

Item No. 9.	Classification: Open	Date: 19 June 2012	Meeting Name: Cabinet
Report title:		Support for Parents and Carers of Disabled Children and Young People – Scrutiny report	
Ward(s) or groups affected:		All	
From:		Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Sub-Committee	

RECOMMENDATION

1. That the cabinet notes the recommendations of the Review of Support for Parents and Carers of Disabled Children and Young People by the education and children's services scrutiny sub-committee (attached as Appendix A to this report), and asks Councillor Dora Dixon-Fyle cabinet member for children's services to bring back a report to cabinet, in order to respond to the overview and scrutiny committee by the 25 September 2012 cabinet meeting.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

2. This is the final report on the review of support for parents and carers of disabled children and young people. The education and children's services scrutiny sub-committee initiated this review in June 2011. The recommendations to the cabinet focus on how the council can support parents and carers, so that they in turn can have a better quality of life and be in the best position possible to parent their disabled children, look after their wider family and participate in community life.
3. The sub-committee's focus was a result of the sub-committee's interest in evidence which indicated that supporting parents had a major positive impact on their children's wellbeing and educational attainment. This review is part of a series of reviews looking at parental support.
4. There are approximately 2500 children and young people with a disability and/or additional need in the borough; of these around 180 children receive a service through social care. Families with disabled children experience significant economic deprivation and social isolation.

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

5. There are 18 recommendations; detail below:

Recommendation 1

Improve the accessibility of universal services by developing and promoting disability awareness training for staff in Southwark's sports and leisure facilities; such as libraries, museums, swimming pools and parks. Ensure this includes training on meeting the needs of hearing and visually impaired children and children with autism.

Recommendation 2

Encourage sports and leisure facilities to increase the accessibility of mainstream services and provide special sessions suitable for disabled children and young people.

Recommendation 3

Take forward the Short Break work plan.

Recommendation 4

Evaluate the services in place to support parents and carers of disabled children over the age of 5; particularly recognising the evidence received of the additional stresses that families experience when young people reach adolescence and in times of transition.

Recommendation 5

Where resources allow provide additional services and support for children and young people with autism; particularly those with challenging behaviour or ADHD and for children under 8.

Recommendation 6

Keep Southwark Council's Disability Register updated and set up a dialogue with partners on protocols to share data in ways that are transparent, lawful and that will assist families and partner organisations supporting families.

Recommendation 7

Explore how the council can do data sharing better and more sensitively. Particularly look at the request that social workers take into account information available from health practitioners when making assessments of children and families.

Recommendation 8

Guarantee that all children will receive an assessment by social and educational services if referred by a professional. Undertake these as early as possible in recognition of the importance of timely support.

Recommendation 9

Provide clear advice and support to parents and carers on their rights; through publications and support organisations.

Recommendation 10

Ensure that statements of special educational need are adhered to.

Recommendation 11

Ensure that the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) enables organisations to support families of disabled children, that there are no unnecessary barriers and that the CAF acts as a collaborative system for statutory and voluntary services to identify and support families in need.

Recommendation 12

Ensure assessments and consultations take into account parents' and carers' responsibilities for other children or work commitments, particularly when taking decisions about the services and support these families should receive.

Recommendation 13

Promote provision for parents of disabled children to find meaningful employment, whilst also fulfilling their caring responsibilities. Parents recommended a pilot developed by the London Borough of Wandsworth (see appendix 2).

Recommendation 14

Provide families with information on statutory, community and generic services available through events, publications and support organisations.

Recommendation 15

Work with all schools to promote better relationships and communication between home and school for families of disabled children and young people.

Recommendation 16

Improve consultation and engagement by:

- Ensuring that results of consultations are shared; wherever possible explain why some requests cannot be honoured.
- Offering various methods to collect feedback (i.e. face to face consultation, questionnaire, electronic survey, telephone survey)
- Providing opportunities for parents to participate in the strategic planning of services wherever possible.
- Using robust methods to engage children and young people and include their views.

Recommendation 17

Value parents as a resource and the power of peer support; particularly in times of scarce financial resources.

Recommendation 18

Commission contracts for as long as reasonably possible.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Background Papers	Held At	Contact
Education and children's services scrutiny sub-committee Agendas	Scrutiny Team 160 Tooley Street London SE1 2QH	Julie Timbrell 020 7525 0514

APPENDICES

No.	Title
Appendix A	Report of the education and children's services scrutiny sub-committee - Support for Parents and Carers of Disabled Children and Young People. Appendices 1 & 2 of this document are available on the council's website: http://moderngov.southwark.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=302&MId=4244&Ver=4

AUDIT TRAIL

Lead Officer	Shelley Burke, Head of Overview & Scrutiny	
Report Author	Julie Timbrell, Scrutiny Project Manager	
Version	Final	
Dated	29 May 2012	
Key Decision?	No	
CONSULTATION WITH OTHER OFFICERS / DIRECTORATES / CABINET MEMBER		
Officer Title	Comments Sought	Comments included
Strategic Director of Communities, Law & Governance	N/a	N/a
Finance Director	N/a	N/a
Chief Officers	N/a	N/a
Cabinet Member	N/a	N/a
Date final report sent to Constitutional Team	29 May 2012	