

**Powys County Council  
Scrutiny Report Template**

**CYNGOR SIR POWYS COUNTY COUNCIL.**

**Health & Care Scrutiny Committee  
19<sup>th</sup> December 2024**

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Portfolio Holder for Future Generations.

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Children's Services

**Report Title:** Update on Integrated Disability Service Development Plan

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**Report For:** Information

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## **1. Purpose**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the developments that have taken place within the Children's Integrated Disability Service (IDS) over the last 12 months, this includes the IDS early help provision.

## **2. Background**

- 2.1 A review of the IDS early help and statutory processes has been ongoing for the past 18 months, due to an identified need to make improvements within this area of the service, and due to recommendations contained within a child practice review. The service has worked hard to streamline processes, increase effective collaborative working alongside our multi-agency partners including health and education.
- 2.2 In the previous year, Childrens Services have updated Health and Social Care Scrutiny Committee in respect of specific IDS areas of work such as 'transitions' of young people from children services to adults services. This was jointly presented between Children and Adult Services. Furthermore, there has been updates reported into Scrutiny around the progress of IDS with the challenge of meeting the reduced budgetary demands in terms of its use around meeting children's needs with 'short breaks.'

## **3. Advice**

- 3.1 Review of the IDS early help process has been undertaken. As a result, this process has been amended to align with the Children's Services Early Help Team by streamlining paperwork, strengthening the closure procedure, and ensuring mutual sharing of resources and training opportunities across all Early Help. All IDS Early Help cases have been reviewed, and the work was found to be outcome focused, with children having clear plans of support. Families are now offered visits at home, with direct work in the home environment. The IDS team work collaboratively with the NHS Learning Disability Nurses, and the Highly Specialist Social Competence and Parenting practitioners. The early help staff and some wellbeing workers within IDS are provided with peer coaching from the lead Highly Specialist Competence nurse practitioner.

- 3.2 The closure process is a key significant change which has now been implemented. When a child is closed to the service, there is a process to follow which promotes communication of this decision and the rationale. The process has been reviewed and tightened to ensure that this includes agreement from the multi-disciplinary team (MDT) working with the child and includes information about how and at what potential future points re-referral to the service should be considered, with a particular emphasis on transition support.
- 3.3 SWAP audit has taken place specifically in relation to the use of direct payments. This audit identified three areas of improvement which positively had already been picked up on by the IDS managers as part of the review and processes put in place to improve these. This audit process, findings and associated next steps have already been presented to Scrutiny. A further internal audit has been arranged to ensure that these processes have been embedded.
- 3.4 An IDS Funding Panel has been set up and is now embedded within practice. This meets every fortnight, and each package of care is presented to the panel consisting of the Team Managers (North and South) and Senior Manager (Care and Support). This provides good oversight of not only the child's care package, but also has a focus on ensuing best value for money. The IDS Funding Panel provides management oversight with quality assurance checks being undertaken as routine. A robust review of the care and support package is undertaken together with ensuring financial processes and administration is accurate and followed so that costs are accurately forecasted for the current and upcoming tax year. This has been key in promoting effective budget management for the service.
- 3.5 The IDS team is currently reviewing the transition protocol with adult services for children and young people within IDS. Additionally, they are examining how to widen this to identify the small number of cases that may transfer from general children's services to adult services. This review will include re-referral guidance for any children who closes to IDS but have not yet reached 18 and may require support post-18. While this review is ongoing, the established transition meetings can be utilised as a temporary measure. This update has been communicated to all Team Managers across Children Services at a recent Operational Management Team Meeting. A well-planned transition is vital for ensuring that young people with disabilities can lead fulfilling, independent, and healthy lives as adults.
- 3.6 The service is currently reviewing the Disability Register with a view to change how this is accessed by families across Powys. There are plans to move to an online form rather than only including children already open to IDS as it is now. There is a duty on the Local Authority to hold a 'Disability Register,' however, the scope of this initiative is much broader than that of young people enrolled in IDS, and it is also based on consent. The goal is to gather accurate, comprehensive information that can be utilised effectively and used to feed into future service planning.
- 3.7 IDS have pages on the Powys internet site. This is being updated to make it more useful to families and professionals wanting to know how they can access support for children with disabilities in Powys. Areas of support on the website include accessing charities and grants, universal services in the local communities, carers support, health care pathways, early intervention, transition advice and parenting courses.
- 3.8 The IDS criteria have been reviewed and updated to ensure that the service is focussed on supporting children and families that most require specialist support and ensures that the short break funding is targeted at the families that are most in need. The IDS Short breaks policy has been updated, alongside the IDS criteria statement.

- 3.9 Relationships between the IDS team and the specialist schools continues to be fostered to ensure that we are highlighting any children that may require transition support. Collaboration ensures that children receive comprehensive support tailored to their individual needs. Disability teams can provide specialized services and interventions that complement the educational strategies used in special schools.
- 3.10 Maintaining strong relationships helps ensure consistency in the care and support children receive across different settings. This consistency is crucial for their development and well-being. Disability teams and special schools can share expertise and resources, leading to more effective strategies for supporting children with disabilities. This collaboration is crucial and can enhance the quality of education and care provided.
- 3.11 These relationships can also provide better support for families, helping them navigate the complexities of raising a child with disabilities. Coordinated efforts can offer families a more cohesive support network. Ultimately, strong partnerships between disability teams and special schools can lead to better educational and developmental outcomes for children. By working together, they can create more inclusive and supportive environments.
- 3.12 The IDS has worked collaboratively with health colleagues to gain NHS funding to train the IDS Early Help practitioners in the Incredible Years Autism programme and they are now co-facilitating the delivery of this programme to ensure that families are receiving early intervention and continuity of advice around supporting children with autism and profound sensory and communication difficulties. This has meant all IDS Early Help Practitioners, and all but one Wellbeing Workers are qualified to deliver the Incredible Years Autism parenting course: with some staff members working towards specialist accreditation. All IDS early help practitioners have received Thera-play and Attachment training, thus increasing the team's ability to offer more focused and specialist support.
- 3.13 There is a plan in place to review the multi-agency triage meeting to ensure that the right children and the right information is being discussed to support care planning between health, education, and social care for our highest risk/most complex children. This will include the development of a Terms of Reference and a working agreement. It is expected that the new Terms of Reference will be in place early in the new year.
- 3.14 The IDS Service (Early Help included) set up and ran independence workshops during the Summer Holiday period which were received positively by children and their families. This offered young people a chance to learn certain independence skills but also met a social need. Furthermore, they provided a 'short break' for families. This is an area of work the team plan to build upon over the next twelve months.
- 3.15 Staff have been encouraged to attend the training that is being put on as part of National Safeguarding Week by SHINE around Spina Bifida and the complicating factors of this disability. This has been internally highlighted as an area of development and will strengthen the team's knowledge around the wider complicating factors of this complex condition, ensuring that staff feel confident to support and advocate on behalf of children with this condition.
- 3.16 IDS have worked with the Family Information Service to continue to promote information with families about relevant charities/organisations that offer services to support / events / useful information for children with disabilities. Knowing what services are available helps families access the necessary resources and support at the right time.

- 3.17 Early access to support services can significantly improve outcomes for children with disabilities. Early intervention can address developmental delays and provide essential therapies and support. Being informed empowers families to advocate effectively for their child's needs. This knowledge enables them to navigate systems and ensure their child receives appropriate care and support. Understanding available services can alleviate the stress and uncertainty that often accompany caring for a child with a disability. It provides families with a clearer path forward and a sense of community support. Comprehensive knowledge of services ensures that families can address all aspects of their child's well-being, including physical, emotional, and social needs.
- 3.18 Staff are actively promoting the Welsh Government-funded Powys Child Care Offer to ensure that children with disabilities can access holiday and after-school clubs alongside their peers.
- 3.19 Children Services next planned thematic audit focuses upon the work undertaken within IDS. A part of this audit is gathering the views of children, young people and families who are supported by IDS. The team are looking forward to the responses to this, which will feed into any future planning discussions. Furthermore, it is worth noted, each review meeting there will be a focus given to the voice of the young person and their family.

### **Next Steps**

- 3.20 Continue to work with commissioning colleagues to review and forward plan in house residential options in line with the closer to home strategy.
- 3.21 Further consider how we address the identified gap in service for children aged 12years plus with significant disabilities where parents require childcare. The Welsh Government-funded Powys Child Care Offer only supports up to the age of 12years. Those children under 12 years with very complex health or behavioural needs and those over 12years are often having to be provided with a costed package of care (such as a direct payments) due to lack of alternative resources to support these children.
- 3.22 Consider how to manage the risk to Direct Payment provision in terms of the impending changes to the minimum wage / living wage/ real living wage; this change will impact the demand on the short break budget. An initial estimate for this additional costing in the 25-26 tax year, is around the £24,000.
- 3.23 Currently the support offer to families is very limited in terms of costed packages. Overnight short breaks are limited to one residential provider with very few children able to access short breaks through foster care (2 children currently accessing fostering short breaks). Due to the number of children accessing Direct Payments and the rurality of Powys, families are continuing to find it challenging to identify people to employ through a Direct Payment. IDS managers are meeting with the fostering manager to discuss strategies for promoting short breaks foster carers, and to consider whether daytime-support foster caring could be possible. This forms an aspect of the Fostering Development Plan.

## **4. Resource Implications**

N/A

## **5. Legal implications**

N/A

## **6. Data Protection**

N/A

## **7. Comment from local member(s)**

N/A

## **8. Impact Assessment**

**N/A**

## **9. Recommendation**

9.1 Health and Social Care Scrutiny notes the content of the report detailing the improvements within the service.

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