

**To the Chair and Members of the  
CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY PANEL  
CHILDREN WITH DISABILITES - OVERVIEW REPORT**

<b>Relevant Cabinet Member(s)</b>	<b>Wards Affected</b>	<b>Key Decision</b>
Councillor Nuala Fennelly Cabinet Member for Education and Skills and Lead Member for Children's Services	All	No

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- There have been a number of changes at both the national and local level which affect the delivery of support for disabled children in Doncaster, most important of which include:
  - Implementation of Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) legislation; and the
  - establishment of the Doncaster Children's Services Trust.

To maintain consistent and stable service delivery during this period of change, the provision of support for disabled children and their families has remained within the local authority.

However, now that these matters have largely been addressed, it is now timely to review our arrangements to assure that we have the optimal structure and processes in place to maximise the benefits for this group of children.

**EXEMPT REPORT**

- This is not an Exempt Report.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

- Consider whether to establish a task and finish group to review current arrangements for the provision of support to disabled children.

**WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR THE CITIZENS OF DONCASTER?**

- The provision of a high quality service for disabled children and their families will support their potential to live safe, healthy, active and independent lives. A review of arrangements for the provision of support will help provide confidence that improvement plan developments have benefitted this group of children and should align with the trust ambition to achieve Ofsted judgement of 'good' by 2016/17 and 'outstanding' by 2018/19.

## **BACKGROUND**

5. This year has seen changes at national and local level which affect the support for disabled children in Doncaster. At national level legislation has brought about significant changes to the way local authorities and their partners work with children with special educational needs. Locally, the Doncaster Children Services Trust became operational on October 1st 2014 and became responsible for the delivery of children's social care, except for support for disabled children. At the time it was felt that maintaining an integrated approach to disabled children whilst new legislative changes were being brought about, was important.

It is timely to review whether arrangements are maximising the benefits for this group of children.

### Issues

The main changes brought in by the SEND legislation are to replace the statementing arrangements with new requirements to establish education, health and care plans. There is also a requirement to publish a 'local offer' so families are clear about services available. All local authorities were required to put in place robust local arrangements with key partners and these arrangements were reviewed by the DFE. The lead for the SEND reforms commented positively on Doncaster's preparations and his comments were included in the report on improvements to children's services which were reported to full council in September 2014.

The support for disabled children is provided by the Disabled Children's team which remained within the council when other social care services transferred to the Trust. The Council also commissions short breaks support for families and provides respite care for disabled children at Oaklands Children's Home. There is an agreed protocol with the Trust to ensure safeguarding issues relating to disabled children are managed effectively. We are currently reviewing those arrangements.

The modernisation of adult services will impact on those disabled young people who are approaching transition to adult services. A joint project is underway to improve transition arrangements and to ensure that young people and their needs influence the modernisation of services and benefit from those changes.

Given all the recent changes and the importance of supporting this vulnerable group of children well, it will be timely for the scrutiny panel to consider whether it wishes to set up a task and finish group.

## **OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDED OPTION**

6. The Panel is asked to consider whether it wishes to set up a task and finish group at this stage.

## IMPACT ON THE COUNCIL'S KEY PRIORITIES

7.

	<b>Priority</b>	<b>Implications</b>
	<p>We will support a strong economy where businesses can locate, grow and employ local people.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Mayoral Priority: Creating Jobs and Housing</i></li> <li>• <i>Mayoral Priority: Be a strong voice for our veterans</i></li> <li>• <i>Mayoral Priority: Protecting Doncaster's vital services</i></li> </ul>	
	<p>We will help people to live safe, healthy, active and independent lives.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Mayoral Priority: Safeguarding our Communities</i></li> <li>• <i>Mayoral Priority: Bringing down the cost of living</i></li> </ul>	<p>The provision of quality services to disabled children and their families will support their potential to live safe, healthy, active and independent lives.</p>
	<p>We will support all families to thrive.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Mayoral Priority: Protecting Doncaster's vital services</i></li> </ul>	
	<p>We will make Doncaster a better place to live, with cleaner, more sustainable communities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Mayoral Priority: Creating Jobs and Housing</i></li> <li>• <i>Mayoral Priority: Safeguarding our Communities</i></li> <li>• <i>Mayoral Priority: Bringing down the cost of living</i></li> </ul>	
	<p>We will deliver modern value for money services.</p>	
	<p>We will provide strong leadership and governance, working in partnership.</p>	

## RISKS AND ASSUMPTIONS

8. There are no specific risks associated with this report.

## **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

9. The Council has a legal duty to ensure that its delivery of support to Disabled children is delivered in accordance with the new requirements outlined within both The Children and Families Act 2014 (Transitional and Saving Provisions) (No. 2) Order 2014 and recent government guidance.

## **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

10. There are no specific financial implications relating to the recommendations in this report.

## **HUMAN RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS**

11. There are no Human Resource implications relating to the recommendations in this report.

## **TECHNOLOGY IMPLICATIONS**

12. Not applicable.

## **EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS**

13. There are no current equality implications with regard to the recommendations in this report but any potential or future changes to services to children with disabilities will require a Due Regard Statement showing how equality implications have been considered.

## **CONSULTATION**

14. No further consultation was undertaken for this report.

## **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

15. Not applicable.

## **REPORT AUTHOR & CONTRIBUTORS**

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