

Annex A – Covering Template for Responses

Please complete the attached cover sheet when sending evidence, indicating the set of questions to which a response is being provided and contact details of the person for any follow-up queries.

Contact details for respondent	
Name	
Job title	Parent Partnership Manager
Do you represent an organisation? (if so, name of organisation and type: e.g. voluntary, public body, private company).	Liverpool Parent Partnership Service – an “arms length” service delivered by Liverpool City Council Children’s Services Department
Postal address	Fairfield Centre Sheil Road Liverpool L6 3AA
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	Which area of the review are you responding to? (please mark X)
Prevention strand	
Review of disabled children	X
Strategy for youth services	
Review of high cost, high harm families	X

Annex B2: Review of Disabled Children

1. What definition of disability are you using? In many cases, there's a fine line between special educational need and disability – with a large overlapping group.
2. Accepting that financial support and benefits are not a focus of the review, it's clear that a complex benefits system deters applicants who are busy trying to cope on a day to day basis with multiple demands on their time, not least those of a disabled child.
3. Re challenges posed to services by the changing profile of disabled children:
 - How to define a peer group – is it the main population, or children with similar needs? Some people feel strongly that the children are included if they are with the mainstream, others (including the children themselves, on occasion) feel more included if they're with children who have similar difficulties. Ideally, a structure would be in place to allow children the choice – in practice this isn't the case currently. There's a strong push for mainstream & "one size" doesn't "fit all". There would have to be systems in place to ensure children who chose to remain segregated from the mainstream were able to access training and employment opportunities when they became young adults. In other words, that they can become productive members of society and that the segregation they'd chosen didn't disadvantage them. There would have to be strong links across the mainstream & segregated sectors. This isn't well-enough developed at the moment.
 - Alternatively, much work still needs to be done to change mainstream cultures so that disabled children are truly included. The "Team Around the Child College Model" being developed in Liverpool seeks to address this: professionals will receive training through a virtual college model from disabled people to increase their understanding of disability and the services disabled people want and how they want them delivered.
4. Re progress made in addressing the needs of disabled children & their families: Much work is under way, but not all of it is fully established as yet. Some is still at the planning stage. "Fusion" seeks to offer respite and alternatives to respite, but is still establishing itself and, from what we hear is receiving a lot of criticism. The Parent Partnership Service is well-established but doesn't feel it meets all the needs it should.
5. Re Barriers: These include
 - lack of engagement between services – disability services are still in a kind of "ghetto" with mainstream services not consulting them as often as they could/should. This is largely due to work pressures and the capacity of individuals to keep track of all the information/developments in services outside their own agency or core group of agencies. Also, resistance in some families to

access services due to fears that they'll lose control: the belief that social services just want to take children away still exists; and other families see social services involvement as a stigma.

- Restricted resources can mean that input can be time-limited and/or inadequate compared to what's needed.

6. Re Lessons we can learn to improve outcomes: Parent Partnership Services have minimum standards; so far as we can tell, this is not replicated elsewhere on the grounds that localities differ. (Ditto for PPS.) However, the minimum standards have helped PPS to assess themselves and where necessary, adjust the focus their service. Work is underway to review these so that they help to measure outcomes. If all services had comprehensive minimum standards, customers should have more accurate expectations and also have a basis on which to work with services to improve outcomes.
7. Re Family Support Services; patchy, early days/ not well advertised. Again an issue of resources/ competing demands.
8. Re Cost-effective interventions: these are more easily achieved if services can be tailored to individual needs. Also, the better supported and better-informed parents are the less stressed they are and the less likelihood there is of confrontation (paraphrase of the old SEN COP). If parents are more able to work with services, it will be easier to achieve cost effective, improved outcomes. Early intervention is obviously better – and services are working to achieve this.
In terms of statutory assessment of SEN in the early years, a colleague commented that she always knew when I had been to see a parent at the very beginning of the process – because the parent understood why she was visiting, what was expected of the parent, how long the assessment was likely to take, what the parent's rights and responsibilities where, and so on. Those parents didn't feel the anxiety that parents who hadn't met with me often exhibited. It set the basis of the parent/professional partnership. We're about to try a similar approach with parents whose children are about to have a person-centred transition review. It links with the development of the key worker role, which could have a big impact provided key workers have the capacity to fulfil the role properly.
9. Families need to be involved in shaping services. Locally we have an SEN Forum – where local voluntary groups and agencies meet with officers from the statutory sector to discuss issues of concern, policy development etc, and a parent & carer forum which has a similar role and seeks to include parents who are not members of other groups. A set of "Guiding Principles" (see other attachment) have been developed that set the ground rules for this relationship.

Annex B4: High Cost, High Harm Families

The review needs to look at dependency culture (ie where a family becomes dependent on services to enable it to function rather than accessing services when needed) as part of its work. The question is how can support be provided without creating dependency and how can we help families to break out of dependency without creating a new type of dependency?

Re Balance between support and sanctions: Care is needed when deciding on sanctions as if they're ineffective, an agency becomes "toothless". For example, a parent can be fined thousands – or even imprisoned – for failing to ensure their child's attendance at school, yet magistrates regularly impose low fines – partly, perhaps because of other factors affecting the family, such as poverty/deprivation. Prosecution is therefore detrimental to the EWS because their bluff has been called. It just underlines that a different sanction is needed. Custom/culture is so ingrained, that it is difficult to identify support that will be effective. It would need to be a long-term initiative to try to break the generational cycle. Yearly funding, and consequently short term planning, would be ineffective.