

Co-ordinated support plans (CSPs)

This factsheet covers:

- what a co-ordinated support plan (CSP) is
- what it should contain
- why a child might be eligible for a CSP
- how to request a CSP
- how the CSP relates to other support your child may have.

What is a co-ordinated support plan (CSP)?

A CSP:

- is an action plan for some children and young people who need significant additional support with their education
- is monitored and reviewed regularly
- supports professionals to work together to help children and young people achieve educational targets
- ensures this support is properly co-ordinated
- is for everyone involved: the child or young person, you the parent, teachers, therapists, educational psychologists, social workers and so on.

Other written plans are used to make sure all children and young people learn effectively. These include personal learning plans, individualised educational programmes (IEPs) and similar local plans. However, the CSP is the only legal planning document in education.

Who is eligible for a CSP?

A CSP is prepared for children or young people aged up to 18 whose school education is the responsibility of a local authority and who:

- need support due to complex or multiple factors that adversely and significantly affect their school education
- have needs that are likely to last for more than a year, and
- need significant additional support from the local authority and another department of the local authority (such as social work services), or another agency (such as health boards, career services, colleges or universities), or both, to reach their educational goals.

For more information on what is meant by terms like 'complex factors' and 'significant additional support', please contact the Enquire helpline (see below for the helpline number).

What does a CSP contain?

A CSP contains information about:

- what has led to the child or young person needing additional support
- the educational objectives for the child or young person
- the additional support needed
- who will provide the support
- who will co-ordinate the support
- the person in the local authority who can provide advice and further information.

Who should consider whether a child needs a CSP?

Local authorities should have arrangements to identify children and young people who need additional support and may need a CSP. Other people such as a teacher, social worker or therapist may also tell a local authority about a child they think needs a CSP. You also have the right to ask the authority to find out whether your child needs a CSP (or to review their existing plan).

You can have a supporter or an advocate present at any discussions with the school and local authority. An advocate is someone who can talk or act on your behalf. For more information, see **Enquire factsheet: Being/getting involved in your child's education.**

Looked after children and young people

All children and young people who are looked after by the local authority are presumed to have additional support needs and must be considered for a CSP. This will not apply if a full assessment shows they do not need additional support to benefit from school education. Every looked after child and care leaver (up to their 18th birthday) will have a Child's Plan.

Children under 3

Children under 3 are not eligible for a CSP, but the local authority has a duty to give them extra support if they have, or seem to have, additional needs due to a disability. If the local authority thinks a child will need a CSP, it should not wait until the child is 3 to start assessing this need. For more information, see **Enquire factsheet: Early learning and childcare**

Who do I ask to consider my child for a CSP?

You can ask your local authority directly, or go through your child's school. You can also ask Enquire for contact details.

We suggest you talk to your child's school first, and to any social work staff and health professionals who support your child. This may help to make your next steps clearer.

How do I ask?

When you ask for your child to be considered for a CSP, your request must be in a form that can be kept for future reference. This could be a letter, email, video or audio recording, or even as part of the notes of a meeting with the local authority.

What information should my request include?

You should include:

- your name and address, your relationship to the child or young person, and a contact telephone number
- your child's name, address, date of birth, and pre-school or school
- a note of your preferred language and form of communication (such as phone, email or letter)
- a statement that you are formally asking whether your child needs a CSP
- the reasons for your request and why you think your child needs a CSP.

This last point is essential. We suggest you include things like the following, depending on your child's situation:

- a brief description of your child's difficulties, including any diagnoses, and how these affect their education - for example if they have difficulty concentrating or communicating, or are falling behind
- a summary of the educational support your child already gets, or needs
- a short note of the support your child gets or needs from other agencies, such as social workers and health professionals
- the names of any professionals who work with your child.

What happens next if the local authority accepts my request?

If the authority decides to prepare a CSP for your child, you are expected to join in. The steps in preparing a CSP are outlined in our **Parents' guide to additional support for learning**.

There is an example of a CSP in the **Supporting children's learning code of practice, 2010** to show local authorities what one should look like. See 'Where to get more information' at the end of this factsheet for a link to the CSP example.

Information the local authority must consider

In preparing a CSP, the local authority must ask for and take account of relevant advice and information from appropriate agencies, such as health, social work and voluntary organisations.

Most of these agencies must provide the information within certain timescales, although voluntary organisation are not bound by the same time limits.

Requesting a specific assessment for your child

At this time, you also have the right to make an 'assessment request'. This means asking the local authority for a particular type of assessment or examination to be done, if you feel your child needs one. It could be a psychological, medical or educational assessment or examination. If you decide to make an assessment request, you should state:

- that you are formally asking for a specific assessment or examination
- the type of assessment or examination you think your child needs
- briefly why you are asking for this.

The local authority should comply with your request unless it considers it unreasonable. In this case, it must write to tell you why it has decided this. The local authority always decides who will assess or examine your child. But if you show the local authority an independent assessment or report, it must take this into account.

You can make an assessment request for your child at any time. For more information about assessment, see **Enquire factsheet: Assessment**.

What if the local authority refuses my request for a CSP?

If the local authority refuses your request, it must write to tell you why. It must also tell you about your right of appeal (called a 'reference') to the Additional Support Needs Tribunals.

You can also appeal to the Tribunal if you are unhappy with how long it takes to decide whether your child needs a plan, or to prepare a plan. You can get more information about this from the Tribunal or from Enquire. Contact details are at the end of this factsheet, and Enquire **Factsheet: Resolving disagreements** has more information about the Tribunal.

How long will each step take?

If you ask the local authority to consider your child for a CSP, it must notify you within 8 weeks whether it is going to deal with your request. If you do not receive notification within 8 weeks, you should consider this a decision not to prepare a CSP for your child, and you can appeal to the Tribunal.

When a local authority does notify you that they plan to decide whether your child needs a CSP, this decision must be made within 16 weeks. If you do not receive a decision within 16 weeks, you should consider this a decision not to prepare a CSP for your child, and you can appeal to the Tribunal. Within this 16-week timescale the local authority must reach a decision and also prepare a plan, if they have decided your child needs one.

If the local authority decides to prepare a CSP, it can extend this 16-week time limit if specific things happen. For example, if it asks your child's school for information during the summer term and then the school breaks up for the summer holiday. You can see a list of all the permitted exceptions in the **Additional Support for Learning (Co-ordinated Support Plan) (Scotland) Amendment Regulations 2005**. The local authority can extend the time limit only up to 24 weeks, and it must tell you if it is doing so. If it fails to meet its time limit, you can appeal to the Tribunal.

Appointing someone to co-ordinate the plan

The local authority chooses and appoints someone to co-ordinate the support detailed in the plan. When choosing a co-ordinator, the local authority should ask for and take into account your and your child's views.

Information in the CSP

You should make sure you are satisfied with the local authority's conclusions in the CSP. If you aren't satisfied, you can appeal to the Tribunal.

Who gets a copy of the CSP?

The local authority will send you the final plan when it has agreed and signed it. Your child's school and the local authority will hold copies. A copy will also be sent to your child if they are 16 or over.

Reviewing the support

The local authority must:

- check that the CSP remains adequate
- review the CSP every 12 months.

If the local authority fails to review the CSP or to complete the review in the time allowed, you can appeal to the Tribunal. You can also go to the Tribunal if the local authority fails to give your child the support agreed in the CSP.

The local authority or you may decide that your child's support should be reviewed sooner, for example if there has been a significant change in your child's circumstances.

What happens when a CSP is discontinued?

A local authority may discontinue a CSP after a review or if it is no longer responsible for your child's education. It must keep discontinued CSPs for 5 years.

If a local authority decides at a review to discontinue the CSP, it must:

- tell you
- wait 2 months before discontinuing the CSP, because you (or your child if they are 16 or over) have 2 months to appeal to the Tribunal.

Child's Plans

The Scottish Government's **Getting it right for every child** (GIRFEC) approach helps to support children. It also aims to integrate and co-ordinate plans developed by different agencies involved in such things as education, health or social work.

As part of GIRFEC, some children may have a Child's Plan. A Child's Plan will be created if a child or young person needs some extra support to meet their wellbeing needs such as access to mental health services, respite care, or help from a range of different agencies. If a child has a CSP, this may form part of the Child's Plan. However, because a CSP is a legal document it cannot be replaced by a Child's Plan.

Where to get more information

Your local authority

Your local authority should be able to give you information about CSPs. Contact your local council or ask Enquire for details.

Enquire

For more information on CSPs, see **The parents' guide to additional support for learning**, (2017)

Enquire's contact details are at the end of this factsheet.

Scottish Government

Supporting children's learning code of practice, Scottish Government, (2010) www.gov.scot/Resource/doc/348208/0116022.pdf. Chapter 5 of Supporting children's learning code of practice, 2010 is about CSPs:

www.gov.scot/Publications/2011/04/04090720/8

See following the link to the CSP template: www.gov.scot/Publications/2011/04/04090720/14

Co-ordinated Support Plan Regulations

www.legislation.gov.uk/ssi/2005/266/contents/made

www.legislation.gov.uk/ssi/2010/149/contents/made

Guidance on partnership working between allied health professionals and education

www.gov.scot/Publications/2010/05/27095736/0

Additional Support Needs Tribunals for Scotland

4th Floor, 1 Atlantic Quay
45 Roberston Street
Glasgow G2 8JB

Helpline: 0141 302 5860
www.asntscotland.gov.uk

ENQUIRE

Helping you understand additional support for learning

Enquire is the Scottish advice service for additional support for learning. We provide independent and impartial advice to parents and carers, to practitioners in education, social work and health services, and to children and young people themselves.

www.reach.scot offers advice to young people struggling at school. With practical tips on what can help and young people sharing their views and experiences on all sorts of life issues, Reach offers a 'go-to' source of advice to help pupils make the most out of their education.

This factsheet has been awarded the Clear English Standard.



Contact details

Enquire, Children in Scotland, Level 1, Rosebery House,
9 Haymarket Terrace, Edinburgh EH12 5EZ

Helpline: **0345 123 2303**
(Access to interpreters through Language Line)

Office: 0131 313 8800

Email: info@enquire.org.uk

www.enquire.org.uk

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