SENCO Inclusion Toolkit

Derby City Council

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Introduction

Welcome to Derby's SENCO Inclusion Toolkit. We hope this will help pull together all the key processes, documents and 'tools' for delivering the best inclusive experience. At the heart of inclusive education lies the commitment to recognising and responding to the unique needs of every learner. This toolkit has been developed to guide and support staff in identifying, understanding, and addressing additional needs including special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) at the earliest possible stage, ensuring that all pupils are given the opportunity to thrive in a mainstream school environment.

Pupils' development is not linear. For many pupils SEND is also not linear, therefore early identification and intervention are crucial. When we act promptly, we not only support better outcomes for our learners but also foster a more inclusive, compassionate, and responsive school culture. Mainstream education can and should be a place where all pupils—regardless of need—are valued, supported, and empowered to succeed.

Effective support for pupils with SEND is a shared responsibility. Alongside the dedication of school staff, Derby benefits from the expertise and partnership of local authority and health services. Educational psychologists, specialist teaching teams, speech and language therapists, and other professionals play a vital role in helping us understand and meet pupils' needs. Collaboration with these services ensures that our children and young people receive informed, evidence based support within a joined-up approach.

This handbook aims to equip all staff with the knowledge, tools, and confidence to play an active role in the SEND process. From initial concerns to graduated responses and collaborative working with families and external agencies, the guidance reflects current best practice and aligns with statutory frameworks.

Our shared goal is simple: to ensure that every child receives the right support, at the right time, in the right way.

As education professionals I know you are driven by the desire to provide each and every young person with the best chance to succeed in life, no matter who they are or where they come from. The evidence tells us that teachers who prioritise familiar but powerful strategies, like scaffolding and explicit instruction, to support their pupils with additional needs including SEND, or schools that allocate their best teachers to those with additional needs make the biggest impact. This means understanding the needs of individual pupils and weaving specific approaches into every day, high quality classroom teaching—being inclusive by design not as an afterthought.

However, meeting the needs of children and young people's is compounded by the complexities of the system of which schools are only one part.

Our aim at the City Council is to support you, whether that is through practical tools and strategies needed to make the biggest possible impact in achieving this or by working with you to generate skills and strategies you feel are needed to meet children's needs, or by listening to you and understanding how we need to make the system work better for our children and young people.

Sharon Buckby – Director of Education Skills and Learning

Legislation And Guidance

The 2015 SEND Code of Practice is a statutory guidance document in England that outlines the responsibilities of local authorities, schools, health services, and other organisations in supporting children and young people aged 0 to 25 with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). Key principles include early identification of needs, greater involvement of children, young people, and their families in decision-making, and a focus on achieving positive outcomes.

The Children and Families Act 2014 introduced major reforms to the way children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) are supported in England. It laid the legal foundation for the 2015 SEND Code of Practice. Together, they promote a more integrated, person-centred approach, ensuring that education, health, and care services work collaboratively to meet the needs of individuals aged 0 to 25.

The Equality Act 2010 is the UK's main legislation protecting individuals from discrimination in the workplace and wider society. It brought together and replaced previous anti-discrimination laws-such as the Race Relations Act and Disability Discrimination Act-into one comprehensive framework. The Act makes it unlawful to discriminate against people based on nine protected characteristics: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation.

The Human Rights Act 1998 incorporates the **European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR)** into UK law, ensuring that fundamental rights such as the right to education, freedom from discrimination, and respect for private and family life are protected and enforceable in British courts.

In the context of **SEND and inclusion in schools**, the Act plays a vital role. It requires public bodies, including schools and local authorities, to uphold these rights in their policies and practices. For example, Protocol 1, Article 2 of the ECHR guarantees the **right to education**, meaning that all children, including those with SEND, must have access to appropriate and inclusive education. Additionally, Article 14 prohibits discrimination in the enjoyment of these rights, reinforcing the legal obligation to treat children with SEND fairly and equitably.

SEN and Disability Duties: Guidance for School Governing Boards. This guidance helps schools understand their legal responsibilities under the Children and Families Act 2014 and the Equality Act 2010. It stresses the importance of inclusive values, strategic oversight, and accountability for outcomes for pupils with SEND.

Schools' Guide to the 0 to 25 SEND Code of Practice A practical resource that helps schools implement the Code of Practice, focusing on high-quality teaching, graduated response, and effective use of SEN support.

Reasonable Adjustments

Under the **Equality Act 2010**, schools must make **reasonable adjustments** to ensure disabled pupils are not at a substantial disadvantage compared to their peers. What Counts as a Reasonable Adjustment? This could include:

- Allowing a pupil with a visual impairment to sit in a specific location.
- Adjusting uniform policies for pupils with allergies or sensory needs.
- Providing coloured paper for pupils with dyslexia.

- Using communication aids like traffic light cards.
- Implementing Thrive, zones of regulation, movement breaks.
- Speech, language and communication interventions.
- Adjusting the building environment, or assistive technology.
- Adjusting start and end of day times.
- Establishing coaching groups.

Schools are expected to work with families and professionals to identify and implement appropriate adjustments, and ensure all staff are aware of them.

A school's notional budget provides a source of funding to enable reasonable adjustments to be made, to implement the graduated approach and support school staff to deliver effective inclusive pedagogy.

SEND Information Report

Schools must publish a **SEND Information Report** on their website, updated annually or sooner if changes occur. It should include:

- The school's approach to identifying and supporting pupils with SEND.
- Arrangements for consulting parents and involving them in their child's education.
- The support offered for pupils with additional needs including SEND.
- How adaptations are made to the curriculum and learning environment.
- Support for improving emotional and social development.
- Contact details for the SENCO.
- Information about staff training and expertise.

Parents have told us they would value clear explanations about different levels of support and what a SEN register is. You may include this on your website or your school Information report. Supporting parents to understand support pathways and strategies can make the system better understood by all.

On your webpage you could have a link to the Local Offer, SENDIASS and Derby SEND Voice website to aid this.

Supporting pupils with medical conditions at school guidance outlines the responsibilities of schools in supporting pupils with medical conditions, ensuring they can access a full education. It emphasises the importance of Individual Healthcare Plans (IHPs), developed collaboratively with families and healthcare professionals, to detail care needs, medication, and emergency procedures.

Staff must be appropriately trained, medicines securely stored and administered with consent, and accurate records maintained. The guidance also highlights the need for clear emergency protocols and regular reviews to ensure pupils' health needs are safely and effectively managed in school.

For pupils with emotionally based school non attendance, the Inclusion Partnership has developed a multiagency pathway and a resource toolkit to support schools to navigate the offer and provide effective support to pupils and their families (LINK).

The **Local Offer** gives children and young people with special educational needs or disabilities and their families, information about what support services are available in their area. Find out more about **Derby City's Local Offer**

Derby's Graduated Approach

Children and young people may be identified with SEN when they exhibit persistent difficulties in areas such as communication or learning that significantly impact their access to education. These indicators might include challenges with literacy or numeracy, difficulties in social interaction, or behavioural concerns that do not respond to universal strategies.

However, it is essential to recognise that such presentations may be rooted in broader contextual factors, including socio-economic deprivation, trauma, or disrupted attachment. In these cases, the underlying cause may **not be a special educational need**, but rather a response to adverse life experiences. Therefore, a holistic assessment is crucial to determine whether SEND support is the most appropriate pathway, or whether alternative interventions—such as pastoral support, mental health services, or family-based approaches—may better address the child's needs. Most, but not all, children who live in poverty will have a delay in their learning (Child of the North), whilst this might mean that pupils require additional learning support this does not mean that they will have an education, health and care plan. Support can be delivered as part of quality first teaching through adaptive, targeted and inclusive curriculum, reasonable adjustments, and targeted interventions.

This ensures that support is both proportionate and targeted, avoiding unnecessary labelling while still providing timely and effective help.

The **Inclusion Partnership** provides a wealth of workforce development opportunities. The focus for the last three years has been on trauma and attachment, relational approaches in schools, forest schooling, play and art therapy. Going forward the drive for inclusion looks towards:

- Embedding belonging and a sense of community in all schools.
- Supporting improved inclusive practice in classrooms.
- Coaching and mentoring.

Identifying needs

It is important to ask the question does a pupil have SEND? You can use our **SEND definitions** guide to help you understand definitions and the four Areas of SEND.

"*A child of compulsory school age, or a young person, has a learning difficulty or disability if he or she has a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of others of the same age, or has a disability which prevents or hinders him or her from making use of facilities of a kind generally provided for others of the same age in mainstream schools or mainstream post-16 institutions.*"

SEND Code of Practice (2015)

If a concern is raised by a parent or member of staff about a child's needs it is good practice to have a meeting with parents to discuss this.

At the meeting you should discuss:

- What the concern is?
- What actions need to be taken?

- Are any Reasonable Adjustments/Best Endeavours needed or already in place?
- Is learning impacted?
- Is additional support needed?
- The strengths of the child and what they do well.

At this point you should consider the **correct pathway for support**. These include:

- Early Help Support.
- Emotional Based School Avoidance Support (Section 19 responsibilities apply).
- Attendance.
- Trauma and Attachment.
- Risk Assessments.
- Personal Evacuation plans.
- An Individual Health Care Plan.
- Special Educational Need (SEND).

Derby City ND Community Hubs (NeuroHubs)

With no formal referral needed, the ND Community Hub in Derby City provides a range of advice, information and support for neurodiverse children, young people up to the age of 25, their families, and carers. Children and young people do not need to have a diagnosis to be able to access the ND Community Hub which offers:

- Drop-in sessions for advice and information.
- One to one sessions or groups via appointments.
- A space to work out how to manage different situations.
- Support with the assessment process.
- Training for parents and individuals.
- Specialist sessions covering housing, benefits, finance and employment.

The ND Community Hub in Derby also provides a safe and supportive environment where people can ask questions, be heard without having to repeat their story, receive hope and encouragement to reduce isolation.

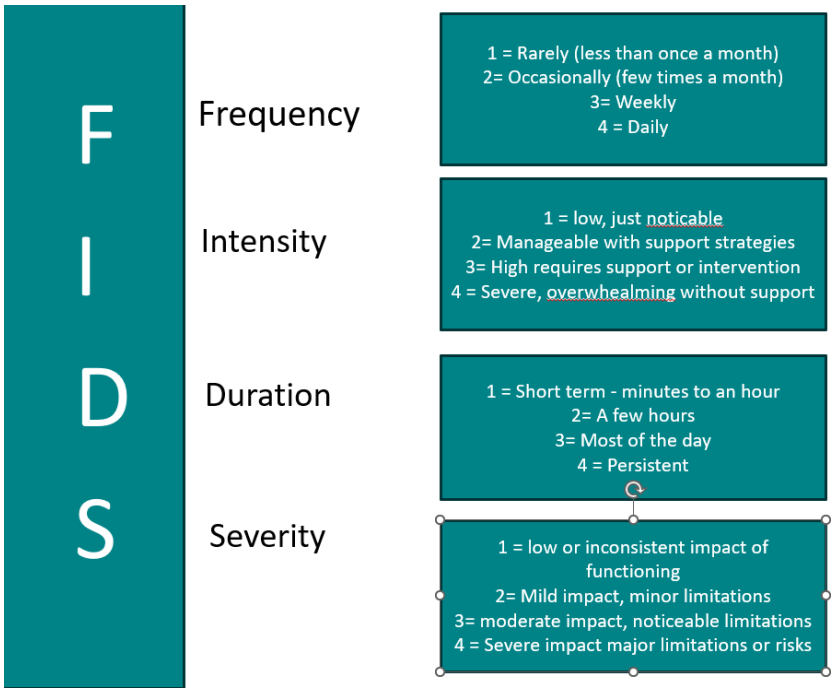
A **SENCO** (Special Educational Needs Coordinator) plays a crucial role in identifying whether a child has **Special Educational Needs (SEN)**. It is vitally important to **work with parents** through this process ensuring consideration is given to information and/or concerns they can share. Equally important is the fact that parents or carers may be able to share strategies that work at home as well as mirroring those that are introduced in school, thus strengthening their impact.

Parents have told us that when they feel heard they are less likely to feel they have to fight for support, reducing stress all round and creating a strong and respectful relationship that fosters trust.

To identify a Special Educational Need you should:

- Monitor progress: Comparing the child's academic and developmental progress with age-related expectations and the demographic you represent.
- Gather teacher feedback: Collecting insights from class teachers and support staff.

- Gain parental input: Talking with parents or carers about concerns, history, and development.
- Listen to the child's voice: Listening to the child's own views and experiences.
- **In-school assessments**: Using tools to assess literacy, numeracy, language, and emotional development.
- **Standardised tests**: Comparing results with national benchmarks.
- **Checklists and screeners**: For specific needs like dyslexia, ADHD, or speech and language difficulties.
- **Perform classroom observations**: Watch how the child interacts, learns, and behaves in different settings. When considering how a child presents for behave in certain environments or situations please consider **Frequency, Intensity, Duration and Severity**.



If you are clear that a pupil has SEND and it is the correct pathway to plan support you will need to create or use a **SEND Register**. A SEND register is a **live document** maintained by schools and settings to record all children and young people identified as having special educational needs. It helps ensure appropriate support, monitoring, and planning.

Information Recorded

- Name, date of birth, year group.
- Primary and secondary needs.
- Type of support provided, implementation and impact.
- External agencies involved.
- Review dates and outcomes.

Review and Monitoring

- The register should be reviewed regularly (at least termly).
- Pupils may move off the register if they no longer require SEN Support.

For those pupils recorded on your SEND register you should be able to evidence they are receiving SEND Support in school that includes *interventions and strategies that are* ***additional to and different from*** *the differentiated teaching and learning approaches typically provided to all pupils through quality first teaching. Unlike general classroom support, catch up programs and school focus development areas, SEN Support involves targeted and individualised interventions designed to address specific barriers to learning* SEND Support is a **systematic, tailored approach** to identifying and meeting the needs of pupils with SEND within mainstream education settings. It ensures that children receive the right help at the right time without needing a formal EHCP.

SEND Support should take a graduated approach

- Assess: Identify the child's needs. As described above in this toolkit.
- Plan: Decide on the support and interventions. You may involve Specialists or advisors to help plan these. Ensure you are able to measure progress and impact of any interventions or support inn place.
- Do: Implement the support. It is critical you give the child time to become familiar with new approaches and deliver them for long enough for them to make an impact.
- Review: Evaluate the effectiveness and adjust as needed. Be reflective, ask the child what is working, consider technology.

When a child is on the schools SEND register, it is good practice to meet with parents three times a year to discuss the APDR, consider support and impact of this and to plan collaboratively. If you are not able to do this three times a year you must do it a minimum of once.

The Graduated Response File (GRF) is a way of gathering information about a child's needs when there are concerns about their development or progress at school or in a setting.

It will support assessment and planning (the Graduated Response) and the actions you are taking and will be taking to meet the child's needs. If the child's school or setting make a request for an Education, Health and Care plan, the information gathered as part of the GRF is relevant and necessary. The GRF can be used with children and young people who have identified special educational needs and receive SEND Support in your school or setting. It can be used for any child or young person with SEND (according to the definitions in the SEND Code of Practice).

- The Graduated Response File, **What is it?**
- The Graduated Response File, **When to use it**
- **Setting up a Graduated Response File**

Pupil voice and Agency

Capturing a child's voice and views is a fundamental aspect of effective SEND support, ensuring that provision is not only appropriate but also empowering. When children are actively involved in discussions about their own needs and support, they are more likely to feel valued, understood, and engaged in their learning journey. The SEND Code of Practice (2015) places strong emphasis on the importance of person-centred approaches, highlighting that children and young people should be involved in decisions that affect them "as fully as possible."

Young SEND and Inclusion Ambassadors

Derby City has 'Young SEND and Inclusion Ambassadors', the group is made up of young people from all our Special Schools and is expanding to additionally include those who attend Mainstream and Enhanced resource bases schools.

Our Young SEND and Inclusion Ambassadors meet once a month on a Wednesday between 11am and 1pm at the museum of making. During the meetings, student ambassadors come together to discuss and collaborate on topics that matter to them. The Local Authority staff team then collate these and share at appropriate meetings or strategic forums.

If your school would be interested in nominating pupils and can facilitate attendance please get in touch via the Local Offer Team **Local.Offer@derby.gov.uk**

Being a part of the SEND Ambassadors Group has been a great experience for me. I often feel like the people in charge of making the big decisions for the city are much older and disconnected from me and shouldn't be able to make choices that affect me without knowing what my daily life is really like. At the Ambassador meetings we discuss important topics such as health and the environment, and I feel like I'm actually being listened to and my voice matters. As young people we're all concerned with the world we're going to inherit as adults, and being able to speak on these topics makes me feel more optimistic and like we're able to make changes for the better. I enjoy sharing my views and hearing what the others have to say, and I'm glad that people are paying attention to what really matters in our lives!
Niall, SEND Student Ambassador

Practical examples of gathering pupil voice include using **one-page profiles**, where children can share what people like about them, what's important to them, and how best to support them.

Pupil voice interviews and **visual tools** like "blob trees" or "feelings charts," and **learning walks with pupils** are also effective, especially for those with communication difficulties.

Some schools use **video diaries** or **photo journals** to help children express their experiences in a more accessible way. These approaches not only inform better planning and review of support but also foster a culture of respect and inclusion.

Capturing the voice of a child who is pre-verbal or not engaging requires creativity, sensitivity, and a deep understanding of the child's communication style. While these children may not use spoken language, they still express preferences, emotions, and needs through non-verbal cues, behaviour, and interactions with their environment.

In cases where a **child cannot tell you their views** there are three main methods that can be utilised: Observation-Based Approaches, Visual and Sensory Tools and Play based Techniques. These include:

- Structured observations during different activities can reveal what the child enjoys, avoids, or finds challenging.
- ABC charts (Antecedent-Behaviour-Consequence) help identify patterns in behaviour that may indicate preferences or discomfort.
- Choice boards or PECS (Picture Exchange Communication System) allow children to select images to express needs or preferences.
- Emotion cards or mood thermometers can help children indicate how they feel, even if they don't use words.
- Sensory profiling can highlight what environments or stimuli the child responds positively or negatively to.
- Child-led play can be a powerful window into a child's interests and feelings.
- Using puppets, dolls, or role-play can help children express themselves indirectly.

SEND Support Resources

We have collected some examples of resources that can support you planning to meet the needs of learners who need additional support:

- A Personalised Learning Plan (PLP) outlines a child's learning needs and how it impacts them in school. A PLP should outline SMART targets and the special educational provision that is being put in place, including resources, teaching and learning strategies and other interventions to support wider needs.

A PLP is the next step after the implementation of quality first teaching, reasonable adjustments and differentiation in the classroom. Differentiation includes considering grouping children by current ability levels to receive learning support in lessons; this is naturally a part of planning teaching and learning. A PLP is not needed if quality first teaching, reasonable adjustments and differentiation meet the needs of the child.

- A **school-level SEND provision map** is a document that outlines the support and interventions available to students with special educational needs (SEN) within a school. It details the different types of provision, resources, and staffing arrangements in place to address diverse needs, ensuring students receive the appropriate support to access the curriculum and make progress.
- **Writing SMART targets** is part of the assess, plan, do, review cycle and when experienced in writing can become second nature, but for those new to this we have created. Writing SMART Targets top tips to support.
- **Individual Health Care Plan (IHCP)** example – remember if a child has health needs and no learning needs you can write a IHCP with support from Health professionals involved to plan support. In most circumstances the pupil will not need to be on the SEND register.
- **Accessibility plans and the Equality Act 2010: a handbook for schools.** The focus of this guide is on disabled pupils and the school accessibility planning duties. These duties require a planned approach to increasing accessibility so that, over time, disabled pupils are more comprehensively included in the whole life of the school and fewer adjustments are needed for individual disabled pupils.
- Take a look at our suggested **Ten tactics for Positive Behaviour** and share with staff across your school.
- Some pupils may need a **Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan (PEEP)** we have created guidance and an example template you can use.
- There may be circumstances when an Individual Risk assessment is required to keep pupils, staff and/ visitors safe. Not all pupils that have one of these will have SEND and not all pupils with SEND will require one to be written.
- Transitions are a important time for children and families, and there are many questions that relate to this process and to making a great transition plan so children get the best experience. We have created **Starting School Policy and Guidance** - Transition to school for early years children SEND to answer common questions an give best practice guidance.
- There may come a time when SEND support is not enough for a child to make educational progress and you may want to consider requesting an Education, health and care Needs Assessment, before doing this you could use our **Things to consider before requesting an EHC Needs Assessment** guidance to support your decision.

Evidence-based interventions are practices or programs that have been peer reviewed, with documented empirical evidence of effectiveness. The effectiveness has been proven or informed by research and evaluation. The **Education Endowment Foundation** provide guidance reports which pull together key areas such as 'making the best use of teaching assistants' based on evidence and research.

Below are some tools and resources that can help you deliver your graduated approach:

- **SEND Categorisation Census Derby Guidance.**
- **The Derby Way.**
- **A Graduated Approach to Supporting Sensory Processing Needs.**
- **A Graduated Response to EBSNA.**
- **Starting School Policy and Guidance** - Transition to school for early years children SEND.

Helpful organisations and Programs

The **Preparing for Adulthood programme (PfA**) was delivered by the National Development Team for inclusion **(NDTi).**

- The programme was funded by the Department for Education as part of the **Delivering Better Outcomes Together** consortium.
- The partnership brought together a wide range of expertise and experience of working with young people and families, at a local and national level and across government, to support young people into adulthood.

Preparing for Adulthood (PFA)website has useful resources developed as part of the work undertaken such as **PFA Outcomes tool**

National Development Team for Inclusion (NDTi) are an independent, not-for-profit organisation that has worked alongside people, communities, policy makers, support organisations and services for over 30 years. Visit their website to find publications and Resources as well as research and development.

Disabled children and the Equality Act 2010: What teachers need to know and what schools need to do provides a summary of what teachers need to know and what schools need to do to prevent and address inequalities and ensure they do not discriminate against disabled pupils.

Safeguarding and SEND– Supporting Children with SEND

The NSPCC provides a wide range of **safeguarding resources** for schools, including guidance on working with children who have SEND and their families. It includes:

- Safeguarding guidance tailored for SEND.
- Lesson plans and resources for inclusive education.
- Online safety tips for parents and carers of children with SEND.

Partnerships for Inclusion of Neurodiversity in Schools (PINS)

The PINS (Partnerships for Inclusion of Neurodiversity in Schools) project is open to all primary, infant and junior schools in Derby City and Derbyshire. Schools who have shared their expression of interest will be provided training equivalent of 40 days per school, as well as parent/care involvement. The project is aimed to develop innovative ways to support the needs of neurodiverse children and families within schools. The project represents a formal partnership between the Department of Education, Department for Health and Social Care and NHS England. This will enable the Integrated Care Boards (ICBs) to link with local authorities and their parent/care forums to support schools to use a whole school approached focused on strengthening partnerships between parents and schools; develop schools' confidence and expertise in supporting neurodiversity within their classrooms; improve the school environment to address low level needs and allow neurodiverse children to successfully engage in learning' develop an inclusive culture that improves the efficacy of other interventions and contribute locally to the system wide ND Transformation Programme.

The PINS Programme will involve:

- Two full days Leadership for Inclusion training for Headteachers and SENCos.
- Five workshop half-days – SENCos and appropriate staff.
- Eight webinars for all staff.
- Four webinars for parents.
- Two webinars for governors.

Wave One (2024/25) of PINS has led to the following positive data:

- Permanent exclusion fell by 83% in PINS Schools compared to 39% across the country.
- Attendance improvements and a reduction in persistent and severe absence.
- Suspensions reduced by 42% and part-time timetables reduced.
- The way needs are described, and the provision created has improved in referrals for services and funding.

PINS Partnership for Inclusion of Neurodiversity in Schools - Derbyshire Local Offer

Derby SEND Voice are the Parent and career Forum run by and for families of children and young people aged 0-25, living with Special Educational Needs and/or disabilities (SEND) in Derby City. They gather the views and experience of members, they work in partnership with decision makers to help shape quality provision to bring about positive change and improve outcomes in Derby City. They provide parents and career with signposting and offer webinars, workshops and much more. If any parents in your setting wish to become a member please refer them to the website.

Independent Travel Training (ITT) is a free tailored and practical service that offers children and young people with SEND a set of essential skills, enabling them to travel independently by public travel on foot or by bike.

ITT aims to help children and young people travel independently without fear so they can get to school, college or work and access social and leisure activities.

It can provide a skill for life that may lead to greater social inclusion and improved employment prospects.

This is delivered by Transition 2 in Derby City and is available for pupils from Year 7 onwards who would benefit from support to become more independent, enabling access to a school bus service or a local bus service.

You can find out more about **how to apply** on Derby City's Local Offer.

Emotional Literacy Support Assistants (ELSA)

Emotional Literacy Support Assistants or ELSA is an initiative developed and supported by Educational Psychologists, who apply their professional knowledge of children and young people's social and emotional development to areas of need often experienced by learners in schools, such as low levels of self-esteem or resilience. ELSAs receive an initial five full days of training followed by ongoing professional supervision every half-term from an Educational Psychologist. This is to help maintain high quality support and intervention undertaken by Derby's ELSA's.

ELSAs deliver short-term, purposeful and personal interventions in a child focused or small group session, these aim to enable children and young people to learn specific new skills and strategies which develop their emotional literacy and improves their emotional wellbeing.

ELSAs work to specific programme aims that are realistic and can be achieved within a school term.

For more information, please visit: **www.ELSAnetwork.org**
You can enquire and book training by emailing: **stepsadmin@derby.gov.uk**

Autism Education Trust (AET) in schools

The Social Communication and Autism Team and the Early Years SEND Team Leader are licensed to deliver AET (Autism Education Trust) accredited training to schools and settings.

We are encouraging all schools and maintained nursery schools to select and train at least one Autism Advocate per setting. Autism Advocates will receive free AET accredited training in 'Making sense of Autism' (MSA) and 'Good Autism Practice' (GAP). The Autism Advocates will receive resources to then train staff in their school to develop who school approaches and understanding. They will also be able to access ongoing support from the Social Communication and Autism team. Autism advocates attend termly network meetings to access ongoing support and CPD during the year.

All Derby City schools will need an Autism Advocate in order to make a referral for individual pupil support from the Social Communication and Autism team from January 2026.

Early Years training will be MSA (Making Sense of Autism) and GAP (Good Autism Practice). This will be delivered several times during the licensed period for any practitioner to attend. Free resources and resources to purchase are available on the **Autism Education Trust website**.

For further information, email **stepsadmin@derby.gov.uk** or download our **Autism Advocates flyer**.

Local Authority Services and Support

Derby **SENCO Advice Line (SAL)** and SEND Support works with mainstream schools to support the implementation of a graduated approach to SEND, as defined by the SEND Code of Practice 2015. The aim is to support and develop high quality SEND provision at Universal and Targeted Levels.

If you have concerns about a child or young person with special educational needs or disabilities in your school or early years setting, the Derby City Council **Specialist Teaching and Psychology Service (STePS)** may be able to help.

Specialist Teaching and Psychology Service (STePS)

The Specialist Teaching and Psychology Service consists of the Educational Psychology Team, the Sensory and Physical Inclusion Team, and a new Intervention First Team**.**

1. Intervention First Team (NEW)

The newly created Intervention First Team encompasses a range of existing and new teams.

The aim of the team is to provide structured early intervention support that aids the child or young person to successfully engage in learning and school life.

The team includes:

The existing **Social Communication and Autism (SCA) Team** – this team support autistic children and children or young people with undiagnosed autism or communication and interaction needs, attending a Derby City mainstream school.

Early Years (EY) SEND Team – this team support children attending private, voluntary and independent early years settings in Derby City, or are not yet in a setting, with a moderate to severe difficulty in one or more area of development.

Specialist and Advisory Teachers (SAT) Team – this new team will work with schools to support review and development of provision as well as development and implementation of school level approaches and strategies. They will provide training and can support in School reviews of practice and / or assurance. They will also support in senco development and training sessions.

Assistant Educational Psychologists – this new team will work with schools who have school aged children on part-time timetables, are experiencing EBSNA or have needs which may make transitioning into school or moving to a new school particularly difficult.

Training delivered by the Intervention First team will be on the School Information Portal and will be regularly reviewed and updated.

2. Sensory and Physical Inclusion Team

The sensory and physical inclusion team provide support and advice for children with a diagnosed hearing impairment, vision impairment or physical disability.

3. Educational Psychology

Educational psychologists provide psychological advice as part of the EHC needs assessment process and offer support to schools and the local authority through training and strategic work. Schools can request support from the Educational Psychology Team via **the sold services brochure.**

For more information about STePS, visit the Schools Information Portal, where you'll find **the service handbook, training details, and mini-guides**

The SEND Team

The SEND Team oversee education, health, and care (EHC) plans for children and young people aged 0 to 25. They work in partnership with families, education settings, health and social care services, to ensure compliance with the relevant legislation.

The SEND Officer is the point of contact for children, young people and their families, and education settings. They are responsible for the completion of all administrative processes where an EHC needs assessment is being undertaken, following agreement by a multi-professional panel.

A SEND Officer has oversight for a caseload of children and young people with EHC plans in place or going through assessment. This is in accordance with the requirements of the Children's and Families Act 2014 and the SEN Code of Practice 2015.

Work is split across the team with different focus tasks:

- New Assessment requests.
- EHC Plan co-ordination including Annual Reviews.
- Complex Cases.

You can find information about who contact in the **Statutory SEN team** on the **SIP** and the **Local Offer** where we keep information updated.

The email addresses for the Statutory SEN Team are:

- **EHCP Assessment -** All things related to new assessments, including consultation responses: **ehcpassessments@derby.gov.uk**
- **SEND Reviews -** all Annual Reviews and request for copies of EHC Plans: **SENDReviews@derby.gov.uk**
- **SEN tribunal** – all communication with regards to SEND Tribunals: **SENTribunal@derby.gov.uk**
- EHC Funding.
- **SEND Duty** – enquiries that need an emergency response: **SENDDuty@derby.gov.uk;**
- **EHCP Funding –** enquires on payments: **ehcp.funding@derby.gov.uk**

Derby Special Educational Needs and Disability, Information, Advice and Support Service (SENDIASS), is a local authority statutory service.

SENDIASS provide **free**, legally based impartial, confidential and accessible information, advice and support for children, young people and parents and carers. They can also offer

advice to SENCO's and key professionals looking for advice on how to support families of children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND).

SENDIASS give advice on health and social care matters relating to SEND. The child or young person does not need to have a formal diagnosis or have an education, health and care (EHC) plan to receive this support.

Education Health and Care Needs Assessments

Most children and young people with SEN or disabilities will have their needs met within local mainstream early years settings, schools or colleges.

Where you have taken relevant and purposeful action to identify, assess and meet the SEN of the child or young person and they have not made expected progress, you may want to consider requesting an Education, Health and Care (EHC) needs assessment.

EHC Needs Assessment is usually for a minority of children and young people who can be described as those experiencing severe, complex, profound, and long-term educational difficulties. Whilst a larger number of pupils may experience difficulties which can be described as SEN, these difficulties are not in themselves grounds for requesting an EHC Assessment. These pupils should have their needs met as flexibly and creatively as possible within whole school/setting/college arrangements to support inclusion. Such needs are sometimes described as high incidence SEN.

Our **EHCNA Guidance Document** details the process with how and when to apply this. **Current forms** can be found on the SIP.

We have created a **visual timeline** to help explain the Statutory Education, Health and Care Needs Assessment process.

Moving Forward Together Meetings (MFT) A MFT is a strengths-based meeting following a decision by an inclusion panel that an EHCNA or EHCP is not required. The meeting will be coordinated by the Derby SEND Advice Line (DSAL) with the school and parent/s. A clear action plan will be developed in the meeting to ensure that all parties are clear on who is responsible for what and to give confidence to everyone involved that there is way forward for the child or young person.

Education, Health and Care Plan delivery

The EHCP outlines specific support and provision to be delivered by the local authority and other relevant bodies, such as healthcare professionals and professional working in the named educational setting.

Parents (or the young person) can request a personal budget to manage some of the provision independently.

The EHCP is reviewed annually (or every six months for children under five) to ensure it remains appropriate and effective.

Annual review process:

If a pupil in your setting does have an EHCP, an **annual review process** is required. We've developed the **annual review toolkit** in collaboration with SENCOs and parents.

The templates shared within this toolkit have been produced to support a more consistent approach to annual reviews across the city. It is important that only approved paperwork is used. We will update these pages regularly so please check before any reviews to ensure that you are using up-to-date templates.

It is best practice to involve parents at the planning stage of this, work with them to agree a date and consider who should be invited. This planning stage is a good time to check parents understand the purpose of an Annual Review and for them to be able to ask questions prior to being in formal meeting.

Emergency Annual review process

An emergency annual review, also known as an **interim or early review**, is a process for reviewing a child's Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan outside the standard annual review timeframe. This is done when there is an urgent need to address significant changes in the child's needs or when the current EHC plan is no longer meeting those needs.

Information And Support for Sencos

We try to keep our information clear and concise and are continually reviewing this to make sure it reflects the latest guidance and research.

We aim to put all our key documents on the School Information Portal (SIP) and the links in this toolkit take to you either webpages or the SIP.

The other way updates will be communicated is via the School Circular.

You will find some quick links to pages we update below:

- **SENCO Forum meetings.**
- **Hot topic briefings.**
- **SEND Ambassadors Programme.**

Impartial Advice and Support

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SENDIASS give advice on health and social care matters relating to SEND. The child or young person does not need to have a formal diagnosis or have an education, health and care (EHC) plan to receive this support.

Understanding SEND Funding

In Derby we continue to fully implement the National Funding Formula meaning schools in Derby continue to be funded above the levels national policy has determined, this is great news for all our schools DSG allocations are based on the financial year rather than the academic year. Government and Local Authority budgets operate on a financial year basis (April to March). Aligning school budgets with this cycle ensures consistency and facilitates smoother financial planning and allocation processes whilst aligning with cabinet ratification.

The Dedicated Schools Grant for Derby is split into four blocks:

- Schools Block – This is the largest portion and funds mainstream schools based on pupil numbers and characteristics. Local authorities distribute this funding using a formula that considers factors like deprivation and prior attainment.
- High Needs Block – Supports children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), as well as alternative provision for students who cannot attend mainstream schools.
- Early Years Block – Funds free childcare and early education entitlements for children aged two, three, and four, including additional support for disadvantaged families.
- Central Schools Services Block (CSSB) – Covers essential services provided by local authorities, such as school admissions, education welfare, and historical commitments.

• Element 1 funding – AWPU. • This funding comes from the school's block.	• As part of the delegated budget, all schools receive basic funding for every pupil known as the AWPU (Age Weighted Pupil Unit). Schools also each receive funding for other pupil characteristics such as deprivation and a lump sum amount for the school which must meet the minimum funding level as set by the Department for Education. • Minimum funding levels per pupil, for 2025-26 primary schools are at least **£4,955** per pupil and secondary school at least **£6,495** per pupil.	• This funding covers teaching/SENCO costs and is the base per pupil funding that every school gets. • Reasonable adjustments that are to be met by the school. • The duty to have an Accessibility strategy, SEN policy and SEND Information report.
• **Element 2 funding – your notional SEND budget.** • This funding comes from the school's block.	• Each school's delegated budget includes a notional SEN allocation. Nationally, schools are required to fund the first £6,000 of additional costs per child or young person with SEN; this funding is used to implement strategies such as resources and/or additional support. • Some pupils with SEN will also be eligible for additional funding, such as Pupil Premium.	• This includes developing and embedding your ordinarily available provision, for example, ELSA, and training and development of staff. • Low impact/high frequency SEND support and interventions for example, the need for Lego therapy, zones of regulation, circle of friends etc. • Adaptation, development, and delivery of appropriate curriculum and environment.

		• You must show how you have used SEND Notional for young people with SEND to meet their needs up to the threshold of £6000 if you make a request for assessment. • **Please refer to 'The Derby Way'**
• **Element 3 – High needs top-up funding.** • This funding comes from the high needs block.	• The funding required over and above the core funding. • This funding relates to an individual pupil and the amount allocated is defined by the individual pupil's needs and agreed provision, as described in their EHC Plan. This top-up funding is used along with universal funding and £6,000 from the school's notional SEN funding to provide the provision described with the pupil's EHC Plan. • Top-up funding is provided to the school for the time a pupil attends that school (part-time places are funded accordingly). • If a Derby school has a child from another local authority attending their school, the school will have to claim 'Top up' funding directly from the other Local Authority.	• This pays for per pupil support beyond SEND Notional, so, for example, if you have a young person with a high level of need who requires more bespoke provision, the element will be used to put in place the provision as specified in their EHCP.

The Banding Matrix: The Local Authority has reviewed processes used to allocate Element 3 Funding. This is often called 'top up funding' or 'banding'. The review was to ensure that finding allocations agreed are consistent and based on a child or young persons needs.

A banding matrix is now used to calculate funding allocations based on the pupils needs. This tool considers pupils needs and the Frequency, Intensity Duration and Severity of these. These needs are calculated to give a Band Level.

We use Bands 1 – 20 which are applied for school aged pupils and across Mainstream schools, our Enhanced Resourced provisions and for Derby City Special Schools.
This is the process for all new EHCPS. EHCP where funding was allocated using the previous system will be reviewed using the banding matrix through annual review over the next two years.

Thank you

With thanks for feedback and support in development of this toolkit from Parent and Carer representatives from Derby SEND Voice, Local Authority Advisory staff including Educational Psychologists and Teachers, Derby City Sencos and Health staff from the ICB and Public Health.

This toolkit will be regularly reviewed. If you have feedback or suggestions, please contact **DerbySAL@derby.gov.uk**

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