

Aiming High for Disabled Children **EDCM supporter briefing - June 2007**

Introduction

Aiming High for Disabled Children: Better Support for Families is the report from the government's disabled children's review. This was a joint review between HM Treasury and DfES, aimed at improving services for disabled children in England.

Overall, the review is an excellent result for the campaigning work of EDCM and all of our supporters. This briefing sets out the key outcomes of the review, and what else EDCM thinks need to happen to make sure that the 2007 Comprehensive Spending Review delivers for all disabled children.

Overview

Aiming High for Disabled Children commits government to providing significant additional resources - £340 million – over the next three years (2008-11). This money should start to transform services across the country. The money is backed by a package of system reform measures, including:

- A new national indicator on disabled children within the local government performance management framework
- A 'core offer' for families with disabled children
- Work to improve data collection at a local and national level

The detail of all these measures is set out in the remainder of this briefing.

Chapter 1 - Introduction

This chapter sets the context for the review, which was part of a wider review of children and young people's services announced in Budget 2006. It sets out the policy initiatives the government has already put in place, but highlights that outcomes for disabled children are poor and that significant challenges remain. These include a lack of data, a focus on high cost crisis interventions and problems with co-ordination across agencies. The review addresses these challenges in the three themed chapters that follow – **empowerment**, **responsiveness** and **service quality and capacity**.

Chapter 2- Access and Empowerment

This chapter sets out the government's plans to make sure families are involved in the management, design and delivery of services. The specific outcomes are:

- A '**core offer**' for families with disabled children, linked to the local government performance framework and made up of the following elements:
 - Information – appropriate information at every stage
 - Transparency – published eligibility criteria for services
 - Participation – in the planning, commissioning and delivery of services
 - Assessment – integrated assessments across agencies
 - Feedback – clear and published complaints procedures

EDCM believes that the 'core offer', and in particular the requirement on local authorities to publish eligibility criteria, has real potential to help transform services, as families will now have the information they need to push for change locally.

- Pilots on **Individual Budgets** for disabled children, potentially including health funding streams.

- **£5 million** to support the development of **Parents Forums** in every local area. *EDCM is delighted that there is funding in this review to support parent participation. However, it is disappointing that there is no money to support the participation of children and young people – this must be a priority for the next spending review.*

Chapter 3 – Responsive Services and Timely Support

This chapter sets out further system reform measures, including:

- A new **national strategy on data**, and proposals that local areas should begin to collect data about disabled children across agencies based on the Disability Discrimination Act definition, and with higher-rate care component of Disability Living Allowance used as a measure for severe disability.

- A new **national indicator** on disabled children as part of the new Public Service Agreement targets to be agreed across government. *EDCM thinks that the new indicator will be key to make sure that local agencies begin to prioritise disabled children. The indicator must be closely linked to the ‘core offer’ (see above) to have maximum impact.*

- Funding to promote **early intervention** for disabled children in the new Centre of Excellence for Children and Family Services. *EDCM wants government to make sure that the new Centre allows professionals and parents to access the best information on interventions.*

- The **roll-out** of the **Early Support programme** to cover all disabled children aged 0-5. *EDCM wants DfES to devote identified resources to ensure a continued focus on Early Support once it is mainstreamed from 2008-9*

- **£19 million** to develop a **Transition Support Programme** to help local authorities improve services for disabled young people in transition to adulthood, building on the success of Early Support.
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Chapter 4 – Improving Service Quality and Capacity

This chapter sets out specific proposals to improve services in three areas:

- A specific grant of **£280 million** to deliver a step change in the level of **short breaks**. This grant is staged so that all local areas will benefit from 2010.
- **£35 million** to 10 pilot sites to develop more accessible **childcare** places
- Radical reform of **community equipment and wheelchair services**

The chapter also contains a commitment that there will be resources from the Department of Health to deliver short breaks for children with complex health needs and improve community equipment and wheelchairs. The chapter also commits to improving the workforce, including therapy services.

CONCLUSION

The Every Disabled Child Matters campaign has welcomed *Aiming High for Disabled Children* as a series of vital building blocks in improving the outcomes and life chances for families with disabled children.

In addition to making sure that the review is delivered, the campaign has identified a number of further steps that need to be taken to ensure the best possible outcome of the Review and CSR 07 for families with disabled children:

- 1) EDCM understands that '**consequential**' amounts will be allocated to **Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland** following the review. These amounts should be published and the devolved administrations should commit to allocating this additional money to improve services for disabled children.
- 2) The **Department of Health** should deliver on its commitment to match the support from DfES for short breaks by allocating at least **£280 million** of its CSR settlement to this area.
- 3) The Department of Health should act on the recommendations of the **palliative care review** and ensure a joint delivery programme with *Aiming High for Disabled Children*. (See <http://www.edcm.org.uk/palliativecare>)
- 4) The Department of Health should work with DfES and the voluntary sector to ensure that the **community equipment and wheelchair services** review delivers a radical overhaul of the system to meet the needs of children.
- 5) EDCM is a member of the **Campaign to End Child Poverty**, and calls on HM Treasury to invest an additional **£3.8 billion** in the tax credit system to meet the Government's interim target of halving child poverty by 2010.

EDCM is asking all our supporters to go to the 'Get Involved' page of our website at <http://www.edcm.org.uk> to find out how to make these next steps happen.

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For further information, see <http://www.edcm.org.uk/aiminghigh>, or contact:

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