From the Graduated Pathway to the Earliest Support Pathway

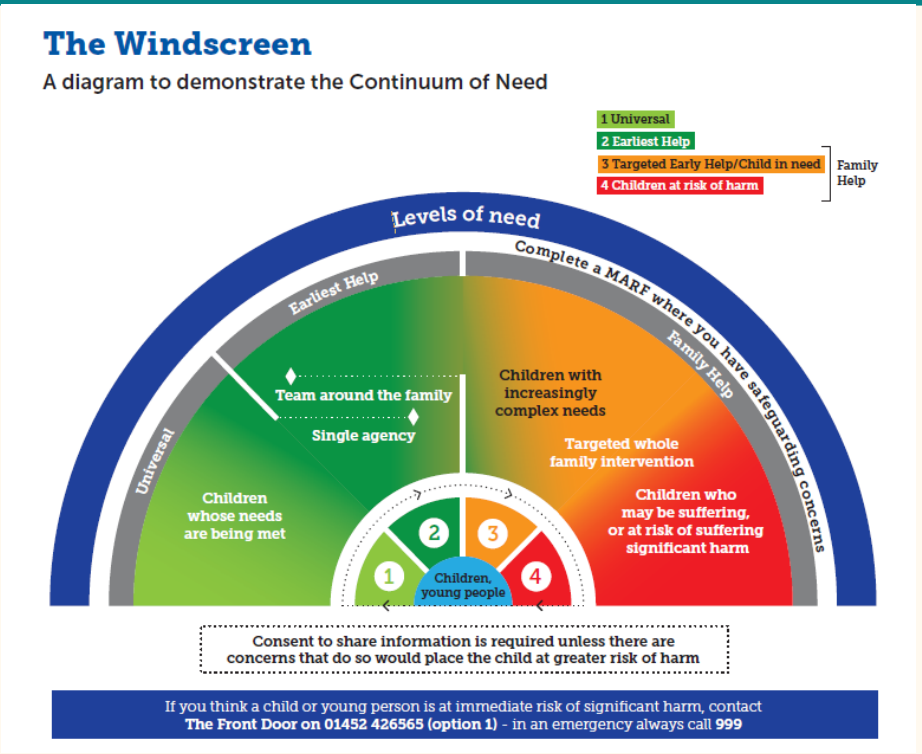
Earlier. Simpler. More coordinated. With families.

A briefing on why the pathway is changing, what is being developed and how partners can shape the final resources.

From the Graduated Pathway to the Earliest Support Pathway

Earlier. Simpler. More coordinated. With families.

Alignment with FFPP and SEND reforms



UNIVERSAL SUPPORT

Families, communities and universal services

EARLIEST SUPPORT

Coordinated help when needs first emerge

FAMILY HELP

Targeted support and statutory social work

Launch: 1 November 2026 Aligned with the Family Help launch

Support when needs first emerge, before difficulties escalate.

Why did we need to review the pathway?

1

Policy and reform

Update the local framework for the Families First Partnership Programme and emerging SEND reform.

2

A clearer local offer

Keep the SEND graduated approach, while making the wider planning pathway meaningful for a broad range of family needs.

3

Simpler practice

Refresh outdated guidance and reduce complexity in tools, templates and online content.



What we heard from schools and families



Schools and settings

- Practice and paperwork vary across settings
- A strong ask for “what good looks like” examples
- Concern about duplication and how the pathway will align with future Individual Support Plans
- Guidance must work for education-only SEND needs as well as wider family needs

Children and families

- Use family-friendly language and a plan that feels useful
- Start with strengths and what matters to the child or young person
- Reduce repeating their story across separate assessments and plans
- Involve families in shaping and sense-checking the final materials

Our response: retain what works, simplify what gets in the way.

What is changing?

New identity

Graduated Pathway becomes the Earliest Support Pathway.

One plan

My Plan, My Plan Plus and My Assessment move towards one combined Earliest Support Plan.

Refreshed guidance

Clearer principles, navigation and alignment with Family Help and SEND.

Practical resources

Family-friendly design, engagement tools and themed example plans across ages and needs.

Digital work continues

Submission to the Local Authority is paused while purpose, legal basis, resource and digital options are explored.



1 November 2026

What is changing?

New identity

Graduated Pathway becomes the Earliest Support Pathway.

One plan

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Refreshed guidance

Earliest Support Pathway | Gloucestershire County Council

Practical resources

Earliest Support Pathway Planning & Tools | Gloucestershire County Council

Digital work continues

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1 November 2026

What are you hearing and seeing?

We want to test the direction of travel with partners:

1. Does what we have heard reflect the experience of children, families and practitioners in your area?
2. What is working well in the current Graduated Pathway that we must retain?
3. Where do families and practitioners experience confusion, duplication or barriers?
4. What difference should the Earliest Support Pathway make in practice?
5. What will help your agency communicate and embed the changes?

We will be continuing to review the roll out of the Earliest Support pathway - Your insight will help shape implementation, communications and ongoing improvement.

