



One minute guide

Portage

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What is Portage?

Portage is a pre-school home visiting educational and support service for young children with special educational needs and disability. The aim of Portage is to help parents/ carers to become teachers of their own children in their own homes. Portage uses small steps teaching to help children learn in all areas of their development; for example, physical, social, communication and play.

What is the Portage offer in Leeds?

Following an assessment, the family may be offered home visits, telephone consultations or signposting to other relevant services. The offer is based upon the child and family's needs. If the assessment indicates that home visits would be beneficial, families are allocated a Portage Home Visitor, who makes regular home visits, usually fortnightly, lasting approximately 1 hour.

Home visit support will be offered for a maximum of up to 12 months; the duration of this level of support is dependent upon the child and family's progress and their ongoing level of need. There are three main elements to each home visit: structured teaching, child-led play, and family focus.

A Portage Home Visitor supports parents/ carers to take an active role in finding out what their child 'can do', identifying goals, and planning activities towards the next steps in their child's development. Leeds Portage Service is registered with the National Portage Association ([NPA](#)).

Which children and families does the Portage service work with?

Requests to the Portage service can be made in the following circumstances:

- The child is aged between 0 to 2½ years of age
- The child presents with 50% delay in 2 or more areas of development: cognition and learning; social communication and interaction; speech and language; social, emotional and mental health; physical; nursing/medical; hearing; vision; and sensory.
- The family are living in the Leeds local authority area.

How are requests made to the Portage service?

There are three ways to make a request to the Portage service, dependent upon who is making the request:

- Parents/ carers can make a request by completing a Leeds Portage Service Request Form. Also, any practitioner working with the family can make a request as long as they have the agreement of the child's parents / carers.
- All health professionals should complete a Health to Education Notification (HEN), ensuring they have the agreement of the child's parents/ carers.
- If the child is attending an early years' setting and the family agree home-based support should be requested, the SENCo (SEN Coordinator) in the setting should complete a One SEND Services Request for Support. The form should be completed on the understanding that the Portage offer will be home-based.

A member of the Portage team will contact parents/ carers to inform them of the outcome of the request and the Portage offer for them and their child.

What other support does the Portage service offer?

The Portage service works closely with other professionals involved with the child, for example, [ICAN](#) (Integrated Children's Additional Needs) teams, the Special Educational Needs and Inclusion Team ([SENIT](#)), and Health Visitors.

Key contacts

To contact a member of the Portage team, please telephone 0113 3782888 or email SEND@leeds.gov.uk.