

The Dorset Parent Guide to support your child's Special Educational Needs 0 to 25 years



Dorset
Council



Dorset Parent-Carer Council

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Section One: Introduction

Dorset Council's Vision for Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) in Dorset

"We want our children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) to be healthy, happy and safe, and able to achieve their potential to lead a fulfilling life. We want them to have, and to expect, the same opportunities in life as other children and young people."

All children and young people in Dorset have a right to receive an education where they are included and make progress, regardless of their disability or special educational needs. We want our children and young people to be able to achieve their goals so that they are prepared for adult life and go on to successful futures.

This guide explains the support ordinarily available in Dorset education settings, from early years settings to post-16 providers, if a child or young person needs more help to achieve their potential. It includes information on how settings should use the Graduated Approach to plan support for children and young people, and how you can access support in your local area. The Graduated Approach is outlined in the SEND Code of Practice (2015).

The SEND Code of Practice (2015)

The Children and Families Act (2014) and the SEND Code of Practice (2015) set out how all early years settings, schools and post-16 providers have to meet the needs of children and young people with SEND.

The SEND Code of Practice states: "A pupil has SEN where their learning difficulty or disability calls for special educational provision, that is provision different from or additional to that normally available to pupils of the same age."

It breaks down SEND into four broad areas. These are:

- Communication and Interaction
- Cognition and Learning
- Social, Emotional and Mental Health Needs
- Sensory/Physical Needs

The SEND Code of Practice tells us:

- All children and young people should receive high quality teaching through ordinarily available provision. This is called universal support.

- Some children and young people need additional and different targeted/ specialist support. This is called SEN support.
- A few children and young people have higher support needs. They will need personalised support and may need an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP).

An EHCP is a legal document which describes a child or young person's special educational needs, the support they need and the outcomes they would like to achieve. Most children and young people's needs can be met without an EHCP and very few children and young people will require one. An EHCP can only be issued after a child or young person has gone through the process of an Educational, Health and Care Needs Assessment. If your child lives in a different local authority to the setting that they attend, it is the local authority where your child lives that has responsibility for Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs).

Equality Act (2010)

Children and young people who have SEN may have a disability under the Equality Act (2010) – that is '...a physical or mental impairment which has a long-term and substantial adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities'.

The Equality Act 2010 sets out the legal obligations that the Local Authority and education settings have towards disabled children and young people:

- They **must not** directly or indirectly discriminate against, harass or victimise disabled children and young people
- They **must not** discriminate for a reason related to a child or young person's disability
- They **must** make reasonable adjustments, including the provision of auxiliary aids and services (for example a specialist chair, IT equipment or therapy)

Reasonable Adjustments

Whether something is 'reasonable' depends on things such as:

- The child or young person's needs and what support, if any, they receive through an Education Health Care Plan (EHCP)
- How practical the changes are and the resources of the education setting
- The cost of making the change or providing the aid
- If the change requested would overcome the disadvantage the child or young person experiences
- If there are other ways of overcoming the disadvantage
- Health and safety considerations and the interests of other children and young people

The duty to make reasonable adjustments in education is anticipatory. This means settings must consider in advance what they need to do to make sure all disabled children and young people can access and participate in the education and other benefits, facilities, and services they provide for those within their settings.

Section Two: Person-Centred Approaches

What are person-centred approaches?

A person-centred approach means your child should be prepared, supported and encouraged to have as much choice and control over their own life as possible. When we think in a person-centred way we focus on the child or young person, their gifts and skills as well as their needs.

Plans should be based on what is important to your child and what is important for your child and you. In this way your child's educational settings will make sure that planning and actions are 'done with' you and your child, rather than 'done to'.

Person-centred approaches should be used at all stages of the identification and assessment of SEN and in the graduated approach's 'assess, plan, do, review' cycle.

Listening and recording what's important to and important for your child or young person, and their family

When we say something is important to a child, we mean this helps them with comfort, happiness, contentment, fulfilment, and satisfaction. When we say something is important for a child, we are saying this is an issue of health and safety or them being a valued member of the community. Being a valued member of the community can include things like how your child is regarded by others and how other people look at them.

In making plans, it is important to identify your child's and your best hopes and priorities. Your child's and your dreams and aspirations provide context and this is a significant part of the plan.

One Page Profiles are an effective person-centred way to summarise information about your child, including what we like and admire about them (strengths), what's important to them as well as how best to support them.

Plans: making them and taking action – shared responsibility

Person-centred approaches can be used when using lots of different types of plans, for example, Individual Education Plans, Pastoral Support Plans, Behaviour Support Plans, Care Plans etc.

Person-centred planning makes sure that targets are relevant and meaningful. Targets in person-centred plans should be SMART; specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time related.

Person-centred planning assumes that children, young people and their family are experts in their own lives. Everyone who is part of a person-centred plan needs to be clear about their roles and what they can and can't influence.

Person-centred planning when the young person is 16 years old or older

When your child reaches their sixteenth birthday, they have a right to make their own decisions as stated in the Mental Capacity Act (2005). This will have an impact on all plans created for your child as part of the SEN graduated approach. Educational settings, parents and carers and young people need to be prepared for this change. When your child is 16 or over they are assumed to have 'capacity' to make decisions and support must be provided to help them do this. Most people can make some or all their own decisions. If they don't have capacity to make a specific decision, then it must be made in their 'best interests'. There must be good evidence about their capacity, what support has been offered and how their 'best interest' has been identified. If there is any doubt about the capacity of a person to make their own decision, seek advice.

Person centred websites and resources

www.preparingforadulthood.org.uk

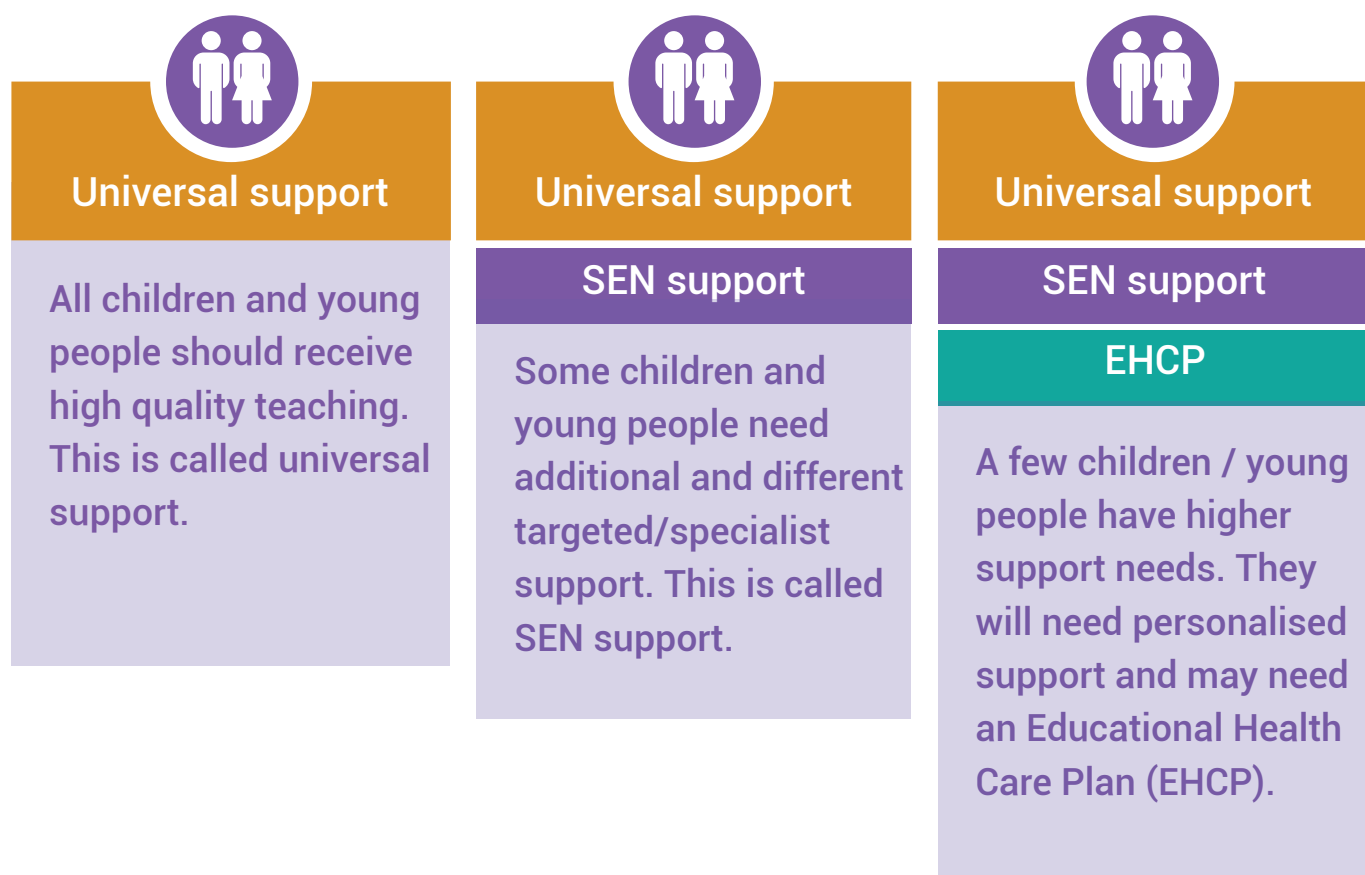
<http://helensandersonassociates.co.uk/person-centred-practice/one-page-profiles/one-page-profile-templates/>

www.sheffkids.co.uk

Section Three: The Graduated Approach

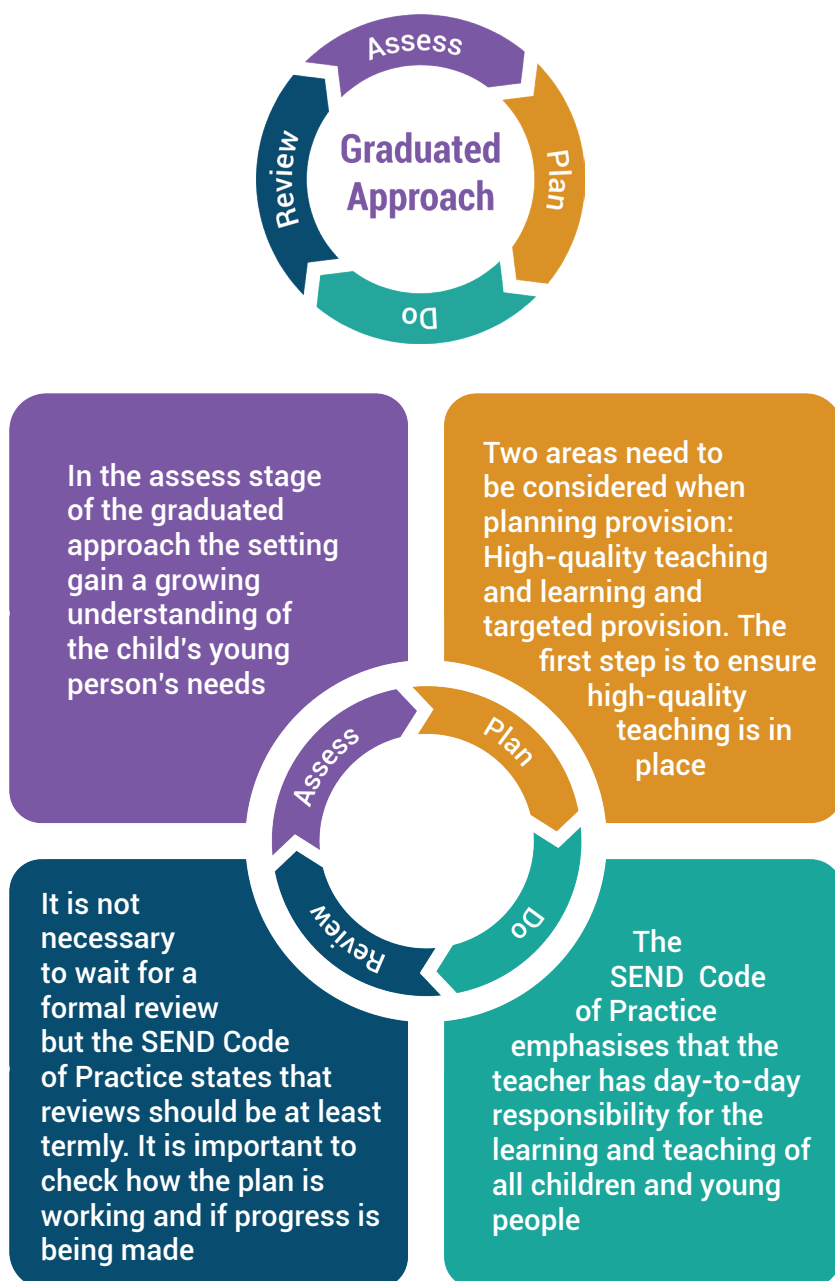
The SEND Code of Practice outlines the need for early years settings, schools, and post-16 providers to follow a graduated approach to meet the needs of children and young people.

Children and young people learn in different ways and make progress at different rates. Education settings should teach in a way that supports all learners. This is high quality teaching and may mean doing things differently for individuals or small groups.



Schools and settings should follow an assess, plan, do, review approach at the universal, SEN support and EHCP stages.

The SEND Code of Practice puts an emphasis on the contribution of you and your child.



Section Four: Universal Support in Education

All children and young people should receive universal support. This section outlines what should be ordinarily available in all education settings.

Staff in your child's setting should be aware of the needs of your child and where necessary make reasonable adjustments. Your child's setting should be mindful of your child's individual social and emotional needs and other personal circumstances.

What are 'reasonable adjustments'?

Where something a setting does might put a child or young person at a disadvantage, the setting must take reasonable steps to avoid that disadvantage. This is called the reasonable adjustments duty. Reasonable adjustments are positive actions that help a child or young person to fully participate in all aspects of education.

Settings need to think in advance about what children and young people might require and what adjustments might need to be made for them. Most reasonable adjustments are inexpensive and might just involve changes in how settings do things. The following are some examples of reasonable adjustments:

- Adjusting a timetable to provide a child with learning difficulties more time to learn and practice new skills
- Allowing a child or young person with a visual impairment to sit at the back of a classroom to accommodate their field of vision
- Providing a child or young person with dyslexia a card to indicate to teachers that they may need extra time to complete written tasks
- Providing a child or young person with alternative ways of recording work, for example a laptop

What to expect from your child's education setting

The setting should involve you and your child in conversations about reasonable adjustments and when considering provision for your child. You know your child better than anyone else and should be involved in planning support for them.

Your child's setting should regularly seek the views of you and your child, for example, through surveys and coffee mornings, to inform policy and practice.

The setting should ensure all staff have the relevant training to meet your child's needs. Your child's setting can also access support and advice from other professionals, such as a Portage Consultant, Education Psychologist or Specialist Teacher. Dorset Council works with its special schools to provide outreach support to other settings too.



Your child should feel safe and valued and their setting should promote diversity and inclusion.

DID YOU KNOW?

Early years settings including registered childminders must have arrangements in place to support children with SEN or disabilities.

Settings have a responsibility to make you aware of the SEN status of your child and ensure support is in place.

Your child's school must also have an accessibility plan on their website.

Section Five: SEN Support in Education

This provision should be in addition to universal support. If your child is still struggling despite access to good universal provision, then early years settings, schools and colleges should provide targeted provision. Examples of targeted provision are set out here for each area of Special Educational Needs.

Communication and Interaction

What is a communication and interaction need?

Your child has a communication and interaction need if they find communicating with others challenging. This may be because they struggle to say what they want to, understand what is being said to them or use social rules of communication.

Children and young people with a diagnosis of an autistic spectrum condition are likely to experience issues with social interaction. They may also struggle with language, communication and imagination which can impact on how they relate to others.

Targeted support for communication and interaction needs:

These are examples of targeted support that can be provided by your child's early years setting, school or college if your child has communication and interaction needs:

- A one-page profile
- A small group or one-to-one intervention
- Sensory needs profile
- Social stories which explain social situations to children and help them learn ways of navigating these situations
- Specific assessments of language and vocabulary, for example British picture Vocabulary Scale (BPVS) or language screener
- Visual support
- Regular short sensory breaks
- Access arrangements in place for examinations and assessments

Cognition and Learning

What is a cognition and learning need?

Your child may have a cognition and learning difficulty if they learn at a slower pace than their peers, even with appropriate differentiation.

Specific learning difficulties (SpLD), affect one or more specific aspects of learning and include conditions such as dyslexia, dyscalculia and dyspraxia.

Targeted support for cognition and learning needs:

These are examples of targeted support that can be provided by your child's early years setting, school or college if your child has cognition and learning needs:

- One-page profile
- A small group or one-to-one intervention
- Pre-teaching of subject specific vocabulary
- Access to assistive technology and to specialist equipment and materials
- Access arrangements in place for examinations and assessments

Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH)

What is a social, emotional and mental health need?

Your child may have SEMH needs if they have become withdrawn or isolated, as well as if they display challenging behaviour. These behaviours may reflect underlying mental health difficulties such as anxiety or depression, self-harming, substance misuse, eating disorders or physical symptoms that are medically unexplained. Your child may also have a diagnosis of attention deficit disorder, attention deficit hyperactive disorder or attachment disorder.

Targeted support for social, emotional and mental health needs?

These are examples of targeted support that can be provided by your child's early years setting, school or college if your child has SEMH needs:

- One-page profile

- A small group or one-to-one intervention
- Team Around the Family (TAF) meeting
- Use of standardised questionnaires with a specific purpose, such as the Boxall Profile
- Social stories which explain social situations to children and help them learn ways of navigating these situations
- Visual aids including now and next cards, timelines and timers
- Access arrangements in place for examinations and assessments

Sensory and/or Physical Needs

What is a sensory or physical need?

Your child may require some special educational provision because they have a vision impairment, hearing impairment or a multi-sensory impairment and require specialist support and/or equipment to access their learning. Children and young people with a multi-sensory impairment have a combination of vision and hearing difficulties.

Some children and young people with a physical disability require additional ongoing support and equipment to access all the opportunities available to their peers.

Targeted support for sensory and physical needs:

These are examples of targeted support that can be provided by your child's early years setting, school or college if your child has a hearing impairment:

- Staff to have advice and training from specialist professionals, e.g. Hearing and Vision Support Services (HVSS), Audiologist, Occupational Therapist/ Physiotherapist
- Use of an assistive listening device (radio aid) from the Hearing Support Service to help reduce the problems experienced due to background noise or distance from the speaker
- Training for staff about meeting sensory needs
- Adaptions to the physical environment – acoustics, reduction of background noise

- Use of strategies to promote social inclusion, for example a buddy system
- Access arrangements in place for examinations and assessments

These are examples of targeted support that can be provided by your child's early years setting, school or college if your child has a visual impairment:

- Use of resources and assistive technology to support learning and recording (e.g. adapted books, interactive books, magnifying equipment)
- The curriculum differentiated and presented to take account of individual needs (for example size of text, methods of recording, and expectations regarding work rate)
- Staff to have advice and training from specialist professionals, e.g. Hearing and Vision Support Services (HVSS)
- Adaptations to the physical environment – lighting, physical layout
- Access arrangements in place for examinations and assessments
- Provide your child with their own copy of materials to avoid sharing books/monitors so your child can position them at the best angle/distance

These are examples of targeted support that can be provided by your child's early years setting, school or college if your child has a physical need:

- Individual Healthcare Plans and/or Medical Risk Assessments developed with input from you and your child
- Agree emergency protocols which are updated annually but sooner if there is a change in circumstance
- Specific activities to target fine and/or gross motor skill development
- Strategies to promote social inclusion, for example a buddy system
- Adult support above that which is usually necessary for: personal and self-care needs, assistance or supervision at break and lunchtimes, mobility and/ or safety, outdoor play, trips and visits
- Staff trained in understanding your child's physical/medical condition
- Consideration given to the use of assistive technology to support learning or recording of work, with an ICT assessment requested, where appropriate



Your child's setting may also seek advice and support from other professionals, for any of the four broad areas of need. This may include:

- An Educational Psychologist and/or Specialist SEN teacher,
- Other colleagues in Dorset's Locality Team such as Portage Consultants, Inclusion Leads or Early Years Support and Advice Officers.
- Outreach support from the Teaching Alliance of Dorset Special Schools (TADSS)

DID YOU KNOW?

Dorset SENDIASS is a FREE, impartial and confidential service that provides information, advice and support to:

- Children and young people aged from 0 to 25 with special educational needs and/or disability (SEND)
- Parents and carers of children and young people with SEND

**Call the SENDIASS team on 01305 595477
or make contact via the website:www.dorsetsendiass.co.uk**

Section Six: Successful Transitions

Transitions

Your child will 'transition' when they move from one setting to another. This could be a change between educational settings (e.g. from an early years setting to a primary setting, a primary setting to a secondary setting, or a secondary setting to a post-16 setting) or a change within the educational setting (e.g. class to class). Information should be shared with you, your child, new staff and previous staff.

Transitions can be an exciting time, but your child may require support to ensure that it is a positive experience for them. Schools and settings are expected to be aware of children and young people who will need additional support with transitions and make plans for them to be successful. All transitions should be person-centred and so you and your child should be involved in the planning. Examples of support include:

- Extra visits to a new setting/classroom
- Visits with a trusted adult
- Visual timetables
- Plans for unstructured times

When your child moves to a different setting, SEN Support should still be provided if required, although it may be in a different format. The new setting might be able to meet your child's needs in a different way or use their resources differently.

Parent-to-parent advice: Meet the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO) in the proposed new setting. Discuss your child's needs before they transfer and find out how they will meet their needs. If it feels like the right place for your child, make sure that a proper transition process is put in place between the existing setting and the new one.



Preparation for Adulthood

Preparing for adulthood is an important part of planning for your child's successful transition from school-age education into adult life. The preparation for adulthood outcome areas are:

- Employment
- Independent living
- Community inclusion
- Health

Good preparation for adulthood adopts a person-centred approach; your child will be central to the decisions made about them and involved in as much of the support planning as possible. Planning should involve appropriate professionals.

If your child has an EHCP local authorities must include a focus on preparing for adulthood and transition planning at the Year Nine annual review and at each review thereafter.

Section Seven: What do I do if my child is struggling in their early years setting, school or college?

Your child's setting

You may have concerns about your child's learning and well-being and wish to ask for help. You can talk to your child's setting about your concerns, or a health professional if they are already working with your child.

Your child's key person, class teacher, head of year or tutor is the best person to talk with first. In schools and colleges, the progress of your child is the responsibility of their teachers, not teaching assistants, even if your child sees a teaching assistant every day.

You can also speak with the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCo) at your child's setting. They may arrange a meeting with you and your child's teacher to discuss your concerns.

TOP TIP: Have a look at the school's SEN Information report and SEND Policy. Every maintained school and academy must have these on their website. In an early years setting, ask them for their policy.

Meetings with your child's setting

When meeting with staff and other professionals involved with your child or young person, it can be helpful to prepare beforehand. Think about your child's strengths and what is important to them, as well as what is important for them.

Parents and carers have shared some advice and tips on how to get the best out of meetings:

- Make notes about what you want to say at a meeting – for example any concerns you have, what is working well and what is not working so well (It may be helpful to take a friend, support worker or relative with you)
- During discussions, keep a record of agreed actions (Who will do it? When will it be done by? When will you meet again to review progress?)
- Ask staff to share ideas so that you can try them at home
- Share ideas that are working at home with the setting

Your child can take part in the meeting and will be supported to participate in a way that



is meaningful for them.

You can ask for copies of the records the setting is making about your child's progress and the actions they are taking. They should ask for your permission before referring your child to other agencies.

Following a meeting, if you feel unsure about something or would like something explained more fully, you should email or telephone the setting or talk to your child's teacher. You can ask to have the information emailed to you if you prefer.

Health professionals

If a health professional is already working with your child (such as a paediatrician or physiotherapist), you may raise your initial concerns with them and you can ask them to send any letters/advice you receive to the SENCo at your child's setting as well. You can also speak to your GP or Health Visitor about your concerns.

Dorset Council

Have a look at Dorset Council's Local Offer
www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/local-offer

Call Dorset's Education Advice Line (DEAL) on **0800 14 040 41**

If your child already has an EHCP, you can contact your SEN Provision Lead through your locality (contact details are in section ten)

Other support

Contact Dorset SEND Information, Advice and Support Service (SENDIASS) www.dorsetsendiass.co.uk. They offer free, confidential, accurate and impartial advice and support to families living in Dorset. Dorset SENDIAS service is provided by Family Action.

Find a support group run by other parent carers who have children with similar difficulties
www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/fis-search

Have a look at the website or contact your local Parent Carer Forum, Dorset Parent Carer Council, (DPCC)

www.dorsetparentcarercouncil.co.uk
[Contact us - Dorset Parent Carer Council](#)

Section Eight: Health

Universal and targeted services

Most families will be able to access the NHS services they require through Universal Services. These are services anybody can access, at any time, without requiring a referral. They include:

- GP's
- Health visitors
- Dentists
- School nurses
- Walk-in centres
- Minor injury units

Some families will require additional, more specialist help from the NHS. These are called Targeted Services and a referral is usually required to access them. The referral will usually come from another professional such as your GP or school. Targeted Services include:

- Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS)
- Speech and language therapy
- Physiotherapy
- Occupational therapy

Children and Young People with the highest levels of physical or emotional health needs may be eligible for support through a Personal Health Budget. There is an assessment process for this, a referral is required from a professional and there are eligibility criteria. Only very few young people require or are eligible for this level of support.

Further information can be found at

[Personal budgets for children and young people with SEND - Dorset Council](#)

Services for Wellbeing and Mental Health

Universal Services include:

Dorset CAMHS

Website contains lots of information for children, young people, families and professionals

camhsdorset.org/

Useful resources for families:

camhsdorset.org/parents-carers/useful-resources-for-parents

Kooth online

This online counselling and emotional wellbeing platform for children and young people offers an online live chat option

www.kooth.com

Chat Health Dorset

Chat Health is a confidential text messaging service that enables children and young people (aged 11-19) to contact their local public health nursing (school nursing) team

Text: 07480 635511

Dorset Mind Your Head

Delivered by Dorset Mind charity, Dorset Mind Your Head, is a whole-school approach to help young people, parents and teachers

live life mentally healthy. Support includes counselling, drop-ins, mentoring and ambassador schemes, assemblies, PSHE, education and workshops for teachers and parents

dorsetmindyourhead.co.uk

TOP TIP: Find and join a local support group run by parents and carers. Search www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/fis-search or ask Dorset Parent Carer Council

Section Nine: Locality Services and Central Services

Dorset Council's Children's Services are delivered through six localities: North, Dorchester, West, Chesil (Weymouth and Portland), East, and Purbeck. The locality approach means that all services for children and families can be delivered locally and by one team.

Staff in localities include:

- Family Workers who provide support to families
- SEN Family Workers who provide support specifically to families where a child has SEN
- Specialist Teachers who have expertise in areas of SEN such as dyslexia and autism
- Educational Psychologists
- Portage Consultants who work with pre-school aged children
- SEN Provision Leads who write and maintain Education Health care Plans (EHCPs)
- Virtual School Leads who support children in care
- Social Workers
- Inclusion Leads who support with attendance, exclusions and elective home education
- Youth Workers

Dorset Council also have the following teams not based in Localities.

Hearing Support Service (HSS) and Visual Support Service (VSS)

Works with children and young people with mild to profound hearing impairments. There is also a Vision Support Service (VSS) working with children and young people with mild to profound visual impairments.

For more information:

[Hearing and vision support services - Dorset Council](#)

Physical and Medical Needs Service (PMNS)

The central team provide advice, guidance and training to make sure children and young people with physical and medical needs get the right support and can enjoy the same opportunities as their peers.

For more information:

[Physical and Medical Needs Service \(PMNS\) - Dorset Council](#)

Children who are Disabled Team (CWAD)

The team includes social workers, early help professionals and an occupational therapist (OT). They provide specialist early help support to children and young people and their families which includes key working and care management aimed at preventing the need for more intensive social care intervention. The paediatric OT services provide statutory services to support children to live at home as independently as possible by providing specialist equipment, adaptations and moving and handling advice.

A few children and young people will transition from children's social care to adult social care. Dorset Council have a specialist Transitions Team to help understand what a young person's care and support needs might be when they reach adulthood. The Transitions Team have conversations with the young person and their family to understand what their care and support needs might be when the young person reaches adulthood and plan for this. The team are also able to provide information, advice and guidance about preparing for adulthood and being as independent as possible. The year nine annual review of the EHCP plan is the point at which a referral to the transitions team should be considered.

Anyone can make a referral by contacting the Adult Access Team on 01305 221016.

The Transitions Team can be contacted at 01305 216611 or transistionsteam@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk

Section Ten: Contact Details

Locality Contact Details

North Locality

northlocality@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk

01258474036

Dorchester Locality

dorchesterlocality@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk

01305224220

West Locality

westlocality@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk

01308425241

Chesil Locality

chesillocality@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk

01305762400

East Locality

eastlocality@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk

01202 868224

Purbeck Locality

purbecklocality@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk

01929557000

Further support for families and children and young people

Dorset's SEN Local Offer

www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/local-offer

**Dorset Education and Advice Line (DEAL)**

Dorset Education Advice Line (DEAL) - Dorset Council

0800 14 040 41

Dorset Special Educational Needs Information, Advice and Support Service (SENDIASS)
dorset.sendiass@family-action.org.uk

www.dorsetsendiass.co.uk

01305 595477

Dorset Parent-Carer Council (DPCC)

dpcc@dorsetparentcarercouncil.co.uk

07827793244



We would welcome your
feedback on this guide

Scan QR to complete the feedback form