

# Information leaflet

## Children with a physical or sensory impairment or learning disability

In certain cases a Special Guardianship Order (SGO) may be made where a child has a physical or sensory impairment or learning disability.

The 2017 special guardianship guidance provided to local authorities, states that special guardians must be considered for extra financial support if there will be a greater amount of money spent because of illness, disability, emotional or behavioural difficulties (see section 38(b) of that guidance).

This would be considered in the SGO support plan but if for any reason it was not covered a special guardian can have it reviewed by requesting an assessment of their support needs.

As the carer of a child with additional needs they are also entitled to all the support anyone else would get in their position.

Here is a brief outline of all the ways special guardians might be able to find out more about their new role, adapt to new responsibilities and access the help they may need.

### Local offer

The Children and Families Act 2014 requires every local authority to have a Local Offer and that it should be kept up-to-date and publish parents' comments as to how useful it is.

The Local Offer should have a directory website covering a range of important information including:

- education, health and care provisions
- training
- travel to and from schools
- provision for adulthood and independent living
- finding employment

- obtaining accommodation
- participation in society
- information about how to obtain an Education, Health and Care (EHC) needs assessment

## Education, Health and Care (EHC) needs assessment

An EHC needs assessment considers whether a child needs an Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plan. An EHC Plan is for children and young people aged up to 25 who need more support than is otherwise available. The Plan identifies the child or young person's educational, health and care needs and if needed specifies what additional support should be put in place.

You may have heard of a 'statement of special educational needs' sometimes referred to as 'a statement'; this has been replaced by the EHC Plan.

Only a small number of young people receive an EHC Plan. A special guardian, the young person (if aged over 16 and under 25 years-old) or any professional such as doctors, teachers or even friends and family can request an assessment.

If a child is given an EHC Plan then the carer might be entitled to a 'Personal Budget' to help them get the support they need.

## Personal Budget

Personal Budget is essentially an agreement to give a carer money to spend on support for the child and can take the form of direct payments or an agreement for someone else to manage the Personal Budget on their behalf – this could be a school, the local authority or even a family member or friend.

## Information, Advice and Support

The local Special Educational Needs and Disability Information, Advice and Support Service (IASS) is able to give free, accurate and impartial information to parents, carers and children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities.

IASS was previously called PPS (Parent Partnership Services) but was renamed in the Children and Families Act 2014.

The scope of the information they cover is huge but includes:

- local policy and practice
- the Local Offer
- Personal Budgets
- the law regarding Special Educational Needs and disability, health and social care
- advice for children, young people and parents on gathering, understanding and interpreting information and applying it to their own situation.
- information on the local authority's processes for resolving disagreements, its complaints procedures and 'means of redress.' ( how it makes it up to you if something goes wrong ).

## Finding people in the same situation

Professionals should note that Special Guardians often want to speak to others in similar situations who can share their lived experiences with them.

Parent Carer Forums (PCF) are groups of parents and carers of disabled children who work with all the people in the lives of children with disabilities and additional needs – like local authorities and health providers – to ensure services meet their needs.

They do not advocate for individual families but instead try to improve the wider picture and situation for all families. PCF tend to attract invested, knowledgeable parents and carers and can be a great way for special guardians to meet others who are in similar situations.

Professionals can assist Special guardians to find their local PCF by advising them to visit the National Network of Parent Carer Forums website.

## Informal Support

Support can come in many forms and often the best way to find somebody to talk to is to visit disability service provisions in the area. The Local Offer should include listings of sport and leisure activities in the area as well as local support groups, coffee mornings and drop-in sessions.

## General information about disability

In some cases a special guardian may not know much about the disability the child has. It can be an overwhelming time but professionals can encourage them to learn more about the condition and the specific support that is available by contacting the main charity relating to the child's condition.

## Key points

- Local authorities were issued guidance in 2017 stating special guardians must be considered for extra financial support if a greater amount of money will be spent because of the child's illness, disability, emotional or behavioural difficulties.
- As the carer of a child with additional needs a special guardian is entitled to all the support anyone else would get in their position.
- An EHC needs assessment looks at whether a child needs an Education, Health and Care Plan. An EHC Plan is for children and young people aged up to 25 who need more support than can be accessed through the existing special educational needs support available to all.
- For further information and guidance special guardians can contact their local SEND Information, Advice and Support Services (IASS).
- Parent Carer Forums (PCF) are groups of parents and carers of disabled children who work with all the people in the lives of children with disabilities and additional needs – like local authorities and health providers – to ensure services meet their needs.

## Useful links

### **The Blue Badge Scheme**

[www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk)

The Blue Badge scheme helps you park closer to your destination if you're disabled. It's named because of the badge you display in your window to demonstrate that you're part of the scheme.

### **Cinema Exhibitors Association Card**

[www.ceacard.co.uk](http://www.ceacard.co.uk)

Tel: 01244 526 016

The CEA Card is a national card scheme developed by the Cinema Exhibitors' Association (CEA) for UK cinemas. It ensures cinemas make reasonable adjustments for guests with a disability and in particular ensures that these customers get a complementary ticket for someone to go with them if required. You don't need to have a CEA Card for a reasonable adjustment to be made.

### **Contact a Family**

[www.contact.org.uk](http://www.contact.org.uk)

Helpline: 0808 808 3555

Contact a Family is a national charity for disabled children, providing information, advice and support services.

### **Council for Disabled children**

[www.councilfordisabledchildren.org.uk](http://www.councilfordisabledchildren.org.uk)

Tel: 020 7843 1900

The umbrella body for the disabled children's sector bringing together professionals, policy makers and practitioners.

### **Disabled Persons Railcard**

[www.disabledpersons-railcard.co.uk](http://www.disabledpersons-railcard.co.uk)

Tel: 0345 605 0525

The Disabled Persons Railcard allows a person with a disability and their adult companions to get one third off most rail fares throughout Great Britain. It costs £20.00 for a one year and £54.00 for three years.

### **National Express Disabled Persons Coachcard**

[www.nationalexpress.com](http://www.nationalexpress.com)

The Coachcard entitles people with a disability up to a third off all standard fares throughout the UK. It costs £10 plus £2 p&p per year.

### **National Network of Parent Carer Forums**

[www.nnpf.org.uk](http://www.nnpf.org.uk)

Tel: 0207 608 8708

Funded by central government, the Forum is made up of Parent Carer Forums from almost every local authority in England. It ensures good practice, knowledge and shared expertise about parent participation continues to grow and strengthen.

### **Nimbus Access Card**

[www.accesscard.org.uk](http://www.accesscard.org.uk)

Tel: 01332 404040

The NIMBUS Card is a card that discreetly informs venues of people's needs.



The individual needs of cardholders are assessed and entered into a secure database which then allows venues to access information on the barriers faced by the customer, including how they can support them. Venues that support the card include Download Festival, All 02 Academies and even Glastonbury festival. The Access Card costs £15 for three years.

### **RADAR National Key Scheme**

[nks.directenquiries.com](http://nks.directenquiries.com)

Tel 020 7250 3222

The National Key Scheme (often called the RADAR key scheme) provides people with a large silver-coloured key that opens more than 9,000 accessible toilets in the UK. It was developed because some public toilets designed for disabled people had to be locked to prevent damage and misuse. Having one key that unlocks all such toilets helps to keep them accessible to those that need them. Keys cost around £5.00.

### **Scope**

[www.scope.org.uk](http://www.scope.org.uk)

Helpline: 0800-800-3333

Scope provides advice and services for children and adults with learning disabilities or a physical impairment.

**Family Action Head Office** 24 Angel Gate, City Road, London, EC1V 2PT

T: 020 7254 6251 F: 020 7249 5443 [info@family-action.org.uk](mailto:info@family-action.org.uk) [www.family-action.org.uk](http://www.family-action.org.uk)

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