

Public Questions

Catherine Black:

Given that the Children with Disabilities Team at any given point have a caseload of around 160 children based on their threshold criteria. If we say that there are 5724 disabled children and young people in the borough, based on the 2014 census data in the short breaks statement (link to documents provided in Nov 2021), so roughly only 3% of disabled children in Bury can access this service. What are the policies and procedures, that the LA use for the remaining 97% of disabled children in Bury?

Can the LA provide to myself and the councillors present here, as representatives of the disabled children and young people in Bury, a copy of the policy for what happens when those families of disabled children request help from Children's Social Care and do not meet the threshold criteria from the Disabled Children's Social Care Team?

I am requesting a blank copy/ies of the document/s used, so as to understand the type of assessment carried out, and the expertise of the person carrying out such an assessment, along with an accompanying set of support notes/checklist used by the social care team.

Response

The Children With Disabilities team currently carry a caseload of 250 children including the caseloads of both Family Support workers and Social Workers. The Local Authority would highlight that the number of children who can access this service is not dependent on the capacity of the team, but dependent on how many children and young people are eligible. The Children With Disabilities Team is a specialist team to assess and potentially provide services to children and young people with very complex and enduring disabilities.

We understand this means that some children who have additional needs or disabilities do not meet threshold for this service. For children, young people and families who fall into this category assessments can be undertaken by the following teams;

- Early Help Locality Teams
- Professionals and agencies already working with / involved with the family
- Initial Response Team

The policies and procedures mean that need is identified through an assessment and this may be the Child and Family assessment should IRT be undertaking the assessment, or the Story so Far assessment which supports the Early Help approach.

WE are committed in the co produced Local Area Action Plan to reviewing the pathways to access universal, targeted and specialist short breaks.

The early help teams are made up of family support workers, early years workers, adolescent support workers and early help social workers and the staff hold a variety of qualifications from degrees/diplomas in social work through to NVQs in youth work. Early Help is not a specific service but an approach across all partners. The Early Help Teams support professionals and families to come together through a team around the family plan, to broker the support required at a lower level of need. The teams do not seek to remain involved with families long term but to pathway to support that is available in the community and through other agencies already involved with the family. Early Help workers would complete Story So Far assessments which identifies the needs of the family and the child and they seek to support access to services. An example might be supporting access to DWP workers to ensure the right benefits are in place. They also carry out a short term interventions for example around parenting support or a specific piece of work with a young person who may have anxieties about school and they may do some 121 activities to build confidence and support. Workers are knowledgeable about services and resources in the community and can advise and support access to those services, this would include for young who are SEND.

Where it is determined that the family require a statutory response they would be referred either to the CWD team or the first response teams where a social worker would lead on completing the assessment and developing the support package

Following the revision of internal processes, where it is determined that the family require a statutory response they would be referred either to the CWD team or the first response teams where a social worker would lead on completing the assessment and developing the support package. As part of the Childrens services improvement journey we are reviewing our model of practice and the supporting documents. We can, outside of the council meeting, arrange for blank documents to be shared EDCS will progress this.