In Gloucestershire, we are committed to working together and in partnership with all agencies providing services to children, young people and their families.

Since 2014, we have had the Graduated Pathway of support for children and young people with SEND. This development was in response to the SEND reforms resulting from the Children and Families Act (2014) and the SEND Code of Practice (2015) and provides graduated responses to support children with SEND from the moment needs are identified.

Alongside the SEND Graduated Pathway we have continued to use CAF as an early help assessment and plan for all other children with additional needs, but following extensive consultation, it has been agreed that from September 2016 there will be one pathway of graduated Early Help and Support for children, young people and their families.

Building on the strengths of the SEND Graduated Pathway, the Graduated Pathway of Early Help and Support provides an integrated and holistic framework to support all children and young people with additional needs and their families.

What this means for you...

As a child or young person, this means that the people working with you will help you when you need it and will not just look at one area of your life but consider everything which could be causing you difficulty.

As a parent, this means that agencies will work together with you and your child to consider all aspects of your child or young person’s life that may be having an impact on their progress, development and wellbeing.

As agencies, this means that you can streamline your paperwork and processes to reduce unnecessary duplication and effort.

As practitioners, this means that there is one pathway to follow when you identify a child or young person with additional needs, including SEND.

Building Better Lives

The Building Better Lives (BBL) policy is a 10 year plan for disability services in Gloucestershire. It’s about modernising through developing and delivering services in partnership with disabled people. It’s also about taking a ‘joined up’ approach to services, with an ‘all-age, all-disability’ focus which makes the most of our resources and makes transition from children’s to adults’ disability services smoother for everyone.

The policy was developed through extensive consultation and co-produced with disabled people and carers. It was agreed by Gloucestershire County Council Cabinet in the autumn of 2014 and is overseen by Directors of Social Care.

The policy is underpinned by the following seven principles which now shape all our disabled service development and delivery. We expect all practitioners to apply these principles through their work.

1. Early help – This is about focussing on how we can help people to do things for themselves and build on what they are good at. We think that if we get this right early we will get...
the chance to help people with areas of their life which they find difficult, which sets people up for a better long-term future. Early help also includes supporting children and young people as much as possible and as soon as possible, so that we build the foundations for a fulfilling life.

2. Inclusion – The principle of being a part of the community is key. We are looking for ways to make people included and to feel included, rather than being segregated in specialist services.

3. Independence – The main point of enabling is to make people as independent as possible. Disabled people have clearly told us that this is what they want.

4. Contribution – People with a disability should have the same right to make their individual contribution to society as others do. Everyone has a contribution to make and it is the job of the disabled person and the range of individuals enabling them to figure out what that contribution is and how it can be facilitated. People might make a contribution through paid work, volunteering or time-banking, for example.

5. Shared responsibility – People with disabilities should be linked into informal networks of support within the community. It is also the job of the community and voluntary sector to enable and include people and is something which friends, family and the community can help with. Everyone’s part counts equally.

6. Personalisation through choice and control – Individually commissioned services need to respond to the expected outcomes for each individual and ensure that planning is personalised in every aspect. Being more independent and included also opens up a lot of new choices and options to people.

7. Coordination of a whole life approach – The plan for a person’s life needs to have a perspective that transcends boundaries put in place by organisations and recognises that each individual can expect and should receive their own personal plan – which is understood by all practitioners. During childhood it’s time to start planning for the future and preparing to become more independent. In adulthood it’s about contributing to society in whatever way works best.

Purpose of this guidance

Ensuring that Gloucestershire children, young people and adults with additional needs including special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) experience a high quality of life and education is at the heart of the guidance contained within this booklet.

The guidance within this book is intended as a broad framework within which all practitioners can work. It is acknowledged that the circumstances within each individual setting will be different, as indeed are the needs of the children and young people.

This guidance is provided to help you navigate a graduated pathway of early help and support; access the tools to support early identification of additional needs; support planning and engaging the right support as early as possible. It should be read in conjunction with the SEND Code of Practice (2015), which is underpinned by the principles in Part 3 of the Children and Families Act 2014, along with Gloucestershire County Council’s SEND policy and Working Together to Safeguard Children 2015.

Early Help in Gloucestershire

Early Help is about providing support to potentially vulnerable children, young people and their families as soon as problems begin to emerge or when there is a strong likelihood that problems will start in the future. It is also about providing support at any and every stage of a child’s life; pre-birth, during pregnancy, childhood and/or adolescence.

Early identification of additional needs is likely to happen in the universal sector i.e. services that are available to everyone in the community. The people involved will be those practitioners in universal services such as:

- universal health services such as Health Visitors, School Nursing, Occupational Therapists, Speech and Language Therapists, Physiotherapists, Paediatricians and Doctors;
- Early Years educational settings, Children’s Centres, Schools, Colleges;
- community services within the Early Help Partnerships;
- voluntary and independent provision of out of school and holiday activities.

Children and families are entitled to early help if, and when, they need it. Early help could be provided through an increase in the levels of universal services, or targeted services provided or be commissioned in localities.
Early Help Approach

In order to achieve a holistic and integrative approach to providing early help to all children with additional needs including SEND, and their families, we are building on what we do well and making the sensible changes that children, young people, families and practitioners want.

The principles are:

- seeing the person or family first, not the difficulty;
- feeling listened to and enabled to be part of the solution;
- a joined-up approach that helps the ‘whole’ child or young person now and into the future;
- a reduction in the multiple times families are asked for the same information;
- a reduction in the amount and variety of assessments and plans which can lead to confusion;
- a more transparent and meaningful approach to how we identify needs early and direct resources to meet outcomes.

Information, advice and support for parents, children, carers, professionals and partners is available from:

The Family Information Service (FIS) – http://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/fis

The Local Offer – http://www.glosfamiliesdirectory.org.uk/kb5/gloucs/glosfamilies/localoffer.page

The Children and Young Person Services (CYPS) – http://www.2gether.nhs.uk/cyps#

When a family or a practitioner who is helping them needs more support, this can be requested from the Early Help Partnership.

Early Help Partnerships

Early Help Partnerships have been developed within each locality across Gloucestershire. This is not a new service but builds on existing arrangements and services already in place, working to share resources and reshape service delivery to meet the local needs of children, young people and their families.

Each Early Help Partnership operates a fortnightly Allocations Group that is administered by locality Family First Plus teams. These are made up of representatives of services across the locality who use their knowledge and experience to identify early help interventions to meet the needs of a child and/or family and offer advice, guidance and support.

Details on how to access additional support can be found by visiting: http://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/extra/early-help

or contacting your local Families First Team

- Gloucester
gloucesterearlyhelp@gloucestershire.gov.uk (01452 328076)

- Cheltenham
cheltenhamearlyhelp@gloucestershire.gov.uk (01452 328160)

- Tewkesbury
tewkesburyearlyhelp@gloucestershire.gov.uk (01452 328250)

- Cotswolds
cotswoldsearlyhelp@gloucestershire.gov.uk (01452 328101)

- Stroud
stroudearlyhelp@gloucestershire.gov.uk (01452 328130)

- Forest of Dean
forestofdeanearlyhelp@gloucestershire.gov.uk (01452 328048)

How to use this guidance

The booklet is set out into sections which are described in the contents page.

There is a section presenting scenarios to provide examples of applying a graduated Early Help and Support approach.

The final section, called Gloucestershire Interventions Guidance (GIG), sets out particular approaches and things to consider when working with children and young people with additional needs that impact on their learning, development and progress.
Implications of the Children and Families Act 2014 & Working Together to Safeguard Children 2015

Identification of needs through an integrated approach to assessment and planning
- Starting early
- More streamlined
- Completed quickly
- Easier to understand
- Greater involvement of children, young people and their families

Focus on understanding the goals of children and young people and how to help them achieve their aspirations
- Focus on the strengths and interests of a child or young person, not what they can’t do
- Focus on life outcomes - fulfilling their potential and enjoying a life of work, leisure and family in their own community

Greater involvement and participation for parents/carers and young people about services they and their family use
- Person and family-centred approaches enable parents/carers, children and young people’s views to be taken account of
- Young people aged 16 and over supported to have final decision

Changes for all children and young people with additional needs, and their parents/carers

Information and advice must be provided on services available locally and how to access them
- Children and young people and their parents/carers know what they can reasonably expect their community services including: Early Years providers, schools, colleges, LA and local services to provide

Staff to have the necessary knowledge, understanding and skills to provide the right support
- Focus on a joined up approach to assessment and planning
- Recognition that an assessment is holistic
- Focus on building capacity within communities to meet additional needs

Services must be planned and commissioned jointly
- Involvement of children, young people and their parents/carers
- Requirement that education, health and social care professionals work together
Holistic support for all children and young people with additional needs

Children and young people deserve to achieve the best possible outcomes and this is at the heart of all our work in Gloucestershire. As part of everyone’s responsibility for safeguarding children and promoting their welfare, we want to ensure that children and young people with additional needs are identified at the earliest possible stage and work is undertaken in a coordinated manner to prevent their needs from escalating.

The Levels of Intervention guidance is intended to provide practitioners with guidance about making decisions according to the level of need. It aims to make sure that the appropriate level of support will be put in place to ensure that a child or young person’s needs are met in a robust and timely way. Levels of intervention act as a guide to professional decision making and are there to make sure that children, young people and families are able to access the right support to increase life chances and keep children and young people safe. They should not be seen as a barrier but as a clear continuum across the levels of need and as a way of providing appropriate support to meet that need.

Children and families have different levels of need at different times across a range of problems. Having a graduated approach ensures that support will be proportionate and at the lowest level of intervention. Children might also have a range of needs across different levels. It is important to take all needs into consideration when determining the type of support that might be required and the professionals who should be involved.

The Levels of Intervention Guidance compliments and sits alongside the Gloucestershire Guidance Booklet for professionals working with children and young people (0-25) with Additional Needs including Special Educational Needs and Disabilities.

The Levels of Intervention Guidance can be accessed via the GSCB website: http://www.gscb.org.uk/article/120318/Working-with-Children--Young-People
A graduated approach

Principles of a graduated approach

Applying a graduated approach is about providing the right level of support at the right time. If more or different support is needed, it builds onto the support already in place and from the understanding of what has worked/not worked in the past.

The principles include:

✔ Helping people to help themselves
  ◦ providing accessible information, advice and support

✔ Understanding the person and being able to apply a person-centred approach

✔ Identifying additional needs early

✔ Communicating with parents and carers

✔ Listening to parents and carers and involving them as fully as possible

✔ Setting SMART outcomes
  ◦ Specific
  ◦ Measurable
  ◦ Agreed
  ◦ Realistic
  ◦ Timed

✔ Agreeing a plan of action and review date

✔ Involving other practitioners and agencies as needed
  ◦ sharing information with consent

✔ Being clear about everyone’s role
  ◦ identifying the Lead Practitioner

✔ Reviewing progress
  ◦ are outcomes being met?
  ◦ if not, why not?
  ◦ what needs to change?
  ◦ do we have all the information we need?

✔ Using holistic assessment to understand needs and strengths that might not be known already

✔ Being committed to work in partnership with all agencies

✔ Being transparent about decision making

Enabling the right level of intervention and support when needed

My Profile
- Universal services

My Plan
- Support to meet additional needs

Statutory Assessment and Planning
- Including Education, Health and Care Plan; Child In Need Plan, Child in Care Plan

My Assessment My Plan +
- Integrated assessment and planning to meet additional needs

Gloucestershire Guidance Booklet for Practitioners Working with Children and Young People (0 – 25 yrs) with Additional Needs including Special Educational Needs and Disabilities
Statutory Social Care and Early Help

When a child or young person requires, or has statutory involvement from Social Care, graduated early help and support must continue. The statutory Social Care intervention builds upon all the support already in place and is coordinated using a Team Around the Child approach. These meetings may be referred to as Child in Need; Core Group following a Child Protection Plan; Child in Care Review.

When concerns arise about a child or young person with social care involvement
If there are concerns regarding the education, attendance, behaviour, physical or mental health of a child that has a current statutory Social Care involvement such as for Children in Care (CiC), Children in Need (CIN) or Child Protection (CP), the Designated or Lead member of staff within the education placement should be alerted so that s/he can make contact with other agencies that may be involved and a Team Around the Child meeting/review (or equivalent) can be coordinated.

Agencies to consider making contact with as soon as a concern arises:

- Advisory Teaching Service
  (01452 426955 or 01452 426842) – communication & interaction; physical and sensory; cognition & learning
- Children and Families Service
  – the Child’s Social Worker or Children’s Helpdesk
  (01452 426565)
- Education Performance and Inclusion Team
  (01452 427274 or 01452 427360) – advice on attendance, behaviour and exclusion
- Educational Psychology Service
  (01452 328004) – educational, personal development, social, emotional and mental health
- Independent Reviewing Team
  (01452 328196) – Children in Care
- SEND 0-25 Service
  (01452 427536) – advice on Education, Health and Care Plans, educational placements, Annual Review
- The Children and Young People's Service (CYPS)
  (01452 894000) – emotional well-being and mental health
- The Designated School Nurse for Children in Care
  (0300 4218164 or 0300 4218298)
- The School Nursing Service:
  - Cheltenham 01242 581009
  - Cotswolds 0300 421 8906
  - Forest of Dean 0300 421 8661/2
  - Gloucester 0300 421 1795
  - Stroud 0300 421 8959
  - Tewkesbury 0300 421 6161
  - Special School nurses
    01242 285 960
- The Virtual School
  (01452 328360) – Children in Care

Information, Advice and Guidance for families and practitioners

There are many sources of information, advice and guidance available for both families and practitioners, such as:

- The Family Information Service
  www.glosfamiliesdirectory.org.uk – with a new Practitioner Zone included
- The Local Offer
  www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/localoffer
- SENCOSPOT
  http://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/schoolsnet/sencospot
- SEND Information, Advice Support Service (SENDIASS)
  www.sendiassglos.org.uk

Please see Section 7 for more detailed information.
Person and Family-Centred Approaches – involving children, young people and families

**Person and Family Centred Principles of an Early Help approach**

The views, wishes and feelings of the child or young person must be taken into account.

Their parents and carers’ views need to be taken into account.

The child or young person, and their parents/carers, must be able to participate as fully as possible in decision making.

The child or young person must be provided with the necessary information and support to achieve that decision.

The child or young person, and their parents/carers, must be supported to help the child or young person to effectively prepare for adulthood.

“...showed that he has ideas for his future and spoke very well.”

Parent of Year 9 child

“...he was able to respond to the questions posed and I was impressed by the quality and depth of his responses.”

“...he was able to respond to the questions posed and I was impressed by the quality and depth of his responses.”

Parent of Year 9 child

The essence of being person-centred is enabling the active participation of children, young people and their families in the process of planning how to achieve their aspirations and outcomes for their life. The views of children, young people and families need to be sought at all stages of the processes of identifying and planning outcomes.

There is a multitude of different ways in which participation of children and young people and families can be increased:

- Practitioners are open and transparent about their concerns and what they would like to do to help;
- Consent to share and seek information is sought in an informed and transparent manner;
- Providing alternative ways to gather and/or record views of children and young people;
- Family’s views and ideas are sought, acknowledging their knowledge and experience;
- Team Around the Child / Team Around the Family meetings are made as welcoming and inclusive as possible – practitioners avoiding jargon and being prepared to listen as well as contribute;
- Being flexible about where a meeting is held;
- Providing alternative and different ways to gather and/or record views of children and young people.

**Person centred reviews**

Reviewing progress is an essential part of a graduated early help response and allows for children and families to focus on what is happening to make a positive difference and ways of sustaining improvement. Reviews can also highlight where progress is not being made and provide opportunity for practitioners and families to refocus and understand the barriers to improvement and the next steps that need to be taken.

Maintaining a person-centred approach is crucial to enabling participation from children and families. Some ways of doing this include:

- The young person could send out the invitations to their own progress review;
- Families could help to decide who needs to come – perhaps inviting a supportive friend or adult advocate for the young person;
- Families are given time to discuss their views before the review if they feel it would help them during the meeting.

Practitioners need to think about how they create a warm and welcoming environment, how they prepare children and young people for their reviews, how they maintain children, young people and parents’ knowledge about services and resources available so they can be fully informed when making future plans, particularly at transition times. All settings can build on established good practice to ensure that they are person-centred in their approach to supporting children with additional needs.