An Introduction to SEND Support in North Somerset

This information has been co-produced with families and professionals to support and enable everyone to better understand the local area’s processes and procedures for supporting children and young people with special educational needs and/or disability (SEND).

This manual will provide parents and professionals with information which enables them to support children to move as seamlessly as possible through services, ensuring that their needs are met as they change and develop. We have broken the document up into sections based on stages of a child’s progress through pre-school and education, to cover the specific changes in provision which occur.

We aim to provide information which can be used across the whole spectrum of need: from those children that require a small amount of additional support to those that have higher level of need for more complex services.

Although these documents are anchored in children’s educational needs, we recognise that this support in schools and settings can often only meet needs if it is accompanied by the appropriate health and social care provision. In North Somerset we are committed to working holistically with all children and young people with SEND. We are also mindful of the commitment made in the North Somerset Local Area SEND Strategy to:

“improve the ways we work to ensure that we deliver on our plans and continue to review progress… we will continue to work collaboratively to improve services throughout the life of this strategy”

Locally, professionals are working more closely than ever with parents and young people to jointly design systems and processes which better reflect the needs and aspirations of the child, ensuring we meet our duties under the SEND Code of Practice and of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child\(^1\). These documents set out our approach to ensuring this takes place for every child.

In North Somerset we understand that all education, health and social care professionals must work together effectively to support children and young people with SEND. We have approached this by identifying three tiers of provision: known as Universal, Targeted and Specialist Support. These do not represent thresholds for services, entitlements or diagnoses but indicate a range of approaches to meeting

\(^1\) United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (Articles 28,29)
need. While all children will receive support in the universal tier via school, their GP, health visitors etc. some children may require additional support more specifically targeted to meet their needs. Equally, these tiers do not represent a continuum of increasing need through which children move. Our aim is to provide support which enables children to remain as far as possible in universal settings and services, supported to do so by appropriate targeted and specialist provision. For example, it may be possible to provide appropriate training or support for management of a serious health condition which enables a child to remain in school.

Our aim is to provide the right support, when needed to enable children to meet their potential, and for parents to be supported to meet their children’s needs.

**Our local approach to SEND services**

The *SEND Code of Practice: 0-25 years* states:

“All children and young people should be given an appropriate education: one that is appropriate to their needs, promotes high standards and leads to the fulfilment of their potential. This should enable them to:

- Achieve their best
- Become confident individuals living fulfilling lives, and
- Make a successful transition into adulthood, whether into employment, further or higher education or training”
Our local response to this is:

Children and young people with SEND often require different levels of support at different times to meet their changing needs. This is often provided by family and friends, or via from universal services. Those with specific needs may be supported by targeted provision, and those with the most complex needs may need ongoing support and advice from more specialist services as well as the universal and targeted services (see Journey of the Child and Young Person).

All of our education, health and care providers are expected to have a systematic approach to identifying those with SEND, and to have interventions in place to support and remove barriers to learning and progress.

We recognise this support should happen as early as possible. Therefore, locally:

- Children Centers and Nurseries are working closer together with social care, recognizing as early as possible if a child may require extra support and responding to that need.
- Weston Area Health NHS Trust (WAHT) provides community health services for children. The service works with children and young people aged 0-19 years and their parents and carers to provide a range of services at specialist level. We are improving communications between health, education and social care professionals to ensure they share a systematic approach to identifying those with SEND.
- Within the child’s early years settings and schools, support is available via early years support, school support or individual learning support and other post-16 providers. Such support aims to meet a child or young person’s needs so that they can fulfil their individual goals.
- We are forming a new transition team which will build links with education providers to work earlier with young people to support them to have successful transition into adulthood.

The SEND Code of Practice: 0-25 years states:

“A child or young person has SEN if they have a learning difficulty or disability which calls for special educational provision to be made for him or her. A child of compulsory school age or a young person has a learning difficulty or disability if he or she:

- Has a significant 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.”

Our local response to this is:

Early Years Providers and Schools will use the broad areas of need described in the Code of Practice to identify areas of need for each child or young person,
recognising that for some, their needs may cover more than one of the following areas. These broad categories are:

- Cognition and Learning
- Social, Emotional and Mental Health
- Communication and Interaction
- Sensory and/or Physical

Where a pupil is identified as having additional needs in one or more of these areas, schools should take action to identify and remove barriers to learning and to put effective special educational provision in place.

All SEN Support in North Somerset is based on a cycle of **assess, plan, do and review** through which earlier discussions and actions are revisited, refined and revised to build a growing understanding of the child’s needs and of what support best enables the child or young person to make good progress towards planned outcomes. This is known as the Graduated Approach and is further explained in our **Graduated Response** and **Joint Outcomes** documents.

In North Somerset, most children and young people with SEND are supported in their educational setting via this Graduated Response and without the need for a formal Education, Health and Care plan (EHCP), though their entitlement to be assessed for a plan remains in place where needed or requested by parents or professionals. If outcomes over a reasonable period are not reached then consideration should be given to requesting an Education, Health and Care Assessment. This would be most appropriate where there is evidence of needs being long term, where support has been in place over time with evidence that all appropriate funding has been applied and used.

Where an EHCP is in place, the progress made will be evaluated at an Annual Review where parents and professionals meet to discuss progress, evaluate how well support has worked and to plan for the year ahead and beyond. Children and young people are encouraged to be involved in annual reviews, and we work to ensure their voices are paramount in decisions made about their future support.

**How to get involved**

We would welcome your comments and suggestions regarding SEND processes, systems and policies in our local area by using the following email address, though please note that this should not be used for questions about individual cases. We will ensure your comments reach the appropriate team within the Local Authority and Clinical Commissioning Group for a response.

Contact us on **SEND@n-somerset.gov.uk**
You may also wish to consider join your local Parent/Carer forum. North Somerset Parent Carers Working Together are involved in all aspects of improving the local SEND system, working closely to challenge and support the Local Authority and Clinical Commissioning Group. Find NSPCWT on Facebook or email northsomersetpcwt@gmail.com

**Other sources of support**

**Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities (SEND) Local Offer**
The website sets out what is available in North Somerset for children and young people who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and their families. We are always keen to add new activities, events and services to the local offer – so please let us know if there is something you have found which isn’t yet listed. http://www.n-somerset.gov.uk/localoffer

**Early Years, Schools and Colleges**
If you feel that there are signs that your child may have additional needs, your initial contact will be the SEND coordinator (SENDCO) in their pre-school setting, school, or college. They will be able to determine whether your child is making appropriate progress for their age and advise on how you can best support them to continue. If the SENDCO has concerns, they will discuss with you what support can be offered.

**Support from Social Care**
Our Disabled Children’s Team can advise you on universal, targeted and specialist support available to children with SEND. Many of the services provided, including a range of clubs and activities suitable for children with SEND, are available without a diagnosis or assessment. However, for children with very complex needs, a social care assessment may be appropriate. Information on their services and how to access them can be found on the Local Offer

**Supportive Parents, SENDIAS Service**
An independent organisation offering a free, confidential and impartial service to any parent, child or young person who has a concern about special educational needs. www.supportiveparents.org.uk

**The Council for Disabled Children**
This website provides lots of useful updates on legislation, resources and access to e-learning. www.councilfordisabledchildren.org.uk

**Preparing for Adulthood**
Provides useful information, updates on legislation and resources about preparing for adulthood with children and young people who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. www.preparingforadulthood.org.uk