

# **Aiming High for Disabled Children and their Families in Staffordshire:**

## **Strategy and Action Plan 2009-2011**



### **Our vision for Staffordshire.....**

**Disabled children and young people and their families are supported to live as ordinary lives as possible, living, playing, learning and contributing alongside their peers and within their communities.**

# Contents

## Foreword

### 1 Introduction

- 1.1 Overview - Introduction to the County
- 1.2 The Strategic Context
- 1.3 Our Vision
- 1.4 Outcomes - Seven Key Outcomes for Aiming High in Staffordshire
- 1.5 Scope of the Aiming High Strategy
- 1.6 Achieving Aiming High in Staffordshire

### 2 The Core Offer

- 2.1 Information
- 2.2 Transparency
- 2.3 Assessment
- 2.4 Transition
- 2.5 Participation
- 2.6 Feedback
- 2.7 Putting Families in Control

### 3 The Full Service Offer for Short Breaks

- 3.1 What are Short Breaks?
- 3.2 Current Short Break Provision in Staffordshire
- 3.3 Staffordshire Short Breaks Vision for Delivery
- 3.4 Universal Short Breaks
- 3.5 Childcare
- 3.6 Additional Support Services
- 3.7 Expanding Out of School Provision
- 3.8 Outdoor and Family Activities
- 3.9 Equipment
- 3.10 Overnight Breaks and Complex Needs

### 4 Delivering Aiming High in Staffordshire

- 4.1 Commissioning
- 4.2 Workforce Development
- 4.3 Performance Management
- 4.4 Conclusion

# Foreword

The Staffordshire Aiming High Strategy is collaboration between the partner agencies working with disabled children as members of Staffordshire Children's Trust.

In developing this strategy we have talked to disabled children and young people and parents and with them identified issues to be tackled.

Our long-term goal is to transform the life chances of disabled children. That will take time, but this strategy is a significant step on the way.

The partner organisations working within Staffordshire Children's Trust have many good services, but there is still much work to be done before all disabled children and young people across the County have the same access to opportunities for play, leisure and other activities as their peers.

Staffordshire's Aiming High Strategy is an invitation to all those who have a part in transforming services to disabled children, young people and their families to work together in partnership to deliver on this significant challenge.

# Section One:

## 1. Introduction

This strategy is Staffordshire's response to the government's transformation programme for disabled children's services. This programme is called Aiming High for Disabled Children (AHDC) and was initiated in May 2007 in response to the Treasury Department's review of services for disabled children, (*Treasury and DfES report Aiming High for Disabled Children: Better Support for Families, HM Treasury, DfES, May 2007.*)

The national programme is a joint initiative between the Department of Health (DH) and the Department of Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) and is aimed at ensuring that every disabled child can have the best possible start in life, and the support they and their families need to make equality of opportunity a reality, allowing each and every child to fulfill their potential.

Supported by substantial new funding and measures designed to make the system work better, the AHDC programme aims to deliver:

- Access and empowerment for disabled children and families
- Responsive services and timely support
- Improved service quality and capacity

With emphasis upon coordinated approaches to partnership working, parent participation and significant investment in a wide range of short break opportunities centred on the needs of disabled children and their families; Aiming High for Disabled Children aims to support and deliver the outcomes of Every Child Matters for all disabled children and also links to the Children's National Service Framework.

Aiming High seeks to achieve transformation by partner agencies working together to deliver:

### **The Full Service Offer for Short Term Breaks**

The Full Service Offer seeks a radical expansion in the availability, quality, content and experience of short term breaks for disabled children and their families. It seeks to enhance and expand existing residential and family based overnight short term break services to include breaks which may last a few hours or a few days and could be delivered in a variety of settings at home, in the community or in specialist provision.

### **A Core Offer for Information, Participation, Assessment and Feedback**

The Core offer sets out national expectations about how services for disabled children, young people and families, should be delivered locally. It is based on five elements of information, transparency, assessment, participation and feedback. It

has an emphasis on parent forums and parental engagement as a critical driver for change and delivery of the core offer and will be measured by a new national indicator (NI54) which is aimed at capturing parent's experience and views on how local agencies deliver on these 5 elements.

## 1.1 Overview

### Introduction to the County

Staffordshire is one of four 'Shire' Counties in the West Midlands Region and is both a rural and urban county. Approximately 75% of the land area is rural, however only around one quarter of the population live in these rural areas it has the 8<sup>th</sup> largest population of the Shire Counties in England and covers a broad geographical area stretching 55 miles north to south and at its widest point almost 40 miles east to west. The administrative county of Staffordshire has a population of 816,700. The unitary authority of Stoke-on-Trent has been administered separately from the rest of Staffordshire since April 1997. Although separate from the rest of Staffordshire in local government terms, Stoke-on-Trent has influence on the wider Staffordshire area surrounding it, with many partner organisations still operating across an area including both Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent.

#### Key figures for Staffordshire

- **Total Population of Staffordshire - 816,700**
- **11209 Children are on School Action (Jan 09)**
- **5702 Children are on School Action Plus (Jan 09)**
- **3501 Children have a statement of Special Educational Need (Feb 09)**
- **4620 Children aged under 18 are receiving Disabled Living Allowance (ONS DLA)**
- **824 Disabled Children are receiving a social work service (Jan 09)**
- **Those aged 0–19 who report limiting long term illness is 8335 (ONS 2001 Census)**
- **1625 children with a statement of special educational need are educated in mainstream schools (Jan 09)**

Below the county council level, local government is provided through the 8 district and borough councils of Tamworth, Staffordshire Moorlands, Newcastle-under-Lyme, Lichfield, South Staffs, East Staffs, Stafford and Cannock Chase, these areas display differing socio-economic characteristics and offer their own challenges.

Demographically, age groups in Staffordshire are divided in line with national trends, the under 19 age group makes up 24% of the population. By 2021, the under 16 population is likely to drop to about 21% of the total.

According to the 2001 Census of Population some

2.4% or 19,000 residents are from black and minority ethnic communities, with particular concentrations in Burton-upon-Trent. This is a relatively low figure when compared to the England average of 9.1%. The largest ethnic group is Pakistani accounting for 0.6% of the Staffordshire population. Ethnic groups have a larger representation in the younger age groups, accounting for 3.9% of the under 16 population

# 1.2 The Strategic Context

## Staffordshire Children’s Trust

### Every Child Matters Outcomes

- **Being Healthy**
- **Staying Safe**
- **Enjoying and Achieving**
- **Economic Well being**
- **Making a Positive Contribution**

The Staffordshire Children’s Trust Board is responsible for the governance of the Trust. It meets quarterly and discusses many issues including: joint commissioning; the Children and Young Peoples' Plan; communications; risk management; integrated service delivery; and performance management.

The delivery of Aiming High for Disabled Children, young people and their Families needs to be embedded within and co-ordinated between a wide range of agencies working with Children at County, District and locality level. In order to facilitate this, the development of Aiming High for Disabled Children in Staffordshire has been designated a workstream of the Staffordshire Children’s Trust. Regular reports on progress with Aiming High are fed back to the Children’s Trust Board and Executive Group.

Significant actions and decisions around investment and other key areas will also be signed off within agencies’ own internal governance structures where this is necessary.

## Staffordshire Aiming High Project Board

Guidance makes it clear that Aiming High needs to be planned and delivered jointly by local Councils and PCTs, with these organisations involving other partners in order to be truly effective. In Staffordshire we have established an Aiming High Project Board, the current membership includes:

### Staffordshire County Council

Representation from the County Council on the Aiming High Board includes senior managers involved with social work assessment, social care provision, education inclusion, a special school head teacher and representation from adult social care services.

### NHS North Staffordshire South Staffordshire Primary Care Trust

Staffordshire has two Primary Care Trusts (PCTs) covering the County.

**South Staffordshire PCT** serves a population of approximately 604,000 people with an annual budget of £681 million approximately. Although largely rural, the PCT contains a number of urban centres including Burton upon Trent, Cannock, Lichfield, Stafford, Tamworth and Uttoxeter.

**NHS North Staffordshire** serves a population of approximately 210,000 and an annual investment budget of approximately £300 million. Like the South it is a rural community but also has several urban centres including Newcastle-under-Lyme, Leek, Biddulph and Cheadle.

Both Staffordshire PCTs are represented on the Staffordshire Aiming High Board.

The Board is fortunate to have representation from a number of other partner organisations.

**North Staffordshire University Hospital Trust, The Staffordshire Parent Commissioner, Connexions Staffordshire** and representing the third sector **Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Consortium of Infrastructure Organisations (SCIO)**.

The main functions of the Board to date have been to develop this strategy and respond to the requirement to achieve readiness criteria established by the DCSF and DH by 31 March 2009 in order to draw down significant Aiming High funding.

The Staffordshire Aiming High Strategy is linked to the Staffordshire Children and Young People's Plan and will assist in the delivery of key outcomes in Staffordshire's Local Area Agreement

## **Aiming High Funding**

Over the next two years Staffordshire County Council has been allocated major investment in short break provision as a ring fenced revenue and capital grant:

	<b>2009-10</b>	<b>2010-11</b>	<b>Total</b>
Revenue	£796,300	£2,568,700	<b>3,365,000</b>
Capital	£384,200	£896,500	<b>1,280,700</b>
Total	£1,180,500	£3,465,200	<b>4,645,700</b>

Funding for Aiming High is also be included in South Staffordshire PCT and NHS North Staffordshire as part of their base budgets, however this funding is not ring fenced and at the time of writing there has been no notification from the Department of Health in relation to what the notional sum would be for each PCT. Both PCTs are fully involved in the Aiming High Board and have highlighted services for children with disabilities in their Local Delivery Plan processes which are currently being conducted, the results of which have yet to be agreed.

## **1.3 Our Vision**

We share the vision of Every Child Matters. We want young people to be healthy, safe, enjoy life and achieve success, make a positive contribution and benefit from economic well being. We know that achieving these outcomes can be challenging for any family and for a family with a disabled child or children there are extra challenges to deal with in many aspects of life.

*'disabled children are less likely to achieve as much in a range of areas as their non-disabled peers. Improving their outcomes, allowing them to benefit from equality of opportunity, and increasing their involvement and inclusion in society will help them to achieve more as individuals.*

*It will also reduce social inequality, and allow communities to benefit from the contribution that disabled children and their families can make, harnessing their talent and fostering tolerance and understanding of diversity.'*

***Aiming High for Disabled Children: Better Support for Families HM Treasury, DfES, May 2007***

We recognise that to help every child and young person achieve their full potential we will have to work together more effectively. We will have to take shared responsibility for achieving better outcomes for children and young people and we need to ensure that disabled children, young people and their families are fully engaged in this activity.

To help us to focus on what we want to achieve we have developed the following vision and outcomes:

## **The Vision for Staffordshire**

**Disabled children and young people and their families are supported to live as ordinary lives as possible, living, playing, learning and contributing alongside their peers and within their communities.**

To realise the vision above we want to work towards disabled children, young people and their families having real choice, opportunity and support to achieve the following outcomes:

## **1.4 Outcomes**

**We have identified seven outcomes that we want to achieve:**

1. Disabled children and young people and their parents have the information they need at the time that they need it and in a format that is appropriate to their needs.

2. Disabled children and young people have the right level of assessment where assessment is needed and this is delivered in a co-ordinated way with minimum disruption to the young person's life.
3. Disabled children and young people receive the right services and support from the right agency or agencies at the right time.
4. Disabled children and young people and their families are routinely involved and supported in making informed decisions about their choices and the services they receive.
5. Disabled children and young people and their families are routinely involved, listened to and contributing to the shaping of services.
6. Families with disabled children and young people in Staffordshire are able to access a wide range of short break opportunities which will afford families a valued break and disabled children and young people have the same enjoyable experiences to develop and fulfill their potential as all other children.
7. All disabled children and young people are effectively supported to have a smooth and planned transition into adulthood.

The Aiming High Project Board will work through the Staffordshire Children's Trust to achieve the vision and outcomes identified above.

## **1.5 Scope of the Aiming High Strategy**

The Aiming High Strategy is primarily aimed at developing services and support to disabled children and young people aged 0-18 and their families.

In some circumstances a wider age range will be considered for example the Transition Group which is developing strategy with partners in adult services will consider services for children and young people from 14+ and into adulthood beyond 18.

In developing approaches to Aiming High the Staffordshire Aiming High Project Board has utilised the definition of disability identified within the National Service Framework for children - Standard Eight:

## **NSF Standard Eight - Definition**

*This standard relates to children and young people who are disabled and/or those with complex health needs, including children and young people with learning disabilities, autistic spectrum disorders, sensory impairments, physical impairments and emotional/behavioural disorders. Many disabled children have no need for ongoing health interventions; other require ongoing treatment and /or nursing care and help with the everyday activities. Some disabled children will also be children in special circumstances.*

**Source: National Service Framework for Children, Young People and Maternity Services: Disabled children and young people and those with complex health needs, Department of Health, Department for Education and Skills, 2004.**

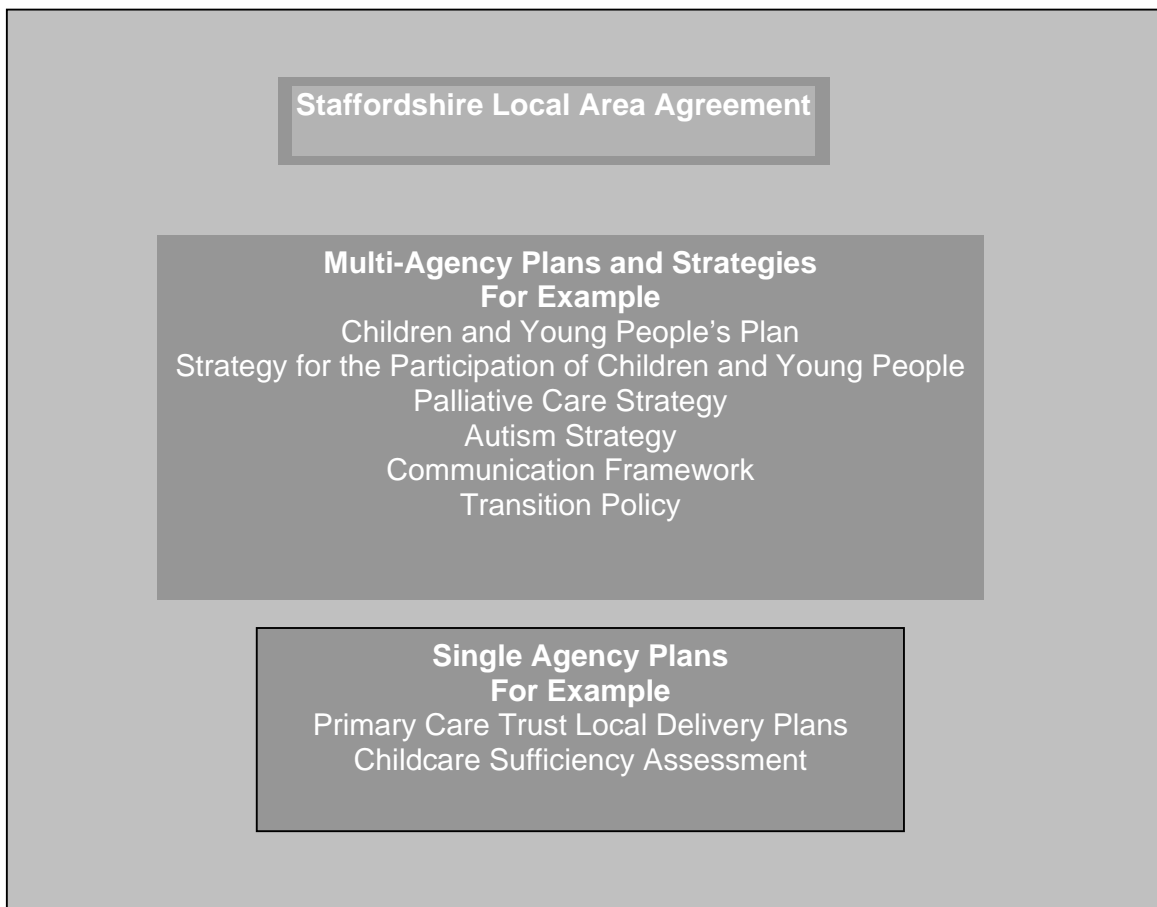
In addition guidance issued under Aiming High identifies 5 groups regarded as most at risk of social exclusion:

- a) children and young people with ASD. These are likely to have other impairments, such as severe learning disabilities or have behaviour, which is challenging. (Not all children on the Autistic Spectrum will require specialist additional short break services).
- b) children and young people with complex health needs which includes those with disability and life limiting conditions who have reached the palliative care stage of their life cycle as well as other children and young people with complex health needs as well as other impairments – physical, cognitive or sensory impairments.
- c) children and young people aged 11+ with moving and handling needs that will require equipment and adaptations. These children are likely to have physical impairments, and many of them will also have cognitive impairments and / or sensory impairments;
- d) children and young people where challenging behaviour is associated with other impairments (e.g. severe learning disability). Children in this group will display behaviour which challenges services or behaviour which causes injury to themselves or others;
- e) young people aged 14+. The young people who fall into this group are young people who are severely disabled and require services that are appropriate to their age.

The Aiming High Project Board will ensure that these particular groups are recognised within each of its workstreams.

# 1.5 Achieving Aiming High in Staffordshire

Our vision is supported by a range of broad multi-agency plans and strategies including the Children and Young People’s Plan. We want to ensure that over time Aiming High becomes embedded in relevant plans and strategies rather than being stand alone – the project board will therefore work to ensure that Aiming High influences the plans and strategies which have the potential to make the most difference for disabled children, young people and their families.



# Section Two

## The National Core Offer

The Core Offer is a statement of the standards which families with disabled children should expect from local services. Primarily the Core Offer refers to early years, education, youth, social care and health services, but housing, leisure and transport are also very important for families with disabled children.

*Aiming High for Disabled Children* identified five elements of the Core Offer.

information and transparency; assessment; and participation and feedback.

### 2.1 Information

**The Core offer states that:**

*'The information provided should be tailored to the individual needs of children and their parents and be readily accessible in a range of formats.'*

In Staffordshire there are a wide range of information sources currently available to parents and their disabled children including:

#### **Staffordshire Parent Partnership Service**

Staffordshire Parent Partnership provides a service to parents and carers of children, aged 0 to 19, who have special educational needs. The service is completely confidential and aims to help parents who may have issues relating to their child's education. The service aims to aid communication between parents, schools and other agencies. It provides direct support to parents and carers and a wide range of parent information which can be accessed via the parent partnership website [www.parentpartnership.org.uk](http://www.parentpartnership.org.uk) or in the form of information packs.

The Service also works with schools and other educational professionals, delivering training to promote good practice in working with parents.

Parent Partnership also acts as a signposting service to other agencies.

#### **Coordinator for Disabled Children**

The coordinator for disabled children also holds comprehensive information on access to social care services and the availability of specialist resources for disabled children and their families. This information can be accessed via the use of a freephone number and via the county Council website. The coordinator also holds comprehensive information on parent forums and groups.

#### **Connexions Staffordshire**

Connexions Staffordshire provides information, advice and guidance to 13-19 year olds (and up to 25 for young people with learning difficulties and /or disabilities) in Staffordshire, to help them make a smooth transition to adulthood and working life. As well as information designed specifically for young people, Connexions also provide guidance and support for parents.

## **Parent Direct**

Parent Direct provides Staffordshire's Family Information Service including information on childcare, support groups and other resources for parents. The service aims to help families to access the information they need in order to have choices which meet their families and employer's needs.

In addition there is web based information on support and resources for disabled children and young people and their families available through the County Council, PCTs and Staffordshire Children's Trust websites.

Information is also available through leaflets and information held at GP surgeries, libraries and other information networks. Health Visitors are an important source of information to parents especially in the early years and schools also have an important role to play in keeping parents informed.

Whilst there are many areas of good practice to build on in terms of information provision, parents have told us that accessing accurate and timely information was still sometimes difficult for them.

*Throughout the meetings there was a widespread, indeed universal, feeling that parents are not told about the different support services that are available to them. This lack of information starts from the moment of birth or diagnosis of a problem - parents often reported feeling 'abandoned' from the very start'*

**Staffordshire Aiming High Consultation events Independent Report February 2009**

Parents whose children attended mainstream schools felt particularly isolated and did not appear to access the same level of information as parents with children in special schools.

Staffordshire's 'Youth Offer' (January 2009) includes intentions regarding information, advice and guidance for young people. This includes the development of a directory of activities and services available to the young people of Staffordshire.

## **We want to**

- **Ensure that disabled children and young people and their families have access to information on services, support and activities in a range of formats that are widely available and easily accessible.**
- **Ensure that parents have high quality information about the needs of their child and this is updated as those needs change and develop.**

- Ensure that parents and carers of all disabled children including those educated in mainstream schools are accessing support and information appropriate to their needs.

## What we will do

- Develop an integrated Information Strategy for Aiming High utilising the specialist providers in this including libraries, parent direct, parent partnership and colleagues in the health and third sectors and linked to the Community and Learning Partnerships and work being undertaken as part of Staffordshire's Youth Offer 2009.
- Learn from the feedback parents have given us on the information which they currently receive and what they want to receive and feed this into our information strategy.
- The information Strategy is to be informed by the Parent Direct research on parents of disabled children's information needs and experience.
- Identify the information needs of disabled children and young people through consultation with young people and linked to the Integrated Youth Service Support (IYSS) Strategy.
- Be informed by and link to Parent Commissioner role and the parenting group.
- Identify tools and processes which can support the information needs of parents e.g. Early Support Programme.

## 2.2 Transparency

### The Core Offer states that:

*Disabled children and young people can expect transparency about how resources are allocated, with criteria based on need, which are fair, understandable, and take account of the impact of disability*

As part of the Aiming High Project Plan we are reviewing the current eligibility for children's social care. We need to do this within the context of a range of documentation including:

- Matrix of Need Staffordshire County Council, September 2005.
- Children and Young People's Continuing Care (Consultation on a National Framework for Assessing Children and Young People's Continuing Care,- DCSF DoH 2008).
- Local Matrix for Special School Funding, Additional Educational Need Funding Staffordshire County Council 2008.
- Fair Access to Care Services Staffordshire County Council 2007 (Adult Social Care eligibility criteria).

*'We're lucky, because my daughter is in a wheelchair we are under the disability team which means that we've got a social worker, an OT, and they're all under one umbrella but my son is outside that he doesn't meet their criteria.'*

**Staffordshire Aiming High Consultation Events February 2009**

We specifically consulted parents on our eligibility criteria (Have Your Say 2008) looking at both the current tool the Matrix of Need and the Resource Allocation System (Taking Control 2008). Both methods had their strengths and difficulties, and concerns were expressed about their subjectivity. In the recent Staffordshire Aiming High consultations parents questioned the rationale of needing a social work assessment to receive a service for their son or daughter.

Within Children's Social Care we have begun to look at a model of resource availability based on the Staffordshire Children's Trust Threshold Model looking at Children and Young People having access to short breaks at universal, additional complex or specialist needs. This at the universal level would include use of the Common Assessment Framework and budget holding lead professionals to enable children young people and their families' access to short break provision.

*There was a strong feeling among some that the Assessment of Needs matrix is biased towards physical and visible disabilities and is not fair to those with problems such as autistic spectrum disorders. Other's felt that they had to exaggerate their child's disability to get the support they need.*

**Staffordshire Aiming High Consultation Events February 2009**

The current processes used to allocate resources are through a multi-agency panel process based in a double district council area. This is cumbersome and a resource rich method and we are in the process of simplifying this. We do have an appeals process for decision making about resources. This has seen about 10 appeals over the last 2 years.

## **We want to:**

- **Simplify processes for Children, young people and their families to access short breaks, that is integrated with their holistic needs in order to avoid repetitive assessments.**
- **Have a transparent process for resource allocation compatible with integrated working across the Staffordshire Children's Trust Agencies.**

## **We will:**

- **Develop an eligibility process for services based on the Children's Trust Threshold Model.**
- **Simplify the panel process using the current eligibility criteria for Children's Social Care.**

- **Integrate the allocation of places within residential school ‘sleepover clubs’ to the panel process.**
- **Reach local agreement over Children’s Continuing Care processes and the decision making tool with NHS North Staffs and South Staffs PCT.**
- **Develop a process for children young people and their families to access short break services via the Common Assessment Framework and budget holding lead professionals.**

## 2.3 Assessment

### **The Core Offer states:**

*Disabled children and young people receive child-centred multi-agency coordinated services from the point of referral through identification and assessment to delivery.*

Current assessment processes can result in parents and children having to repeat their information in order to satisfy the requirements of a variety of different assessments and professionals who are supporting them.

Furthermore even to be able access relatively low levels of support from children’s social care families are required to take part in intrusive assessments which are often not appropriate in these circumstances.

It is our intention to work towards the join up of all assessments to enable a holistic view of a child and their family to be considered especially at key points such as transition, this will include consideration of the educational assessment of special educational needs under the Code of Practice.

We will build on the developments already made in respect of the Early Support Program and the Common Assessment Framework in Staffordshire to enable access to support services at the earliest possible point of intervention and without the need to be involved in referral and assessment to more statutory services where appropriate.

We will consider how the budget-holding lead professional role could be developed to address the needs of disabled children, young people and their families. The aim is to test whether better service packages for core groups of children and families could be delivered by giving lead professionals a budget with which to quickly procure goods and commission services directly from providers.

### **We want to**

- **Increase the access of disabled children and young people to mainstream services.**

- Provide support for families at the earliest point of identification and reduce specialist assessments.
- Co-ordinate and minimise specialist assessments.
- Reduce the amount of times parents, children and young people have to give information about their circumstances.
- To ensure children, young people and parents views are listened to in the decision that effect them.
- To empower disabled children and their families to manage their own budget and decide how their support is delivered.
- To empower parents and disabled children 16+ to have control over the delivery of their care plan.

## **What we will do**

- Integrated Service Delivery Project (ISD) to include assessment of disabled children and young people.
- Develop processes for Common Assessment Framework assessment of disabled children and families to enhance access to mainstream provision.
- Develop process for access to direct payments (or other payments) without the need for social work assessment linked to an empowerment strategy.
- Invest Aiming High for disabled children funding in Common Assessment Framework development (Joint Assessment Co-ordinator posts JACs) for disabled children and young people and their families.
- Develop budget holding lead professional role to work with families and provide resources as appropriate.
- Consider statutory assessment procedures in light of recommendations arising from the Lamb Report due Summer 2009.

## **2.4 Transition**

The national report A Transition Guide For All Services: DCSF, DoH, 2007, local consultation (Have your Say 2007 and Aiming High Parent Consultation 2009) and local research (Better Transition in Staffordshire 2008) tell us that the transition from the world of school and family life to a world of independence and adulthood can provoke huge anxiety and uncertainty for disabled young people their parents and carers.

Part of Aiming High is around addressing the fact that disabled young people may face more challenges than most in the critical transition to adulthood. The

*'There should be more links between child services and adults services because they are two totally separate things and neither of them seem to communicate or understand so you've got to go from one to the other'*

**Staffordshire Aiming High  
Consultation events Independent  
Report February 2009**

Government has developed a Transition Support Programme aimed at helping disabled young people and their families benefit from intensive, coordinated support and person centred planning. This is also an area that we feel needs addressing further locally. Building on existing good practice we want to learn from the Transition Support Programme Self Assessment which took place in January 2009. A Staffordshire Transition Policy is in place.

Within Staffordshire ( Feb 2009) we have 9577 14 year olds in school, of which 411 have a Statement of Special Educational Need and 945 are on School Action and 469 on School Action Plus. In this current year (2008-2009) there were 79 young people who have transferred from receiving a service from Children's Social Care to Adult Social Care and Health.

Locally we have adopted the Transition Pathway Tool (Person Centred Planning) for Transition Reviews, and in 2007-2008 over 200 staff from schools, Connexions Staffordshire, health and children and adults social care were trained in its application. This was jointly funded by the local authority Children and Lifelong Learning, Adult Service, Connexions Staffordshire and the Adult Learning Disability Partnership Board. There have been Transition Workers appointed within Social Care and Health who are working with colleagues in health, schools, Connexions Staffordshire and children's services, to ensure a more effective service for young people and their families. Both Children's Services and Social Care and Health are developing individual budgets as a form of service delivery. Through our Parent Partnership service we hold information days for parents about transition.

Connections Staffordshire have Personal Advisers working in all schools across Staffordshire as well as other locations to support young people and parents/carers with transition. Connexions Staffordshire produce a publication for parents/carers and a workbook for young people to support transition planning.

We were recently required to complete a Transition Self Assessment which told us that we have some areas of good practice, however it is not consistent across the county and our strategic processes need to be developed.

A multi agency group Transition Group has been established to work in partnership to develop an integrated and coordinated approach to improving transition for children and young people who have disabilities and their families across Staffordshire.

This group recognises that transition relates to all transitions in a child/young persons life, from early years to infant school and subsequent changes in schools in addition to childhood to adulthood and it's terms of reference have been expanded to include this wider remit.

## **We want to:**

- **Develop accountable and robust transition processes that effectively support children and young people and their families into the adult world of independence, well being and choice.**
- **Develop accountable and robust transition processes that effectively support children and their families from early years to infant school and subsequent changes in schools.**
- **Help families to have a smooth and understandable transition process where they know what is happening, who they need to talk to and where they can get help.**
- **Ensure that all young people aged 14 plus have a plan which is centred on their needs as they move from Children to Adult services (person centred planning).**
- **Identify the role of Integrated Youth Support Service in transition planning and provision.**

## **We will:**

- **Develop multi-agency transition action plans based on findings of the Transition Self Assessment and review current transition arrangements and identify gaps.**
- **Refresh our Transition Policy to reflect the full contribution of health and other Children's trust agencies and partners and fully implement Transition policy and protocols.**
- **Monitor the implementation of the strategy through the strategic transition group which will feed into the Learning Disability Partnership Board, Staffordshire Children's Trust and the Aiming High Project Board.**
- **Monitor the contributions of young people and their parents to their transition reviews.**
- **Implement a transition protocol.**
- **Implement a pilot of Individualised budgets for young people aged 16 plus, and continue to expand the use of direct payments for this age group.**
- **Develop 8 local transition monitoring groups that can strategically monitor and plan for this group of young people. Such groups would feed into the district Children's Trust Boards and the locality Learning Disability Partnership Boards.**

- Investigate streamlining the transition review process with the looked after children review process in order to simplify matters for young people, their parents/cares and the network of professionals around them.
- Ensure that any short break provision for young people aged 14 plus reflects their transition needs

## 2.5 Children and Young People's Participation

The Core offer states that:

*'Disabled children want staff to listen to them, ask for their ideas, take notice of what they say and give them choices....Involvement of children and their parents in planning services leads to more appropriate services'*

Staffordshire is fully committed to the participation of children, young people and parents and has a number of areas of good practice.

### **Staffordshire Children's Commissioner**

In Staffordshire we are fortunate to have a specialist Children's Commissioner who plays a vital role in ensuring the views of children and young people are taken into account when planning and providing services for children in the county. The Commissioner was appointed following a rigorous selection process which included intensive questioning from a group of eight and nine-year-old children, teenagers and professionals from health, education and social care services.

The post works on behalf of Staffordshire Children's Trust Board, to raise awareness of the views and interests of Staffordshire's children and young people and ensure that effective co-ordination and consideration of the views of children and young people are embedded in the planning, commissioning and delivery of services

### **Voices into Action (VIA)**

The Commissioner has been central to the establishment of a Shadow Trust Board for Staffordshire Children's Trust. The Shadow Board Voices Into Action (VIA) is made up of children and young people aged 11-19 years including children with disabilities.

### **District Shadow Trust Boards**

There are eight district shadow trust boards in various stages of development, some of which include representation from disabled children and young people.

### **The Youth Action Council (YAK)**

The Youth Action Council advises the County Council on service provision; it gives young people a voice, a chance to express their opinions and a chance to be heard.

Members must be aged between 11 and 19 and membership is by election only from one of the following groups:

- From any of the Staffordshire District Youth Forums
- Young Carers Forum
- 4us Forum (Young People Leaving Care)
- Children and Young Peoples Voice (Young People in Care)
- Special Needs Young People
- S.C.V.Y.S (Staffordshire Council for Voluntary Youth Services Forum)
- UK Youth Parliament, 8 elected members all receive an automatic place

All of the above groups receive 4 places for which the young people are all democratically elected within their own group.

## **Children in Care Council**

Staffordshire also has a Children in Care Council which includes children from a diverse range of care backgrounds including disabled children and young people who use overnight short break services.

Other opportunities to consult with disabled children and young people are available through the school councils and through specific user groups in short break provision at Hawthorne crescent and Cannock Resource Centre.

## **The Children and Young People's Participation Sub Group (C&YPPSG)**

Meeting bi-monthly, the network considers new/forthcoming legislative issues, new strategy, shares good practice and provides a forum where professional can legitimately take time to network and share ideas/resources. It has approximately thirty members from partner agencies who work directly with children and young people and are the 'children's champions' in their organisation. Crucially, the establishment of this active involvement 'network' has helped put an end to the duplication of consultation and involvement of young people by teams working in isolation from each other and has avoided young people being involved in repeated consultation exercises. This co-ordinated approach to young people's active involvement has led to a wider range of young people being involved and to the development of more sophisticated forms of involvement, through the pooling of resources and expertise.

## **Strategy for the Participation of Children and Young People**

Staffordshire is proud of the commitment it has made to the development of participation of children and young people. August 2008 saw the launch of the Strategy for the Participation of Children and Young People which establishes the action needed to deliver participation of children and young people across Staffordshire Children's Trust member agencies. It also promotes the Hear by Right Standards framework aimed at securing sustained and beneficial participation of

children and young people and encourage continual improvement in an organisation's activities. Senior Officers from the Staffordshire Children's Trust have the overview of the strategy and its implementation. The strategy is currently being refreshed.

There is also a **Listening to Disabled Children Group** which brings together a wide group of practitioners to discuss how to improve our ability to listen to disabled children.

## **Consultation with young people on Aiming High in Staffordshire**

Within Staffordshire's Children and Lifelong Learning we have a group called the Residential Partnership. This group consists of two residential settings for children and young people with disabilities run by Social Care and five special schools that offer residential provision. All of the settings meet the needs of children and young people with an extensive range of disabilities and learning difficulties. Two of the special school settings accommodate young people (one primary, one secondary) with emotional, social and behavioural difficulties.

We are currently undertaking a consultation exercise with the young people that access these settings and their parents/carers with a view to determining their thoughts and aspirations for the development of short break provision within Staffordshire. The young person consultation is in the form of a differentiated questionnaire created from a parental version that was used with parents and carers at the Aiming High Parental Consultation events in Staffordshire. Some of the young people will be able to undertake the questionnaire independently whilst others will need additional support. The level of this support will depend upon personal need. All settings are very experienced in addressing a diverse range of communication needs. Completed questionnaires will be fed into workstream Action Plans and the Aiming High Board.

Findings from participation will also be fed into other agendas such as the Integrated Youth Support Service (IYSS) to ensure development captures the needs and preferences of disabled children and young people.

On an individual level we know that in-between 2007/08 to 2008/09 we have seen an increase in the participation of disabled children and young people in their reviews of their care plan up from 93% to 100%. This cohort is for full time Children in Care. Participation can take a variety of formats including children and young people communication in a variety of ways and being supported to do so by their carers, parents, social workers and the independent chairs. We have three Independent Conference Chairs who specialise in chairing safeguarding, and looked after children reviews for disabled children and young people.

We cannot at present collate data about the participation of disabled children and young people in their overnight short break reviews or their individual service plan reviews.

## **We want to**

- Ensure the engagement of disabled children, young people and families in the design and delivery of service is embedded in children and young people's participation.
- Ensure disabled children and young people are listened to and their involvement leads to more appropriate services.

## What we will do

- Work with the Children's Commissioner and the Children and Young Person's participation sub group to identify how to most effectively deliver the core offer standards for the participation of disabled children and young people.
- Develop processes to ensure disabled children and young people's participation is embedded in all relevant participation activity in Staffordshire, both current delivery and in future commissioning
- Consider traditional and new methods for involvement and participation.
- Audit current participation and active involvement opportunities for disabled children and young people in individual care and support and in shaping services.
- Involve disabled children and young people in the development of participation.
- Incorporate the findings of the Aiming High consultation exercise with young people.
- From 2009-2010 we will be recording young person's attendance at their transition reviews.
- During 2009-2010 we will be looking to develop a mechanism for collating data about children and young people's participation in their overnight short break reviews.

## Parent Participation

The Core offer states that:

*'Disabled children and young people and their families are routinely involved and supported in making informed decisions about their treatment, care and support, and in shaping services.'*

The enhancement of parent participation and support to parents is a developing area in Staffordshire providing an exciting opportunity for the Aiming High Project Board to build on existing good practice.

## Staffordshire Parent Commissioner

In 2008 Staffordshire Children's Trust partners created a new post, the Commissioner for Parents. The post was appointed in autumn 2008 and is a central champion for parents across Staffordshire to ensure parents' voices are represented, that key decisions are truly reflective of parents' views and that parents and the family are at the heart of services.

The home environment and family are one of the biggest influences over children and young people and it is important that parents therefore get the help, advice, support and information that they need to help their children grow from babies to adults. The post is a mark of Staffordshire's commitment to recognising this. It will help to ensure that everyone working to improve outcomes for children and young people also champions parents.

The appointment of the Commissioner provides an exciting opportunity for the development of participation of parents. The Aiming High Board will be working closely with the parent commissioner to identify action to ensure that the participation of parents of disabled children is embedded in the commissioner's role and in strategic developments.

## Aiming High Parent Events

During January and February 2009 four parent events were held across the County specifically to consult on two aspects of Aiming High in Staffordshire: Short Breaks and Parent Participation. Over 80 parents attended these events and contributed their thoughts and experiences. An Independent Facilitator was commissioned to summarise the key messages from the group work (which was digitally recorded).

Parents told us that they often felt isolated and welcomed the opportunity to share their views and experiences.

*'we do find it useful to talk to you guys and people like ourselves...perhaps we could have once a year forum, where in the morning it's a session where there are speakers to talk about sleep etc and in the afternoon get us to fill some stuff out, like a seminar...'*

**Staffordshire Aiming High Consultation events  
Independent Report February 2009**

The information received from parents who attended these events has been invaluable in shaping the Aiming High Strategy and Action Plan. We want to ensure that we maintain participation and build on it so it becomes embedded in service development. We know that we have a lot of work still to do in this

area and that parents need to be at the heart of how we take this forward.

Other mechanisms in place include the Early Support Service Audit Tool and Parent Workshops which will provide opportunities to systematically evaluate services and to provide a mechanism to enable families to shape the structure of services.

## Parent Forums and Groups

There are a wide variety of parent groups and forums in Staffordshire at different stages of development and with specific interests. Some are support groups and some take on a more participatory role.

*'It's about making sure people are accountable and about reporting back to us about what they've done because very often you do get a bit of consultation fatigue because you are asked what do you want us to do, how can we improve things and then three months later, how could we improve things.'*

**Staffordshire Aiming High Consultation events  
Independent Report February 2009**

The Parent Partnership Service has links to and works to support many of the parent groups which exist in Staffordshire.

One of the challenges for Staffordshire is around more effectively gathering information from individual parents and parent

groups to shape service provision. Staffordshire is a large rural County with a number of key urban centres. It is not feasible to expect parents to travel large distances to join a single central parent forum, due to the time, cost and transport implications.

We know that all Looked after Children's reviews and service plan reviews by definition require the participation of those with parental responsibility in order to create a meaningful care plan. We have recently altered the parental consultation document for looked after reviews to look at all short break services.

Any treatment planning both within hospital or community settings is with full informed consent of those with parental responsibility or the young person if they are competent under the Fraser Guidelines. We also work within the Code of Practice for the Mental Capacity Act in issues to do with health treatment, where someone should live, or the type of care they should receive for young people aged 16-17

## **We want to**

- **Ensure that we fully involve parents of disabled children and young people in the shaping of services including those from harder to reach groups who may not currently feel that they have a voice.**
- **Consider innovative solutions which work for parents and help us to develop our services more effectively.**
- **Enhance parent involvement in decision making around support needs of their child.**
- **Make sure that we link to other relevant services and initiatives like parent direct and parent partnership and the new parent support workers through the community and learning partnerships.**

## **What we will do**

- **Work with the Parents' Commissioner and the Parenting Strategy Board to identify how to most effectively deliver the core offer standards for the participation of parents of disabled children and young people.**

- **Develop processes to ensure participation of parents of disabled children and young people is embedded in all relevant participation activity in Staffordshire, both current delivery and in future commissioning.**
- **Audit current participation opportunities for parents of disabled children and young people and link to all relevant services and initiatives.**
- **Involve parents of disabled children and young people in the development of participation.**
- **Regular Feedback to parents on the findings of the consultation events and progress with Aiming High.**
- **From 2009-2010 we will be recording parent/carer's attendance at their son or daughter's transition reviews.**
- **During 2009-2010 we will be looking to develop a mechanism for collating data about parental participation in short break reviews.**

## 2.6 Feedback

The Core Offer states that disabled children, young people and their families can expect:

*A clear and well publicised complaints procedure for all families who are not happy with services they are receiving.*

*Complaints to be dealt with promptly, fully, fairly and at an appropriate level.*

In addition to feed back from participation referred to earlier in this document there is also the opportunity to gain feedback from complaints and compliments received by agencies who work with disabled children, young people and their families.

Within the County Council complaints from parents, disabled children and young people are dealt with by the Customer Feedback and Complaints Team. Information is made available through the internet and leaflets placed in a wide range of establishments on how to complain. Feedback from statutory complaints are reported to Corporate Parenting Panel and departmental management structures. Children are offered advocacy via the CARS Advocacy service. Members of the Team are also represented on the Listening to Disabled Children Group.

### **We want to**

- **Ensure that parents and disabled children and young people have access to information on how to complain and the resources they need to complain effectively e.g. technical support advocacy etc.**
- **Ensure that relevant complaints and feedback is fed into the shaping of services for disabled children, young people and their families.**

### **What we will do**

- **Make links to complaints processes in PCTs and other agencies.**
- **Review how children and young people and parents access complaints information.**
- **Identify how complaints and feedback is fed into the shaping of services for disabled children, young people and their families.**

## 2.7 Putting Families in Control

The Core Offer states that:

*'Disabled children, young people and families can expect participation through: Choice over the support provided to them through full involvement in assessment and design of their packages of care.'*

Disabled young people and their parents are often experts on their impairment, and when packages of care are designed in partnership and aim to promote choice and control, they are more likely to be appropriate to their needs, and less likely to leave gaps in provision or to waste resources through inappropriate provision.

### Taking Control

Staffordshire are one of a number of local authorities who have signed up as a pilot site for taking control. The aim of the programme is to move towards self-directive support where children with disabilities and their families are given an individualised budget to meet their support needs and can choose creatively how to use the budget flexibly to meet their agreed support plan. Staffordshire are in the process of setting up a pilot for a maximum of **8** families to have an individual budget with a focus on those children and young people with disabilities in transition.

### Direct Payments

Direct payments are an alternative way to provide support to disabled children and their families following an assessment of their need. Direct payments offer disabled children and their families an increase in choice and control and independence in how care and support is delivered and are given money to choose how this delivered by whom and when.

*Several people said that they had been allocated Direct payments but complained about how difficult they are to access....However once they had been allocated, Direct payments often seem to work well .....in the best instances parents say they gave them direct control over the support and the flexibility they want.*

**Staffordshire Aiming High Consultation events  
Independent Report February 2009**

Staffordshire is one of the largest direct payment schemes for disabled children with 234 families on the scheme, approximately 128 of whom have recruited their own personal assistant, the remainder using agencies (November 2008).

A support scheme is in place to assist disabled children and their families to manage their direct payments. The

Rowan Organisation support families in the initial stages of using their direct payments to recruit their own carers and to mentor families in understanding employment legislation and completing their returns to the local authority for reimbursement. They also offer a pay roll service and support in keeping accounts.

## **We want to**

- Enable families who want to take control of their own support arrangements to be able to do so.
- Ensure that families have access to a pool of high quality and trained support workers.
- Simplify the processes for families who want to organise their own care.

## **We will**

- Identify good practice and the range of potential options for families, children and young people to have choice and control of their own support at the earliest point of intervention.
- Investment of Aiming High revenue into direct payments in Year One to increase number of families receiving direct payments.
- Ensure parents and carers are well informed about how to access and use direct payments.
- Ensure threshold for direct payments is set at the 'right' level

# Section Three:

## Short Breaks

### 3.1 What are Short Breaks?

The transformation of short break services forms a central component of the wider Aiming High for Disabled Children change programme in Staffordshire.

In developing the strategy for short break development – the project board has been informed by the Aiming High for Disabled Children Short Breaks Implementation Guidance jointly issued by the Department for Children Schools and Families (DCSF) and the Department of Health (DH) in July 2008.

Short breaks form part of a continuum of services, which support disabled children and their families. Short breaks are provided to give:

- **Enjoyable experiences for disabled children and young people away from their primary carers, contributing to personal and social development and to reduce isolation.**
- **Valuable breaks for parents and families from their caring responsibilities.**
- **Short breaks opportunities include day, evening, overnight and weekend activities which take place in a child's own home, the home of an approved carer, in the community or in a residential setting.**
- **Short term breaks duration are flexible from just a few hours to a few days or occasionally longer depending upon the needs of children and their families.**

### 3.2 Current Short Break Provision in Staffordshire

In Staffordshire we have a wide range of provision delivering short term break opportunities more details on this provision and its usage can be found in the separate document Aiming High Resource and Evidence Base.

#### **Home and Community Based Short Breaks**

We have a number of different community and home based services

#### **Holiday Playschemes/Activities**

The local authority offer grants to voluntary sector, parent groups and district councils to fund a range of activities and outings

available to facilitate short breaks including sitting services, domiciliary support, leisure link and buddy schemes. Most of this support is currently commissioned from third sector organisations like MENCAP and Action for Children. Some support is spot purchased from the Independent sector.

### **Hospital at Home**

South Staffordshire PCT has already increased provision of Children's Community Nursing in the Stafford/Cannock area. The continued development of the service is being considered following a review of acute and community paediatric services. There is some short term work being done as part of the current LDP process and the work will be continued through 2009, building on the work already undertaken.

The Children's Community Nursing Team in North Staffordshire is also developing hospital at home provision.

### **Family Based Overnight Breaks**

**Family Link Service:** This is a County wide service where specialist foster carers are recruited and approved to meet the specific needs of individual disabled children and their families through a robust assessment and matching process.

### **Level 5 Fostering (Contract Care):**

From July'08 family link service has expanded to recruit carers that have the skills knowledge and competence to meet the needs of disabled children with higher levels of needs. The aim of the scheme is to increase the number of nights or placements available. And to offer placement choice and provide more placements to disabled children with one set of carers.

during the summer holidays across the county. Administered by the Co-coordinator for Disabled Children, the grant supports both inclusive and specialist schemes and range from between £1,000 - £5000.

### **Residential Overnight Breaks**

A variety and range of short breaks are provided across the County by different providers. Delivery and style of provision varies across the districts.

**Hawthorn Crescent:** Based in Burton Hawthorn Crescent is a the main provider of residential short breaks in the East of the County and outreach support to families with a range of holiday opportunities and activities.

**Cannock Resource Centre:** A new initiative opened in 2008 as part of the reconfiguration of health respite. The centre is commissioned primarily to meet the needs of children with complex health needs, life-limited conditions and physical disabilities. Providing overnight stays at weekends and school holidays and a wide variety of activities in the community on one-to one basis as well as time limited support in the home and holiday opportunities and activities. The resource centre is also a vehicle for early years initiatives, facilitating and delivering a range of services in partnership with Cannock Children Centre as a satellite service to families in Bridgetown.

**Dragon Square:** Dragon Square is a health resource commissioned by NHS North Staffs and Stoke PCTs and delivered by Combined Health Care Trust. This resource provides 6 beds to children and young people with severe learning disabilities who have in addition either a complex health need or severe challenging behaviour.

**Trialpha:** A commissioned service provided by Action for Children based in the north of the county covering the Newcastle and the Moorlands District more recently the service has increased capacity to reach as far as Stone. Available

**Hospices**

Children with life-limited conditions and complex health needs in Staffordshire have access to two hospices. The Donna Louise Trust is located in Stoke-on-Trent serving the needs of both Staffordshire and South Cheshire children, providing both community and building based support. The Acorns Hospice is also used by Staffordshire children and young people.

at weekend and school holidays with a requirement of providing a minimum of 1,000 bed nights a year to 32 children with disabilities and their families.

**Out of County Short breaks:**

Occasionally the local authority spot purchases short breaks through the Independent Sector. This is usually in circumstances where needs cannot be met in-house or where there is insufficient capacity to provide a service at the level required. There are currently 16 children and young people who receive a service through an independent package, 5 of which are joint funded with health.

**Residential Special Schools**

Staffordshire has 5 Residential Special Schools which provide between 48 and 120 bed nights a week to disabled children and young people. The schools also provide a range of community and holiday provision.

In addition to the specific provision outlined above there are other community based short break opportunities available including leisure activities, youth clubs and play opportunities.

In developing the vision for short term breaks the Aiming High Project Board and workstreams have considered the availability of existing provision and the feedback received from parents and disabled children and young people. In doing so the Board has developed the following vision for the delivery of Short Term Breaks in Staffordshire

### **3.3 Staffordshire Short Breaks Vision for Delivery**

In Staffordshire we want to develop a full range of short break opportunities building on the good practice already in place locally.

We know that disabled children and young people want to lead ordinary lives. And that relationships with their families and friends are very important to them. They want to be like other children and do not always want to have breaks without their families and away from home.

Parents of disabled children want practical, flexible help and a break from the physical and emotional demands of caring for their child as well as opportunities for breaks with their child. They often wish that their relationship with their disabled child

could be more 'ordinary' and they did not always have to perform caring or nursing roles.

Traditionally, services providing short breaks have focused on residential care solely for the disabled child. New types of short break are aimed at meeting the needs of the whole family.

In Staffordshire we want to expand flexible short break opportunities and offer many different kinds of support.

Developing a new model for short breaks which are:

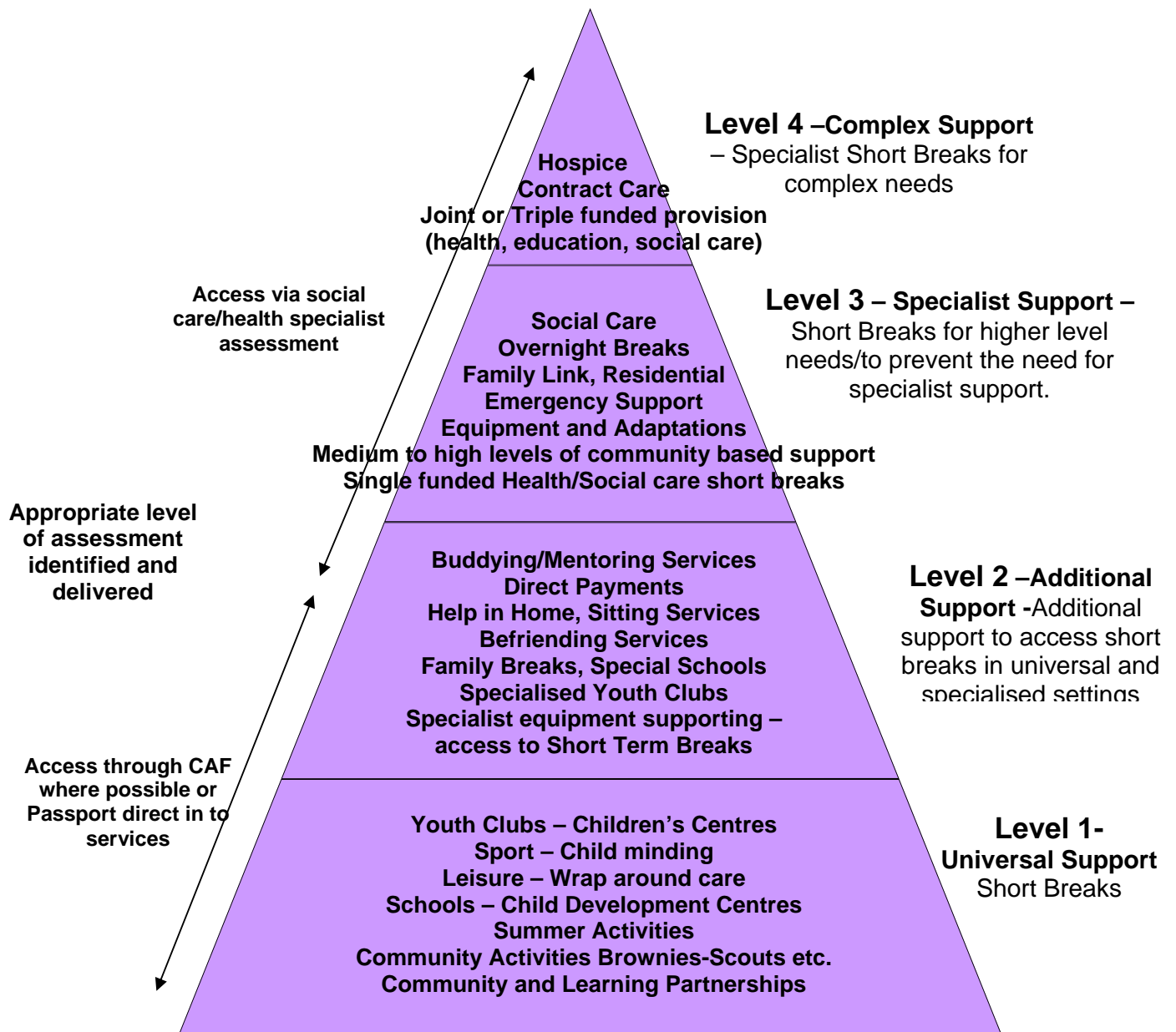
- flexible and responsive to the whole family's needs
- based at home or in the community
- ensure continuity of care
- offer stimulating and educational activities
- family-centred
- support parents and children and young people

The diagram below describes the range and level of short term breaks we want to work towards delivering as part of the Full Service Offer. We want to ensure that all disabled children and young people in Staffordshire are able to access the full range of short break opportunities which are appropriate to their own and their families' needs.

## **We will**

- **By 2011 we will be delivering a full service offer with a continuum of short breaks opportunities available through both specialist and universal services tailored to meet individual needs of disabled children and their families.**

**Fig 1 Vision for Short Term Break Delivery**



**Where provision is accessed, is dependent on both the needs of the child/young person and the context of their family situation.**

## 3.4 Universal Short Breaks

In 2007, the Every Disabled Child Matters campaign asked hundreds of disabled children what one thing they would like to change for disabled children and their families. One of the top three things they cited was that there should be more fun things for disabled children to do.

Many disabled children and young people do access universal provision for example via the youth service, voluntary sector or through their local leisure centre. However parents have told us that this can sometimes be very difficult and that places which appear to be inclusive are not always able to meet the needs of children with significant needs or challenging behaviours.

*'...as the children get older they tend to go out less and less, the kids are bigger, they are harder to handle, they are heavier to manipulate, they are more obvious if they throw a tantrum, whereas if there is a group of you its better than if you are stuck on your own in a situation where they do that. its quite daunting.'*

**Staffordshire Aiming High Consultation Events Independent Report February 2009**

Parents told us that they often felt isolated or unable to use 'universal' provision as other parents would make them feel uncomfortable because of their child's behavior or there were not adequate provision for their children including adult sized changing tables. Training for staff in specific disabilities was also raised.

In 2007 Sport Across Staffordshire undertook a consultation exercise with disabled children and young people on the activities they undertook and would like to take part in. This survey of 814 children and young people

found that the majority did take part in some form of activity outside of school although a significant number 119 (15%) stated that they didn't take part in any activities. When asked about what would enable children and young people to participate more fully the majority of answers related to confidence and information and support from a person to take the young person or stay with them.

### **Q9. What would help you do more physical activity/sport?**

	No.	%
Someone to take you	271	14%
Knowing what is available	380	20%
Better transport	138	7%
Somebody to go with	403	21%
More confidence	182	10%
Understanding of need	433	23%
Other	92	5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>1899</b>	<b>100%</b>

We know that there are examples of really good practice in enabling disabled children and young people to take part in activities out of school times. However, we want to ensure that this is consistent across areas and that those children who are at

most risk of exclusion are also able to take part in activities and sporting opportunities similar to those of their peers. Recently a programme of training events called autism in the community have taken place to help support people like scout and brownie leaders to understand the challenges children and young people on the autism spectrum face. We want to build on this kind of practice to enable better understanding of the needs of disabled children and young people in our communities when accessing universal provision.

## **Staffordshire Integrated Youth Service Support (IYSS)**

Current support services for young people are being re-shaped to create a more responsive and Integrated Youth Support Service (IYSS)

The aim is to have;

*'a single body responsible and accountable for Youth Policy and the Every Child Matters outcomes in each area will enable integrated planning and commissioning of the full range of services for teenagers from universal activities through to more specialist and targeted support. This will lead to an Integrated Youth Support Service, focused on and structured around young people's needs and involving a wide range of providers, including voluntary and community organisations'. (Youth Matters 2005)*

There are four key delivery strands of IYSS:

- How to engage more young people in positive activities and empower them to shape the services they receive.  
**(Empowering Young People: Things to do and Places to go)**
- How to encourage more young people to volunteer and become involved in their communities.  
**(Young People as Citizens: Making a Contribution)**
- How to provide better information, advice and guidance to young people to help them make informed choices about their lives.  
**(Supporting Choices: Information, Advice and Guidance)**
- How to provide better and more personalised intensive support for each young person who has serious problems or gets into trouble.  
**(All Young People Achieving: Reforming Targeted Support)**

There are obvious links have to the Aiming High agenda, particularly in relation to the expansion of positive activities. The Aiming High Board will be working with the IYSS Board to ensure the inclusion of disabled children and young people in the key delivery strands.

Staffordshire Youth Service Delivery Plan 2009/10 has identified a commitment to improve service delivery to young people with a disability including the development of at least one youth work outlet per district (8) dedicated to providing activities and opportunities to those young people with a disability

## **Community and Learning Partnerships**

Community and Learning Partnerships (C&LPs) are defined as: clusters of schools, children's centres and other community venues, forming a campus, from which to deliver the extended schools programme and children's centre activity. C&LPs enable the delivery of a range of services reflecting local need and parental choice and includes: support for childcare, employment opportunities, information, health support, family support, adult education, activities, wider community access and swift and easy referral.

We want to ensure that Aiming High is reflected in the activity of the 50 C&LPs working across Staffordshire and to build on the existing good practice taking place there. Each C&LP has a Management Action Group (MAG) which takes a multiagency approach to looking at needs and plans for its C&LP area. MAGs can support Aiming High by ensuring that all children irrespective of ability can access universal services and the extended schools programme.

We want to work with local partnerships to facilitate non-stigmatising resources, activities and support for disabled children and their families, ensuring they receive support and opportunities in the heart of their local community and less reliance on the involvement of statutory services.

## **Playbuilder**

Staffordshire County Council has successfully been awarded £1.129 m from the DCSF to provide a minimum of 22 new and refurbished play areas across the county by the end of March 2011. The DCSF are very clear that they want local communities to be at the heart of delivery through the involvement of community and voluntary groups and through consultation with children, young people and parents.

The sites will be innovative and attractive to children, particularly 8-13 year olds and should be inclusive for disabled children and minority groups. Staffordshire County Council will be delivering 8 new/refurbished play areas within the year 2008/2009 and all applicants must show how they will provide better access. This will be evidenced by ensuring that the sites are open access (with children generally free to come and go as they please) and free of charge. They must also ensure better access and experiences for disabled children across their site. This must include ensuring that their development of their play area must comply with the disability discrimination legislation. Applications for 2009/10 are due to be submitted mid March 2009.

## **We want to**

- **Work with partners in the third sector, community based services and district councils, leisure and cultural services, youth services etc. to develop processes to ensure that children with disabilities including those most at risk of exclusion are accessing the full range of provision through either specialist or mainstream provision as part of a series of short term break opportunities.**

- **Build on the strengths of the Community and Learning Partnership (C&LP) approach and ensure that Aiming High is incorporated within that approach.**
- **Learn from existing good practice happening on the ground and build this into a consistent and equitable approach across the County.**
- **Link to other key initiatives which relate to Aiming High including IYSS.**

## **We will**

- **Seek to influence the development of universal provision which is genuinely accessible to disabled children and their families.**
- **Continue to work with parents and children and young people to identify what activities they would like to access and how we can support that access.**
- **Work with organisations like Early Years, Sport Across Staffordshire, the Youth service and other Integrated Youth Support Services (IYSS) to improve our expertise and understanding in the development of activities for disabled children and young people.**
- **Co-ordinate and improve our ability to collect information on the short break opportunities which disabled children are currently undertaking and develop plans to expand those opportunities.**
- **Identify play opportunities for disabled children including enhanced access to soft play and sensory opportunities for disabled children**
- **Identify opportunities for birthday parties, swimming parties etc. which can be held in resources which have access to appropriate support and equipment.**
- **Linked to Integrated Youth Service Support Strategy (IYSS.) Identify disabled young people's access to youth clubs etc. in a way in which is equitable to their peers i.e. parents not being required to stay with them.**
- **Identify access to sport and leisure opportunities linked to Sport Across Staffordshire and district engagement strategy.**
- **Develop engagement strategy to underpin expansion of short break opportunities including: Community and Learning partnerships, Third Sector, District and Borough Councils, District Children's Trusts.**
- **Ensure children in specific groups identified by Aiming High as most at risk of exclusion from opportunities including short breaks are included in all relevant work streams of the AH Project Board.**

## 3.5 Childcare

The Childcare Act 2006 requires local authorities to pay particular attention to the needs of families with disabled children when addressing their duty to secure sufficient childcare, so far as is reasonably practicable, to meet the needs of working parents in their areas.

*'You just don't get a life really do you that's not involving sorting out the children, and battling and fighting for everything the children deserve...it's really hard to hang on to who you are as a person yourself and it impacts on our ability to earn a living, I've given up my career. we give up our pension rights.....'*

**Staffordshire Aiming High Consultation Events Independent Report February 2009**

The provision of good quality childcare will allow parents to return to work, if this is what parents choose; reducing poverty and increasing employment opportunities. Good quality childcare can also improve children's outcomes and general wellbeing.

As well as facilitating parental employment, childcare will benefit disabled children in the same way as it benefits non-disabled children: the provision of high quality education and

care at an early age reduces the risk of developing special educational needs at a later stage, from 1 in 3 to 1 in 5.5.

Parents told us that access to child care and wrap around care was sometimes a problem for them. Parents talked about the fact that they had to sometimes to give up their employment in order to care for their child/children because appropriate childcare was not available or they did not have the necessary transport solutions available to access it.

Good quality childcare is needed for disabled children, just as it is for all children and families and we want to ensure that all families with a disabled child or young person are supported to access appropriate childcare provision wherever possible.

### We want to

- **Develop solution focussed approaches to access to childcare and listen to the voices of parents about what they want.**
- **Enable parents to reduce isolation and take up employment and training opportunities wherever possible through access to high quality childcare solutions.**

### We will

- **Work with partners in Early Years and through the Childcare Sufficiency Assessment to ensure that the needs of disabled children young people and their families are fully incorporated.**
- **Identify the child care options in place to meet the needs of disabled children and plan to enable parents' access to education, training, employment and leisure opportunities.**

- Learn from the findings and good practice identified from the national Aiming High childcare pilots currently taking place.
- Consider findings from parent direct research project on parents of disabled children's information requirements.

## 3.6 Additional Support Services

Additional Support is part of the continuum of short break services either enabling disabled children and young people and their families to access universal provision or to provide some specific additional support to that child or young person.

*'I've put horse riding and sporting activities because that's what he wants to do. He loves his sports but there isn't so much of it around with the support.'*  
**Staffordshire Aiming High Consultation events Independent Report February 2009**

This could be support in the home with a young person, taking a young person out somewhere or supporting a child or young person whilst they try a new activity then moving on to support someone else once the child or young person is confidently

*'I've put down day trips down, for the future, trusting somebody else with him really. Sporting activities because he quite likes tenpin bowling and he loves soft play.'*  
**Staffordshire Aiming High Consultation events Independent Report February 2009**

able to access the service independently.

Currently Staffordshire offers some befriending, sitting and outreach services either from its resource centre bases or via commissioning in the third sector. However there is variance on the availability of these services and

issues about recruiting trained and available workforce to deliver this kind of support.

Parents told us that being confident that their child is safe is absolutely crucial to them. They want their children to access available opportunities with someone that they can trust and have confidence in.

Transport was also raised as an issue in enabling disabled children and young people to attend after school activities and other universal provision.

### We want to

- Create appropriate support services to meet the needs of disabled children, young people and their families in Staffordshire in order to enable access to universal and specialist provision.
- Consider the range of options available, identify good proactive and develop a model of support which works for disabled children, young people and their families in Staffordshire.

### We will

- Consider developing our range of services which support access to universal and specialist provision including befriending.
- Identify and target specialist providers to provide a range of opportunities as identified by disabled children and their families at consultation events and to extend to those young people identified as being at most risk of exclusion.
- Identify the support needed to enable disabled children and young people to access universal short break opportunities e.g.
  - Befriending schemes.
  - Peer mentoring.
  - Personal assistant.
  - Direct payments.
- To develop a plan to address transport issues including exploration of ring and ride, buddies, bus passes, extension of school transport arrangements.
- Develop plans to ensure Children with complex health needs and challenging behavior receive appropriate support in their community.
- Develop model for residential and outreach opportunities based on current model at Cannock Resource centre and identify process for embedding this model at other residential short break facilities.

## 3.7 Expanding out of school provision

The local authority offer grants to voluntary sector, parent groups and district councils to fund a range of activities and outings during the summer holidays across the county. Administered by the Co-coordinator for Disabled Children, the grant supports

*School holidays were almost always reported to be a very difficult time, with a change in routine often affecting the child's behaviour and very little to keep them, and their siblings entertained. Requests were made for days or sessions of mixed activities which didn't give the children time to get bored as they could flit from one activity to another in a safe environment.*

**Staffordshire Aiming High Consultation Events Independent Report February 2009**

both inclusive and specialist schemes and range from between £1,000 - £5000.

Staffordshire is fortunate to have a substantial educational resource specifically aimed at the needs of disabled children. The County has a number of special schools including five residential special schools. It has been recognised for a number of years that this provision could be expanded and used more widely to benefit more disabled children and in different ways. This recognition has led to a core group of Residential Managers from social care, residential schools and commissioned independent units being formed. This

group have been working together for approximately 3 years to develop action plans

to consider how best we can make use of the resources we share for disabled children, young people and their families. This has included buildings, equipment, training, policies and most importantly the potential use of residential school facilities at weekends and school holidays.

As a result of this joint working, Heads of Residential Special schools (of which there are 5) and Senior Managers from Vulnerable Children's Division meet regularly to strategically progress the vision articulated by the residential partnership group. This has left Staffordshire well placed to respond to the Aiming High agenda for short term break development. Progress has already been made in terms of expanding provision by:

All of the residential schools over last two summer holidays have made their existing resources available to existing school pupils, the community and other settings providing a range of activities to disabled children and their families.

Two pilot weekends took place in September and October '07 at Saxon Hill Residential Special School and was facilitated by staff from both the school and social care settings. Feedback from families and young people was extremely positive.

A data base has been developed to identify and share information in relation to which children are accessing what resources and where.

A residential school admission panel has been developed the aim being to provide a more equitable access to both residential provision in social care and schools for disabled children and their families and to reduce duplication and unmet need. The disability resource panels and residential admission panels are merging to provide an integrated approach.

*'...we just need sometime where he is with other people who are motivated to have a good time with him and understand his needs'*

**Staffordshire Aiming High Consultation Events Independent Report February 2009**

Many parents whose children are educated in special schools valued the resources that were available to them, however some parents with children in mainstream schools felt very isolated and did not feel they had the same opportunities to access support as others.

## **We want to**

- **Expand the quality, range and availability of short term break opportunities to disabled children, young people and other families maximising the use of existing resources wherever possible**
- **Ensure appropriate provision is in place to meet the needs of disabled children and young people including those most at risk of exclusion.**
- **Ensure disabled children and young people in mainstream education have the same opportunity to access short break opportunities and support as children who attend special schools.**

## **We will**

- **We will expand the availability of existing resources in special schools and other settings, so that children with quite complex needs or family circumstances can access a full range of provision.**
- **Based on outcomes of the gap analysis, work with specialist providers to increase opportunities to access extended schools, Saturday Sunday clubs and youth activities.**
- **To continue summer play schemes and consider expanding this to all school holidays.**
- **Develop strategy to increase the availability of resources and activities within special schools at weekends, holiday and after school.**
- **Identify the availability of these resources to children and young people who do not attend special schools.**
- **Identify how to ensure access for disabled children and young people in mainstream schools**
- **Identify and target specialist providers to provide a range of opportunities as identified by disabled children and their families at consultation events and to extend to those young people identified as being at most risk of exclusion.**

## **3.8 Outdoor and Family Activities**

In addition to the universal provision referred to earlier in this document Staffordshire is resource rich in terms of its outdoor education provision. Staffordshire has four outdoor education centres located across the County. The Staffordshire Outdoor Education Centres have been providing courses for over 50 years and the Service is proud of the high standard of tuition offered and its excellent safety record. The Service is led by qualified teachers who also hold appropriate qualifications in outdoor activities. All Centres are licenced by the Adventure Activities Licencing Service.

All the Centres offer a wide range of different activities and studies; while some are common to all four centres, the way that a particular activity is organised varies a great deal from site to site. Activities available include climbing, caving, ropes course, team challenges and orienteering team building, problem solving, archery, freshwater ecology canoeing, dinghy sailing, kayaking and rafting indoor and outdoor climbing walls and many others.

Substantial residential and camping facilities are also available.

All the Centres are able to provide courses for groups and individuals with special needs. The majority of the activities can be undertaken by all and staff are experienced in using an inclusive approach.

In particular the Centre at Laches Wood can accommodate up to 100 students with additional ensuite bedrooms for visiting staff. The accommodation includes 6 family rooms, all ensuite, providing opportunities for family learning activities.

The extensive grounds include woodland with wheelchair friendly paths and trails and a large camping field for up to 120.

There is potential to further develop the existing resources at the outdoor education centres to expand short break opportunities for children and young people with disabilities individually or with their families.

Parents also told us that often they wanted to have a break with their child or as a whole family rather than the traditional 'respite' model of short breaks.

*Those people who attended the workshops consistently requested 'somewhere to go' - literally so they could get out of the house and mix with others. ....somewhere to go as a holiday - outdoor education centres that include provisions for disabilities would be ideal. Many would like to go with their child as well; a family holiday.....somewhere to go where disabled and able bodied children can mix - especially siblings'*

**Staffordshire Aiming High Consultation Events Independent Report February 2009**

The outdoor education service is fully engaged with the Aiming High group which is looking at the expansion of short term break opportunities and work is taking place to consider how the use of this resource can be maximised.

## **We want to**

- **Develop the opportunities for family breaks where possible**
- **Maximise the use of the resources available in the outdoor education centres to make available to disabled children and young people in Staffordshire.**

## **We will**

- **Identify opportunities for the development of outdoor education opportunities on existing sites for day time opportunities, weekend breaks for disabled children and their families and family fun events.**
- **Identify the possible use of Aiming High capital funding to enhance the outdoor education provision for a wide range of needs.**

## 3.9 Equipment

A disabled child or young person's mobility and ability to access the same opportunities as their peers including short term breaks will be significantly enhanced by the provision of the right equipment.

In Staffordshire we have included the provision of equipment and access to equipment services as part of the work of the Aiming High Project Board because we believe it is crucial element in realising our vision for disabled children and young people in Staffordshire.

Work to date has identified that the access to a variety of equipment within the children's trust is not well co-ordinated across health, education and social care. For children with moving and handling issues there can be long waits to access the right equipment and there can be inconsistencies across the home, school and short break providers.

We know from Parental Consultation (Have Your Say 2008 and Aiming High Parent Consultation Jan/Feb2009) that the access to and wait for equipment can be confusing for children, young people and their families, and is not always understood by the professionals who do not hold specific responsibilities in this area.

In 2005 the Children's Disability Service of the County Council took responsibility for delivering the County Council's statutory responsibilities for equipment for disabled children and young people. This has seen a greater focus on the bespoke needs of children and increase in spend both in equipment and adaptations in this area.

As part of our work under Aiming High, South Staffs PCT and NHS North Staffs are working with the county council to look at the assessment, provision, supply, maintenance and insurance for a range of equipment for children and young people with moving and handling needs.

### **We want to**

- **Simplify processes for professionals to access and order equipment for disabled children and young people that they work with.**
- **Make access to appropriate equipment much easier and faster for disabled children and young people**

### **We will**

- **Put processes in place so that by 2011 any appropriately trained professional working within the Children's Trust will be able to order the appropriate equipment for a child or young person, regardless of where they work.**

- Develop joint assessment, ordering and IT processes for the Community Equipment Store.
- Investigate the development of self (parental) assessment for simple equipment, with the use of equipment suites (possibly using Aiming High capital funding), for children, young people and their families to try “before you get”.
- Consider the development of prescription processes and direct payments to give families more control over the equipment they receive.
- Enhance existing links with local third sector groups in order to complement the range of equipment on offer to the children and young people of Staffordshire.

## 3.10 Overnight Breaks and Complex Needs

For some families overnight care is a necessary and valued resource which meets the particular needs of their family. In seeking to expand the range of short break options available we also want to consider the range and availability of overnight short break opportunities.

We want to reduce the number of children with complex needs being accommodated

*We've had 2 or 3 nights (respite care) and when we've got there I've cried because it's being able to completely switch off, I'm always on the go and always on edge.*

**Staffordshire Aiming High Consultation events Independent Report February 2009**

full time and ensure appropriate levels of support are available across Staffordshire for children with complex needs.

As mentioned earlier we want to ensure the full and appropriate utilisation of residential special schools, a residential school admission panel has been developed the aim being to provide a more

equitable access to both residential provision in social care and schools for disabled children and their families and to reduce duplication and unmet need.

Cannock Resource Centre is a new centre opened in 2008. The centre offers community and outreach activities in addition to overnight care for disabled children and young people.

*It is fantastic and the staff know exactly what we need and are able to deal with him...they take him on holiday, they take him to farms and Cannock Chase. Swimming.....They're going to start having him on a Monday night and start cooking his tea...start doing life skills with him..'*

**Staffordshire Aiming High Consultation events Independent Report February 2009**

*'We feel that we are able to give (child) opportunities, and we enjoy him being part of our family life because of the level of support we get from Staffordshire even though we've had to fight for it. We really value what we get and the fact that we are able to do so much stuff with him and he's able to experience so many things because we get these breaks....which means that when he's at home we can concentrate on him and all the things he enjoys doing, because we are not ground down by the experience.'*

**Staffordshire Aiming High Consultation events Independent Report February 2009**

We want to replicate the Cannock Resource Centre model through the other resources which are available to us. In addition we want to expand the Contract Care Service which can support children with very complex needs. We currently have two contract carers and we are looking to expand this service to five as part of the development of the full service offer.

We want to ensure that children with very complex needs can access safe and effective overnight care which supports them and gives their carers a break from their caring role. For some families this can be a lifeline which supports the whole family.

## **Palliative Care Strategy**

Palliative care in children and young people includes all those who have a life limiting

condition and therefore it is recognised that there is substantial cross-over between this agenda and implementing Aiming High for Disabled Children, particularly in relation to transition and short breaks.

The two PCT's in Staffordshire are currently working with Stoke PCT to develop a countywide strategy for Palliative Care for children and young people. This is linked with the Regional Children's Palliative Care Network who have already supported a multi-agency mapping session against the Association for Children's palliative care Treatment (ACT) criteria in each area. This mapping has highlighted where gaps exist as well as identifying areas of good or excellent practice.

It has been agreed to form two time limited meeting groups, both of which are multi-agency. The first is a reference group, which will consist of practitioners and operational managers, voluntary sector representatives, such as hospices and parents/carers. The second is a small commissioners group who will develop a Staffordshire wide commissioning strategy for Palliative Care by October 2009. The reference group will be used to ensure that the commissioning strategy is clinically sound and will also be utilised to support the engagement of children, young people and their families.

The commissioning group will feed directly into the development of Joint Commissioning in Staffordshire.

## **We want to**

- Support families who need access to overnight short breaks to be able to access the breaks appropriate to their families needs at the times when they need them.
- Ensure we are meeting the needs of those families where children have complex needs

## **We will**

- Commission 24 hour support for parents at times of crisis e.g. parent/carer needing to go into hospital, bereavement etc.
- Identify further overnight opportunities for children with complex needs including commissioning 5 contract carers with a minimum of one household having adapted property.
- Focus recruitment of family link carers in those areas where building based short team breaks are not available.
- Develop robust support mechanism in place to offer enhanced support to parents and disabled children with the most complex needs.
- Target the recruitment of foster carers with specific experience of meeting needs of those children identified at most risk of exclusion. Invest Aiming High capital funding in significant adaptations to at least one carer's property.
- Develop model for residential and outreach opportunities based on current model at Cannock Resource centre and identify process for embedding this model at other residential short break facilities.
- Develop a palliative care commissioning strategy for Staffordshire.
- Consider the whole Staffordshire picture for continuing care across both PCTs
- Development of Community Nursing and support for those children with complex needs.

# Section Four

## Development Activity

This strategy forms the basis for the development of the Core Offer and Full Service Offer for Short Term Breaks in Staffordshire. In order to fully realise Staffordshire's vision for disabled children, young people and their families the strategy needs to be backed up by robust arrangements for its implementation including commissioning, performance management and workforce development.

### 4.1 Commissioning

We want to build on existing commissioning arrangements to develop robust systems for the commissioning of services for disabled children, young people and their families. Partner agencies need to work together to identify the current spend on disabled children, young people and their families –in order to identify growth against that spend to deliver aiming high and the outcomes we expect to deliver through the commissioning of services.

Identifying existing spend is difficult because data collection systems across the PCTs are integrated with adult services, and PCT block contract for groups of services likewise means that disaggregating spend on young people's vs. adults services can be very difficult. Also many services provide specialist/targeted services as well as universal services available to children without disability. Others, such as the Children's Community Nursing service provide for children with disability and children with acute or chronic illnesses. We want to work together with the PCT's to develop systems for identifying spend and opportunities for pooling of budgets where appropriate.

We also want to improve our systems for gathering data on disabled children, young people and their families in terms of prevalence, future trends and service take up. In the interim we are gathering information via the development of the Staffordshire Aiming High Resource and Evidence Base in the longer term we are intending to develop strategic effective information gathering through the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA), to develop predictive modeling techniques to predict future demands for services as accurately as possible. This will be combined with effective and systematic service user and family consultation & participation activity to ensure services are developed on an evidence based, needs led way which has the care of service users at it's heart.

Staffordshire Children's Trust is currently developing a Joint Commissioning Unit specifically to develop robust commissioning for children's services across the Trust. Whilst the vision is clear, it must be recognised that Staffordshire is in a transitional phase and that the full Joint Commissioning Unit will not be fully operational until 2010. This does not however prevent progress being made in this area and South Staffordshire PCT and Staffordshire County Council are already developing joint

service specifications for services such as Special School Nursing and Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services. The development of Joint strategies for Aiming High will be an integral part of the development of the Unit and how we meet the challenges described above will have great benefits with regard to informing the further development of the Unit in 2010-11.

Integrated delivery can be fostered in many ways, and at many levels, making sure the system overall is meeting the right needs for the right children and young people requires effective integrated strategies:

- A Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA)
- Shared decisions on priorities
- Identification of all available resources
- Joint plans to deploy them

Joint commissioning ensures that those best able to provide the right packages of services can do so. All of this requires arrangements for governance that ensure everyone shares the vision and gives each party the confidence to relinquish day-to-day control of decisions and resources, while maintaining the necessary high-level accountability for meeting their statutory duties.

The Joint Commissioning Unit manager has been appointed and will develop the change management programme, ensuring a smooth transition from current commissioning arrangements to the joint commissioning ideal. The post is line managed by the Local Authority and the work plan, performance management and supervision is being provided by senior managers from NHS North Staffs, Staffordshire County Council and South Staffordshire PCT.

NHS North Staffs, South Staffs PCT and the County Council have agreed to joint fund a new post specifically to develop commissioning for aiming high services. This post will be appointed to in summer 2009 and will be managed by the Joint Commissioning Unit Manager.

## **We want to**

- Develop robust commissioning to support the implementation of Aiming High, linked to world class commissioning standards and supported by accurate and timely information on finance, prevalence, need and service take up.

## **We will**

- Work with the Children's Joint Commissioning Unit Manager (Children and Young People) to identify best practice and processes for the development of Aiming High commissioning and pilot aiming high commissioning approach as part of the Children's Joint Commissioning Unit.
- Work via the Aiming High Implementation Tool to identify accurate information on investment in disabled children services.

- Establish a pooled budget from Staffordshire County Council, NHS North Staffs, South Staffs PCT, for the development of Aiming High commissioning activity including the appointment of an Aiming High Commissioning manager.
- Develop as part of the commissioning strategy activity to support market and workforce development to ensure the skills of the local workforce fully meet the standards required to meet the needs of this group of young people and their families
- Develop processes for gathering accurate and timely information on disabled children, young people and their families linked to activity, to demonstrate both 'what works' and where further development of services is required to meet unmet needs, in order to develop the JSNA.

## 4.2 Workforce Development

Workforce Development is a key area for the effective implementation of Aiming High in Staffordshire. In order to deliver the Full Service Offer (FSO) we need an effective,

*I also access direct payments. I get 14 hours a week but you cannot get PA's (Personal Assistants) for love nor money. I handed back something in the region of 300 hours last year because I couldn't get PA's. I think everybody is struggling but particularly those with severe complex needs because the rates for disability are the same regardless of whether its' moderate learning difficulty or complex needs, it's all personal care.*

**Staffordshire Aiming High Consultation events  
Independent Report February 2009**

available, safe and trained workforce to deliver the expansion in short break opportunities. Parents have told us how important it is to know that they can trust staff that are working with their families and some parents have reported how difficult it can be to find appropriate support.

Linked to our commissioning strategy and to partners in the third and independent sectors we need to identify how we can develop the appropriate workforce to meet the

FSO.

Staffordshire Children's Trust has a Children's Workforce Development Strategy in place which is delivered via the workforce development workstream of the Trust. The workstream has been developed in response to the requirement to produce a children's workforce strategy as part of the Children and Young People's Plan. The strategy recognises that here is a need for a more integrated approach to workforce planning across agencies so that we can meet the challenge of developing future service models and address issues of affordability, quality and sustainability.

There are many challenges for workforce development in delivering the Aiming High Full Service Offer. From ensuring staff across the Children's Trust are adequately trained to effectively support disabled children to access short break provision in universal and other settings, to ensuring there is capacity in the workforce to deliver the expansion in short breaks which Aiming High needs to deliver by March 2011.

**Areas which we know we need to look at include:**

- Demand and supply
- Workforce capacity
- Workforce awareness/understanding
- Workforce skills
- Workforce deployment (role, duties, where employed)
- Structure of the market (in-house/independent providers/more self-directed care)

We want to link with other workforce initiatives including the workforce development workstream within Staffordshire Children's Trust and children's workforce development within the relevant organisations delivering aiming high including district based services, the third sector and other independent providers.

## **We want to**

- **Develop a skilled workforce with the capacity to deliver the Full Service Offer for short breaks at all levels by March 2011.**

## **We will**

- **Linked to the Children's Trust workstream for children's workforce development develop an Aiming High workforce development strategy.**
- **Identify opportunities to work regionally on workforce development issues for Aiming High and learn from good practice in this area**
- **Identify and utilise local expertise and resources including adult social care services, third and independent sectors.**
- **Develop an Aiming High workforce development audit looking at capacity, awareness, deployment and skills.**

# **4.3 Performance Management**

We want to ensure that Aiming High doesn't remain words on the page but makes a real difference to the lives of disabled children and young people and their families in Staffordshire. In order to check that we are on track with Aiming High and implementation is timely and making a difference, we want to establish a robust management framework linked to national indicators and local indicators for Aiming High, with regard to services commissioned and provided by Children Trust partners.

This framework clearly needs to sit within Staffordshire Children's Trust monitoring and we will be working with the Trust Performance Management Group to identify a comprehensive approach to the performance management of Aiming High. We will also be undertaking analysis of how aiming high contributes to performance against the national indicator set including:

- NI 51- Effective use of child and adolescence mental health
- NI 54 – Services for Disabled Children

- NI: 57 Children and young people's participation in sporting opportunities
- NI68 Reduce the causes and consequences of neglect.
- NI69 Children who have experienced bullying.
- NI 110 – Young People's participation in positive activities
- N1 117 – 16-18 year olds who are not in education training or employment.
- NI 118 – take up of formal childcare by low-income families.
- Raise aspirations of parents and communities (NI 163,164,165)
- Improve access for children, young people and their families and communities (NI 8,9,10,11,57 110).
- NI 88 – No of extended schools.
- NI 130: Social care clients receiving Self Directed Support.
- NI 145 Adults with learning disabilities in settled accommodation.
- NI 136 People supported to live independently through social services (all adults).

Staffordshire Aiming High Strategy is underpinned by an Action Plan which will be monitored by the Aiming High Board.

## **We want to**

- **Develop a Performance Management framework for Aiming High.**
- **To be clear which National Indicator and/or local performance indicator the strategy contributes to and establishes clear methods of monitoring.**

## **We will**

- **Ensure that the Aiming High strategy is linked into the existing performance monitoring and management frameworks across the Children's Trust.**
- **Develop a process for Aiming High to be appropriately performance managed.**

## **4.4 Conclusion**

The Staffordshire Aiming High Strategy will form the basis for delivering the core officer and full service offer across Staffordshire by March 2011. Through effective partnership working and appropriate investment of Aiming High funding we will improve outcomes for disabled children, young people and their families in Staffordshire.