

Support for Children Under 5 with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

As a local authority, West Sussex need to be aware of all children who have, or may have SEND, so we can plan and prepare to meet their needs. We want to make sure that we are putting children first and working to improve outcomes and the experience for these children and their families. We are working with Health teams to share information so that we can work together, in partnership with parents/carers, to provide the support that each child needs through their early years. To support this, groups of professionals will meet together across the county in "SEND Under 5s" groups to review and plan for the needs of children with SEND before they start school.

Why is my child being referred to SEND Under 5s and what information will be shared?

Your child has been identified as having, or possibly having, SEND. Information will be passed to the local authority to support them to plan support for children with SEND.

We will share basic information about your child – their name, date of birth, address and that they have been referred to us. This will not lead to any further action, unless you give permission for this, but will fulfil our duty to inform the local authority.

If you would like the SEND Under 5s group to work with you to plan and provide additional support, then we will share your contact details and more details about your child's needs. We do not share this level of information without your consent.

Please feel free to ask the professional who has given you this information to tell you more about the SEND Under 5s group and what support can be offered.

Who will see this information and provide additional support?

The information shared with the local authority will be saved securely on their database and shared with professionals at a local SEND Under 5s group.

The SEND Under 5s group will include:

- health professionals who work with young children, including those with SEND
- Portage Coordinators who support young children with SEND and their families

- Early Years and Childcare Advisors who support early years and childcare settings (including childminders, day nurseries and pre-schools) to offer high quality, inclusive support to all children

How will my child be supported?

Our aim is to work with you to make sure that you are confident that your child's needs are known and are being met throughout their early years.

We can provide you with information about local groups that you can attend for support or to meet with other families or support to access early years and childcare provision.

Most children with SEND can have their needs met within mainstream provision – in early years and childcare provision and in school – and the SEND Under 5s group will work with you to enable your child to access an early years setting alongside their peers when you are ready. Attending high quality early years provision has a positive impact on children's learning and development.

West Sussex can provide brokerage to help you to find local childcare and offer a "supported transition" to plan for your child's specific needs so that they are ready to provide what your child will need to thrive in the setting as soon as they start attending.

The support offered will be regularly reviewed to ensure that it is still appropriate and meeting your child's needs. Our aim is always to offer support at an early point so that your child makes good progress. This may result in support being reduced later on as it is no longer needed.

The group will also consider what might need to be in place for a child starting school. For most children with SEND, a supported transition will be all that is needed to enable the child to make a successful start to school. If there is likely to be a need for additional support over and above this for a period of time, the group may recommend that information is gathered and shared with West Sussex Special Educational Needs Assessment Team in order for a formal assessment process to be carried out. This would be done in consultation with you.

Other information and support

- [West Sussex Local Offer](#)
- [West Sussex Parent Carer Forum, parent support groups](#)
- [SEND Information Advice and Support Service](#).

How we use this data

For information about how West Sussex County Council uses this data, refer to:

- [Parents accessing early years and childcare provision privacy notice](#)
- [Early Help privacy notice](#)