



Northumberland  
County Council

# The Northumberland Graduated Approach for Special Educational Needs

## Information for Parents/Carers

July 2018

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## Introduction

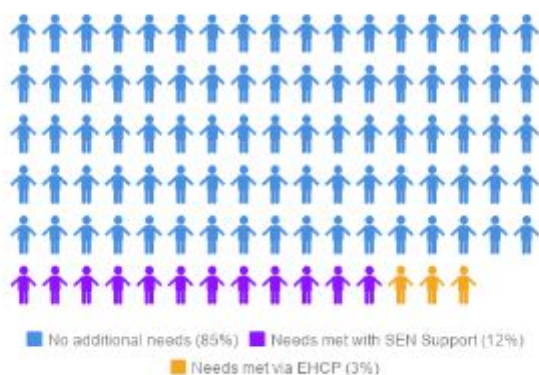
In 2015, the government produced guidance which followed the Children and Families Act of 2014. This guidance, the Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice: 0-25 years (Code of Practice) provides information to all those involved in meeting the needs of children and young people, and outlines statutory responsibilities of different organisations. The guidance must be followed by local authorities, all schools and further education institutions, and any early years settings which are funded by the local authority. The guidance also provides information around the role of health and social care services in supporting children and young people with Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities.

The Code makes it clear that the wishes and aspirations of young people and their parents/carers must be at the centre of decision making at a variety of levels, e.g. at the level of the individual child around the support they require, and at a strategic level around planning local services.

In addition, the Code lays out a clear approach that should be taken by schools and settings when there are any concerns about the progress of a child or young person. Schools and settings play a crucial part in the identification of special educational needs, and for providing support for children which is appropriate and effective. You, along with your school or setting, know your child's strengths and difficulties and what support works best for them. This is why working together is so important.

The Code also explains clearly the systems that must be in place for the small minority of children and young people who, despite appropriate support being in place at school, have complex needs which require a multi-agency assessment (Education Health and Care needs assessment).

In 100 children/young people 5-19 there will be learners with...

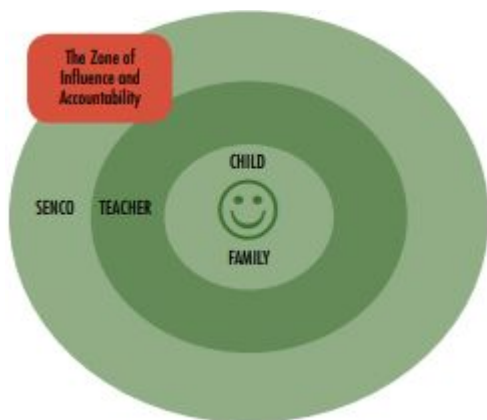


As a broad guide, approximately 12% of learners are supported at school level via SEN Support whilst approximately 2.9% have an Education Health Care Plan (Local Government SEND report 2016-17).

This booklet explains what, in Northumberland, you can expect if your child has a special educational need and/or a disability.

## The Graduated Approach

If your child has Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities (SEND), schools and settings should take action to remove barriers to learning and put effective special educational provision in place through the use of a Graduated Approach. This means that they should put a range of things in place to support children and young people with many different types and levels of need.



The Graduated Approach starts in every classroom, where children should have high quality teaching which is adapted according to need. This is the entitlement of all learners. Class teachers are responsible for the progress and development of children with special educational needs. All mainstream schools must appoint a teacher to be their SENCo who is responsible for the day-to-day operation of the school's SEN policy and will have oversight of which pupils need additional support in school and how this is being delivered.

Schools and settings must then make reasonable adjustments to make sure that children and young people with SEND are able to have their needs met within the classrooms, by providing support that is individual to the child and helps them to overcome any barriers to learning. In this way, SEND learners should enjoy the same opportunities as their peers wherever possible and be fully included within their communities.

The way that schools and settings work in supporting children with additional needs will follow an **Assess-Plan-Do-Review (APDR)** model. This means that they will be

- assessing any challenges to a child's learning i.e. working out what the issues are
- planning what will best help
- carrying out the plan
- reviewing how successful the plans have been i.e. has the child started to make progress



The model looks like this. Schools should talk to you at the planning and review stages. It may be that cycles are repeated with minor changes over time.

The Code of Practice outlines when a concern about progress may need to be thought of as a possible special educational need. It says this is where a child's progress:

- is significantly slower than that of their peers starting from the same baseline
- fails to match or better their previous rate of progress
- fails to close the attainment gap between the child and their peers
- widens the attainment gap

## A Graduated Approach to Meeting Needs

Most learners will have their needs met through the funding usually available to the school or setting. All schools are expected to provide the first £6000 of any support required (early years funding arrangements are different).

All learners are entitled to quality first teaching within their classrooms.

There are then a number of 'stages' through which a school or setting might suggest your child progresses, depending on the success of the interventions that have been tried:

### First/Initial Concerns

This is when someone expresses a concern that your child is potentially facing challenges with learning and their progress is slower than would be expected. It is good practice to make sure that the concerns are noted and most schools will record this to help monitor children's progress. Anyone, including yourself or your child, can express a concern.

At this stage, if it is the school or setting who have identified the concern, they should contact you to let you know, and discuss how they are going to help your child. Once a plan is agreed to help your child, two cycles of assess, plan, do, review (APDR) will take place, likely to be one term each. For many children, the plans will have a good impact and any barriers to learning will be addressed using these early and low level interventions. They might include small group work within the classroom which targets literacy or numeracy, or a programme developing social skills or language.

If, following two cycles, progress has not been as hoped, this will be discussed with you again. The school/setting may recommend that more interventions are needed, and at that point they may think that the next stage of support would be beneficial. This will mean that your child will be placed on the school's SEN register. You will be told about this.

### SEN Support - Profile/Passport

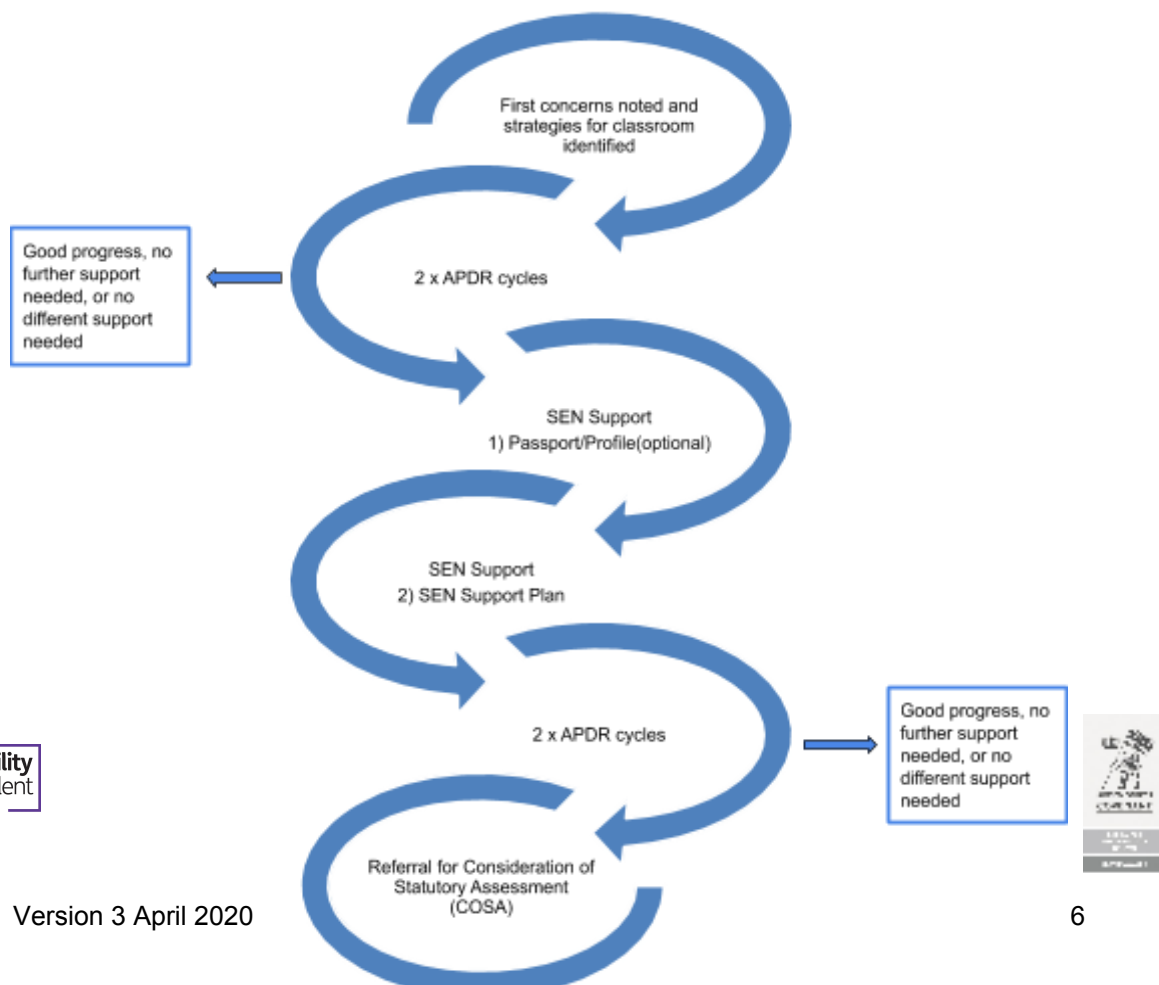


At the early stages of SEN Support, you may be invited to complete a pupil profile/passport with the SENCo and your child. This is a way of the school/setting recording your child's strengths and barriers to learning, and planning and communicating the support and provision necessary. This document should be used by the school/setting to ensure everyone working with your child knows how best to support them. Following two cycles of this profile/passport, if it is agreed at the review that progress is still not in line with what is expected, then your child should move onto:

## SEN Support - SEN Support Plan

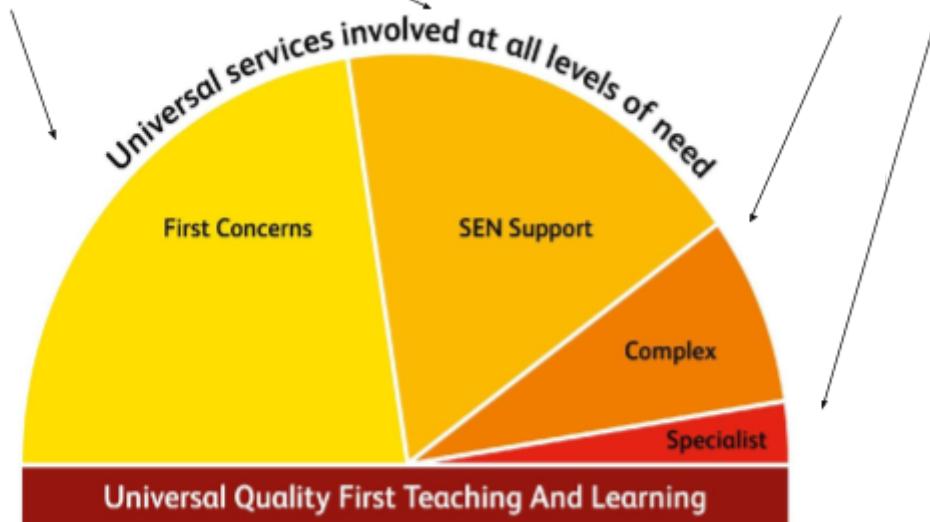
At this stage, a more structured and detailed plan should be made which allows the needs of your child to be set out clearly. Your views, and theirs, will be taken into account and there should be clear, measurable outcomes. Support at this stage may continue to come from within the school/setting, but they also might call on outside specialists to advise them. This may include some individual support for learning, and more specialist interventions recommended by a suitably qualified person. People who might be involved at this stage are Educational Psychologists, Specialist Teachers from the SEND Support Services, Speech and Language Therapists, Occupational Therapists, Physiotherapists etc. This will all be detailed in the plan. The plan would run for at least two cycles, with a review process after each cycle involving all concerned.

If it is decided by all involved that sufficient progress is not being made, and the gap between the child and their peers is widening, it may be that everyone concerned feels that a multiagency assessment of need is required.



At 'First Concern' and 'SEN Support' stages, schools make 'reasonable adjustments' using delegated/notional budgets over a series of APDR cycles. See above.

At 'Complex' and 'Specialist' stages, the local authority may need to make provision under an Education Health and Care Plan. A request for a *consideration of statutory assessment (COSA)* can be made, see below. An EHC needs assessment may then follow. See page 8.



## Consideration of Statutory Assessment (COSA)

A COSA request is asking the Local Authority to determine whether there is evidence that the level of special educational need is over and above what a mainstream school is expected to meet from within their own resources. The request is made via a 'COSA form' which collects information around what difficulties your child is experiencing, how the school has been supporting them and what impact the support has had. There is also a parent/carer form which you can complete at this stage to share any information about your child that you feel is important.

COSA forms are sent to the SEN Team at Northumberland County Council and go before a SEND Commissioning Panel. The Panel is made up of head teachers / senior school leaders, representatives from health and social care and other professionals such as educational psychologists and specialist advisory teachers. The Panel scrutinises all applications to ensure that decisions around the provision of additional resources are allocated according to level of individual need and are fair and consistent across the County.

The Panel reviews the information and makes a decision as to whether there is clear evidence that the school or setting have used the resources delegated to them to meet SEN, and can make the following decisions:

- **To Assess** - there is clear evidence that the level of need is over and above what schools are expected to meet from within their own resources. A multi-agency assessment can be carried out to determine whether there is a level of need sufficient to have an Education Health Care Plan. Your child will be allocated a SEN Case Worker from the SEN Team who will coordinate the assessment
- **Not to Assess** - there is not sufficient evidence to show that it may be necessary for special educational provision to be made for the child or young person in accordance with an EHC Plan, and the school should continue to support the child at SEN Support

(NB A decision to assess does not mean that your child will receive an Education Health Care Plan. It is sometimes difficult to make a decision about what support is required, so an assessment may be agreed but the outcome may not be an Education Health Care Plan).

An educational setting can request a COSA. They will seek your consent to do so and share with you the information they are sending to the Local Authority. A parent or young person over 16 but under 25 can also request one, and those requests would be made directly to the local authority. However, as evidence will still be requested from the school/setting it is always helpful if everyone can work together.

If there have been any other professionals working with your child up to this point, they do not need to provide a *separate* report for the COSA request, as this step is about schools showing how they have used their delegated resources to help your child. Schools may already have evidence of specialist input and should include that in their request, in particular how the school has acted on the advice of a specialist. However, if you have any reports about your child from a health or social care professional it is helpful to share them with school and they can send them in alongside their evidence.

## **Multi-agency Education Health and Care Needs Assessment**

Once the decision to carry out a statutory assessment has been made by the Panel, everyone in education, health and social care who is working with your child will be asked to submit a written report (often called 'SEN advice' by some professionals) to the Local Authority within six weeks. An educational psychologist will also meet with the school/setting, yourself and your child to write their statutory advice for the assessment. Sometimes the professionals working with your child might need to see them again and you may be asked to attend extra appointments.



You will have an opportunity to provide your advice as well and will be provided with a form to fill in to share what is working well for your child and what help and support you feel your child needs. Please let the SEN Team know if you would like help completing the form. You can also access other support for this - see contact details at the end of this booklet.

Once all the reports have been sent to the Local Authority, the SEN Case Worker will look at all the advice received and will draft a Proposed Support Plan. A multi-agency meeting will take place where you, and everyone involved with your child, will be invited to look at the Proposed Support Plan and agree the contents. The Proposed Support Plan and all the written advice that the Local Authority received will then go to the SEND Commissioning Panel (as described earlier).

The Panel will decide whether the assessment of your child's needs has shown the level of need is over and above that which can be met from within school resources and whether an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) is required. The EHCP will detail what level of support is required to best meet your child's needs. The Panel may decide that your child's needs can be met from resources available within school and recommend that your child continues to be supported at SEN Support.

## Complaints

### About support in school

If you are not happy about how your child is supported in school, talk to your child's school and try to resolve the problem with them first. If you cannot resolve the problem informally, then ask for a copy of the school's complaint procedure. School complaint procedures usually include complaining to the governing body of the school. Every school has a governing body. In the case of an academy, there is also a governing body although it may have a different name. You should submit your complaint in writing, addressed to the chair of governors at the school.

### About the outcome of Panel

You can appeal to the SEND Tribunal about decisions that the local authority has made about your child, and about disability discrimination by schools and local authorities. The kind of decisions you can appeal against include refusal to carry out a statutory assessment, refusal to issue an EHCP and the contents of an EHCP.

You can find more about appealing to the SEND Tribunal at:

[www.justice.gov.uk/tribunals/send/appeals](http://www.justice.gov.uk/tribunals/send/appeals)



## Further Help and Support for Families

Your child's school or setting should be able to offer you good support and information about how they are addressing your child's needs. There may be times when you feel it necessary to look beyond this in order to seek additional advice or services that may be helpful to you, your child and your family. You may find the following links and contact details useful:

The [Northumberland Local Offer](#) (link below) provides information on what is available in Northumberland for children and young people aged 0- 25 years with special education needs and/or a disability (SEND) and their families.

<http://www.northumberland.gov.uk/Children/Northumberland-Local-Offer-SEND-0-to-25-years.aspx>

The [Northumberland SEND Information, Advice and Support Service](#) provides free, confidential and impartial information, advice and support to children and young people with special educational needs or disabilities up to the age of 25, and their parents and carers. The service can be contacted on 01670 623555 or [alison.bravey@northumberland.gov.uk](mailto:alison.bravey@northumberland.gov.uk)

<http://www.northumberland.gov.uk/Children/Northumberland-Local-Offer-SEND-0-to-25-years/Information-advice-support.aspx>

As of Spring 2020, a new parent carer forum is currently being established for Northumberland. Information and further details will be published on the Northumberland Local Offer website as it becomes available.

The [Families Information Service](#) (FIS) is a free, impartial service providing information on a wide range of services for children and young people in Northumberland and their families. The service also provides detailed advice on childcare and early years educational provision. They can be contacted on 0800 023 4440 (Freephone), 01670 624889 or [fis@northumberland.gov.uk](mailto:fis@northumberland.gov.uk)

<https://northumberland.fsd.org.uk/kb5/northumberland/fsd/home.page>

