

Early Years Service SEND Offer

The Early Years Service provides a range of support for both EY settings and young children across Gloucestershire. This includes ensuring that Gloucestershire has a range of high quality, inclusive Education/child care provision to enable all children to access their entitlement of EY provision and to enjoy early education experiences.

The Early Years Service has a holistic and flexible approach to supporting young children with additional needs and/or disabilities. It is our aim that all children in Gloucestershire have the opportunity to be the very best they can be, to enjoy learning and have access to high quality educational experiences throughout their childhood. Ultimately we want children to be happy, healthy, confident and resilient and of course be ready for the next stage in their lives. We therefore offer a range of bespoke support for individual children and families where this is needed. Our Additional Needs/SEND offer is set out below.

Referring to the Early Years Service for support/advice for individual children with SEND

The Early Years Service SEND offer is targeted support for young children aged 0-5 with additional needs and/or disability. Professionals/practitioners must ensure that they have explored other areas of support before considering a referral to the service, for example for advice/support around sleep, routines, toileting, diet and/or behaviour the health visiting service can provide advice and support. The service always welcomes a phone call from practitioners/professionals to explore potential referrals to ensure referrals are appropriate.

We ask that where possible all referrals are accompanied by a My Plan (this can be in a basic format but it is important this is in place before we become involved).

We ask that health professionals referring to our service carry out their statutory duty of completing the 'SEN health notification to the local authority' on system one – please discuss this with the health visiting lead if you are unclear of what this is.

Referrals will not be accepted unless there is a parent/carer signature. We will not accept referrals that do not have this signature.

With all referrals to the Early Years service we may, with the consent of parent/carers, suggest referrals to other agencies as appropriate to ensure that the holistic needs of the child and family are addressed.

Young Children aged 0-18mths*

Children within this age bracket may be offered home visits. The home visits will usually be undertaken by an Early Years Advisor who will identify with the parent a clear plan of support. This plan will be influenced by the initial referral and other information gathered from the family. Visits will be fortnightly, 4 weekly or less frequently depending on the needs of the child. Home visits typically focus on supporting the child's development by using a 'small steps to learning approach.'

The Early Years Advisor will work alongside the child's health professional to review the child's My Plan which will have accompanied the initial referral to the service.

All children referred to the service will be invited to a monthly drop in session within their locality.

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Children aged 18mths-3* Years (*or until in EY Setting)

Children within this age bracket will be offered weekly sessions at an Early Start group within their locality. These sessions will usually be run by an Early Years Advisor who may also work alongside a practitioner within the community.

The Early Years Advisor and the parent will agree on a clear plan of support and a date of when support will be reviewed – this support will relate to the initial referral and will be included within the child's My Plan.

Early Start groups are targeted play sessions for children and parent/carer to attend. The groups provide a gentle introduction to social interaction with peers, routines (eg snack, group time) and different play experiences.

During these sessions parents will naturally develop a clearer understanding of how their child learns and will be supported to explore their child's next stage in learning (eg early years provision).

The Early Years Advisor will work alongside existing professionals and parent/carer to review the child's My Plan – in some instances the Early Years Advisor may take on the role of the Lead Professional.

Children in Early Years Provision

Support for children accessing an early years provision may be provided by the Early Years Advisor who will visit the setting and child to develop a clear understanding of what the challenges are for the child and how the setting can adapt practice and their environment to support the child's development and learning. There will be a clear timescale of support that will be regularly reviewed and additional advice may be sought from the Lead Advisor or Locality Lead. The provision that the child attends may also be provided with specific training and the child's parents/carers may also be invited to this too. For some children it may be identified that additional resources are required to either ensure that child is safely included or ensure that the child is able to fully access the Early Years Curriculum, in these circumstances the Early Years Advisor and Lead Advisor will explore with the setting appropriate and effective ways to meet the child's need.

Transition into Reception

All early years children require a smooth and well managed transition into Reception. However, for children with additional needs and/or a disability, transitions have got to be carefully planned. This may mean that for some of the children referred to the Early Years Service, support is needed in the early stages when starting school. This support will be individual to the child and the school and will be able to ensure that the child is settled, fully included and can access the curriculum.

Occasionally, there will be times where children that have not previously been known to the Educational services significantly struggle to start school, where this occurs the Early Years Service will ensure that there is a planned and supportive response to ensure we fully understand the child's needs.