

What else is available?

Along the way, a range of other services may be offered to you. For example, when children experience difficult patterns of behaviour, specialist parent support courses can be helpful. There are a range of sources of advice and help, for example, family support services ('Family First/Early Help') and parent support courses; school based pastoral care and counselling; education behavioural support services and other primary mental health services. Please ask for any of these services if you think they may help you and your child. Further information, advice and guidance on supporting children ("My Child has additional needs, what does this mean and what can I do") and the graduated pathway is available at:

www.glosfamiliesdirectory.org.uk

Glossary of terms:

Graduated Pathway – a phased multi-agency approach to identifying and meeting the needs of children, co-ordinating extra educational help and support to enable your child to make progress (resulting in My Plan, My Plan +, My Assessment or statutory plan – i.e. EHCP)

TAC – 'Team Around the Child'. Sometimes also referred to as 'Team Around the Family'. A process of bringing parents and community professionals together to consider the needs of the child and wider family, and think about the best ways to offer support at school and at home.

SENCO – A designated person in an educational setting who is responsible for helping children with additional learning needs.

ATS – Advisory Teaching Service, specialist teachers who are able to assist class teachers/SENCOs to help children at school with additional learning needs.

EP – Educational Psychologist identifies a child's strengths and areas of need. The EP defines the severity of learning needs or learning disability.

Assessments for Developmental Difficulties, including Neurobehavioural Conditions

(Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)), significantly Delayed Development and Learning Disabilities)

Are you concerned about your child's development and behaviour? Are you worried about Autism, ADHD or Learning Disability?

Developmental and behaviour concerns are common. All children develop at different rates but when there are concerns, there is help and support available.



Who do I speak to about concerns?

My health visitor, child's teacher, school nurse or GP?

This leaflet will help you understand who to speak to if you are concerned about your child, and explain what you can expect from professional services which support your child.

Getting to know your child and finding help: 'a needs-led approach'

When a child struggles, the initial focus of our approach in Gloucestershire is to get to know your child as this means we can respond better. This starts with your child meeting local professional teams in your community. These professionals may include health visitors, playgroup and nursery nurses, therapists and others. For older children, this is likely to be coordinated by their teaching staff at school. Working together, the team will gradually assess, support and understand your child's needs better.

If children need a greater level of support, staff at their school or nursery can ensure that this is put in place. In Gloucestershire, there is a process for this (called the **Gloucestershire Graduated Pathway**) which helps to ensure that children are assessed and that they receive the support they need. The process of parents and professionals coming together to think about the best way forward, is often called a 'TAC' meeting: **Team Around the Child**.

In some situations when nursery or school staff feel they can't meet the needs of your child, the Graduated Pathway will ensure the involvement of specialist educational services (for example, Educational Psychologists [EP], Advisory Teaching Services [ATS]) and other appropriate services). Throughout this process, the focus remains on understanding the needs of the child and offering the right support to help (this is called a '**needs-led process**').

What about medical diagnosis?

Sometimes this process identifies that a child may have a medical diagnosis such as ASD, ADHD or Learning Disability. At the present time, there is not a single, simple medical test that allows doctors to make such diagnoses quickly. To undertake a specialist assessment, doctors need to review all the available assessment information to reach a medical opinion about the nature of the child's difficulties.

Therefore, the evidence gathered along with feedback from the interventions and support that have been put in place are important in considering and making a diagnosis for these conditions. The assessments and the opinions of specialist educational professionals (for example, Special Educational Needs Coordinator –SENCo-, Educational Psychologist –EP- and Advisory Teaching Service –ATS-), are very important information for the doctor to make accurate conclusions and diagnoses for these conditions.

This process should ensure that children receive the support they need whilst assessment is ongoing and give them the best chance of an accurate diagnosis, which for some, may be a life-long diagnosis.

So who do I talk to?

If your child is under 5 years and not at nursery or pre-school: – speak to your health visitor

If your child is in nursery, pre-school or school: – speak to the lead professional at nursery, pre-school or teacher in school to involve the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCo)

The health visitor or SENCO will help you and your child to work through appropriate tests and assessments. If there is a need for medical involvement to consider a specific diagnosis, the SENCo (or other lead professional at the education setting) will complete a form ("Supporting Information from Education Setting") on which they will ask you to provide your parental observations and concerns. You will then be asked to see your GP with this form and any additional documentation the nursery/school is able to provide. Depending on the information submitted, the GP will assess and make the next decision with you. If there is full and detailed information, and reports, the GP may decide to involve the hospital paediatrician (community/neurodisability team) for a diagnostic opinion. Without this level of detail (EP and/or ATS report/s are expected), referral to paediatric services will not usually be made. Your GP is always able to seek advice and guidance from paediatric services if they are not sure what to do next.

