Child Disability Service
Report April 2009 - March 10

Introduction
This report summarises the work of the Child Disability Service over the past year and reports on progress and feedback from customers/partners.

Service Users and Partners
The Child Disability Service provides a social work service to children and young people who live in West Lothian and have a significant or complex disability. We offer support, advice and guidance to children, young people, their families and carers.

The Child Disability Service strives to promote social inclusion and to maximise the potential of individual children with the emphasis on providing, as far as possible services in local communities.

In addition to providing services directly related to the impact of disability, the Child Disability Service also delivers statutory services. This includes providing reports to the Scottish Children's Reporter Administration (SCRA), Child Protection investigations and supporting children who are Looked After and Looked After and Accommodated by the Council.

Summary of the services provided
The Child Disability Service supports children and young people between birth and 16 years who live in West Lothian and have a significant or complex physical, learning or sensory disability. The Child Disability Service will also offer support to young people beyond 16 years of age, as appropriate, during the transition to adult services.

All children, who meet the above criteria, and come to the attention of the Child Disability Service are offered an assessment, in order to identify their additional needs. The Child Disability Service provides and accesses a range of services in order to support children and their families. This includes:

- Short breaks from caring
- Overnight breaks from caring
- Holiday activities
- Support to access community activities
- Personal care

Services are offered via existing West Lothian resources, core funded voluntary organisations and individual commissioned packages. The Child Disability Service strives to ensure the provision of service is consistent and equitable and that the number of children receiving appropriate services is maximised.

This is achieved by having a clear procedure in place which, ensures that all children are subject to the same process of identifying priority of need.

The Child Disability Service will continuing to work in partnership with children, their families and all partner agencies to provide integrated services, which promote an inclusive community and enable children with a disability and their families to live as independently as possible.

Annual Consultation

This year the Child Disability Service undertook a postal survey of customers and a postal/email survey of partner agencies. Unfortunately we received a very low response which did not provide us with the relevant information in order to gather a representative sample of customer/partner views. Further discussion will take place in order to ensure we tailor our consultation to maximise response from customers and partners in the future.

Service Standards

In line with the Children & Families Practice Teams our service standards have been reviewed and amended to reflect the overarching aim of children's services to contribute to making sure that all children and young people in West Lothian are safe, nurtured, active, healthy, achieving, included, respected and responsible. We do this in partnership with children and young people, their families and carers, their communities and other relevant organisations. We aim to be open, honest and accountable, and to make best use of our resources through a competent and confident workforce.

We will:

- Respond to referrals within ten working days
- Provide a high quality service as judged by our customers
- Provide the information you need in ways which are easy to understand and meet your needs and preferences
- Ensure our staff behave professionally in all aspects of their dealings with you
- Work with you to achieve the best outcomes for children

In addition the Child Disability Team objectives are:

- To allocate assessments to appropriate worker within 8 weeks of referral
- To complete all assessments in partnership with children, young people, parents and colleagues in education, health and voluntary agencies - undertake this within 12 weeks of allocation
- To establish a Care Plan for every child or young person who receives service and involve all relevant parties
- To review Care Plans every 6 months, involving all relevant parties.

The Child Disability Service reviewed their objectives and have reduced the waiting time for allocation following previous customer feedback. We will continue to review the service standards and objectives on an annual basis and we will monitor our performance against them by regular management review and listening to customer feedback.

Feedback on customer satisfaction
As indicated earlier we are unable to provide a representative view from our customers and partners.

The Child Disability Service recognises that there are difficulties in gaining the views of customers and in particular the views of children/young people with significant and complex disability. Children and young people are involved, as far as possible, in the assessment, care planning and review process and the team strive to gain their views of the services they receive as well as the service provided by the Child Disability Service.

We welcome feedback from all service users, potential service users, partner agencies and staff. Feedback is extremely important and is fully considered by the team and incorporated in the team action plan to ensure we continue to provide an effective service.

Please let us know if you feel we are not performing in accordance with our standards or if you have other feedback regarding the Child Disability Service.

Complaints/compliments report
Between April 09 and March 10 we received 2 complaints. These complaints raised concern about the level of contact with the Child Disability Service and the level of service being recommended or provided.

Following investigation these complaints were resolved by clarifying the level of contact and fully explaining the process for decision making regarding the level of service being recommended/provided.

We investigated all the complaints.

During the year we have also had a number of compliments from children, young people, parents, carers and partner organisations.

Future Developments
There are presently plans for the Child Disability Service to be relocated at the new Strathbrock Family Unit in Broxburn and it is hoped this will take place by the end of May 2010. Along side office accommodation the Child Disability Service will also have access to the main communal area and a small bungalow on the Strathbrock Family Unit site. This will offer the opportunity for the Child Disability Service to develop the service they provide within a community based setting for example family assessment, individual/group activity, life skills/independence training etc.

Exploration is also taking place regarding the use of the bungalow for the possible provision of breaks from caring/overnight respite. Presently West Lothian provide breaks from caring in a variety of ways, however, the majority of overnight respite takes place out with West Lothian. Consideration is being given to using the bungalow to relocate overnight respite where appropriate.

These developments are at a very early stage and consultation would take place with all relevant parties prior to any final decision.

If you would like any further information regarding any of the above please contact:

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