

Gateshead local offer information pack for parents and carers of children aged 5-16



How we can help your family

Information about services in Gateshead for families of children with special educational needs and/or a disability

Welcome

to the Gateshead local offer information pack for parents and carers of children aged 5-16

As part of the Government's reforms around special educational needs (SEN) and disability, local authorities are required to publish a local offer showing the support available to disabled children and young people and those with SEN and their families/carers.

This is one of a range of booklets that tells you about the services available across education, health and social care for families of children with special educational needs and/or a disability.

This booklet was produced jointly by Gateshead Council and the health service in partnership with parents and carers. It will help us to make sure that we are providing the sort of services that families have told us they need. It will be reviewed every 12 months so that it continues to reflect the views and needs of families living in Gateshead.

A further three booklets are available.

- Gateshead local offer information pack for parents of children aged 0-5 years
- Gateshead local offer information pack for parents of children aged 16-25 years
- Voluntary and community organisations

Each booklet can be read on its own. Some information may be relevant to more than one age group so may be included in more than one booklet. We hope you find them helpful.

Key contacts

To find out more about the information in these booklets or if you have a general enquiry about services for children with special educational needs and/or a disability, contact us at:

Pupil and Parent Services

Tel: 0191 433 3638

Email: senteam@gateshead.gov.uk



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Section 1

About this booklet



Introduction

This booklet concentrates on additional help or special help that local authorities and health services provide for families with children with additional needs who are aged from 5 – 16 years old. There may be other organisations out there that are also able to help. Please also refer to the separate booklet on local voluntary and community organisations.

Defining special educational needs

What do we mean by special educational needs or a disability?

The term special educational needs (SEN) describes the needs of children who have a difficulty or disability which makes learning harder for them than other children of the same age. SEN can cover a broad spectrum of difficulty or disability and children may have wider ranging or specific problems. These may relate to physical development, visual or hearing impairment or difficulties related to speech and language communication, behavioural or learning

How/when might your child be identified with special educational needs?

Research shows that identifying children's support needs early is vital to a child's ability to thrive. Schools place great emphasis on identifying special educational needs early so that they can help children as quickly as possible, staff there will share any concerns they have about your child with you. If you are worried that your child has additional needs from your own observations, speak with your child's teacher or doctor who will be able to give you advice on the next steps to take.

What local services are available to support you?

There are many services available to support you, your child and your family. There are a range of statutory services which your local authority and health service must provide for you by law. They are organised in different ways and in different places but usually

include health, education and social services. A general picture of how responsibilities are set out is described as follows:

Health services

- Look after your child's health and provide treatment when necessary
- First point of contact may be a hospital specialist or GP who can refer you to other services provided by health like speech therapy, occupational therapy or physiotherapy

Social services

- Gateshead's Disabled Children's Team can provide practical help if you meet the criteria for provision of a service including:
- short breaks during the day or overnight
- support to enable a disabled child to access community-based leisure activities
- support in the home with the care of a disabled child
- support to access adaptations and special equipment

Education services

- Provide education for your child and additional support at school if your child has an identified special education need. Staff can provide practical help to promote development and learning, and if appropriate, assess and monitor your child's progress.

Working together – multi-agency

Different services are sometimes called agencies and you might hear the description “multi-agency working”. This means that a number of different services or agencies are working together to achieve a joint assessment or a single plan for your child. In such situations, you will always have the support of a named “lead practitioner” who will coordinate support for you and your family.

There is a growing tendency for services to work closer together. The aim of this is to help families get all the support and advice they need in a joined up and more effective way.

Single assessment

In the future the Government has plans to develop this further and create one single assessment so that parents/carers do not have to go through numerous assessments and tell

their story to lots of different practitioners (people who work with your child). We are in the process of developing this model in Gateshead, however, for now; we are describing the current process which may involve separate assessments by practitioners in education, health and/or social care. For this reason we have set out the information below under the main headings of Health, Education and Social Care.

We have outlined the assessment process you can expect in each of these three areas and have followed this with a description of the main services that may be offered to your child and family and an indication of some of the practitioners that you and your child are likely to meet.

We hope that you find this helpful.



Section 2

Health

Introduction

All parents and carers start out knowing something about health services. Nearly everyone has a family doctor (GP) and has visited a local hospital at some time.

The health service (NHS) provides services that everyone in the population can access. These are called universal services. It also provides other services that you are more likely to come across because your child needs extra help and support. These services are called specialist services.

Due to the varying and often complex needs of children, it is possible that a range of health professionals will be involved in helping and supporting you and your child. This section provides an introduction to the people and specialist services you may come across. Some of these services are provided in hospitals or clinics and you may have to attend appointments at a distance to access them. Community health services are provided in your local area, sometimes by people who visit families at home. Health services for children are called "paediatric services" and the doctor who specialises in working with children is called a "paediatrician".

Guide to people and services

District Nurses

District nurses are a team of specialist practitioners who deliver care in a variety of community settings. Care is provided to support patients with short term needs (such as dressings and injections). They also provide support to patients with long term conditions in their own homes (including residential homes). District nurses can be contacted via your local health centre.

School Nurses

School nurses give advice and support to school age children, their parents/carers and teachers on topics such as obesity, substance misuse, sexual health, emotional health and well being and other health related issues. They can be contacted through your child's school or relevant health centres.

Children's Community Nursing Service

The team includes trained children's nurses. Initial referrals are through hospital paediatricians (specialists in children's health) but once your child is known to the service, parents can contact the team directly. The team works with the children and their families in a variety of community based settings, such as the home, school and short break facilities. This enables some children to leave hospital sooner and helps to avoid some admissions for children with complex needs. Staff carry out assessments and work closely with all agencies concerned in the welfare of a child.

Contact: Team leader at Low Fell Clinic on 0191 283 4660.

Specialist Health Practitioner for Children and Young People with additional support needs

The specialist health practitioner for children and young people with additional support needs works with the family's health visitor in supporting families, offering information and liaising with local agencies and services.

Contact Low Fell Clinic on 0191 283 4660.

Bladder and Bowel Service

This service is available to everyone including children and young people who have problems associated with their bladder and bowels. If you would like any help or advice regarding your individual needs, you can contact your health visitor, school nurse, district nurse or directly into the service. Bladder and bowel service is based at **Whickham Health Centre on 0191 283 4753.**

Speech and Language Therapy Special Needs Team

The special needs speech and language therapy team helps children and young people with special needs and communication and/or eating and drinking difficulties. The team includes speech and language therapists and assistants who offer primarily a consultative service. A qualified speech & language therapist will assess and make recommendations based on his/her findings.

The team may offer advice, training sessions for families, group therapy, and/or individual therapy as deemed appropriate. Pre-school services are offered in the setting most appropriate to the client. The team also offers a school based service to Gateshead Special Schools with regular links with family.

Contacts:

- Jackie Peck, Clinical Lead, Special Needs Speech & Language Therapy Team, Dunston Health Centre, Tel: 0191 460 5249.
- Janis Proudfoot, Paediatric Speech & Language Therapy Service Manager, Department of Speech & Language Bensham Hospital, Tel: 0191 445 6667.

Community Dental Service

Provides dental treatment for patients of all ages who have difficulty in accessing general dentist services. The service encourages the very early referral of children with additional needs from any health practitioner caring for your child. A self referral from a parent/carer is also welcome. This ensures early preventative dental care and regular contact to monitor your child's oral health. Experienced staff are fully familiar with the extra time and expertise that children with additional needs often require.

Contact: Referrals Coordinator, The Galleries Health Centre, Washington Way, NE38 7NQ, Tel: 0191 502 6754. Clinics are based at: Blaydon, Wrekenton Health Centre, Queen Elizabeth Hospital



Section 3

Education



Introduction

Many children will have special educational needs of some kind during their time in education. Most children can be helped to overcome the barriers their difficulties present quickly and easily but some children will need extra help for some or all of their time in education.

Gateshead Council has a duty by law to support your child if s/he has been identified with a special educational need and or/disability. The council will:

- Identify and assess needs of pupils with special educational needs/disability and provide appropriate provision for your child
- Provide high quality support and services to schools
- Improve accessibility to the curriculum, premises and written information for pupils
- Develop coordinated multi-agency provision

- Plan strategically with schools and other relevant partners to develop systems for monitoring and accountability for special educational needs and disability
- Continue to review local authority arrangements for SEN(D) provision
- Provide independent consultation service for parent and carers

Every child with a special educational need/disability should have their needs met as far as possible within a mainstream setting, with access to a broad and balanced curriculum. Within education services in Gateshead, there is a variety of services and support to make this possible for your child.

Schools are expected to apply the above principles to their everyday policies, practices and procedures. Settings and schools are also specifically required to appoint a special educational needs coordinator (SENCO) and have a special educational needs policy in place.

Primary and secondary education

How your child might be identified with special educational needs

Once a practitioner (for example your child's teacher) has identified that your child needs extra help and support, a discussion will take place with the SENCO (special educational needs coordinator) in your child's school. You should be informed at an early stage and your knowledge and views taken into account in planning any support for your child.

The needs of the child are normally achieved through the teacher's/practitioner's knowledge of a child's strengths, skills and abilities. If it

is decided that your child needs help beyond that which is normally available, or your child needs interventions that are additional to and different from those normally provided as part of the curriculum, the school/setting may contact the local authority for extra guidance and support.

Assessing your child

In Gateshead, education for children with SEN has been developed in line with the 1996 Education Act and the **SEN Code of Practice (2001)**. The code recommends that

schools and local authorities should provide a graduated, three level response to intervention, with procedures at Early Years School Action, Early Years School Action Plus and Statutory Assessment.

School Action

This involves interventions that are additional to, or different from, those normally provided as part of the school's curriculum and teaching strategies. They are school based and arranged through the school's own resources. An individual action plan (IEP) should be drawn up for a child and this should be developed in consultation with the parents and child. Reviews should take place at least twice a year and parents/carers should be invited. It should include only those actions that are additional or different from the normal curriculum plan.

School Action Plus

This is where there is the need for a higher level of involvement and support if the child is not making progress through the school action approach. It is at this point that external services, both local authority based and outside agencies become involved. External specialists will be able to advise teachers on targets and strategies and provide materials and more specialist assessments to inform planning. A new or updated individual education plan (IEP) will be produced and reviews will continue, at least twice a year. Parents/carers should be invited to reviews.



Statutory Assessments

For some children with significant educational needs, a Statutory Assessment may be recommended.

What is a Statutory Assessment?

This is a very detailed look at a child's difficulties, strengths and needs to decide whether a child requires more or different educational help and how this could be provided. It may lead to a statement of special educational needs.

Who can ask for a statutory statement?

A statutory assessment can be requested:

- by your child's school
- by you as a parent/carer
- by referral from another organisation, such as health or social services

How will a Statutory Assessment be carried out?

Following a request for statutory assessment, the local authority will write to you to let you know that they are considering whether it is necessary. You will also be given the name of a member of staff who can give you more information throughout the process. This person is called the 'Named Officer'.

If the local authority decides to go ahead, you will be informed and the team at the local authority will then gather information about your child's special needs from his/her school, from doctors and from an educational psychologist. You will also be asked to provide information and your own views about your child's needs. The local authority will have six weeks to gather the relevant information and a further six weeks to make a decision and inform you of the decision.

What happens if a statement of educational needs is required?

If the local authority decides that a statement is required, you will receive a proposed (draft statement), along with a copy of all the reports sent in during the statutory assessment. The proposed statement will include details of all suitable schools and a reply form for you to complete. If you are happy with the proposed statement, you will have 15 days to tell the local authority which school you would like your child to attend. If you are not happy, you can contact the local authority to arrange a meeting to discuss your concerns. You will then have a further 15 days following this meeting. The final statement will be produced within eight weeks of issuing the original proposed statement.

How long will a statement last?

This depends on the progress of your child. The statement must be reviewed at least once a year. Your child's school will translate the statement into an action plan, (currently known as an Individual Education Plan – (IEP), which should be reviewed at least twice a year and preferably each term. You will be invited to the annual review and should also be involved in reviewing each IEP.

What happens if a statement is not required?

If the local authority decides not to issue a statement, staff must write to you explaining the reason for the decision and of your right to appeal. You will also be sent a "Note in Lieu" of a statement, setting out the reasons for the decision, and including recommendations about the provision for your child. If you agree, the 'Note' can be passed on to your child's school to help teachers plan for the future.

What happens if you are not happy with the decision?

If you are not happy, the next step is to discuss your concerns with the local authority and try to sort out any issues. The Parent Partnership Service is available to help. If you are still not happy, there are aspects of the statement against which you can appeal to an independent special educational needs tribunal. The Parent Partnership Service offers independent advice to parents/carers involved with statutory assessments. A Statement is a legal document. If you don't think the service is being delivered, get in touch with the SENCO at your child's school initially. If you still aren't happy, please contact your 'named officer' at the local authority or the Parent Partnership Service for further advice.

For more information contact:

Pupil and Parent Services

Tel: 0191 433 3638

Email: senteam@gateshead.gov.uk



Starting school

Getting ready to start school is an important decision making time for parents and carers. A child reaches compulsory school age the term after his/her fifth birthday. In Gateshead a child is normally admitted to school at the beginning of the academic year in which s/he reaches the fifth birthday. The academic year runs from 1 September until 31 August.

- **Nursery Education** – is from the age of three
- **Primary Education** – is from the age of four to 11 (from Reception – year 6)
- **Secondary Education** – is from the age of 11-16 (from year 7 – year 11)
- **Further Education** - is from the age of 17-18 (years 12-13) and can take place at schools, sixth form colleges or further education colleges)
- **Higher Education** – is from the age of 18/19 and takes place in colleges and universities

When a child has already been given a statement of special educational need, and it names a particular school in the statement, the child is required to be admitted to that named school. However, if the school named in the statement is different to your chosen first preference school ranked on your application form then you will need to speak to the special educational needs team regarding this. You will also have the right to appeal against this decision. **Contact: Pupil and Parent Services on 0191 433 3626.**

If your child has special educational needs but not a statement, your application for a school place will be considered on the basis of the school's published admission criteria.

In Gateshead the options for schools are as follows:

Mainstream schools

Most children in Gateshead are educated in mainstream schools. This includes children who may have a statement of SEN or those who are on school action and school action plus. Find out more about schools at: www.gateshead.gov.uk

Special schools

Some children will need special educational help that cannot be provided in primary and secondary schools. There are currently six special schools in Gateshead.

These are:

- **The Cedars** (2-16 years), Ivy Lane, Low Fell, Gateshead, Tyne and Wear, NE9 6QD. www.cedarsacademy.co.uk
- **Dryden School** (11-19 years) Shotley Gardens, Low Fell, Gateshead, Tyne and Wear, NE9 5UR. Tel: 0191 420 3811 or 420 3812
- **Eslington School** (5-11 years), Hazel Road, Gateshead, Tyne and Wear, NE8 2EP. Tel: 0191 433 4131
- **Furrowfield School** (11 -16 years – boys) Whitehill Drive, Felling, Gateshead, Tyne and Wear, NE10 9RZ. Tel: 0191 433 4071
- **Gibside School** (4-11), Burnthouse Lane, Whickham, Newcastle upon Tyne, Tyne and Wear, NE16 5AT. Tel: 0191 414 0123 www.gibsidesschool.org
- **Hill Top School** (11-16 years) Wealcroft, Leam Lane Estate, Gateshead, Tyne and Wear, NE10 8LT. Tel: 0191 469 2462 www.hilltopschool.org.uk/



Some other mainstream schools are also designated as additionally resourced mainstream schools (ARMS). These are:

- **Bede Community Primary School**
(behavioural, emotional and social difficulties) Tel: 0191 433 4135
www.bedecommunityprimaryschool.org/
- **Bill Quay Primary School**
(Autism Spectrum Disorder)
Tel: 0191 469 3013
www.billquayprimary.org/
- **Brandling Primary School**
(Language difficulties) Mulberry Street
433 4079
www.brandlingprimary.org/
- **High Spen Primary School** (hearing impairment) Tel: 01207 542 373
www.highspenprimary.org
- **St. Wilfrid's RC Primary**
(complex learning needs) 0191 477 1909
- **Swalwell Primary School** (physical difficulties), 0191 433 4000
www.swalwellprimary.org
- **Washingwell Community Primary School**
(Autism Spectrum Disorder)
Tel: 0191 488 4400
www.shingwell.gateshead.sch.uk
- **Charles Thorpe Comprehensive School**
(11-18 years) (complex needs)
Tel: 0191 413 2113
www.charlesthorpcs.co.uk
- **Whickham School & Sports College**
(11-18) Burnthouse Lane, Whickham,
Newcastle Upon Tyne, Tyne and Wear,
NE16 5AR. Tel: 0191 496 0026
www.whickhamschool.org

If you would like more details of the facilities at Gateshead schools please contact Pupil and Parent Services on 0191 433 3626.

You can also look directly at the school websites to find out more information. You can find these through Gateshead Council's website at: www.gateshead.gov.uk

Out of area placements

Very occasionally, a child is placed in a special school which is not within the local authority. Those schools may be run by another local authority or may be independent and could also be residential. They are a very expensive option for the local authority and are only considered when a child's needs cannot be met in a Gateshead school.

How can I tell if the school is right for my child?

Whatever the school, the key question to guide parents/carers should be "Can this school meet my child's educational needs?" With mainstream schools, this can be hard to assess, especially if your child does not have a Statement or note in lieu or if there are no other children with similar needs in the school. It will help to:

- Talk with the head teacher to try to get an idea of the school's overall attitude towards children with special needs, and more specifically to your child's special needs.
- Look at the school's special needs policy.
- Meet the school's special educational needs coordinator
- Try to find out what resources the school has for children with additional needs, such as learning support teachers and any outside help

What should you expect from the school?

Your child's school must:

- Provide the name of the teacher responsible for children with special educational needs, usually called the SEN coordinator
- Explain the way it decides which children need help and how it will be given
- Describe how it will work closely with parents/carers
- Through its governing body, draw up and publish a special needs policy and report on it annually to parents/carers
- Publish information about physical access to the school for disabled children.

Annual reviews of statements of special educational needs

If your child has been issued with a statement of SEN, the local authority (LA) can review it any time during the year, however, it must be reviewed within 12 months from the date that it was finally issued. You should be invited to all reviews on your child's progress, and you can take someone along to these meetings. The head teacher will arrange the Annual Review meeting, which is usually held at the school. Your child's progress will be discussed and new targets will be set. As well as inviting you to the meeting, others involved with your child (such as teacher/s, educational psychologist) will also be invited to attend. They may also send in written reports. It is important that you have the chance to read their reports beforehand so that you can think about what you would like to happen at the meeting.

As a result of any recommendations that are made at the Annual Review meeting, the LA will decide on one of three things:

- To amend or change the statement
- To continue with the existing statement
- To withdraw or "cease to maintain" the statement

If the LA decides to change the statement, you will be given a proposed (draft) amended statement; this will follow the same procedures and timescales used when producing a new statement. A statement is usually only changed through the annual review process.



Moving to secondary school

When your child moves from primary to secondary school, your child's statement will have to be reviewed. This takes place between May (when your child is in year 5) and October (year 6). The reviews will then be taken to the SEN Panel and the SEN panel will make a decision on whether to place a child in a special or mainstream school.

All parents/carers of children in mainstream schools are advised to complete a secondary admissions application when your child is in year 6 at primary school. This will ensure that there is a mainstream place for your child if the SEN Panel decides that it is more appropriate for your child to attend a mainstream secondary school.

For more information about the school admissions process contact:
0191 433 2757 or 0191 433 2775 or visit
www.gateshead.gov.uk/

Changing schools

At any time, you can request a change of school named on your child's statement. The results of the annual review are very important when any change of school is under discussion. If you are considering changing your child's school, then it is a good idea to discuss this with people working with your child to best meet your child's needs.

If you move to a different part of the country, the new local authority (LA) must honour your child's statement and place him or her into an appropriate school whilst they are working through their own procedures. This will usually mean reviewing the statement, or deciding to do a new assessment. If your child is at an independent school placement funded by the LA, the new LA must continue to pay the fees until the statement is changed.

Transition Planning

All young people face major changes as they move from being teenagers to becoming adults and making important decisions about their future. This change can be more complicated for young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities as they are often involved with a number of support agencies.

Transition planning is about young people deciding what they want to do in the future and about helping them to make sure that each young person's needs and choices are fully explored.

Connexions Personal Adviser

In year 8 or 9 of school (age 13/14), young people and their families/carers will be introduced to a Connexions Personal Adviser. Your personal adviser will be able to help you make choices about your future, provide information, advice and guidance and work with other agencies to make sure support is provided for you.

**Contact: Connexions Gateshead Interchange Centre, West Street, Gateshead NE8 1BH
Tel: 0191 433 6800
Opening times Monday-Friday 9.30am-5pm**

The Transition Plan

In Year 9, following the annual review of your child's statement, a Transition Plan will be drawn up to look at support required over the coming years and to identify who will provide this to prepare for post 16 or 18/19 options. As well as preparing for post school arrangements, the transition plan should plan for ongoing school provision. The plan should draw together information from a range of individuals both within and beyond school in order to plan appropriately for the young person's transition to adult life. Annual reviews in the following schools years will check against the transition plan and your child's statement will be amended as necessary.

LDAs – Learning Difficulty Assessments

LDAs are completed when it becomes clear that a young person with a statement of educational need is likely to leave school and progress into further education or training. This process involves gathering information about the young person and his/her future learning and support needs. The information comes from school and other professionals, such as social workers, educational psychologists, as well as parents/carers. The LDA is then shared with the new provider (e.g. further education college) to make sure the young person continues to get the right level and type of support. The assessment usually takes place in year 11 but can also be completed in year 12, 13 or 14.

If a young person on school action or school action plus is likely to need post 16 support, an assessment could also be used to help ensure support is available.

Work experience

Work experience gives young people the chance to experience the world of work. Connexions is the local organiser of work experience for schools and colleges. Placements are for one or two weeks any time from the beginning of year 10, depending on the requirements of the school. You can find out more by talking with your personal adviser or teacher at school, or visit the work experience website at:

www.work-experience-tw.co.uk

Guide to people and services

Connexions

Connexions is a confidential advice and support service for 13-19 year olds (and up to age 25 for young people with special needs). Connexions Personal Advisers offer advice and support on a wide range of lifestyle issues including careers, education, training, employment, health and personal development opportunities. **Contact: Connexions Civic Centre Tel: -0191 433 6800.**

Connexions personal adviser

is someone who is trained to provide impartial, confidential advice and guidance to young people aged 13 to 19 (and up to age 25 for people with special needs). A Connexions Personal Adviser can give you support, information and guidance to help you make the best choice for your future.

Educational psychologists (EP)

Educational psychologists work with parents/carers, teachers, health and social care professionals to assess and advise upon strategies to be used with children and young people who are experiencing barriers to their learning. Referrals to the service are made through schools, following the SEN Code of Practice. Educational psychologists have a key role in the assessment of children and young people who are undergoing statutory assessment towards the provision of a Statement of Special Educational Need.

Contact: Gateshead Psychological Service on 0191 433 8550, their address is Dryden Centre, Evistones Road, Low Fell, Gateshead, NE9 5UR.

Named Officer

The officer at the local authority who deals with the paperwork relating to the child's case.

Parent Partnership Officer

Provides independent advice and information on special educational needs provision and procedures. Offers support to parents/carers involved with Statutory Assessment, such as compiling parents' and carers' contributions to Statutory Assessments.

Contact: 0191 478 4667, their address is Barnardo's Gateshead Family Resource Centre, 20 Bewick Road, Gateshead, NE8 4DP

SENCOs (special educational needs Coordinators)

SENCOs are the members of staff in school or nursery settings with responsibility for special educational needs within the setting/ school.

Independent Parental Supporter (IPS)

This is someone that you choose who will support you through your negotiations with the local authority and your child's school. This can be a member of your family, a friend or The Parent Partnership Service can allocate an IPS if needed.

Pupil and Parent Services

The service works closely with parents and carers, schools and other agencies involved in the statutory assessment process, to ensure that children's needs and appropriate provision are identified and met. The team is responsible for the administration of the statutory assessment, monitoring and review of statements, and also for transport applications for children with additional needs. **Contact: Pupil and Parent Services on 0191 433 3626.**

SENIT (SEN Improvement Team)

This is a team of specialist teachers (ranging from Dyslexia, Dyspraxia, Autism, Sensory Impairment (HI, VI), Learning Difficulties, Speech and Language, Physical Disabilities and Social, Emotional, Behavioural Development). The team may undertake an assessment of your child's needs (e.g. at early action plus stage or during the statementing process) and may work on a one to one basis with your child or support school staff and SENCOs through training sessions and devising intervention programmes. **Contact: Admin team for initial enquiries on 0191 433 8530 or 0191 433 8513.**

Special Educational Needs Panel

A panel of professionals who meet regularly to discuss special educational needs provision for children in Gateshead. The SEN Panel decides whether requests for statutory assessment should go ahead, looks at initial proposed statements and makes recommendations on placement and provision. In addition, it considers any recommendations for changes to placement and/or provision that have been suggested at an Annual Reviews and placements for children moving into the Gateshead area.

Behaviour and Attendance Improvement Team

Provides support to schools in the area of behaviour and attendance, including school admissions, in-year transfers, exclusions, attendance and behaviour.

**Contact: 0191 433 8758 or
email:joannamcdonald@gateshead.gov.uk**

Home to school transport

It is the responsibility of parents/carers to ensure that their school aged children attend their nominated school and are responsible for their travel from home to school. In a small number of cases Gateshead Council may provide help with home to school transport where considered necessary.

Parents/carers may apply for help using the 'Home to School/College Transport' form supplied by the local authority. Applications can be made at any time during the school year. Following receipt of the completed form an assessment is carried out by Gateshead Council on the basis of the information provided. Some of the factors taken into account include the child's age, distance travelled, family circumstances, physical impairment or learning disability.

The local authority will normally process applications within 10 working days.

**For further information contact:
Pupil and Parent Services,
Civic Centre Gateshead
Tel: 0191 433 3626**



Some abbreviations you may come across

AR	Annual Review
BSS	Behaviour Support Service
EBD	Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties
EP	Educational Psychologist
EPS	Educational Psychology Service
HI	Hearing Impaired
IEP	Individual Education Plan
LA	Local Authority
LSS	Learning Support Service
LST	Learning Support Teacher
MLD	Moderate Learning Difficulties
PD	Physically Disabled
PEP	Personal Education Plan (only children who are in care will have one of these)
PMLD	Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulties
PSP	Pastoral Support Programme
PST	Pre-School Teacher
SEN	Special Educational Needs
SENA	Special Educational Needs Assistant
SENCO	Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator
SENSS	Special Educational Needs Support Service
SLD	Severe Learning Difficulties
SpLD	Specific Learning Difficulties
VI	Visually Impaired



Words They Use

Advice – The reports provided by professionals and parents, which have to be considered for the statutory assessment

Annual Review – a meeting to discuss the child's progress and to set new targets

Behaviour Support Service – aims to help to change the behaviour of pupils experiencing emotional and behavioural difficulties within their schools and to enable them to derive maximum benefit from the social and academic opportunities they have.

Code of Practice – a guide to schools and local education authorities (LAs) on how to help children with special educational needs. Schools and LAs must take note of the Code when they deal with a child with special educational needs. You can obtain this from the Department for Children Schools and Families (www.dcsf.gov.uk)

Early Years Action - If a child is having difficulties accessing the curriculum within an early years setting then they may decide to put the child on early years action and put an individual education plan together to help the child.

Early Years Action Plus – if a child has been at early years action and they are still not making progress then the setting may then go to early years action plus which means they involve other professionals to look at putting a plan together to help the child

Home/Hospital Tuition – this service is provided to enable children to continue with their education when they are not at school.

Individual Education Plan – a plan which sets targets for your child to achieve and a date for a review to see what progress he or she has made.

Language Unit – for children with speech and language difficulties

Learning Difficulty – a child has learning difficulties if he or she finds it much harder to learn than most children of his or her age.

Learning Support Service – provides additional support for children with special educational needs through teams of specialist liaison teachers.

Mainstream School – local schools in the community.

Mainstream Support Base – a support centre or class within a mainstream school which offers support to children with special educational needs. The base usually has between 10 and 12 pupils.

Maintained School – a state school

Non-maintained Special School – a non-profit making special school which charges fees. Most non-maintained special schools are run by charities or charitable trusts.

Note in Lieu - a note in which the LA will explain why it has decided not to make a Statement following a statutory assessment. It also outlines the child's special educational needs, so that the parents and the school can make sure that they are met.

Pastoral Support Programme – a school-based process to support pupils who are at risk of permanent exclusion.

Proposed Statement - this is the first draft of the Statement, which is sent to parents to check before the Statement is finalised. It leaves out the part naming the school the child should go to.

School Action – this is the same as Early Years Action but for children in Primary and Secondary School

School Action Plus – this is the same as Early Years Action Plus but for children in Primary and Secondary School

Special Educational Needs – a child has special educational needs if he or she has learning difficulties that need special educational provision

Special Educational Provision – the additional help given to children with special educational needs.

Special Educational Needs and Disability Tribunal – an independent body that hears appeals against decision made by LAs.

Special School – a school which offers specialist teaching to children with special educational needs.

Statement of Special Educational Needs – a legally binding document which sets out in detail a child's special educational needs and all the extra help he or she should get.

Statutory Assessment – a detailed examination of a child's special educational needs. It may lead to a Statement.



Section 4

Social Care Services



The Assessment Process

Local authority social services departments have a duty by law to assess the needs of a child with a disability. An assessment is a way of finding out about you and your family and the sort of help you will need. A referral for an assessment can be made by anyone, including the parent/carer of a disabled child, a GP or your health visitor. This referral is made to the Referral and Assessment Team.

How will my child be assessed?

The assessment can be brief (a CAF Assessment or an Initial Assessment) or more in depth (a Core Assessment) and helps staff to make decisions about what support can be provided. You can find out more about the different types of assessments below. If you want a full copy of the criteria we use either visit www.gateshead.gov.uk or contact the Disabled Children's Team.

CAF Assessment (Common Assessment Framework)

In this assessment a range of agencies work together so that families receive effective joined up support at the earliest opportunity. It considers the strengths and needs of a family and identifies which services should be involved in order to agree outcomes to be achieved. A 'Team around the Family' (TAF) is then brought together to deliver services as part of a single support plan, with one practitioner taking the role of 'Lead Practitioner' to act as the main point of contact for the family. CAF Assessments may be also be completed by your health visitor, a children's centre worker or a teacher.

Initial Assessment

This assessment will be carried out within ten working days of a referral. It may involve the social worker visiting you at home to meet your child and talk with you and your family, as well as contacting other professionals who are involved with the family.

Core Assessment

An Initial Assessment could be followed by a Core Assessment. This is more in-depth and is undertaken if needs are thought to be significant. It involves social services working with other agencies or independent professionals who may complete specialist assessments or give specialist knowledge or advice. It normally takes no more than 35 working days to complete a Core Assessment.

What happens following an Assessment?

The outcome of the assessment will be shared with the family. You will be advised what level of service can be offered and you will be allocated a lead worker, if appropriate, to coordinate support for your child and the family. Together, you will agree a plan which outlines the type of service to be provided, and how the services will be expected to meet the needs of the child. All plans are reviewed regularly and services can be changed (increased or decreased) to respond to the changing needs of the child and their family.

Reviews are usually held within every six months to discuss how the services your child is receiving are benefiting them. The review chairperson will make recommendations on how the services should continue. You will be encouraged to attend these meetings, along with other practitioners involved in services your child receives.

Carer's Assessment

Parent and carers have also a right to a separate assessment, in addition to their needs being fully addressed in their child's assessment. In general, however, this should not be necessary, provided the parent's/carers' employment, training, education, leisure and other needs are fully addressed in the child's assessment.

People and Services

Disabled Children Team

Gateshead Council provides and arranges a variety of services to enable children with additional needs and/or a disability to fulfil their potential. Our specialist Disabled Children Team, can offer emotional and practical support to parents/carers to meet the needs of children aged 0-17 years, who have substantial, long term disabilities that have a profound effect on their lives. This is a specialist team of workers made up of a team manager and some social workers and a community resource officer. The services it can provide include:

- Short breaks – during the day or night
- Support to enable a disabled child to access community based leisure activities
- Support in the home with the care of a disabled child
- Support to access adaptations and special equipment

Contact Disabled Children Team at Gateshead Civic Centre. Tel: 0191 433 2720

Definition of roles

You will meet a lot of different workers who will give you and your child support. Here are definitions of some of the key roles of the workers you will come across.

Social worker

A social worker can offer support, advice and counselling to you and your family. With your help they will assess what kind of help/support you and your child might need and work towards getting this for you.

Case worker

Usually this is a social worker who has been allocated your child's case. It is this person's responsibility to find out what support you and your child need and to provide ongoing support and assistance, if required.

Duty social worker

This is a person who takes details when you ring and make contact with social services. Most teams of social workers operate a duty system, which means that each team member is responsible in turn for answering the phones, making home visits and dealing with families who do not yet have an allocated or named social worker.

Family Intervention Team

From time to time some families need a bit of extra help with the challenges of everyday life. The Family Intervention Team can give practical help, advice and advocacy for families who may need help with home conditions, household budgets, family relationships and parenting.

**Contact: 0191 433 3426 or 0191 433 2565.
Email: Familyinterventionteam@gateshead.gov.uk**

Community Resource Worker

Helps to identify accessible local leisure activities, working with other agencies to encourage and support children to access mainstream leisure facilities.

Involvement Worker

The Involvement worker works with disabled children and young people to ensure they have a voice in shaping their services and are fully engaged in their care planning. This includes using creative methods of involving disabled children and young people, including those who communicate in ways other than speech. This service is available on a referral basis through your child's social worker or other practitioner.

Contact: Disabled Children's Involvement Worker on 0191 433 3843.

Occupational Therapists

This service is different to the occupational therapy service offered through the health service. The council employs a number of occupational therapists who can undertake special assessments to establish the practical needs of a disabled child and his/her family. The main role is to recommend equipment and adaptations to the home, to help to make the child as independent as possible and provide equipment or major adaptations which would support the child to carry out everyday tasks. Referrals can be made via the Disabled Children Team.

Team Around the Family

Where a CAF assessment identified that support is needed from more than one agency,

a Team Around the Family brings together relevant practitioners. Together with you and your child, they work together to plan co-ordinated support through an agreed written support plan which clarifies each team member's responsibilities. The aim is to reduce duplication and support a common service delivery approach.

Lead Practitioner

Where a multi agency response is needed to provide support for your child/family, a lead practitioner will be named to act as a single point of contact for your family and take a lead role to ensure that services are coordinated to meet your child's needs.

Additional support services

There are a range of additional support and services for your child and your family including short breaks, holiday schemes and access to discounted leisure facilities

Short Breaks

Short Breaks give disabled children the chance to spend time with friends, experience exciting and fun activities and develop new skills and independence. They also give parents and carers a break from their caring role and time to recharge batteries. In the past this was called "respite".

Short breaks come in all shapes and sizes to suit you and your family's needs. They can be a break for a child away from their family or can involve supporting families to take a short break together, away from the routine of daily life. Short breaks can last a few hours, an evening, over night or longer. They can take place in or away from the family home.

The type of short break you will receive will depend on your child's assessed needs. This may change over time. You can see the types of short breaks available and how you can access them on the next page.



Specialist short break services for disabled children with the most complex needs

Access route:

Core Assessment: Referral and Assessment Team and sometimes a continuing health care assessment (Community Nursing Team)

Access to support such as:

Grove House, Home from Home scheme, Reach Gateshead, Individual Budgets, St. Oswald's Hospice, Palliative care services

Targeted Short Break services and long term support

Access route:

Common Assessment Framework (CAF) or Family Service Plan or Initial Assessment

Access to support such as:

Direct payments, commissioned out of school club places, one to one workers, childminders and personal assistants

Preventative Short Break Support

Access route:

Common Assessment Framework (CAF) or Family Service Plan

Access to support such as:

Early Intervention funding, community resource worker, Saturday clubs

Local minimum entitlement to short breaks for all disabled children

Access Route:

Membership of Network of Children with Disabilities (preferred)

Access to:

Leisure cards, Max Cards, inclusive youth clubs, Active Kidz Holiday Scheme, emergency support and all universal services

See below for more information about specific types of short break.

Home from Home Service

This is a scheme (for children and young people up to 17 years old), which can offer children and families regular short breaks by linking them with another family. All children using the scheme have learning or physical difficulties or both. If you are interested in using the scheme, you should speak with your child's social worker.

Leisure cards and Max cards

Members of Gateshead Network of Children with Disabilities receive free or reduced cost entry into swimming pools, leisure centres and visitor attractions throughout Gateshead.

For more information contact

Julie Brown, tel: 0191 433 2788 or email juliebrown@gateshead.gov.uk

Active Kidz Holiday Scheme

This is a school holiday activity scheme for 5-14 year olds, available at venues across Gateshead and includes arts, crafts, games, dance and sport.

You will need to complete a booking form, contact: 0191 433 7117.

Reach Programme

North East Autism Society run this specialist short breaks programme, including a school holiday scheme, Saturday club and outreach support for children with autism. To be eligible, a social care assessment is needed so you will need to discuss this with your child's social worker.

Some families can also use a direct payment or an individual budget to buy their own short break services.

Financial support

Caring for a disabled child may change your financial circumstances. There are several benefits that you may be able to claim as the parent/carer of a child with additional needs. Entitlement to some benefits is based on the needs of your child, while others are means tested. **For general information contact the government's benefit enquiry line Freephone: 0800 882 200 Monday to Friday, 8am to 6pm or visit: www.dwp.gov.uk**

Financial support – your questions answered

What is a direct payment?

A direct payment is money paid directly to you so that you can buy your own support, rather than having services delivered by Gateshead Council. It might take up part, or all, of your child's care plan and can also be part of an individual budget.

What is an individual budget?

An individual budget is an up front allocation of money. You can use your budget to design and purchase support from the public, private or voluntary organisations.

Who can get a direct payment or individual budget?

People with parental responsibility for a disabled child can get a direct payment or individual budget if the child has support needs that must be helped by the council. Your child has to be assessed by a social worker in order for this decision to be made.

What can a direct payment or an individual budget be used for?

There is no fixed list, but the support you want to buy must meet your child's assessed needs and promote her/his welfare. For example, some families have employed a worker to support their child to access leisure activities or to help out at home. Others have bought overnight short breaks for their child. You cannot use a direct payment for health services, education or housing.

Will my benefits be affected?

No. Direct payments and individual budgets do not impact on the benefits you receive. They are in place of direct services from Gateshead Council.

Is it for me?

With direct payments and individual budgets, you are in control. You can decide how your child's needs will be met and make the arrangements yourself. You can arrange support flexibly, in a way that is convenient for your family. This may not suit all families as some may not want the responsibility of keeping track of how much is spent or arranging their own support. If you try self directed support and then decide it's not for you, you can go back to having services delivered by Gateshead Council.

Other services that can help

Adaptations

If your child has a disability which is permanent and substantial you may be eligible for assistance from the local authority. Major Adaptations provision can be provided after an assessment of physical, sensory, mental health and learning disabilities. The assessment will focus on the difficulties your child has with everyday tasks.

Contact: Referral and Assessment Team on 0191 433 2653.

Advocacy Service

Gateshead Council works in partnership with Action for Children to provide an advocacy service for children who may be having difficulty having their voice heard. This is offered on a referral basis. Your child's social worker will be able to give you more information.

Gateshead Network of Children with Disabilities

This is an information service for families with disabled children. Membership is voluntary and any family with a disabled child aged 0-17 can join. Members receive free leisure cards and Max cards, which can be used at lots of leisure attractions in the Gateshead area.

For more information about joining contact Julie Brown on 0191 433 2788 or email juliebrown@gateshead.gov.uk

The Disabled Children's Forum

This is a chance for parents and carers to meet with workers and discuss services for disabled children. You can find out more by contacting Parents in Power (see below).

Parents in Power

This is a voluntary organisation run by parents/carers for parents/carers of a child with additional needs and can be contacted by

email at Parentsinpower@yahoo.co.uk
or in person at c/o Liddell Terrace,
Bensham, Gateshead, their website is www.parentsinpower.btck.co.uk

The Disabled Children's Team also works with local groups that offer support to children/young people and their families, see separate booklet on voluntary and community organisations for more information.

Comments, Compliments and Complaints

It is always helpful to find out what you think of the service you are receiving. If you receive an excellent service or have suggestions about how things can be improved, please make your views known. If you are unhappy with the service, you should speak with the Disabled Children Team Manager or contact the Social Care Complaints Manager on 0191 433 2408 or email cbs@gateshead.gov.uk

Find out more

Your child's social worker will be able to give you information about the services outlined above. You can also contact the Disabled Children Team from 9am – 5pm (Monday to Thursday) and 9am - 4.30pm (Friday).

Call: 0191 433 2720

Write to: Civic Centre, Regent Street, Gateshead NE8 1HH



Section 5

Leisure Services



Play Development

Play is an essential part of childhood and is a way for children to learn about the world. Gateshead Council's Play Development Service offers a wide range of inclusive play across Gateshead, including weekly term time, after school and lunchtime sessions in both schools and community venues; it also offers half term holiday schemes such as Active Kidz and summer programmes.

Contact: Play Development Manager, tel: 0191 433 5080 or visit www.gateshead.gov.uk

Clasper Towers Adventure Playground

The playground is free and provides an inclusive environment for children. The team at Clasper Towers have a wealth of experience to encourage children to learn in a range of subjects including art, craft and environmental science. Groups can take part in themed packages tailored specifically to need. Sessions need to be booked in advance

Contact: Clasper Towers, tel: 0191 433 5100 or email: claspertowers@gateshead.gov.uk

Toy Library

This is a community resource to improve play facilities. It provides a loan service of toys and equipment and also a dedicated space for children and families, with staff on hand for information and advice. The Toy Library is based at Chowdene Children's Centre. Opening hours are Monday – Thursday 9am - 4.30pm and Friday 9am - 12noon.

An outreach programme also enables people to loan and return toys at children's centres throughout Gateshead.

Contact: Caroline Wakefield, Tel: 0191 433 5055, email carolinewakefield@gateshead.gov.uk or visit www.gatesheadearlyyears.org/toylibrary

Libraries

Libraries can offer a great range of books, resources and activities for children of all ages. Children can have a library ticket from birth. You can also find out about national Bookstart scheme, which provides free packs for all young children, including specific separate packs for children with a sensory impairment.

Contact: Gateshead Central Library, Tel: 0191 433 8410 or email: libraries@gateshead.gov.uk

