

Physical and/or medical impairments may arise from physical, neurological or metabolic causes, the implications of which may produce low, medium or high levels of need/difficulty for pupils. A medical diagnosis does not necessarily imply special educational needs. *It is the degree to which the impairment impacts upon the child's learning potential which is the determining factor.* (Code of Practice (7.64))

The impact of physical and/or medical difficulties on a child's education range from mild to severe; they may be temporary or permanent and are affected by the age and level of understanding of the child and by the educational setting. The impact of a physical or medical difficulty may be apparent in the following:

- evidence of difficulties in other areas, for example, progress in learning;
- effect on the child's confidence, self-esteem, emotional stability or relationships with peers;
- effect on classroom performance (e.g. through drowsiness, fatigue, lack of concentration, lack of motivation);
- effect on participation in curriculum activities;
- effect on the safety of the child.

Schools must seek to establish appropriate systems and resources with the aim of minimising the negative impact of a child's condition and maximising their individual potential. Children with physical and/or medical conditions may benefit from some or all of the following:

- flexible teaching arrangements
- flexible school routines
- appropriate seating/furniture
- adaptations to the physical environment at the school
- adaptations to school policies
- access to alternative methods of communication
- access to alternative methods of recording (ICT/Amanuensis)
- access to additional support (teaching/non-teaching)
- access to specialist services
- an Individual Health Care Plan
- an Individual Education Plan

Schools should have a Medical Register of children who have **low levels** of need due to medical conditions such as, mild asthma, mild allergies, kidney complaints, minor medical problems. The school nurse should have access to or be involved in the compiling of this list and it should be circulated to all appropriate staff (teaching and non-teaching) and placed on staff notice board. The information contained within this register should be relevant and regularly updated.

For pupils who have more severe problems, schools may wish to complete risk assessments and draw up an Individual Health Care Plan.

These children may:

- have conditions which are high risk or have life-threatening implications e.g. oxygen dependency, severe anaphylaxis.

- be highly dependent upon additional support for self-help skills, mobility or curricular access, e.g. severe cerebral palsy, severe chronic juvenile arthritis, spina bifida, severe long-standing toileting problems.
- also be dependent on additional support to oversee their well-being and safety or to carry out medical procedures during the school day e.g. tracheotomies, achondroplasia, uncontrolled epilepsy, metabolic conditions.

Additional funding for these children may be allocated by the Authority via the Service for Pupils with Medical and Physical Needs and will be monitored through regular reviews of the pupil's Individual Health Care Plans and/or Individual Educational Plans.

For a small number of children whose physical and medical needs are complex and compound their learning difficulties the Authority will need to make a **Statutory Assessment** of their special educational needs. An assessment may be initiated if it is considered that a more comprehensive picture of the child's overall functioning is required to inform future needs and if, in these few cases, indications for special provision can only be described in a statement for example:

- Physical and medical impairments compounded by significant, associated difficulties in other areas (cognition and learning, emotional, behavioural and social, communication and interaction, hearing or visual).
- Physical and/or medical impairment which is compounded by a combination of other more complex difficulties, i.e. a complex combination of low level difficulties.
- A physical and/or medical impairment which is progressive and therefore the pupil will have changing/increasing levels of need, e.g. Duchenne/congenital muscular dystrophy, some syndromes and metabolic conditions, severe cerebral palsy.