The Equality Act 2010 and Accessibility Plans

The Equality Act (2010) was introduced to offer protection from all types of discrimination under a single piece of legislation. The Equality Act replaced several previous Acts of Parliament and regulations (including the Disability Discrimination Act) and a core aim of the act is to increase its effectiveness through being less burdensome.

All education settings including Early Years providers, all schools, FE colleges, sixth form colleges, 16-19 academies and independent special schools approved under Section 41 of the Children and Families Act 2014 have duties under the Equality Act 2010. All settings must make reasonable adjustments for pupils including the provision of auxiliary aids and services for disabled children, in order to prevent these children being put at a substantial disadvantage. These duties are anticipatory, meaning that settings must plan in advance to ensure the needs of future pupils can be met.

The Equality Act introduced a single Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) which applies to public bodies including maintained schools and academies. The PSED's main elements include eliminating discrimination, advancing equality and fostering good relationships between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

Under this Act schools have two specific duties; these are that schools should:
- publish information which shows compliance with the PSED, and
- publish at least one equality objective.

The Equality Act replicates duties that schools had under the Disability Discrimination Act in so much that all schools need to carry out accessibility planning for disabled pupils. Schedule 10 of the Equality Act states that schools must implement accessibility plans which are aimed at:

(a) increasing the extent to which disabled pupils can participate in the school's curriculum;
(b) improving the physical environment of the school for the purpose of increasing the extent to which disabled pupils are able to take advantage of education and benefits, facilities or services provided or offered by the school, and
(c) improving the delivery of information to disabled pupils which is readily accessible to pupils who are not disabled.

It is the duty of the responsible body of a school to prepare an accessibility plan. Accessibility plans should not simply respond to the current identified needs of its school population but should anticipate the potential needs of future pupils and plan accordingly.

Gloucestershire County Council’s accessibility strategy (2015-2018) is available on SENCOSpot and on the Local Offer using the following link. The strategy can help settings develop their own individual accessibility plans.

http://www.glosfamiliesdirectory.org.uk/kb5/gloucs/glosfamilies/site.page?id=8J-W5nLUngl

A key responsibility of the SENCO is working with the Head Teacher and school governors to ensure that the school meets its responsibilities under the Equality Act (2010) with regard to reasonable adjustments and access arrangements.

Department for Education: Guidance on the Equality Act 2010 and advice for schools can be found at:

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/equality-act-2010-advice-for-schools
Key roles in Educational Settings

The role of the Head Teacher or Principal

A Head Teacher or Principal is the most senior teacher and leader of a school or educational setting and responsible for the education of all pupils, management of staff, and for school policy making.

Head teachers or Principals are ultimately responsible for the smooth running of a school or setting, the academic achievement of its pupils and the management of its staff. Their role is to provide educational vision, direction and motivation to both staff and pupils.

The role of the Class Teacher

High quality teaching, differentiated for individual pupils, is the first step in responding to pupils who have or may have SEND.

(SEND Code of Practice, 2015)

The key characteristics of ‘quality first’ teaching includes:

- highly focussed lesson design with sharp objectives;
- high demands of pupil involvement and engagement with their learning;
- high levels of interaction for all pupils;
- appropriate use of teacher questioning, modelling and explaining;
- an emphasis on learning through dialogue, both individually and in groups;
- an expectation pupil’s will accept responsibility for their own work;
- regular use of encouragement and authentic praise.

The SEN Code of Practice (2015) takes this mantra of ‘quality first’ teaching and develops the concept into one where high quality teaching available to the whole class should lead to fewer pupils requiring support that is different from, or additional to that normally available to all pupils of the same age. High quality teaching, differentiated for individual pupils, is the first step that should be taken to meeting the needs of pupils who may have SEND. Schools should regularly review the quality of teaching for all pupils and where necessary offer support to class teachers to aid their understanding of how to support pupils with SEND.

The role of the Class or Subject Teacher is embedded in the graduated approach to meeting the needs of pupils with SEND. Referencing this four part cycle the role of the Class or Subject Teacher is to:

- **Assess** – the class or subject teacher, with the SENCO, should carry out a clear analysis of a pupil’s needs based on the teacher’s assessment and experience of the pupil;
- **Plan** – the teacher, alongside the SENCO, pupil’s parents or carers and pupil where appropriate, should agree interventions and support to be put in place with a clear expectation of the impact these interventions will have;
- **Do** – the teacher should remain responsible for working with the child on a daily basis, where interventions are led by a teaching assistant it remains the responsibility of the class teacher to have an overview of planning, implementation and impact of these interventions;
- **Review** – The class or subject teacher, again working with the SENCo, parent, carer and pupil, should review the support offered to a pupil in response to the progress made against agreed interventions and decide on any changes needed to the additional support the pupil receives.

‘Teachers are responsible and accountable for the progress and development of the pupils in their class, including where pupils access support from teaching assistants or specialist staff’ (6.36 SEND Code of Practice: 0-25, January, 2015)

The role of the Teaching Assistant

In the past decade the number of teachers in England has remain broadly constant however the number of Teaching Assistants (TAs) has more than trebled to around 244,000. The role of a Teaching Assistant will vary between settings, even within an individual setting there may be differences between the roles the Teaching Assistant has.

The latest Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) Guidance Report highlighted seven key recommendations over the way Teaching Assistants are deployed to maximise their effectiveness. The guidance draws on research such as the Deployment and Impact of Teaching Assistants (DISS) and also from new findings from EEF funded evaluations.

This guidance highlighted that:
TAs should not be used as an informal teaching resource for low-attaining pupils; TA should be used to add value to what teachers do, not to replace them; TAs should help pupils develop independent learning skills and manage their own learning; TAs should be fully prepared for their role in the classroom; TAs should deliver high quality one-to-one and small group support using structured interventions; interventions should have a good evidence base; explicit connections should be made between learning from everyday classroom teaching and structured interventions.

The full updated guidance report can be viewed here: http://maximisingtas.co.uk/assets/content/ta-guideportrait.pdf

There are clear links between this latest report into the effective use of Teaching Assistants and the key principles of ‘quality first’ teaching. Both the EEF guidance and the original DCSF guide highlights that the role of the Class or Subject Teacher remains paramount when supporting all pupils in the class and both guides highlight the importance of supporting pupils to increase their skills to be independent learners.

When deploying TAs within a setting it is crucial that the class teacher has a clear overview of the work that the TA does. Planning time should be given to effectively deploying resources; interventions should be focussed and learning transferrable from the intervention to the classroom. When TAs are completing interventions the class teacher must maintain an overview of the impact the intervention is having. The lower attaining pupils must not see the amount of time they have been directly taught by the class teacher diminish due to increasing levels of support from a TA.

The role of the Designated Safeguarding Lead for Child Protection

The role of the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) is to lead in facilitating the development of safeguarding and child protection policies, training and procedures and guidance for the educational setting, ensuring that the Child Protection Policy is reviewed annually by the Governing Body.

The DSL will undertake appropriate Child Protection Training every 2 years in order to:

- understand the assessment process for providing Early Help and intervention, e.g. through locally agreed common and shared assessment processes such as the Graduated Pathway of Early Help and Support;
- have a working knowledge of how the LA conducts Child Protection Case Conferences and be able to attend these effectively when required to do so;
- ensure each member of staff has access to and understands the educational setting’s Child Protection Policy and Procedures, especially new and part time staff.

Other responsibilities include:

- to receive and coordinate referrals, arranging action and reviewing services for children and families;
- to ensure that students who are victims of abuse are supported appropriately and sensitively and that all actions assigned to the setting from planning and intervention meetings are successfully carried out and monitored;
- to liaise with the Head Teacher or Principal to inform him or her of issues, especially ongoing enquiries under Section 47 of the Children Act 1989 and police investigations;
- to maintain accurate, confidential and up to date documentation on all cases of safeguarding and child protection and ensure that all records are forwarded to any new school the child may attend;
- to work directly with children in need and their families in the community in order to promote, strengthen and develop the potential of parents/carers and their children in order to prevent children becoming looked after and/or suffering significant harm;
- to support the care of children where their living arrangements are at risk of breakdown (including Local Authority placements);
- to provide support and guidance to carers and provide planned interventions as part of agreed plans for children;
- to act as a source of support, advice and expertise to staff on matters of safety and safeguarding and when deciding whether to make a referral by liaising with relevant agencies.

The role of Designated Teacher for Looked After Children

The role of the Designated Teacher for Looked After Children became statutory in September 2009.
The Designated Teacher is a senior member of teaching staff with responsibility for all the Looked After Children in the school. They are responsible for ensuring the needs of Looked After Children are met and that any issues are dealt with in a timely manner, are the key contact in school for any agencies involved with a particular Looked After Child and are responsible for promoting the educational achievement and well-being of Looked After Children including monitoring their progress and attendance.

The Designated Teacher ensures that the Personal Education Plan (PEP) for each Looked After Child is completed in conjunction with the Social Worker and Virtual School and is of a good standard.

The role of Pastoral Support

Teachers’ and colleagues without teaching responsibility play a central role in supporting the pastoral needs of learners in schools, colleges and academies. There are a variety of roles and responsibilities expected of those with non-teaching pastoral responsibility to support the emotional, behavioural and learning needs of students and understand how to build effective professional relationships with parents and carers, team members and outside agencies, in order to create a whole-school approach to pastoral care.

Some of the main areas of responsibilities include:

- supporting the emotional, behavioural and welfare needs of learners;
- supporting outstanding attendance and punctuality;
- engaging interventions that evidence positive impact;
- building positive and supportive relationships with team members across the school;
- building positive relationships with parents and carers to support the pastoral and learning needs of students;
- support to families as part of Early Help.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare – guidance from Ofsted

Inspectors will make a judgement on the personal development, behaviour and welfare of children and learners by evaluating the extent to which the provision is successfully promoting and supporting children’s and other learners’:

- pride in achievement and commitment to learning, supported by a positive culture across the whole provider;
- self-confidence, self-awareness and understanding of how to be a successful learner;
- choices about the next stage of their education, employment, self-employment or training, where relevant, from impartial careers advice and guidance;
- where relevant, employability skills so that they are well prepared for the next stage of their education, employment, self-employment or training;
- prompt and regular attendance;
- following of any guidelines for behaviour and conduct, including management of their own feelings and behaviour, and how they relate to others;
- understanding of how to keep themselves safe from relevant risks such as abuse, sexual exploitation and extremism, including when using the internet and social media;
- knowledge of how to keep themselves healthy, both emotionally and physically, including through exercising and healthy eating;
- personal development, so that they are well prepared to respect others and contribute to wider society and life in Britain.
Key roles in Health

Consultant Paediatricians
Consultant paediatricians are children’s doctors offering families specialist support and clinics in a range of complex medical conditions. Referrals to a consultant paediatrician will normally be made via a G.P.

Consultant paediatricians lead on different speciality areas for Gloucestershire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust’s Children’s Services. Consultant led teams offer a range of services including providing diagnostic assessments for a broad range of neurodisability and neurobehavioural childhood conditions as well as providing long term follow up for children with multiple complex health issues (Please see Local Offer, Paediatrics Consultant led Specialist Services).

Health Visitors
Health Visitors are highly trained specialist community public health nurses. They work in teams for a particular community and will have extensive knowledge of your geographical area and other services there.

This means that they are skilled to help a child and their family lead as healthy a life as possible, both physically and emotionally. Health Visitors support families with young children aged 0-5 years by listening to any worries or questions a family may have.

The wider Health Visiting team may also include nursery nurses, healthcare assistants and other specialist health professionals. Health visitors also work in close partnership with midwives who have an important role to play before birth and in the first days of life.

Health Visiting teams provide expert advice, support and interventions to all families with children in the first years of life. They are uniquely placed to identify the needs of individual children, parents and families (including safeguarding needs) and refer or direct them to existing local services, thereby promoting early intervention

Community Nursery Nurses make up part of the Health Visiting team. They have a range of childcare related qualifications which gives them expert knowledge of child health and development.

Health Visiting teams have access to up to date health research and Department of Health guidance to ensure advice is based on latest evidence.

Further information related to local Health Visiting teams and useful resources can be found at: http://www.glos-care.nhs.uk/index.php/our-services/children-young-people/health-visiting

School Nursing service
A team of School Nurses provide a public health nursing service for school-aged children and young people in community settings. They work in teams providing support for all children and their families in schools and local communities.

School Nurses are qualified nurses or midwives and come from a wide range of backgrounds and experience in different areas of nursing. School Nurses have a broad range of knowledge, skills and experience in order to help support a child or young person.

Some School Nurses have additional specialist training in public health. This means these school nurses are skilled to help a child or young person and their family lead as healthy a life as possible, both physically and mentally.

The School Nursing service use the model of care provided by the Healthy Child Programme (Department of Health 2009) and their framework is from the Vision and Call to Action for School Nursing (Department of Health 2012).

There is a team of School Nurses in each of the six localities in Gloucestershire: Gloucester, Cheltenham, Forest, Tewkesbury, Stroud and Cotswolds.

There is also a team of School Nurses who cover the special schools across the county.

Further information can be found at: http://www.glos-care.nhs.uk/index.php/our-services/children-young-people/school-nursing

2gether Children and Young People Service (Formerly known as CAMHS)
CYPS provide mental health services to children and young people aged 0-18 years and their families/carers that live in Gloucestershire. CYPS work in partnership with schools, GPs, health and social care and other services supporting children and young people. Referrals can be

Gloucestershire Guidance Booklet for Practitioners Working with Children and Young People (0 – 25 yrs) with Additional Needs including Special Educational Needs and Disabilities
made by any practitioner working with children, young people and their families/carers.

CYPS work with children and young people who experience a level of emotional wellbeing problems that significantly affect their ability to cope with normal stresses and demands of life. In addition, CYPS also help with other problems such as developmental disorders, eating disorders, bipolar disorders, psychosis, attachment difficulties, infant mental health problems, conduct disorders or when a young person is at risk of harming themselves.

Further information can be found at: http://www.2gether.nhs.uk/cyps

Speech and Language Therapy (Children)
The Speech and Language Therapy service is a countywide specialist service for children and young people aged 0-18 and their families and carers. The service supports difficulties with speech, language, communication, feeding or swallowing.

Speech and Language Therapists are qualified professionals with an in-depth knowledge of difficulties with communication (understand and using spoken language and social communication skills) and eating and drinking disorders.

The service provides assessment, advice and treatment planned around the individual needs of the child and family. Advice, training and support may also be provided to teaching and support staff or other professionals as appropriate, to facilitate the development of communication skills.

Children can be referred to the service by their parents and carers or by another health or educational professional with the parent’s permission.

Further information can be found at: https://www.glos-care.nhs.uk/index.php/our-services/children-young-people/slt

Children’s Physiotherapy
The Gloucestershire Community Children and Young People’s Physiotherapy Service aims to support children & young people with a range of conditions by providing them and their families with support, advice and physical intervention to promote optimum outcome for the child and their family.

Children’s Physiotherapy is a countywide specialist physiotherapy service for children and young people aged 0-16 years (16-19 in full time education), their families and carers, providing physiotherapy in both the hospital and community settings.

The Children and Young People’s Physiotherapy service is provided in a variety of locations and settings. Access to physiotherapy is in the most appropriate setting for their assessment, treatment and ongoing support, enabling them to achieve their outcomes. This may be at a clinic, in a hospital, at a children’s centre, in a mainstream or special school or at home.

Further information can be found at: https://www.glos-care.nhs.uk/index.php/our-services/children-young-people/physio

Children’s Occupational Therapy (OT) Service
The Children’s Occupational Therapy (OT) service is an integrated countywide specialist service working at health, social services and educational sites across Gloucestershire. It aims to address the needs of children/young people who have difficulties managing their activities of daily living and developing functional skills such as bathing, showering, toileting, dressing, eating: these are known as Occupational Performance Issues (OPIs).

The service is for children and their families and carers, providing occupational support in the hospital, community and educational settings.

Further information can be found at: https://www.glos-care.nhs.uk/index.php/our-services/children-young-people/children-s-occupational-therapy
Key roles in Children’s Services

Early Years SEND

The Early Years SEND Team provides a range of support for children aged 0-5 years with additional needs (medical/educational) and their families.

The main focus of the Team is securing good outcomes for children through supporting early identification of SEND and adopting an Early Support approach. The team consists of:

SEND Early Help Advisors

The Special Educational Needs and Disability Early Help Advisors offer a countywide service to support and advise parents/carers, professionals, practitioners, Early Years providers, and schools in order to promote inclusion, raise aspirations and improve outcomes for children with Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND).

Before considering support from an Early Help Advisor, please follow the guidance on the Graduated Pathway of Early Help and Support within this booklet.

Further information can be found at: http://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/extra/article/108860/SEND-Early-Help-Advisors

Gloucestershire Portage

The Gloucestershire Portage Service is an educational support service for pre-school children with additional needs and their families. Referrals to Portage are made with parental consent usually by the Health Visitor or other practitioner working with a child.

Children requiring support from the Portage Service should be demonstrating developmental delay in at least three areas as measured on a standardised scale.

Further information can be found at: http://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/extra/article/108770/Early-Years-SEND

Early Years Sensory Group – Advisory Teaching Service

The Advisory Teaching Service Hearing Impairment and Visual Impairment Teams run a support group for parents/carers of babies and pre-school children diagnosed with a sensory impairment. This provides a regular opportunity for parents/carers to meet with Advisory Teachers, Deaf Communications Tutor, Audiologists, Speech & Language Therapists and other Specialists as well as each other. Speakers are invited to the group to discuss a range of topics.

Further information can be found at: http://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/ats

Families First Plus Teams

Families First Plus are multi-disciplinary teams based in each locality. As part of Early Help Partnerships, Families First Plus teams work with other practitioners to:

- support the coordination and development of local Early Help Partnerships;
- coordinate all requests for additional support on behalf of the Partnerships;
- provide advice, guidance and support through Community
Social Workers and Early Help Co-ordinators;
- provide Targeted Support—a range of family support interventions including whole family intensive work, parenting groups, specific interventions linked to an assessment of need.

The teams include the following:

**Community Social Workers** are qualified Social Workers who work with professionals to assist them in managing risk. Community Social Workers can attend and advise with Team Around the Child/Family meetings, attend home visits with the Lead Practitioner, help to build chronologies and employ the Gloucestershire Levels of Intervention to ascertain what level a case sits at. This in turn leads to a greater understanding of how the case measures up to the thresholds for Social Care and supports referrals to be made at the most opportune time.

**Early Help Coordinators** can support practitioners with the Graduated Pathway of Early Help and Support. Early Help Coordinators have good links with their communities and their Lead Practitioners and can help to bring providers together to meet the child, young person or the family’s needs. Early Help Coordinators can support Lead Practitioners through all aspects of Early Help. Early Help Coordinators monitor the Early Help across the county and ensure that standards and timescales are maintained.

**Family Support Workers** can actively support families, children and young people through targeted interventions such as Triple P (Positive Parenting Programme) and working with the whole family to help identify patterns of behaviour that are detrimental and those that are beneficial. The Family Support Worker will then support the family to make the changes that they want to make and to address the changes that they need to make.

Further information can be found at: http://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/extra/early-help

**SEN Monitoring and School Support Team**

The Gloucestershire County Council’s SEN Monitoring and School Support Team fulfils the Local Authority’s statutory responsibilities in monitoring the provision in place for, and the progress made by, children and young people with SEND. The team monitors and supports schools’ implementation of the SEND Code of Practice and Gloucestershire’s Graduated Pathway. SEN Monitoring and School Support Officers monitor the use and impact of the SEN funding delegated to schools and how schools are identifying children and young people in receipt of SEN Support and how this compares with local and national practice.

In addition to monitoring the arrangements schools have in place for pupils in receipt of SEN Support, they also attend a high number of statutory Annual Reviews of Statements of SEN/Education, Health, Care Plans (EHCPs) in order to monitor the quality, effectiveness and value for money of SEND provision and challenge schools to set high standards. The SEN Monitoring and School Support Officers work in partnership with schools and other professionals to facilitate sharing of best practice and to be a point of advice and support for Head Teachers and SENCOs. They work closely with the Education Performance and Inclusion team to support school improvement in relation to SEND and enable schools to recognise best practice in SEN Coordination.

Further information can be found at: http://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=66348&p=0 or email Nathan Roe, Lead SEN Monitoring and School Support Officer – nathan.roe@gloucestershire.gov.uk

**SEND Development and Post-16 Support Team**

The Gloucestershire County Council’s SEN Monitoring and Post 16 Support Team fulfils the Local Authority’s statutory responsibilities in monitoring the provision in place for, and the progress made by young people aged 16-25 with SEND. The team monitors and supports schools’ Post 16 Units, colleges’ and training providers’ implementation of the SEND Code of Practice and Gloucestershire’s Graduated Pathway.

The team works closely with the SEN Monitoring and School Support Team. They attend initial college reviews for new students in independent settings and a high number of statutory Annual Reviews of Education Health and Care Plans (EHC Plans)/ Statements of SEN in order to monitor the effectiveness and value for money of the provision and the progress made by young people in preparing for adulthood and employment. The team also work with young people, their families and providers to develop Gloucestershire Guidance Booklet for Practitioners Working with Children and Young People (0 – 25 yrs) with Additional Needs including Special Educational Needs and Disabilities
individual packages of support where necessary to meet their further education and adult needs.

The team is also responsible for the commissioning of sufficient high quality education and training placements to meet the SEND for children and young people aged 0-25.

Further information can be obtained by emailing Megan Toomer Post 16 Casework Liaison Officer – megan.toomer@gloucestershire.gov.uk

Education Performance and Inclusion Team

The Education Performance and Inclusion Team are comprised of the following:

**Strategic Leads** are responsible for the strategic coordination of challenge, support, intervention and prevention in schools in order to help ensure the best academic outcomes, reduce exclusions and improve attendance. Each Strategic Lead is responsible for a geographical area.

**Education Advisers** (formerly School Intervention Advisers) act as project leads in schools as well as supporting other school improvement activities. They have a key role in working with Ofsted inspectors, supporting school networks, clusters and partnerships. Each adviser has responsibility for an aspect including areas such as: exclusions, Elective Home Education, Closing the Gap.

**Inclusion Advisers** have particular responsibility for attendance and exclusions and working collaboratively with colleagues across children’s services to support early help for vulnerable children and young people.

**Parent Advisers** are responsible for providing advice and support for parents relating to admissions, attendance and exclusions, particularly those who are hard to reach. They also provide advice on accessing Early Help.

**Advisory Teaching Service**

The Advisory Teaching Service offers specialist support for children requiring support to access educational. Advisory Teachers help children and young people participate and achieve in all aspects of life by developing the skills of the individual and those of their families, schools and settings through collaborative working in which the voice of the child is paramount. There are Advisory Teaching teams based in Gloucester, Cheltenham, Forest of Dean and Stroud. Each area team has a range of specialist Advisory Teachers who support children and young people from birth to 19 years with the following needs:

- communication and interaction;
- physical disabilities;
- sensory (including hearing or visual impairment);
- cognition and learning;
- social, emotional or mental health.

Specialist hearing and alternative communication tutors, mobility and assistive technology tutors for children with visual needs, Speech and Language Therapists, Occupational Therapists are also part of the Advisory Teaching Service.

Further information can be found at: http://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/ats

**Educational Psychology Service**

Gloucestershire’s Educational Psychology Service offers a comprehensive psychology service for children, young people and their families. The educational psychologists use their knowledge of psychology, child development and social interaction to promote young people’s development, learning and well being (0 - 25 years). All statutory work for the Local Authority is part of the core service delivery offer which also includes support for critical incidents, a consultation service for pre-school children and Children in Care.

There are Educational Psychologists based in area teams in Gloucester, Cheltenham, Forest of Dean and Stroud. They work with educational settings, health and social care partners and other organisations, such as the Advisory Teaching Service or Portage, as part of Gloucestershire’s graduated SEND pathway. All schools have a named Educational Psychologist.

Further information can be found at: http://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/eps

**The SEND Casework Team**

The SEND Casework Team works with early year’s settings, schools, academies and post-16 education & training providers in identifying, assessing, planning for and reviewing children/young people’s special educational needs and...
disabilities (SEND). It delivers all of the local authority’s statutory duties in relation to SEND including maintaining Statements of special educational needs and Education, Health & Care Plans (EHC Plans).

The SEN Casework Team manage all the casework involved in the following:

- identifying, with educational settings, children and young people’s SEND;
- managing the statutory EHC Needs assessment process;
- making and reviewing Statements of special educational needs/EHC plans;
- co-ordinating the educational placements of children and young people who have Statements/EHC plans, including in mainstream and specialist settings;
- chairing and co-ordinating the Multi-Agency SEND Panel;
- ensuring provision of an independent information, advice & support service for children/young people and parents of those with SEND (SENDIASS);
- tribunals (SENDIST).

Education, health & care professionals can request an EHC Needs Assessment from the local authority by completing the standardised request forms found on SENCO Spot. Parents/Carers can request a coordinated assessment directly from the SEND team but parents and carers are strongly encouraged to speak first with the education, health or care professional who already works with them, and consider jointly making the request.

**How and who to make a complaint to:**

Complaints about children and young people’s education, health & care should usually be raised with the child/young person’s education, health or care worker in the first instance such as their teacher, doctor or social worker. Complaints can then usually be escalated to that professionals’ manager, complaints department or regulatory body. Following this process, if the complaint is about the local authority’s management of a statutory SEND process and cannot be resolved, parents/young people can raise complaints with the Local Government Ombudsman:

The Local Government Ombudsman PO Box 4771 Coventry CV4 0EH

Web: http://www.lgo.org.uk/publications/fact-sheets/complaints-about-special-educational-needs

Phone: 0300 061 0614

Parents/young people can seek informal disagreement resolution through the Special Educational Needs and Disability and Information, advice and Support Service (SENDIASS).

Web: www.sendiassglos.org.uk

Phone: 01452 389344/5

In some situations, for example, if Gloucestershire County Council decides not to carry-out a Statutory assessment, or declines to issue or change an Education, Health & Care plan, parents/young people can appeal to the First
Access and Inclusion

Tier Tribunal. This is a court of law and their address is: HM Courts and Tribunal Service, SEND Tribunal First Floor, Darlington Magistrates Court Parkgate Darlington DL1 1RU.

However prior to lodging any appeal with the First Tier Tribunal, parents/young people must actively consider formal mediation. Gloucestershire County Council contracts this independent service from GLOBAL Mediation. Parents/young people considering appealing a local authority decision about SEND must contact GLOBAL and obtain a certificate to present to the First Tier Tribunal:

Web: www.globalmediation.co.uk
Phone: 0800 064 4488
SEND Team Manager Telephone Number: 01452 427536
Email: sengeninq@gloucestershire.gov.uk

Social Care

Social workers – are right at the heart of children’s services, holding challenging caseloads, working closely with and engaging children and families in finding permanent solutions and ways forward. Social workers carefully assess situations to make evidence-based decisions and interventions that achieve positive outcomes for children.

Family Support Workers – provide interventions with children and families identified through careful assessment and planning.

Referral and Assessment Teams

There are four Referral and Assessment Teams across the county, providing the initial responses to child protection referrals. They are responsible for Initial Assessments, and work with families up to Initial Child Protection Conferences where this is necessary. Their focus is on delivering good quality assessments which take account of historical information, culture, disability and the experiences of the children.

Further information can be found at: http://www.gccsocialcarejobs.co.uk/roles/

Children and Families Teams

Families needing further social work interventions are transferred through to one of 7 locality based Children and Families teams. The role of these teams is to ensure that every child has a clear assessment of need, with a plan that sets out how help will be delivered, outcomes to be achieved and arrangements for review. A priority for these teams is to ensure that the children’s experiences are reflected in assessments, plans and interventions and that direct work is purposeful and of high quality.

Children supported in these teams are either subject to Child Protection Plans or Children in Need Plans. These teams also make arrangements to look after children where this is needed. If they are not successfully reunified before the second review, unless they are in proceedings, they are transferred to one of two Children in Care teams or to the Young People’s team.

Disabled children and young people who need the support of social care, access services through these teams as well. The services have developed personal budgets to enable individualised commissioning of support based to meet needs and outcomes for the child or young person.

The Disabled Children and Young People’s Service

The Disabled Children and Young People’s Service provides social care 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 enable disabled children to have the same range of opportunities as non-disabled children, and with their families to be able to experience the ‘ordinary’ things of life that others take for granted.

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

Further information can be found at: http://www.glosfamiliesdirectory.org.uk/kb5/gloucs/glosfamilies/service.page?id=2-5QQwl8zA8&&newfamilychannel=0

Gloucester Pods

These are a unique model of smaller multi-agency teams called Pods. They work with children and families in smaller geographical areas in and around Gloucester. Work is allocated according to the skills of the workers and priorities. Gloucestershire social workers
collaborate in the Pods with adult substance misuse, adult mental health and domestic violence specialists in order to deliver a more cohesive service with a focus on outstanding practice.

**Children in Care**

Children in care receive support from across a range of social care teams:
- a Children’s Permanence Team, primarily focused on younger children with a plan for adoption;
- an under 16s Children in Care Team;
- over 16s are supported by social workers in one of 3 social work teams based in the Youth Support Service.

About a third of children in care are supported by social workers in one of the 7 locality based Children & Families teams (primarily those new to care and/or in care proceedings).

**Turn Around for Children Service**

The TACS offers an intensive, Health Visitor led programme for new born at risk of severe neglect from parental substance misuse, mental health, co-morbidity domestic abuse and those with experience of generational neglectful parenting.

There are two referral routes into the service, ante-natal through the specialist midwives or through the 16+ team for Children in Care or Care Leaving young parents.

**The Fostering Service**

The Fostering service is comprised of 4 teams:
- Fostering Recruitment Team, focused on recruiting new foster carers to the service;
- Fostering Support Team focused on providing high quality support to existing carers;
- Family Link Team for disabled children;
- Fostering Friends and Family Team, developed in response to the increasing need for focus and specialism in this important and growing area.

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**School Admissions**

As part of the council’s statutory duties to allocate reception places and secondary places, a guidance booklet for parents to assist them in this process has been produced. Please use the following link:

http://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=56737&p=0

**Deferred entry to school**

For children starting school for the first time, the local authority offers all Gloucestershire families the opportunity for their children to start school in the September following their fourth birthday.

Parents of non-compulsory school age children (four year olds) may request a pattern of part-time attendance or deferment, if that best suits the needs of their child. Some parents who have summer born children may feel that their children are too young to start school in September if their child has just turned 4 years old. The school admission code states that parents have the right to ask for a deferral. The local authority will then make a decision on whether to allow the deferral.

There may also be families who wish to delay entry until the child turns 5 years and start in reception year, i.e. taught back a year. This may be because the child has special needs or medical conditions and parents, carers and professionals feel it would be best for the child. Again the local authority will consider the facts of the case and will make a decision about the year group into which the child should start school.

Once a child is in school, the school might identify a reason for a child to repeat a year group. This would be a discussion and decision for the school and parents to make together. They must both agree with the decision. Usually when a child is offset, i.e. repeating a year, the decision is not reversed.

More information on school admissions can be found using the following link:

http://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/schooladmissions
Attendance concerns

For a pupil with concerning levels of absence, schools should investigate the reasons behind poor attendance, particularly where the change is sudden, dramatic or unexpected. School staff should engage with other members of staff in school e.g. Class Teacher, Form Tutor, Pastoral Lead, Family Support Worker and check if action is already being taken to support the child and whether a My Plan or My Plan+ is in place.

- If a plan is already in place, it is important to identify any specific needs of the pupil that may make them more vulnerable to reduced attendance or poor punctuality. These needs should be considered, with any other support offered, when agreeing a plan. This could be through a Team Around the Child or Family (TAC/F) meeting, making particular reference to ways to promote improved attendance.

- If the pupil does not have an existing plan, the school should contact the parents/carers and arrange for an appropriate plan, within the graduated approach, to be put in place to support the child and family in securing improved attendance.

When a plan is in place, the school should ensure regular review with those involved using a TAC/F approach and ensure that absence patterns are regularly monitored and that action is taken when it becomes concerning.

On the occasions where a school has tried a range of strategies that have not improved attendance sufficiently, advice should be sought from the Education, Performance and Inclusion Team in the Local Authority.

In addition, schools are reminded that they have a statutory duty to inform the Local Authority of any pupil who has 10+ continuous days of unauthorised absence:
attendance@gloucestershire.gov.uk

Also, following Ofsted guidance, there is a requirement on schools to inform the Local Authority of any pupil who is placed on a part-time timetable for a period of time:
PTTimetables@gloucestershire.gov.uk

For further information regarding improving attendance:
School attendance parental responsibility measures:
January 2015

Statutory guidance for local authorities, school leaders, school staff, governing bodies and the police.

School attendance: October 2014
Departmental advice for maintained schools, academies, independent schools and local authorities

Gloucestershire Attendance links
http://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/schoolsnet/attendance

Gloucestershire Guidance Booklet for Practitioners Working with Children and Young People (0 – 25 yrs) with Additional Needs including Special Educational Needs and Disabilities
Information about exclusion

When considering the exclusion of a pupil schools must have regard to the statutory guidance ‘Exclusion from Maintained Schools, Academies and Pupil Referral Units (PRUs) in England’ that came into effect on 1 September 2012. This guidance applies to all maintained schools and academies as well as free schools and Alternative Provisions.

There is additional information online:
http://www.education.gov.uk/schools/pupilsupport/behaviour/exclusion/g00210521/statutory-guidance-regs-2012

Gloucestershire Guidance for Pupils at risk of exclusion

For a pupil at risk of being excluded, a school ought to:

- firstly, engage with other members of staff involved with the pupil and check whether a My Plan or My Plan+ is in place. If so, the needs of the pupil regarding their behaviour, which may make them vulnerable to being excluded, can be included together with any other support being offered. This could be done through a Team Around the Child (TAC) meeting;

- secondly, where there isn’t an existing plan, the school should contact the parents and arrange for an appropriate plan, within the graduated approach, to be put in place;

- thirdly, if needs are identified which require support from external agencies not already involved, the school can contact the Families First Plus team in their locality to discuss involvement from the Early Help Partnership.

When a plan is in place, school should ensure regular review with all those involved using a Team Around the Child approach.

Head Teachers should consider the exclusion of children with special educational needs and disabilities under the same guidance, but there will be additional factors to consider in relation to children’s special needs. Every effort should be made to explore alternatives to exclusion, and this should be especially so for pupils with special educational needs and disabilities. A disproportionate number of children who are excluded each year have an identified Special Educational Need. This means that a pupil with SEND is more likely to be excluded than another pupil.

When considering exclusion as a result of a specific incident, schools will need to satisfy themselves that the presenting behaviour is not as a result of the pupil’s special educational needs and disabilities. Schools will also need to satisfy themselves that the pupil was being appropriately supported at the time the incident took place and that there were no reasonable adjustments to the school’s policies and practice that might have been made to prevent the incident which led to the exclusion. This would need to be demonstrated in the event of the exclusion being challenged and, if it appeared that a pupil’s needs were not fully being met, the exclusion could be overturned. When considering exclusion it would be unlawful to treat a pupil less favourably when compared to his peers for a reason associated with a special educational need or disability.

It must be remembered that during the period of a Fixed Period Exclusion a pupil is excluded from the school premises and not excluded from education. The requirement for a school to arrange suitable full time education on the sixth day of a pupil’s fixed term exclusion applies in the case of the pupil with special educational needs and disabilities as well as other pupils. In the event of a Permanent Exclusion the Local Authority has a duty to provide education on the sixth day. Arranging suitable full time education for a pupil with an Education Health Care Plan, for example, will pose additional challenges. The school will need to satisfy itself that the interim provision it has arranged meets the needs and provisions set out with the child’s plan and that any additional adult support or equipment that is required is provided.

It is unlawful to exclude (or to increase the length or severity of an exclusion) for a non-disciplinary reason. For example, it would be unlawful to exclude a pupil on the grounds that the school felt unable to meet the pupil’s needs. It would also be unlawful to exclude a pupil for failure to make expected academic progress or for working at an academic level which requires the school to substantially modify the curriculum and support...
arrangements usually in place. Pupils who repeatedly disobey their teachers’ academic instructions could, however, be subject to exclusion.

If the decision is made to exclude a pupil it is unlawful to stipulate that certain requirements need to be met as a condition of return and before they can be reinstated, e.g. the pupil must undergo a certain assessment or the pupil must commence a course of treatment or medication.

‘Informal’ or ‘unofficial’ exclusions, such as sending pupils home ‘to cool off’, are unlawful, regardless of whether they occur with the agreement of parents or carers. Any exclusion of a pupil, even for short periods of time, must be formally recorded.

Annual Reviews
Head Teachers should, as far as possible, avoid permanently excluding a pupil with an Education Health and Care Plan. Where a school identifies a pupil with an Education Health and Care Plan who is at serious risk of disaffection or exclusion, an interim or early SEN review should be called. It will then be possible to consider the pupil’s changing needs and recommend amendments to the EHC Plan or Statement, as an alternative to the pupil being excluded. The request may be made that the Local Authority amends the Plan to name an alternative school or that an increased level of support be considered to further support the pupil.

Managed Moves
A Managed Move is defined as a formal agreement between two schools, a pupil and their parents which allows a pupil at risk of permanent exclusion to transfer to another school. The move requires the agreement of the child’s parent, the Head Teacher of the pupil’s school, the Head Teacher of the proposed school, and the Strategic Lead on behalf of the Local Authority. For pupils with Education Health and Care Plans it will be necessary for the Local Authority’s SEN Casework Team to formally consult with the receiving school and amend the details of the school named in the Education Health and Care Plan.

Reviewing the Head Teacher’s decision to exclude – Governing Bodies and Impendent Appeal Bodies
The guidance compels a Governing Body to meet, if certain conditions apply, to consider the Head Teacher’s decision to exclude a pupil. The Governing Body may make the decision to overturn the exclusion and direct the pupil’s readmission or to uphold the Head Teacher’s decision. If, upon consideration, the Governing Body makes the decision not to reinstate a child who has been permanently excluded, the parent has the right to request that the Local Authority (if the pupil is registered at a maintained school) or the relevant Academy Trust (if the pupil attends an Academy) arrange for an independent review panel hearing to review the Governing Body’s decision. This request has to be made within the timescales prescribed in the guidance. If requested by parents in their application for an independent review panel, the Local Authority/Academy Trust must appoint a SEN expert to attend the panel as

parents have the right to request their attendance, regardless of whether the school recognises that their child has SEN or believes that this is necessary. The SEN expert should be a professional with first-hand experience of the assessment and support of SEN, as well as an understanding of the legal requirements on schools in relation to SEN and disability. They should not have had any previous involvement in the assessment or support of SEN for the excluded pupil, or siblings of the excluded pupil. The final decision on the appointment of an SEN expert is for the Local Authority/Academy Trust to make but it should take reasonable steps to ensure that parents have confidence in the impartiality and capability of the SEN expert.

It is extremely important that parents of children and young people with SEN who are excluded from school, receive advice on the options available for their child’s future education. Such advice is available through the Parent Partnership Service, tel: 01452 389345 or 01452 389344 and the school must provide parents with the contact details of the relevant Local Authority Strategic Lead for your area who can provide information about the exclusion process. Schools must also inform parents of the availability of mediation services and of their right to appeal to the Special Educational Needs and Disability Tribunal if they consider that Disability Discrimination may have occurred. It is therefore important that schools use the template letters provided in the Local Authority guidance in order to ensure that all legal requirements are met.

This guidance is available on: http://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/schoolsnet/exclusions
Pupil Premium – funding for mainstream schools, special schools, alternative provision settings and early years settings

The Pupil Premium is additional funding given to publicly funded schools in England to raise the attainment of disadvantaged pupils and close the gap between them and their peers.

Funding

Pupil Premium funding is available to both mainstream and non-mainstream schools, such as special schools and pupil referral units. In the 2016-17 financial year, schools will receive the following funding for each child registered as eligible for free school meals at any point in the last 6 years:

- £1,320 for pupils in reception year to year 6;
- £935 for pupils in year 7 to year 11.

Schools will also receive £1,900 for each pupil who has left local authority care because of one of the following:

- adoption;
- a special guardianship order;
- a child arrangements order;
- a residence order.

The DfE use eligibility for free school meals as the main measure of deprivation at pupil level. A list showing schools how many of their pupils have been eligible for free school meals at any point in the last 6 years can be viewed on the Keys to Success website. This data will allow you to identify the pupils who have previously attracted Pupil Premium funding so you can target support accurately. The data can also help you estimate how much Pupil Premium funding you will be allocated for budget planning purposes.

You should work with the Head Teacher of the Virtual School to identify your pupils in care.

To receive the Premium for adopted pupils you should mark them as eligible on the school census. If you do not know who your adopted pupils are, you will need to contact parents and ask them to let you know.

Allocations are made based on the school which the eligible pupil attends at the time of the January school census.

More recently, an early years premium has been introduced for disadvantaged three and four year olds receiving free pre-school education. It will complement the government-funded early education entitlement by providing nurseries, schools, and other providers with up to an additional £300 a year for each eligible child.

Using the Pupil Premium effectively

It is for schools to decide how best to spend the Pupil Premium allocated to them taking into account their pupils’ needs. However, to help schools choose between different approaches The Education Endowment Foundation provides a toolkit which summarises the educational research about the effectiveness and value for money of a range of approaches. The ‘Families of Schools’ toolkit helps teachers learn about effective practice from similar schools.

The DfE present Pupil Premium Awards to schools whose use of the Pupil Premium has significantly improved the attainment of their disadvantaged pupils. There are prizes for primary, secondary and special schools in England. You can find information on winners on the Pupil Premium Awards website.

The DfE also publish a list of schools with excellent results for disadvantaged pupils at key stage 2 and key stage 4.

Accountability

Head Teachers and school governing bodies are accountable...
for the impact of Pupil Premium funding in the following ways:

- performance tables, which show the performance of disadvantaged pupils compared with their peers;
- schools are required to publish details online each year of how they are using the Pupil Premium and the impact it is having on pupil achievement;
- the Ofsted inspection framework, where inspectors focus on the achievement of pupil groups, and in particular those who attract the Pupil Premium.

Online reporting
Education settings must publish details of how they spend their Pupil Premium funding and the effect this has had on the achievement of the pupils who attract the funding. You must include:

- how much Pupil Premium funding received for this academic year;
- details of how funding was used, including reasons and evidence;
- details of how Pupil Premium funding was spent during the last academic year;
- how it made a difference to the achievement of disadvantaged pupils.

The funding is allocated for each financial year, but the information published online should refer to the academic year, as this is how parents and the general public understand the school year.

As settings won’t know how much funding they will receive for the latter part of the academic year (from April to July), they should report on the funding up to the end of the financial year. Information can be updated later in the year when settings have all the figures.

Ofsted inspections
Ofsted school inspections report on the attainment and progress of disadvantaged pupils who attract the Pupil Premium. Inspectors will take particular account of the progress made by disadvantaged pupils by the end of the key stage compared with that made nationally by other pupils with similar starting points and the extent to which any gaps in this progress, and consequently in attainment, are closing.

Pupil Premium reviews
Ofsted will recommend that a school commissions a Pupil Premium review if they identify issues with the setting’s provision for disadvantaged pupils.

Other bodies may also recommend a setting commissions a pupil premium review, including:

- the local authority;
- your academy trust;
- your regional schools commissioner;
- the Department for Education.

Guidance on how to commission a Pupil Premium review is available – https://www.gov.uk/guidance/pupil-premium-reviews.

Further information
Further information, and links to the websites referenced above, can be found on the Department for Education website - https://www.gov.uk/guidance/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

Local support
The Pupil Premium summit in July 2015 found that “while the impact (of pupil premium funding) has been significant in individual schools, progress remains slow at a national level.”

This is mirrored in Gloucestershire. The gap between the achievement of disadvantaged pupils (i.e. those eligible for Pupil Premium funding) and other pupils in Gloucestershire is not closing as rapidly as we would like; however, we know that individual schools are showing significant impact of the pupil premium funding and there are pockets of effective practice across the county.

The Pupil Premium summit also reported “Finding ways to achieve impact on a larger scale is one of the obstacles we face in the drive to raise standards. While there is no one-size-fits-all solution, we do need better systems in place for sharing and collaborating.”

With this in mind the local authority has developed a “Pupil Premium Toolkit” to bring together and share effective national and local practice. The toolkit can be found at http://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/schoolsnet/article/120155/Pupil-Premium-Toolkit and includes the following information and resources:

- data analysis tools;
- reviewing, monitoring and evaluating tools;
- planning tools;
- effective practice;
- online reporting;
- key publications;
- key websites;
- pupil premium reviews;
- CPD events;
- CtG Newsletters.
Management of health care needs and medication

There are many students in our varied contexts who have a wide range of medical needs that may demand intense personal care or careful management of medicine. This includes pupils with physical health and mental health needs. On September 1st 2014 new legislation came into force for governing bodies to make arrangements to support pupils at school with medical conditions.

- It is a statutory requirement that every school has a ‘supporting pupils with medical needs’ policy. (Statutory policies for School DfE September 2014).
- Pupils at school with medical conditions should be properly supported so that they have full access to education, including school trips and physical education.
- Governing bodies must ensure that arrangements are in place in schools to support pupils at school with medical conditions.
- Governing bodies should ensure that school leaders consult health and social care professionals, pupils and parents to ensure that the needs of children with medical conditions are effectively supported.

The most recent statutory guidance for governing bodies is contained within the document, “Supporting pupils at school with medical needs” (DfE December 2015).

In essence contexts must ensure that children and young people with medical needs are supported and fully included. Governing bodies should ensure that schools develop policies for supporting pupils with medical conditions that are reviewed regularly and readily accessible to parents and school staff. Governing bodies should ensure that policies include details on how the school policy will be implemented effectively, including a named person who has overall responsibility for policy implementation.

The Role of Individual Healthcare Plans

Individual Healthcare Plans should be drawn up for students with physical health or mental health needs. These will range in the level of detail according to the severity of need but will be constructed by a designated member of staff, school nurse or other healthcare professional who is involved with the child or young person. The plan should be informed by the range of professionals involved and look to include such information as the medical condition and its triggers, symptoms and expected responses from those who are to be in contact with the child or young person with the medical need. The governing body should ensure that plans are reviewed at least annually or earlier if the child’s needs change. They should be developed in the context of assessing and managing risks to the child’s education, health and social well-being and to minimise disruption. Where the child has a special educational need, the Individual Healthcare Plan should be linked to the child’s Statement or EHC plan where they have one.

Managing Medicines on School Premises

The governing body should ensure that policies are clear about the procedures to be followed for managing medicines. Policies should reflect information such as:

- medicines should only be administered at school when it would be detrimental to a child’s health or school attendance not to do so;
- no child under 16 should be given prescription or non-prescription medicine without written parental consent except in exceptional circumstances such as where the child or young person has been prescribed medicine without the knowledge of the parent/guardian;
- all medicines should be stored safely but be available to the child or young person immediately;
- contexts should maintain up to date record keeping in relation to all medicines administered;
- governing bodies should ensure that policies set out what should happen in an emergency situation both in general terms but where a child or young person has an Individual Healthcare Plan a specific...
response of what to do in an emergency specifically related to the individual concerned.

The Role of Gloucestershire Hospital Education Service (GHES)

Gloucestershire Hospital Education Service (GHES) has a schoolroom at the Gloucestershire Royal Hospital allowing paediatric inpatients to access education whilst in hospital. Referrals are also made to the GHES Outpatients Team, by medical professionals, if a child or young person is unable to attend school for a period of time due to medical needs (e.g. a period of recovery following surgery). Education is then provided in the home. Pupils referred to Gloucestershire Hospital Education Service remain the responsibility of their registered school. In exceptional circumstances, such as when there is no registered school, a pupil may be sole registered with GHES. For pupils with SEND, the school must ensure to share all information and documentation with GHES including a My Plan, My Assessment, My Plan+ or EHCP as applicable. Close liaison between the registered school and GHES is essential within the SEND review process.

For further information about GHES please go to the GHES pages on the Gloucestershire County Council website: www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/ghes

Children and Young People in Care – The Virtual School, Personal Education Plans (ePEP) and Pupil Premium Plus

Virtual School

Education matters to all children, it is crucial to their well-being and improves their life chances. For children in the care of Gloucestershire who have previously faced challenging situations it is even more essential to do all possible to support them.

Gloucestershire Council has corporate parenting responsibility for children in care and, like all parents, valuing and supporting children’s education is one of the most important contributions the Council can make to their lives. The Virtual School for Children in Care, therefore, has high aspirations for these children to help them maximise their access to education and have the chance to achieve their full potential.

The Virtual School is a team of teachers and dedicated education professionals who work to support the education of Gloucestershire Children in Care and care leavers, although their children also remain the responsibility of the school at which they are enrolled.

The team is a small multi-disciplinary team working to raise the educational attainment and school attendance of children and young people. They work in close collaboration with colleagues across the authority, but also in partnership with other areas. The Team track educational progress and implement and monitor interventions to help young people in care to achieve their full potential. They also make a strong contribution towards supporting schools, social workers and foster carers with education training.

Who are The Virtual School?

The Virtual School is a team of teachers and dedicated education professionals who work to support the education of Gloucestershire Children in Care and care leavers, although their children also remain
Virtual School's role is to champion the educational needs of these young people. This involves monitoring progress and attendance, supporting young people and professionals around them, quality assuring Personal Education Plans, planning targeted interventions and celebrating achievements. To do this the Team works together with schools, carers, social workers, health professionals and education professionals, to help children achieve their full potential.

The Virtual School aims to offer practical support for children, young people and their carers throughout their education. They are also there to support at specific times such as the transfer to primary or secondary, moving schools, exclusions and gaining appropriate support for any special educational needs.

During the academic year, two Personal Education Plan (PEP) meetings are held to make sure that everything is in place for the young person to achieve their full potential as their education progresses. These meetings, usually held at the school, involve the young person, the social worker, a representative from the school, the carer and usually the Virtual School learning mentor.

The Virtual School will challenge and offer support to young people and professionals to ensure that the best possible progress is made by the young person, in the best possible educational placement.

In addition to the direct educational supports offered, the Virtual School also values wider achievements and learning. It offers a host of additional opportunities including Children in Care Council, targeted summer activities, study skills support conference and horse riding academy. The Virtual School is developing ASDAN to accredit skills and is working closely with other partners and promote activities in children and young peoples localities such as the summer reading scheme through the libraries, work experience opportunities on the “Work it out Project”, the National Citizenship service (NCS), Princes Trust programme and the Duke of Edinburgh’s Award Scheme.

Some children with special educational needs and disabilities may also be Children in Care. In many settings the SENCO is the Designated Teacher with responsibility for Children in Care, but this is not always the case. If this role is taken on by two different teachers within school then close liaison and coordination is required to ensure that the pupil’s needs are planned for in a coordinated way and to avoid duplication of processes and meetings. This will help to streamline the liaison with outside agencies and carers and to ensure that provision and progress is recorded and shared in a consistent way. For example, it may be possible to combine parents’ evenings, My Plan or My Plan+ review meetings, or Educational, Health and Care Plan review meetings with a Personal Education Plan (PEP) review meeting (although certain statutory timescales may apply).

**What is an electronic Personal Education Plan (ePEP)?**

- All Children in Care have a Care Plan. The online electronic PEP is a statutory part of this care plan.
- All Children in Care in Gloucestershire aged between 3yrs and 16yrs have an ePEP.
- A Personal Education Plan is also completed on a paper form as part of your Pathway Plan when young people are over 16yrs and attend a School 6th Form, College or Training Provider.

**Why do Children in Care need an ePEP**

- To make sure that young people are getting the best possible education.
- To celebrate achievements in school and also outside of school.
- To keep an up to date record of learning and achievements.
- To give young people a voice in setting targets and shaping their education.

**When do PEP meetings take place?**

- When young people first come into care, within the first month.
- Twice a year, when young people are in school.
- Whenever there is a change of school.
- If there are any major changes in life that may affect learning.

**Who attends a PEP meeting?**

- **Social Worker** – Must attend the meeting.
- **School** – Must attend the meeting. This is the Designated Teacher for Children in Care, but sometimes it is another teacher who knows the young person well.
- **Young Person** – It is important they attend, but they do not
have to – their views can be put across by completing the ePEP Young Person’s Views section before the meeting.

- **Foster Carers** – Need to attend so they are able to support education for children in their care.

**At the Personal Education Plan meeting:**

**School Designated Teacher**
- Lead the meeting and make sure that young person’s views on school and learning are discussed.
- Complete Section 2 Education details i.e. attainment, attendance etc.
- Also complete Section 3 notes of the PEP Meeting and Action Plan.

**Social Worker**
- Sends out electronic invitations to the ePEP meeting in discussion with school and carers.

**Young Person**
- Completes child or young persons views on school and learning.

**Everyone**
- Has the chance to make a contribution about target setting and also how the Pupil Premium money should be spent.

**After the meeting the Virtual School Learning Mentor will:**
- Check the ePEP to make sure that everything has been completed properly and also that the Pupil Premium Plus money is being used effectively.

**Using the Pupil Premium Plus:**
- Pupil Premium Plus is money that the government is investing in the education of Children in Care.
- From 1st of April 2014 it is £1900 and Gloucestershire will release £900 when a child comes into care. The rest will be allocated based on learning needs identified in the ePEP.
- At the ePEP meeting, targets are set and how to invest this money in each young person’s education is agreed.
- Some of the most popular and useful ways young people ask to spend Pupil Premium Plus includes:
  - 1-2-1 tuition;
  - resources – books, software, Kindles, Laptops, equipment for work experience;
  - classroom support – to help out in difficult lessons or subjects;
  - 1-2-1 counselling – to help deal with difficult issues;
  - extended learning – activities and clubs outside of school;
  - education visits and trips – to make sure young people do not miss out on once in a lifetime opportunities;
  - training – to help school staff understand the individual needs of a young person.

Pupil Premium Plus needs to be evaluated in terms of making a difference in the progress Children in Care make in comparison with their peers of similar potential ability in that school. This needs to be discussed with the designated Children in Care Governor and reported to the Senior Leadership Team and Governing body in their school at least once a year.

Use and impact of the Pupil Premium Plus also needs to be reported on the school website.

Further information and support is available from:

Rachel Evans – PEP and Pupil Premium Officer
Email: rachel.evans@gloucestershire.gov.uk
Tel: 01452 328373

Additional information is available on the Virtual School website:
http://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/vschool
Short breaks for disabled children and young people

Short breaks were in the past delivered solely through a limited range of specialist services – residential units, Family Link, or Personal Assistants. Since 2008 working in partnership with parents and young people, short breaks have been transformed in Gloucestershire. We have focused on enabling as many disabled children and young people as possible to have a short break by going to a sports, arts or leisure activity alongside non disabled young people.

The majority of children and young people now access short breaks through arts, sports and leisure activities, with or without support. The majority do not need an assessment to have these breaks – they can go straight to the activity provider. To support the providers of these activities, the council provides inclusion training, support from networks in their sector, enablement grants and capital grants. As a result there is now a much wider range of short breaks in Gloucestershire, including:

- arts and leisure activities (e.g. music, drama, horticulture, cooking, camping);
- sports and physical activities (e.g. football, sailing, swimming, wheelchair basketball, boccia, cycling, archery, horse riding);
- resourcing of Personal Assistants to facilitate participation in activities and other short breaks at home or in the community;
- holiday activity schemes for children and young people in school holidays;
- the Of Course We Can Programme of challenging and adventurous activities developed in partnership with young people and parents;
- family based short breaks (Family Link and Shared Lives).

Some children and young people who have very complex needs are not able to take part in activity breaks in the community, even with a lot of support. So the council continues to commission specialist services. These short breaks include:

- Children’s Home for those with very complex needs;
- individually commissioned residential short breaks from independent providers;
- nursing staffed short breaks, residential, day and outreach provided by Gloucestershire Care Services NHS Trust and voluntary & community sector organisations.

For further information please visit Carers Gloucestershire website: http://carersgloucestershire.org.uk/ or email: mail@carersgloucestershire.org.uk

Family Link Plus – support for disabled children

What is Family Link Plus?

Family Link Plus are a support team covering the whole of Gloucestershire, providing tailored support packages, in and out of the family home, to families with disabled children 0-18 years.

There are many families in Gloucestershire caring full time for their disabled child, these families are in real need of a short break, this time allows them to relax,
spend time with other members of their family or just complete necessary tasks like the weekly shop; tasks that can be really challenging as a full-time carer.

The children also benefit hugely from the support offered, it offers them the chance to make friendships and participate in new activities with people outside their family, activities that most non-disabled children take for granted.

What kind of care is offered by Family Link Plus?

- Day-time care for disabled children in the carer’s home, which can include short sessions such as tea times after school.
- Overnight care for disabled children in a carers family home, this could take the form of a regular weekend break, and breaks from the family home during school holidays.

Additional Services offered by Family Support Workers as part of Family Link Plus include:

- day-time care for disabled children in both their own homes and elsewhere, including befriending, travel support, support at mealtimes and bed times and sibling support;
- support to enable disabled children to participate in educational and recreational activities in the community.

Who are the children?

The service is available to children and young people up to the age of 18 years of age who have a range of disabilities.

Family Link Plus is open to children with:

- physical disabilities;
- severe learning disabilities;
- autistic spectrum disorders;
- complex medical needs;
- those with special educational needs including children who present with a range of challenging behaviours, for example: disrupted sleep, self-harming, continence needs, aggressive behaviours.

The children placed are generally aged between 0 and 18 years old.

Contact the Family Link Plus Team at: Gloucestershire County Council
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Email: familylink@gloucestershire.gov.uk