

FAQs

My child receives a service at Seaside View. Does this mean we are entitled to receive a service from the social care team?

The Integrated Child Development Team at Seaside View works with a wide range of children across a range of developmental needs and abilities. The social care team has a more specific remit to work with families that come under our eligibility criteria (see below). This means that service provision is focussed on supporting those children and families where the level and / or complexity of need is such that they require specialist rather than mainstream services.

What is the 'eligibility criteria'?

This defines who can receive a service from the team. We are not able to work with every child that has a disability and this criteria is the means by which we identify those children and families most in need of specialist, social care (rather than or in addition to health care) support.

The current criteria make provision for:

'Children with a severe learning and / or physical disability; and children with moderate learning difficulties, where it is assessed that their needs in terms of challenging behaviour / mental health issues can be met only through the input of specialist services.'

In practice this means that children will be disabled, and /or have disability related challenging behaviour to such a degree that it is difficult to access community support and require specialist services. It might helpful to think in terms of attending a school for children with complex needs such as Hillside or Downs View, or in terms of a child with a lesser degree of learning disability those who have behaviour that has a profound impact on family life.

What is the 'duty system'?

The social work team works with a high number of children and families and it is not possible to allocate everyone to a named social worker or social work resource officer (SWRO). The duty system maintains a service to those families and children that do not have a named worker. This would usually be due to the fact that they have been referred relatively recently, or there is not a need for frequent contact. There is a nominated social worker or social work resource officer each day, Monday to Friday within office hours, who can respond to calls and enquiries. These workers, under the oversight of the duty practice manager, will ensure that children's plans are reviewed and services are co-ordinated for those families.

How is the decision made to allocate a named social worker to my child?

Some children have a very high level of need, requiring a complex package of support. Similarly, some families are in need of a high level of support, advice and guidance and it is important to have one worker maintaining the thread of what is happening and avoiding the family having to go over the same things repeatedly. In these situations we aim to allocate a named social worker, although sometimes this might not be possible immediately.

If a child is made subject to a child protection plan or if a child receives overnight respite or lives away from their family, they will have a social worker allocated.

What do social workers do?

The social work service is concerned with supporting families to deal with situations and difficulties that impact on their ability to care for their child or children. This may be because of the demands involved in caring for a disabled child or because something has happened or changed within the family that reduces that family's ability to cope. The social worker will look with the family, involving all the immediate family members, to identify what needs to be different in order to improve family life. The focus will be on ensuring that the child or children have their needs met to the best of everyone's ability. Social workers are trained to support families in very stressful circumstances. Part of what they do is to listen and offer emotional support. Social workers will be responsible for co-ordinating any services such as short break services that are identified for your family, and regularly meeting with you and any relevant others to ensure that those services are meeting the needs they have been designed to support. Social workers can also offer advice on a range of parenting issues and dilemmas, working with you to identify helpful strategies. They can also signpost you to specialist services and sources of advice about these and other issues.

What is the Resource Panel?

It is a group of workers and managers from different organisations located in the area of Brighton and Hove who provide services that can assist disabled children and their families. The panel considers new requests for support or significant changes to existing support. Please download the Resource Panel information leaflet for detailed information.

How do you decide who gets what services?

At present this is decided by the Resource Panel on the basis of the assessed needs of the child (or children) and their family. The involved Social Worker or SWRO submits a written report to the Panel and also attends for a discussion.

We do not currently have a formal Resource Allocation Process, which would provide a method of ranking or scoring levels of need, and from this the level of support that should be provided, but we are in the process of trialing such a process as a way of improving transparency around resource allocation.

Once my child has become open to the social work team, will they then stay open?

Yes, if there is some form of support service being provided. If we do not have an ongoing or active role children will be closed to the team, but can be re-referred at any point.

What happens when my child turns 18 and in the period leading up to this?

At 18 the statutory responsibility of Children's Services ends and transfers to Adult Services. If a child's primary need is a learning disability then the responsible team is the Adult Community Learning Disability Team; if a child's primary needs is due to a physical disability the responsible team is the adult Access Point Team. More details about both are on the Council's website.

In advance of a young person turning 18, if they are open to our service and have ongoing support needs, a Transition Assessment will be completed in order to plan for how support will be provided from 18 onwards. This might be completed by a specific Transitions Worker or by the existing Social Worker or SWRO. Even if a young person has not previously been open to Children's Services they can still be assessed for Adult Services if they meet their criteria.

More information about Transitions can be requested from the Children's Disability Service.

Are families financially assessed?

No. However, our resources are finite so we have to allocate resources in as fair a way as possible. As part of an Assessment and ongoing Reviews we will routinely have a discussion with families about what financial resources they are able to contribute to care for and support their children.

For some aspects of home adaptations families may be financially assessed in the future, but Occupational Therapists would be able to give more information about this as necessary.