Parent Carers' Council
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PaCConnect

Social Care Support Services (in particular in Mainstream Schools) - 7th Oct 2013

Professionals: Lore Riedel (Team Manager) & Caroline Edwards (Practice Manager, Social Care Team, Integrated Disability Service)

Lore gave an overview of how their service works and said they were keen to work with families to improve where they can.

Children's Disability Service Social Work team is commissioned to work with the most severe/complex children. Whilst some CYP have service from the larger Integrated Disability Service they may not be eligible for the SW service.

7 social worker (SW) and 3 SW resource officers (not SW qualified) – roughly 10 practitioners – holding a caseload of about 250 children. Some CYP have an allocated SW (if family situation or disability are most in need) or if less complex needs or more settled family circumstances – will see a DUTY SW.

Referral:

By another professional (teacher, school nurse, GP etc.) – reviewed every week and allocated out to duty SW; if emergency it will be looked at earlier.

Assessment:

When a child is referred to team they have to see if they are 'eligible' (meet the threshold) – need to undertake a single assessment (Child and Family Assessment) looking at child's needs, carers' needs/situation (separate carers assessments not done), support networks etc.

They have to turn around these assessments in max. 45 days – if simpler – in 10 days. SW should communicate to the family how long roughly the assessment will take.

Allocation:

Outcome of the assessment might be for the family to be signposted to a different service e.g. CAMHS or it might be the SW decides the family needs some level of short break.

Discussion held at Resource Panel (monthly allocation meetings) where cases are discussed individually. Professionals discuss what level of service and who can provide for each family – care package determined. That information is written up into Care Plan and it should be copied to the family, regardless where the support is coming from.

Services offered:

DPs, Outreach, Barnardos Link, Drove Rd/Tudor House (from age 8), some financial support for integrated play schemes/after school clubs,

Reviews:

Should be reviewed on regular basis – sometimes will be a full scale review or might be just a phone call. It should be every 4 months on average. Lore is trying to get an agreement to have the reviews on a scale.

Additional work:

Team also supports CYP who are ‘looked after’ – Looked After Child (LAC) Review – if over 75 nights respite provided per year.

Some child protection support/cases too, those cases where a family might have tipped over into not being able to cope.

Team is doing some work to fit into the new single assessment and planning work (for education, health, and care plan).

Key Issue / Question	Suggested Solution / what parents would like	Agreed action/ date/ who
How do we can **refer**? Once receive referral send out referral form. Then may ask for more details.	Can phone up and speak to a duty SW – can be referred by a GP, teacher, school nurse.	
ELIGIBILITY. The LA publishes the eligibility criteria on the council website. Having met the criteria families are still turned down for short breaks or direct payments. Why is this? Criteria for complex needs. Confusion over eligibility for short break service – if deemed eligible for a social work service might not end up with short break might have been signposted to other service. This is confusing. It’s eligibility for an assessment.	Could mainstream SW team pick up more cases not eligible for Lore’s? Talk to Lore & services. Try to be clear, age of child is important. Amaze and PACC to work with Lore on changing wording on eligibility documents	

Why special school assessment is easier when more children go to main stream school? Not all about assessment; all needs are taking into consideration, e.g. socialization and so on.	SENCO should take more responsibility about the situation	
A parent pointed out that school and home situation should be kept separated. The parent was sent a form to fill it in, very complex and difficult to do. Lore’s team could help in situation like that and help people fill the form in. SENCO should know what’s going on outside the school and understand the big picture, there should be a plan.	SENCO should just know about education, not situation at home.	
How does information and feedback get passed on to services? There is an open dialogue, also with the Council.		
What information gets passed on to commissioners? The assessment time-scale; the visit frequency. The commissioners are involved in to the planning. September last year (2012) Lore’s team did a survey which took into account every review and visit form. Another questionnaire is planned for the end of this year (December 2013).	Queries related to this issue should be fed back to PaCC representative sitting on the Disabled Children’s Strategic Partnership Board. Maybe we should have a PaCConnect with Commissioners.	
One parent’s child with behavioural issues was seen by SW, then sent to Cross Road. Then nothing… It has been now over 2 years, no news. What can be done?		Lore and Caroline offered to take the child details and look into it.
Is referral to Cross Road the end of the story? What about home services?	There is a need of more clarity on how home services are provided.	
Disability social services turned down a person twice (paediatrician and key worker). CAF could be a path; an early intervention before social worker get involved, e.g. Team Around the Family (TAF)		
There is a feeling that people get told ‘no’ before they get assessed?		

That shouldn't be the case; the assessment should direct that decision. Assessments should be discussed with the family. How is need assessed? How is assessed need converted into DPs or respite? If families have a CAF (common assessment framework) does this sit within social care support? If not where does it sit? How does a carer get an assessment? When does a carer's assessment take place? How do the social care team share the outcome of all assessments? There is a good flow chart of the Carers Assessment on line but no timescales, what are the timescales, can they be published?		
Is it harder to get DPs and or respite if your child attends **mainstream school**? Attending from mainstream school doesn't preclude CYP from accessing service but they do need to have quite significant needs.		
Child with mental health issues onto of their disability. One family didn't receive any respite but did receive an **Inclusion Grant** – allowing him to access mainstream holiday clubs and after school clubs. Problems with this however, as schools/holiday clubs hired workers without specific training/understanding of son's needs.	Need to have some criteria for running an 'inclusive' activity/service.	
Resources: Core offer of 3-4 hours was looked at but concern that some		

families might get this but might not need it Lore explained there is a finite pot of money which needs to be shared out fairly. If needs are identified a support service should be provided – but often may need to go on waiting list		
Direct Payments: An option where a decision is taken to allocate a certain amount of money for the family to 'buy-in' their own support – usually in the form of a Personal Assistant (PA) to support at home, or take the child out; and to buy places on play schemes etc. Replacement to services, as for example speech therapy and occupation therapy. Time management: how people can do it? And how much the school will get on board? However parents have to take on the responsibility of employing staff – although support is available for managing payroll etc. More difficult with transition and services cuts.	Can the parent have control over it? Or maybe choose to stay in the school? Lore said that this is a working project and the issue is on the agenda.	
Choice & Control & Panel decisions about DPs: Often parents told the DP pot is empty – one example of where parent stated that they had asked for DP – but been offered the Link service. **Personalisation agenda and social care Personal Budgets:** Discussed this was the direction of travel and its concerning for parents to feel not enough DPs budget. Lore explained there is a finite budget so if more resources were put into the DPs but taken out of other services.	Parents would like to see the reports written about them which go to panel – so clearer that their requests/choices are well represented. Gillian said parents should be given opportunity to attend the panel where they are discussed. Is this possible? Maybe it needs to be clarified if parents have the right to ask for DPs and more clarity over when this not provided. If no service/support offered – can help be given to apply to other agencies? Parents shouldn't be just left to chase/beg services from other providers e.g. Chestnut Tree/ Crossroads etc.	
Emergency respite:		Lore agreed better emergency

One parent raised that when a carer asked for emergency respite as she'd come out of looking after child in hospital Can this be more responsive and professionals to recognise carers might be facing very difficult periods, and plan ahead, without parents having to ask and make own arrangements		service needed
Carers' Needs – issue was raised about whether parent carers' needs are taken enough into consideration. As it's a holistic assessment it's not often clear when/how the carers assessment part is being done. Rachel [inserted after] said the parent carer survey just done by Amaze found the vast majority of parent carers didn't	One parent suggested the carer needed to be clear/it needs to be communicated when their needs are being discussed. They should	
TRANSFER OF SERVICE Can Link Plus (or other short break service) respite be transferred to Direct Payments ? Guidelines suggest parent/carers can transfer services, is this the case?		
Data on applications. How many parent carers apply for short breaks and are turned down? What is the current waiting list time, to access each short break provider? Is information fed to commissioners on need for service that is unmet?		
Payments Inclusion pot funding; the way money is handed in to the provider. Is the budget controlled by you? No, Lore's team has not a voice over it, only on reporting main issues so the Council is aware of them.	Training is needed for provider.	

General How can we keep this dialogue going? One parent felt that some of the staff don’t have skills for communicating with disabled children. Lore replied that all staff have basic training.	This a role for PaCC . Maybe PaCC needs to take this forward.	