

Appendix 1: The Charter commitments

1. We have detailed and accurate information on the disabled children and young people living in our area, and provide public information on how we plan to meet their needs

One of the primary tools Health and Wellbeing Boards have to drive strategic commissioning in their area is the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA). The JSNA can only be an effective tool for evidence-based decision making if it is based on accurate and meaningful data. However, data on disabled children is notoriously poor and improving the quality and scope of information on disabled children and young people should be a priority.

2. We engage directly with disabled children and young people and their participation is embedded in the work of our Health and Wellbeing Board

Health and Wellbeing Boards should ensure that the voice of disabled children and young people is always heard when decisions are being made that affect them. The benefits of embedding participation of disabled children and young people are huge and well evidenced. All disabled children and young people communicate and have a right to have their views heard.

3. We engage directly with parent carers of disabled children and young people and their participation is embedded in the work of our Health and Wellbeing Board

The purpose of parent participation is to ensure that parents can influence service planning and decision making so that services meet the needs of families with disabled children. The benefits of effective parent participation are well established and Health and Wellbeing Boards should ensure that parent carers are involved in decisions that affect them at a strategic and service level.

4. We set clear strategic outcomes for our partners to meet in relation to disabled children, young people and their families, monitor progress towards achieving them and hold each other to account

The Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy (JHWS) should address how the needs of disabled children, young people and their families should be met and make recommendations on cost-effective approaches to reducing the health inequalities they experience. However, if this group is not identified as a priority in the JHWS, the Health and Wellbeing Board should demonstrate how it is providing strategic direction for partners to meet the needs of disabled children and young people.

5. We promote early intervention and support for smooth transitions between children and adult services for disabled children and young people

The importance of early intervention and transitions to life-long outcomes has been repeatedly emphasized. This is particularly significant for disabled children, young people and their families, who often struggle to obtain a diagnosis and access appropriate support at an early age and when transitioning to adult services.

6. We work with key partners to strengthen integration between health, social care and education services, and with services provided by wider partners

Disabled children and young people frequently access services across multiple agencies and the failure to effectively coordinate services around them often leads to considerable distress and poor health outcomes. Health and Wellbeing Boards must work with partners, including education providers, to meet the needs of disabled children and young people and ensure seamless integration between the services they access.

7. We provide cohesive governance and leadership across the disabled children and young people's agenda by linking effectively with key partners

The role of the Health and Wellbeing Board must be understood in relation to new and existing partnerships, including: local children's trust arrangements; local safeguarding children's boards; learning disability partnership boards; and others. A clear local framework on how these partnerships interact needs to be established to avoid the duplication of effort or even competing for resources.

Health and Wellbeing Boards must also prepare for its new responsibilities which will be introduced by the Children and Families Bill.