

FAQ's

- **What is the Gateway Award?**

The Gateway Award is an activity based award for people of all ages and ability. People taking part in the award set their own challenges to achieve personal goals and progress to complete the award at their own pace. It's all about experiencing new things, gaining confidence, improving health and wellbeing, meeting new people and having fun. There are three levels to the award; Bronze, Silver and Gold. At each level participants complete 5 different sections: Hobbies, Fitness, Lifestyle, Volunteering and the Gateway Challenge.

- **Who can take part in the Gateway Award?**

Gateway Award is for anybody with a learning disability. There is no age limit and it is open to people of all abilities. This includes people with profound and multiple learning disabilities. Activities can be tailored to an individual's needs making this a truly person centred award.

- **Where can you do the Gateway Award?**

People enrol on the award at a Gateway Award centre. The centre is responsible for supporting people to complete the Award. Gateway Award centres can be any number of settings, including local Mencap groups, leisure groups, schools, colleges, residential or day services and youth organisations.

- **What activities can you do as part of the Gateway Award?**

A diverse range of activities can be undertaken for each section of the Gateway Award. We have an ideas booklet that can help people come up with ideas for different activities. Activities can be completed at the award centre or in the participants own time. They can be completed in any order and simultaneously.

Please see below for examples of activities for the Gateway Award.

Hobbies: Participants select a hobby from one of three sections - arts and crafts, collections or recreation, e.g. a participant may take part in painting classes over three months developing painting skills either in their own time or as a group in a leisure or learning environment.

Fitness: Participants select new fitness activities e.g. taking part in Zumba classes, swimming, table tennis, football and yoga etc.

Volunteering: Participants choose a volunteering activity to benefit their community, e.g. volunteering at a leisure club, running a recycling project, doing gardening for a neighbour and volunteering at a local charity shop.

Lifestyle: Participants choose new lifestyle topics to learn about, examples include first aid, money, independence and healthy eating

Gateway Challenge: Participants identify a challenge and an activity or project to explore - this can be a personal or group challenge, e.g. a personal challenge may be to plan a trip to a local museum, the planning would include looking into travel to the museum, budgeting for the visit, researching information on the museum and then the challenge would be visiting the museum.

- **How long does the Gateway Award take?**

Participants taking part in the challenge progress at their own pace.

However, there are guidelines for how long each award level should take to ensure that participants have to opportunity to meaningfully engage and plan their activities.

Overall timeframe:

Participants should be engaged on the Bronze award for a minimum of 6 months

Participants should be engaged on the Silver award for a minimum of 12 months

Participants should be engaged on the Gold award for a minimum of 18 months

The timescales are expressed in months but participants need to commit to an average of one hour a week during this time.

For more information about this, please ask for the Bronze, Silver, and Gold level overviews.

- **What level of support is needed?**

The level of support needed will vary for each individual. In most cases, participants may need some form of support to plan and attend their activities. An assigned supporter can work with the participant to plan their award and record their evidence. Some participants may require a supporter to complete the online monitoring and tracking of the award.

- **What people have said about the Gateway Award**

‘My life has changed because I signed up to do the Gateway Award and have now completed my Bronze Award. I have a volunteer placement in a café, I have

completed an English and Maths courses at Wirral Mencap and a computer course at Birkenhead Library. I now have reasons to get up in the morning and lots of things to talk about with my family. I feel happy now and part of something.’ - *Mark from Wirral Mencap*

‘Doing the Gateway Award has made me a different person. I’m much more confident and I can see just how far I have come. I have also made so many new friends.’ - *Jennifer from South Wiltshire Mencap*

I have learnt new skills and made lots of friends while taking part in the Gateway Award. I think that many other young adults should take part in this award as it brings people together and you can have fun at the same time. The Gateway Award has helped me realised there is so much more I can do if I put my mind to it’ - *Georgia from South Wiltshire Mencap*

- **How does an organisation register as a Gateway Award centre?**

To register, a *centre enrolment form* needs to be completed and sent to Mencap alongside the centre fee. It costs £50 per level for a centre to run the award; you will initially pay £50 and a subsequent £50 if your participants progress onto Silver and then Gold. The maximum centre fee would therefore be £150. After registering as a centre, you will be given a login and dedicated page on the Gateway Award website. This allows supporters to register their participants, track progress, upload evidence, network with other centres and access useful resources. If you would like to register, please contact gateway.award@mencap.org.uk and we can send you an enrolment form.

- **I work at a school/college, can we register as a Gateway Award centre?**

Any school or college can register as a Gateway Award centre. Schools and Colleges that run the Gateway Award can use activities that are already a part of the curriculum towards students completing the different sections. To register, please see above.

- **How is the award assessed?**

When participants register for the Gateway Award they are given a bespoke folder split into five sections, where they can store evidence of what they have done. As they progress, participants will need to collect evidence of their activities. A variety of items can be used as evidence, for example, photos, quotes, leaflets and other objects.

Participants will need to complete an outcome questionnaire when they register to do their award and when they complete each level.

For each section, a section sign off form and one piece of evidence will need to be uploaded onto the participant's profile on the Gateway Award website. This will need to be signed off by the Gateway Award supporter to verify that the section is complete.

When all five sections are complete, an end of level form will need to be filled in. Once this is done, you will need to let Mencap know and we will send out the Award certificates and medal.

All forms can all be found on the participant's profiles on the Gateway Award website and completed online.

Please note: Mencap are working on the Gateway Award website so that when section sign off forms and end of level forms are completed, we will get an automatic notification. This will mean that Gateway Award supporters will not have to contact Mencap to let us know when they have completed these forms as we will get an immediate alert. Please bear with us as we work with the developer to make these changes.

- **Gateway Award Website**

A website has been set up where centres can have their own profile, register participants, track progress, and sign off completions. This system allows effective management by the Gateway Award centre, and is also viewed by Mencap, so we can see the progress that is being made and support you to administer the award. The site provides an easy way to view the status and progress of your participants, and keep track. It minimises paper and printing costs, as much of it can be done online. The system allows Mencap to view the content of the forms, so you do not need to separately send us completed forms and paperwork*.

We have a separate user guide that we send out to centres once they have registered to help with navigating the website.

- **What are the costs?**

It costs £50 per level to register as a Gateway Award centre. If you support participants to go through all three levels, the total centre fee will be £150. A participant's place costs £21 per level.

This cost includes:

- A colour printed folder
- Section and end of level certificates and medal
- Moderation and processing by Mencap, & online Gateway Award profile



- Online Resources and Gateway award handbook
- Postage and packing of all materials listed above

- **How do I find out more, or get my organisation involved?**

To get started please contact Sarah Rowley, Gateway Award Project Manager:

Please call: 0207 696 6960

Email: gateway.award@mencap.org.uk