



Factsheet 2

Collaborative working

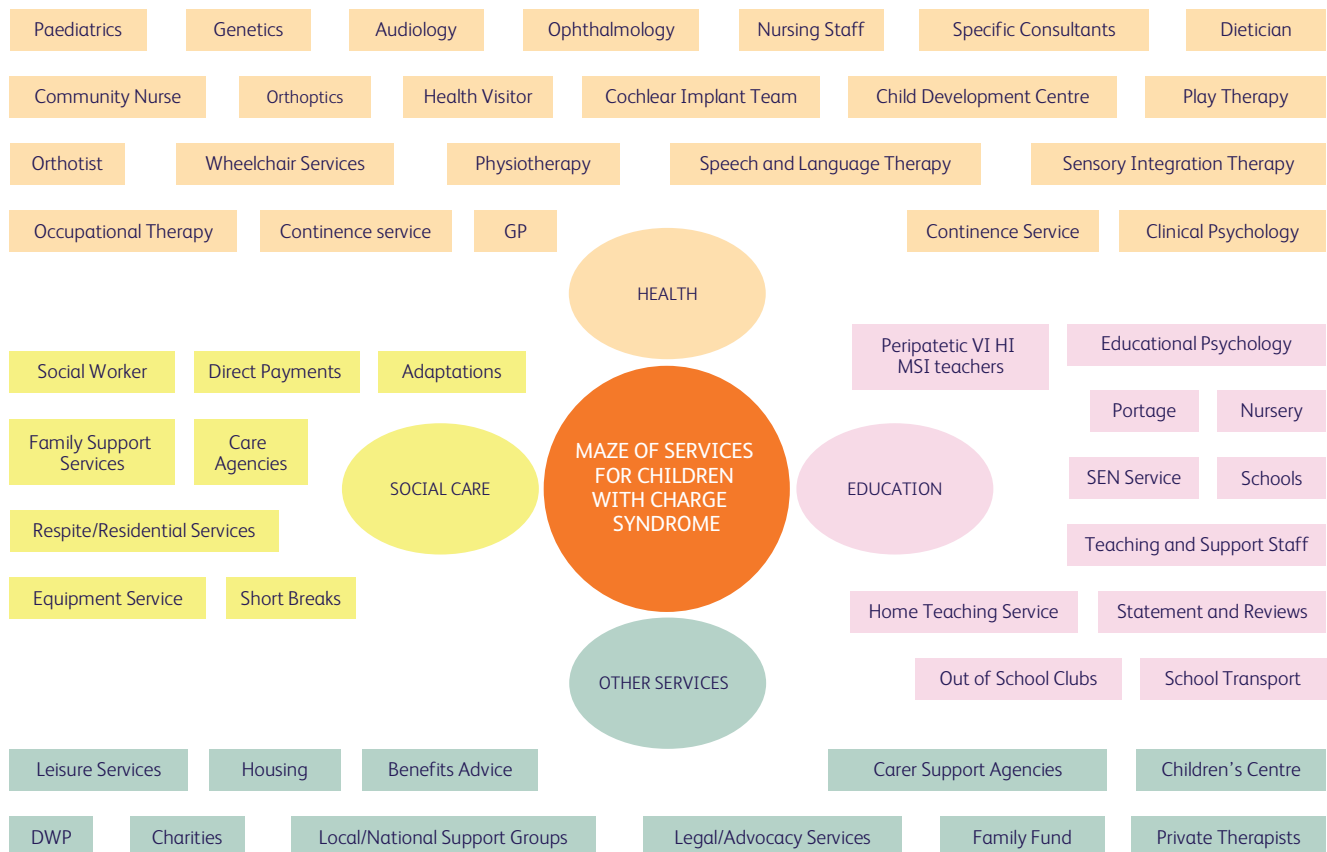
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The nature of CHARGE syndrome means that many practitioners from different agencies and disciplines are likely to be involved with a child with this condition. Each practitioner brings their own specialist skills, expertise, knowledge and insight. The large number of practitioners who can potentially be involved is shown in the diagram below.

Difficulties that may arise

With so many practitioners involved, there is potential for:

- conflicting advice given to parents causing confusion and concern
- a practitioner being unaware of the actions and involvement of other practitioners





- a duplication or absence of required services
- parents being asked repeatedly to provide the same information
- the child having many appointments, often in the same location but on different days
- wrongly assuming that the child is receiving other input they need from elsewhere
- conflicting priorities amongst different practitioners.

What matters to families is that any input, help and support is well-planned, well-executed and fully explained. Also that services are coordinated and focussed on the child and family's specific needs. (Early Support, 2007).

Legislation and guidance

There is a range of existing legislation and guidance that promotes working in partnership. These impose duties on a local authority to promote cooperation through multi-agency working. This should bring together practitioners to work in an integrated way to provide the best possible support for the child and family (Department for Education, 2012). It is vital that practitioners supporting the child with CHARGE subscribe to this way of working:

“effective multi-agency working is needed to ensure services are coordinated and that families are kept at the heart of discussion and joint decision-making about their child.” (Early Support, 2007, p. 8).

What makes a good partnership?

- Communication
- Cooperation
- Coordination
- Collaboration.

Do

- Work together with the family and other involved practitioners to ensure consistency of approach.
- Build up your own knowledge and understanding of CHARGE, including liaising with other practitioners to draw on their knowledge and expertise as many parents describe having to become information providers about CHARGE to practitioners.
- Provide the family and other practitioners with full information about your involvement and planned action.
- Think about how you present information on the child's records or correspondence so that other involved practitioners can more easily update themselves on the child's situation.
- Be honest with the family and provide positive, practical support.

- Respect the choices of the family and the opinions of other practitioners.
- Recognise and accept priorities – your input may not be the most vital or important at a given time.
- Be flexible and sensitive.
- Give the family and other practitioners the time they need.
- Try to minimise the impact on the family and child by consolidating their appointments where possible.
- Recognise the family's knowledge and skills and provide support to develop them further.
- Ensure that the child and family receive, or are aware of, any other appropriate support.
- Celebrate the child's strengths and what is working well.

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REFERENCES

Department for Education (2012) *Multi-Agency Working*. [online] <http://www.education.gov.uk/childrenandyoungpeople/strategy/integratedworking/a0069013/multi-agency-working> [Accessed 27 December 2012].

Early Support: Helping Every Child Succeed (2007) *Introduction to the background information booklets*. DfES Publications.