NHS
Bath and North East Somerset, Swindon and Wiltshire
Integrated Care Board

Bath, North East Somerset, Swindon and Wiltshire (BSW) Integrated Care Board (ICB)

Position Statement on Global Developmental Delay (GDD)

August 2026

This position paper has been prepared by the BSW ICB Designated Medical Officer (DMO) and Designated Clinical Officers (DCOs) for Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) in response to an observed increase in the number of Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) which contain historic wording referring to Global Developmental Delay (GDD).

The term Global Developmental Delay (GDD) is a descriptive term of neurodevelopment and is not diagnostic.

It has historically been used to describe young children under the age of 5 who presented with significant developmental delays in 2 or more areas. Once children are over 5 years old consideration should be given instead to whether the individual presents as having learning difficulties aligned with neurodivergence, or a specific learning difficulty / disability, and the term Global Developmental Delay (GDD) should no longer be used.

In some areas, the term GDD has not been used by the community paediatricians for many years. Instead, the term Early Developmental Impairment(s) is used which can describe one or several areas of impairment. However, just like GDD, this term only applies to children under the age of 5, after which the term becomes redundant and should not be used.

In conclusion the ICB do not support the terms Global Developmental Delay (GDD) or Early Developmental Impairment (EDI) being included within an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP), when a child is over the age of 5, and all reference to these descriptors should be removed to maintain factual accuracy.