

## **Early Support in Wales:** improving service delivery for young disabled children and their families



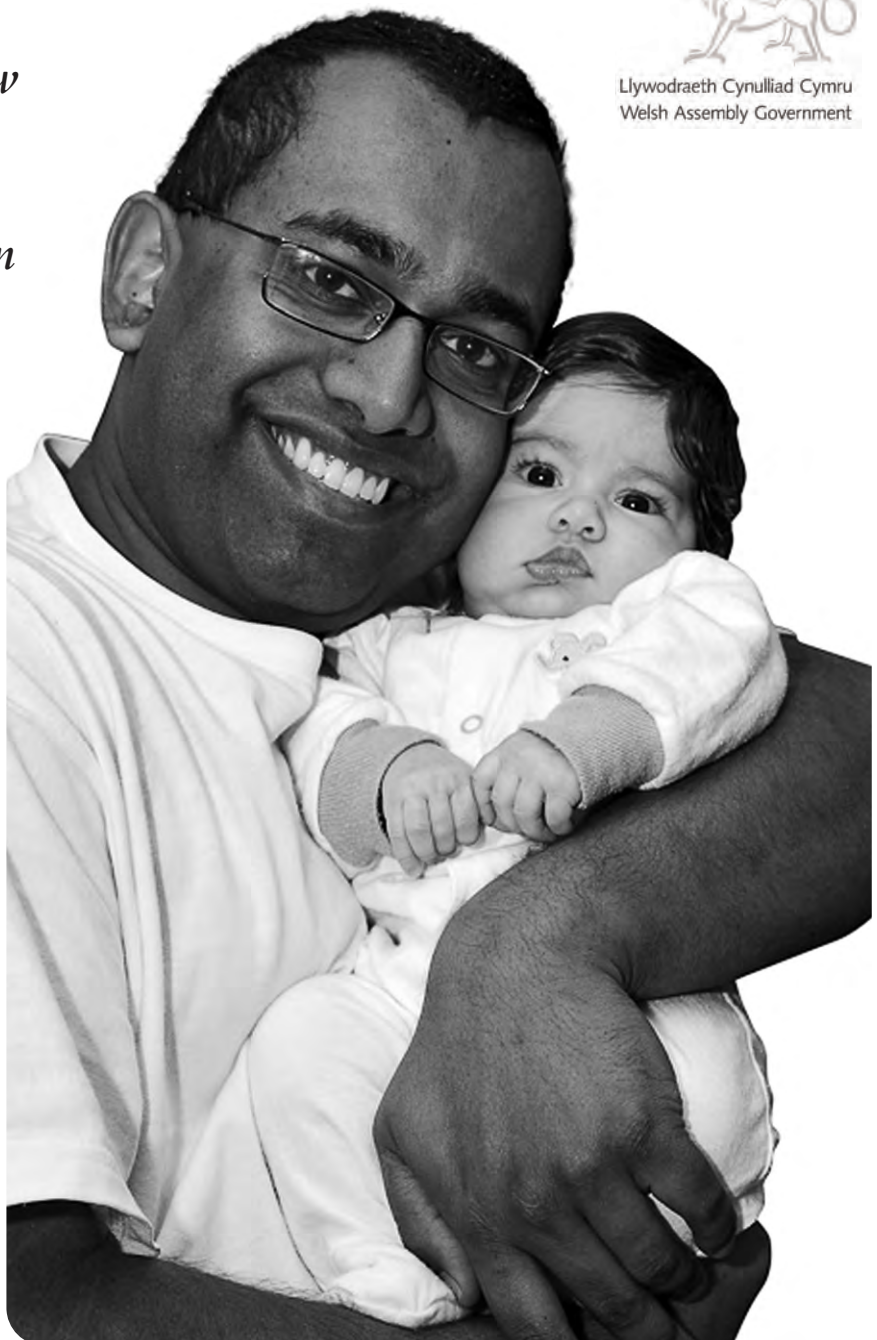
Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru  
Welsh Assembly Government

*Kim Bevan describes how  
Early Support in Wales  
aims to improve the lives  
of young disabled children  
and their families*

Early Support is the Welsh Assembly Government funded programme to improve the delivery of services to disabled children under 5 and their families. It builds on work carried out in England over the last 5 years, where Early Support is well-established in many local authorities. Children in Wales and a wide range of voluntary sector and other partners have been tasked by the Welsh Assembly Government to implement Early Support in Wales.

### **Lack of co-ordination**

Parents have consistently reported a lack of co-ordination in services, where separate systems operating in the statutory agencies positively stand in the way of parents receiving a joined up service. Parents sometimes feel that



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they have to fight the system to ensure that their family gets the support they need early on – they end up having to act as the main point of contact, coordinating the services that are there to assist them. Early Support aims to ensure that services are better coordinated, with a single point of contact, working in a family and child focused way, in partnership with parents and carers.

## Support Materials

Early Support has developed a range of resources and training aimed at bringing service providers together and put the family at the centre of the process. Early Support materials have been developed to help families and professionals move out of a model of crisis intervention and bring an element of planning into the lives of families with young disabled children. The materials include:

- Family Pack (including the Family file)
- Range of background information booklets
- Range of information for parents booklets
- Multiagency planning and improvement tool
- Developmental journals (for children with Down syndrome, visual impairment and a generic version) and monitoring protocol for deaf babies and children

The development of these resources and the training began in England and it is

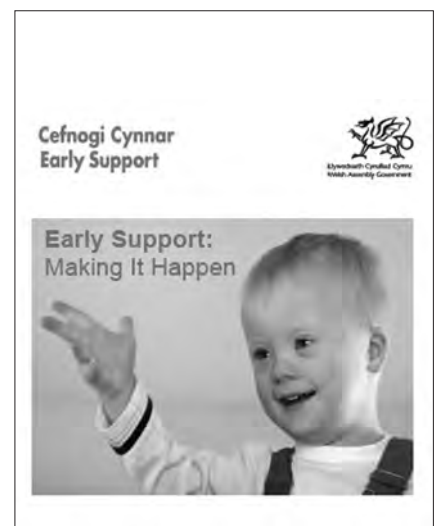
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currently taking place in Wales to ensure the materials are suitably adjusted to fit the Welsh context and are available through the medium of Welsh. A large proportion of the materials, including the Family file, will be ready and available by the end of September 2009, when the programme is formally launched in Wales. The launch of Early Support in Wales is on 29th September 2009 at the Millennium Stadium, Cardiff.

The materials are not, however, the intervention and Early Support principles and approaches will be gradually introduced in Wales, with the support of Early Support consultants working closely with

all partners across Wales. The training will be free in its initial phase and the Early Support training team will support local areas to build their own capacity to deliver the training.



*For information about the programme, the consultants, the training and the launch contact Kathy Beach, Early Support administrator – [kathryn.beach@childreninwales.org.uk](mailto:kathryn.beach@childreninwales.org.uk) or Kim Bevan, Early Support lead consultant – [kim@bevanassociates.co.uk](mailto:kim@bevanassociates.co.uk) or visit the Early Support website – [www.earlysupportwales.org.uk](http://www.earlysupportwales.org.uk)*