

Changes to services for children and young people with special educational needs or disabilities

Through the Children and Families Bill (2013) the government is transforming the system for children and young people with special educational needs (SEN), including those who are disabled, so that services consistently support the best outcomes for them.

From September 2014 these changes will affect the service for all children and young people with special educational needs or disabilities and their families and not just for those children and young people who have a statement of special educational needs. It will extend the SEN system from birth to 25, giving children, young people and their parents greater control and choice in decisions and ensuring needs are properly met. It will mean:

- replacing statements and learning difficulty assessments with a new birth-to-25 Education, Health and Care Plan
- extending rights and protections to young people in further education and training
- offering families personal budgets so that they have more control over the support they need
- improving cooperation between all the services that support children and their families and particularly requiring local authorities and health authorities to work together
- requiring local authorities to involve children, young people and parents in reviewing and developing provision for those with special educational needs
- requiring local authorities to publish a 'local offer' of support.

South Gloucestershire Council proposes to meet the changes set out by the Bill, and in its supporting information, outlines what this could mean for local children and young people with special educational needs or disabilities, their families, the people that work with them and the future services and support that will be available.

The current arrangement for support for children and young people with special educational needs or disabilities is through a variety of different teams in both children's and adults departments. Having brought together all our 'people' related services into a single Children, Adults and Health department earlier this year, South Gloucestershire Council is able to be more effective and joined-up in our planning and delivery in these areas and we want to build upon this to provide an improved service for these children and young people.

We want to use this opportunity to not only meet the legislative changes of the Children and Families Bill (2013) but to also improve the journey through life for children and young people with special educational needs or disabilities supporting them through all the development stages of their lives from birth through to adulthood to encourage their aspirations and plan for what they will achieve in the future.

We plan to develop a 0-25 service for children and young people with special educational needs or disabilities that removes barriers to fulfilling potential, and is developed taking into account the views of those children, young people and their families. By developing a 0-25 year service we aim to ensure

stability for young people specifically at times of significant change such as when they leave school and move on to adult education.

The council's vision is for:

“every child and young person with a special educational need or a disability to be given the best chance to succeed in life by enabling them to maximise their potential at school and college, and to move successfully into adulthood: finding work, living independently and participating in their community.”

We will deliver this vision by:

- involving parents and young people in reviewing and developing provision and ensuring that children, young people and their families are at the heart of the service.
- working with health and care services to jointly commission services
- publishing a clear local offer of support and services, including health provision and education, for all children and young people with additional needs, so that parents and young people can easily understand what is available to them
- offering a streamlined assessment process, which brings together education, health and social care, and involves children, young people and their families
- replacing statements and learning difficulty assessments with the new 0-25 Education, Health and Care Plan, which will reflect the child or young person's aspirations for the future, as well as their current needs.
- offering a personal budget for families and young people with an Education, Health and Care Plan, extending choice and control over their support
- empowering young people to move into adulthood successfully whilst managing expectations and supporting their aspirations

Further information and ways to have your say

We want you to help us determine the shape and purpose of this service. We want to hear your views on the changes outlined in this summary and what they could mean for you, your child, your family or the young person you support.

Further information about the proposals is available from our website:

www.southglos.gov.uk/0to25disability

Information is also available from all South Gloucestershire Libraries and One Stop Shops until 24 February 2014.

We will also be holding a series of events, workshops and focus groups in the coming months, details of which can be found on our website.

You can tell us your views and have your say by:

- completing the survey included with the supporting information
- completing the online survey on our website: www.southglos.gov.uk/0to25disability
- sending an email to: consultation@southglos.gov.uk
- calling us on: 01454 868008
- writing to: FREEPOST RTCT-JXLE-EET, South Gloucestershire Council, 0-25 disability service consultation, Civic Centre, High Street, Kingswood, BRISTOL, BS15 9TR