

1. Criteria

- 1.1 It is necessary to set criteria for the work that is taken on by the Children with Disabilities (CwD) Teams. One purpose of such criteria is to establish the threshold at which a child with a disability requires a specialist social care service. Another purpose of such criteria is to ensure that the workload matches the capacity of the staffing complement within the Children with Disabilities fieldwork teams.
- 1.2 As a general principle, where children and families can receive a mainstream service, this should be provided as a way of minimising the impact of disability and avoiding any unnecessary segregation. Therefore, some children with lesser degrees of disability should rightly remain within mainstream services. However, where there are disabilities which particularly call for specialist intervention, these cases should be referred to the Children with Disabilities service.
- 1.3 These criteria are:

THAT THE CHILDREN SHOULD HAVE SEVERE OR PROFOUND LEVELS OF DISABILITY. THIS COVERS LEARNING DISABILITIES, PHYSICAL DISABILITIES, SENSORY IMPAIRMENTS AND/OR COMPLEX DISABLING MEDICAL CONDITIONS.

- 1.4 In the past, these criteria have also covered autistic spectrum disorders with associated challenging behaviours. When autism was originally included as a criterion, this was because it was regarded in itself as a most disabling condition and often associated with severe learning disabilities. With the more recent emphasis on autism as part of a spectrum, there has been a significant increase in diagnoses on this spectrum including Asperger syndrome which is typified by emotional and behavioural difficulties rather than the severe and profound disabilities with which the CwD teams specialise.
- 1.5 The criteria for Children with Disabilities Teams now exclude specific reference to autism (along with all other types of diagnosis); any children with an autistic spectrum disorder will only be eligible for the Children with Disabilities Teams, therefore, if they also have other disabilities of a severe or profound degree.
- 1.6 Where mainstream social workers hold cases of children who might be considered to be disabled, appropriate advice and support can be made available from the specialist Children with Disabilities Team.

Appendix One (below) describes how disabilities might be categorised in terms of mild, moderate, severe and profound.

Appendix One

Determining cases to be accepted for allocation to social workers in the Children with Disabilities teams

CRITERIA FOR ALLOCATION TO A SOCIAL WORKER IN THE CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES FIELDWORK SERVICE

Where it might be considered that a child has a disability, the effects of the disability can be categorised according to the four levels: mild, moderate, severe and profound.

Mild	older child, some limitation present but able to function independently
	younger child functioning slightly behind the level expected for age
Moderate	older child where aids and/or assistance may be required to perform tasks
	younger child functioning around 2/3 the level expected for age
Severe	older child who is unable to perform tasks without aids and assistance most of the time
	younger child functioning around 1/2 the level expected for age
Profound	Older child completely dependent upon carer to perform tasks

(Reference: 'Disability in Childhood – Towards Nationally Useful Definitions', report of the working group convened by the British Association for Community Child Health and the Department of Health, December 1994).

Within Children and Young Peoples Social Care Services, assessing and meeting the needs of those children with mild and moderate levels of disability falls within the responsibilities of social workers who also deal with non disabled children. This is so in order to maximise children's social inclusion and to avoid labelling and any unnecessary dependence upon specialist services.

For children and young people with difficulties associated with their mental health, services are provided by the Child and Adolescent Mental Health service (CAMHS) which is a partnership between social work and health services.

Where children have disabilities which are considered to be severe or profound, it is recognised that a specialist service is likely to be required and these children and their families should be referred to the Children with Disabilities fieldwork teams.