

**SCRUTINY OF SERVICES FOR DISABLED CHILDREN AND THEIR FAMILIES**

*Report of the Director of Children, Schools and Families*

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**1. Purpose of the report**

To report to members on:

- the key findings of the scrutiny of the services for disabled children
- the progress of developing a joint disability strategy with Health
- the proposed action to respond to the scrutiny findings

**2. Summary**

The report sets out:

- the key findings of the scrutiny
- the action being taken to address these findings
- the progress on developing a joint disability strategy with Health
- the outline joint disability strategy.

**3. Conclusions**

The Scrutiny Committee may wish to:

- note the findings of the scrutiny
- approve the actions proposed for taking forward the scrutiny
- request that progress of the Action Plan is reported through the Members' quarterly briefing Bulletin.

## **1. Background**

1.1 The CSF Select Committee reviewed Quality Protects outcomes in March 2001 and requested a scrutiny item to be presented to the following Select Committee. The scrutiny report was presented to the CSF Select Committee on 11 July. A group of parents attended the committee and described to members their experiences as parents of disabled children. Following further consideration of these issues at the Special Needs Panel on 19 September, a small working group was set up to undertake a detailed scrutiny focussing on:

- Parent/Carer concerns
- Respite and Shared Care
- Waiting Lists
- Family Support services (e.g. play schemes, leisure opportunities)

1.2 The Health Authority and Trusts had also set up a Review of Children's Services in July 2001, looking at 3 areas: Acute Services, Community Services and Management and Organisation. The review of Community Services was to focus specifically on disabled children. It was agreed with Health that a new Joint Disabled Children's Strategy needed to be established and would be led by a Joint Disability Strategy officer Group. This would be informed by the findings and recommendations of members' scrutiny.

1.3 In planning future developments, noting what is working well and ensuring we continue to seek best value has been recognised. In addition the process has greatly benefited from a unified approach within CSF. At the same time the planning has been shaped by active parental involvement and the views of disabled young people. This approach has resulted in a plan for taking forward the work for disabled children's services which has a clear sense of purpose and direction.

## **2. Member Visits**

2.1 Visits have been made to the following:

- Shared Care – Southgate, Stevenage
- Local Service Disability Team (Social Worker) – Porters Lodge, Ware
- Local Service Disability Team (OTs) – Southgate, Stevenage
- Webb Rise, Stevenage (HCC)
- Stairways (Harpenden Mencap) & Busy Bees
- Grove Meadows (Jubilee House), Welwyn Garden City
- Nascot Lawn , Watford
- Transition Springboard Project – Briar Patch Lane, Letchworth
- Money Advice Unit – County Hall, Hertford
- Pat Lewis Development Centre, Hemel Hempstead (Joint Assessment Project)

In addition a visit was made to Luton Borough Council to look at their Disabled Children and Support Services.

### **3. Findings from the visits**

- 3.1 Many of the issues were operational and were linked to a specific service. These are outlined below by service. These issues are followed by a number of cross-service findings, which arose on different visits. A draft action plan, listing the issues and actions to be taken to address these issues, is attached in Appendix 1. The positives of the service in Luton have been noted for developing the joint strategy for disabled children.
- 3.2 The over riding finding is that while progress has been made in achieving a more equitable distribution of services across the county, this has not addressed the overall limited availability of services. This shortage in services is made more difficult by problems in recruiting and retaining staff both for in-house services and services provided by the private and voluntary sectors.
- 3.3 The scrutiny findings are set out under each section in the report as follows:
- Scrutiny findings
  - Where the issues are addressed in the CSF plan
  - Plans to address the scrutiny findings.

### **Service Issues**

#### **4. Short Breaks**

- 4.1 The key concern is that the demand for Short Breaks or respite cannot be fully met by either the respite units or by Shared Care. Given the increased life expectation of disabled children, the existing provision will need to meet increasing and more complex needs.
- 4.2 Members expressed concerns about the relationship between Webb Rise and Lonsdale School. This issue is addressed in the attached action plan.
- 4.3 CSF Plan 4.4.5 sets out the tasks to develop existing respite services, long term residential services and support arrangements for disabled children and the families of disabled children.
- 4.4 It is planned to:
- develop the shared care scheme to meet more complex needs
  - review the provision of respite beds
  - increase the range of provision by exploring alternative community based services (such as outreach and direct payments)
  - report back to Members on the partnership working arrangements with Lonsdale

## **5. Local Services: Staffing and Workloads (social workers)**

- 5.1 In the quadrants it was felt that the heavy workload and consequent stress led to both sickness and difficulties in the retention of staff. Some parents were concerned about the lack of continuity in social workers as well as there not always being an allocated social worker, particularly to assist the child and family at key milestones in the child's life. This finding was supported by an analysis of workloads carried out in August 2001, which identified staffing shortfalls to meet the increasing demand for services.
- 5.2 CSF Plan 4.4.6 sets out the tasks for enabling the Local Service disability teams to meet the unmet demands for service from the families of disabled children.
- 5.3 It is planned to:
- address the quadrant staffing issues through a growth bid as identified in the CSF Plan
  - address the operational issues in the in-house respite units through management action

## **6. Local Services: Staffing and Workloads (Occupational Therapists)**

- 6.1 On several different visits the significant role that an adequately resourced OT service could play in providing services to disabled children and their families was mentioned.
- 6.2 A workload study carried out in August 2001 identified the workload shortfalls and children waiting for OT assessments, the number of OT vacancies further compounded this situation. In addition the equipment budget was inadequate to meet the demand for costly, specialist equipment required for the children and which assist the families in coping with their child's disability.
- 6.3 There are also over 100 children waiting between 6 months -1 year for an assessment (20 in schools, 20 + in each quadrant) and this has delayed them from receiving services such as shared care or attending school. The post of a Moving and Handling Officer would speed up assessments in this specialist area and at the same time, free up OT time currently being used on this task. It will also ensure we meet our duties under EEC Manual Operational Handling 1992.
- 6.4 CSF Plan 4.4.6 sets out the tasks for enabling the Local Service disability teams to meet the unmet demand for OT services.
- 6.5 It is planned to:
- increase OT staffing
  - increase the equipment budget for equipment for families and foster carers
  - appoint a Moving And Handling Officer (0.5 w.t.e.) to each quadrant

Bids for Quality Protects funding have been made for these developments.

6.6 Further proposals regarding OTs are made under 12.2 **Working with Partners**.

## **7. Care in the Home**

7.1 There were similar concerns around Care in the Home in this county and in Luton. Agencies varied in their standards of care provided, did not always carry out police checks on staff and in many cases, were unable to provide staff for children with complex needs. Health colleagues have also mentioned similar concerns.

7.2 CSF Plan 4.4.5 includes the development of support arrangements for disabled children and their families. These plans include:

- Providing a wider range of respite services (including salaried shared carers, alternative community based provision such as outreach and direct payments)
- Working jointly with Voluntary Organisations on creative ways to recruit and retain staff in order to maximise use of respite care
- Pooling budgets with Health through a joint commissioning of Care at Home

7.3 This area of work is being reviewed jointly with Health with a view to bringing forward detailed proposals for joint working as part of the Joint Disability Strategy.

## **Cross service Issues**

### **8. Customer Service Centre & Client Services**

8.1 Client and partner agency dissatisfaction with the Customer Service Centre and Client Services was widely reported as well as concerns with delays in processing work. Details of client concerns are being investigated individually as well as the other issues raised. Steps are being taken to address all the matters raised during the scrutiny visits.

8.2 It should also be noted that in a recent consumer satisfaction survey (January 2002) 92% of the users were fairly satisfied or very satisfied with the way in which calls were handled.

### **9. Corporate Parenting Officer/ Corporate Parenting Panel**

9.1 There was both a lack of awareness among some staff of the role of the panel and the Officer. There were also some misunderstandings and it should be noted that from the outset the design of the filofax has been developed to meet the needs of disabled children.

9.2 These issues are being addressed by:

- future work with the Corporate Parenting Officer on the issues raised
- a report to the Corporate Parenting Panel in respect of its responsibilities towards disabled children in public care

## **10. Information**

10.1 The importance of providing benefits information as well as its cost-effectiveness was clearly evidenced. Members were impressed by the Money Advice Unit pilot schemes and the information presented. It was estimated that successful claims for 51 families over 5 years would result in additional income of £1.1 million, and for 90 families over 5 years an additional £2 million.

10.2 CSF Plan 4.4.2 sets out the tasks for the development and implementation of an effective and accessible information service for disabled children and their families.

10.3 It is planned to:

- Review and provide a range of information materials (leaflets, flyers, wallet card, website), working closely with the DISH voluntary organisation
- Disseminate information to families through a range of access points, including the Register for Children with a Disability
- Improve training of professionals re benefits
- Expand the Money Advice Unit benefits advice scheme (bid for Quality Protects funding)

## **11. Relationship with Partner Agencies**

11.1 The benefits of working in partnership were apparent from the evidence presented by the Joint CSF and Health Assessment Project in Hemel Hempstead. Members felt this inter agency model of working could be favourably expanded into other areas of joint work and partnerships with other agencies.

11.2 It is planned to:

- Develop a joint assessment and care planning approach to all disabled children
- Participate in the Integrated Equipment Project with a short term aim of a draft CSF protocol with Health and a pooled budget
- To bring together OTs from Health and CSF to consider how we achieve a more integrated approach.
- Develop protocols with Borough, District and other Housing Authorities

## **12. Young Carers**

- 12.1 The effect on siblings of having a disabled brother or sister was also raised. Often these children are in effect Young Carers and often need their own support. Young Carers also made this point in the recent consultations that have been held with them.
- 12.2 CSF Plan 5.2.3 sets out the tasks for developing and implementing a Young Carers Strategy. It is planned to address this in the Young Carers Strategy currently being developed.

## **13. Transition**

- 13.1 Transition issues were raised on several of the visits. This is a key area for the delivery of services to disabled young people.
- 13.2 A Report outlining the plans to progress this work went to CSF Scrutiny Committee on 23 January 2002. The future proposed action to be taken in relation to improving planning for disabled young people is set out in 4.4.4 and 5.6.4 of the CSF Plan 2002/5. The plans address the need for more opportunities to be made available in education, employment and training. Transition Development workers will work to ensure these plans are actioned.
- 13.3 It is planned
- to feed these issues into the present work being carried out on developing a co-ordinated inter-agency transition service.
  - to discuss these plan in more detail at a multi-agency workshop in the Spring
  - to hold a Transition Conference in the Autumn 2002

## **14. Parent Issues**

- 14.1.1 The whole process has greatly benefited from the continuous input of parental views. Parents mentioned many of the issues outlined above. Chief among the concerns were:
- not having an allocated social worker or the lack of continuity in the social worker
  - poor quality of information provided by professionals
  - their views not listened to
  - delayed and inflexible services
- 14.2 The plans to respond to these concerns are covered in 4.4, 5.3, 7.3, 10.4.

## **15. Views of Young People**

15.1 In the course of the CSF Plan Consultation with Young People (Viewpoint) a total of 83 questionnaires were completed by disabled young people. The key points to emerge were:

- More support for them and their families (including short breaks, after school activities and information)
- More community sports, arts, cultural and leisure activities
- More teacher and adult help in order to raise school achievement
- Computers definitely helped them to learn
- A keen interest in having a say in plans and services, and being helped to voice their views

In terms of priorities the need to keep children safe was given the highest rating.

15.2 Their interests are broadly in line with other young people in Hertfordshire as outlined in the “Young Peoples Social Attitudes Survey”. They have also told us on several occasions that they wish to do the same activities as their siblings do.

15.3 It is planned to:

- ensure their views are addressed in the outline joint disability strategy
- ask young people their views on services and ensure their participation in the follow-up

## **16. The “tagged on” service**

16.1 One of the most widely expressed views was that disabled children were “tagged on” in the planning and delivery of services. From this it appears that there is still a gap between the overriding aim to provide inclusive services and the reality of ensuring disabled children and their families are fully integrated into all our thinking, planning and delivery of services.

16.2 It is recognised among all professionals that the needs of disabled children need more attention. This has been addressed in the CSF Plan as well as being a key priority for both CSF and Health.

16.3 It is planned to:

- assist in the development of more inclusive programmes in such areas as cultural, sports and leisure activities
- consult more widely with disabled young people about their services
- involve young people and parents in the development of services

## **17. Progress on Development of Joint Disability Strategy**

17.1 There has been close working with Health and good progress has been made in developing an outline joint disability strategy. The outline strategy has been built on all the information received from earlier consultations and the findings from the scrutiny.

17.2 The outline draft strategy is attached in Appendix 2. It was presented to 113 stake holders at a workshop at the Fielder Centre on 28 February. The stakeholders included participants from:

CSF	44
Adult Care Services	7
Health	25
Voluntary organisations & families	30
Members	5

There was a very positive response from stakeholders and in particular, parents valued their involvement in the day. One of the strongest messages from the day was the importance of delivering on the proposals in the outline strategy.

17.3 The next step will be to work up the joint disability strategy in more detail and include time scales. This will be presented at a half-day workshop in May to the same group of stake holders that attended the February workshop. It is recognised now that a joint strategy with Health will not be in place by July. However we will continue to work with Health in order to negotiate agreements with the 8 PCTs, Hertfordshire Health Trust and the Health Authority. It is planned to use the feedback from stakeholders at the May workshop to further refine the strategy into a phased development :

- Phase 1 implementation of improved services within CSF in 2002-03
- Phase2 joint developments with Health for 2003-04
- Phase 3 further implementation of joint services with Health 2004-05

17.4 This phased development will continue to be driven by a clear commitment to work closely with Health in order to develop flexible services that meet the needs of parents and young people.

## **18. Financial implications**

18.1 Bids for 2002-03 have been put in for the following grants:

• Childcare Grant	£25,500
• Carers Breaks	£317,600
• Quality Protects	£450,945
• CSF Plan (base budget)	£129,000

18.2 It is proposed the CSF Plan (base budget) funds 4 social worker posts and necessary support costs in the disability teams, Local Services.

## 19. Conclusion

The Scrutiny Committee may wish to:

- note the findings of the scrutiny
- approve the actions proposed for taking forward the scrutiny
- request that progress of the Action Plan is reported through the Members' quarterly briefing Bulletin.

### Background information used by the author in preparing this report:

Report to CSF Select Committee, 11 July 2001

Report to Special Needs Panel, 19 September 2001

Report to Special Needs Panel, 5 December 2001

Report to CSF Scrutiny Committee, 23 January 2002: Transitional Arrangements between Children, Schools and Families for Young Disabled Children

Quality Protects 2002/03 LAC (2001) 28

CSF Plan 2002-05

Valuing People: a new strategy for Learning Disability for the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Dept of Health, LAC 2001(23)

Young Peoples Social Attitudes Survey 2001 (University of Cambridge & Hertfordshire LEA)

**APPENDIX 1**

**SCRUTINY REPORT ACTION PLAN**

<b>Issue</b>	<b>Key Issues</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Who</b>	<b>Report By</b>
<b>SHORT BREAKS/ RESPITE (Shared Care)</b>	Shared Care Scheme: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Waiting list of increasingly complex children for shared care</li>   <li>• Greater recognition needed for Shared Care</li> </ul>	Salaried carers for children with complex needs QP bid (02-03)  Plan/Report	<b>Helen Nys</b> (Head of Child Care Protection)  <b>Maureen Phillips</b> (Head of Family Placement Service)	<b>April 02</b>  <b>May 02</b>
<b>SHORT BREAKS/ RESPITE (Webb Rise)</b>	Staffing Issues <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Difficulty in gaining shift work cover at short notice &amp; appropriately trained workers</li> </ul> Partnership Working with Lonsdale <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Different standards, policies and procedures.</li> <li>• Communications</li> <li>• Better use of shared facilities</li> </ul> Operational Issues: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• access required at 1pm for staff to prepare for young people</li> <li>• Parking &amp; Storage</li> <li>• Sleep-in room at Webb Rise needed (no room for doing outreach)</li> <li>• No permanent storage area or transport</li> </ul>	Report on staffing issue  Report on Webb Rise issues	<b>Stuart Petrie</b> (Departmental Personnel Manager)  <b>Angela Harris</b> (Head of Residential Homes)	<b>May 02</b>  <b>May 02</b>

Issue	Key Issues	Action	Who	Report By
<b>SHORT REAKS/ RESPITE (Stairways Busy Bees)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Query regarding facilities being used to their full potential</li> </ul>	Review contract	<b>David Gibson</b> (Planning Officer: School Places)	<b>May 02</b>
<b>SHORT BREAKS/ RESPITE (Grove Meadow, Jubilee House)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Proposed reduction of beds</li> <li>“Swop Shop” pilot to address concerns re flexibility. Reports to reviews after 6 months</li> <li>Additional Training requirements</li> </ul>	<p>Report on Contract</p> <p>Monthly Reports, Reviews after 6 months</p> <p>Report</p>	<p><b>David Gibson</b></p> <p><b>David Gibson</b></p> <p><b>Ken Harvey</b> (Principal Officer: Disabled Children) &amp; <b>David Gibson</b></p>	<p><b>May 02</b></p> <p><b>Monthly Report &amp; 6 monthly</b></p> <p><b>May 02</b></p>

Issue	Key Issues	Action	Who	Report By
<b>LOCAL SERVICE DISABILITY TEAMS (Social Workers)</b>	Staffing & Workload <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sickness, retention, vacancies</li> <li>• Increasing workload</li> <li>• Travel and working practices across large Quadrants (e.g. message taking)</li> </ul> Oracle: difficulties re updating information and alerting regarding Reviews	Increase in staffing – Growth bid (CSF Plan 4.4.6)  Oracle development Phase 3 Progress Report	<b>Helen Nys</b> (Head of Child Care Practice)  <b>Bob Kiff</b> (Team Manager – North Herts)	
<b>LOCAL SERVICE DISABILITY TEAMS (Occupational Therapists )</b>	Staffing & Workload <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staffing shortfall &amp; large Workloads</li> <li>• Insufficient budgets to meet demands</li> </ul> See also Action under “ <b>Partner Agencies</b> ”  Equipment: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Present complex budgets/arrangements impede delivery</li> <li>• Economies could be made</li> </ul>	Staffing increase for OTs, Moving & Handling Officer, , increased equipment budgets – QP bid (02 – 03)  Proposals for improving delivery of service	<b>Helen Nys</b> (Head of Child Care Practice)  <b>Gill Manning-Smith</b> (Project Manager – Integrated Equipment Project)	<b>April 02</b>  <b>Sept 02</b>

Issue	Key Issues	Action	Who	Report By
<b>CLIENT SERVICES</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Client concerns about Client Services</li> </ul>	Issues to be followed up & resolved	<b>Anne Futcher</b> (Assessment & Review Manager)	<b>May 02</b>
<b>CORPORATE PARENTING</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Members recommended report on “Responsibilities of Corporate Parenting Panel to disabled children in Public Care”.</li> <li>Staff awareness of role and work programme of Corporate Parenting Officer</li> </ul>	Report to Corporate Parenting Panel or equivalent  Response to these issues	<b>Charlie MacNally</b> (Head of Services: LAC)  <b>Felicity Evans</b> (Corporate Parenting Officer)	<b>To be arranged</b>  <b>May 02</b>
<b>HOME CARE</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Difficulties for agencies to recruit and retain staff</li> <li>Lack of continuity &amp; not all police-checked</li> </ul>	Progress Report on review of contracting arrangements	<b>David Gibson</b> (Planning Officer – School Places)	<b>May 02</b>
<b>INFORMATION (Information Service)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Need to improve dissemination of information to families</li> </ul>	To be included in Joint Disability Strategy for CSF Scrutiny	<b>Gill Webster</b> (Client Development Manager)	<b>20 March 02</b>

Issue	Key Issues	Action	Who	Report By
<b>INFORMATION (Money Advice Unit – Benefits)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Need to raise Benefits Awareness among all professional groups, parents/carers &amp; young people.</li> <li>• Concerns re the future funding of this pilot project</li> </ul>	<p>MAU Programme for 02-03 to include Awareness Training for professionals, parents and young people</p> <p>QP bid and expansion (02 – 03)</p>	<p><b>Bernie O’Gorman</b> (Senior Welfare Benefits Advisor)</p> <p><b>Helen Nys</b> (Head of Child Care Practice)</p>	<p><b>April 02</b></p> <p><b>April 02</b></p>
<b>PARTNER AGENCIES</b>	<p>Co-ordination of work with Partner Agencies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Protocols need to be developed with Borough, District and other Housing Authorities</li> <li>• Protocol to include need for families to be kept informed of action &amp; time scales</li> </ul>	Development of Protocols with Borough, District, & other Housing Authorities	<b>Lin Phillips</b> (Group Manager – Long Term Casework)	<b>Sept 02</b>
<b>YOUNG CARERS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Need for siblings to receive support for themselves</li> </ul>	Ensure this issue is specifically addressed in Young Carers Strategy	<b>Gill Webster</b> (Client Development Manager)	<b>June 02</b>

Issue	Key Issue	Action	Who	Report By
<b>TRANSITION (Springboard Project - Briars Patch)</b>  <b>(Quadrant/Parents)</b>	Issues re: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Planning Process</li> <li>• Benefits advice</li> <li>• Sexuality &amp; Relationships</li> <li>• Lack of county wide facilities</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Young People not allocated a social worker for Transition</li> </ul>	Ensure issues are addressed in Transition work programme - see CSF Plan 4.4.4 & 5.6.4  As above	<b>Ken Harvey</b> (Principal Officer – Disabled Children)  <b>Ken Harvey</b>	<b>Sept 02</b>  <b>Sept 02</b>
<b>Inter-agency Assessment Project</b> Pat Lewis Development Centre, Hemel Hempstead	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expanding this project (and address what we have learnt from this project)</li> </ul>	Report and proposals on future developments of Project to Joint Development Strategy March 02	<b>Tammy Swailes</b> (Strategic Partnership Manager – CSF)	<b>March 02</b>
<b>Nascot Lawn</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Positives of this Health provision noted</li> </ul>	Noted in Joint Strategy	<b>Gill Webster</b> (Client Development Manager)	<b>March 02</b>



## **APPENDIX 2**

### **OUTLINE JOINT DISABILITY STRATEGY**

The **outline Joint Disability Strategy** addresses 6 key areas of concern:

#### **1. Early Intervention & Care Planning**

Concerns in this area centre on the difficulties in accessing services, both in getting an assessment and then delays in receiving a service. In particular parents felt there was a lack of joint working between the agencies.

##### **It is planned to:**

- Continue with Joint Assessments with Health for complex needs
- Develop a new streamlined, joint assessment and care planning process for all disabled children

#### **2. Family Support Services**

The areas of concern that need to be addressed are the inflexibility of services for Short Breaks (respite), as well as their limited availability, and the lack of emergency respite. The provision of equipment for disabled children does not follow the child; instead it requires different assessments for home and school.

##### **It is planned to:**

- Provide a wider range of respite services (including salaried shared carers, alternative community based provision such as outreach and direct payments)
- Working jointly with voluntary organisations on creative ways to recruit and retain staff in order to maximise use of respite care
- Consider pooling budgets with Health on a joint commissioning of care at home
- Streamlining the provision of community equipment through the Integrated Community Project. We are required to have a shared social welfare and Health integrated community equipment budget by March 2004. It is hoped to achieve this before this date. It also provides an opportunity to look at the options for including school equipment.

##### **For the future:**

- Occupational Therapists: joint planning with Health for the deployment of their valuable skills to best advantage

#### **3. School, leisure and community activities**

Concerns in this area centred on the lack of confidence and inappropriate educational expectations for disabled children, as well as the lack of social, arts, leisure and sports opportunities for disabled children, particularly for those with complex needs.

Views of Young People:

- More community sports, arts and leisure activities
- More teacher and adult help in order to raise school achievement
- Computers definitely helped them to learn

**It is planned to:**

- Promote learning opportunities through targeted IT programmes (Downs Syndrome & children in public care)
- Increase participation in Out of School Hours Learning (OSHL)
- Increase play scheme places
- More inclusive Sports/Leisure programme
- Special events for children with complex needs
- Launch a “buddy scheme” to facilitate uptake of new opportunities

#### **4. Information**

There have been long established concerns about the poor information available about both services and benefits.

**It is planned to:**

- Develop a disability website for families and professionals with signposting to specialist sites
- Joint Information Pack about services
- Improve training about services and benefits information for professionals
- Expand the MAU benefits advice scheme.
- Consultation with Young People regarding their information needs

#### **5. Training**

There are concerns about the lack of training opportunities for voluntary organisations and that the family/child viewpoint is missing from current training.

**It is planned to:**

- Include voluntary organisations on professional training
- Include parents and feedback from young people on courses

#### **6. Participation**

Families and voluntary groups have stated that they are tired of being consulted on what they want from services. They now want to hear what it is planned to do. However the mechanisms for involving families, children and voluntary organisations

on an ongoing basis in these plans are not consistent across the county. Due to the process being patchy some sections of the community (e.g. minority ethnic groups) have not had the same opportunity for their views to be heard.

**It is planned to:**

- Ensure there are locality Planning Meetings across the county for involving families, children and voluntary organisations with on-going planning and development of services.
- Ask young people their views on services and ensure their participation in the follow-up
- Use Health & School facilities for participation in the planning and development of services.

**7. Transition**

Transition issues were raised on several of the visits. This is a key area for the delivery of services to disabled young people, which need to address the need for more opportunities to be made available in education, employment and training. Transition Development workers will work to ensure these plans are actioned.

**It is planned to:**

- feed the issues raised in the scrutiny into the present work being carried out on developing a co-ordinated inter-agency transition service.
- discuss these plans in more detail at a multi-agency workshop in the Spring
- hold a Transition Conference in the Autumn 2002.