

# Managing Referrals for Disabled Children: Guidance and Process

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## Document Overview

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## 1. Underpinning Principles

- 1.1 This document is for children and family professionals in our partner agencies.
- 1.2 If there are **immediate safeguarding concerns** do what you would do for any other child – contact MASH on **0345 050 7666**.
- 1.3 Disabled children do not necessarily require the support of the specialist children's disability social work teams or any other social work team. Many of them can be supported by universal services or services which are targeted to disabled children but which don't require a social work assessment. This is the starting point for supporting disabled children and the assumptions we make are the same as for all other children. Universal and targeted services for disabled children are open to all disabled children regardless of their immigration status. Professionals in the community and the Family Information Service can assist parents to access these services. Additionally some schools employ OSLOs (out of school liaison officers) who can be very helpful. Please see below for further information and useful sources of support.
- 1.4 Details of the support available for disabled children can be found in the Local Offer on the public website: <https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/public-site/disabled-children>
- 1.5 Where there needs to be a more robust plan to support a disabled child, an Early Help Assessment (EHA) should be completed by a lead professional identified by the family and/ or professional group working with the child and family. This may then lead to a Team-Around the Family (TAF). The EHA was previously known as a CAF and the TAF was often known as a TAC. The paperwork is slightly different and, we hope, easier to complete. For information about how to initiate an EHA and a TAF please see the OSCB website:  
  
<http://www.oscb.org.uk/2017/03/early-help-assessment-team-around-the-family-threshold-of-needs/>
- 1.6 The OSCB Threshold of Need Document has been revised and gives helpful information about supporting disabled children. It can be found through the above link or at [http://www.oscb.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/Oxfordshire-Threshold-of-Needs\\_Final.pdf](http://www.oscb.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/Oxfordshire-Threshold-of-Needs_Final.pdf)

## 2. Referral

### 2.1 [Expectations Prior to Referral](#)

2.1.1 All disabled children referred to children's social care should have an **Early Help Assessment** and a **Team Around the Family** in place prior to the referral being made. However, there will be some exceptional circumstances, such as if a child is moving in from another area with a pre-existing care package. Please note that the Children's Disability Service will not commit to match a care package from another area and a reassessment will be required.

2.1.2 If you are in any doubt please discuss the potential referral with the LCSS team duty worker for the relevant geographical area. Alternatively you could speak informally to one of the Team Managers of the Children's Disability Teams (Their contact information is listed in section 3 below).

### 2.2 [Eligibility Criteria](#)

2.2.1 The **eligibility criteria** for on-going support from the Children's Disability Social Work teams are detailed below. Children who have:

- Moderate/ Severe Learning Disability - i.e. the child is functioning at a substantially lower than expected level for his/ her chronological age
- And/ or substantial physical impairment - e.g. wheelchair user
- Autistic Spectrum Disorder but only with a moderate/ severe learning or physical disability
- Sensory impairment but only with one or more of the above

2.2.2 The Children's Disability social work teams, however, will not offer a service to children with any of the following unless they also have a moderate/ severe learning disability

- ADHD
- High functioning ASD
- Dyslexia
- Dyspraxia

2.2.3 If a child does not meet these criteria and a full social care assessment is appropriate, the assessment will be undertaken by the Children and Families Assessment team. If a child does not meet the criteria for services from the specialist Children's Disability Social Work team they may be eligible for support from the Family Solutions Service, either Early Help or Statutory.

## 2.3 Additional Information

2.3.1 Professionals wishing to refer may be asked for the following information to help with decisions about which is the most appropriate referral route:

### 2.3.2 Education

- Does he or she have a Statement of Educational Need/ Education Health and Care Plan?
- Is the child attending a Special School (Not Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties e.g. Northern House/ Northfield) If so, which one?
- Is he or she working at a level well below that expected of a child his/ her age? E.g. at P Level for children aged 12 and under or a National Curriculum Level 1-2 for teenagers

### 2.3.3 Health

- Has there been a formal diagnosis for the child? If so, what is it, who diagnosed and when?
- For Under 5's: Has there been a Multidisciplinary Assessment (MDA) at the Children's Hospital?
- Which health professionals are involved? E.g. Speech and Language Therapist; Physiotherapist; Occupational Therapist; CAMHS/ LD CAMHS; Neurologist; Community Paediatrician; Other. Please provide names and contact information

### 2.3.4 Day to day life

- Is the child receiving Disability Living Allowance? At what rate?
- How do they get about?
- How do they communicate?
- What can they do for themselves? How much adult support do they need?

### 2.3.5 Prior Assessment/ Multi-Agency Involvement

- Is there an EHA/ TAF?
- Who is the Lead Professional?
- Is the referral part of the plan?

## 2.4 Referral Routes

2.4.1 **Professional Referrals.** These should be made via the Locality and Community Support Service for the relevant Social Care area. In making a referral there needs to be clear evidence of an EHA and a TAF in place and that this is not being effective in supporting the disabled child and their family's needs. The LCSS will offer support and guidance about EHAs and TAFs, to facilitate their effectiveness. It may be that the LCSS advises that the EHA and TAF should remain in place with some additional support before a referral for a Children's Social Care Assessment is made. This is in recognition of the skills and knowledge that our partner professionals have and of the principle that disabled children are "children first" so the need for an intrusive assessment to access services is kept to a minimum.

2.4.2 LCSS can be contacted as per the table below:

Area	Telephone Number
North and West	0345 241 2703
Central	0345 241 2705
South	0345 241 2608

2.4.3 **Parent(s)/ Carer(s) Self-Referral:** These must come via the MASH. The best route is by phone. If an EHA is needed the MASH worker will support the parent to identify a trusted professional who could lead on an EHA. The MASH worker will ask parents for consent to pass this information to their area LCSS team to support the professional to begin the EHA.

### 3. Useful Information

#### 3.1 Community and Support Resources

3.1.1 There are activities and support services in the community for disabled children and their families. Many are open access and do not require an assessment. There is a great deal of information on the public website under the Local Offer: <https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/public-site/special-educational-needs-and-disability-local-offer>

3.1.2 Other resources, information and support services include:

Provision	Details
Oxfordshire Family Information Service	Directory of services, advice and information for families of disabled children, SEN and additional needs: <a href="http://fisd.oxfordshire.gov.uk/kb5/oxfordshire/fsd/disabilities.page">http://fisd.oxfordshire.gov.uk/kb5/oxfordshire/fsd/disabilities.page</a>  One member of staff has specialist disability knowledge. Call: 0345 241 2487 option 3
Early Years SEN Inclusion Teachers	See Local Offer
Out of School Liaison Officer (OSLO)	Based in some special schools provide information on social activities in their locality and are able to access funding and transport for children who qualify.  For those in mainstream schools contact FIS or the school SENCO.
Oxfordshire's Short Breaks Statement	This explains the services available and if they are universally available or require a specialist assessment. <a href="http://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/content/short-breaks-disabled-children">www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/content/short-breaks-disabled-children</a>
Oxfordshire's Short Breaks Newsletter	This is a monthly newsletter with lots of helpful information about support and activities for disabled children and their families. <a href="https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/content/short-breaks-disabled-children">https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/content/short-breaks-disabled-children</a>
Family Fund	National charity that provides annual grants for families of Disabled children– means tested <a href="http://www.familyfund.org.uk">www.familyfund.org.uk</a>
Flexicare	<a href="http://www.flexicare.org/">http://www.flexicare.org/</a> Provides “babysitting” for disabled children.
SENDIASS	For education issues <a href="https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/public-site/sendias-oxfordshire-formerly-parent-partnership">https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/public-site/sendias-oxfordshire-formerly-parent-partnership</a> Call: 01865 810541

Young Carers	Children's social care young carers' team. Team manager is Guy Wiseman. <a href="mailto:young.carers@oxfordshire.gov.uk">young.carers@oxfordshire.gov.uk</a>
Autism Family Support	<a href="http://www.afso.org.uk/">http://www.afso.org.uk/</a>
Disability Living Allowance	For help with personal care or getting around Call: 08457 123456 (FIS can help with referrals and renewals since the forms are complicated).
Support for Carers	Is available from Carers Oxfordshire Call: 0845 050 7666 or <a href="mailto:carersoxfordshire@oxfordshire.gov.uk">carersoxfordshire@oxfordshire.gov.uk</a>
Autism Oxford	<a href="http://www.autismoxford.org.uk/">http://www.autismoxford.org.uk/</a>
Housing Advice/ Adaptations/ Equipment	Refer to Oxford Health Integrated Therapy <a href="http://www.oxfordhealth.nhs.uk/children-and-young-people/oxon/integrated-therapies/">http://www.oxfordhealth.nhs.uk/children-and-young-people/oxon/integrated-therapies/</a>
Benefits Advice	Citizens Advice Bureau, Barton Advice Centre Call: 01865 744152 <a href="http://adviceoxford.org.uk/get-advice/barton-advice-centre/">http://adviceoxford.org.uk/get-advice/barton-advice-centre/</a>  Agnes Smith Centre. Call: 01865 770206 <a href="http://www.agnessmith.co.uk/">http://www.agnessmith.co.uk/</a>  Family Information Service. <a href="https://fisd.oxfordshire.gov.uk/kb5/oxfordshire/direct-ory/home.page">https://fisd.oxfordshire.gov.uk/kb5/oxfordshire/direct-ory/home.page</a>

## 4. Social Work Assessment Process

4.1 If the Children's Disability Social Work Assessment is undertaken, the process is:

- A Social Worker from the relevant Children's Disability Team will complete a detailed assessment about the child which will involve meetings with family and consultation with involved professionals
- The assessment **may** be submitted to the monthly multiagency meeting, Priority Panel.
- At Panel, Support Services **may** be allocated (known as a Care Package) These services may be:
  - Home care: to help with personal care of child or young person
  - Short breaks: specialist support for child or young person in absence of parent at home or in community
  - Overnight short breaks: Family based or residential centre

4.2 There are very clear criteria for allocation of any of these support services.

### 4.3 Direct Payments

4.3.1 These may be arranged **only** if a Care Package is agreed by Priority Panel. DPs allow carers to purchase support by employing their own carers or using organised and registered activities. Any carers employed must have enhanced DBS clearance by OCC for the child in question and not be self-employed.

4.3.2 NB DPs are not allocated to support parents to cover their work commitments.

### 4.4 Disability Team Contact Information

4.4.1 If the family is seeking more support than is available in the community **and** a Disability Assessment is indicated because:

- an EHA and TAF has been completed and hasn't provided enough support
- The child's needs seem consistent with the eligibility criteria,

Please contact one of the following Children's Disability Team Managers or Senior Practitioners for an informal discussion:

Area	Manager	Contact Number
North	Interim – Sarah Beerling	01865 816668
City	Julie Fox	01865 323080
South	Sheila Raw	01865 897982

**Please note, however, that the referral must be made through the LCSS if a professional is making the referral or through the MASH if it is the parent who is doing so.**



