



One minute guide

Child Health and Disability Service

No. 191, July 2025

What is the Child Health and Disability Service?

The Child Health and Disability Service, often known as CHAD, is made up of a number of teams working with children and young people aged 0-18 with complex health needs and disabilities, where their disability has an impact on their ability to be safe, develop skills for life and be part of their local communities growing up.

The service, which sits with Children and Families Services in the local authority, aims to ensure that every child in Leeds with a complex health need and disability benefits from child-centred, high-quality, flexible and responsive services to help them live a successful and fulfilling life.

Within CHAD there are three locality social work teams, the Regional Specialist Team and the Occupational Therapy Team.

Where are the locality social work teams and what do they do?

The three locality CHAD social work teams cover different areas within the city, East North-East, West North-West and South and work with children with complex health needs and disabilities.

CHAD social workers specialise in working with children and young people who have additional needs, which includes those with difficulties with communicating and/or challenging behaviours. They use a wide range of different communication aids and skills to ensure the child remains the focus and that their voice is heard.

The CHAD social work teams work to the same statutory requirements as other social work teams. Each team undertakes assessments, safeguarding and care management activities. In line with statutory safeguarding procedures and investigations, the teams work directly with children who need help and protection and those subject to care proceedings. They also work with children who are looked after by the local authority.

The teams assess on-going care needs and develop specialist packages of support for these children. This includes assessing the impact of caring responsibilities on the family as a whole, including consideration of the needs of siblings. This is done through Child and Family Assessments, Parent Carers Assessments, regular reviews and attending review panels.

CHAD social work teams work closely with health practitioners, Specialist Inclusion Learning Centres (SILCs) and Early Help leads to provide robust rounded support. The CHAD teams also work closely with the SILC Cluster to provide targeted services and interventions.

What is the Regional Specialist Team and what do they do?

The Regional Specialist Team provides emotional and practical support to children and young people with specific medical conditions, and their families.

The children and young people may be from Leeds but the team also work with those from other local authorities who are receiving specialist treatment at Leeds General Infirmary through specialist hospital departments which include the Renal, Oncology, Haemophilia, and Cystic Fibrosis Care and the Paediatric Intensive Care teams.

What is the Occupational Therapy Team?

The Occupational Therapy (OT) Team cover the whole of the Leeds area and assess the long-term needs of children, young people and their parents and carers. They can recommend equipment and adaptations to the home as well as advising families on safe moving and handling techniques.

How are referrals made to CHAD?

Referrals to CHAD are made by practitioners contacting the Duty and Advice Team at the front door. Duty and Advice discuss potential referrals with whoever is making the contact so that it can be demonstrated that the child's identified needs cannot be met by universal or targeted services. If it is felt that a social work response is appropriate, Duty and Advice may refer the child to a cluster social work team, but depending on the level of the child's disability or complex needs, they may decide that a referral to CHAD social work is more appropriate.

Following a referral to a CHAD social work team, a Child and Family Assessment is carried out which includes speaking to all practitioners involved as well as the child or young person and their family. An outcome of the assessment may be an identified package of support through the local authority Short Breaks and Fun Activities Offer which is reviewed regularly to ensure the needs of the child or young person are being met.

Key contacts or for more information

Contact numbers for CHAD teams in Leeds are as follows:

- CHAD WNW Social Work tel: 0113 3784068
- CHAD South Social Work tel: 0113 3784915
- CHAD ENE and OT tel: 0113 3785140
- Regional Specialist Team tel: 0113 5351504 or 0113 5351499

Further information is available on the [local offer](#) webpage, and the fun [activities and short breaks and fun activities catalogue](#).