

Working in partnership with parents

Parents are the most important people in their children's lives. Children begin to learn about the world and their place in it through their experiences, activities and routines with parents and families.

Parents can also be an important support to children's learning in their educational settings. By working together parents and practitioners can make a significant and positive impact on children's learning and development. Approaching parents as equal partners and without judgment are the first steps towards developing a rewarding partnership that children can benefit from.

Most parents experience difficulties at some time or another. For example, the loss of a loved one, relationship breakdown, money problems, or ill health can have a negative impact on family life. At times such as these, parents can feel overwhelmed and unable to support their children's learning and development as well as they might. Other factors such as working patterns, poverty, previous negative experiences, language and/or literacy difficulties or different disabilities may also act as barriers to parents being as fully involved as they would otherwise be.

Practitioners and establishments should be aware that parents may be experiencing difficulties or pressures in their lives and these could be having an impact on their children's learning and development. Being open,

approachable and recognising the important role parents play in their child's life, their knowledge and their expertise will help parents to feel more able to communicate and work together to support their children.

Quotes from parents...

"Thank you for all the help and support that you have given to myself and my daughter, it has made a big difference in our lives. Also thank you for getting my daughter's work experience placement, she is really grateful for this."

"My worker has been wonderful, I don't know where we would have been without her. She has understood our needs and I cannot thank her enough."

"Our worker has really listened to us and involved us in everything."

Family Information Service

The Family Information Service is a free impartial information, advice and support service for all families with children and young people aged 0 – 19 years (up to 25 years for those with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities) and professionals working with families.

The Family Information Service hosts an online, responsive directory detailing a wide range of information including family support and advice, education, childcare, things to

do and the Local Offer (www.glofamiliedirectory.org.uk).

A new feature of the directory will provide a centralised point of reference for professionals. The 'Information for Practitioners' section has been designed to support work with families to ensure they have access to the most up to date information and resources.

The team also offer a brokerage service for those parents and

professionals who have complex enquiries. Advisers will research the options available and discuss the family's needs with providers ensuring the information given to the enquirer is comprehensive, enabling them to make an informed choice.

Telephone: 01452 427362

Email: familyinfo@gloucestershire.gov.uk

www.glofamiliedirectory.org.uk

Gloucestershire's Local Offer (SEND)

Under the Children and Families Act 2014, every Local Authority must publish a Local Offer for Special Educational Needs & Disabilities (SEND). In Gloucestershire this can be found on www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/localoffer



What is the Local Offer?

The Local Offer provides information about provision across education, health, social care, private, voluntary and community sectors for children and young people who have SEND. It also provides advice and guidance about local approaches to supporting children and families through the graduated pathway.

Two main purposes of the Local Offer:

- to provide clear, comprehensive, accessible and up-to-date information about available services and how to access them;
- to make provision more responsive to local needs and aspirations by directly involving children and young people with SEND, their parents and service providers in its development and review.

What does developing a local offer mean?

Development of the Local Offer is a two way process. Services develop their own local offer detailing how they enable children and young people with SEND to access and use their service.

In addition, users of services for children and young people with SEND can provide feedback to enhance the local offer i.e. how to make provision more responsive to needs and broaden access to more children and young people.

What is my role in developing the Local Offer?

Providers of services can continually develop and update their local offer and the most effective way for them to do this is by registering on the Glosfamilies Directory – www.glofamiliedirectory.org.uk or by contacting the Family Information

Service on 0800 542 02 02.

Practitioners can use the Local Offer to find services that support a child, young person with SEND. Practitioners can also promote use of the Local Offer as a valuable resource to find services in their area and know what to expect in terms of access and provision.

If a practitioner or family find a service or activity that is not on the Local Offer but could benefit children and young people with SEND and their families, details can be emailed to sendlocaloffer@goucestershire.gov.uk

Schools and colleges

Schools and colleges are required to contribute to Gloucestershire's local offer by providing details about how they will meet the needs of children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities.

In addition, schools are required to publish their own SEN Information Report providing details about how they will meet the needs of children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities. The requirements in relation to schools and colleges can be found in the Code of Practice available online.

To assist schools and colleges in meeting their obligations, Gloucestershire's Local Offer work stream (including parents, a Head Teacher and College Director) have produced a template for schools and colleges. The template is also in response to a request from parents to make it as easy as possible for them to find information and consider options across different settings/providers.

The template, circulated to

schools and colleges, is intended as a guide to help them display their SEN Information Reports. The template is available on the Glosfamilies Directory – www.glosfamiliesdirectory.org.uk/localoffer.

Advice and guidance on developing a school's SEN Information Report and contribution to Gloucestershire's Local Offer is available from the SEN Monitoring and School Support Team, (see page 50).

Schools and colleges can use their own forms if they wish or are invited to complete the template and can then:

- publish it on their own website as a pdf document;
- change the design and use the headings and publish it in their own style online as a pdf (Adobe) document;
- put it into HTML format (web page format) and publish it on their own website.

Please email sendlocaloffer@goucestershire.gov.uk when your school or college SEN Information Report is available.

The Local Offer information is updated and reviewed annually.

What GCC will do includes:

- deliver Gloucestershire's Local Offer through the Family Information Service directory (www.glosfamiliesdirectory.org.uk);
- provide a voluntary Disabled Children and Young People's Register (The Key) for children and young people from birth to 25 years. This is supported by the Family Information Service who provide impartial advice, information and support (0800 542 02 02);
- provide a Local Offer template for schools and colleges available on the Glosfamilies Directory;
- Gloucestershire's Local Offer will enable feedback from parents and young people on the accessibility of the Local Offer and services available, including schools and colleges;
- annually publish comments received concerning the Local Offer together with the responses provided.



Gloucestershire Parent Carers

Ensuring the participation of parent carers is an underpinning principle of the Children and Families Bill.

This has two distinctive aspects:

1. The individual participation of children, young people and their parent carers in their own assessments, plans and support and subsequent reviews of these.
2. The strategic participation of children, young people and parent carers in local (and national) service design, delivery and evaluation.

In most local authority areas there is a parent carer forum whose membership (network) is made up of parents of children with a range of disabilities and conditions. Unlike other support groups, the primary aims of parent carer forums are to work in partnership with service providers and commissioners to improve the services their children access across health, education and social care.

In Gloucestershire the parent carer network elects a steering committee: The Parent Carer Council, to ensure the parent carer voice is heard and represented.

Parent Carers in Gloucestershire have already had a huge impact on the development of services and built strong relationships with practitioners and service providers across the county. They do this to:

- actively seek the voice of parent carers to highlight what works well;
- help shape future services and participate in the planning process;

- identify issues and concerns frequently experienced by service users;
- promote good practice amongst service providers.

Many parents do not see themselves as carers, particularly parents of a child with mental health difficulties. Parents do not always identify with their child being 'disabled'. Anyone with parental responsibility for a child with additional needs/disability providing regular unpaid help is a parent carer and can become a member of the parent carer network. Joining the parent carer network gives families the opportunity to share experiences and keep up to date with every changing policies.

Find out more at
<http://glosparentcarers.org.uk>

or call Carers Glos
01452 386283 or email
parents@carersgloucestershire.org.uk

FB Gloucestershire
Parent Carers



“My best experiences with Practitioners have been when there is mutual respect and when my suggestions are treated seriously, not dismissed or belittled.”

“When I was asked to be part of the Parent Carer Council it gave me back some level of control over my future as a parent carer of a child with complex needs. It has had a very positive impact.”

“I find it really helpful to be included in the planning processes of important decisions that are being made on our behalf. I feel more in control of my disabled son's fate.”

Special Educational Needs and Disability Information Advice and Support Service (SENDIASS) Gloucestershire

SENDIASS Gloucestershire provides information, advice and support on matters relating to children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). The service is free, confidential and impartial and offered to parents and carers of children and young people aged between 0 and 25 years old.

SENDIASS Gloucestershire Advisers can:

- provide information and advice on the telephone;
- meet parents/carers in person to discuss any concerns;
- help parents/carers to prepare for meetings, appeals and tribunals;
- support parents/carers to attend meetings;
- help parents/carers to prepare for transport, exclusion and admissions appeals;
- support parents/carers to attend transport, exclusion and admission appeal hearings;
- help to explain reports written by professionals;
- explain the Education, Health and Care Needs Assessment process;
- provide a range of written literature;
- provide advice on matters such as SEN support, starting or changing schools, attendance, bullying, home to school transport, exclusions;

- help parents/carers to prepare for Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Tribunals;
- with parents'/carers' permission liaise with schools and other agencies;
- signpost to other sources of help.

SENDIASS Gloucestershire has a freephone telephone helpline 0800 158 3603 which is available Monday to Friday 9.00 am – 5.00 pm all year round. Callers who are using a mobile phone can dial 01452 389345 as an alternative.

The service operates a 'self-referral' process. However, on occasions it may be considered appropriate for a professional to make contact with the service on behalf of the parents/carers. The service will act upon such requests only on the full understanding that consent has been given.

Main Office: Special Educational Needs and Disability Information Advice and Support Service (SENDIASS) Gloucestershire, 2nd Floor Messenger House, 35 St. Michael's Square, Gloucester, GL1 1HX

Freephone: 0800 158 3603

Direct Line: 01452 389344/5

Email: sendiass@carersgloucestershire.org.uk

Website: www.sendiassglos.org.uk

Facebook: Sendiass Gloucestershire



Independent Support Gloucestershire

Independent Support (IS) is a Government funded programme to provide additional support to young people and parents during the implementation of the SEND reforms. Independent Support is free, impartial and confidential.

We can help parents if:

- a child/young person has a Statement of Special Educational Needs and it is being transformed into an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP);
- a child/young person has educational needs that are not able to be met without support within a nursery, Pre-School, school or college and a parent would like to know more about Education, Health and Care Needs Assessments.

We can help young people if:

- they have a Statement of Educational Needs or a Learning Disability Assessment (LDA) which will be transformed into an Education, Health and Care Plan.

The service operates a 'self-referral' process. However, on occasions it may be considered appropriate for a professional to make contact with the service on behalf of the parents/carers or young person. The service will act upon such requests only on the full understanding that consent has been given.

Independent Support Gloucestershire can:

- help parents/carers and young people to understand the EHC Plan process including Annual Review;

- support parents/carers and young people to have their views heard and to ensure the aspirations of the child or young person are at the core of the Plan;
- ensure parent/carers, children and young people are engaged in decisions from the outset;
- support parents/carers to complete forms/paperwork – particularly if this is difficult

because of literacy difficulties, a disability or if English is an additional language.

Independent Support Gloucestershire has a freephone telephone helpline 0800 158 3603 which is available Monday to Friday 9.00 am – 5.00 pm all year round. Callers who are using a mobile phone can dial 01452 872247 as an alternative.

