



How to access support for Children and Young People with Disabilities.

This document is developed in partnership with The Disabled Children and Young People's Service, Carers Gloucestershire and parent carers to ensure that we work effectively together to achieve meeting needs and outcomes for disabled children, young people and parent carers within Gloucestershire.

The Disabled Children and Young People Service

This service provides assessment and support planning for disabled children, young people and their families, and a range of support to meet assessed needs. Support is intended to provide disabled children with the same range of opportunities as non-disabled children and with their families experience the 'ordinary' things in life that others take for granted.

We are committed to working in partnership with young people and families in everything that we do. Our aim is to support disabled children and young people to be fully participating and included in their families and communities, with the skills and experiences needed to live as independently as possible.

What do we mean by 'disabled'?

In the Regulations, the word "disabled" has the meaning given in Section 17(11) of the Children Act 1989. That is, that a child is disabled "if he is blind, deaf or dumb or suffers from mental disorder of any kind or is substantially and permanently handicapped by illness, injury or congenital deformity or such other disability as may be prescribed". That language is now very outdated. The more recent Equality Act 2010 says "a person has a disability if they have a physical or mental impairment and the impairment has a substantial and long term adverse effect on their ability to perform normal day to day activities".

Where can I find support?

Gloucestershire's Local Offer is a wide range of information about all the support and facilities which families can expect to find in their area for children and young people who have special educational needs (SEN) and disabilities. The information covers education, health and social care support and services for children and young people aged between 0 and 25. www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/localoffer

The Key is a special information service for any family in Gloucestershire with a disabled child or young person aged between 0 and 25. If you register with The Key you can get free and discounted leisure passes at designated centres. You will also regularly be kept up to date with what's going on in the county through The Key

newsletter. The Key also has a site for young people. You can register on line www.keywords.org.uk or call staff at The Key 01452 427361

The Family Information Service (FIS) offer free impartial advice and support for ALL families with a child or young person aged 0-19 (up to 25 years for young people with additional needs). They produce a newsletter called Families Matter and you can contact them directly on 08005420202 or to see details of their directory visit www.glofamiliesdirectory.org.uk

Carers Gloucestershire support parent carers and provide opportunities for contact with other parents. Carersline is a telephone helpline 0300 111 9000 providing information, advice, guidance and a link to other services for anyone who gives regular unpaid help to a relative or friend who has a disability or additional needs. The Parent Carer network helps shape current and future services. See <http://gloparentcarers.org.uk/>

What is available if I need more support? You can contact your local Families First Plus Team or Children's Helpdesk.

Your Families First Plus Team is a local early help service who work with the Children's partnership to identify who is best within the partnership to help provide support to your child and family. They will work with you to gather information about your child and family to help to understand the needs of your child or young person and the support you may need as a family.

This way of working is called *The Early Help Offer*. It respects every family's right to access information to help manage their own lives successfully. The teams will provide advice about support available and how to get it. It enables services to coordinate their activity better and provide families with a single point of contact. Help can then be agreed as soon as concerns start to emerge. The 'Offer' is for all children at any point in a child or young person's life. It includes both universal (for everyone) and targeted /specialist services (for those with a particular need), to reduce or prevent concerns from growing or becoming fixed.

The information gathering may result in advice and signposting to other agencies or resources for information. It may tell us we need more information to understand your child's needs and find the right support. We may suggest an assessment called a 'My Plan' or 'My Plan Plus'. A Lead Professional in the community or a practitioner already supporting you may be able to help you with this.

If the early help offer has been considered and does not meet the needs of your child and family you may be referred for an assessment called a My Plan Plus or a single assessment to be completed by a Lead Professional or Social Worker from the disabled children's service.

What will happen when my child is assessed?

An 'assessment' will be carried out by a Lead Professional or Social Worker to discuss your child's and your family's needs with you. They will discuss strengths and support, concerns or worries and identified needs. All disabled children are entitled to an assessment of needs. Our approach to assessing needs is for the first

point of contact to be with advice, guidance and early help, this can frequently meet needs.

Should early help not be appropriate to meet needs an assessment will be carried out by a Lead Professional or Social Worker. The assessment will cover a range of questions and information gathering and at the end of the assessment, needs and outcomes will be identified. A plan will then be developed with resources to meet the needs and outcomes. This can be a resource within the family, a community resource, a service you are signposted to, a service you are funding yourself or a service funded through a personal budget.

To start this off a Lead Professional or Social Worker will make a phone call to introduce themselves and arrange a visit. This will be followed up with an email or letter to include:

- Part one and two of 'How to access support for Children and Young People with disabilities.'
- An 'Assessment in Children's Services document 2013'
- Compliments/Complaints process and Team Manager details
- Information about:
 - Gloucestershire's Local Offer
 - The Key
 - Carers Gloucestershire
 - Family Information Service

Keeping families informed

Our agreement with parents is:

If your situation or child/young person's needs change or a re-assessment is needed we ask that you contact your child/young person's named worker

If your child/young person's allocated worker is unavailable for a long time we will send you details of whom to contact during their absence.

We can't always allocate the same worker to help you. If a new worker is allocated they may need to ask questions to check they fully understand your child's and your family's needs.

Family Map

Part of the assessment will include a genogram, which is a family map or tree. This will help us to understand your child's world and the network of support from friends, family or services.

What you can expect from us

- A respectful, non-judgemental and empathic approach.

- That we will explain why we working with you and your family and what we can do and not do
- We will listen to you and consider your wishes and feelings in everything we do
- We will make sure you understand what we are saying by using clear and straightforward language
- We will do everything we say we will
- We will be on time for meetings and appointments
- We will keep you updated on progress
- We will keep your personal information safe and explain how we are going to use it
- We will try to answer your questions or find someone who can

- The Lead Professional or Social Worker will want to meet your child or young person. This may be at home, school or another setting so that we know as much as possible and his or her 'voice' shapes plans. We realise that some children and young people cannot express their views or likes and dislikes in words so we will ask you to help us find ways to meet with them and understand them better.

- Recognition that parents are experts in their own child's disability and needs. Practitioners may not have the in depth knowledge of your child's particular condition/disability but will work in partnership with you, learning also from colleagues and research to inform assessments.

- We will share information wherever necessary with those who work with you and your family. We will ask you to sign a Consent to Share form which makes sure we all understand what and how this information will be shared . Both parents' views will be included in the assessment where possible.

Understanding the needs of you and your child - Assessment

All Children's Services assessments are based on looking at your child's developmental needs (the things they need to learn as they grow up), parenting (your strengths as a parent and the difficulties you face) and the strengths of your family and the community you live in. We will endeavour to involve both Parent/ Carers of a child/young person in the assessment.



The triangle details the areas we will discuss with you.

- **What are the questions we may ask?** This may seem like a lot of questions, but what we are trying to do is to understand your child and your family, your strengths and difficulties, so that we can help you to make plans. It is therefore important for us to ask the who, when, why, how, where and what in relation to the areas below. One question may trigger another question and will be based on your child and young person's individual needs.

: Child's Developmental Needs

- **Health:** medication, diagnosis and the impact of these
- **Physical difficulties:** Moving and getting about, physical safety, help needed with moving and daily routines
- **Sleep:** How your child sleeps, bedtime routine, frequency of night time needs and impact of these needs on your child and family
- **Food:** Eating and drinking habits
- **Toileting:** Issues related to managing toileting (continence)
- **Mental health:** emotional wellbeing, and whether s/he has any behaviours that harm him or her (self harm) or others
- **Routines and life at school** – attendance; making progress; behaviour at school, travel to school, friendships, activities at school
- **Behaviour:** How your child behaves at home, at school, in the community. How these behaviours are managed in each setting and what are the impacts of these behaviours? Can you give examples of behaviour in specific situations, patterns, frequency and triggers

- **Sensory:** Child's response to their environment such as how sensitive s/he is to light, noise, particular sounds and/or touch
- **Communication and Thinking (Cognitive):** How is your child able to let you know their likes and dislikes? When they are happy or sad? Their hopes and dreams? What is important to them? Can you give examples of; how your child communicates, reacts to certain situations?
- **Independence:** What your child is able to do for him or herself, what areas need further development towards independence? How your child is involved with planning and decision-making.
- **Routines and life at home:** likes and dislikes, interests, activities and play, how s/he gets on with other children and adults

Parenting Capacity (Strengths and difficulties of parenting):

- What are the main strengths in your family, what works well?
- What are the difficulties you face and what do you think would help?
- What support do you have as parents? This may include family, friends or services
- Please describe the additional caring responsibilities you have in relation to your child?
- How do you encourage your child to be as independent as possible?
- If you are two parents, how you work together to support your child and what effect this has on you both?
- If parents do not live together, what involvement do both parents have in your child/young person's life?
- How is your health? Do you experience any mental health issues or problems with alcohol or drugs or stresses in your relationship? What are the effects of this on you and your family?
- How do you manage your child's physical and health needs and his/her behaviour?
- How do you take care of yourself? How do you meet your own needs? Would you consider a separate Carer's Assessment?

Your family and the world around you

- **Activities:** Are there activities your family can enjoy together? How do you manage this as a family?
- **Home:** Is your home a safe environment? Has your home been adapted? Does your child have or need specialist equipment? Does your child have any problems getting in or out of your home, or getting around inside it?

- **Out and about:** Can you tell us about your family and friends and the community you live in? Do you feel included? How much support are they able to give you? Transport options available to you.
- **Money matters:** Employment status. Are you in receipt of all the benefits you are entitled to? How disability benefits are used to support your child's disability related needs?

The Lead Professional or Social Worker will share with you a summary of your child and family's strengths, risks and needs. We will then work with you to write your support plan.

You and your Lead Professional or Social Worker will agree on actions and explore support available to make these things happen.

A Resource Allocation System (a form) will be used to help gather information. The Social Worker or Lead Professional will then explore with you how to best meet the needs of your child or young person in the most cost effective way. This will include exploring community and family resources. Where needs cannot be fully met in this way, a Personal Budget may be explored with you and if required, you will be given more information about what this is and how it is calculated.

If you are unhappy with the response or outcome of our intervention then please contact your child/young person's allocated worker or team manager to discuss in the first instance. If you are still not happy with the response, then please ask for a Compliment/Complaints leaflet. Alternatively if you are satisfied with the support offered, then please feedback via the same leaflet or online as per link below.

[Complaints about children's social care services \(social work services\)](#).

From time to time we will request feedback on our service. See link below for the feedback questionnaire.

https://gloucestershire-consult.objective.co.uk/public/bmd/grs_general_survey