

AIMING HIGH FOR DISABLED CHILDREN

THE NATIONAL AIMING HIGH PROGRAMME

Summary of Key Issues:

The Government wants disabled children to be a priority, both nationally and locally. Aiming High for Disabled Children (AHDC), launched in May 2007, is the transformation programme for disabled children's services. 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

National Aiming High priorities are currently:

- Short breaks
- Childcare
- Transition support
- Palliative care
- Core Offer and national indicator (these are the key factors that make all services work better, for instance improving access to information about what is available)

Aiming High in Oxfordshire

In January 2009 a new Aiming High Team was formed to support the national programme of work. In Oxfordshire we have received funding to support the development of childcare, short breaks and palliative care. Oxfordshire is currently participating in an assessment of its transition support services. The Programme Board will ensure that all aspects of Aiming High work are coherent, effective and of high quality.

Working closely in partnership with health and the voluntary sector is key to ensuring resources are used most effectively to improve outcomes:

- Health is represented at Programme Board and Project implementation levels.

- There are already established links with the Community Nursing Team and the project team will continue to work in close partnership, informed by shared protocols.
- Aiming High funding is being used to increase capacity to provide both care to children with palliative care needs and training for staff who are not health qualified so that they can support children who need help with invasive health care using shared care protocols.
- Aligned OCC/PCT/voluntary sector budgets are being used to support the 2 residential short break centres in Banbury and Oxford which cater for 86 children with particularly complex needs.
- Opportunities to link related strategies especially in relation to the support needed by autistic children and their families are also being explored by the interagency Aiming High Programme Board.
- Preparatory and advisory work is taking place to support voluntary organisations that wish to meet the Aiming High criteria for selection as providers of services.

Childcare

Oxfordshire is one of only 10 local authorities in England to have received pilot funding to develop childcare services for disabled children. In developing our programme we have aimed to put projects in place to overcome the main barriers identified by parents that prevent them from using childcare and early education. The £1.9M allocated to Oxfordshire will therefore be used to do the following:

- Continue to develop services in consultation with children, young people and families through a range of mechanisms already in place. In addition develop a newsletter that will demonstrate outcomes as a result of this consultation.
- Provide parents with high quality information following a comprehensive audit undertaken by the Family Information Service. In addition to develop a range of services to support parents seeking childcare and early education for their children on a local and countywide basis.
- Work with colleagues in Transport and schools to develop more flexible transport solutions that enable access to childcare, play and leisure activities.

- Develop a range of childcare options that provide for a wide spectrum of individual needs in particular for children aged over 11 and those whose behaviour is challenging.¹
- Develop a range of initiatives to address affordability issues including support for those wishing to return to work or training.
- Expand the programme of training so that providers are able to understand disability equality awareness, assess individual need and deliver childcare to children with specific impairments.
- Promote the benefits of inclusion to providers of childcare play and leisure through a DVD and training materials;
- Celebrate and promote inclusion through annual Inclusive Childcare Awards.

Short Breaks

£3.7 million has been allocated to help families whose children have complex health needs, are dependent on technology or specialist care with moving about, or who have particularly challenging behaviour because of a severe learning disability or complex autism.

Families tell us they would like increased access to day care activities especially at weekends and in school holidays in a wide range of settings e.g. family based care, residential settings, other community settings and in the child's own home. They also need more overnight care to have a longer break from caring and to catch up on sleep when their children are particularly unsettled at night. There are plans to try and recruit additional family based carers who can offer care to a number of different children and have adaptations to their home so that they can care for older children who need specialist equipment. Additional funding will also be used to increase overnight support in the child's own home and in residential settings as families are clear that it helps to have a choice of provision as well as having longer and more frequent breaks.

Focus groups took place in Autumn 2008 with families and a range of provider services so that everyone involved can plan together to get the best possible value out of this investment.

¹ The Oxfordshire Childcare Sufficiency Assessment identified these as particular areas of need in its major audit in 2007/8.

Short Breaks: Sarah Ainsworth, sarah.ainsworth@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Accessible Childcare: Vivienne Hoskins, Vivienne.hoskins@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Project Managers in post from March 2009:

Short Breaks Project Manager: Kay Willis, kay.willis@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Accessible Childcare Manager: Liane Low, liane.low@oxfordshire.gov.uk

From March 2009 the team will be based at:

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More detailed information about programme development can be provided on request.

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**Draft Terms of Reference for
Aiming High for Disabled Children Joint Programme Board
from 1 January 2009 to 30 June 2009**

The Aiming High for Disabled Children Joint Programme Board is a strategic group charged with overseeing the effective delivery of two major funded projects designed to improve outcomes for disabled children and their families:

- Short Breaks
- Disability Childcare

The Board will:

1. Agree the strategy for
 - Implementation
 - Commissioning
 - Communications
2. Ensure the projects deliver against the relevant aspects of the Children & Young People's Plan
3. Ensure the projects work closely with other associated projects and maximise effectiveness of resource
4. Monitor performance against intended outcomes
5. Report progress to the Children's Trust (OCYPT)
6. Review terms of reference at 6 monthly intervals

Membership

Head of Service CYPF – Jan Paine

Health - Kate Barker (Service Development Manager Joint Commissioning)

Disability Services – Sarah Ainsworth (Interim Area Service Manager, Social Care)

Childcare – Amanda Powell (Area Service Manager Children's Centres & Extended Schools)

Parent reps – Katherine Moss, Valerie Reed

Commissioning – Sarah Breton (Lead Officer Commissioning) &

Don Nash (Strategic Procurement Manager)

Project Managers – Kay Willis (Short Breaks) & Liane Low (Childcare)

Participation - Alison Partridge – Strategic Lead, Participation & Play



