

Support from the Children's Disability Team

The Children's Disability Team provides a Specialist Statutory Social Work Service for children and young people aged 0-17 and their families in North Tyneside. Following assessment, services may be allocated under Section 17 of the Children Act 1989. A child in need is defined under the Act as a child who is unlikely to achieve or maintain a reasonable level of health or development, or whose health and development is likely to be significantly or further impaired, without the provision of services; or a child who is disabled.

The Team also provides services to children and young people who are 'looked after by the Local Authority', or in need of protection, and young people going through transition into adulthood and Adult Services. It is the legal responsibility of Adult Social Care Services to assess the needs of young people aged 18 and over.

Children and young people are eligible for support and services if they have a physical or mental impairment, which has a substantial and long-term effect on their ability to carry out day-to-day activities. This may include a physical or learning disability, a hearing or visual impairment. It includes children with Autism and Asperger's Syndrome and children who may have challenging behaviour as a result of their learning disability. It also includes children who have complex health needs and who may have palliative, life limiting or a life-threatening condition.

Many children with additional needs and disabilities and their families will access universal/mainstream opportunities and services and receive support from family, friends or the community they live in. Some children and families may need support from the Early Help & Assessment Team, accessed by North Tyneside Front Door Service, to ensure they are able and make best use of the services and resources available to them. The Front Door Service provides access to all services for children and families in North Tyneside. To contact the Front Door Service call 0345 2000 109.

For some children with complex disabilities, they and their families will need specialist services to access the support they need. To access the Specialist Disability Services, children and their families will need to participate in a Statutory Social Work Assessment (SWAT) accessed by North Tyneside Front Door service. The areas of assessment the SWAT may include are:

1. Is the child safe?
2. Is the child healthy?
3. Is the child able to achieve Economic Wellbeing?
4. Is the child able to make a Positive Contribution?
5. Is the child able to enjoy and achieve?

6. Is the child in a caring and stable family?

If the 'need for specialist services' are identified, under Section 17 of the Children Act 1989 and 2004, a Social Worker from the Children's Disability team will be allocated to undertake specialist assessment, incorporating any other agencies and professionals who are involved with the child/young person. A care plan will then be agreed and implemented, and a care team formulated to co-ordinate the plan and review the outcomes.

Because of the complex disabilities of the children accessing the Specialist Disability Service, all of the children also have Special Educational Needs. From September 2014 the Department for Education requires Local Authorities and Health Services to bring Education, Health and Social Care assessments and personalised plans together.

To ensure children, young people and their families have more choice and control of how their needs are met, the Department for Education also requires Local Authorities and Health Services to offer eligible children, young people and families the opportunity to receive and bring together, personal education, personal health, or personal social care budgets as an alternative to receiving currently provided Education, Health or Social Care services.

It will be the personal social care budget used as an alternative to the specialist disability services mentioned above that families can choose to use as part of their Education Health and Care (EHC) budget from the Specialist Disability Service. It is intended that children, young people and families can use this social care budget creatively; however, it can only be used to achieve the children and family outcomes linked to their social care plan. This will be closely monitored and reviewed by the team working with the child/family. This will take place on a 6 monthly basis, or sooner if required, as it is important to evidence improved outcomes for children and families when using specialist resources.