

17th January 2022**Agenda Item: 9****REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR, COMMISSIONING AND RESOURCES****ESTABLISHMENT OF ADDITIONAL POSTS IN THE INTEGRATED
CHILDREN'S DISABILITY SERVICE****Purpose of the Report**

1. This report seeks approval for the establishment of additional posts in the Integrated Children's Disability Service (ICDS) with effect from 1st April 2022 as follows:
 - 1 fte Occupational Therapy post (Band A/B) within the Children's Occupational Therapy Team
 - 1 fte Occupational Therapy Assistant post (Grade 5) within the Children's Occupational Therapy Team
 - 1 fte Occupational Therapy Service Organiser post (Grade 4) within the Children's Occupational Therapy Team
 - 1.5 fte Assessment Officer (Grade 5) in the Short Breaks Assessment and Review Team
 - 2 fte Service Organisers (Grade 4) in the Education, Health and Care Assessment Team.
2. The report also seeks approval to permanently establish 1 fte Occupational Therapy Senior Practitioner (Grade C) post which has been temporary since November 2018.

ICDS Children's Disability Occupational Therapy Team

3. The ICDS Children's Disability Occupational Therapy Team is responsible for providing dedicated Occupational Therapy assessment, planning and support for children and young people who require major and minor adaptations and specialist equipment to ensure their safe care at home and to maximise their wellbeing and independence.
4. The role of the Children's Occupational Therapist is to assess a service user's specialist equipment and housing needs and to consult and work in partnership with health and social care colleagues and the District Council's grants officers to deliver appropriate equipment and housing adaptations to meet the assessed needs.

5. The current Occupational Therapy team structure was approved by Children and Young People's Committee in February 2017. Since 2017 there has been a marked increase in referral numbers and complexity of children. This has had a detrimental effect on waiting times which are now 18 months for an Occupational Therapy assessment, 5 months for an Occupational Therapy seating assessment, and 8 months for an Occupational Therapy Assistant assessment.
6. Approval is sought to:
 - establish an additional 1 fte Occupational Therapy (Band A/B) post with effect from 1st April 2022
 - establish an additional 1 fte Occupational Therapy Assistant (Grade 5) post with effect from 1st April 2022.
7. Due to difficulties recruiting a full-time Occupational Therapy manager, 1 temporary Occupational Therapy Senior Practitioner post was created in November 2018. Since then, the workload and waiting times has continued to increase the pressure on the management of the team, and the burden on management has also increased. The Occupational Therapy Manager and Senior Practitioners are responsible for authorisation of assessments, equipment orders, adaptation requests and waiting list management which includes requests for re-prioritisation and complaints.
8. Approval is therefore sought to:
 - permanently establish a further 1 fte Occupational Therapy Senior Practitioner (Band C) post which has been temporary since November 2018, with effect from 17th January 2022.
9. Occupational Therapists work closely with District Councils to provide adaptations for children with disabilities. A Disabled Facilities Grant is a statutory grant that is awarded under Part 1 of the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act (HGCRA) 1996 and is administered by the Housing Authority. The maximum grant that can be awarded towards an adaptation is currently £30,000. Housing Authorities have a discretionary grant which can be used to provide additional funding for adaptations up to £20,000.
10. The Council has discretionary powers to assist a family in meeting their housing needs if the cost of adaptations is above that which can be funded by the Housing Authority.
11. The lengthy and complicated administration processes for Occupational Therapy staff in terms of collaborating with families, the Housing Authority, architects, builders, financial and legal departments place a strain on limited professional resources.
12. Approval is therefore sought to establish an additional 1 fte Occupational Therapy Service Organiser (Band 4) post, with effect from 1st April 2022, with specific duties related to the Disabled Facilities Grant process, releasing Occupational Therapy resources for direct work with children, young people and their families.

ICDS Short Break Assessment and Review Team

13. The ICDS Short Break Assessment and Review Team was established in 2018 following a review of Nottinghamshire's short breaks offer. The revised offer was co-produced with parents and the Short Break Assessment and Review Team was established to assess and review short breaks.
14. The Short Break Assessment and Review Team currently (December 2021) has a cohort of 1,111 children and young people that are accessing a short break, of these 937 must be reviewed annually.
15. In addition to new applications, the Short Break Assessment and Review Team receives referrals for children and young people from the Children's Disability Service. These children and young people no longer need a Tier 4 service from Children's Social Care, but their packages still require an annual review by the Short Break Assessment and Review Team. These referrals, known as step-downs, have increased by 85% since November 2018.
16. Since November 2019 there has been a significant backlog of reviews due to the low staffing levels initially put in place when the Short Break Assessment and Review Team was established. The review backlog currently stands at more than 200 children and young people.
17. There are arrangements in place for those families who require an urgent review due to a change in circumstances and some staff are doing additional hours, but this is not a long-term solution.
18. Approval is sought to permanently establish 1.5 fte Assessment Officer posts (Grade 5), with effect from 1st April 2022.

ICDS Education, Health and Care Assessment Team

19. The Support Functions in the ICDS Education, Health and Care Assessment Team has been reviewed following the re-organisation of the Team in April 2021. The purpose of this review was:
 - to establish if there are sufficient resources to enable all statutory duties to be undertaken successfully
 - to ensure all roles are clear and consistent
 - to make recommendations to the Senior Leadership Team on the future number, roles, and responsibilities of the Education, Health and Care Assessment Team's support functions, which might have implications for other teams in ICDS.
20. The review recommended that two additional Service Organiser posts should be established to support statutory functions (Education, Health and Care Plan Annual Reviews and Mediation and Tribunals), which the Education, Health and Care Assessment Team has responsibility for delivering on behalf of the County Council.

21. The Mediation and Tribunal Service Organiser post has been a temporary post in the team for a couple of years. It plays an important role in supporting the mediation and tribunal processes which have seen a considerable increase in recent years.
22. The Education, Health and Care Plan Annual Review Organiser is required to support the processes to deliver over 3,300 reviews annually. The timely completion of Annual Reviews will become a mandatory performance measure for the Department for Education from January 2023. The Annual Review Service Organiser will ensure the successful embedding of the digital platform for the delivery of Annual Reviews during 2022.

Other Options Considered

23. Consideration has been given to the use of temporary agency staff. There is a national shortage of suitably qualified staff with social care and paediatric Occupational Therapy experience and the cost of agency staff is very high. Creating full-time, permanent posts will allow the Council to invest in training staff, providing them with the skills they need to achieve positive outcomes for children with disabilities and their families.

Reason/s for Recommendation/s

24. To meet the statutory duties of the Children and Families Act 2014, the Children Act 1989, the Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1970 and the Housing Grants & Regeneration Act 1996.

Statutory and Policy Implications

25. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of crime and disorder, data protection and information governance finance, human resources, human rights, the NHS Constitution (public health services), the public sector equality duty, safeguarding of children and adults at risk, service users, smarter working, sustainability and the environment and where such implications are material they are described below. Appropriate consultation has been undertaken and advice sought on these issues as required.

Financial Implications

26. The additional costs of the posts, as detailed below, is £229,259, and will be met from the Integrated Children's Disability Service base budget subject to Full Council's approval of the Budget for 2022-2023 in February 2022:

• 1 fte Occupational Therapist (Band A/B)	£49,179
• 1 fte Occupational Therapy Assistant (Grade 5)	£35,691
• 1 fte Occupational Therapy Service Organiser (Grade 4)	£30,284
• 1.5 fte Assessment Officers (Grade 5)	£53,537
• 2 fte EHC Assessment Team Service Organisers (Grade 4)	£60,568

Total cost	<u>£229,259</u>
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27. The cost of the Occupational Therapy Senior Practitioner post (Band C) is already included in the ICDS base budget for 2021-2022.

Human Resources Implications

28. All posts will be recruited to in line with the County Council's recruitment policy and procedures.

Safeguarding of Children and Adults at Risk Implications

29. The additional Occupational Therapy staff will enable children to have their equipment and housing needs met quicker, reducing the risks to them and their parents/carers.
30. The additional Assessment Officers will enable a more responsive service to requests for assessment and reviews of short breaks, preventing parent/carer stress and potential family breakdown.

Implications for Service Users

31. The needs of disabled children and their families will be assessed in a more timely manner leading to greater independence, improved wellbeing, and safer care at home.

RECOMMENDATIONS

That Committee:

- 1) approves the permanent establishment of the following posts within the Integrated Children's Disability Service with effect from 1st April 2022:
 - 1 fte Occupational Therapist (Band A/B)
 - 1 fte Occupational Therapy Assistant (Grade 5)
 - 1 fte Occupational Therapy Service Organiser (Grade 4)
 - 1.5 fte Assessment Officers (Grade 5)
 - 2 fte Service Organisers (Grade 4).
- 2) approves the permanent establishment of 1 fte Occupational Therapy Senior Practitioner post (Band C), which was previously temporary, within the Children's Occupational Therapy Team with effect from 17th January 2021.

Laurence Jones
Service Director, Commissioning and resources

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Constitutional Comments (AK 22/12/21)

32. This report falls within the remit of Children and Young People's Committee under its terms of reference.

Financial Comments (CDS 23/12/21)

33. The cost of the additional posts, as detailed in **paragraph 26**, would be approximately £229,000 and will be incorporated in the County Council's draft budget for 2022-2023 (subject to approval by Full Council on 24th February 2022).
34. The cost of the Occupational Therapy Senior Practitioner post (£55,948 at top of grade) that is proposed to be made permanent is already contained within the existing Integrated Children's Disability Service base budget of £4,857,000.

HR Comments (BC 21/12/21)

35. The staffing implications are contained within the body of the report. New posts will be subject to the Council's vacancy control and recruitment procedures.

Background Papers and Published Documents

Except for previously published documents, which will be available elsewhere, the documents listed here will be available for inspection in accordance with Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972.

[Proposed efficiency savings within the Integrated Children's Disability Service – report to Children and Young People's Committee on 20th February 2017](#)

Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected

All.

C1535