

Your rights to Social Services for your Deafblind Child

All deafblind children are considered as Children in Need under the Children Act 1989. In practice this means that social services are responsible for ensuring:

- The identification of deafblind children on the Social Services Disability Register.
- The child and their family are offered an assessment based on the Framework for the Assessment of Children in Need and their Families.
- The quality of assessments and within the assessment to encourage an active partnership between mainstream and specialist services working together to manage disabled children's inclusion in family life, education and community services.

If your child requires one-to-one support to participate fully in family life and the community, social services must provide that one-to-one support. Your child may already be provided with support to access education (a statement). Asking to be assessed for additional community based services will not affect your child's educational support. You can use the statement as evidence of your child's need for one-to-one support.

The Deafblind Guidance was issued by the Department of Health in 2001 and then reissued in 2009, to make clear that it does not have an end date. It is statutory guidance that applies to children and adults in England and Wales.

The Guidance should be an important part of the process described above, which means that when children are assessed this should be carried out by someone who is specifically trained to understand their needs as a Deafblind child. Assessing a deafblind child is a specialised area and different from assessing a deafblind adult. Ask about the qualifications and experience of the people assessing your child. The services your child is assessed as needing should be provided by people who have the appropriate training and skills. These services may include the need for one to one support and/or the need for short breaks/respite care.