

My Child has additional needs, what does this mean and what can I do?

Information for Parents and Carers on Gloucestershire's Graduated Pathway to support children and young people with additional needs including Special Educational Needs and Disabilities



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Additional Needs – what does this mean?

All children can have additional needs at times. These could be to do with their development, learning, communication, behaviour, or emotional wellbeing. Sometimes, additional needs may be called special educational needs or disabilities, (SEND).

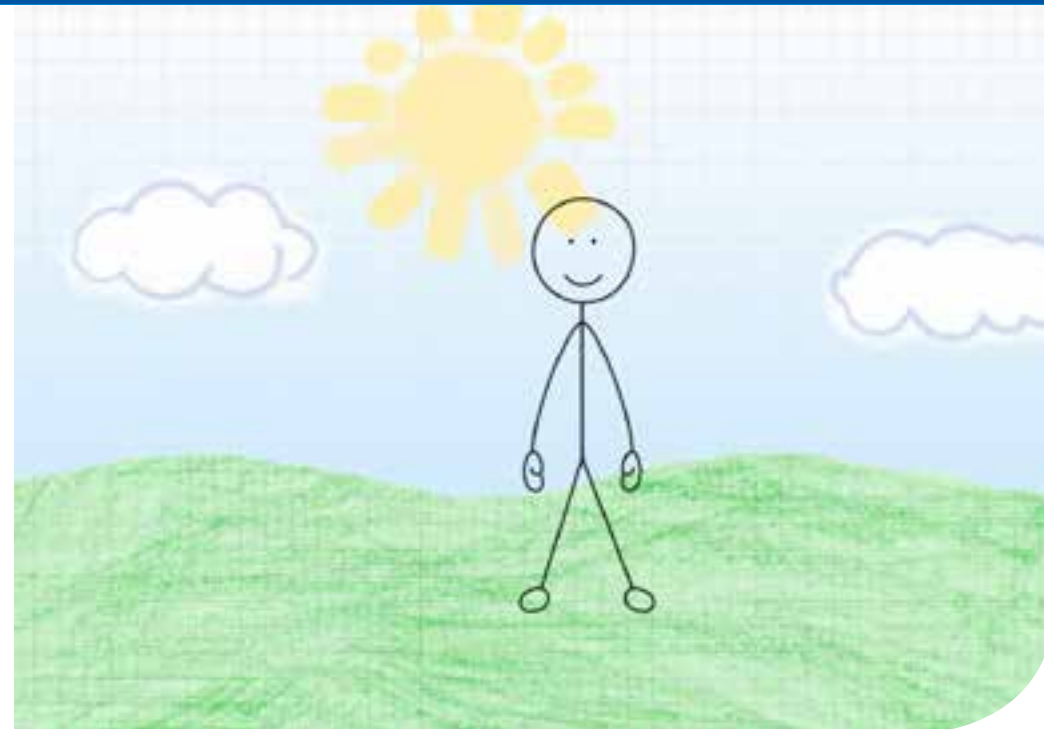
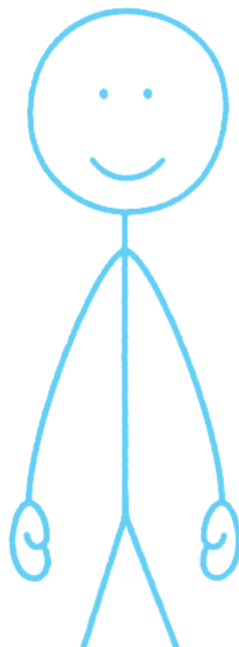
Additional needs can be short term or long term so that some children may need additional help for a short period of time while others may need it for longer.

What may concern parents or carers?

Parent or carers may worry about their child's development in comparison to other children of a similar age.

What may concern people working with children?

People working with children may be concerned about a child's progress with their learning, attendance and participation in their education setting and activities outside of the home, emotional wellbeing, physical health and development, or communication skills.



What can I do if I think my child has additional needs?

Whatever the concerns may be, it is important to discuss them with people working with your child. These could include a Health Visitor, Early Years practitioner, Teacher, Family Support Worker or anyone else involved with your child. It is also important to let people and services working with your child know what your hopes are for your child. Having a good understanding of what your child wants to achieve in the future will help make good decisions today.

How can this leaflet help?

This leaflet provides some information and guidance to parents who may be concerned that their child has additional needs. It will explain what is available in Gloucestershire to support your child and how to get the help that may be needed. We call this Gloucestershire's Graduated Pathway – getting the right kind of help at the right time.

There is a short film which explains Gloucestershire's Graduated Pathway which is available on www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/localoffer

What is Gloucestershire's Graduated Pathway?

In response to the Children and Families Act 2014, which seeks to improve outcomes for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities, Gloucestershire has developed an approach that ensures children are at the centre of the support that is given. This is called 'person-centred' planning and it is important because children are individuals with individual preferences, motivations and needs - what helps one child might not necessarily help another.

The Graduated Pathway ensures that there are consistent reviews of progress made so that the type and level of support given will change as the needs of the child change.

In short, the Graduated Pathway includes:



My Profile



My Plan



My Plan+



My EHC Plan



Pages 6 to 11 provide more detail.

Information and advice about the range of services and activities available to support your child can be found on Gloucestershire's Local Offer: www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/localoffer

What is the Local Offer?

The Local Offer provides information and advice about the range of services available in Gloucestershire and how they may support children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities. Education settings (early years, schools and colleges), health, care and community services have provided information about each of their services so that you and your child know what is available and what you can reasonably expect from them. The Local Offer does not guarantee that a particular service will be available where you live, but should be a useful guide to what you can expect in your area. Gloucestershire's Local Offer website can be found on: www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/localoffer

If you do not have access to the internet please contact:

The Key: 0800 009 3443

Family Information Service: 0800 542 0202

The seven steps of Gloucestershire's graduated pathway are:

Step 1: "My Profile"

This is a short profile that all children (aged 0-25 years) can use, or be supported to use, to provide information about them as individuals. This includes:

- What is important to me
- My hopes and goals
- What people like and admire about me
- What helps me
- What doesn't help me

This information can help people working with your child know more about him or her as a person and be used as part of person-centred planning.

Parents, carers and families can also use this information as a guide towards finding the services and activities best suited to their child. Parents and families can look on Gloucestershire's Local Offer for information about services and activities to support children and young people with additional needs. The Local Offer gives you information about education, health and care services all in one place.

www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/localoffer



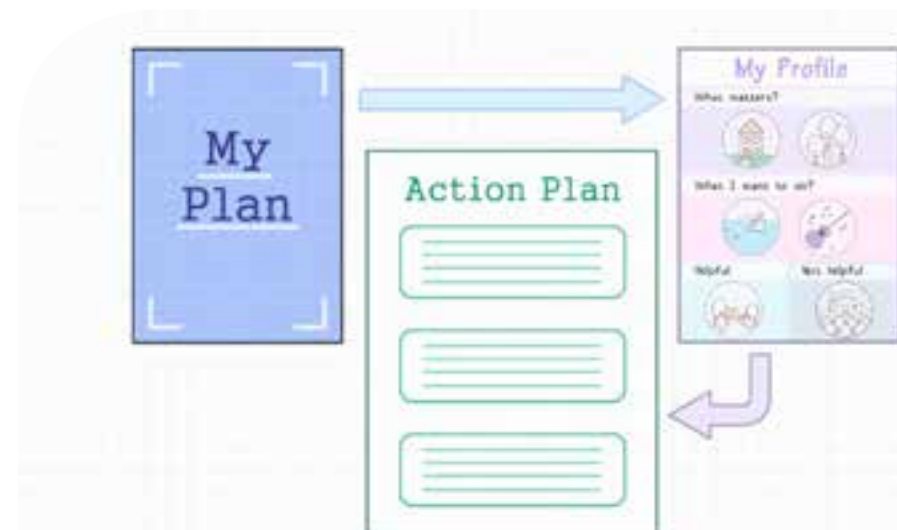
Step 2: My Plan:

If your child is identified with additional needs, someone working with him or her will talk to you about putting a plan of support in place. This would include being clear about your child's needs, the outcomes wanted and the actions needed to achieve those outcomes.

My Plan should use the person-centred information from "My Profile" to make the plan relevant to your child in terms of the outcomes agreed and the ways in which they could be met that would best suit your child as an individual.

Regular reviews of My Plan will show what is working / not working towards the outcomes to be achieved. When outcomes are met, your child may no longer need a My Plan.

If outcomes are not being met or if needs are identified in other areas of your child's life, Step 3 may be needed.





Step 3: My Plan+

If your child's additional needs require assessment and intervention from different agencies such as education, health and social care, My Plan+ may be used. My Plan+ is a multi-agency framework that brings different assessments and interventions into one single assessment and plan. Someone working with your child will co-ordinate and bring this information together.

A meeting of all those involved, sometimes called a Team Around the Child (TAC) meeting, will be organised, to which you would be invited to attend. During the meeting, the team around your child will look at the support and help already in place for your child and explore what is available through the Local Offer. The plan will then be agreed.

As with My Plan, My Plan+ will use regular reviews to show what is working / not working towards the outcomes to be achieved. When outcomes are met, your child may no longer need a My Plan+.

Step 4: Request for an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHC Plan)

At this stage, you and the team around your child (TAC) may be considering making a request for an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHC Plan). This is because your child's education outcomes are not being met. An EHC Plan is a statutory plan that is only needed when a child's education needs cannot be met within the additional resources already in place.

In most cases, practitioners working with you will make a request on your behalf.

The request is looked at by a multi-agency panel, which is a group of people from across Education, Health and Social Care. The panel will decide if your child is eligible for an EHC assessment which may lead to an EHC Plan and contact you to explain what will happen next.

If the decision is yes, then Step 5 will begin.

If the decision is no, you and the team around your child will be signposted to alternative sources of support.





Step 5: “My Story”

If your child is eligible for an EHC needs assessment which may lead to an EHC Plan, you will be asked for more information about his/her additional needs that are impacting on their education outcomes.

You will be sent a form called “My Story” to complete. “My Story” covers all areas of your child’s life and asks you to think about things that are working and not working so well.

While you are completing “My Story”, the practitioners working with your child will be asked to provide information about your child’s needs and what has already been put in place to support your child’s outcomes.

All of this information is brought together by a named Casework Officer in the Council’s SEND Team and the multi-agency panel will decide if an EHC Plan is needed.

If the decision is to issue an EHC Plan, Step 6 will begin.

If the decision is not to issue an EHC Plan, you and the team around the child will be signposted to alternative sources of support.

Step 6: “My EHC Plan”

An EHC planning meeting will be held to discuss the content of the draft EHC Plan. You and your child will be invited to attend so that you can contribute to the wording of the Plan. The EHC Plan will set out what will be needed to ensure your child achieves his/her goals.

At this stage as a family you can discuss how you would like some of the resources available to be used. Options to consider could range from contributing ideas about how best to use some of the resources to the option of taking a proportion of the resources as a direct payment. Direct payments would enable you to purchase a service independently on behalf of your child as long as it would achieve one or more of the outcomes identified in the Plan.

You will receive a written version of the Plan after the meeting and have 15 days to get back to the SEND Team with anything you would like to change.

The EHC Plan will then be finalised, the resources agreed and you and the team around your child will be ready to put the Plan into action.



Step 7: My Review



At least once per year, the family and practitioners involved with your child will be asked to review the EHC Plan. Regular reviews will also show what is working / not working towards the outcomes to be achieved. When the education outcomes are met, your child may no longer need an EHC Plan and needs that remain in other areas of his/her life can continue to be supported in a My Plan or My Plan+.

What can I do if I disagree with decisions made by the local authority?

You can appeal to the First-tier Tribunal (Special Educational Needs and Disability) if you disagree with the local authority's decision not to:

- assess your child's educational, health and care (EHC) needs (stage 4 above)
- create an EHC plan (stage 5 above)
- change what's in your child's EHC plan (stage 6 above)

More information on your right to appeal and mediation that is offered as a first step can be found on the local offer website: www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/localoffer or from the services listed on page 13.

Other sources of help and advice:

For more information on Gloucestershire's Graduated Pathway, SEN Support and EHC Plans, please visit the Local Offer website on www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/localoffer

Or contact:

The Special Educational Needs and Disability Information and Advice Support Service (SENDIASS), formerly known as Gloucestershire Parent Partnership Service, provides free confidential and impartial advice and support to parents and carers of children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities.

Email: pps@carersgloucestershire.org.uk or Freephone: 0800158 3603 Direct lines: 01452 389344 / 01452 389345

Gloucestershire Independent Support Service provides free & impartial help if your child or young person has educational needs that are not being met within school/college or nursery and you would like them to be assessed for an EHCP

Carers Gloucestershire -
Independent Support Coordinator
Email: ldavenport@carersgloucestershire.org.uk
Freephone: 0300 111 9000

Family Information Service - offer free impartial advice, information and support for families with children aged 0-19 years (up to 25 years for children with additional needs).

Email: familyinfo@gloucestershire.gov.uk
or Freephone: 0800 542 02 02

The Key - Disabled children's and young people's register and information service.

Email: thekey@gloucestershire.gov.uk
or Freephone: 0800 009 34 43

What can I do if I am not happy with the support provided for my child?

Occasionally, disagreements and misunderstandings happen. Families and practitioners need to talk and work together to solve any problems.

However, if after discussion you have a complaint or are unhappy with your child's support, there are a number of things you can do:

- Check the information provided by the service in question on the Local Offer www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/localoffer to see if it is in line with your child's experience;
- Talk to the manager of the service, Head Teacher or Principal of their education setting;
- Ask for a copy of the service's special education needs and/or disability policy as this will explain how the service will handle your complaint;
- Contact the Gloucestershire Parent Partnership Service for information and impartial advice



Glossary

Additional needs: is when something is limiting a person's development. For children, additional needs could be in areas of physical development, learning, communication, wellbeing and behaviour.

Education, Health and Care Plan or EHC Plan: is a statutory plan for a few children whose education needs cannot be met within the existing additional resources. A statutory plan is one that must be provided if a child is eligible for it.

Gloucestershire's Graduated Pathway: is a pathway of support that helps children with additional needs. The level and type of help needed is in proportion to the level and type of additional needs. It starts with support that can be put in place by parents and families using the Local Offer.

Gloucestershire's Local Offer: is a website that provides information, advice and guidance on a range of services available to children with additional needs, special educational needs and disabilities.

Outcomes: are actual differences that are made as a result of support given. Some outcomes are universal as a result of services that are in place for everyone. For example, every child receives an education that prepares them for adult life. However, when outcomes are agreed for a child with additional needs, they should be individual to that child.

For example, *'Jenny' can sit independently for 10 minutes and complete a task by herself, or,*

'Jake' is using simple sentences that are helping him to be understood better by his teachers and friends in class and by his family at home.

