


# Stepping Stones

a guide to Integrated Children's Services



Integrated Children's Services is the name for a range of agencies working together to support children with special needs.

If your child has special needs they are likely to have moderate, severe or profound difficulties in one or more of these areas:

- hearing
- vision
- speech and language
- learning difficulties
- physical health
- emotional and mental health
- behaviour.

If your child has severe or profound needs they will need a co-ordinated response from more than one agency and their needs will be assessed through a multi-agency approach in Integrated Children's Services.

Integrated Children's Services has offices in North, South and East Devon. Each area has an area manager and a range of staff drawn from Devon County Council and NHS Devon including:

- community children's nurses
- learning disability nurses
- community psychiatric nurses
- occupational therapists
- physiotherapists
- speech and language therapists
- primary mental health workers
- mental health professionals
- social workers
- community care workers.

Other professionals, such as paediatricians and educational psychologists, have dedicated time to work as part of Integrated Children's Services.

### The Joint Agency Record and the Children and Young People's IT (CYP IT) system

The **Joint Agency Record** is the computer database for Integrated Children's Services and holds information about children's needs in Devon. The information is treated in confidence and used by education, health and social care staff to plan and monitor services and help improve young people's transition to adult services.

The **CYP IT system**, Devon's own database holds more detailed records of children who have Integrated Assessment Service Plans and is the system Integrated Children's Services uses to manage cases. The Joint Agency Record and CYP IT system can only be used by staff who have agreed to the confidentiality rules.

## Early Response Service

Each area has an Early Response Service which uses the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) to assess need and then uses the solution-focused approach of the Team Around the Child (TAC) to work in partnership with children and families to produce the desired outcome.

Staff working in the Early Response Service include:

- health visitors
- school nurses
- social care staff
- primary mental health workers
- parenting support advisers.

## Further Response Service

The Further Response Service manages the cases of children and young people with more complex additional needs. The Further Response Service is also responsible for linking effectively with other services to ensure that the child and family receive the range of support they need to meet their needs..

Staff working in the Further Response Service include:

- mental health staff
- community children's nurses
- occupational therapists
- social care staff
- specialist children's centre staff
- transition workers
- keyworker support staff.

## Keyworker services

Many families of children with special needs have said that:

- they are confused about where to go for advice
- they are giving many professionals the same information
- assessments seemed to be duplicated
- many services were poorly funded or hard to access.

Keyworker services can overcome these difficulties and we want to provide a keyworker for all children on the Joint Agency Record when necessary and when wanted by the family.

We work to a common format of assessment, planning and reviews for children with additional needs.

The keyworker is a single point of contact for the family and helps to co-ordinate the assessment, planning and review process.

Keyworkers might be working in Integrated Children's Services or may work for another agency which has agreed to work to the Integrated Children's Services processes and protocols. You could become a keyworker for your own child if you want to.

## Family Support Services

Family Support Services are usually for children with the most profound needs who have regular short breaks as a key part of their service plan.

These services provide residential, overnight care in a range of establishments across the county.

Family Support Services also manage the county nursing team for children with complex health needs. This service delivers care in the child's home up to 24 hours a day. This service is likely to expand to provide a similar service for children with palliative care needs.

Family Support Services provide a range of day services and enabling services across the county.

We are also developing a **bridging service** which will make sure that families get the right services at the right time after they have their Integrated Children's Service assessment. The bridging service will arrange services for families from statutory, private and voluntary providers, and will work to make sure a vibrant market is available locally to provide effective services for children and families.

## Parent Carers Voice

Parent Carers Voice groups are established across Devon and have been actively involved in developing and monitoring services. Parents have been involved in staff recruitment and are members of groups such as Young People in Transition.

Parents have been consulted on, and involved in, the development of the Fair Access to Short Breaks Scheme and a parent chaired the North Devon Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services Implementation Group.

## Child Development Centres

Child Development Centres have been crucial in developing multi-agency assessments for under 5s in Devon.

Staff in Child Development Centres are developing outreach services to deliver services closer to children's homes. The development of **Specialist Children's Assessment Centres** will further enhance this area of work and build on the work of Child Development Centres.

We want more children to have assessments at home or in local settings so staff working in Specialist Child Assessment Centres will be more likely to do assessments in the family home and in local children's centres. More services will be delivered closer to the child's home, with only the most complex cases being dealt with at a Specialist Child Assessment Centre.

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### Contact us

#### Email

[steppingstones-mailbox@devon.gov.uk](mailto:steppingstones-mailbox@devon.gov.uk)