

This is not hard evidence, but may be helpful.

There is considerable anecdotal evidence that in our PCT area children have increasing disability. The 100 place school for children with physical disability has increased in number of wheelchair users from approx 5 to over 50 in a 10 year period. Schools for children with moderate learning difficulties have had to change admission criteria this year due to there being more children with severe learning disability than there are places in the local SLD school. Over the last 3 years extra classes for children with social communication disorder at primary and secondary level have had to be added to mainstream schools. These children not only require more care and intervention by all government agencies but also often more bigger bulkier equipment which makes current environments less suitable. We have looked for local and national statistics on this in partnership with education and have not found any definitive information. I would be grateful for knowledge of any sources you have.

Services to families with children with disability are focused on the child. Interventions such as the early support programme and the CAF consider the child and family however there is no universal targeted help for parents of children with a disability in coming to terms with this disability to allow them to work with the child and use the above processes. This limits access to services and effectiveness of services for many children. Extension of the expert patients programme for newly diagnosed children and for parents with older children could meet this need.

Services for children and families vary within London, in the boroughs surrounding ours each one offers different levels of services. I am not aware of ways we can currently reliably attach service level to outcome in children with complex disabilities.

Simple interventions such as appropriate counselling for parents in coming to terms with a Childs diagnosis: respite care available when problems identified but before a child has a diagnosis when the family is at high stress level and setting up early identification of movement/ speech and language disorders in a allied health professionally led clinic set up would in many cases allow improved access in a more efficient and effective way and in the long term provide money savings.

Croydon PCT

