

Care Inspectorate Disabled children and young people: Thematic review 2023-24

The Care Inspectorate carried out a review to understand more about disabled children and young people's views and experiences of the support they received from social work services, focusing on getting it right for every disabled child and how well disabled children's rights were being respected and upheld.

This report presents the key messages of our review of how well social work services contribute to ensuring disabled children have their rights respected and receive early care and support.

Key messages

1. Respectful relationships were key to building a culture of listening to and respecting children and young people's views. This ensured they were engaged in decisions about their care and support.
2. Too many disabled children and young people's views, feelings and wishes were not being heard.
3. When children and young people received the right support at the right time from social work services, this helped them to grow and develop
4. Increasing complexity of need and high demand for services was outweighing the availability of supports.
5. Children and young people were not always provided with meaningful choices about the support they received.
6. Parents and carers routinely provide a significant level of care and support. Their wellbeing must be promoted and protected.
7. The quality of social work assessments, plans and reviews were variable and were not always properly addressing all the child or young person's needs.
8. The experience of transitioning into life as a young adult continues to be characterised by unpredictability and uncertainty for too many disabled young people.
9. Compassionate and dedicated social work staff were helping to improve the lives of children and young people. High workloads and recruitment and retention of staff significantly challenged staff teams.
10. The social work role was not always easily understood by families and/or other professionals.
11. Reliable data and a shared definition of disability are not available to inform future planning or to support the setting budgets.

You can read the full report at the [Care Inspectorate website](#)