The Graduated Response in North Somerset

What is the graduated response?

The Children and Families Act 2014 and the supporting Code of Practice place a clear responsibility on early years settings, schools and colleges to meet the needs of all children and young people with SEND including those who do not have an Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plan.

The approach to meeting the needs of children with SEND is known as the graduated response – our local process to ensure whenever possible, children, young people and their families receive the right support at the right time in their current setting or school. We aim to have a clear process in place for all to understand and follow.

Actions which underpin our local Graduated Response include the following steps:

• When a child is identified as having SEN the early years provider or school must take immediate action. Staff must put effective SEN provision in place and ensure that all barriers to learning are removed.

• As soon as a child is identified as having SEN their family must be informed. The early years provider or school must then work in partnership with parents/carers, listening to their views and proactively involving them and their child in decision making and planning.

• SEN provision must be reviewed at least termly, and all reviews must involve the child and their family.

• It may be decided that advice from specialist professionals is required in order to meet the needs of a child, which will be obtained by the school or setting in the first instance. This might be advice about the child’s education, health or care needs.

• SEN support and provision should be informed by the ‘assess, plan, do, review’ cycle as outlined in the SEND Code of Practice.

What is the local areas response to implementing the Graduated Response?

Teachers within early years settings, schools and colleges are responsible and accountable for the progress and development of children and young people in their class, even when the child or young person accesses support from teaching assistants or specialist staff.
Support maybe provided by specialist staff based within the school or it maybe accessed from appropriate colleagues in by education, health or care services.

This support:

- Is rooted in a whole setting approach in both early years and in school
- Places emphasis on the teacher’s role in driving the graduated response
- Will provide support for teachers and families via the early years co-ordinator and schools SEN co-ordinators
- Includes meaningful co-production and participation with children and parents
- Is underpinned by an ethos and values that promote high expectations and a drive for inclusivity, fully supported by the leadership of the early years setting or school

This combination of informal and formal support, drawing on specialist advice as needed, should provide families with the help they need most and every child with the best opportunity to realise their potential.

It is important to remember that it is not just the practitioners and specialist services that support children with SEND and their families. In many cases, the help and informal support of their family and friends, and the support of their community, makes a really significant difference and is most valued. A range of community services which are often open to everyone but which have made a particular effort to ensure they are inclusive can be found on the Local Offer website.

Services that everybody can use (which we call universal services) include schools, leisure centres and your doctor’s surgery. They can provide valuable advice and support. Practitioners can also work together to provide joined-up services to achieve specific outcomes or support more complex needs when required. There is also a range of services that can provide very specialist support at times when it is most needed. It is also important to remember that children’s needs and situations will change over time: sometimes needing additional support at certain times, but equally experiencing times of stability when they may need less support. The graduated response enables us to step up and down the tiers of service, providing the right support at the right time, without causing disruption or confusion for children and families.

Universal services are a combination of informal and formal support that can provide your family with the help you need most and your child with the best opportunity to realise their potential. Most children and young people with SEND in North Somerset have their needs met through mainstream education. The Code of Practice makes it clear that high quality teaching which is adapted for individual pupils is the first step in responding to possible SEND.

The following two documents explain in detail the process early years providers, schools and colleges will work through when supporting you and your child, and include details of the likely support they will draw on from across the education, health and social care system.