



Children with Complex Needs Service in Trafford- Practice Sharing Event 29th April 2025

Justin Colman, Interim Head of Service for Children
with Complex Needs and Designated Social Care
Officer, Trafford



+

•

○

Agenda today

- Introduce the model in Trafford – Complex Needs Social Work Team and Short Breaks Team
- Pathways to Assessment –C&F or Short Breaks Assessment?
- Expansion of our Short Breaks Commissioned Offer
- Learning from having a SW in the Short Breaks Team
- Edge of Care Pilot in the Short Breaks Team
- Looking ahead to the Social Work Reforms

+

•

○

Social Work Team (CwD)

1 TM, 1 AP, 6* SWs, 1 Family Practitioner

This team carries out all main statutory functions for the most complex children aged 0-18 including CIN, CP, Cared For, PLO and care proceedings

Numbers: we tend to have around 90-100 children open in the team to a SW or to the AP. Currently 17 Cared For, 11 on CP Plans and the rest are either on a CIN Plan or have a C&F Assessment underway (not to assess Short Breaks).

+

•

○

Short Breaks Team

1x TM-this was made a substantive post following service review in 2023/24

1x SW-this was added as a substantive post following service review in 2023/24

4* x Social Care Reviewing Officers

*Has just been increased to 5 for a 12-month trial and holding a SW post vacant to test out SW Reforms.

Numbers: we currently have 270 children and young people open to the service

+

•

○

Eligibility Criteria for the SW Team

0-18 living in Trafford and having one or more of the following:

- 1. a severe or profound learning disability;
- 2. a severe or profound physical disability;
- 3. significant or profound sensory disability;
- 4. complex health needs related to a lifelong or life limiting disability;
- 5. severe developmental delay;
- 6. severe communication disabilities or behavioural difficulties related to the child's disability (eg autism);
- 7. a combination of disabilities, which individually are not severe, but cumulatively have a similar impact to a severe disability

+

•

○

Criteria for Short Breaks in Trafford (in the SB Duty Statement)

- Equality Act definition is applied broadly
- Principle is applied that children should where they can access mainstream activities or those set out within the Local Offer (Universal / Mainstream =Tier 1)
- Tier 2='Targeted'-signposted to our Commissioned Services
- Tier 3=Specialist-is for children and YP who are not able to access any of our commissioned services due to their levels of need. **Short Breaks Assessment by a Social Care Reviewing Officer**
- Tier 4='Complex'-family may be in crisis or at risk of family breakdown. **Child and Family Assessment by SW in SB Team or within the main CwD SW Team.**

+

•

○

How to access Short Breaks in Trafford

- 'Short Breaks Enquiry' can be made via Trafford Local Offer/website by a parent or professional
- Screened by a member of the Short Breaks Team
- TM does final sign off and agrees:
 - NFA / Advice and Information
 - Refer family to commissioned service and then NFA
 - Agree Short Breaks Assessment by Social Care Reviewing Officer
 - Agree C&F Assessment by SW in the Short Breaks Team
 - Request assessment in the CwD SW Team

+

•

○

Outcome of Short Breaks Assessment

- Activity Agreement –up to £750, which is only renewed upon family making a request annually.
- A Direct Payment
- Care agency package for support in home and/or community
- Joint package with Children's Continuing Care
- Overnight respite (S17)
- Child & Family Assessment
- Targeted Support / Team Around Child Approach
- Combination of the above

+

•

○

Joint working approach

- CwD SW Team and Short Breaks Team will co-work where there is a need for a Short Breaks Package.
- Social Care Reviewing Officer will lead on Short Breaks Package, brokerage role, present at Short Breaks Panel
- Reviewing Officers will also co-work with children and young people within the mainstream SW teams, again leading on the Short Breaks element of support.
- When the SW involvement ends, the relationship with their reviewing officer continues and packages are reviewed at least annually.

+

•

○

Expansion of Short Breaks Service in Trafford

Increase in short break providers in
Trafford over last 12-18 months

Now able to meet a wider cohort of needs
including those that require 121 support

Informed and co-produced with Short
Breaks Working Group

Spot purchasing approach to trial new
provisions

Have led to some reductions in care
packages (eg from agency outreach
packages to commissioned service)

Have diverted some of these savings in
order to expand offer

+

•

○

Benefits of a SW in the Short Breaks Team

SW in the SB Team in place since March 24.

Have trialled different approaches over the 12 months.

Enabled us to work with children that typically fall between the net, or don't benefit from a mainstream SW.

Has led to a loosening of criteria ('Right Help, Right Time'-SEND Ambition 5)

Fits with the broader challenges across the SEND system with SEMH

Edge of Care Panel in Trafford-very high proportion of referrals have EHCP with primary need SEMH-70-80%

+

•

○

Edge of Care Pilot in Short Breaks Team

- Trialling a new pathway for children with SEND on the Edge of Care and who do not meet criteria for the CwD Social Work Team.
- Co-working with Early Help/Intensive Family Support Worker (not stepping up or across)
- Clinical advice from Edge of Care CAMHS (usually only offered as part of the Edge of Care / Outreach Service in Trafford)
- Referring into DSR where applicable
- Allocating Social Care Reviewing Officer
- Team Around remaining in place until things have settled.

+

•

○

Criteria for Edge of Care Pilot

- Child or YP has ASD, be on the TASC pathway, or have other social communication needs eg ADHD
- Child or YP has an EHCP with SEMH as primary need
- Issues with school attendance/risk of school placement breakdown
- Violence towards siblings and / or parents and carers
- Complex trauma background / risk of adoption breakdown
- Family at breaking point

+

•

○

What have we learnt so far from the pilot?

- SW is viewed differently to that of a mainstream SW
- The lens of disability is helpful to apply
- Helps to move away from locating problems mainly within parenting
- A more trauma informed lens especially around adopted children
- Parents have commented that they feel more listened to, there is access to help more quickly ('Right Help, Right Time')
- The role of short breaks and overnight respite for a wider cohort of children and YP who are on the Edge of Care

+

•

○

Social Work Reforms and looking ahead.....

‘Keeping Children Safe, Helping Families Thrive’ -November 24

Delivering a single, integrated system of family help and child protection

Moving away from stepping up/stepping down/stepping across

Importance of maintaining relationships with families

Family Help Practitioners will work alongside multi-agency child protection teams, who work as a single team.

‘CIN’ children can be supported by family help workers with oversight of social work qualified managers/ ATMs/APs

+

•

○

What might this mean in Trafford?

- We may not need as many social workers? (we are already trialling this)
- We might increase the number of Social Care Reviewing Officers further?
- We are thinking about a CAMHS role within the team, or an LD nurse?
- We might think about how to develop further the Trafford Team Together approach in our Special Schools.
- We might not need two Social Work qualified TMs if we are moving towards a reduced number of social workers.