

TONBRIDGE & MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

6 March 2012

Report of the Director of Health and Housing

Part 1- Public

Delegated

1 CHILDREN'S OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY ASSESSMENTS – SCOPING REPORT

Summary

The report sets out the terms of review of children's occupational therapy assessments for endorsement.

1.1 Background

- 1.1.1 Kent County Council Children's Occupational Therapy Service carries out occupational therapy (OT) assessments of disabled children in the county. The children are usually referred into the service through their parents/carers or other health/housing professionals. An OT assessment will consider the needs of the child taking into account relevant medical information and determine what action needs to be taken to meet the child's needs. The action can include providing equipment e.g. hoist, bath lift; recommending re-housing and providing a housing needs assessment report if the property the child lives in is unsuitable; or making a referral for a Disabled Facilities Grant to the local district authority if major adaptations e.g. through floor lift, specialist bath are required.
- 1.1.2 Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG) are a mandatory grant offered under the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996. They can cover work such as providing access to and from a dwelling as well as access to a bedroom, family rooms and bathroom; ensuring a dwelling is safe; and ensuring use of a WC, wash hand basin and bath/shower. Within the DFG legislation there is a duty to consult social services on adaptations in particular whether the works are necessary and appropriate to meet the needs of the disabled person. DFGs are a means tested grant apart from where the work is for a disabled child or young person where there is no means test. The maximum DFG that can be awarded is £30,000.
- 1.1.3 Within Kent all DFG referrals come to the district authorities from the relevant OT service (adult or children) after an OT assessment to determine what the needs of the disabled person are. This assessment is therefore the starting point for the

DFG process. In May 2009 concerns were raised within the Strategic Housing Advisory Board about the length of time children were waiting for an OT assessment. At that time a number of children on the OT assessment list had been waiting for over two years. Since that time several meetings have taken place with Kent County Council to address the situation, the Head of Specialist Children's Services has attended the Council's Strategic Housing Advisory Board and update reports have been taken into each meeting of the Board right up until the present.

1.2 Key Issues for the Review

1.2.1 I suggest the key issues for the review are:

- To consider the history of the waiting times for Children's OT assessment since May 2009; and
- To compare the waiting times for Children's OT assessments in Tonbridge & Malling with other West Kent local authorities; and
- To assess the prospect of recent service improvements being sustainable into the foreseeable future; and
- To agree a way forward with Kent County Council in terms of assessment targets and levels of resources to meet the targets.

1.3 Review Process

1.3.1 It is suggested that this review is dealt with a single report into the June meeting of this Committee and as part of that a senior Officer from Kent County Council Children's Service will be invited to that meeting to give a presentation covering the above key issues. We will also seek the views of our main Registered Provider, Russet, who are involved in the adaptation of properties for their tenants and families.

1.4 Legal Implications

1.4.1 None

1.5 Financial and Value for Money Considerations

1.5.1 None

1.6 Risk Assessment

1.6.1 When a property does not meet a child's needs there is a risk that an accident/injury could occur e.g. parent injures back carrying child upstairs as child unable to walk. It is therefore important that any identified needs are met as quickly as possible.

1.7 Equality Impact Assessment

1.7.1 See 'Screening for equality impacts' table at end of report

1.8 Recommendations

1.8.1 That the key issues for the review of children's occupational therapy assessments and review process as outlined in this report **BE ENDORSED**.

Background papers:

contact: Linda Hibbs

Nil

John Batty

Director of Health and Housing

Screening for equality impacts:		
Question	Answer	Explanation of impacts
a. Does the decision being made or recommended through this paper have potential to cause adverse impact or discriminate against different groups in the community?	No	
b. Does the decision being made or recommended through this paper make a positive contribution to promoting equality?	No	
c. What steps are you taking to mitigate, reduce, avoid or minimise the impacts identified above?	n/a	

In submitting this report, the Chief Officer doing so is confirming that they have given due regard to the equality impacts of the decision being considered, as noted in the table above.