the assessed needs such as Direct Payments or Short Breaks. Whilst services are named within this column, please bear in mind the following:

- **Universal Services** refers to those services which are deemed open to all (dependent on availability of places) and do not require referral by a social worker or any other professional.
- **Voluntary/community groups** are organisations that are set within communities and organised and run by communities or the voluntary sector.

There is an overview of the specific services available on Somerset's Local Offer on the Somerset Choices website at <https://www.somersetchoices.org.uk>

NB: Access to hospices has not been included within this table although access to hospice care is available via referral to NHS where assessed as required.

Level of Need	Level of Intervention
<i>Factors in the child's life starting with lowest level of need at the top</i>	<i>Potential services available</i>

<p>Level 1 Universal see</p> <p>Effective Support for Children and Families document (http://sscb.safeguardingsomerset.org.uk/effectivesupport-documents/)</p> <p>Child has low level needs that have little impact on daily life. The family feel well supported in their caring role. The child and family feel well supported and able to meet the child's educational, health and care needs independently.</p> <p>No assessment is needed.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Resources • School • GP and Health Visitor • Youth Centres • Children's Centres • Citizens Advice • Housing • Short Break Calendar • Voluntary or Community Groups
<p>Level 2 Additional see</p> <p>Effective Support for Children and Families document (http://sscb.safeguardingsomerset.org.uk/effectivesupport-documents/)</p> <p>The child and their family are isolated in their community. Parents/carers require a break to give:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - their other dependents their uninterrupted time and attention. - uninterrupted time to themselves. <p>Parents/carers and siblings require a break or assistance to engage in personal leisure activities/short break that are not appropriate or enjoyable for their disabled child.</p> <p>Parents need help setting up access to leisure activities for their child.</p> <p>The disabled child requires:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Substantial assistance to spend time with their friends, peer groups/social activities to provide social inclusion. • Substantial assistance to take part in leisure activities. 	<p>All of the above plus</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Somerset Supporters Service • Specialist Short Break information • Inclusive play schemes • Equipment and or housing adaptation [via the Occupational Therapy service]. • Personal Budgets (in the form of Direct Payments)

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Help with setting up access to leisure activities. • Assistance developing independence, choice and control. <p>Early Support Record would be carried out by one of the Children with Disabilities Early Support Teams</p>	
<p>Level 3 Complex see</p> <p>Effective Support for Children and Families document (http://sscb.safeguardingsomerset.org.uk/effectivesupport-documents/)</p> <p>It is assessed that the child and family would benefit from the child having supported social activity independently from their family. Or because parents/carers require a time-limited break [sessional care] due to their capacity to care being temporarily exhausted.</p> <p>Parents or Carers require additional support due to the substantial demands of caring for their disabled child.</p> <p>Early Support Record would be carried out by one of the Children with Disabilities Early Support Teams</p> <p>Children with High needs requiring support, protection or care will have a Children and Families Assessment carried out by a Social Worker **</p> <p>At the complex level possible circumstances are:</p> <p>Education, health and /or social difficulties related to the child's disability means that the family are at risk of not being able to continue to provide care at home.</p> <p>Child has complex needs requiring co-ordination of multi-agency support in relation to their educational, health and care needs now and as they prepare for adulthood.</p> <p>This could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disturbed nights • Persistent challenging behaviour • Supervision of the child's complex health care needs • Complex manual handling tasks 	<p>All of the above plus</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sessional care provided under the Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1970. • Direct Payments • Short breaks Service • Advice guidance and support with parenting needs. • Short breaks service including overnight care provided under s17 of the Children Act 1989 ** • Individualised packages of support jointly funded by CSC health and education.**

<p>Level 4 Acute see Effective Support for Children and Families document (http://sscb.safeguardingsomerset.org.uk/effectivesupport-documents/)</p> <p>The child may have complex and or high level unmet needs and may need support via a child in need plan.</p> <p>There is reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering or is likely to suffer significant harm a child protection investigation will be carried out under s47 of the Children Act 1989 which will form part of a Child and Family Assessment.</p> <p>Child is assessed as requiring a multi-agency child protection plan to safeguard them.</p> <p>The child is unable to remain in the care of their parents or carers</p> <p>Children and Family Assessment carried out by a Social Worker.</p>	<p>All of the above services and support may be required.</p> <p>Support under s17 CA1989 Child in Need</p> <p>Investigation under s47 of Children Act 1989</p> <p>Child Protection Plan</p> <p>Reception into care via Section 20 or 31 of Children Act 1989</p>
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