1) What does your service do?

Portage is a home-visiting educational service for pre-school children aged 2 to 4 with additional support needs and their families. It is delivered in three ways, via Core Portage, Portage Plus and Outreach.

Services for Young Children (SfYC) Portage Plus is for families of pre-school children with significant behaviour difficulties. This support is provided by a Portage Home Visitor who will offer support through a combination of visits to your home and the pre school or nursery setting that your child attends in order to help identify and support with managing the behaviours of concern. You and pre school staff will be helped to plan and implement strategies to support your child including individual behaviour plans, which are reviewed regularly. If appropriate, prior to school entry, the Portage Home Visitor will liaise with your child’s receiving school and other agencies to ensure a smooth, successful transition.

Once Portage Plus visits have been offered to your family, in consultation with yourselves and the Portage team, a decision will be made as to the regularity of the service that you and the pre school or nursery setting will receive. This is reviewed regularly with you, the Portage Home Visitor and any other agencies that may be working with your family. The level of support will vary depending on the needs of your child.

Activities and strategies are planned and developmental journals or checklists are used for an initial assessment of your child’s skills and the behaviours causing concern, to create an individual behaviour plan in your home and the pre school or nursery setting concerned. Toys and resources may be left with you to support any suggested and agreed strategies.

The amount of time the service will support you and your child depends entirely on your family’s needs, input from other agencies and the hours your child attends his or her preschool or nursery setting as it may impact on the level of support offered. This will be discussed with your Inclusion Team Leader (ITL) during their initial visit to your home.

Children taken on to the Portage Plus service may be offered on-going support through local Children’s Centre groups: http://www3.hants.gov.uk/childrens-services/childrenandyoungpeople/childrens-centres/childrens-centres-search/hampshire-centres.htm

2) Where is it located and what areas does it cover?

Portage Plus can be accessed from:

**Eastleigh & Winchester District:** SfYC, The Aviary Children’s Centre, Blackbird Road, Eastleigh, SO50 9JW, Tel: 02380 651983

**Havant District:** SfYC, Mill Hill Children’s Centre, Mill Road, Waterlooville, PO7 7DB. Tel: 02392 261057

**New Forest District:** SfYC, Ashurst Child & Family Health Centre, Lyndhurst Road, Ashurst SO40 7AR Tel: 02380 293768

**Test Valley District:** SfYC Beech Hurst, Weyhill Road, Andover. SP10 3AS. Tel: 01264 368656

**Basingstoke and Deane District:** SfYC, Vertex, Chineham Court, Lutyens Close, Basingstoke, RG24 8AG 01256 359002

**East Hants District:** SfYC, Bushy Leaze Children and Families Centre, Eastbrooke Road, Alton, GU34 2DR Tel. 01420 80862

**Hart and Rushmoor District:** SfYC, Rushmoor Borough Council Offices, Farnborough Road, Farnborough, GU14 7JU Tel:01252 814770

**Fareham and Gosport District:** SfYC, Woodcot Primary School, Tukes Avenue, Gosport, PO13 0SG Tel: 01329 286750
3) Who does your service provide for?
The Portage Plus service provides for preschool children aged 2 – 4 years with significant behavioural difficulties and their families and the following criteria apply:

- Your child has challenging behaviour, over and above that expected for a child of his/her developmental age.
- Your child is at risk to themselves or others at home or in their pre school or nursery setting.
- You are reluctant to send your child to a pre school or nursery setting because of concerns about behaviour.
- Your Pre School or nursery setting is reluctant to accept your child because of concerns about behaviour.
- You and your pre school or nursery are committed to support the intervention.
- Your parental signature has been obtained, giving consent to the referral.
- Following an initial visit, the Inclusion Team Leader will identify if you and your child will benefit from Portage Plus.
- You must agree to be available to meet with the Portage Home Visitor on a regular basis and abide by the contractual obligations of the agreement including data protection and child protection protocols.

4) How can I start to use the service?
Portage has an open referral process and a key feature of all referrals to Portage is that a parent signature is required to ensure that parents are aware of the referral and what is expected of them as a family to enable us to work in partnership with the service.

We endeavour to start working with the family as quickly as possible. However, we do operate a waiting list which can vary in length depending on the demand in your local area such as, high numbers of referrals and current caseloads.

There is no charge for the service and personal budgets cannot currently be used to pay for additional support.

Requests for support forms can be accessed from:
http://www3.hants.gov.uk/portage.htm

Other professionals, health colleagues, multi-agency SEN panel can contact the service directly. Local office details are:
http://www3.hants.gov.uk/childrens-services/childcare/useful-contacts/syfc-local-offices.htm

Information can also be accessed through the National Portage Association:
www.portage.org.uk

5) How are decisions made about who can use your service?
Following a referral for Portage Plus support, your local Inclusion Team Leader will meet with you and your child in your home at a time to suit you. An assessment is usually carried out to determine what individual support could be offered.

On completion of the initial visit, the Inclusion Team Leader will explain to you the outcome of the visit and explain if your child meets the criteria to receive Portage Plus. They will answer any questions you have and clarify any details you have not fully understood. If Portage Plus support is offered you will receive a letter of confirmation with details of who your allocated
Portage Home Visitor will be. Following this letter you will be contacted by them to arrange a mutually convenient time for their first visit to you and to the pre school or nursery setting. This there a process for complaint/ signposting offered, etc if the child does not meet the criteria?

6) How do you communicate with service users and how are they involved in decision making/planning?

At your initial visit, the Inclusion Team Leader will explain to you and your family that you are welcome to contact us at any time regarding your Portage support. You are encouraged to speak to your allocated Portage Home Visitor with any comments or concerns or contact your Inclusion Team Leader, via phone, e-mail or letter using the contact details that are provided in your Portage Welcome Pack. A complaints procedure is also included in the Welcome Pack with clear guidance on making a complaint. (Able to link to pack or page with pack?)

Portage Plus has been developed to support the planning of work with children who have challenging behaviour. This plan will reflect your knowledge of your child, your priorities and those of your pre school or nursery. When working with your child, individual behaviour plans will recommend a consistent approach that will be reviewed regularly. Children receiving Portage Plus may be supported by other agencies and professionals within the fields of health, social care and education. Portage Plus supports effective consultation and collaboration on a regular basis and ensures that all areas of your child’s needs are being met.

The individual behaviour plan will be written as soon as it is appropriate, with subsequent plans as and when required. A variety of materials and developmental journals can be used to make initial and on-going assessments of your child’s skills, incorporating The Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum. Targets will be agreed with you and working in partnership in this way should help you to feel empowered and should improve and sustain good communication. Targets are planned to be functional so that they are easily incorporated into your family’s daily routine and reflect your cultural backgroud.

Individual behaviour plans will be written in a concise, unambiguous and specific format, ensuring that relevant and appropriate information is shared. This will ensure effective information sharing and partnership working. Plans will include your child’s skills, targets to work towards and strategies to support learning.

There will be a written Concluding Evaluation form sent to you when you and your child move on from the service. Data from the evaluation forms will be collated and used to develop and shape the quality of the service in the future.

To ensure a consistent approach, the Portage service promotes an active working partnership with a variety of agencies that are involved with children and their families. Joint working visits are often made with other agencies involved with your child, sharing information and strategies to support your family. Portage Home Visitors will attend and contribute to meetings such as Team Around a Child (TAC) to ensure that all relevant information is shared. Views of other professionals working with your child will always be taken into account when setting targets.

Portage leaflets, support, guidance and advice are available on Portage web pages and are available for parents, practitioners and professionals:
http://www3.hants.gov.uk/portage.htm
7) Is your service fully accessible?

Our service is based within the homes of your children and their families. Therefore, accessibility is subject to the families own home environment. However, every effort is made to make sure our service is as accessible as possible, utilising the resources available through Hampshire County Council such as translators, Braille, large print, hearing loops, Makaton signs and symbols etc. Similarly all pre school or nursery and childcare settings are encouraged to make reasonable adjustment to their environment to ensure all families can be included.

8) What training have the staff supporting children with SEND had or are having?

All staff are qualified and experienced to a high level. All Portage Home Visitors have completed a recognised Portage Basic Workshop training and several members of staff have completed an advanced course to become accredited to support further training for practitioners. They will have a sound knowledge of child development and competencies in assessing, designing delivering and evaluating teaching skills. In addition, they have effective communication and people skills. Portage Home Visitors have support through supervision to continue their own workforce and professional development by accessing a variety of relevant training and courses. Some members of the Hampshire Portage Team specialise in certain areas, for example sleep disorders, toileting and continence difficulties, Video Interaction Guidance, Behaviour Management and Makaton signing. All Portage Home Visitors have access to clinical supervision from Hampshire’s Educational Psychology service (HEPS)

9) Who can I contact for further information?

If anyone has a concern about a child and wanted to discuss the service available in more detail, there are several routes that be used. Each local area service can be contacted directly and any member of the Portage Home visiting team or the Inclusion Team Leader will be very happy to discuss any individual children and concerns about their development. They will also be able to help you decide on the next course of action to support your child and family.

Professionals/practitioners can contact us using the information on the Portage web pages, leaflets, or directly by telephone:
http://www3.hants.gov.uk/childrens-services/childcare/useful-contacts/sfyc-local-offices.htm

Parents can contact as above or by talking initially to your Health Visitor/GP/Consultant/Paediatrician and asking for details to access our support.

10) How will I know my child will be safe using this service?

The Portage team have a responsibility to ensure all children who use their service are safe. All Portage Home Visitors have a good understanding of the working together to safeguard children document. The team takes a lead in providing support, advice and guidance to lead practitioners within settings for safeguarding through support groups, policy documents and direct links with the Local Children’s Safeguarding Board (LCSB) team. Safer recruiting practices are adhered to by all recruiting staff. The professional phone line (01329 225379) provides instant professional advice and guidance to all staff that have concerns over a child’s welfare. The reception and assessment (R&A) team (0845 603 5620) are there to provide immediate child protection advice. The Local Authority Designated Office (LADO) role (01962 876364) supports practitioners with any allegations made against adults working in your childcare sector. All Portage staff attend a two day child protection training which is renewed every 3 years. All staff teams have a responsibility to ensure that they and their colleagues are protected through our safer working practices protocols. All staff attend relevant safeguarding training regularly in line with good practice guidelines.