



SOUTH GLOUCESTERSHIRE MULTI-AGENCY STRATEGY FOR CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE WHO HAVE LEARNING DIFFICULTIES AND/OR DISABILITIES

The South Gloucestershire Children and Young People Plan (CYPP) sets out the vision for all children and young people in South Gloucestershire based around the Every Child Matters five key outcomes.

This Strategy aims to contribute to making the vision real for children who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LDD) and their families

What is the Strategy?

The Strategy sets out a five year multi-agency plan to improve services for children and young people who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and their families in South Gloucestershire.

It is based on the underlying principles and themes of the Children and Young People Plan and will focus on ensuring that the objectives of the Plan are relevant to children with LDD and their families. The LDD Implementation Plan for the strategy (Appendix 1) should be seen as an integral part of the overarching CYPP.

Who is the Strategy for?

Children and young people with LDD and their families

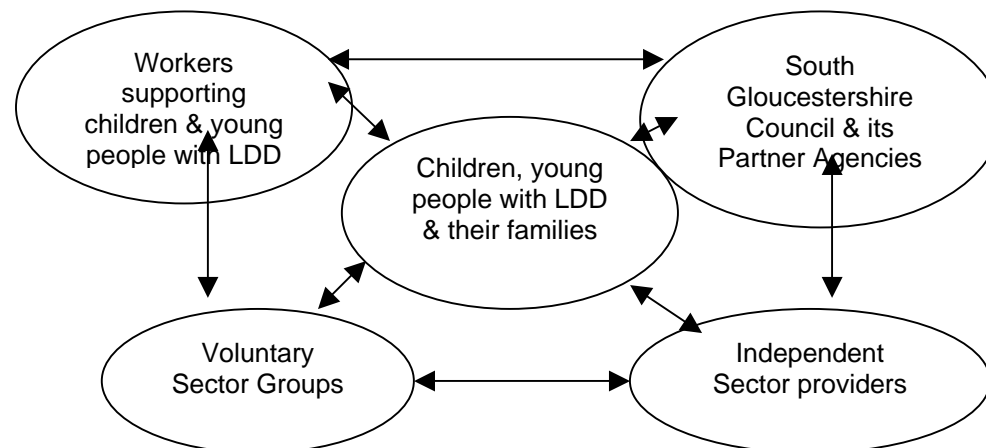
Everyone working to support children and young people with LDD

All organisations who are partners with South Gloucestershire Council in providing services for, or that include these groups.

All Departments within South Gloucestershire Council whose work affects children and young people with LDD.

All voluntary sector organisations and groups who support children and young people with LDD and their families

All independent sector providers who work with these groups



What does the Strategy aim to do?

- make the five outcomes of the Every Child Matters Programme work for children and young people with LDD and their families in South Gloucestershire;
- involve children and young people with LDD and their parents in shaping services;
- develop services with the most beneficial impact on their lives;
- promote the development of good practice for this group;
- support multi-agency and partnership working at all levels to meet the needs of this group;
- link with other plans and strategies which are part of the wider implementation of the Every Child Matters programme for all children and young people in South Gloucestershire.

Why develop a LDD Strategy now?

- *Increase in the national population of disabled children and the resulting pressure on services;*
- *Different groups within the overall population;*

- *What South Gloucestershire parents have told us;*
- *Growing concern about outcomes for children and young people with learning difficulties;*
- *National policy context .*

Numbers of disabled children are increasing. Recent reports, using the broad DDA definition of disability, state that there are approximately 770,000 disabled children under 16 in Great Britain (about 7% of the population aged 0 – 16). It is estimated that since 1975, children under 16 have formed the fastest growing group of disabled people (an increase of 62%).

This is *not a single uniform population* but is *made up of different groups*. All the groups will need to be able to access services which are designed to meet their specific requirements as well as services which are used by all children. This presents challenges for designing and organising services, for keeping pace with the growth and for achieving improved outcomes for everyone.

Two major factors contributing to the growth in numbers are:

- the increase in the numbers of children with very complex and significant needs as a result of advances in neonatal care and improved survival rates for all ages;
- the increased diagnosis and/or prevalence of children with autistic spectrum disorders and with a range of mental health disorders.

Many children in these groups require significant support from specialist services to enable them to achieve their potential and to be included in society.

South Gloucestershire parents have told us that they do not have enough information about services available, or about the criteria for eligibility to services and what thresholds are applied. They found most services difficult to access, and there was strong support for more coordination between different agencies with

integrated services and keyworkers being seen as key features in improving service delivery. They requested that parents should be listened to, and involved in deciding about services.

Concerns about outcomes. There are both local and national concerns that there are gaps in services for young people with learning difficulties, and that, as a result, they can be disproportionately represented amongst those experiencing difficulties in the transition to adulthood.

Some key current policies: the new vision and strategic framework for all children's services, based on five key outcomes for all children and young people, is set out in the *Every Child Matters Programme*. A major theme is that disabled children and young people should be included in universal services for all children, as well as having access to specialist services to meet their particular needs.

The National Service Framework for Children, Young People and Maternity Services. Standard 8 sets out the aim for disabled children and their families to receive coordinated, high quality child and family centred services which are based on:

- assessed need;
- promoting social inclusion;
- enabling children and their families to lead ordinary lives;
- involving children and families in decisions.

Improving the Life Chances of Disabled People published by the Prime Minister's Strategy Unit in 2005: a 20 year plan setting out a vision of how services for all disabled people should be provided within this timescale. Families of disabled children must be included in the support provided to all families.

Making the ECM outcomes work for children and young people with LDD and their families.

How can the Every Child Matters outcomes lead to improved services and support for children and young people with LDD?

The Strategy will be based on proposed priorities and objectives with specific relevance for children and young people with LDD and their families, which will apply across all agencies, and which will aim to remove the barriers to inclusion.

The Strategy implementation will involve further work on defining, prioritising and refining the objectives in partnership with parents and young people, based on key questions:

- what will make the most difference to the lives of children and young people with LDD and their families?
- what will support parents in their caring role?
- what services will need to be in place to ensure good outcomes?

Some outcomes underpin others. For example, being as healthy as possible and free from pain is a key to enabling young people with complex health needs to achieve higher level outcomes in relation to enjoying, achieving and participating in everyday life. Parents' views on desired outcomes may also vary according to the group of children and young people.

Key linking strategies and service developments.

What other strategies will need to be implemented in partnership with the LDD Strategy in order to ensure that children and young people with LDD are included and reach optimum developmental outcomes?

The Childcare Act 2006 will have major implications for services for children and young people with LDD and their families.

The following plans and service developments will be crucial:

Children and Young People Plan

Extended Schools Planning.
Youth Offer
Children's Centres
Children & Young People's Participation Strategy
SEN Strategy
PCT Local Delivery Plan
Corporate Parenting Strategy
Parenting Support Strategy
CAMHS Plan
Disability Equality Scheme
Activity and Sports Plans
Play Strategy
Connexions Plan
LSC Local Implementation Plan
Information and Communication Strategy
Housing Plan
Regional Transport Plan

How will the Strategy be governed?

The overarching governing bodies will be:

- The Children's Strategic Partnership Board
- Children and Young People Select Committee

Implementation will be overseen and monitored by

- The Multi-Agency Steering Group for the Strategy
- Parents' Reference Groups
- Representation from Children and Young People

Key Principles

The Strategy and development of services will be based on the following key principles:

- Children and young people with LDD should have opportunities to achieve their potential and lead 'ordinary' lives in the same way as their peers
- There should be local universal services for all, and, for children and young people with additional needs, access to targeted, specialist provision where necessary
- Eligibility criteria for targeted and specialist services should be clearly defined, available to all and operated fairly
- Children and young people with LDD and their families should be involved in planning and evaluating services
- Parents, carers and families should be offered appropriate support to enable them to care for their child
- Services within the overall framework should be coordinated and based around the needs of each child and family
- Services should focus on early identification of issues and timely interventions, and should ensure that children and young people with LDD are safeguarded from harm
- The design of services should take into account that children and young people with LDD will need to move through services over time, and should ensure that systems are in place so that this progression is a smooth process

Underlying Themes

Key themes which cut across each outcome area:

1. Access to advice and information.
2. Calculating numbers and needs.
3. Agreed criteria for eligibility for services, and thresholds for targeted/specialist services.
4. Improved coordination and integration of services.

Priority aims which link with the underlying themes:

All themes:

- *Agreeing shared multi-agency priorities and objectives for each outcome area;*
- *Gaining parental and multi-agency agreement to the key principles;*
- *Exploring possible reconfiguration of services and budget alignments in order to ensure the most efficient use of resources*

Themes 2 & 3

- *Improved registration & other data sharing mechanisms;*
- *Agreeing a shared definition for the population of disabled children;*
- *Defining clearer criteria for eligibility and thresholds for specialist services.*

Theme 4

- *Agreeing a model for integrated LDD Children's Services;*
- *Agreed multi-agency pathways for different stages of the child's and parents' journey through the services;*
- *Designing support services relevant to different stages of childhood and parental needs.*

What will be different when the Strategy is in place?

Children and young people with LDD and their families should have clear and timely information about the range of services available, both universal and specialist, how these can be accessed, and whether eligibility criteria apply.

Parents should feel supported in their parental and caring roles, and be able to find appropriate childcare if they wish to work.

Children and young people with LDD should have opportunities to make friends and take part in leisure and youth activities in the same way as their peers.

More children and young people with LDD should be able to be educated within the Authority.

The Authority and its partners should have accurate information about the numbers of children and young people with LDD in the area, their needs for support services and what gaps in services exist.

Services should be coordinated, avoiding duplicate and repetitive collection of information, equitably delivered and, where possible, locally available without undue delay.

All agencies should be involving parents and young people in planning and designing services, and evaluating their effectiveness.

Young people with LDD and their families should experience a smooth transition to adulthood, and have access to support.

All professionals working with children and young people with LDD should be trained in the skills necessary for the delivery of services to this group.

Professionals should have improved access to information about services, and providers.

The service commissioning process should be linked to needs analyses and to gaps in provision identified by families and workers. Commissioning should ensure services are cost effective and efficiently delivered.

There will be better use of information on the needs of children to plan for adulthood

What has happened so far?

Audit of current services

Survey of parents' views

Meetings with parents to form the nucleus of a parents' reference group for the Strategy

Initial work on specific descriptors and indicators for disabled children and their families, and draft action plans to find out the required information to enable the indicators to be measured

Development of the multi-agency Strategy and Implementation Plan for children and young people with LDD

Contact with Managers responsible for implementing strategies for the provision of universal services which should include children and young people with LDD.

Timescale:

A 5 year time scale is proposed so that the implementation of the Strategy can be coordinated with the national time frame for implementing the Every Child Matters Programme, and with the timescales for developments in the organisation and delivery of other local services which are key to the success of the Strategy.

The Disabled Children's Strategy and LDD Implementation Plan involves working across all agencies to achieve the five outcomes of the Every Child Matters Programme which are central to the vision for all children and young people in South Gloucestershire

Children and Young People have a right to a life in which they:

Enjoy the best possible physical and mental health and live a healthy lifestyle
(Be Healthy)

Have equality of opportunity
(Economic Well-Being)

Are protected from harm and neglect and feel safe both at and outside of home and school

Are supported by their parents and carers and their peers
(Stay Safe)

Are given encouragement and opportunities to learn, develop, enjoy and achieve both inside and outside school
(Enjoy and Achieve)

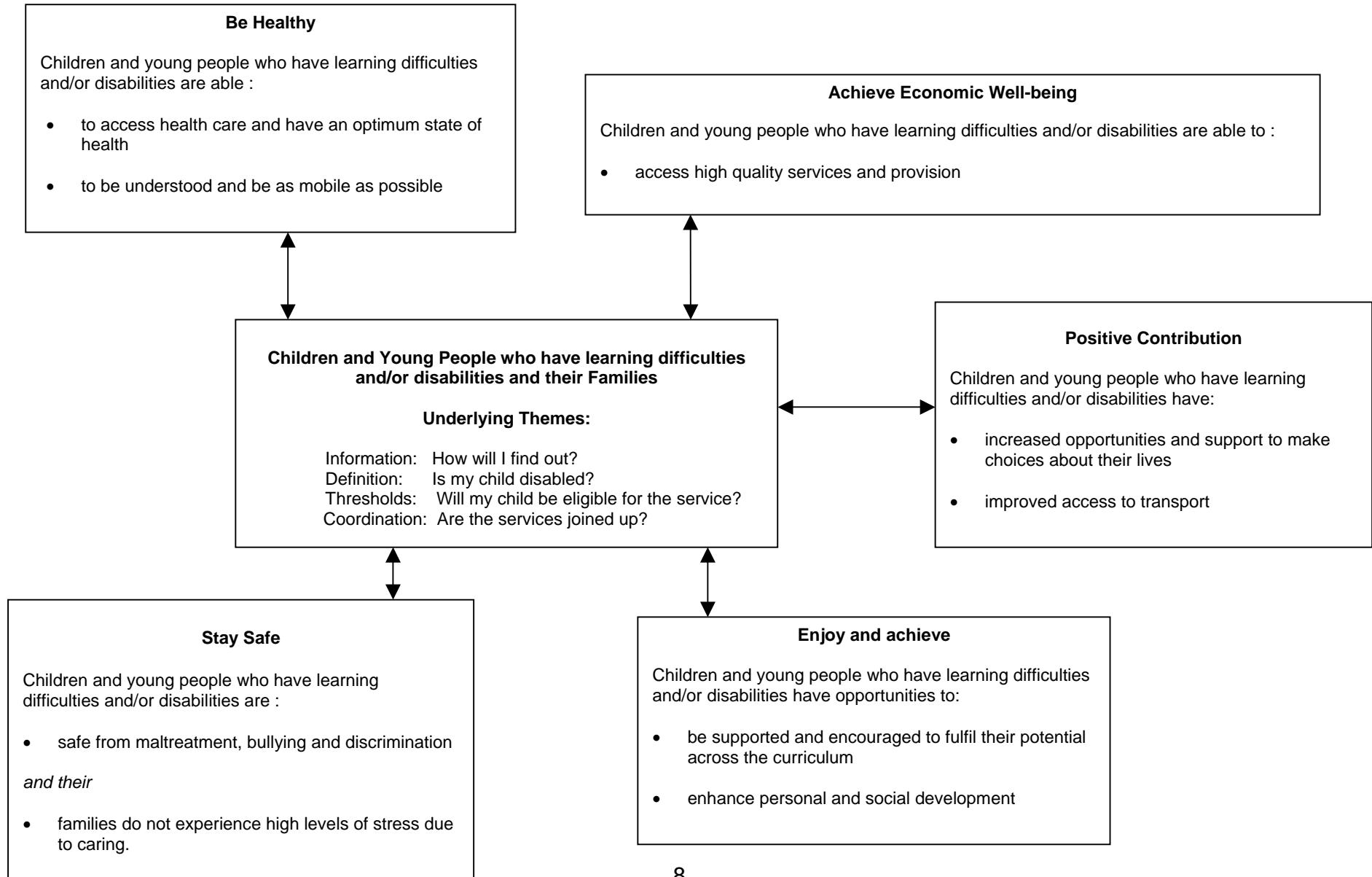
Are encouraged to play a full part in their communities and behave in a socially responsible manner
(Make a Positive Contribution)

The LDD Implementation Plan consists of two parts:

1. Strategic and Overarching Tasks
2. More detailed overview of each of the ECM outcomes

Summary diagrams of the priorities and objectives for each outcome are shown on pages 8 - 9

MULTI-AGENCY STRATEGY FOR CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE WHO HAVE LEARNING DIFFICULTIES AND/OR DISABILITIES PRIORITY OUTCOMES



MULTI-AGENCY STRATEGY FOR CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE WHO HAVE LEARNING DIFFICULTIES AND/OR DISABILITIES OBJECTIVES OF PRIORITY OUTCOMES

