

Everybody Included

The SEND Code of Practice explained

KEY GUIDANCE ON:

- ▶ THE GRADUATED APPROACH
- ▶ THE LEGAL FRAMEWORK
- ▶ ASSESSMENT
- ▶ THE LOCAL OFFER
- ▶ PERSONAL SEN BUDGETS

**PRACTICAL
HELP**

SEND audit tools
and action plans

NATIONAL SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS IMPLEMENTATION EVENTS

nasen
Helping Everyone Achieve

*Inspirational day. Loads of
information to feed back and
work on over the next few months*

*Gaynor Martin, Assistant Headteacher
nasen Learning Event November 2013*



Implementation events, funded by the Department for Education will be run nationally in June and July 2014. Each event will provide practical information, guidance and support for the implementation of the SEND Code of Practice 0 – 25.

To supplement implementation events being run around the country, the DfE will provide briefing sessions at nasen Live 2014. For information about nasen Live visit www.nasenlive.org.uk.

Events will provide:

- A summary of main points of the SEND Code of Practice 0 – 25.
- Workshops to support key elements of the Code and how to respond to them.
- An opportunity to network with other SEN professionals to discuss and share how the new legislation can best be introduced into your setting.
- Up to date information to support your implementation of the new Code.

Book your place

To book your place at a learning event, please complete the booking form on the reverse of this flyer and return it to us by:

Email events@nasen.org.uk

Fax 01827 313 005

Post nasen House, 4/5 Amber Business Village,
Amber Close, Amington, Tamworth B77 4RP

Once your booking form has been received and registered on our database, a booking confirmation will be sent to the email address provided. If you have not received the email booking confirmation within 48 hours of sending the form by fax or within 3 days of sending it by post, please call 01827 311 500 to check we have received it.

Please book early to avoid disappointment

These events are free to attend and lunch will be provided. Places are limited and will be allocated on a first come, first served basis. Please note that whilst the event is free to attend we are unable to cover additional costs such as travel or supply.



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Welcome



A graduated approach from 0–25 years, page 4



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Effective transition planning, page 42

Nasen welcomes the government reforms to special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) which the Children and Families Act 2014 will bring, and the consequent implementation of the new requirements for SEND for settings, schools, colleges and other education providers from 1 September this year.

The reforms represent a transformation in the way support is provided for children and young people with SEND up to the age of 25. They will bring new opportunities for all education providers to reconsider the arrangements they make for children and young people who may have SEND. The vision for reform is based on the following principles:

- ▶ High expectations and aspirations for what young people can achieve.
- ▶ Aspirations of young people and their parents and carers that are placed at the centre of everything we do.
- ▶ Early identification of needs, and integrated early help.
- ▶ Integrated assessment and planning from 0–25, focused on long-term outcomes, bringing together education, health and care support.
- ▶ High-quality provision organised with clear pathways and providing choice and control to families.
- ▶ Excellent outcomes achieved through the knowledge, skills and attitude of everyone working with children and young people.

Reform naturally brings change. What will this mean for settings, schools, colleges and other education providers? Nasen has prepared this guidance with its range of practical advice, tools and examples of good practice to enable all education providers to gain a better understanding of how they might approach the new requirements for SEND. We are particularly grateful to all the settings and organisations which have contributed to this publication. Drawing on the experience and expertise across sectors has resulted in a comprehensive range of materials and guidance which we expect all settings will find useful.

The new SEND legislation will bring changes to the way statements, reviews and services will be delivered and publicised and how local authority responsibility will be defined for local young people up to the age of 25 years. The new Code of Practice will make teachers more accountable for the progress of all pupils, even those supported by specialist staff. As part of performance management, teachers should expect to be judged on how well they teach pupils with SEND. High-quality continuing professional development, training and information will be of paramount importance to our education workforce. How can we expect teachers to identify SEND and support pupils with different needs if they do not know exactly what is required of them?

This guidance is just one of a number of high-quality resources nasen provides to individuals and organisations through a comprehensive membership package. Membership of nasen provides all the necessary information any SENCO or professional should need, including a range of tools, templates and guidance prepared and ready for you to access.

Join nasen today using the form on the inside back cover of this publication or at www.nasen.org.uk and let's work together to ensure that everybody is included.

Jane Friswell, Chief Executive, nasen

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Nasen would like to thank all those who have contributed photographs.

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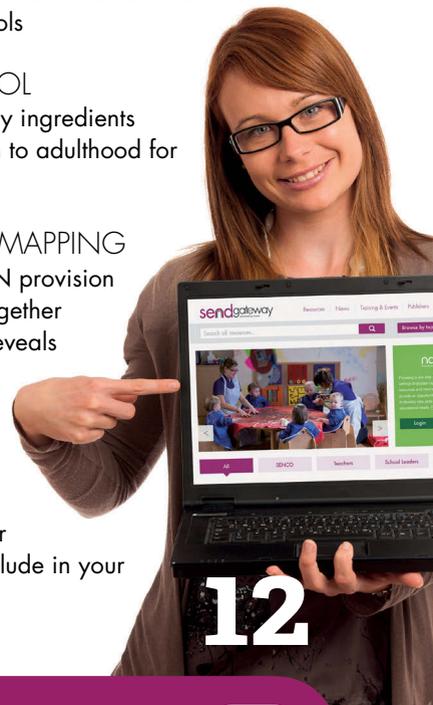
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Assess – Plan – Do – Review

Jane Friswell discusses the best way to make the graduated approach work for your setting

‘Class and subject teachers need to be at the heart of this approach’

The graduated approach is at the heart of whole-school practice as we are continually assessing, planning, implementing and reviewing our approach to teaching all children. However, where a potential special educational need has been identified, this process becomes increasingly personalised, as it responds over time to a growing understanding of the child or young person’s barriers to and gaps in learning and an increasingly individualised assessment of need. This cyclical process enables schools continually to reflect on their approaches to meeting a child’s needs and in doing so, necessitates that schools plan for enhanced opportunities to engage with parents and carers and the pupils themselves in a growing understanding and awareness of needs and approaches that enable good progress and good outcomes.

Prerequisites for success

The role of the class/subject teachers

Where a potential special educational need has been identified, there can be a tendency for the response to fall predominantly into the hands of the SENCO or the learning support team and this may lead to an implicit expectation on them for meeting a child’s needs; ultimate accountability can be seen to rest in their hands too.

The Teachers’ Standards 2012 make it clear that it is every teacher’s responsibility to ‘adapt teaching to respond to the strengths and needs of all pupils’, a point reinforced by the new SEND Code of Practice. Class and subject teachers need to be at the heart of this approach, driving the movement around the four stages of action with the support, guidance and leadership of the SENCO and, where appropriate, other specialist staff.

High expectations and aspirations

The graduated approach will only secure good outcomes for vulnerable pupils if all those who teach and support pupils with SEND have the highest aspirations for them and if those who lead and manage provision demonstrate an ambitious vision and plan of action to enable this to happen. An identification of a special educational need should not result in excuses for lack of appropriate progress or a lowering of expectations.

Assess

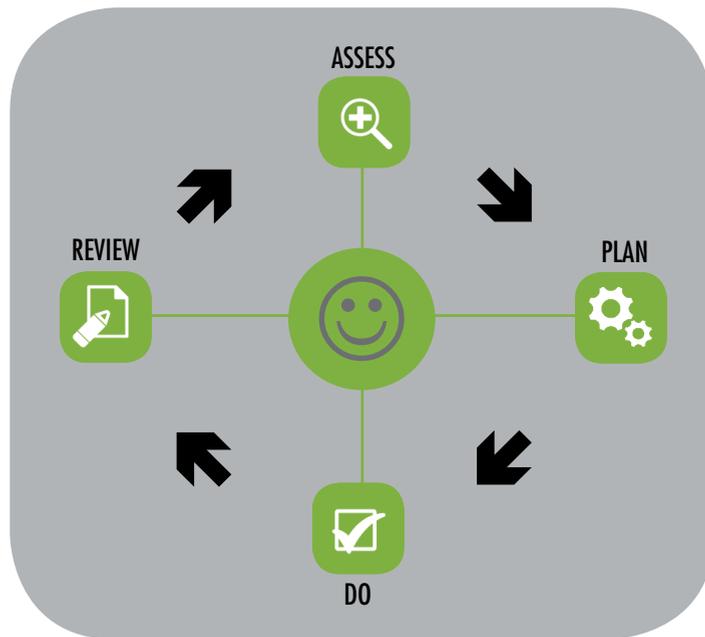
A clear understanding of a child's needs is a critical precondition to planning effective strategies, creating appropriate provision and influencing the adjustments to teaching that will lead to good progress and improved outcomes. Assessment of need starts with a whole-school approach that can quickly identify where a child is not making adequate progress, despite high-quality teaching. The Code suggests a range of sources of information that teachers can draw on to establish a clear analysis of a pupil's need:

- ▶ Teachers' assessment and experience of the pupil.
- ▶ Pupil progress, attainment and behaviour.
- ▶ The individual's development in comparison with their peers.
- ▶ The views and experience of parents.
- ▶ The pupil's own views.
- ▶ Advice from external support services.

However, it may well be necessary to explore further the *precise* gaps in the pupil's learning and development and to *clarify* what the barriers to learning may be. It is good practice to look afresh at the range of individualised assessment 'tools' and approaches the school itself can access to support this closer identification of need, such as:

- ▶ Standardised tests.
- ▶ Criterion-referenced assessments and checklists.
- ▶ Profiling tools, for example for behaviour and speech, language and communication needs.
- ▶ Observation schedules and prompt sheets.
- ▶ Questionnaires for parents.
- ▶ Questionnaires for pupils.
- ▶ Screening assessments, for example for dyslexia.

Carrying out individualised assessments should result in greater clarity of a pupil's strengths and needs and influence subsequent approaches to teaching and learning. To that end, schools may wish to reflect on current practice in using individualised assessments and consider whether they are utilised by teachers to make adjustments to their core or targeted teaching,



or are predominantly carried out by specialised SEN staff, with any results sitting in a file for reference only. Schools who feel this is an area to reflect on may wish to consider carrying out an audit of individualised assessments using nasen's whole-school 'Continuum of Assessment' tool (see below, available in the members' area of the nasen website at www.nasen.org.uk).

Establishing a structured and agreed approach to the identification of special educational needs is a key responsibility of the SENCO. Good practice in this area is to utilise a record of initial concerns, where teachers who have identified a pupil as not making adequate progress, despite high-quality teaching targeted at their areas of weakness, can record their concerns, observations and any individualised assessments that may have been made. Establishing a structured and agreed protocol around the possible identification of SEN ensures that the decision is given the gravitas it deserves; all information needs to be available ▶

'Assessment of need starts with a whole-school approach'

Continuum of Assessment for _____ [insert school name here]					
Teacher		SENCO		Specialists	
All pupils	Broad areas of need from the SEND Code of Practice	Area of assessment	Assessment tools available for teachers	Assessments for use by SENCO/trained TA	Specialists available for further assessment
Parents' views Child's views Previous teachers' views Support staff views	Communication and interaction	ie this section can be broken down into: – receptive language – expressive language – social/functional etc			
Reports from previous school/preschool Development matters Foundation Stage Profile NIC/P levels APP	Cognition and learning	ie this section can be broken down further into: – phonics encode decode – HFW – maths – phonological awareness – processing speed – working memory etc			
Phonics check OCA	Social, emotional and mental health				
Behaviour policy	Sensory/physical needs				

All pupils Pupils who are not making progress due to possible SEN

to the professionals involved in making this decision and where there is not enough detailed information, further clarification can be sought and provided. A process such as this in place in a school should ensure that over-identification of SEN does not become a pattern, or that the specific aspects of pupils' needs are not overlooked. Evidence is key to identifying needs and ensuring that the appropriate provision is provided. Without a structured approach to identifying SEN, vital evidence is likely to be lost, incomplete or lead to delays – a frequent complaint of pupils and parents.

Nasen suggests the use of an initial concerns checklist approach and has provided an example of such a list which can be accessed via the members' area of the website at www.nasen.org.uk/ This Initial Concerns Checklist is designed for class teachers/subject specialist teachers to use to collate summative assessment data, observations and any initial individualised 'testing' they have on a pupil in their class about whom they may have concerns. This checklist can then be shared and discussed with the SENCO to consider, for example, possible placement of the pupil on the SEN register, further adaptations to core

teaching, further assessment and observation and possible placement on the SEN record.

This particular tool should be helpful in enabling SENCOs to engage and communicate effectively with teacher colleagues in the early stages of information gathering, when initial concerns are identified about a child or young person. The Initial Concerns Checklist promotes the requirement for a truly whole-school approach to identifying, assessing and meeting the needs of all pupils and provides a practical approach and tool for this process.



First step: inclusive quality-first teaching

Once the need for SEN Support has been identified, the Code is quite clear that the first step in responding to a pupil's identified need is to ensure that high-quality teaching, differentiated for individual pupils, is in place. Essentially, this should be the teacher asking themselves, with the support of the SENCO, what they now know – following the individualised assessments they have undertaken – that they didn't know before about this pupil's strengths, areas of need, barriers to and gaps in learning and the pupil's and parents' views, and then what changes or adaptations to quality-first teaching this new understanding means they need to make.

It is likely to be the role of the SENCO here, or an appropriate specialist member of the teaching staff directed by the SENCO, to support the class/subject teacher(s) in the kind of adjustments to teaching, support and use of resources that would be most effective. However, as SENCOs know all too well, they don't have a 'magic wand' and although experience in the role over time will lead to a greater confidence and growing knowledge and understanding of a range of pupils' needs, no two pupils' profiles are the same and therefore it is the level of pedagogical discussion and reflection that is important, along with a willingness to seek further advice if needed.

Making all staff aware of a pupil's needs

The Code says that 'all teachers and support staff who work with the child should be made aware of their needs, the support provided and any teaching strategies or approaches that are required'. This can be a particular challenge in secondary schools where there are greater numbers of teaching and support staff to advise.

Some schools have adopted a pupil passport approach to enable this to happen as efficiently as possible and also to ensure that



REFLECTION AND READINESS

- ▶ How are we ensuring that we are identifying and addressing pupils' needs/SEN as early as possible?
- ▶ Can we improve our liaison with pre-school/feeder schools to prepare and deliver our best endeavours for pupils with additional needs as soon as they arrive with us/them?
- ▶ Can we improve our liaison with post-school education and training providers/further education colleges to prepare and deliver our best endeavours for students with additional needs and inform and plan for effective transition?
- ▶ Have we available a range of tools and expertise to support identification and assessment of need?
- ▶ Do class/subject teachers make suitably effective use of these tools to identify pupils' gaps in and barriers to learning, adapting their core teaching in the light of these findings?
- ▶ Do we need to refresh our procedures around the identification and assessment of SEN?
- ▶ Do we know how to call on the support of a range of external specialists as and when we need to?
- ▶ Are there any areas of SEN where our staff need training to support their understanding of and ability to identify pupils' emerging difficulties as early as possible and to respond appropriately?



the individualised needs and views of the pupil are kept at the heart of these strategies and approaches.

Targeted special educational provision

Once the specific areas of need and gaps in learning and development have been identified, additional or different provision targeted at these key areas can be planned. The Code says this planning process should take place in consultation with the parents and the pupil and should be 'accurately recorded'. Class and subject teachers retain responsibility for the pupil, even when the pupil is undertaking targeted provision away from them, and therefore should be firmly at the centre of the process of planning this provision with the SENCO and any specialist staff involved with the pupil. Parents and pupils must also be involved.

Planning targeted provision that is based on reliable evidence of effectiveness is always the best course of action, but even the most efficacious targeted intervention can be rendered ineffective if other areas have not been considered, explicitly planned for and put firmly in place. For example:

- ▶ High-quality training is provided for all staff involved in delivering and monitoring targeted provision.
- ▶ The time and place for targeted provision to take place are established and adhered to regularly.
- ▶ Skills learnt during targeted provision are practised back in class.
- ▶ Time and a system for feedback from staff delivering targeted provision to class/subject teachers are planned for.

- ▶ Time is available to prepare resources linked to targeted support.
- ▶ Teachers ensure that they seek and are provided with regular feedback on pupils' learning/progress with targeted provision.
- ▶ Parents understand and agree on the intervention and support and the expected impact.
- ▶ Staff make sure that pupils are clear as to the key aspects of learning they will be working on during this provision.

It is important to note that any system is only as good as the environment in which it operates. In some settings, particularly primary schools, individual education plans (IEPs) form an important part of provision. However, I would encourage colleagues to think differently and consider how new ways of working can support the whole setting's inclusive agenda.

There is a steadily increasing body of research around what type of approach and/or provision works best for pupils with a range of additional needs, and SENCOs need to keep abreast of this as a key aspect of their role.

Websites and links to organisations that collate such information include:

- ▶ www.interventionsforliteracy.org.uk
- ▶ www.thecommunicationtrust.org.uk/whatworks
- ▶ <http://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/toolkit/>

Student passports

A student passport may cover the following key areas and usually takes up one side of A4 paper:

- ▶ Student information and photograph (this provides a personalised approach). ▶

'Class and subject teachers retain responsibility for the pupil'

'The SENCO monitors progress termly with all relevant staff'

- ▶ ▶ I would like you to know that... (the young person's first-hand description).
- ▶ This means that... (again, first-hand information for teachers from the student).
- ▶ I find it difficult to... (key areas that are difficult, agreed after discussion).
- ▶ It would help me if you could... (practical strategies and tips to support the identified areas of need).
- ▶ I will help myself by... (agreed strategies and practical solutions for the young person).
- ▶ Additional support (noted additional support; speech and language therapy, therapy sessions, teaching assistant support, and so on).
- ▶ Access arrangements (noted assessment needs – extra time, reader/scribe).
- ▶ Data/information (key data/information, as required – summarised for ease of reference).

Using the student passport as a tool for engaging the student in real discussions about learning, needs and strategies allows for an opportunity to activate metacognitive discourses and thinking. This is considered as 'high impact for low cost, based on extensive evidence' (Education Endowment Foundation) and also provides a refreshing opportunity for a positive dialogue with students, parents/carers and other professionals, culminating in a single document to support learning, teaching and access to the curriculum.

What better way to inform a parent/carer than to have a meeting and use the student passport as a 'discussion template'? Indeed, some of the most powerful discussions have taken place when parents/carers take the draft passport home and have conversations about learning away from school – empowering them to have a more sophisticated level of involvement.

Nasen will be sharing examples of pupil passport proformas on its website at www.nasen.org.uk/

REFLECTION AND READINESS

- ▶ How are we ensuring that teachers and other key members of staff have access to all the information about the special educational needs of pupils they teach, including statements/EHC plans and specialist reports?
- ▶ Is the SENCO supporting the development of staff skills, confidence and expertise in this area?
- ▶ Are teachers at the heart of the process of planning targeted provision for pupils with SEN?
- ▶ Are we utilising research around effective interventions and strategies for pupils with SEN?
- ▶ Is targeted provision always being carried out as planned?
- ▶ Is there planned time and a system for feedback from staff delivering targeted provision to class/subject teachers?
- ▶ Do support staff have appropriate time to prepare resources linked to targeted support?
- ▶ Do parents understand and agree on the intervention and support and the expected impact?
- ▶ Are pupils clear as to the key aspects of learning they will be working on during this targeted provision?
- ▶ Are there effective tools in place to record the targeted provision pupils with SEN are receiving? Do they serve their purpose as effective working documents?
- ▶ Are pupils' targets linked directly to their key areas of need and the targeted provision being planned for?
- ▶ Are pupils and parents meaningfully engaged in the co-production of SEN provision?
- ▶ How are we ensuring that the targeted provision and support in place are addressing the objectives as outlined in pupils' statements/EHC plans?
- ▶ Do we need to refresh our approach to record keeping and provision mapping, especially in relation to how we currently use IEPs?

Target setting – linked to targeted provision

One of the key themes coming through loud and clear in the SEND Code of Practice is the need to ensure that where additional/different targeted provision is planned for, there are clear and expected outcomes linked directly to the provision. Very often, targeted provision is planned to take place outside the class and away from the class/subject teacher. If this is the case, then schools have to have a very clear reason for it and be explicit, transparent and precise as to the purpose of this targeted provision – the expected (targeted) outcome by the end of, for example, the term/half term needs to be discussed, agreed and planned for. It may be that the targets are the same for a group of pupils and are recorded on a group intervention plan or they may be more individualised for a pupil needing more personalised one-to-one support and therefore recorded on an individual plan. There is no expectation that schools use one particular form or another; the important consideration is whether the planning, target setting and monitoring tool used is fit for purpose and supports the process of raising achievement. If a school's current recording tools are enabling this to happen, then it is probably best to stick with what they are currently using. If, however, the SENCO has long thought that the school's current system of individual education plans is no more than a paper exercise and does not support and underpin the graduated approach, then maybe it is time to refresh and rethink the school's record-keeping systems.

Planning provision for a pupil with a statement/EHC plan

The process of planning targeted provision for a pupil with a statement or an education, health and care (EHC) plan is firmly rooted in the graduated approach, the difference being that as these pupils' needs are likely to be more complex, the approach to meeting these needs and ensuring progress will be even more personalised and individualised. Crucially, the approach will be based on organising provision around the planned outcomes written on the pupil's statement/plan.

So what do schools need to ensure is in place when planning provision for pupils with statements/EHC plans?

- ▶ All staff working with children have read and understood the statement/EHC plan and any specialist reports.
- ▶ A clear range of strategies and approaches to support class differentiation is agreed by all those involved based on specialist advice.
- ▶ Co-production of a plan to address needs, with agreed outcomes for all targeted provision, is produced.
- ▶ Any additional training for teaching and support staff is arranged.
- ▶ Teachers monitor progress towards meeting agreed outcomes regularly, adjusting planning where needed.
- ▶ The SENCO monitors progress termly with all relevant staff, parents and pupils.

Focus on outcomes not hours

In a local authority that indicates hours of additional (teaching assistant/specialist teacher) support on the plan, schools should focus first on the agreed outcomes being sought and then on how the allocated 'hours' are being used to reach the agreed outcomes. Again, how this is recorded is very much dependent on school context and the effectiveness of current planning and reviewing systems.

Do

The SEND Code of Practice places the teacher at the centre of the day-to-day responsibility for working with all pupils, including those with identified SEN, whether receiving SEN Support or with an EHC plan, even where interventions and targeted provision involve group or one-to-one teaching away from the class. The imperative is that teachers work closely with any teaching assistants or specialist staff involved to plan and assess the impact of targeted interventions.

Time is perhaps the most precious commodity in all schools, so ensuring that this planning

and review time is explicitly planned for and regularly takes place is crucial if it is not to get sucked away by other issues. Some schools have utilised strategies such as:

- ▶ joint planning, preparation and assessment (PPA) time with support staff
- ▶ support staff paid to join planning and department meetings
- ▶ quick and concise communication tools to convey outcomes of targeted provision
- ▶ targeted provision work carried out in pupils' class/subject books so that teachers can see what work has been done and to what standard and pick up any emerging issues as soon as possible.

Outstanding teachers continually reflect during their lessons, and when marking and planning afterwards, on where students are in their learning, where they are going and how best to enable them to get there. In the case of children with identified special educational needs, this reflective process can be especially important because they can be the most challenging children to teach. Ensuring that there is a high level of pedagogical discussion around how pupils' day-to-day learning is developing is crucial to moving the skills of teachers and support staff on in a process of continual refinement and in response to what is happening in the classroom. Having a forum in which professionals working with a child can reflect together on what is going well is vital, and can be both supportive and developmental.

Sharing the learning journey

It is clear from the work carried out and collated by the Education Endowment Fund that teachers are becoming more aware of the effectiveness of metacognitive and self-regulation strategies (sometimes known as 'learning to learn' strategies). These are approaches that make students think about learning more explicitly by teaching them specific strategies to set goals, monitor and evaluate their own learning. Essentially, these strategies involve enabling pupils to become aware of the strengths and weaknesses in the way they learn. Encouragingly, the evidence suggests that these approaches tend to be particularly effective with lower-achieving pupils. See <http://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/toolkit/meta-cognitive-and-self-regulation-strategies> for more details.

The SEND Code of Practice is challenging us to ensure that the child or young person is participating as fully as possible in decisions and being provided with the information and support necessary to enable participation in those decisions. An essential element of moving through the graduated approach is to ensure that we are regularly reflecting on how ▶

OUTCOMES NOT HOURS

- ▶ It is vital to be absolutely clear about the outcome required from any SEN support provided – not how many hours of teaching assistant or other staff time will be provided.
- ▶ A clear date should be set to check progress and evaluate the support that is used in school.
- ▶ Open conversations should be held with parents about what the support is intended to achieve, how it will be clear whether it has worked and what the school will do next if it hasn't.





REFLECTION AND READINESS

- ▶ Are teachers confident and appropriately skilled to be able to meet the needs of pupils with SEN whom they teach?
- ▶ Is the SENCO supporting the development of staff skills, confidence and expertise in this area?
- ▶ Do teachers monitor the progress of pupils within targeted provision for whom they are accountable? Is time planned in to enable this to happen?
- ▶ How can we ensure that the skills being taught and practised within targeted provision are improving the outcome of work in class and are developing pupils' independence?
- ▶ Are we supporting pupils toward a growing awareness of the way they learn best?

TESTING THE TEACHING AND LEARNING

These are some questions that class/subject teachers can draw on, ideally with any support staff, when reflecting on how successful day-to-day teaching and learning are for pupils with identified SEN. They are also useful questions to address as part of a lesson study focused on pupils with additional needs.

- ▶ Has the adult support been effective in enabling planned objectives to be met?
- ▶ Are the skills that are being developed in targeted provision transferring back in class/across the curriculum?
- ▶ Are pupil confidence and self-esteem healthy?
- ▶ Is behaviour for learning appropriate/improving?
- ▶ Are the pupils on track to meet targets set?
- ▶ Have they had the opportunity to work in a variety of groups this week?
- ▶ Have they had an equal amount of teaching input this week?
- ▶ Are there any emerging gaps in/barriers to learning that need to be investigated further?
- ▶ Have they been able to work effectively with peers?
- ▶ How engaged are they in the learning?
- ▶ How independently are the pupils able to work? Is this improving?
- ▶ How well and how often are the planned learning objectives being met?
- ▶ Has the adult support been effective in enabling them to meet planned objectives?
- ▶ Are they developing a keen awareness of their strengths, areas of need and what strategies and approaches to learning they can utilise to enable them to achieve their goals?

- ▶ we enable pupils to develop their skills and confidence, to share their aspirations and goals and understand the best ways that those who teach and support them can help to remove any barriers to their learning and participation. So, the challenge for us as teachers is to consider how, in the day-to-day classroom experience, we support pupils to gain a better awareness of the way they best learn and enable them over time to participate fully in decisions about their own life, particularly in reviews of their progress, assessments of their support needs and in decisions about their transition to adult life.

Review

As mentioned in the previous section, teachers are continually reviewing the progress of all pupils on a daily, albeit informal, basis in every lesson through marking and feedback opportunities as well as regular meetings with support staff. Teachers shouldn't wait for the more formal termly review meeting to reflect on and make necessary adaptations to teaching and learning approaches and provision. However, the SEND Code of Practice states that the progress towards meeting planned outcomes should be tracked and reviewed regularly, at least termly.

The tracking and reviewing of all pupils has become increasingly robust over the last few years, so schools should be considering how they can utilise whole-school approaches wherever possible. For example, many schools carry out a regular (often termly or half termly) pupil progress meeting or department review meeting where both group and individual progress can be reviewed. For teachers to be ready to discuss the progress of pupils with identified SEN at this meeting, they should consider the following:

- ▶ Have the pupils met the expected end of term/year National Curriculum/P level target, and are they achieving the level/grade independently and consistently? Evidence of progress and attainment can be taken from a variety of sources, including:
 - observation
 - work scrutiny
 - assessed work
 - use of APP (Assessing Pupil Progress)
 - tests, where appropriate.
- ▶ Are they on track to meet their end of year/key stage target?
- ▶ Is there an improvement in the previous rate of progress?
- ▶ Is the gap narrowing (attainment and progress) between pupils with SEN and all pupils?

Reviewing the progress of pupils on the SEN record may, in some schools, be a clearly timetabled termly meeting with the teacher(s), SENCO, support staff and parents, and perhaps pupil, in attendance. Or it may be a process where the views of all those involved in supporting and teaching the pupil are sought and reviewed between the class teacher/tutor and SENCO. However it is managed in a school, the review process needs to be planned for as it is a crucial part of the graduated approach, providing an opportunity formally to evaluate the success of teaching and learning in class as well as the impact of targeted provision on pupil progress data and pupils' wider development. Once again, the teacher needs to be the key driver of this process, with the support of the SENCO.

Key considerations during this meeting may include an assessment of whether inclusive quality-first teaching and targeted provision have been effective in relation to achieving the planned and expected outcomes. Consider the following:

- ▶ Have they achieved agreed targets?
- ▶ What is the evidence from day-to-day intervention tracking?
- ▶ Has there been a generalisation of skills transferring back into class work?
- ▶ How have the pupil and parents responded to targeted provision?
- ▶ What are the views of support staff, pupil and parents?
- ▶ How does this term's evaluation feed back into the analysis of pupils' needs?
- ▶ What are the necessary changes to support, provision and targets needed for next term?

Finding time to implement a comprehensive termly review will always pay dividends in enabling an ever-sharper focus on the nature of pupils' needs, with increasingly well-targeted support leading to improved outcomes.

The new arrangements may take significant adjustments for some schools and settings. The replacement of School Action and School Action plus with the new SEN Support arrangements, the introduction of EHC plans and a focus on the provision of evidence-based programmes while ensuring that students are being provided with high-quality inclusive teaching will constitute a shift in philosophy for some settings, although many have already made significant inroads to adjust their provision.

With the emphasis on the identification and support for students with SEN being identified and implemented by class and subject teachers – and the SENCO having a supporting, specialist role – training and professional development will be an essential part of developing provision.

In addition, there is renewed emphasis on improving the parent/carer voice and



REFLECTION AND READINESS

- ▶ Are pupils and parents meaningfully engaged in the review of SEN provision?
- ▶ Are we utilising whole-school tracking and reviewing processes to support the evaluation of the achievement of pupils with SEN?
- ▶ Are staff well prepared to discuss the term's outcomes (qualitative and quantitative) of pupils with identified SEN?
- ▶ Have we got in place appropriate recording tools to collate the outcomes, views and future adjustments to provision?

contribution to discussions about assessment and provision. The SENCO's skills will be called for in ensuring that a 'real' student voice is heard and that the development of self-advocacy is part of a truly person-centred approach. These are key elements of successful schools currently, and using student passports has proved to be a very effective mechanism to engage students, parents/carers and school staff, while keeping the young person central to all discussions and decisions.

With any system of approaches it is important that there is positive engagement with parents and carers. Many schools have great dialogues with parents and carers of students with SEN and this should be at the centre of provision for all schools from September 2014.

Jane Friswell is the Chief Executive of nasen.

'There is renewed emphasis on improving the parent/carer voice'

Introducing the SEND Gateway

So much information, so little time – Terry Waller takes a look at the benefits that nasen's new SEND Gateway will bring to all special educational needs professionals



The SEND Gateway has been developed by nasen to provide the solution, and is designed to help busy professionals easily access high-quality information, resources and training, as well as relevant topical news. It will provide an opportunity for the education workforce to develop new skills and understanding, navigate the recent and upcoming reforms to SEN and access resources and training materials from the UK's leading voluntary community sector (VCS) organisations supporting children and young people with SEND.

The SEND Gateway already includes government-funded resources from the voluntary and community sector and the Department for Education. The value of the resources lies in the research and quality assurance behind them, provided by the organisations that have developed them, which is the reason that nasen wants to promote these organisations and the excellent resources they provide.

But this is only the start! Initially the site will reference free resources, but over the next few months further materials and training will be added, providing an even wider choice of high-quality content ready for the new school year.

Quality will be at the heart of the content on the site, and that may mean it will take time to include all of the great resources that are around. However, from the word go there will be a wide range of high-quality resources, including an easier way to access the wealth and breadth of content developed as part of the Complex Needs and Advanced Training Resources.

Schools will also be able to contribute by adding good practice examples, case studies and additional materials to assist in developing an evidenced-based approach to effective practice. The intention is that over time there will be resources to support education professionals from all settings, making it highly relevant to all those working with children and young people with SEND aged 0–25.

At a time of unprecedented changes in the special educational needs landscape it can often be difficult to know where to go for high-quality advice and information.

A web search engine often provides too many results, finding resources that are of mixed quality and not always relevant to the UK system or context. And with time at a premium, it can be very frustrating to follow link after link, only to discover a resource that is not what you need!

Nasen knows there are many fantastic resources out there for meeting the needs of children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), often developed by teaching professionals, families and carers and the voluntary sector, working closely with local people. Recent government funding has contributed to the development of many of these resources, but finding them can often be a challenge.

**QUALITY
WILL BE
AT THE
HEART OF
THE CONTENT**

An easy way to find exactly what you want

Finding resources through the SEND Gateway couldn't be easier. There are two routes: you can either search by free text or browse via topics. Searching using free text is found on most websites – just type a word or phrase into the search box and a list of results will be displayed, along with a brief description and an indication of the type of resource. Scanning the list will give an idea of the resource content.

Clicking on the title of the resource then provides further details of an individual resource. This might be a digital publication, a DVD, a report that can be requested by post, a free information service, a webpage or even a video showing good practice. Once the required resource is found, it can be downloaded immediately if uploaded to the Gateway, or accessed via a link to the provider's website. As the resources link back to the originator's website, professionals can easily identify additional resources of interest.

If you are not exactly sure what you want, then selecting one or a number of the carefully chosen topic headings provides a way to browse the content. By selecting sub-topics it is possible to narrow down the search further to the desired resources. And by registering you can collect resources through the 'My Gateway' favourites option, then continue searching and access the full list of favourites again when convenient. These will still be logged in your personal Gateway when you next visit the site, or can be cleared immediately.

Alternatively, if you want to browse the latest resources from several organisations there is an A-Z listing of all the providers, along with contact details and an overview of the type of material they have provided.

In order to help SENCOs and other professionals to encourage colleagues at the school to exploit these resources there will be regularly updated collections of resources showcased, focusing either on specific topics or on audiences, for example SEN governors or teaching assistants. These will bring together the latest or recommended items for quick reference.

However, if locating high-quality local training is a priority, you can find out what is available nearby, by topic and locality. Searching by region or for national events and online training opportunities will be an important aspect of the SEND Gateway, making it easier to identify continuing

professional development opportunities for you or your colleagues. Within a few clicks you could be booking a place at an event, or sharing the details with other professionals in your setting.

Although all the resources on the site have to meet quality criteria, professionals visiting the site may be interested in how others rate the resource in practice. Therefore, if you particularly like what you have found, you can rate the resource, share it with others through email or social networking, or send feedback directly to the provider. Your feedback will help others when they visit the site, and also inform resource providers on ways to improve the content further, and help nasen to identify any gaps in resource coverage. Nasen will then seek out or encourage the development of content not covered by the Gateway.

Keeping you up to date at all times

Registering with the SEND Gateway will bring immediate benefits. If you take a few minutes to add basic information, on your next visit the latest ➤

**WITHIN
A FEW
CLICKS
YOU
COULD BE
BOOKING
A PLACE
AT AN
EVENT**



CONTRIBUTING ORGANISATIONS

Among the many organisations that will be adding details of materials, training and news items to the Gateway are:

- ▶ Autism Education Trust
- ▶ Dyslexia-SpLD Trust
- ▶ Whizz-Kidz
- ▶ Royal National Institute of Blind People
- ▶ British Association of Teachers of the Deaf
- ▶ Afasic
- ▶ British Dyslexia Association
- ▶ Council for Disabled Children
- ▶ SEBDA
- ▶ Contact a Family

YOU CAN OPT TO RECEIVE A REGULAR SEND GATEWAY NEWSLETTER

resources matching your interests will be displayed. As your priorities change, simply updating the topics in My Gateway will save time, with only resources that match your immediate interests shown.

As you browse or search for resources, you can add them to your Gateway favourites, and retrieve, review or visit the resources at any time – and if you want these can be saved for when you visit the site again.

We all have favourite websites, and even though they may be constantly updated with new and useful information, there isn't always time to visit them all. To save you time and keep you right up to date with the latest news, training and events, you can opt to receive a regular SEND Gateway newsletter.

Just interested in specific topics? Then you can choose to receive email alerts whenever new resources matching your interests are added to the Gateway. When you spot something of interest, just follow the link in the email, and instantly view or download the resource.

As the requirements of the Children and Families Act and the SEND Code of Practice 0–25 come into force, the SEND Gateway will be well placed to provide the support necessary to develop new skills and a more thorough understanding of SEND. SENCOs will be able to access resources to support whole-school planning and development, and to help colleagues in identifying resources relevant to their particular professional development needs. Busy teachers looking for the latest resources designed to support the education of young people with high incidence or complex needs will be able to find them via this portal.

Interactive and responsive

Nasen has been liaising with a large number of leading voluntary and community sector organisations, who received funding from the Department for Education, to identify and bring together materials and professional support to include on the SEND Gateway.

So that you have the information at your fingertips, all in one place and whenever you

need it, the site has been designed to work on desktop computers, portables and mobile devices. With the potential to include some of the best blogs around, and well-established communities of practice, such as the SENCO-forum and the Sld-forum, the Gateway means that access to advice and the expertise of classroom practitioners will be only a click away.

The SEND Gateway was developed in response to comments and views expressed by people attending the many nasen events held during the last couple of years. Being responsive to those needs is very important for nasen, and the association will continue to listen and seek feedback from users of the portal. In response to feedback from those using the site and existing and potential contributors, nasen can revise the content and also the way the site operates to ensure that it delivers what you want.

But this is only the start

It is important that the SEND Gateway continues to be current, relevant and responsive to needs, so the intention is to expand the number of resources on the site while maintaining quality standards.

Newly created resources from teaching schools and other public bodies will be added from the summer term onwards, and in early 2015 commercial organisations will also be eligible to join the Gateway and share their resources.

The quality assurance framework and moderation process that nasen has put in place will ensure that as the number of resources increases you will not be far from high-quality content. This process will not be bureaucratic, instead it is designed to promote and encourage the sharing of useful resources. For example, materials created under Creative Commons licences, designed by and for specialist and classroom teachers, will be included.

With one in five children identified as having a special educational need, and inclusion still at the heart of provision for these children, it is clear that every teacher must be given the support necessary to develop new skills and an understanding of SEND. In order to achieve this, teachers and SENCOs must be supported and empowered to deliver the first class education that all children deserve, no matter what their abilities are. The SEND Gateway has been developed to offer education professionals the guidance and assistance they need to give young people with SEND the best possible start in life.

SHARING RESOURCES

The launch of the SEND Gateway will provide an opportunity for resource and training providers to register an interest. In line with the site's terms and conditions, organisations or individuals will go through the approval process and can then add resources.

If you have resources which promote multi-agency working and the development of personalised education solutions that can make a positive difference to the lives of children and young people with SEND and their parents, carers and families, please contact nasen at webadmin@nasen.org.uk.

Terry Waller is an independent education, inclusion and technology consultant.



FAQs for SEND reforms

Nasen receives a lot of queries about the SEND reforms, so in answer to these and to dispel the many myths circulating online, we provide some essential guidance

‘The definition of SEN and the thresholds are the same’

WHEN DID THE SEND LEGISLATION RECEIVE ROYAL ASSENT?

The Children and Families Bill, Part 3, refers to the reform to the provisions for children and young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Following agreement by both Houses of Parliament on the content, the Bill received Royal Assent on 13 March and is now an Act of Parliament (law). The Act seeks to reform legislation relating to the following areas:

- ▶ adoption and children in care
- ▶ aspects of the family justice system
- ▶ children and young people with special educational needs
- ▶ the Office of the Children’s Commissioner for England
- ▶ statutory rights to leave and pay for parents and adopters
- ▶ time off work for antenatal care
- ▶ the right to request flexible working.

WHEN WILL THE NEW LEGISLATIVE CHANGES AROUND SEND COME INTO FORCE?

The legislation within the new Children and Families Act 2014 will come into effect from

1 September 2014. This is the commencement order designed to bring into force the whole Act of Parliament at the date specified after Royal Assent has been granted. The practical implementation of the Act is the responsibility of the appropriate government department, not Parliament. The associated regulations, SEND Code of Practice and other related documentation from the Department for Education (DfE) provide comprehensive statutory and non-statutory advice and guidance on the implementation of the new legislation.

IN THE NEW CODE OF PRACTICE, WHAT WILL REPLACE SCHOOL ACTION AND SCHOOL ACTION PLUS?

These will be replaced with a single school stage called SEN Support. It will be provided by early years settings, schools, colleges and other providers and will be based on early identification of needs, early help and SEN support. The work will be done with other services as needed, in an integrated way using the Common Assessment Framework and the Team Around the Child. This work will ➤

‘The young person’s voice is the main one’

- be centred on children, young people and their parents/carers, and their aspirations and desired outcomes. For further details on what this SEN Support approach may look like in your setting refer to the article ‘Assess – Plan – Do – Review’ on page 4.

WILL THE INTRODUCTION OF THE SINGLE SCHOOL STAGE REDUCE THE NUMBER OF CHILDREN WITH SEN, MEANING THAT MOST CHILDREN CURRENTLY ON SCHOOL ACTION WILL NOT HAVE SEN FROM SEPTEMBER 2014?

The definition of SEN and the thresholds are the same as they are now and should stay the same in September. The reforms have not been introduced as a number-cutting exercise; however, settings, schools, colleges and other providers will need to decide clearly what constitutes ‘SEN Support’ in their respective context. They are well placed to do this, as they will know their cohorts best. Nasen recognises that for some this may present a challenge, particularly when the new guidance recalibrates the significance of the phrase ‘every teacher is a teacher of every child’. We anticipate that the real challenge for settings will be the point at which quality-first, highly differentiated teaching is no longer meeting the needs of some individual children and young people. Refer to the article on page 4 of this publication for further explanation of how this may work for you in your setting.

WILL SENCOS STILL HAVE TO BE QUALIFIED TEACHERS?

The regulations concerning the role of the SENCO have not changed and the requirement for qualified teacher status is embedded within the new legislation and the new guidance. Governing bodies of maintained mainstream schools and the proprietors of mainstream academy schools (including free schools) must ensure that there is a qualified teacher designated as SENCO for the school.

WILL LOCAL AUTHORITIES STILL ISSUE STATEMENTS?

From September 2014 the education, health and care (EHC) plan will replace new statements and there will be a programme to ensure conversion so that all children and young people who previously had a statement will have been transferred to an EHC plan by 2017. The aim is to start with conversions at key transition points.

WILL THE CHANGES IN SCHOOL FUNDING ARRANGEMENTS ALLOW SCHOOLS TO REDUCE THE HOURS OF SUPPORT FOR A CHILD WITHOUT A STATEMENT?

The same duties apply under the new legislation; however, schools and colleges may deliver outcomes differently. The focus of the new legislation in this regard should be outcomes, not hours. This may be a challenge for some, but we need to continue actively pursuing quality provision which contributes to longer-term life outcomes.

CAN A PARENT STILL BE INVOLVED IN DECISIONS ABOUT THEIR CHILD’S SUPPORT ONCE THE CHILD TURNS 16?

The parents can be involved, but the young person’s voice is the main one. For some providers, this may mean an opportunity to review existing arrangements for listening to pupil and student voice within their organisation and to address how they will support and educate families in enabling their children to become increasingly more independent.

WILL FEWER CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE GET AN EHC PLAN THAN GET A STATEMENT OF SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AT PRESENT?

The definition of SEN will remain the same, and according to the new legislation there is no suggestion that fewer children and young people will be eligible for an EHC plan than currently are for statements. However, nasen recognises the concerns that many



providers have around this particular issue and we have already voiced these concerns directly with government. There are some isolated yet worrying indications that a few local authorities are beginning to 'move the goalposts' in relation to local eligibility criteria for statutory assessment. Nasen believes this to be unacceptable practice within the reform framework and any changes which do take place at local level should be undertaken in open and full consultation with all stakeholders.

HOW LONG DOES THE NEW LEGISLATION GIVE THE LOCAL AUTHORITY RESPONSIBILITY FOR A CHILD/YOUNG PERSON'S SEND SUPPORT?

The new legislation extends the local authority's responsibility to the age of 25 if a young person is in education, college, training or supported employment.

WILL ALL PARENTS AND YOUNG PEOPLE WITH AN EHC PLAN BE ABLE TO GET A DIRECT PAYMENT?

All parents and young people with an EHC plan will be able to request a personal budget for some services. This is an option for all of them to consider.

IS THE LOCAL AUTHORITY'S LOCAL OFFER LARGELY A DIRECTORY OF SERVICES FOR FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE WITH SEND?

No. This would be a very narrow view of the local offer. It should be a website, or some webpages, that will enable all families to find out exactly what they can expect from schools, health services and other services, what criteria services have for access and what happens at transition points. There should also be a facility for service users to comment on the usefulness of the information. The local offer should be co-produced by parents, children and young people to ensure it answers all of their questions and it should be subject to regular review by all stakeholders. For more details see the article in this publication on page 35.

DO THE NEW ARRANGEMENTS IN THE CHILDREN AND FAMILIES ACT APPLY TO DISABLED CHILDREN AS WELL AS TO CHILDREN WITH SEN?

Some of the duties do apply to disability. The Government amended the Children and Families Bill to include disabled children and young people within the scope of the legislation in December 2013. Previously the Bill covered only children and young people identified as having special educational needs;

the decision to include disabled children has been warmly welcomed by the voluntary and community sector. The amendments mean that disabled children are now incorporated into a number of clauses in the Act, including the local offer and local joint commissioning arrangements.

IF A PARENT IS NOT HAPPY WITH THEIR CHILD'S EHC PLAN CAN THEY APPEAL TO THE TRIBUNAL?

They can make an appeal, but only for the education element of the plan. There is no single point of appeal for parents and carers in respect of the entire EHC plan. This reflects the fact that, in law, the EHC plan is largely an educational plan. Should parents and families wish to appeal about the health or social care aspects of their child's plan, they will have to follow the appropriate and separate appeals process for each provider. Nasen believes that this is a flaw in the appeals process for the new legislation that will make life more difficult for those parents who may wish to appeal.

ARE PARENT PARTNERSHIP SERVICES FEATURED IN THE REVISED LEGISLATIVE GUIDANCE?

Parent Partnership Services are there and support for parents is detailed, as is advocacy and support for young people with SEN. Local information will be made available on how to access these services.

ARE INDIVIDUAL EDUCATION PLANS (IEPS) STILL NEEDED AND DO SETTINGS HAVE TO HAVE SEN REGISTERS?

IEPs are not a statutory requirement and never have been. The new Code of Practice provides guidance which promotes child- and pupil-centred approaches to recording individual needs, targets, interventions and outcomes. Nasen supports the use of pupil passports and this guidance refers readers to a range of examples. However, the continued use of IEPs should not be cause for revolution. We would suggest that evolution is a good route when considering what works best for you, your pupils and students and your staff. Schools and settings are advised that it is good practice to provide a record of pupils and students in receipt of SEN Support – presently this is referred to as the SEN register. There is no requirement on settings and schools to keep a register; however, nasen would advise that all providers have an up-to-date record of those pupils and students who have received or are receiving SEN support and this should provide clear, precise information relating to entrance and exit points on and off the record.



**'In law,
the EHC
plan is
largely an
educational
plan'**



The top ten for SEN

As the September deadline for the new SEN legal framework looms, Jane McConnell highlights the essential top ten actions for schools

‘Potentially more children and young people should be included in the definition of SEN’

We have a new Children and Families Act 2014 which is due to be implemented from September 2014. Before that can be done, secondary legislation in the form of SEN Regulations and statutory guidance – the SEN and Disabilities Code of Practice – needs to be finalised.

So what do we already know for certain about what an early years provider, school or post-16 institution should be doing in order to be as prepared as they can be for these changes?

Here is a checklist of the top ten things any provider of education or training needs to be aware of.

1 Definition of SEN

The Children and Families Act 2014 section 20 (C & F Act 2014 s.20) defines when a child or young person has special educational needs (SEN). This is when they have either a learning difficulty or a disability and they need special educational provision (SEP) to be made for them. SEP is defined as any education or training provision which is additional to or different from that generally made for others of the same age in

mainstream schools or post-16 institutions in England.

These definitions are at least the same as we have under the current legislation. Any child or young person who is currently on the SEN register will therefore remain on it unless something changes for them individually which means they no longer need SEP.

However, it is possibly now an even wider definition. The comparison made is now against the typically developing child or young person of the same age across England – not just those in the local authority area as the current law requires. It will mean that potentially more children and young people should be included in the definition of SEN.

Perhaps the most interesting addition to a local authority’s duties towards any child or young person identified with SEN or a disability is the over-reaching requirement that the local authority ensures they receive education or training to ‘achieve the best possible educational and other outcomes’ (C & F Act 2014 s.19(d)). This raises the bar from the current requirement to receive an appropriate education.

Action: Ensure that all children and young people who are identified as having SEN under this definition are on the SEN register. Add any who now fall under the wider definition and are receiving education or training which is additional to or different from that made nationally in mainstream schools or post-16 institutions.

Consider whether the education and training being provided will enable the child or young person to receive the best possible outcomes. Consider what support the local authority would need to put in place to achieve this.

2 Governing bodies' duties

Under the C & F Act 2014 s.29 the governors of early years, schools or post-16 institutions – including academies – have a duty to co-operate with local authorities, and local authorities must co-operate with governors in relation to carrying out their duties towards children and young people with SEN.

The C & F Act 2014 s.43 requires governing and equivalent bodies to admit a child or young person to their school or other institution where they are named in the education, health and care (EHC) plan.

Most importantly, under the C & F Act 2014 s.66 governing bodies of schools and other institutions must use their 'best endeavours' to ensure that SEP is made for a pupil/student. This is a direct legal duty on them as a body and is a proactive duty that requires them to check what is happening in their school or institution and that special education provision is being put in place – not just rely on what they are being told.

Under C & F Act 2014 s.68(2), parents and young people must also be informed by governing bodies if the child or young person is receiving SEP and is on the SEN register.

Action: Ensure that responsible bodies – governors/proprietors – are aware of their specific duties towards children and young people with SEN. Arrange training for them on how to fulfil these duties.

3 Record keeping for children and young people with SEN

The draft Code of Practice required schools and institutions to keep clear records of the special educational needs an individual child or young person has, the provision put into place to support them and the outcomes expected to be achieved. This provision needs to be reviewed at least termly

with parents. Progress towards outcomes must be recorded. It is not expected that this part of the Code will have changed drastically when it is finally in force.

If you have a successful record-keeping practice already in place then it is highly likely this will do the job more than adequately. You just need to ensure that you have identified outcomes for the child or young person and that progress is recorded against those.

Action: Review your record-keeping processes to ensure that they record what provision is being made that is additional to or different from others for all children or young people with SEN – whether they are on SEN Support or have an EHC plan. Make sure you consistently record outcomes. Note that this information has been shared with parents or young people at least termly and that you have acknowledgement of their response, such as a note of a meeting or a signed, returned copy of the record, with comments.

4 Children and young people with SEN but no EHC plan

The Code of Practice now refers to a single group of children or young people who have SEN but who do not have such needs as to require a statutory assessment or EHC plan put in place. They are now termed those who are receiving 'SEN Support'. How you organise that support is up to you as a school or institution. If you want to continue a graduated or stepped response, you as a school have the flexibility within the framework to decide to do this. ➤

'Make sure you consistently record outcomes'



‘Ensure that all staff are aware of the cycle of action’

- The ‘cycle’ of action the Code of Practice sees a professional taking is potentially a management approach to SEN:
 - ▶ Assess – the child or young person’s needs.
 - ▶ Plan – what you need to do, what provision is needed and what outcome should be achieved.
 - ▶ Do – do it! Put the provision in place.
 - ▶ Review – what difference is it making towards outcomes?

If this cycle is not effective in improving a child or young person’s outcomes then professionals must consider requesting that the local authority carries out a statutory assessment of their needs. A school or institution is only expected to provide support to the best of their abilities within the resources – finance and teaching staff/expertise – that they already have.

Action: Consider how best to support children or young people with SEN within your school or institution. Is it via a graduated approach? If it works for you then consider keeping it. Ensure that all staff are aware of the cycle of action that should be followed and how that will be expected to be put into practice and then evidenced as having been followed.

5 Requesting a statutory assessment for children and young people with SEN who may need an EHC plan

If an early years setting, school or post-16 institution requests that the local authority carries out a statutory assessment of a child or young person’s SEN then the local authority



must respond to that request within the maximum of six weeks – but legally as soon as it is able – to say that it will or will not do so.

A local authority is responsible for carrying out a statutory assessment of a child or young person with SEN under the C & F Act 2014 s.36(8) if:

- ▶ the child or young person has or may have SEN – any child or young person on the school SEN register has already been identified and accepted as having SEN
- ▶ it may be necessary for SEP to be made for them in accordance with an EHC plan. This is only a ‘may’ test and therefore the threshold for the local authority to carry out a statutory assessment is a low one – especially where teaching professionals who are working with a child or young person are requesting it.

Action: Ensure that you request a statutory assessment for children or young people who are not achieving better outcomes even with additional SEN Support.

The evidence to be provided by the existing early years setting, school or post-16 institution should be:

- ▶ a copy of all records regarding SEN Support given
- ▶ any additional professional reports that have been obtained already
- ▶ notes of termly meetings to review SEN Support.

Please note that early years settings, schools or post-16 institutions cannot be required by a local authority to obtain evidence from an outside professional, such as an educational psychologist, as a prerequisite of requesting a statutory assessment.





6 Statutory assessment and the decision to issue a draft EHC plan

Once a local authority has agreed to a statutory assessment, under the C & F Act 2014 s.36(2) it must assess the education, health and care needs of a child or young person. The local authority must request advice and information on the child or young person's needs and the provision that should be put in place to meet those needs from:

- ▶ the parents or the young person
- ▶ an educationalist – headteacher/principal of the school/post-16 institution
- ▶ an educational psychologist
- ▶ health
- ▶ social care
- ▶ anyone else the parents or the young person request – including health and social care professionals
- ▶ a specialist teacher for the visually impaired or hearing impaired, if appropriate.

If a professional is asked by the local authority to provide this advice and information they must do so within six weeks. This advice and information should be specific about the provision to be put in place and based on the child or young person's needs and not on the resources available within a local authority area, school or post-16 institution.

Once the statutory assessment has been completed, based on the evidence gathered, the local authority must decide whether it will issue an EHC plan. The C & F Act 2014 s. 37(1) requires a local authority to do this where 'it is necessary for the special educational provision to be made...in accordance with an EHC plan'. If a school or post-16 institution has requested a statutory assessment be completed it is usually clear evidence that the child or young person's

needs cannot be met without an EHC plan being in place.

If the local authority is not going to issue an EHC plan it must inform parents up to 16 weeks after the initial request for assessment is made. Practically – in order to meet statutory time limits regarding consultation – if a local authority is going to issue a draft EHC plan then it needs to do so within 14 weeks.

A draft EHC plan will be issued to parents or the young person and they will have 15 days to make representations to the local authority about its contents. The draft EHC plan will not include the name or type of school or post-16 institution that the child or young person will attend. It must be written, based on the evidence gathered, to reflect the child or young person's individual needs and the provision required. Only once the draft EHC plan is issued can the local authority ask parents or the young person the type of school or institution they want to attend and which specific school or post-16 institution they want named.

Once parents or the young person have made a request for their chosen school or institution then they have to be consulted and also have 15 days to respond to the local authority. There are very limited grounds on which a local authority can reject the parents' or young person's choice of school or institution. Even if the consultation is negative, the local authority has the legal power to name the school or institution anyway, and it will have to admit them.

The EHC plan has to be finalised within 20 weeks of the initial request for a statutory assessment being made to a local authority. ▶

'A draft EHC plan will be issued to parents or the young person'

- It is irrelevant who made that request – parents, young person, school or other institution.

‘Watch out for woolly words or phrases’



Action: Ensure that you gather all additional evidence you have already to support the statutory assessment process, including any up-to-date reports from class/subject teachers. Be clear what needs you have identified as the child or young person already having, the provision you have put in place to support them and the outcomes this has or has not achieved.

Support parents or the young person to identify other professionals from whom they need to request that the local authority obtains advice and information, such as speech and language therapy, occupational therapy and behavioural support. The local authority can then instruct specialist professionals to assess needs and specify (usually in terms of hours of support) the provision to be put in place to meet each of those needs and the outcomes they would expect to be achieved.

When considering draft EHC plans sent to you for consultation by a local authority, be clear what your school or institution can provide from your existing resources and what you will need in terms of extra support – finance or specialist input – from the local authority in order to meet the needs and make the provision. If provision is not clearly specified in the EHC plan – it is not clear who has to do what, when, how often and reviewed by whom – then request that is addressed. Watch out for woolly words or phrases – ‘opportunities for’, ‘regular’, ‘access to’, ‘as required’ – which are not specific. Without provision being clear you will not be able to ensure that you have delivered it or have the funding to do so.

The C & F Act 2014 s.21(5) states that ‘health care or social care provision which educates or trains a child or young person is to be treated as special educational provision

(instead of health care provision or social care provision)’. Ensure that any therapies or specialist support are specified in the special educational provision section of the EHC plan if, without them, the child or young person would not be fully able to access education or training.

7 Children and young people with SEN with a EHC plan

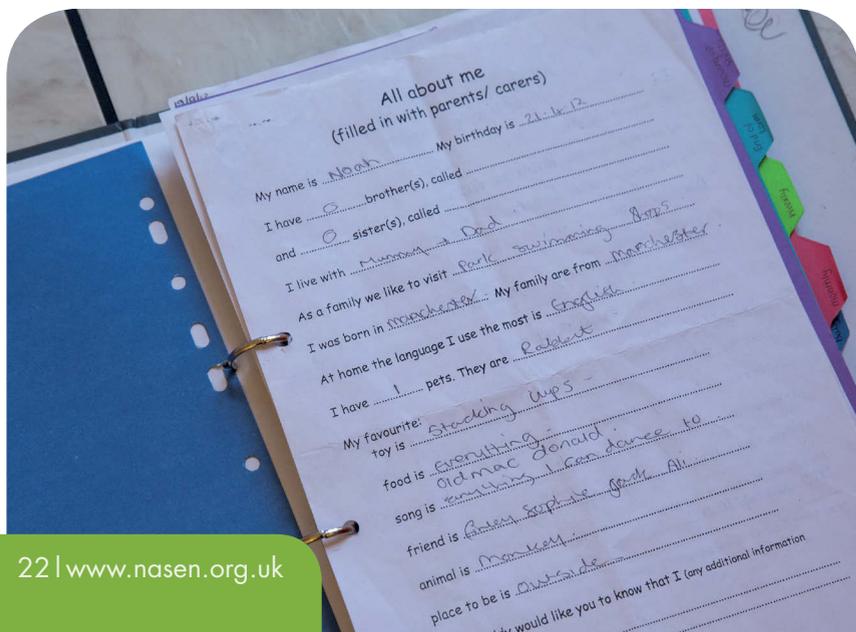
Once an EHC plan has been finalised, the local authority must ensure that specified special educational provision is secured. This duty can never ultimately be delegated to the school or institution named in the plan if you can prove that you do not have the actual resources to make that provision. This legal duty on local authorities cannot be fulfilled by delegated funding schemes such as banding or blanket agreements regarding funding arrangements. Legally, an individual child or young person must receive the provision in an EHC plan, and lack of money is never an acceptable excuse for them not to be receiving it. This will include any therapies – even if they are usually delivered via an agreement with local health care services.

If the EHC plan specifies health care provision then the responsible commissioning body – usually the local clinical commissioning group – must arrange it. If the EHC plan specifies social care provision the local authority does not have a duty to ensure it is delivered. It may have duties under separate legislation to do so, but this will need to be clarified.

Action: Ensure that you are clear as to what resources you need in order to make the special educational provision specified in each individual EHC plan. This is an existing duty regarding statements, so you can start this exercise in anticipation of an EHC plan being issued. Remember that if a child or young person has an existing statement, unless their individual needs have changed drastically, they should be issued with an EHC plan, as the legal threshold for being eligible is at least the same as it is under the current system. Once you have made this assessment then be clear to the local authority what additional resources you need to receive in order to support the child or young person.

8 Review of EHC plans

The C & F Act 2014 s.44 requires a local authority to review an EHC plan within 12 months of it being finalised and within each subsequent 12-month period.



The local authority will usually ask the school or institution to hold a review meeting on its behalf at which evidence will be gathered. The report of that meeting, sent to the local authority from the school or institution, will be the basis on which the EHC plan will be reviewed. The details of this process will not be so different from the current arrangements and will be outlined in the SEND Code of Practice. A local authority can take one of three routes:

- ▶ Amend the EHC plan in line with the recommendations of the meeting.
- ▶ Leave the EHC plan as it is.
- ▶ Decide that the EHC plan is no longer needed because all outcomes have been achieved.

Action: Be clear about what is involved in reviewing an EHC plan and put in place a process for careful consideration of its contents. Look at any amendments that need to be sought to ensure that they reflect current levels of need and provision, with particular regards to specificity.

9 SEN information report

Under the C & F Act 2014 s.69, the governing bodies of schools and nurseries – including academies – must publish an SEN information report. Regulations will outline in detail what this should contain but this is not finalised yet. It is likely, based on the draft SEN Regulations, to include details of the expertise already available in a school or institution to meet SEN, how you can access specialist equipment or services, your approach to SEN and admissions arrangements for those with a disability and/or SEN.

This information must be published online on the school or institution's website. This is not a 'school offer'. There is legally no requirement for a school or institution to produce a 'school offer'.

Action: Start to plan the development of your SEN information report. Once it is made clear in the SEN Regulations what it must contain, assemble the information into one document and review it ready for posting on your website. This requirement is not so different from the one already on schools under existing SEN information regulations, so if you are already doing this it will not mean starting from scratch.

If your local authority asks you to fill out a separate document, which they have developed themselves, consider whether this is something you may want to do, but ensure that you have put together the SEN information report first as this is something you must do by law.



10 Personal budgets and direct payments

Under the C & F Act 2014 s.49, once a draft EHC plan has been issued to parents or a young person they can then request that the local authority prepares a personal budget for them. This will be a notional amount of money that is available to secure the provision specified in the EHC plan.

Parents or the young person can then request that the local authority makes part of that budget as a direct payment to them as money in order that they can directly commission services themselves in lieu of the local authority making the provision. Regulations will make clear the exact details of how these direct payments will work and when the duty of the local authority will have been fulfilled, ie when the payment is made to the parents or young person or when the actual service is delivered. What is very clear is that headteachers or principals of post-16 colleges will always retain power of veto within their own settings.

Action: Once the final arrangements for direct payments are clear, make sure you are aware of the circumstances of when a parent or young person could be able to use them within your school or institution. Ensure that you discuss the use of any potential direct payment carefully with parents or the young person and the reasons why you are agreeing or not agreeing.



'Start to plan the development of your SEN information report'

Jane McConnell is the Chief Executive of the charity IPSEA (Independent Parental Special Educational Needs).

The EPIC effect

As the reforms to special educational needs and disabilities are intended to improve the lives of young people, it seemed only sensible to ask the young people themselves for their views. Joanna Carr reports on the consultation



group of young people with busy lives and many other commitments, they have worked incredibly hard to inform and influence top-level decision-makers. They have had many successes and some disappointments. Listening to children and young people talking about their lives and finding out what is important to them can only ever be a positive and productive experience. Children and young people are the experts on their own lives, and EPIC has proved that young people can effectively advise on and influence change.

Wider engagement

In late 2013 the DfE put the draft SEN Code of Practice out for consultation and commissioned the Council for Disabled Children (CDC) to consult young people on the content. As a national group, EPIC members bring diverse perspectives to their advisory role. However, the DfE wanted to consult a wider group of children and young people on the draft Code. The CDC met 19 groups involving 168 young people directly affected by the SEND reforms to be implemented from September 2014. The CDC has written a report presenting the findings from the groups.

In order to gain as wide a range of views as possible, the CDC selected young people:

- ▶ across England
- ▶ across the 5–25 years age range
- ▶ from diverse ethnic backgrounds
- ▶ with experience of different academic settings
- ▶ living in a range of settings, for example towns, cities and villages
- ▶ with a range of impairments.

Here is a flavour of the views of the young people on some of the issues raised by the draft Code. You can read the report in full, and an accessible young people's version, on the CDC website: www.councilfordisabledchildren.org.uk/

Taking control of your rights at the age of 16

'I wasn't involved in decisions until I hit transition and then everyone wanted me to make complicated decisions and I felt a lot of pressure and didn't feel I had enough experience of making decisions.'

The special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) reforms set out in the Children and Families Act 2014 will create the most significant changes to the way children and young people with SEND are assessed and supported for a generation. The Government hopes that these reforms will give children and young people with SEND better and more flexible support, increase their participation in making decisions about their education and help them secure better life outcomes. But what do the children and young people, for whom these reforms are intended, actually think about the changes?

Since October 2012 the Equality, Participation, Influence, Change (EPIC) group has been advising the Department for Education on the SEND reforms. EPIC members, recruited from all over England, have met in London to discuss in detail some of the different areas of the reforms, including education, health and care plans, the local offer, transition to adulthood, decision making and access to information. EPIC members regularly meet with officials at the Department for Education (DfE) to share their views and have spoken directly to the ministers leading the reforms. For a small

'Children and young people are the experts on their own lives'

Reaching Year 11 is something of a milestone for many young people. They are suddenly the oldest in their school, they begin preparation for their exams and, it is hoped, they are looking forward to moving on to the next stage in their life. Young people with SEND have the additional responsibility of making decisions about their SEND support. Until this point, they may not have been involved in these decisions in any meaningful way, or they may have had significant support from family and professionals.

During the consultation, the young people, particularly the younger children, were very clear that they value the support of their family in helping them to make decisions. They were equally clear that involvement in decision making needs to begin much earlier to give young people the chance to develop these key skills and gain confidence in making important decisions.

Decision making and access to information and support

The young people were very clear that they want to have better information and support about their options and they want opportunities to develop skills that will give them a real chance to secure better life outcomes.

'[We need] to be made more aware of what will happen step by step, who will be involved and why they are involved.'

The young people felt that if they had greater involvement in their assessment and review meetings they would have more confidence to make decisions, be able to communicate their support needs and form better working relationships with support staff, agencies and service providers.

'I need to know all my options, and be aware of the consequences of my choices.'

It became very clear during focus group discussions that young people need to have some context to understand, in practical terms, what will happen when they make certain decisions and how this may have an impact on future choices.



Privacy and sharing personal information

While awareness and understanding of the reforms were limited for many of the young people who took part in the consultation, they were still able to contribute very effectively to discussions on what information they felt should be included in an education, health and care (EHC) plan to enable professionals to provide the support they need. Some of the considerations were age-related:

'I think a plan should change in questions asked as you get older; what you might need to be asked at 5 might not apply at 14.'

Many of the young people expressed concern about who would have access to their EHC plan. They wanted to know how their plan would be stored, who would be able to see it and who would be able to share it with others. All of them agreed that they would want to approve who had access to their plan prior to it being shared. In addition, there was considerable worry over who would be able to see personal and private details about a young person's support needs. These worries included:

- ▶ access to mental health information
- ▶ details about potentially embarrassing personal care needs
- ▶ information about a young person's home life, for example if they were in the care of social services
- ▶ incidents of bullying, particularly if the bullying was carried out by an adult
- ▶ concerns about emotional well-being, for example being at risk of self-harm or eating disorders.

The young people strongly suggested that some parts of their EHC plan should be made available only to those people who absolutely needed to see that information. Some felt that, if the entirety of their EHC plan was available to a range of professionals, they would be less likely to ask for help with serious issues when they needed it.

The three areas discussed here clearly show that children and young people have very definite ideas about how their SEND support should be designed and delivered. Unanimously the young people who took part in the draft Code of Practice consultation welcomed and appreciated the opportunity to be involved. They all said how much they valued participating in the consultation and felt that their views and opinions should hold significant weight with government.

Joanna Carr is the Participation Development Officer at the Council for Disabled Children. She currently supports the EPIC SEN advisory group to the DfE and recently co-ordinated the national young people's response to the draft 0–25 SEN Code of Practice consultation.

'They wanted to know how their plan would be stored'



READ THE REPORT

For a copy of the report on young people's views of the draft SEN Code of Practice visit www.councilfordisabledchildren.org.uk/what-we-do/policy/sen-and-disability-reforms/key-documents-on-the-children-and-families-bill/young-peoples-views-on-the-draft-sen-code-of-practice/

An accessible young people's version of the report is also available at www.councilfordisabledchildren.org.uk/media/547660/draft-code-of-practice_young-peoples-views_accessible_final.pdf/



Reassessing assessment

Pat Bullen discusses the new arrangements for assessment and the introduction of education, health and care plans

'Eligibility must be set out clearly by all local areas'

Within the new Children and Families Act 2014 are changes to statutory assessment and a replacement of SEN statements with new education, health and care (EHC) plans. The Government has listened to the views of parents, carers and young people and is introducing a more person-centred approach to assessing need and planning for better outcomes for children and young people aged 0–25 years.

The 0–25 co-ordinated assessment process and EHC plan are core components of the special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) reforms. They sit alongside the local offer, the option of a personal budget for those with an EHC plan, improved multi-agency working and joint commissioning.

Pathfinder authorities have been testing the new arrangements for over two years. Initially, the Government intended a single assessment approach for children and young people with complex needs but it became evident quite early in the testing that this was a challenging requirement. Would educational psychology take a lead? How would speech and language assessments fit within a broader assessment

regime? What if the child had significant health and medical needs? Would the assessment then be led by a paediatrician? What role would social care play? And most importantly, what difference would this make to the lives of children with SEND?

All 20 pathfinders, without conferring in the early stages, moved towards an integrated assessment approach, with a view to shortening the time that assessment took, and to reducing bureaucracy. The Lamb Inquiry in 2009 reflected the views of parents and carers: *'Many parents found the statutory assessment process stressful and difficult due to a lack of information, poor support and the negative attitudes they often encountered. Parents need to have confidence that their children's needs are accurately assessed and regularly reviewed.'* It also stressed that: *'At times, the needs of children with SEN have been lost sight of by spending too much time assessing and providing for services that are easy to quantify rather than those that are most effective at delivering improved outcomes.'*

EHC plans will replace the current statement of SEN and the Learning Difficulty Assessment.

They will be focused on the outcomes the child or young person seeks to obtain across education, health and care to enable them to achieve at school and college and to make a successful transition to adulthood. Delivering EHC plans for 16–25 year olds in post-school education or training will more than satisfy the legal requirement for local authorities to carry out Section 139A of the Learning Skills Act 2000, Learning Difficulty Assessments.

EHC plans will set out how services will work together to meet the child or young person's needs and support their outcomes. The co-ordinated assessment and planning process puts the child and their parents or the young person at the centre of the decision making.

Eligibility

Within the new SEND reform agenda, eligibility must be set out clearly by all local areas in the local offer. It is not anticipated that eligibility will change for an EHC assessment and plan, and it should be based on the current arrangements in local areas.

The statutory assessment process must be co-ordinated across education, health and care to ensure a cohesive experience for children, parents and young people. Information from existing relevant assessments should be used and professionals should share information so that families do not have to keep giving the same information on different occasions. It is important that EHC plans reflect the views, interests and aspirations of children, young people and their parents, alongside detail of assessments and provision aligned to outcomes.

The process should also consider the different ages of the child or young person concerned, particularly for young people preparing for adulthood. The new Code of Practice outlines that a core goal of this co-ordinated and personalised overall approach should be that 'children, young people and families should experience well-co-ordinated assessment and planning leading to timely, well-informed decisions'.

Chapter 3 of the Code reinforces that families should be at the heart of the new co-ordinated assessment process and EHC plan. Person-centred planning is identified as an effective approach to support this, as it focuses on identifying the outcomes that are important to the individual and then the support and services that are required to achieve these. An outcome in this context should be seen as a personal goal and not a service goal.

Nottinghamshire County Council is one of the 31 pathfinder local authorities engaged in planning and developing EHC assessment and pathways. It has produced a useful animation of the EHC assessment journey at <https://klinikin.eu/page/view/id/47860/>

A person-centred approach

A key element of the SEND reforms is a focus on more person-centred planning and services. It has been central to pathfinder testing to develop an approach which is 'co-produced' with families – families should not be passive recipients of services but enabled to be in control of the decision making affecting them and their family members. It has been important to move away from 'doing to' and towards 'working alongside' families.

Pathfinder sites have worked with parent and carer forums, in partnership with the National Network of Parent Carer Forums, and with children and young people's groups, to ensure that they have begun to develop processes that are more person-centred and empower families to take choice and control.

Practitioners are familiar with describing activities and services, but this new approach demands a more considered understanding of how actions affect the outcomes which people want in their lives.

A new focus on outcomes is creating a workforce development need to work differently. This fits with the culture change that the new reforms also demand.

Leicester City Pathfinder visits the family in their home, following referral for statutory assessment. A family supporter develops a family file (based on the Early Support materials – see www.ncb.org.uk/early-support) in order that information is gathered only once, and this is then circulated by the person in the key working role to all of the relevant parties – families give their consent and information can then be shared more freely than in the past.

The home visit in Leicester also captures the views, feelings and aspirations of the child or young person in creative ways – through pictures and a one-page profile. This feeds into a person-centred meeting and an integrated assessment meeting.

Other pathfinders work in similar ways; for example, the Hartlepool Pathfinder also works initially in the family home to gather important information about the child/young person and their family. Downloadable from the pathfinder website, the information pack on co-ordinated assessment and education, health and care plans gives many more examples and links to individual pathfinder sites (see www.sendpathfinder.co.uk).

A focus on outcomes

The new way of working with families requires much new thinking, including a move away from narrow educational 'objectives' towards a more outcome-based approach. Outcomes can be arrived at creatively and from many different directions. Planning with families means that we can decide with them how an

'[A] statutory assessment should not be the first step in the process; rather it should follow on from planning already undertaken with parents and young people in conjunction with an early years provider, school, post-16 institution or other provider.'

SEND Code of Practice

'Families should not be passive recipients of services'

'Planning should start with the individual and take account of their wishes and aspirations, the outcomes they seek and the support they need to achieve them. It should enable parents, children and young people to have more control over decisions about their support.'

SEND Code of Practice



‘The key worker provides the right information and signposting’

- outcome could be arrived at, potentially using resources in a different way. For example, families who have previously accessed short-break arrangements from social care budgets, where the outcome was to give other siblings time with their parents, have been able to buy resources such as a trampoline, which a child can use every day, rather than a short time-limited period of attending a club or doing an activity with support.

Key working

A main message of the new reforms is to support families through the statutory processes, with a renewed emphasis on key working. Key workers can be a range of different practitioners – in Northamptonshire, the person-centred meetings which establish the desired outcomes and the EHC plan are facilitated by several different professionals, from educational psychologists to social workers and voluntary sector key workers. The aim of key working is to support the family, emotionally as well as practically, through the assessment process. The key worker provides the right information and signposting, and ensures that the family understands the steps within the process and is empowered to access each stage, being as well equipped as possible. In the current system, families often feel that they are not in control, that the professionals know what happens next, but they do not. SQW evaluation of the pathfinders has shown that parents and carers have valued the support of key workers enormously – see the pathfinder website for evaluation of the programme.

What makes a good EHC plan?

Some families have experienced a statement that weighs a few pounds dropping on their doormat. A complex document of over a hundred pages is not uncommon, frequently with out-of-date information and old materials included. The statement has felt moribund and cannot address the planning needs of the family. An interesting example of an interactive EHC plan is shown on the pathfinder YouTube site from the Greenwich Pathfinder: www.youtube.com/watch?v=76q1U31ihw0&feature=youtu.be/

Implications for SENCOs and schools

Schools will need to be aware of the following issues:

- ▶ The local offer in their own area should be ‘exhausted’ before application is made for a statutory assessment – schools must be much more aware of universal offers made through health and social care. Duties placed on local authorities from September 2014 should locate all such arrangements in one place (see www.localofferleicester.org.uk for an example).
- ▶ SENCOs will need evidence of applying a graduated approach to interventions beyond the universal, including what has worked well, and interventions that have not worked or have ceased to make an impact.
- ▶ Schools should develop their evidence base of engaging the family in both graduated approaches and planning, and of hearing their views, wishes and aspirations.
- ▶ Schools and SENCOs will need to be geared up to review existing statements of SEN for children in their care with the local authority in order to convert current statements to EHC plans. Local authorities have three years for the conversion. This could involve training for schools, or special arrangements with local authorities in holding transition reviews.

Summary

The spirit of new arrangements for assessment and EHC planning is the ability to be better at co-ordinating assessments across agencies, to hold the views and aspirations of the family at the centre of the planning process and to co-produce the plans with the family and agencies. The option of a personal budget will require development over time, but it is an essential aspect of building a more constructive approach to meeting the needs of children with SEND, with an emphasis placed on what children can do alongside their special educational needs and how all parties can improve a child’s outcomes.

Pat Bullen is the SEND Pathfinder Lead at Leicester City.

What makes a difference?

Stakeholders from some of the settings in nasen's Outstanding Schools project spoke to Annie Grant about what contributes to the quality of their provision

Nasen has spent the last several months visiting schools to collect information for its Outstanding Schools project. Part of the project involved talking to a range of stakeholders in a number of settings about what makes the difference to the quality of provision. We will be sharing some of the audio and video recordings from these sessions via the nasen YouTube channel and the SEND Gateway.

TRANSITION AT LAKES COLLEGE



Lance, pupil

Visiting the college was great because, as I have special educational needs, it's different for me.

Other people just get thrown in at the deep end and get on with it, but with us, we just need a wee bit of time to adjust. But once we adjust we'll be fine. I am really looking forward to going to college now. I can't wait.



Jeanette Hughes, parent

I always felt very involved. It helped me to relax because I was anxious about the transition from school to college. I just didn't know whether my son would settle into a new place.



Angela O'Connell, additional learning support co-ordinator

What makes a difference for me is getting parents on board, because that transition from school to

college is quite massive for parents of young people with special educational needs and disabilities.



Shannon, pupil

I liked getting to look round and getting used to it. I feel more confident now I've met some of the teachers and

helpers and they seem dead nice, so I'm not worried about starting now. If I've got any problems, I can always go and speak to them. I'm looking forward to it much more than I was.

'I always felt very involved'



James, pupil

When you think about leaving school and going to college it's good to know people in the college and then you realise there is nothing to worry about.

PARENTS AT LYMEHURST NURSERY



Ian, parent

For me, it's the dedication of the staff, their warmth and their readiness to engage with you and to support you far beyond anything you could have expected.

Gill, parent

My child's challenges – and she has more than most children – were not seen as problems but as opportunities. She was seen as a bonus, that she brought as much as every other child, she was as important as every other child and she was valued as much as every other child.



Lorraine, parent

The nursery is part of the local community. They reach out to parents and if you come to them with any problems, they listen and they put strategies in place to overcome them.



Gillian Ellis, nursery manager and owner

It's all about teamwork. My staff are absolutely brilliant. They're passionate about childcare. It's about going that extra mile to make sure that the children's needs are met.

'They reach out to parents'



SECONDARY NURTURE GROUPS AT GUISELEY SCHOOL

Paul Clayton, deputy headteacher, responsible for the curriculum

We have a combination of staff who know how to build relationships with pupils and are experienced in providing bespoke and targeted differentiation.

Kelsey, pupil

The staff give me strategies that help me to calm down or give me time to think and reflect.



James, pupil

The Student Support Centre has been vital. If I had gone straight into the main school I wouldn't have known what to do but coming into the Centre has made me more confident.



Claire Fursey, higher level teaching assistant

Pupils get constant encouragement from staff and the attitudes of their peers are helpful and accepting.



Garry Freeman, director of inclusion and SENCO

We respond to the needs of each child and we will support those needs and remove barriers, and that runs through everything that we do.

'We respond to the needs of each child'

A HELPING HAND AT FINHAM PARK SCHOOL



Ros Morris, autism advisory teacher

The staff are able to communicate effectively. Everyone – parents, outside agencies – feels that they are being listened to and heard.

Pauline Parkes, inclusion manager and SENCO

A frustration for many parents and children is that they feel that their voice isn't heard. But we are prepared to listen and after we have listened, we are prepared to support them.

Cameron, Year 8 pupil

They never turn you away, they just help you.



Wilf, Year 12 pupil

The whole school is there for you. I can go to anyone with any problems, any queries I have, and they'll talk to me. It is just brilliant.



Mark Bailie, headteacher

We inspire children and make them believe that they can achieve things beyond their expectations.

COMMUNICATION AT FREDERICK BIRD PRIMARY SCHOOL



Lisa Sabotig, educational psychologist

We bring an understanding of psychology to everyday situations and this helps the school to look at things in a very creative way.



Natalie Franklin-Hackett, assistant headteacher for inclusion

We have opened up the lines of communication and staff feel that they are able to talk about the children very openly with me that some action will then be taken, drawing on expertise either within or outside the school



Kelly Watts, Year 1 class teacher

We have dedicated teachers willing to share strategies so that everyone can deliver more effective teaching and all children can make progress.

Key issues to emerge

Although these comments come from a wide range of stakeholders, there are several key themes that have emerged during the project. Many of those who responded highlighted the need to ensure that there was a strong relationship built on mutual trust between all stakeholders.

There is clearly a whole-school approach to developing relationships with children, parents, carers and their families, which provides a solid foundation for children and young adults to feel that they are being listened to and their needs are being met. Where external support is brought in it is very much integrated into the school's wider provision so that interventions are part of a longer-term strategy.

Finally, the pathfinders' projects trialling education, health and care plans have talked about the co-production of provision between all stakeholders, and the settings that we interviewed were already using this approach to improve the effectiveness of their interventions.

If you'd like to see some of the videos to accompany these comments, visit the nasen YouTube channel at www.youtube.com/user/nasenonline/

Nasen would like to thank all the participants who contributed to the interviews, which were conducted by Annie Grant, a freelance consultant, producer, writer and editor.



Explaining personal SEN budgets

As funding for special educational needs provision underwent major reform last year, we take a closer look at the new arrangements

Early years settings, schools, academies, colleges and other learning providers are focused on supporting all children and young people to achieve quality learning outcomes. The teacher or tutor will be focused on helping every member of their class or tutor group to achieve well.

Some children and young people will need additional support to achieve their learning outcomes. We call this targeted support. Early years settings, schools, academies and colleges have funding for this. The targeted

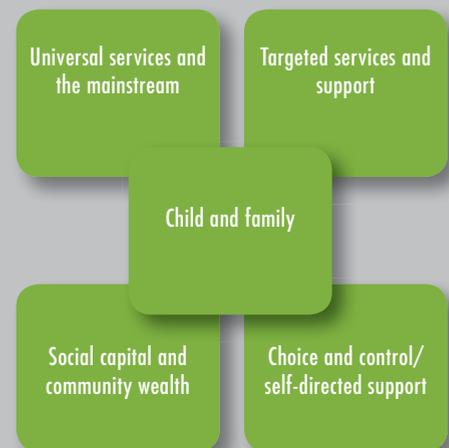
support might include, for example, focused literacy support or a behaviour management programme.

A small number of children and young people will require additional and individual support over and above the targeted support so that they can participate in learning activities, enjoy the learning experience and achieve well. At the moment, most of these children and young people have a statement of special educational needs; in the future they will have an education, health and care (EHC) plan, which may be supported by a personal budget.

Where some or all of this budget is to enable the child or young person to participate, enjoy and achieve their learning outcomes, this element is called the personal SEN budget.

A child or young person may also have an element of their personal budget from social care (for example, short breaks) or health. While the personal SEN budget is focused on learning outcomes, a personal care budget is focused on outcomes around family and home life, being safe when out and about in the local community and being able to take part in life outside school. Personal health budgets are focused on health outcomes. Together these elements form the child or young person's overall personal budget.

A simple way to explain personal SEN budgets



In use since April 2013, the new school funding arrangements divide funding for children and young people into three parts (elements 1, 2 and 3). Using the diagram above we can see how this works for mainstream settings, schools, academies and colleges.

1 Universal services and the mainstream: funding per pupil at a school – each school receives an amount to fund a place at school. This is called element 1.

2 Targeted services and support: additional learning support funding – each setting, school, academy or college is expected to provide



‘The personal SEN budget is focused on learning outcomes’

support up to the equivalent of £6,000 to meet the additional support needs of children and young people who require this. This is called element 2.

3 Choice and control/self-directed support: ‘top-up’ funding, retained by the local authority. This is called element 3. This funding is allocated through a resource allocation system as indicative personal SEN budgets. It provides the additional individual support the child or young person needs in order to achieve their learning outcomes as set out in their EHC plan or statement of SEN. Parts of the personal SEN budget may be taken as a direct payment and used by parents on behalf of the child or by the young person themselves to purchase the additional and individual support set out in the EHC plan (for example, any assessed support which is not already provided by the school).

How do personal budgets fit in with assessment and planning?

Bexley Local Authority has developed a regional framework for assessment and planning, as shown in the diagram (below right).

An indicative personal budget, whether from education, health and/or social care, is allocated where it says ‘Agree and allocate’. ‘Agree’ means that decisions made about the identified outcomes and how best to meet them are agreed, and ‘allocate’ means that if the child or young person needs support over and above that available through universal and targeted support due to the level or complexity of their additional and individual support needs, an indicative personal budget is allocated in the early stages of drawing up of the EHC plan.

How will I know if a child or young person can have a personal SEN budget, and how will I know how much it will be?

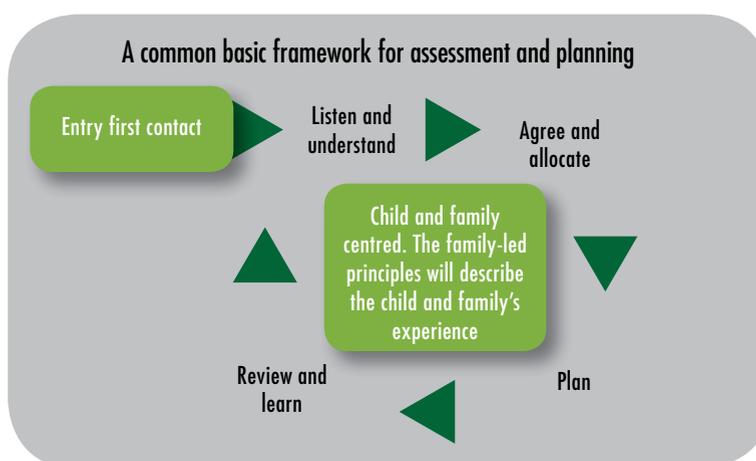
Following the single assessment process, a decision will be made about how to meet

the identified learning, health and/or care outcomes together with the child or young person and their family. The decision will include whether there is a need for a personal budget from one or more of the available budgets: education, health or social care (or in some cases from a single pooled ‘support’ budget).

If it is agreed that a personal budget is needed to achieve particular outcomes, a resource allocation will be completed with the family or young person, resulting in an indicative budget being allocated to help draw up the EHC plan. The indicative budget will be known in the early stages of the EHC plan. Children, young people and families will be supported to create the plan. It is only once the planning process has been completed that it will be clear what the final personal budget should be in order to fund the additional support required to achieve the identified outcomes.

How do personal SEN budgets fit with other sources of support, access and opportunity at school, college or in training?

A personal SEN budget does not include funding for the school place, and it does not include targeted support managed by the



DEFINITIONS AND TERMINOLOGY

Direct payments – as with a personal budget for social care or a personal health budget, it will be possible for the family/parents to ask to have the personal SEN budget as a direct payment. In so doing, the parents will be responsible for the management and use of the money in the same way as they are if they choose to manage a personal social care budget or a personal health budget.

Education, health and care plan (EHC plan) – the single plan which will set out how the health, care and learning outcomes of the child or young person with SEND are going to be supported. This may include the use of a personal budget (or budgets) if it is agreed that the child or young person has support needs which cannot be met through mainstream services or targeted support.

Indicative personal SEN budget – an allocation of funding made prior to the drawing up of the EHC plan. It is called an indicative allocation or personal budget as it is an estimate of the funding available set against the level of support the child or young person needs; it will only become a full personal SEN budget when the EHC plan is finalised and agreed.

Mainstream services – with the focus being on education settings, this means: early years services, schools, academies, colleges and other education/training providers which co-ordinate and/or deliver learning opportunities/activities with identified learning outcomes. This can include work experience, work-based learning and participating in learning activities in a variety of environments and settings.

Personal budget – an amount of funding allocated to meet the additional and individual support needs of the child or young person. The personal budget is allocated in recognition

that the child or young person's support needs cannot be met in full by mainstream/universal or targeted services without an additional individual investment being made. Personal budgets may be provided from one, two or all three different funding streams: education, health and social care, or from a single pooled fund. Whichever is the case, the personal budget will be holistic and used to support the achievement of the identified outcomes in the education, health and care plan.

Personalised funding, activities, support and/or resources – this may include a personal budget; however, there are other resources, activities and funding which can be used in a personalised way within a school or other education or training setting to support a child or young person in achieving their learning outcomes. These are personalised to the needs of the child and young person and their views must have been central to all decisions.

Resource allocation system (RAS) – a simple set of rules which explain what budget is available, which children or young people will be supported by this budget and what outcomes are set against the use of the budget. An RAS may include a simple set of questions that will be completed by the family and linked professional; this set of questions will result in an indicative allocation of a personal budget.

Targeted support – services and support targeted on a group of children and young people due to a particular common learning support need. At a school level, targeted support will mean support focused on one or more children and young people in a class or in a group, where there is a shared offer of support. This may include funding of support staff. This support will be funded through the budgets of early years settings, schools and colleges.

'A personal SEN budget could fund some specialist input'

- school or other learning providers to offer additional learning support to individuals, classes or groups of pupils and students. A personal SEN budget enables the support offered to the child or young person to be further personalised to meet individual learning support needs.

What sorts of support could a personal SEN budget fund?

An important aspect to consider is how the funding can be used alongside all the other sources of support, learning activities and opportunities to help the child or young person achieve their learning outcomes. The learning outcomes that the child or young person hopes to achieve will be set out in their EHC plan and setting/school/college education plans.

A personal SEN budget could:

- ▶ add to existing learning support, providing a more consistent offer of support to the child or young person
- ▶ fund time to bring all key parties together to bridge the gap between home and school/ other learning provision and to build a team of dedicated support people (including family)
- ▶ fund some specialist input
- ▶ fund work experience or a work-based learning opportunity
- ▶ add to the technology available to promote a student's individual style of learning.

This information has been adapted from the *Explaining Personal SEN Budgets* leaflet provided by the London Borough of Bexley (www.bexley.gov.uk).

What's in a local offer?

You've probably heard about the 'local offer' within the special educational needs reforms and the new Children and Families Act 2014, but what does it really mean? Pat Bullen provides some details

The local offer is a response from government to the desire of parents and carers to find out about all services, opportunities and access for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) in their area. In 2009, parents told the Lamb Inquiry that they wanted information to be accessible, transparent and in one place. This has led to a duty within the new Children and Families Act (clause 30) to ensure that local authorities take responsibility for the local offer and publish it in one place.

The local offer should encompass all of the universal elements of services offered in localities – all schools, settings and colleges within the local authority border; and all of the services offered by health – from therapies and how to access them, to services for children with complex health care needs. The local offer should build on universal services and illustrate to families how to access additional, targeted and specialist services.

As outlined in the new Code of Practice, 'Local authorities must publish a local offer, setting out in one place information about provision they expect to be available for children and young people in their area who have SEN, including those who do not have EHC plans.'

The Special Educational Needs (Local offer) Regulations provide a common framework for the local offer. They specify the requirements that all local authorities must meet in developing, publishing and reviewing their local offer.

The purpose of the local offer

The key purpose of the local offer is to make provision more responsive to local needs and aspirations by directly involving children and >



KEY ELEMENTS

The information in the local offer must include:

- ▶ how the local offer is to be published – a web presence is important, but not the only approach which local authorities should utilise
- ▶ who is to be consulted
- ▶ how to involve children, young people and parents – including their essential role in giving feedback and being engaged in the annual review of the local offer
- ▶ how to seek an education, health and care assessment – local authorities must publish both eligibility and how families can seek an assessment. Within the new legislation, young people can also advocate for themselves and request an assessment, hence the local authority description of access and entitlement to an education, health and care (EHC) plan is new
- ▶ where to get advice and support – related to current arrangements for support – which is impartial and informed, usually offered by Parent Partnership Services (PPS). New duties for advice, information and support are refined within the new SEND Code of Practice
- ▶ the publication of comments and the local authority's response – if local authorities use a 'TripAdvisor' style of feedback for parents, carers and young people, they must publish such feedback and also their response. If a service is being constantly praised but noted as insufficient, or if a service is regarded by parents as 'useless', then it would be expected that the local authority would address the insufficiency or the inadequacy of that service.



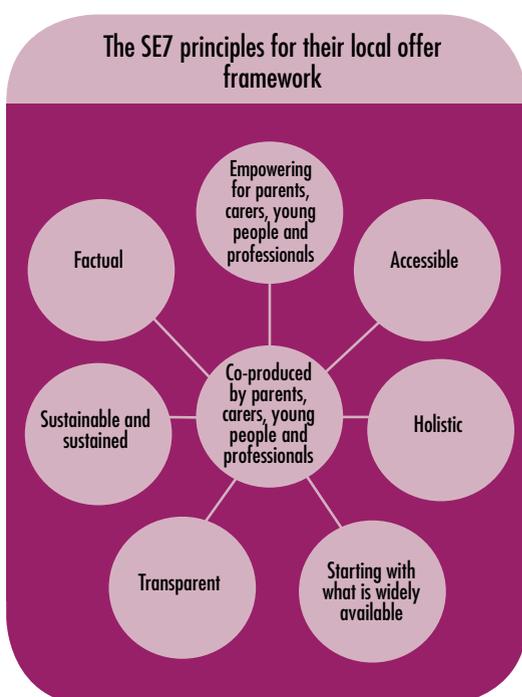
- ▶ young people with SEND, parents and carers and service providers in its development and review. It should also help local authorities to improve provision – it should not simply be a directory of existing services but should be responsive and ever developing.

The SE7 Pathfinder comprises seven local authority areas, which have worked together on their Pathfinder programme. Central to their approach is co-production with parents and young people in developing the local offer. They have agreed a set of principles, depicted in diagrammatic form (below left).

Key actions for settings, schools and colleges

- ▶ Engage with the local authority in developing the local offer and agreeing the amount of funding delegated to schools for SEND.
- ▶ Review and revise your systems for understanding the needs of pupils. How does your approach to school improvement affect the quality of teaching for SEND and the approach to planning and managing SEND support? How strong are your relationships with parents?
- ▶ Make use of the experience of other schools and the free information and training materials available through the SEND Gateway (www.nasen.org.uk).

'It should not simply be a directory of existing services'



Pathfinder experience of the local offer

The pathfinder website (www.sendpathfinder.co.uk) is an excellent resource for further information, and these key elements are particularly notable:

- ▶ Some pathfinders have conducted research looking at the 'parental journey' to understand how parents find information at different stages of their child's life and development (for example, diagnosis, starting school, transition), what works well and what



information is particularly hard to find. This information is then used to inform local offer work to aid navigation and accessibility and reduce unnecessary stress for families.

- ▶ Some pathfinders are now focusing their efforts on looking at innovative ways to present information to improve accessibility, for example interactive maps to help young people, parents and staff to choose and filter the services available in their area.
- ▶ A user-led approach helps to ensure that the local offer is designed in a way that those using it can easily understand and use it to meet their needs.
- ▶ It's a good idea to develop a communications strategy to promote awareness and ensure effective wider consultation of the local offer at the beginning. Some pathfinders have used a variety of channels to target stakeholders, including the use of social media, face-to-face contact, publications and forums, to encourage the provision of feedback to inform next steps.
- ▶ Making use of and building on existing resources, including your Family Information Service, Parent Partnership Services and local parent carer forum, has been seen as a more sustainable approach by some pathfinders.
- ▶ Engagement with service providers early in the process has been invaluable, not only regarding the local offer but in relation to personalisation, personal budgets and a commissioning framework.
- ▶ The scope of the local offer is large, so it helps to break it down and develop it over time, using sub-groups to focus on specific areas. Iterative consultation and co-production at each development stage are key to ensuring that the local offer continues to remain responsive to stakeholders' needs without the need to backtrack or redesign.



- ▶ Don't focus solely on the internet – areas need to think about other ways for families to access the local offer. One solution to this is having local offer 'tourist guides' or 'information brokers' within libraries, schools, colleges and other appropriate communal facilities. This meets the requirements of those families who do not have a home computer/device or the desire to access the local offer online. Having someone to help them navigate the local offer and find the information they need, coupled with printable extracts, is also effective.

Getting started

Information from the Pathfinder programme has indicated how important it is for local authorities to engage the right stakeholders from the outset, in order to find out what families want, how they would like to see the local offer presented to them, and how they can give ongoing feedback to shape and develop the local services within their area.

Most pathfinders have begun with work with their local parent and carer forum and with the Parent Partnership Services in their area. The National Network of Parent Carer Forums is hosted by the Council for Disabled Children (CDC) and can be found at www.nnpcf.org.uk/

The Hampshire parent/carers network has also written a document for SE7 called

WHO SHOULD BE INVOLVED?

The following list is a starting point for those essential parties to be engaged in developing the local offer:

- ▶ Children, young people and families
- ▶ All schools and colleges
- ▶ Pupil referral units
- ▶ Early years providers and children's centres
- ▶ Health – both children and adult services
- ▶ Social care
- ▶ People involved with preparing for adulthood
- ▶ Youth offending teams
- ▶ Appropriate others – for example, voluntary and community sector services in an area.

CHALLENGES

- ▶ Keeping the local offer up to date – services change and resources to develop a website and other communications for parents and young people may be limited.
- ▶ Making sure that families without internet access are not disadvantaged and can still access information about services.
- ▶ Ensuring that ongoing feedback is considered from the outset by local authorities and settings, schools and colleges, so that all arrangements are set up to gather feedback.
- ▶ Getting the right comprehensive information on the site from all parties – especially health partners – even if using an incremental approach to gathering the right information.
- ▶ Using templates, such as the Leicester City templates, for gathering the same information from all providers to ensure fairness, equity and consistency of information provided.
- ▶ Making sure that families for whom English is an additional language can access materials – similarly, considering the access arrangements for those with visual needs/dyslexia and so on.
- ▶ Working out who will monitor the local offer and who will ensure that local authorities are meeting their new statutory duties – this is surely not the responsibility of busy parents/carers of children with SEND.

▶ *Local Offer – Not a Directory.* This aims to provide guidance as to what is meant when the phrase ‘the local offer is not a directory’ is used. This, too, can be found on the pathfinders’ website at www.sendpathfinder.co.uk/

Implications for schools, settings and colleges

All schools, settings and colleges will have a duty to model the local offer, setting out their arrangements for access to services and arrangements in their institution. Schools should expect to engage with children and parents/carers in reviewing their graduated response, in considering access arrangements and in developing their service offer through enabling regular feedback and showing that they have responded to views from service users.

Trafford has sought to build its local offer onto a newly launched Family Service Directory, using the existing infrastructure of this service. As a result, Trafford’s local offer has been published online (principally) and can be found at <http://trafford.childrensservicedirectory.org.uk/kb5/trafford/fsd/home.page/> Trafford has sought to develop its local offer incrementally, ie to publish and improve sections of the offer when possible, and to build it over time. Such an approach would be beneficial to both local authorities and individual schools and settings.

In summary

The local offer could be a great resource for families, giving them much more comprehensive information in one place and the opportunity to shape services over time, provided that they give feedback to their local authority. It could provide information to families in a user-friendly way – see the Nottinghamshire Pathfinder animation of the EHC assessment journey at <https://klikin.eu/page/view/id/47860/> It could give information in short video clips, made by families for families.

When local offers are launched, from September 2014, it is likely that they will be a summary of services at that time, but will develop into more accessible and interesting formats over time. Schools, settings and colleges have an important part to play both in providing information to the local offer, and in providing their own information on their website, or (in the case of early years settings) in a leaflet format or similar.

What is certain is that the local offer is here to stay and could constitute a revolution in clarifying for parents and families what services they can find in their area, and how they can demonstrate what services are missing or in hot demand in their locality.

Pat Bullen is the SEND Pathfinder Lead at Leicester City.





Participating in decision making

Philippa Stobbs examines the new relationships that schools are building with parents in the light of SEN and disability reforms

Across a range of public services, user involvement has become an increasingly significant factor in the development of services. In the field of social care for disabled children, parental 'involvement' has developed into their 'participation' in the design of services. The government programme Aiming High for Disabled Children promoted new levels of user involvement and there are positive outcomes from this approach: services that are better designed to meet the needs of users, and parents who are more active agents rather than passive recipients in caring for their children and who feel they have some control over their lives and their children's lives. This in turn can lead to lower levels of stress and better use of services.

The SEN and disability reforms build on the experiences of the Aiming High programme, and new principles enshrine the approach in the legislation. Section 19 of the Children and Families Act 2014 sets out core principles by which the legislation should operate. A key principle is that parents of children with

SEN, and young people with SEN, should 'participate in decision making'. This is not about 'consulting' parents – that suggests a decision has been made, at least in principle, if not quite finalised – nor is it about 'involving' parents, which still suggests parents are at some distance from the core point where decisions are taken. 'Participating in decision making' locates parents as key participants, along with schools, local authorities and other agencies, at the main point where decisions are made. A related principle, sitting alongside this, recognises the importance of ensuring that parents have accurate and impartial information and support in order to participate effectively in this decision making.

Better communication and engagement with parents

Improvements in parent participation need to be based on better communication with parents. The Lamb Inquiry highlighted the importance of good communication as the basis for the development of trust: >

'This is not about 'consulting' parents'

'The DfE has supported parent participation in every aspect of the reforms'



➤ *'Good, honest and open communication is key to the development of positive working relationships and requires practitioners who listen to parents and are trusted by them.... The quality of communication both affects and is a reflection of the working relationships between professionals and parents. The worst communication generates significant levels of hostility.... The best communication engenders impressive levels of confidence and a sense of partnership.'*

Better communication and greater parental engagement are key to a number of developments that seek to put the child and the family at the centre of the planning process. The Team Around the Child (TAC) involves a collaborative approach to assessment and planning, and one that is more responsive to the needs of the child and the family. The approach has been successful in the early years and widely welcomed by parents. Early Support has promoted and developed the approach. It operates in partnership with parents, with a TAC and a keyworker co-ordinating services and working with the child's family. The reforms in special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) have seen the approach extended up the age range and to children in schools.

For young people moving towards adulthood, the promotion of person-centred approaches has been a key element in improvements in transition planning promoted through the Preparing for Adulthood programme (PFA) (see the article on page 42).

A wide range of person-centred approaches are now being adopted by schools, including MAPs and PATHs, developed by Marsha Forest and Jack Pearpoint. There is a growing understanding of the benefit of these approaches and of the core principle of the child and the family being at the heart of the assessment process.

One of the key elements of the Achievement for All pilot programme was training for professionals in a structured conversation with parents. While the requirements for this structured conversation were quite precise, in practice what it was designed to do was to establish a wider school culture of listening to the thoughts and aspirations of parents of young people with SEND. Hearing the views of parents and carers and of children and young people themselves, then planning on the basis of those views, are key elements in securing parental confidence and involvement in the approaches adopted.

The national evaluation of the Achievement for All pilot identified the benefits thus:

'Schools have also reported a change in the general culture of parental engagement through the structured conversations. Whilst

some parents were previously very reluctant to approach schools, this new way of working has provided something of a paradigm shift.... Many parents now view the school as collaborating with them in their child's progress, listening to their views, and working in their best interests.'

Developing higher levels of trust provides an important springboard for the more thorough-going 'participation in decision making' that is heralded by the Green Paper and the SEND reforms.

The SEND reforms

The Green Paper, *Support and aspiration: A new approach to SEN and disability*, set the direction of travel for the development of the relationship between parents and services:

'To give parents confidence by giving them more control over the support their family receives, we will introduce more transparency in the provision of services for children and young people who are disabled or who have SEN. Parents will have real choice over their child's education and the opportunity for direct control over support for their family.'

The draft SEN Code of Practice, published for consultation in October 2013, made it clear that participation applied both to the individual and strategic engagement of parents:

'Local authorities must ensure that parents, children and young people are involved in discussions and decisions about every aspect of their SEN, planning outcomes and making provision to meet those outcomes, and in:

- ▶ *planning and reviewing the local offer;*
- ▶ *reviewing special educational provision and social care provision; and*
- ▶ *drawing up individual EHC plans, reviews and reassessments.'*

The experience of pathfinders

The pathfinder local authorities were commissioned by the Department for Education (DfE) to explore how to put into effect the vision that had been set out in the Green Paper. The pathfinders started work in September 2011. The experience of the Aiming High programme had been that engaging with parents made for a slower start but a better and more sustainable result in the longer term. So it proved with the pathfinder activity in relation to the SEND reforms: while the early work of the pathfinders was slow, the evaluation has shown consistently that parental engagement in the reforms is the best developed aspect of pathfinder activity.

This degree of parental engagement in the development of the design of the reforms at a local level is matched by the degree of involvement in developing the new assessment

and planning arrangements for individual children. This is reflected in higher levels of parental satisfaction with plans compared with statements. There is a cost attached in terms of the time needed to develop an education, health and care (EHC) plan: a recent evaluation estimated that the time normally taken to write a statement is in the region of 30 hours; the time taken to develop an EHC plan is in the region of 42 hours, with much more of this time spent face to face with parents. This presents a challenge for local authorities, which will be expected to complete the assessment and planning process in a shorter timescale than before – 20 weeks as opposed to 26 weeks.

Support for parent participation

Throughout the pathfinder period and the subsequent developments, the DfE has supported parent participation in every aspect of the reforms. It has provided support through funding for local parent carer forums, and for the National Network of Parent Carer Forums, which supports the local forums. This has enabled parents and carers to be involved in the development of all aspects of the SEND reforms, from the development of EHC plans and the local offer, in pathfinder areas, to influencing strategy at a national level. This has proved an important signal of the DfE's intentions to change the way we engage parents in the SEND system.

The reforms also recognise the importance of the information and advice that parents need in order to participate fully. The Children and Families Act builds on and extends Parent Partnership Services to provide information and advice to children and young people as well as their parents. The local impartial information, advice and support (IAS) service will be an important source of that support for parents that will better enable them to participate in decision making regarding their child.

Education, health and care plans

Reflecting the more personalised approach, implementation guidance issued by the DfE in April 2014, *Implementing a new 0 to 25 special needs system: LAs and partners: Further Government advice for local authorities and health partners*, confirmed the DfE's intentions to include as a key requirement in an EHC plan, the 'aspirations, views and interests of the child and their parents, or the young person themselves'. This and the outcomes sought for the child or young person head the list of items that must be included in an EHC plan. This feels quite different from the starting point for a statement.



A further element in the reforms, heralded in the Green Paper and in the new Code of Practice, is the use of personal budgets. A personal budget is an amount of money allocated through an EHC plan with a view to involving the parent, or the young person themselves, in securing the provision set out in the plan. This gives parents a new level of control over the resources in their child's plan. This approach has been tested in social care and in health care but the approach in education is new. The evaluation suggests it is one of the least well-developed aspects of pathfinder activity but it marks a step-change in the participation of parents in decision making.

What do new levels of parent participation mean for schools?

The new Code of Practice sets out a vision for engagement with parents of children with SEND that is more personal and more face to face, with schools expected to meet parents at least three times a year. This should lead to a more collaborative and creative problem-solving approach between schools and parents.

When it comes to an EHC assessment, schools will need to be able to inform the local authority's decisions about assessment and planning. Such information will be based on the school's understanding of children's progress, attainment and their wider achievements, but also on a closer understanding of the views, wishes and feelings of the children and their parents.

It is these aspects of the new arrangements that will require schools to consider how they engage with parents. Schools should review their skills in listening to parents and check that these are at least as well developed as skills in talking to parents. This is not just about a friendlier, more personal approach for the benefit of parents and teachers because it feels better; crucially, the evidence is clear that the effective engagement of parents has a beneficial impact on children's progress.

Philippa Stobbs is Assistant Director (Education) at the Council for Disabled Children.

FURTHER READING

Parent Participation: improving services for disabled children, Contact a Family and Council for Disabled Children (2004)

The PATHs & MAPs Handbook: Person-Centered Ways to Build Community by John O'Brien, Jack Pearpoint and Lynda Khan (2010). Examples can be seen in: *Implementing the DDA in schools and early years settings*, DfES (2006)

Achievement for All: the structured conversation. Handbook to support training, National Strategies and DCSF (2009)

Achievement for All: National evaluation. Research Report DfE-RR123 by Neil Humphrey and Garry Squires (2011)



Transition protocol

As a member of the Preparing for Adulthood team, Caroline Bennett shares best practice in enabling a smooth transition to adulthood for young disabled people

‘Preparation for adulthood needs to begin at birth’

Preparing for Adulthood (PFA) is the strand of the SEND reforms which aims to support disabled young people to move into adulthood with fulfilling lives. It focuses on young people aged 14–25, the pivotal age at which they start to work out what they want to do with their lives. However, it also requires a shift in thinking for those working with younger children too. Raising aspirations for disabled children and young people, and planning services to help them reach their goals, needs to start in a child’s early years, or as soon as their additional needs come to light. This could include support to develop independence and decision-making skills and to build social skills in order to develop and maintain friendships and relationships.

Some local authorities have been piloting aspects of the SEND reforms as pathfinders and regional champions. The PFA team has worked

with them to support the implementation of the SEND reforms. The learning from the pathfinders is shared in the publication *Delivering Support and Aspiration for disabled young people*, which you can download from the PFA website.

The pathfinders identified five elements that are essential to improving the life chances of disabled young people and ensuring that they move into adulthood with employment, good health, independent living, and friends, relationships and community participation.

The illustration opposite shows the five key elements that support the progress to good life outcomes for disabled young people.

What is the Preparing for Adulthood programme?

In the last five years there has been a huge focus on improving transitions for children and young people and a lot of learning has been developed in this area. The PFA programme, a partnership between the National Development Team for Inclusion and the Council for Disabled Children, is funded by the Department for Education (DfE) to build on the learning from previous transition programmes and to support local areas in using best practice in transition to adulthood when implementing the SEND reforms.

Preparing for adulthood cuts across all the elements of the SEND reforms; however, the themes that are of particular relevance include the engagement and participation of young people and parents, the local offer, education, health and care (EHC) plans, joint commissioning, personalisation and personal budgets and clearly defined outcomes.

Developing a shared vision

The PFA programme and work in the pathfinder areas have identified the vital importance of schools, colleges and other post-16 providers engaging in the development of a shared vision of improving life chances for disabled young people and those with SEN. The vision should be developed in partnership with young people, families, professionals working across education, health and care, commissioners and a range of providers, including employment and housing.

Schools and colleges should be working with the local authority to develop the local offer for young people. The local offer should identify the gaps in provision and be used to identify the priorities for commissioners who will be planning and purchasing services in line with these priorities. This should all inform the development of the local authority transition protocol, which should set out the policies and procedures that enable young people to have a planned, co-ordinated and positive transition to adulthood.

Raising aspirations for young people and their families

Preparation for adulthood needs to begin at birth and be built into early years provision, play opportunities and primary-age support. This could include employing disabled people in children's centres or other family settings and ensuring that diverse and positive role models are available from an early age.

It is essential that everyone working with children, young people and their families knows what helps all young people to have more choice and control over their lives and to have good life chances. Schools have a key role to play in using the curriculum and extra-curricular activities to encourage children and young people to develop social skills, friendships and independence and to think about their aspirations for the future. Schools need to underpin this with evidence-based support that leads to the PfA outcomes: employment, good health, independent living, and friends, relationships and community inclusion.

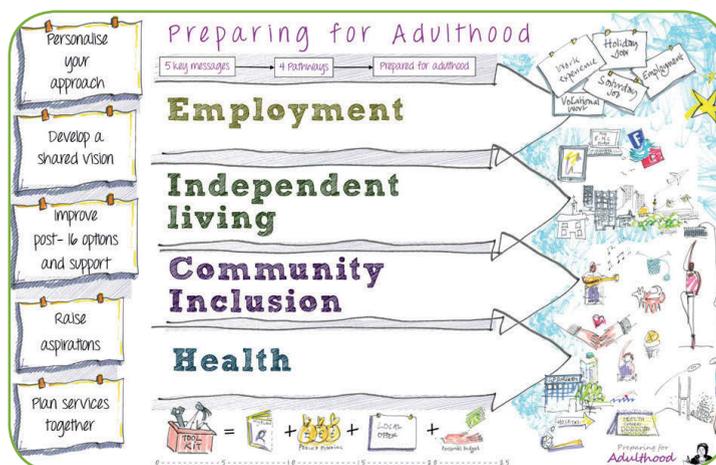
It is important for parents to meet other parents whose sons and daughters are working, having fun and making their own decisions, so that their horizons are not restricted.

Personalising your approach

The PfA team has promoted person-centred practice, where support and services are planned and provided by listening to what children and young people want and including them in decision making when developing EHC plans. The critical ingredient is to collect person-centred information such as what is important to the young person now and for the future, what is important for them in order to keep them healthy and safe, and what is working well and not so well. This information helps to set outcomes that are based on the young person's aspirations, taking account of what is important for them, building on what is working and reducing what is not working. Once there are clear outcomes we can identify what support a young person needs to be written into their EHC plan. The plan should set out how to achieve the outcomes, what this will look like in practice and what additional resources will be allocated.

The key principles of person-centred approaches include:

- ▶ Focus on the child or young person, not their diagnostic label.
- ▶ Use ordinary language and images rather than professional jargon.
- ▶ Actively highlight a child or young person's strengths.
- ▶ Enable the child or young person, and those who know them best, to express their interests and aspirations for the future.
- ▶ Tailor support and personal budgets.



A key element in person-centred approaches is the development of personal budgets. A personal budget is an allocation of funding that may be held by the local authority or someone else or taken as cash as a direct payment for the direct purchase of the provision in the EHC plan. This gives young people a greater level of choice and control over their support.

In practice, person-centred transition planning and reviews can be used to benefit all disabled children and young people and those with SEN, whether or not they have an EHC plan. Some local areas are using one-page profiles for all children in the school. These have been particularly useful in supporting children and young people as they move from primary to secondary school, or secondary school to college. The person-centred approach needs cultural change and workforce development but fulfils what is at the heart of the reforms.

Joint commissioning and developing practice

The Children and Families Act 2014 creates a new duty on local authorities and health bodies jointly to commission services across education, health and care, including adult social care. It is vital that commissioning is influenced by the aspirations and experiences of disabled children, young people and their families. This could be done by basing the commissioning strategy on the shared vision and ensuring that information from EHC plans feeds into this.

PfA has worked with pathfinders to help them develop greater choice and a range of post-16 provision and support that leads to the five PfA outcomes.

PfA will continue to share the good practice from the programme over the coming months, so make sure that you return to the website regularly and sign up for the monthly e-bulletin that contains updates from the PfA programme, details about the wider SEND programme and information from work in pathfinders and other local areas – www.preparingforadulthood.org.uk/what-we-do/best-practice-and-information/

Caroline Bennett is the Preparing for Adulthood Best Practice and Information Lead.

KEY RESOURCES

For examples from pathfinders and learning from the programme so far, download *Delivering Support and Aspiration for disabled young people*. You can also read about the experiences of young people and parents at www.preparingforadulthood.org.uk/resources/

You can also sign up to the PfA forum and download the FAQs on the local offer, the engagement of young people and families, EHC plans and personalisation and person-centred practice at www.preparingforadulthood.org.uk/forum/

More information on person-centred approaches can be found at www.personalisingeducation.org and on the Personalising Education YouTube page at www.youtube.com/user/PersonalisingEduc/videos/

Early Support produced some films of young people talking about their aspirations. You can view these at www.youtube.com/EarlySupportEngland/ There are also films and resources on the Aspirations for Life website: www.aspirationsforlife.org/

Effective provision mapping



Planning interventions and tracking pupil progress are so much easier with a system of provision mapping, as Annie Grant explains

‘It is not the SENCO’s job to write provision maps’

The new SEND Code of Practice will bring renewed focus on how schools organise their provision and account for the money they spend on pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Provision mapping is a way of evaluating the impact on pupils’ progress of provision that is additional to and different from the school’s differentiated curriculum. Provision maps can help schools manage this provision to ensure that it is, and continues to be, effective in helping pupils to make progress.

The provision mapping and evaluation cycle should run in parallel with the school’s system for tracking and evaluating pupils’ academic progress and it should feed into pupil progress review meetings.

Provision mapping should be carried out by class/subject teachers and/or within subject departments/faculties. When teachers write and update provision maps, it encourages them

to assume responsibility and to be accountable for all pupils in their class, including those with SEND. Ofsted expects teachers to demonstrate that they have an understanding of the impact of intervention on progress. It is *not* the SENCO’s job to write provision maps for teachers, although the SENCO will be able to support teachers in this process. The teacher, supported by the SENCO, is responsible for:

- ▶ determining provision – teachers are best placed to know the kind of differentiation that pupils require and whether additional intervention is needed to sustain or improve their progress
- ▶ evaluating the impact of provision on pupils’ progress.

The process of constructing a provision map can be broken down into four stages.

1 Auditing provision

- ▶ Make a list of any provision (and for each intervention) that is additional to and different from the school’s differentiated curriculum.
- ▶ Add other relevant information, such as staff-to-pupil ratio, staff delivering the intervention, frequency and duration, and pupils involved. Schools can customise their provision maps to include information that is important to their own context (for example, some may include the cost of provision to determine whether interventions deliver value for money) or to identify initiatives funded through the pupil premium.

Like data analysis sheets, provision maps need to be easy to understand by everyone who might use them: teachers, support staff, the senior leadership team, supply teachers and parents/carers. On the left is an example from a primary class.

Intervention	Group size	Frequency/duration Staff	Pupils				
Comprehension group	1:6	3 x 15 mins x 6 weeks HLTA	Amy Joe Dan Fred Bob Max				
Numeracy	1:6	4 x 20 mins x 6 weeks (early am) HLTA	Dan Fred Carl Amy Jane Sara				
Paired reading	1:6	Daily x 10 mins HLTA	Joe				
Social skills	1:6	3 x 15 mins TA	Carl Jack Tim				

2 Collecting baseline data and setting targets

The process for collecting data associated with particular initiatives is no different from that for collecting data to track pupils' academic progress. There must be a baseline measure, ie at the beginning of an intervention, from which progress can be tracked, and a reliable and valid measure of ongoing progress towards identified targets. Targets should be SMART (specific, measurable, attainable, relevant and time-limited) and have associated success criteria so that teachers will know when they have been achieved. Baseline measures for interventions could be, for example:

- ▶ a National Curriculum level, where this is appropriate
- ▶ some other measure (quantitative or qualitative) that identifies clearly where a pupil is on entering an intervention and against which progress can be measured at school assessment points.

In the table (top right), entry data and targets have been added to the earlier provision map.

Intervention	Group size	Frequency/duration Staff	Pupils	Entry data	Intervention target		
Comprehension group	1:6	3 x 15 mins x 6 weeks HLTA	Amy Joe Dan Fred Bob Max	2c 2b 2c 2c 2b 2c	Plus one sub-level To use expression in reading. To demonstrate understanding of text in conversation.		
Numeracy	1:6	4 x 20 mins x 6 weeks (early am) HLTA	Dan Fred Carl Amy Jane Sara	3c 3c 3b 3c 3c 3c	Plus one sub-level. To be able to use multiplication facts (2, 5, 10) confidently. To use the 24-hour clock.		
Paired reading	1:6	Daily x 10 mins HLTA	Joe	2b	To re-engage with text. To read with expression.		
Social skills	1:6	3 x 15 mins TA	Carl Jack Tim	Leuven targets 1 2 4 2 3 2	To work on: independent targets, organisational skills, working with others.		

3 Measuring progress

Schools will need to decide on a suitable means of assessing pupils' progress in each intervention. Some interventions come with their own assessment tools but for others, a qualitative or quantitative measure of the impact of what has been taught will need to be devised. It will also be important to consider how far pupils' progress in interventions has affected their progress back in class.

4 Evaluating outcomes

Outcomes can be evaluated by:

- ▶ comparing baseline data with the data collected at the assessment point
- ▶ reviewing pupils' progress in relation to the targets set
- ▶ taking account of other factors that may have affected progress.

In the table (bottom right) an outcomes column has now been added.

In her book, *Provision Mapping: Improving outcomes in primary schools*, Anne Massey suggests that as a reminder to teachers and a prompt to others using the provision map, a section should be added at the top of the provision map, listing the differentiated provision that the teacher has made in the classroom to meet the needs of those at risk of underachievement, for example teaching strategies such as visual timetables, peer mentoring, grouping for support, writing frames.

In summary

Provision maps can be extended to include further interventions and differentiated provision and to incorporate assessment

Intervention	Group size	Frequency/duration Staff	Pupils	Entry data	Intervention target	Exit data	Outcomes
Comprehension group	1:6	3 x 15 mins x 6 weeks HLTA	Amy Joe Dan Fred Bob Max	2c 2b 2c 2c 2b 2c	Plus one sub-level. To use expression in reading. To demonstrate understanding of text in conversation.	2b 2b 2a 2a 2a 2b	Positive outcomes for all except Joe. Behaviour is an issue
Numeracy	1:6	4 x 20 mins x 6 weeks (early am) HLTA	Dan Fred Carl Amy Jane Sara	3c 3c 3b 3c 3c 3c	Plus one sub-level. To be able to use multiplication facts (2, 5, 10) confidently. To use the 24-hour clock.	3b 3b 3b 3c 3a 3a	4/6 plus one sub-level or more. Positive outcomes. Amy – attendance poor.
Paired reading	1:6	Daily x 10 mins HLTA	Joe	2b	To re-engage with text. To read with expression.	2a	Good progress.
Social skills	1:6	3 x 15 mins TA	Carl Jack Tim	Leuven targets 1 2 4 2 3 2	To work on: independent targets, organisational skills, working with others.	3 3 4 4 4 4	Leuven well-being and involvement improved.

at later progress points. When used well, provision maps become working documents which are continually updated, for example following pupil progress review meetings. It is important that while the SENCO can offer advice, guidance and support on the creation of provision maps, this is done in a way that supports the role of the class teacher, who is ultimately responsible for the quality of provision in their class.

Annie Grant is a freelance consultant, producer, writer and editor. This information is adapted from the nasen quick guide called *Tracking Progress and Managing Provision*. The tables have been adapted from Anne Massey's book, *Provision Mapping: Improving outcomes in primary schools* (Routledge, 2013).



Objective (how will you do it?)

Possible objectives:

- ▶ To identify and provide for pupils who have special educational needs and additional needs.
- ▶ To work within the guidance provided in the SEND Code of Practice 2014.
- ▶ To operate a 'whole pupil, whole school' approach to the management and provision of support for special educational needs.
- ▶ To provide a SENCO who will work with the SEN Inclusion Policy.
- ▶ To provide support and advice for all staff working with special educational needs pupils.
- ▶ To develop and maintain partnership and high levels of engagement with parents.
- ▶ To ensure access to the curriculum for all pupils.

Identifying special educational needs

- ▶ Refer to the section of the Code of Practice that describes the four broad categories of need.
- ▶ Acknowledge clearly that while the four categories of need broadly identify aspects of primary areas of need for children and young people, at your school/setting, you identify the needs of pupils by considering the needs of the whole child, which will include not just the special educational needs of the child or young person.

Consider what is *not* SEN but may impact on progress and attainment:

- ▶ Disability (the Code of Practice outlines the 'reasonable adjustment' duty for all settings and schools provided under current disability equality legislation – this alone does not constitute SEN).
- ▶ Attendance and punctuality.
- ▶ Health and welfare.
- ▶ English as an additional language (EAL).
- ▶ Being in receipt of the pupil premium.
- ▶ Being a looked-after child.
- ▶ Being a child of serviceman/woman.

Remember that identifying behaviour as a need will no longer be an acceptable way of describing SEN. Any concerns relating to a child or young person's behaviour should be described as an underlying response to a need which you as a provider will be able to recognise and identify clearly as you will know the child/young person well.

A graduated approach to SEN support

In this section of your SEN policy, set out the process by which your setting/school identifies and manages children and young people with SEN. If you choose to record pupils on an SEN record or register, your criteria for 'entering' a pupil on this record should include:

- ▶ What work has to be done before, by whom? (Write about quality-first teaching in your school and the role of the class teacher or

Getting the policy right

Make sure your SEN policy is up to date with our top tips on what you need to include

'State the purpose of your school or setting's approach to SEN'

The front page of your policy should state the name and contact details of your SENCO or the person responsible for managing your setting's provision made for children and young people with SEN (Regulation 3a for schools).

At the beginning or on the front page, name the SENCO with contact details and add their status regarding the National Award for SEN Co-ordination. State clearly whether the SENCO is a member of the senior leadership team (SLT) or if the SENCO is not a member of SLT, name the advocate on the SLT. See references to the role of the SENCO in the SEND Code. State here:

- ▶ your own school/setting's beliefs and values around SEN
- ▶ that every teacher is a teacher of every child or young person, including those with SEN.

You may also want to add:

- ▶ how your policy was developed, who you consulted and how it was shared with your stakeholders, including parents and families, and that it reflects the SEND Code of Practice 0–25 guidance
- ▶ contextual information about your school/setting in line with other school/setting policies you have.

Aim (the longer view)

State the purpose of your school or setting's approach to SEN; what do you want for your pupils? For example, raise the aspirations of and expectations for all pupils with SEN.

subject specialist teacher in providing for all pupils – you may wish to put this at the start of the previous section. The Code of Practice suggests that pupils are only identified as having SEN if they do not make adequate progress once they have had all the intervention/adjustments and good quality personalised teaching.

- ▶ How is the decision made to place pupils on the register? Describe the steps you take as a school/setting in applying the Assess – Plan – Do – Review cycle.
- ▶ How are parents, families, children and young people involved in this process?

Managing pupils' needs on the SEN register

It is important here to consider the process not the provision – this comes later. Remember that this is now a single category of support, SEN Support, so your school/setting needs to decide how you are going to break down the graduated approach into manageable chunks understood by everyone (this is your opportunity to be innovative in your approach as there is unlikely to be specific guidance on this). Your in-house arrangements will need to be personalised to meet your cohort of need. Here are some key considerations to include in this section:

- ▶ What cycle/system for assessing, planning, delivering, reviewing and recording provision do you use? Remember, individual education plans, provision maps and person-centred plans are only effective if they are living records which set out exactly what needs have been identified, how to remove key barriers to learning effectively, ie what works, and the clear outcomes to be achieved within an agreed timeframe. The person responsible for maintaining and updating the record or plan and the lines of accountability must be made clear here, including the core expectation that the teacher has responsibility for evidencing progress according to the outcomes described in the plan.
- ▶ How often is it reviewed and how does it feed into pupil progress meetings?
- ▶ How is the level of provision decided? This may be a good place to write about your school/setting's contribution to the local offer – you can include this as an appendix.
- ▶ If your school/setting identifies that it is unable fully to meet the needs of the pupil through its own provision arrangements, what do you need to evidence this?
- ▶ What is the process for engaging additional support and specialist services? Who monitors and costs this? When and how are parents, families and children and young people involved? (You may have a local

matrix/indices to apply here which enables you to answer some of these questions.)

- ▶ If the school/setting identifies that additional funding and support are needed from the local authority high needs block, describe what this process looks like. Where do you find your information? Who needs to be involved? (You may have an SEN local authority information file to access, which could provide some of this information.)
- ▶ What referral documentation do you need to complete? Single agency referral? Common Assessment Framework?
- ▶ How are pupils and parents involved?
- ▶ Do you have a process for exiting the SEN register/record in your school?

Next, set out what else your school does to support pupils with SEN, if this has not already been covered in your policy.

Training and resources

- ▶ How is SEN funded?
- ▶ How are the training needs of staff identified and planned for?

Roles and responsibilities

- ▶ Define the role of the SEN governor.
- ▶ Define the role of SEN teaching assistants – name the line manager, if this is not the SENCO.
- ▶ Name the designated teacher for child protection.
- ▶ Name the member of staff responsible for managing pupil premium and looked-after children funding.

Storing and managing information

Detail here how documents are stored. This will probably sit in line with other school policies on information management (how long to store documents, when they should be destroyed, what should be kept, where, and so on) and confidentiality.

Dealing with complaints

Identify here any arrangements made by the governing body or the proprietor relating to the treatment of complaints from parents of pupils with SEN and/or disabilities.

Reviewing the policy

The SEN policy should be reviewed annually. How are the views of children and young people represented in the creation of policies in a meaningful way? Who reviews the policies in your school? When are they ratified by governors and when are parents involved? What does this involvement look like and is it born out of an intent to improve levels of engagement with parents, carers and families? Are there opportunities for co-production of policy in place?

'The SEN policy should be reviewed annually'

SUPPORTING PUPILS AND FAMILIES

- ▶ Guide parents and pupils towards the local authority's local offer.
- ▶ Consider links with other agencies to support the family and pupil.
- ▶ What are your admission arrangements and where can they be found?
- ▶ How do you ensure that children with SEN are able to access exams and other assessments and who is responsible for this in your school?
- ▶ How do you manage transition – from class to class, across key stages and to another school, including secondary school?



Audit tools and action plans

A range of practical tools to help you to improve the quality of your provision and prepare for the SEND reforms

'Professionals need to listen to the views of children, parents, carers and families'

Much of the special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) reform programme is dependent on a new co-produced and person-centred approach to supporting children and young people with SEND. While person-centred planning and approaches have been around for almost two decades in social care and in special school planning, this approach is less familiar to mainstream schools.

The North Yorkshire SEND Pathfinder has developed an implementation pack, *Personalised Learning Pathways: Information for young people and their families*, available at www.sendpathfinder.co.uk (click on information packs). This offers a useful insight: *'A personalised learning pathway is a person-centred programme which supports the young person to develop and progress, based on a clear understanding of how each person learns best; strategies that will help them achieve their goals; and the support they require within the learning environment.'*

Schools might find it helpful to look at communication plans and one-page profiles, which describe how a child learns best – whether they sign/need to be near to the whiteboard to see better and so on – but also give the child's own views about how they learn best and communicate. An excellent guide with practical examples of one-page profiles can be found on the Helen Sanderson website at www.helensandersonassociates.co.uk/

For mainstream schools, this approach incorporates the best engagement with the learner and their family – how do they learn

best, what are the intended outcomes that school and home aim to achieve and how does this look on a provision map? The 'programme' could be a provision map with features that include one-page profiles for individual learners.

In order to personalise learning, professionals need to listen to the views of children, parents, carers and families and so over the next few pages nasen has included two audit tools: one for parental engagement and participation and one for children and young people's voice and self-advocacy. These enable schools and other settings to consider how they are using pupil and parent voice when planning their SEND provision. In addition to key questions, there is a simple action plan framework to record the issues raised and the appropriate actions that need to be undertaken. You can then use these to adjust the information you include in your version of the third toolkit item, an action plan to support school preparation for the SEND reforms. Editable versions of these tools can be found in the members' area of the nasen website at www.nasen.org.uk/

The best SENCOs and most inclusive schools have been offering a personalised approach driven by stakeholder views within a graduated approach for many years. Within outstanding settings there is clarity across all staff and governors as to the whole-school vision for effective engagement and participation of children, parents, carers and families. If this isn't the case in your setting then the arrival of the new Code of Practice is the ideal opportunity to address this issue.

Parental engagement and participation audit tool for parents and carers of pupils with SEND

- ▶ Select the 'best fit' box and make notes within it.
- ▶ Remember to carry out this audit with parents too. How do your views differ from those of parents?
- ▶ At the point of discussing these areas of practice, ask what the possible *barriers* may be to promoting greater parental engagement and participation, so you have an idea of where to go next to improve practice.

AREA OF PRACTICE	Poor engagement and weak participation – information-giving only	Developing some areas of good practice – mainly on the level of consultation and participation	Strong engagement and full co-production of plans and joint decision making evident
On entry (where SEND is known) We draw on parents' views and experience of their child in establishing an overview of the pupil's strengths and needs and the supportive strategies used			
Initial identification We draw on parents' views and experience of their child in establishing an overview of pupil's strengths and needs			
Planning provision (SEN Support) We work in partnership with parents to develop a plan of support for their child			
Planning provision (statement/EHC plan) We work in partnership with parents to develop a plan to meet the objectives on a statement/EHC plan			
Learning at home We enable parents to support their child's learning away from school			
Day-to-day, two-way communication We have effective systems to ensure that parents and teachers are kept informed of any day-to-day issues/successes			
Review We enable parents to work with us to revise the support provided and the related targets in the light of progress and emerging issues			

AREA OF PRACTICE	Poor engagement and weak participation – information-giving only	Developing some areas of good practice – mainly on the level of consultation and participation	Strong engagement and full co-production of plans and joint decision making evident
<p>Outside agency involvement We support and fully engage with parents when outside agencies are involved, enabling them to understand the process and interpret the outcomes</p>			
<p>Annual review We enable parents to be fully engaged as equal partners in the annual review process</p>			
<p>Signposting We actively enable parents to access support from parent support services (eg PPS)</p>			
<p>Transition We enable parents to be confident in their child's transition process from year group to year group and when leaving the school, sharing concerns and jointly planning future provision and support</p>			
<p>SEN policy We enable parents of pupils with SEND to share their views when reviewing the SEN policy and we take account of them in redrafting</p>			
<p>SEN school self-evaluation We regularly seek parents' views when ascertaining how effective we are in making provision for pupils with SEND and enabling them to achieve and be happy at school</p>			
<p>Staff training Staff are confident in talking to and working in partnership with parents of pupils with SEND and in undertaking difficult conversations, because they are well trained and well supported</p>			
<p>Ethos and values All staff value and actively support the full engagement and partnership with the school of parents of pupils with SEND</p>			

Action plan following parental engagement and participation audit for parents and carers of pupils with SEND

Key area for improvement
How will we know we have achieved this?
How and when will we evaluate this?

Area of practice that needs improving	Action needed to make improvement	Who needs to be involved?	By when?

Children and young people’s voice and self-advocacy audit tool

- ▶ Select the ‘best fit’ box and make notes within it.
- ▶ Remember to carry out this audit with children and young people with identified SEND. How do your views differ from those of children and young people?
- ▶ At the point of discussing these areas of practice, ask what the possible *barriers* may be to greater children and young people’s voice and self-advocacy, so you have an idea of where to go next to improve practice.

AREA OF PRACTICE	Poor pupil participation and self-advocacy – information-giving only	Developing some areas of good practice – mainly on the level of participation in processes	Strong self-advocacy and full co-production of plans and joint decision making evident
<p>On entry (where SEND is known) We draw on children and young people’s views and experiences in establishing an overview of their strengths and needs and the supportive strategies used</p>			
<p>Initial identification We draw on children and young people’s views and experience of their strengths and needs</p>			
<p>Planning provision (SEN Support) We fully engage children and young people in developing a plan of support</p>			
<p>Planning provision (statement/EHC plan) We fully engage children and young people in developing a plan to meet the objectives on a statement/EHC plan</p>			
<p>Learning at home We fully support children and young people in their learning away from school</p>			
<p>Self-advocacy skills We actively and explicitly support the development of children and young people’s self-advocacy skills</p>			
<p>Review We engage children and young people fully in revising the support provided and related targets in the light of progress and emerging issues</p>			

AREA OF PRACTICE	Poor pupil participation and self-advocacy – information-giving only	Developing some areas of good practice – mainly on the level of participation in processes	Strong self-advocacy and full co-production of plans and joint decision making evident
Annual review We enable children and young people to be fully engaged and their views to be expressed in the annual review process			
Transition We enable children and young people to be confident in the transition process from year group to year group and when leaving the school, sharing concerns and contributing to future provision and support			
SEN policy We enable children and young people with SEND to share their views when reviewing the SEN policy and we take account of them in redrafting			
SEND school self-evaluation We regularly seek children and young people's views when ascertaining how effective we are in making provision to meet their needs and enabling them to achieve and be happy at school			
Staff training Staff are confident, well trained and well supported to seek and act proactively on the views and feelings of children and young people with SEND			
Ethos and values All staff value pupil voice and actively work to develop children and young people's self-advocacy skills			

Boxes left blank for other areas that may arise in discussion with staff and parents.

Action plan following the children and young people's voice and self-advocacy audit

Key area for improvement
How will we know we have achieved this?
How and when will we evaluate this?

Area of practice that needs improving	Action needed to make improvement	Who needs to be involved?	By when?

An action plan to support school preparation for the SEND reforms

	Area for reflection	Guidance and support – questions to support reflection and key issues to consider
1	Review and refresh the school's processes for the early identification and assessment of SEND	<p>Reflect on the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ How is the school ensuring that it is identifying and addressing pupils' needs/SEND as early as possible? ▶ Can you improve your liaison with pre-school/feeder schools to prepare and deliver your best endeavours for pupils with additional needs as soon as they arrive with you? ▶ Have you available a range of tools and expertise to support identification and assessment of need? ▶ Do class/subject teachers make enough effective use of these tools to identify pupils' gaps in and barriers to learning, adapting their core teaching in the light of these findings? ▶ Does the school need to refresh procedures around the identification and assessment of SEND? ▶ Do you know how to call on the support of a range of external specialists as and when needed? ▶ Are there areas of SEND that staff need training for, to support their ability to identify pupils' emerging difficulties as early as possible and know how to respond?
2	Update the SEN record and refresh the school's approach to record keeping	<p>Update the school's SEN record and any related paperwork replacing School Action/School Action plus with SEN Support. Consider using this time to review the children on the SEN record – are there any children who could come off the record? Look out for changes to the Pupil Census in January 2015. Is the school's approach to record keeping efficient and manageable? Does the school provide the SENCO with sufficient administrative support?</p>
3	The graduated approach – review the school's current processes around the assess, plan, do, review cycle	<p>Refresh the school's procedures and timings for undertaking termly reviews with parents of pupils with SEND. Reflect on the following areas when considering refreshing the school's graduated approach to meeting the needs of pupils with SEND:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ How is the school ensuring that teachers have access to all the key information about pupils with SEND whom they teach? ▶ Are teachers confident and appropriately skilled to be able to meet the needs of pupils with SEND whom they teach? ▶ Is the SENCO supporting the development of staff skills, confidence and expertise in this area? ▶ Are teachers at the heart of the process of planning targeted provision for pupils with SEND? ▶ Do teachers monitor the progress of pupils within targeted provision for whom they are accountable? ▶ How can you ensure that the skills being taught and practised within targeted provision are improving the outcomes of work in class and are developing pupils' independence? ▶ Are pupils and parents meaningfully engaged in the co-production and review of SEND provision? ▶ How is the school ensuring that the targeted provision and support in place is addressing the objectives as outlined on pupils' statements/EHC plans?
4	Role of the SENCO	<p>Update the SENCO job description to ensure it reflects fully the expectations of the role. Use this opportunity to ensure that all staff and key stakeholders across the school understand the nature of the SENCO role. With the senior leadership team (SLT) and SEN governor, review the key priorities for the role over the next year. Consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Is the SENCO a member of/affiliated to the school's SLT? ▶ Is there sufficient administrative support and time away from teaching to enable the SENCO to fulfil their responsibilities? ▶ Does the SENCO need to consider completing the National Award for SEN Co-ordination? ▶ Is the school booked onto termly SENCO Net meetings through the Forest Way Teaching School Alliance to keep up to date with national and local developments in SEND?
5	Update the school's SEN policy in light of the new Code of Practice and ensure that regulations related to SEN information are adhered to	<p>Consider a parent/pupil focus group to support the review process and ensure that the views, hopes and concerns raised are reflected in the rewriting. Place the SEN policy on the school website.</p>
6	Develop the SEND information for inclusion on the school website	<p>Use local authority guidance. Check for examples from pathfinder authorities – www.sendpathfinder.co.uk/ Where possible, consult with parents, children and young people about what information they would like to see on the school website and how they would like it presented. Consider a jointly devised structure/format across a family of schools.</p>
7	Preparation for transition	<p>Consider the following areas when reflecting on the school's practice in the area of transition:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ What has the transition process been like for children and young people with SEND and their families both in/out of the school? What can be learnt from past successes and what are the areas for development? ▶ Is the school aware of the training opportunities, apprenticeships, traineeships and supported internships available to young people as outlined in the local offer? ▶ Are there effective links with existing SENCO networks to support smooth transitions (into and from school) to other education providers? ▶ Are smooth transitions planned for well in advance with parents, children and young people? ▶ Are the skills and techniques of a person-centred planning approach planned for? ▶ Does the process of within-school transition from one class/subject teacher to another need refreshing to ensure smooth transitions?

	Area for reflection	Guidance and support – questions to support reflection and key issues to consider																
8	Co-ordinated 0–25 EHC assessment and planning process and personal budgets	<p>Attend the local authority’s training/briefing on the implementation arrangements for the co-ordinated EHC assessment and planning process, personal budgets, annual reviews and person-centred planning approaches.</p> <p>Respond to any future local authority consultation on revised thresholds for an EHC plan/Element 3 funding.</p> <p>Consider the following when reviewing how the school is meeting the planned outcomes of current statements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Are all staff involved with the child fully aware (and have read) Part 2 of the statement? ▶ Are all staff involved with the child fully aware of the objectives on the statement? ▶ Do the statement objectives drive the provision and targets (as outlined on a provision map/individual education plan)? ▶ Are parents co-producers of the IEP/provision? ▶ Are pupils co-producers of the IEP/provision? ▶ Is it clear how the deployment of the statement ‘hours’ are linked to a specific intended outcome? 																
9	Review and refresh the school’s vision and procedures for effective parental engagement	<p>Use the <i>Parental engagement and participation audit tool</i> to review practice in the areas outlined below. Consider reviewing these areas with an SEN parent forum.</p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td>▶ On entry (where SEND is known)</td> <td>▶ Annual review</td> </tr> <tr> <td>▶ Initial identification</td> <td>▶ Signposting</td> </tr> <tr> <td>▶ Planning provision (SEN Support)</td> <td>▶ Transition</td> </tr> <tr> <td>▶ Planning provision (statement/EHC plan)</td> <td>▶ SEN policy</td> </tr> <tr> <td>▶ Learning at home</td> <td>▶ SEN school self-evaluation</td> </tr> <tr> <td>▶ Day-to-day, two-way communication</td> <td>▶ Staff training</td> </tr> <tr> <td>▶ Review</td> <td>▶ Ethos and values.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>▶ Outside agency involvement</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	▶ On entry (where SEND is known)	▶ Annual review	▶ Initial identification	▶ Signposting	▶ Planning provision (SEN Support)	▶ Transition	▶ Planning provision (statement/EHC plan)	▶ SEN policy	▶ Learning at home	▶ SEN school self-evaluation	▶ Day-to-day, two-way communication	▶ Staff training	▶ Review	▶ Ethos and values.	▶ Outside agency involvement	
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10	Review and refresh the school’s vision and procedures for effective children/young people engagement	<p>Use the <i>Children and young people’s voice and self-advocacy audit tool</i> to review practice in the areas outlined below:</p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td>▶ On entry (where SEND is known)</td> <td>▶ Annual review</td> </tr> <tr> <td>▶ Initial identification</td> <td>▶ Transition</td> </tr> <tr> <td>▶ Planning provision (SEN Support)</td> <td>▶ SEN policy</td> </tr> <tr> <td>▶ Planning provision (statement/EHC plan)</td> <td>▶ SEN school self-evaluation</td> </tr> <tr> <td>▶ Personal targets/termly review</td> <td>▶ Ethos and values.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>▶ Learning at home</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	▶ On entry (where SEND is known)	▶ Annual review	▶ Initial identification	▶ Transition	▶ Planning provision (SEN Support)	▶ SEN policy	▶ Planning provision (statement/EHC plan)	▶ SEN school self-evaluation	▶ Personal targets/termly review	▶ Ethos and values.	▶ Learning at home					
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11	Developing the workforce	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Carry out whole-staff training on the new arrangements and consult with them on what the SLT considers are important areas for reviewing and developing current practice, with particular focus on every teacher being a teacher of pupils with SEND and ensuring that teachers are clear as to their responsibility and accountability for the progress and development of pupils with SEND in their class(es). ▶ Consider undertaking a whole-staff audit of knowledge, confidence and skills in structured approaches to engaging parents and pupils, assessment and identification of need, tracking and measuring progress of pupils with SEND, knowledge of different types of SEND, and suitable teaching approaches and interventions. ▶ Consider developing a dedicated place on the school’s virtual learning environment to place and link training and support materials about aspects of SEND, eg areas of need. 																
12	Meet with the SEN governor to ensure that they are aware of the new arrangements	<p>Share this action plan.</p> <p>Remind governors to attend local authority Governor Development Service updates/briefings.</p> <p>Discuss where the SEN governor could provide support for the school in, for example, updating policy or undertaking a parent/pupil audit.</p>																
13	Parent awareness of new arrangements	<p>Make arrangements for raising parents’ awareness as to any new school and local authority SEND arrangements, in particular:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ new terminology ▶ the move from statements to EHC plans ▶ the local offer ▶ Parent Partnership Services. 																
14	Working with specialist outside agencies	<p>Is the school confident in knowing the range of services across education, health and social care, including the voluntary sector, to support schools, particularly, although not exclusively, in the early identification of SEN and effective support?</p> <p>Are routes and criteria for referral known (should be made clear on the local authority’s local offer)?</p> <p>Are key contacts for different services known (should be made clear on the local authority’s local offer)?</p>																
15	Self-evaluation of SEND	<p>Are you confident that you know how the school’s SEN budget (Elements 1, 2 and 3) is deployed and whether it is being effectively utilised to meet the needs of pupils with identified SEND across the school and leads to good outcomes?</p>																
16	Pupils with medical needs	<p>Read the Department for Education’s <i>Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions</i> guidance and implement the recommendations. (NB This is not necessarily the SENCO’s remit.)</p>																

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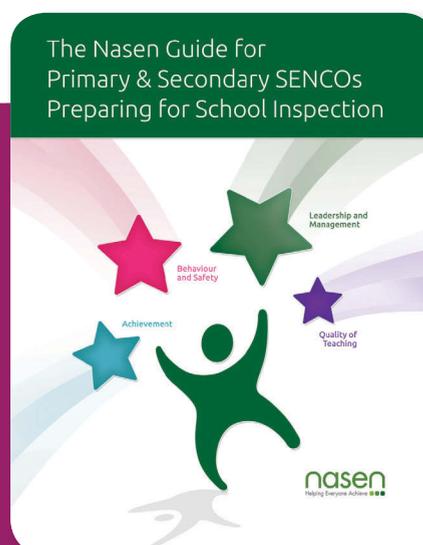
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