

# THE GRADUATED APPROACH TO SEND: GUIDANCE FOR EDUCATION SETTINGS

## **Introduction**

This document provides a framework for the Graduated Approach to SEND. It is aimed at professionals and parents, and has been developed and reviewed with a wide range of parents/carers, specialist staff and partners agencies. It is the outcome of extensive partnership working. The strong commitment and great efforts of all involved is hugely appreciated.

The framework, which this document outlines, is part of a suite of documents, designed to help and support settings and schools in assessing the needs of and making appropriate provision for, children and young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities. You will find links throughout this guidance which enable you to use the accompanying documents. They are the [Early Years Profiles of Need and Response](#), [School Age Profile of Need and Response](#) and the [SEND Profiles of Need Graduated Response](#), which sets out Surrey's offer of support.

## **Aim of this Document**

The aim of this document is to provide a clear, graduated framework for all educational settings and stakeholders, which underpins well-coordinated early intervention, and the prevention of needs escalating to the point where statutory intervention is required.

It is not the aim of this document to prevent children who need one from having a statutory assessment or plan. Quite the contrary; it provides a clear framework to ensure consistency and fairness when identifying the need for statutory intervention.

The benefits of early intervention are widely recognised. Identifying need at the earliest point and then making effective provision improves long-term outcomes for the child or young person. Parents/carers and SENCOs at workshops and meetings consistently supported the focus on early intervention and targeting support to children and young people at the right time.

## **Principles**

The principles underpinning this document are those set out in the SEND Code of Practice.

Section 9 of the Children & Families Act 2014 makes clear that local authorities, in carrying out their functions under the Act in relation to SEND **must** have regard to the:

- views, wishes and feelings of the child or young person, and the child's parents
- importance of the child or young person, and the child's parents, participating as fully as possible in decisions, and being provided with the information and support necessary to enable participation in those decisions
- need to support the child or young person, and the child's parents, in order to facilitate the development of the child or young person and to help them achieve the best possible educational outcomes, preparing them effectively for adulthood.

These principles are designed to support:

- the participation of children, their parents and young people in decision-making
- the early identification of children and young people's needs and early intervention to support them
- greater choice and control for young people and parents over support
- collaboration between education, health and social care services to provide support
- high quality provision to meet the needs of children and young people with SEND
- a focus on inclusive practice and removing barriers to learning
- successful preparation for adulthood, including independent living and employment.

Further detail of how these principles must be translated into practice are clearly set out in section 1 of the SEND Code of Practice. [Send code of practice 0 to 25 years](#)

### **Statutory Basis for the Graduated Approach to SEND**

In Surrey, we want all our children to thrive and reach their full potential. For children with special educational needs, this requires services to have a clear, graduated framework to ensure that additional needs are identified and met, through school and specialist SEND support, as soon as they become evident. This guidance aims to provide that clear and graduated framework.

The SEND Code of Practice explains that most children with SEND will achieve their outcomes through the arrangements that can be made available to them without the use of an EHC Plan.

The Code defines the Graduated Approach as 'a model of action and intervention in early education settings, schools and colleges to help children and young people who have special educational needs'. It recognises that there is a continuum of special educational needs and that, where necessary, increasing specialist expertise should be brought to bear on the difficulties that a child or young person may be experiencing.

In schools and settings, where a pupil is identified as having SEND, the Code expects action to be taken to remove barriers to learning and put effective special educational provision in place. This SEND support should take the form of a **four-part cycle** (assess, plan, do, review) through which earlier decisions and actions are revisited, refined and revised with a growing understanding of the pupil's needs and what supports the pupil in making good progress and securing good outcomes. This is known as the **graduated approach**.

The graduated approach draws on more detailed approaches, more frequent review and more specialist expertise in successive cycles in order to match interventions to the SEND of children and young people. It supports the best use of resources by promoting prevention, early identification of needs, better access to services, the development of good language, communication and mental health through universal services, and better transitions between life stages and settings 0-25. For those children and young people whose complex and significant needs demonstrate a best fit in the statutory column in the SEND Profiles of Need documents, referral for statutory assessment may be made directly.

The Code identifies four broad areas of need and support:

- Communication and interaction
- Cognition & Learning
- Social, emotional and mental health difficulties
- Sensory and/or physical needs

When reviewing and managing special educational provision, the Code expects schools and settings to review how well equipped they are to provide graduated support across these four broad areas.

## **The Four Part Cycle**

### **Assess**

In identifying a child as needing SEND support, the class or subject teacher, working with the SENCO, should carry out a clear analysis of the child's needs. This should draw on the teacher's assessment and experience of the child, their previous progress and attainment, as well as information from the school's core approach to progress, attainment, and behaviour. It should also draw on other subject teachers' assessments where relevant, the child's development in comparison to their peers and national data, the views and experience of parents, the child's own views and, if relevant, advice from external support services. Schools and settings should take seriously any concerns raised by a parent. These should be recorded and compared to the setting's own assessment and information on how the child is developing.

Assessments should be reviewed regularly. This will help ensure that support and intervention are matched to need, barriers to learning are identified and overcome, and that a clear picture of the interventions put in place and their effect, is developed. For some types of SEND, the way in which a child responds to an intervention can be the most reliable method of developing a more accurate picture of need.

In some cases, outside professionals from health or social services may already be involved with the child. These professionals should liaise with the school or setting to help inform the assessments. Where professionals are not already working with school staff, the SENCO should contact them, if the parents agree.

## **Plan**

Where it is decided to provide a child with SEND support, the parents must be formally notified, although parents should have already been involved in forming the assessment of needs as outlined above. The teacher and the SENCO should agree in consultation with the parent and the child the adjustments, interventions and support to be put in place, as well as the expected impact on progress, development or behaviour, along with a clear date for review.

All teachers and support staff who work with the child should be made aware of their needs, the outcomes sought, the support provided and any teaching strategies or approaches that are required. This should also be recorded on the school's information system.

The support and intervention provided should be selected to meet the outcomes identified for the child, based on reliable evidence of effectiveness, and should be provided by staff with sufficient skills and knowledge.

Parents should be fully aware of the planned support and interventions and, where appropriate, plans should seek parental involvement to reinforce or contribute to progress at home. Information should be readily available and discussed with, the child's parents.

## **Do**

The class or subject teacher should remain responsible for working with the child on a daily basis. Where the interventions involve group or one-to-one teaching away from the main class or subject teacher, they should still retain responsibility for the child. They should work closely with any teaching assistants or specialist staff involved to plan and assess the impact of support and interventions and how they can be linked to classroom teaching. The SENCO should support the class or subject teacher in the further assessment of the child's particular strengths and weaknesses, in problem solving and advising on the effective implementation of support.

## Review

The effectiveness of the support and interventions and their impact on the child's progress should be reviewed in line with the agreed date.

The impact and quality of the support and interventions should be evaluated, along with the views of the child and their parents. This should feed back into the analysis of the child's needs. The class or subject teacher, working with the SENCO, should revise the support in light of the child's progress and development, deciding on any changes to the support and outcomes in consultation with the parent and the child.

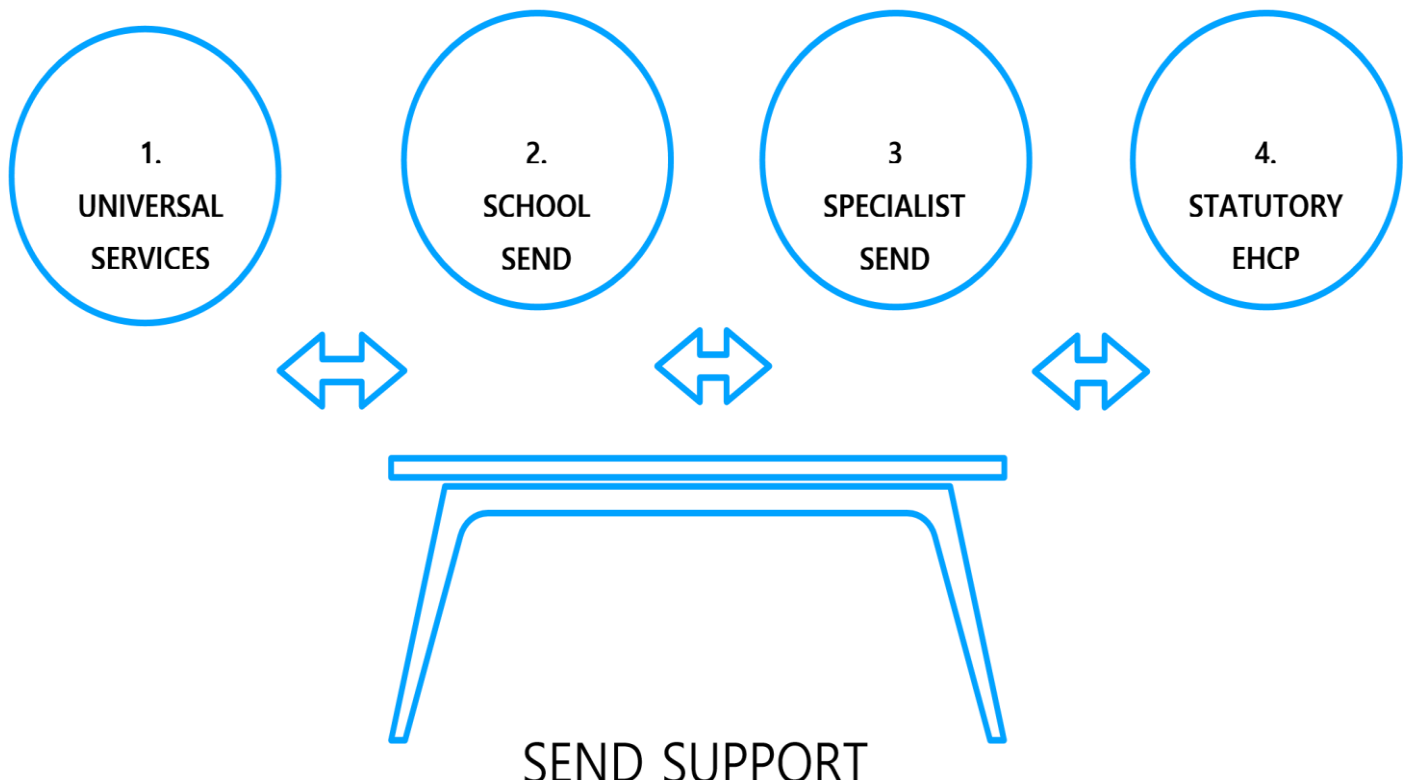
Parents should have clear information about the impact of the support and interventions provided, enabling them to be involved in planning next steps.

For most children with SEND, this cycle will be completed 3 times before making a request for statutory assessment. To inform its decision, the local authority will expect to see evidence of the action taken by the school or setting, as part of SEND support.

Where a child has an EHC plan, the local authority must review that plan as a minimum every twelve months and more often if the child is in an early years setting. Schools and settings must co-operate with the local authority in the review process and, as part of the review, the local authority can require schools and settings to convene and hold annual review meetings on its behalf. Schools and settings should continue to hold internal reviews at least termly, which is the expectation for any child with SEND.

## Graduated Response for SEND in Surrey

Through partnership working, parents, SENCOs, specialist services and other stakeholders have developed a **graduated response model** for Surrey. This has four stages that align to the expectations of the SEND Code of Practice:



At a more detailed, operational level, the **SEND Profiles of Need** are underpinned by the guidance in this document. The purpose of these profiles is to promote and enable:

- strong partnership with parents
- consistent identification of children's needs as early as possible
- consistent identification of the interventions and responses required
- consistent, fair, transparent and trusted SEND decision-making
- coherent SEND pathway planning 0-25
- systematic monitoring of SEND outcomes and pupil progress.

The Profiles cover all four broad areas of need and support as set out in the Code. For each of these areas of need, they set out guidance to support:

- Assessment and Planning
- Intervention and Support
- Evaluating Progress and Reviewing.

Surrey's **graduated response** for SEND has four stages and are these outlined below:

- Universal Services
- Schools and Settings SEND Support
- Specialist SEND Support
- Statutory EHCP

### **Universal Services**

Universal services are those services that support all children and young people and their families to be healthy, stay safe, enjoy life and achieve their full potential. These services include:

- GPs
- Health Visitors
- Early Years educational settings
- Schools and colleges
- School Nurses and Family Nurse Partnerships
- School Immunisation services

With regard to schools and educational settings, the Code of Practice states that high quality teaching, differentiated for individual pupils, is the first step in responding to children who have or may have SEND.

*“Additional intervention and support cannot compensate for a lack of good quality teaching. Schools should regularly and carefully review the quality of teaching for all pupils, including those at risk of under-achievement. This includes reviewing and, where necessary, improving teachers’ understanding of strategies to identify and support vulnerable pupils and their knowledge of the SEND most frequently encountered.”*

### **School and Settings SEND Support**

All schools and colleges are provided with resources in their delegated budget which they can use to support children with additional and special educational needs. In line with the Code of Practice, the majority of children and young people with SEND will have their needs met through the provision of tailored school or specialist SEND Support.

In the Early Years, children with SEND can access SEND support arrangements through the Disability Access Fund and the Early Intervention Fund. For the majority of children in receipt

of this funding, the Code expects that the outcomes they wish to achieve can be delivered by the range of local and accessible services and education provision set out in the Local Offer.

The use of a One Page Profile (OPP) is well established across Surrey's schools and educational settings as a first step to SEND Support. An illustrative template of the OPP is provided in Surrey's SEND Support Arrangements document. [Early Years SEND Support Plan. Add here the attached file – 'SSA for inclusion in Graduated Response Guidance](#)

It includes a summary of person-centred information which can be used to both get to know the child or young person very quickly and to ensure the support is provided in a way that the individual wants. Understanding what is important to the child or young person is key to ensuring that SEND Support is meaningful and relevant. The profile can be used to focus conversations on what is working and what is not working in the individual's life. By considering what is important to and for a child or young person and what good support looks like, actions can be agreed that make a difference.

All aspects of SEND Support, at school, setting and specialist stages, should be recorded. Again, an illustrative template is provided in the Surrey SEND Support Arrangements [attached document as above](#) document. This includes the opportunity to:

- record all relevant contact information in relation to the child and family
- record the completion date of the original profile and subsequent versions together with details of any supporting information received.
- enable the child or young person, parent / carer to tell their story; to make clear from their perspective how they have arrived at this point in time and what their aspirations are for the future
- draw together in one place all the assessment information for the child or young person in line with the four broad areas of need in the Code. To build resilience, the focus should be on strengths and skills as well as areas of difficulty and need. Where the parents have social care involvement, their consent must be actively sought in line with information sharing protocols prior to recording this information
- record the interventions planned and the person centred outcomes which have been agreed. An outcome can be defined as the benefit of difference made to an individual as a result of intervention. It should be personal and not expressed from a service perspective
- record progress information, which should be reviewed three times a year. This includes barriers to further progress in addition to recording quantifiable progress towards the identified outcomes
- record evidence of the financial cost to the setting, for example using costed provision maps.

Schools and settings may involve specialists at any point to advise them on early identification of SEND and effective support and interventions.



## **Specialist SEND Support**

Where a child continues to make less than expected progress, despite evidence-based support and interventions that are matched to the child's area of need, the school should consider involving specialists, including those secured by the school itself or from outside agencies.

A school should always involve a specialist where a child continues to make little or no progress or where they continue to work at levels substantially below those expected of children of a similar age despite evidence-based SEND support delivered by appropriately trained staff. The child's parents should always be involved in any decision to involve specialists.

The involvement of specialists and what is discussed or agreed should be recorded and shared with the parents and teaching staff supporting the child or young person in the same way as other SEND support.

Where assessment indicates that support from specialist services is required, it is important that children and young people receive it as quickly as possible. Joint commissioning arrangements ensure that there are sufficient services to meet the likely need in an area. The Local Offer sets out what support is available from different services and how it may be accessed.

Schools and settings should work closely with the local authority and other providers to agree the range of local services and clear arrangements for making appropriate requests. This might include schools commissioning specialist services directly.

Such specialist services include, but are not limited to:

- Educational psychologists
- Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS)
- Specialist teachers or support services, including specialist teachers with a mandatory qualification for children with hearing and vision impairment, including multi-sensory impairment, and for those with a physical disability
- Therapists (including speech and language therapists, occupational therapists etc.).

The SENCO and class teacher, together with the specialists, and involving the child's parents, should consider a range of evidence-based and effective teaching approaches, appropriate equipment, strategies and interventions in order to support the child's progress.

They should agree the outcomes to be achieved through the support, including a date by which progress will be reviewed.

## **Statutory Assessment and Support**

SEND support should be adapted or replaced depending on how effective it has been in achieving the agreed outcomes. Where, despite the school having taken relevant and purposeful action to identify, assess and meet the SEND of the child or young person, the child or young person has not made expected progress, the school or parents can consider requesting an Education, Health and Care needs assessment.

## **How to Use the SEND Profiles of Need**

For a young person in a school or other learning setting, the SENCO will normally maintain the SEND Profiles. [School Age Profile of Need and Response](#). This is because the focus of the profiles is to support learning. The SENCO will coordinate the support and interventions provided by other agencies.

If a profile is completed in a pre-school setting it will be maintained by the lead person in that setting. [Early Years Profiles of Need and Response](#)

Use the Profiles at any time when a picture of a child or young person's achievements is needed, e.g. initial awareness of a special need, tracking progress, identifying an escalation of need, transition points, statutory assessment, annual review.

- Highlight the indicators which most closely match the information from current information, assessment reports and observations. If possible, this should be done in consultation with the professional who has produced the assessment report and the parent/carer.
- Highlight interventions where they are being used. If an intervention is used which is not on the Profile, it can be written in where appropriate. Any future interventions can be noted at the bottom of the Profile. A child or young person could have highlighted indicators in Universal Services, School and Setting SEND Support or Specialist SEND Support. It is a best fit of needs as children and young people may have a wide range of needs or a spiky profile.
- When completed, the Profile gives an immediate visual profile of a child and young person.
- The Profiles are summary documents for the purposes described below. They are ultimately enabling a consistent language to describe the presenting barriers to learning of a young person as assessed by the professionals using their respective expertise, informed by the experience of the parents and carers.
- Only highlight an indicator if there is supporting evidence. The Profiles bring into one place a map of a child's Special Educational Needs and the interventions and support which are currently used, or will be used, with the child or young person.

- The evidence base which informs the Profiles is compiled by the SENCO and comes from school based assessments, the assessments made by the various professionals and agencies.
- The Profile provides a summary of the barriers to learning in a specific area of need, and the interventions agreed by the professionals and parents and carers as appropriate. It does not provide the detail of the interventions; that detail lies in the individual action plans of the individual young person.
- The Profile can carry a note of the costs of those interventions.

In addition to the descriptors, the SEND profiles provide guidance on the following:

### **Assessment and Planning**

The SEND Profiles contain descriptors for each of the areas of need and a common framework to inform the writing of assessments from the One Page Profile to a statutory assessment if that is required.

The SEND Profiles clearly define the range of educational needs through the descriptors and provide, in conjunction with the profile and common language, a clear pathway from assessment to a provision which is understood by all.

### **Intervention and Support**

The SEND Profiles are used to provide shared understanding of a young person's needs, to identify interventions and support. They are not diagnostic forms. Rather, they bring together the outcomes of various assessments into one place, so that the young person's need for maximum learning can be holistically addressed

### **Evaluating Progress and Reviewing**

The SEND profiles will be used to highlight specific ways in which progress can be reviewed and evaluated. They will be used throughout the review process to assist the analysis of level of need after intervention, where the outcome will be to:

- cease the current level of intervention and return to a lower level of support
- maintain the same level of intervention
- initiate a higher level of support and intervention.

### **Involving Parents and Children**

The use of SEND Profiles should be a transparent process involving all involved. This includes professionals and parents and carers and where possible, the child or young person themselves. This will give an element of self-evaluation and will engage the child or young person in agreeing interventions.

The best use of a continuum of provision and settings to meet a specific barrier, (e.g. ASD, Speech Language and Communication), requires an identification of the nature and level of needs that are met by the various settings. It is not practical to list in detail the programmes and interventions that each setting provides.

The SEND Profiles provide a language which enables a match to be made between a child or young person and the setting which best meets their needs. This match will always be a matter of professional judgement and parental preferences, as all settings will provide a spectrum of provision within a specialism, as very few young people with SEND present with a single barrier to learning.