

Families who have a child with a disability (long term condition, disabled or suffering from a mental disorder) have a right to services that will help their child to lead as normal a life as possible. Parents also have a right to their own carers assessment - see the **Community care** factsheet for more details.

## Social Work Services

A parent or guardian can request an assessment under s23 of the Children (Scotland) Act 1995 to determine the needs of their child and any other children in the family who may be affected by their sibling's disability. To request an assessment contact Children and Families Social Care Direct on 0131 200 2327.

Local authorities have a duty to provide a range of services appropriate to the needs of children with a disability in their area. In providing these services the local authority should take into account the child's religious persuasion, racial origin and cultural and linguistic background.

A social worker from the Children and Families department will visit the family to complete an assessment form. This can take up to two hours and may require a return visit. The social worker must take into account, wherever practicable, the views of the parent or guardian and the child. Following this the social worker will attempt to find appropriate services to help relieve any difficulties or stress at home.

It is not always possible to provide a service because it may not be available in a particular area, there may be limited resources or not enough money to pay for it. Children are placed on a waiting list according to priority of need but do not be put off from asking your social worker for a service as they will always try to help where possible.

The types of services provided by social work include:

- access to mutual support and advice from other organisations and families
- help with personal care and/or practical housekeeping
- sitting or befriending services to take the child out or allow the carer to go out
- day care
- advice and help with special equipment
- periods of respite care away from home
- holiday play schemes

# Medical Conditions

Many families find that they are not given enough information when their child is first diagnosed with a particular illness or condition. They can feel isolated and are often frightened about what the future holds. There are two organisations in Edinburgh that can help:

## **SNIP - Special Needs Information Point (SNIP)**

SNIP provide information about medical conditions and rare syndromes as well as details of local and national support groups.

## **Contact a Family**

Contact a Family provide similar information and can put you in touch with other families who may be dealing with a similar rare condition.

Details for SNIP and Contact a Family can be found in the ***A - Z of useful contacts*** factsheet.

# Education

The Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004 became active on 14 November 2005 introducing significant changes to current arrangements for school age children and young people who experience difficulties in learning. The Act was introduced to ensure disabled children could be educated in mainstream schools, wherever possible, with additional support.

## **Key requirements of the Act:**

- the term 'additional support needs' refers to the needs of all children who, for whatever reason, require additional support, short or long term, to help them make the most of their education
- the Record of Needs (RON) system has been abolished and a Co-ordinated Support Plan (CSP) will be opened for children who have complex needs requiring multi agency intervention. It is important to note that CSPs have not replaced RONS and even if your child had a RON they may not have a CSP
- the local authority must provide a system for resolving disputes in relation to provision for additional support needs which parents and young people can access
- there is a nationally organised Tribunal to hear appeals relating to Co-ordinated Support Plans
- local authorities have a duty to ensure that policies, practice, information and advice services take account of the legal requirements of the Act

- partner agencies including the health services are expected to help local authorities to discharge their duties in relation to the education social work service and any other relevant functions under the Act.

### **New rights for parents to:**

- request an assessment to determine if their child has additional support needs
- request an assessment to determine if their child requires a Co-ordinated Support Plan (CSP)
- request a specific type of assessment (eg. medical)
- be informed of the outcome of any requests they make
- receive advice and information about their child's support needs and a copy of the Co-ordinated Support Plan where there is one
- have their views sought and taken into account and noted in a CSP where there is one
- request a specific school placement
- access independent mediation services provided by the local authority
- access dispute resolution services
- appeal to an independent Tribunal in matters related to Co-ordinated Support plans

## Young carers

If you have other children in the family who spend a lot of time helping you care for their chronically sick or disabled sibling then they may benefit from contact with a young carers project.

Young carers projects can offer fun, relaxation, time out, information and advice. They also provide the chance to meet other young people, try new activities and learn new skills. If you think your child would benefit from this kind of support you will find details of young carers projects in the ***A-Z of useful contacts***.

Further information about any of the information detailed in this factsheet is available from specialist organisations whose contact details are listed in the ***A-Z of useful contacts*** under 'Education', 'Children with Special Needs' and 'Advocacy'.