

Children with a Disability Eligibility for Support

Introduction

Local authorities are required to assess whether a child has needs for care and support. A disabled child is presumed to need care and support in addition to, or instead of, the care and support provided by the child's family. This means that in most cases a local authority will be obliged to assess the needs of a disabled child.

The criteria for the Disabled Children's Team establish the threshold at which a referral, in relation to a child with a disability, will be accepted on the basis that the child requires a specialist social care assessment.

The Disabled Children's Team will offer a specialist social care assessment where the following complex needs are present-

- A severe or profound physical disability
- Significant or profound sensory disability
- Progressive conditions and complex medical needs
- Life limiting illness
- Epilepsy which is having a significant impact on the child's health and development
- Severe development delay and/or severe challenging behaviour arising from a disability
- A level of autism that severely impacts on day-to-day functioning
- Children with more than one moderate difficulty in learning, communication, hearing, vision, hand function and mobility or personal care will also be considered.

Criteria in practice

A disabled child will be eligible for a service if they fulfil one or more of the following criteria

- There must be a formal diagnosis (where a formal diagnosis has not yet been confirmed, due to extended diagnostic waiting times, the Disabled Children's Team may accept referrals where there is robust multi-agency evidence of a permanent and substantial disability, including confirmation that the child is on a diagnostic pathway and that their needs have a significant impact on daily functioning)
- Has clear evidence of a significant learning disability, evidenced by reduced functional ability and impact on daily living, supported by multi-agency professional assessments. A formal cognitive (IQ) assessment is not required where need is otherwise clearly evidenced
- Has already had a Cognitive Assessment, which indicated a profound, severe or moderate learning disability (i.e. IQ below 70 along with reduced functional ability)
- Attends a special school (e.g. Crownbridge)
- Has an Individual Development Plan (IDP) for severe learning difficulties (either a school maintained IDP or a Local Authority maintained IDP) and attends another type of school.
- Attends a moderate learning difficulty school or a mainstream school or college but has more than one communication, sensory or physical disability or medical difficulties that together have a substantial effect on daily living and so requires constant and continuous support and supervision throughout the day or is dependent on an adapted environment or special technology
- Has a significant visual or hearing impairment or both.

Occupational Therapist Involvement:

The occupational therapist will become involved if:

- A child/young person is presented with one or more of the listed, complex needs.
- An O.T assessment is required if a family are planning on moving properties and have a child with complex needs.
- If a child requires short term intervention, such as the provision of equipment following surgery/hospital discharge. The disability or limitation needs to be both 'permanent and substantial', ruling out where for example someone could benefit from a loan of equipment during a recovery following surgery.
- If a child has a physical disability/ significant learning disability/ significant ASD requiring assessment for equipment/adaptation to a property/or re housing
- If a child is hoisted or requires a Manual Handling risk assessment.

The following are not included in the eligibility criteria:

- Mental health disorders unless in conjunction with a primary learning, physical or communication disability
- Social, emotional and behavioural problems not associated with a disability
- A diagnosis of ADHD or ADD unless in conjunction with a substantial and permanent learning, physical or communications disability
- Attendance at a specialist school primarily for social, emotional, mental health or behavioural needs, in the absence of a qualifying disability as set out above, does not in itself meet the eligibility criteria for the Disabled Children's Team

Eligibility will be decided on the basis of the information received from parents/carers, health and education professionals and observations and assessment made by the Disabled Children Team.

Our contact details

For more information contact:

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