

UNIT 4: Identification of Special Educational Needs

What the SEND Code of Practice says:

The Code of Practice makes clear the benefits of early identification of additional needs and making effective provision to improve the long-term outcomes for children and young people.

“A pupil has SEN where their learning difficulty or disability calls for special educational provision, namely provision different from or additional to that normally available to pupils of the same age”. (SEND Code of Practice, page 94)

All schools and settings should have a clear approach to identifying and responding to special educational needs, embedding the process of Access, Plan, Do, Review in classroom/setting practice.

Care should be taken when assessing the needs of children and young people whose first language is not English, and with younger children who have not had access to good pre-school learning opportunities.

Early identification of SEN in Early Years

The requirements for identification of SEN for children 0 – 5 years are set out in the EYFS framework. The ‘Early years outcomes’ helps early year’s practitioners, and others to know what outcomes for the child they should be working towards. The Code emphasises the importance of parental involvement in assessing the needs of the child, and listening to the parents descriptions of how their child presents in different situations.

Some children are identified as having developmental, sensory and/or physical needs from birth and are more likely to have special educational needs. If a Health professional thinks that a child under compulsory school age will have or is likely to have special educational needs, they **must** inform the parents and **must** also give parents the opportunity to discuss their professional opinion and let the parents know about any voluntary organisations who could offer support and advice.

For children under compulsory school age, The Health professional **must** also notify the local authority of their professional opinion that the child does or is likely to have special educational needs.

Identification of SEN in schools

The Code emphasises the importance of all those who work with children and young people being alert to emerging difficulties and respond early on with appropriate interventions. Schools should assess each pupil's current skills and levels of attainment on entry, building on information from previous settings and key stages where appropriate (SEND Code of Practice, page 95). Schools should also consider the evidence that a pupil may have a disability under the Equality Act 2010 and, if so, the reasonable adjustments which may need to be made for them.

Schools should have whole-school systems in place for tracking and reporting on the academic progress of all pupils. There should be clear expectations for progress of all pupils which is shared in a meaningful way with the pupils and parents. Many schools will also formally assess and track pupils' participation and well-being using such programmes as PASS or locally developed programmes.

As soon as an area of difficulty is noted, high quality teaching should be targeted at this area, e.g. phonic work or social skills.

Experiencing difficulties does not necessarily mean that the child or young person has SEN. There are many reasons why they may have fallen behind their peers. They may have had disrupted education due to illness, or other reasons for absence; they may have experienced poor teaching at an earlier stage of education. For pupils whose first language is not English, care should be taken when assessing progress as lack of progress could be due to a language barrier. For further information on supporting English as an additional language please contact CREDS on 01223 703882 or creds@cambridgeshire.gov.uk

Pupils' progress may also be affected by bullying; bereavement; difficulties at home, e.g. poor housing; domestic abuse; drug and alcohol related problems or may have had a lack of pre-school play and learning opportunities. The Code of Practice makes it clear that persistent disruptive or withdrawn behaviours do not necessarily mean that a child or young person has SEN. Where there are concerns, there should be an assessment to determine whether there are any causal factors such as undiagnosed learning difficulties, difficulties with communication or mental health issues or it may be that housing, family or other domestic circumstances may be contributing to the presenting behaviour. In such circumstances, the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) should be completed by the school and discussed with the Locality Team.

Where progress continues to be less than expected despite high quality teaching and targeted support the class or subject teacher, working with the SENCO, will consider whether the child has SEN. They will informally gather evidence (including the views of the pupil and their parents) and observe the child in class and around the school. They will use SEN checklists and guidance documents to assist in the identification of needs and the strategies that need to be put in place. Below are some of the resources schools frequently use to help with the identification of need:

- Speech and Language Descriptors
- Social Communication Descriptors
- Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ)
- Sensory Audit

- **Boxall Profile**

The Code of Practice identifies four broad areas that give an overview of the range of needs that should be planned for.

Communication and interaction

Children and young people with speech, language and communication needs (SLCN) have difficulty in communicating with others. This may be because they have difficulty saying what they want to, understanding what is being said to them or they do not understand or use social rules of communication. The profile for every child with SLCN is different and their needs may change over time. They may have difficulty with one, some or all of the different aspects of speech, language or social communication at different times of their lives.

Children and young people with ASD, including Asperger's Syndrome and Autism, are likely to have particular difficulties with social interaction. They may also experience difficulties with language, communication and imagination, which can impact on how they relate to others.

Cognition and learning

Support for learning difficulties may be required when children and young people learn at a slower pace than their peers, even with appropriate differentiation. Learning difficulties cover a wide range of needs, including moderate learning difficulties (MLD), severe learning difficulties (SLD), where children are likely to need support in all areas of the curriculum and associated difficulties with mobility and communication, through to profound and multiple learning difficulties (PMLD), where children are likely to have severe and complex learning difficulties as well as a physical disability or sensory impairment.

Specific learning difficulties (SpLD), affect one or more specific aspects of learning. This encompasses a range of conditions such as dyslexia, dyscalculia and dyspraxia.

Social, emotional and mental health difficulties

Children and young people may experience a wide range of social and emotional difficulties which manifest themselves in many ways. These may include becoming withdrawn or isolated, as well as displaying challenging, disruptive or disturbing behaviour. These behaviours may reflect underlying mental health difficulties such as anxiety or depression, self-harming, substance misuse, eating disorders or physical symptoms that are medically unexplained. Other children and young people may have disorders such as attention deficit disorder, attention deficit hyperactive disorder or attachment disorder.

Schools and colleges should have clear processes to support children and young people, including how they will manage the effect of any disruptive behaviour so it does not adversely affect other pupils. The Department for Education publishes guidance on managing pupils' mental health and behaviour difficulties in schools – see the References section under Chapter 6 for a link.

Sensory and/or physical needs

6.34 Some children and young people require special educational provision because they have a disability which prevents or hinders them from making use of the educational facilities generally provided. These difficulties can be age related and may fluctuate over time. Many children and young people with vision impairment (VI), hearing impairment (HI) or a multi-sensory impairment (MSI) will require specialist support and/or equipment to access their learning, or habilitation support. Children and young people with an MSI have a combination of vision and hearing difficulties. Information on how to provide services for deafblind children and young people is available through the Social Care for Deafblind Children and Adults guidance published by the Department of Health (see the References section under Chapter 6 for a link).

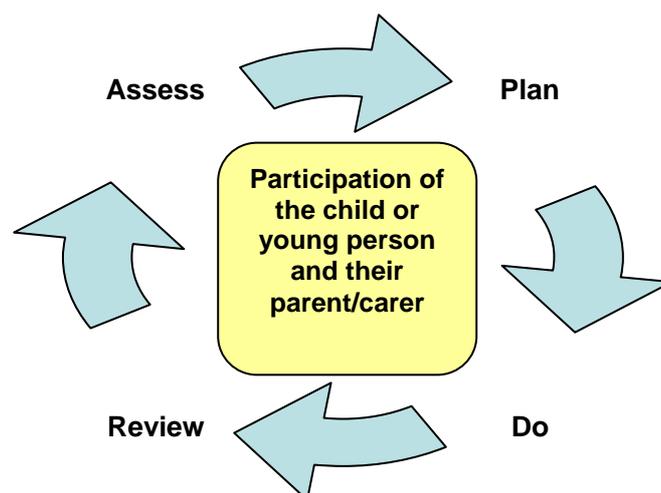
The purpose of identification is to work out what action the school needs to take, not to fit a pupil into a category. In reality, individual children or young people often have needs that cut across all these areas and their needs may change over time. It is important that once this information is gathered that it is communicated in a way that the child and parents or young person wants. This needs to be discussed and agreed. A variety of communication passports and learning profiles are included in the appendix to this section.

SEND Services (Educational Psychologist, Specialist Teachers, Sensory Services Team and Early Years teams for SEN) offer consultation with schools and settings to advise them on early identification of SEN and effective support and interventions. A school should always involve a specialist where a pupil continues to make little or no progress or where they continue to work at levels substantially below those expected of pupils of a similar age despite evidence-based SEN support delivered by appropriately trained staff.

Assess, Plan, Do, Review

For children and young people who have been identified by schools and settings as having Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND), they will be placed on **SEN Support** (this replaces the previous categories of School Action and School Action Plus). Parents must be informed if a school or setting is making special educational provision for a child or young person.

A four-part cycle of **Assess, Plan, Do, and Review** will be started. The parent and the child or young person, are central to all decision making in this cycle. Earlier decisions and actions are revisited, refined and revised with a growing understanding of the pupil's needs and of what supports the pupil in making good progress and securing good outcomes. This is known as the **graduated approach**. It draws on more detailed approaches, more frequent review and more specialist expertise in successive cycles in order to match interventions to the SEN of children and young people.

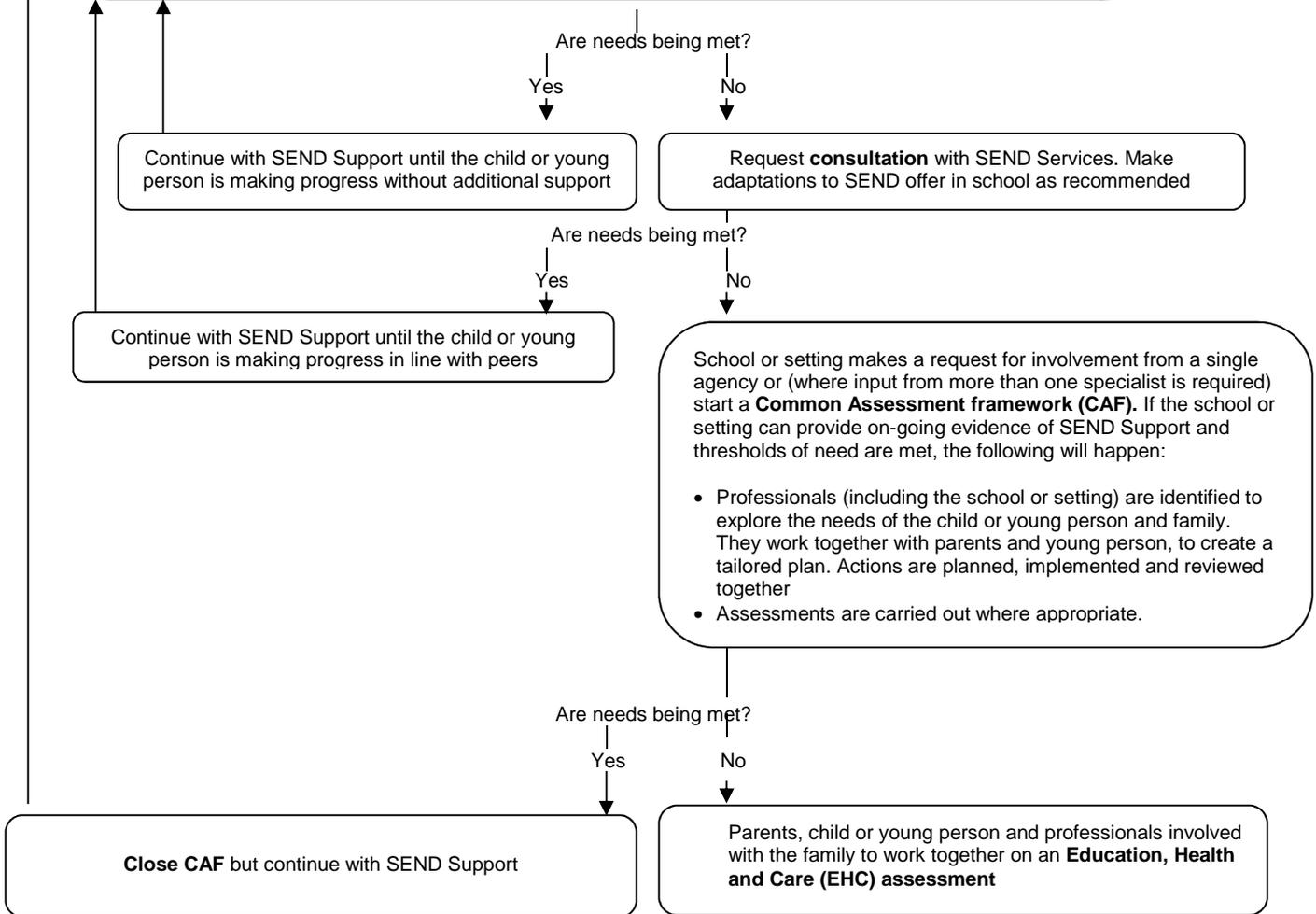
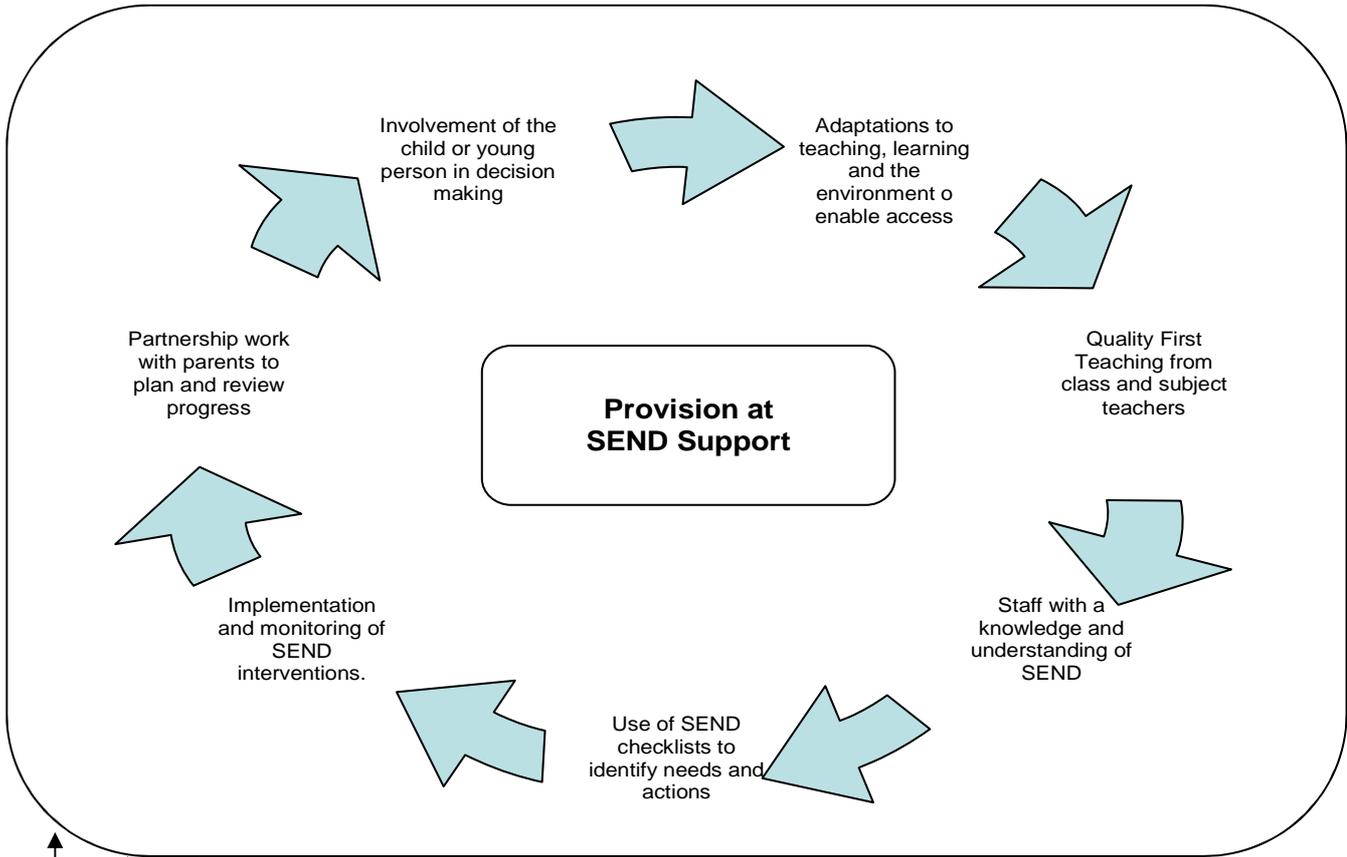


What does provision at SEND Support look like?

There are seven main elements of SEND Support that parents can reasonably expect any school or setting to provide. Some are part of the universal support that should be available for all children and young people and should be continued when SEN is identified. When considering whether an Education Health and Care (EHC) Needs Assessment is appropriate it is important to first check the quality of SEN Support in each of the seven elements. The seven elements are:

1. Partnership work with parents/carers to plan and review provision.
2. Involvement of the children/young person in making decisions that affect them and the promotion of independence.
3. Adaptations to teaching, learning and the environment to enable access.
4. High Quality Teaching from the class/subject teachers.
5. Early identification of SEN with the use of SEND checklists (descriptors) to identify needs and actions.
6. Implementation of time-limited SEND interventions linked to outcomes (what the child or young person wants to achieve). The impact of these will be tracked over time with robust monitoring arrangements in place.
7. A workforce with a knowledge and understanding of SEND with a programme of continuing professional development for the school or setting.

Most children and young people with SEND will have their needs met fully through SEND Support. A small percentage of these children and young people will have significant and complex SEND and will require an Education, Health and Care (EHC) Assessment and Plan with a highly personalised package of support across services. The SEND pathway is represented in the diagram below:



Workforce development to support children and young people with SEND

Schools, colleges and early years providers who wish to improve the knowledge and skills of staff in relation to specific conditions can access information, advice and training materials from a range of sources.

NASEN provides an SEN Gateway that enables access to a broad range of materials and support services across the range of SEN (www.sendgateway.org.uk).

The Excellence gateway provides access to resources to support professional development in the FE and Skills sector (www.excellencegateway.org.uk).

Early Support provides a range of information materials to families and professionals (www.ncb.org.uk/earlysupport.)

The following organisations provide advice, information and training on specific impairments:

- The Autism Education Trust for children and young people on the Autism Spectrum (www.autismeducationtrust.org.uk) Cambridgeshire County Council is the training provider for the Eastern Regions. For more information on training opportunities please contact autism.training@cambridgeshire.gov.uk
- The Communications Trust for speech, language and communication difficulties www.thecommunicationtrust.org
- The Dyslexia SpLD Trust on dyslexia and literacy difficulties (www.thedyslexia-spldtrust.org.uk)
- The National Sensory Impairment Partnership for vision impairment, hearing impairment and multi-sensory impairment (www.natsip.org.uk)
- MindEd (www.minded.org.uk) is an e-learning portal aimed at supporting all adults working with children and young people. It provides simple, clear guidance on children and young people's mental health, wellbeing and development.

Identification of SEN in post 16

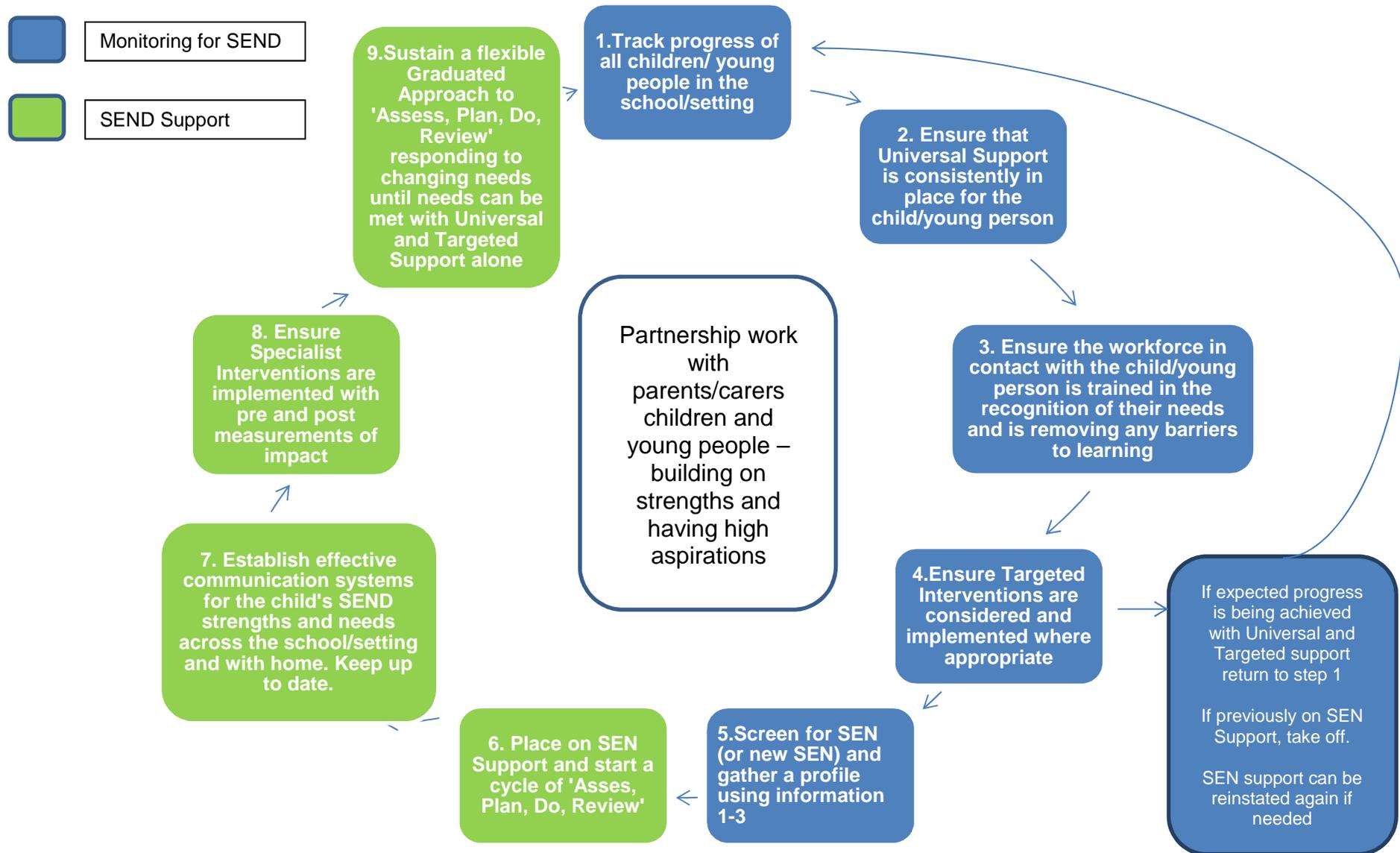
The majority of learners at post 16 with special educational needs would have been identified prior to them attending FE college or sixth form. For a few young people who transfer to an FE college or sixth form, their additional needs only become apparent when they have started their programme of study. This can be for a variety of reasons and they may have had good strategies in place that have enabled them to cope with curriculum and social demands up to this point. In a very few cases, they may have had an illness or injury which has impacted on their functioning resulting in the need for additional support and adaptations to access the college programme. The Code emphasises the need to Assess, Plan, Do, Review and the risks of over identifying SEN:

“Students who fell behind at school, or who are studying below level 2, should have their needs identified and appropriate support should be provided. It should not be assumed that they have SEN just because

they have lower attainment levels than the majority of their peers. They may do, but this should be identified specifically and supported. Equally it should not be assumed that students working on higher level courses do not have any learning difficulty or disability that may need special educational provision.”

(SEND Code of Practice, page 114)

Identification of Special Education Needs Disability (SEND)



Identification of Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND)

1. Track progress of all children/ young people in the school/setting

Schools and settings should have a whole school/setting tracking system in place to monitor the progress of **all** children and young people. This will usually include:

- Academic progress (including subject areas, literacy and numeracy)
- Wider life skills (including communication, social and emotional skills etc.)

2. Ensure that Universal Support is consistently in place for the child/young person

Universal Support	Some examples
High Quality Teaching	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Highly focused lesson design with sharp objectives. • High demands of pupil involvement and engagement with their learning. • High levels of interaction for all pupils. • Appropriate use of teacher questioning, modelling and explaining. • An emphasis on learning through dialogue, with regular opportunities for pupils to talk both individually and in groups. • An expectation that pupils will accept responsibility for their own learning and work independently. • Regular use of encouragement and authentic praise to engage and motivate pupils.
Removal of Barriers to Learning - Accessibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Auxiliary Aids for disabled children and young people such as hearing loops, adaptive keyboards and special software. • Teaching, learning and social environments adapted for physical access. • Sensory audits and adaptations • Multi-sensory approaches to teaching and learning. • Writing scaffolds including ICT frameworks and supportive technology.

3. Ensure the workforce in contact with the child/young person is trained in the recognition and support of SEND

Below are some examples of recommended whole workforce SEND awareness training for schools and settings:

- Autism Education Trust (AET) programme Level 1
- Inclusion Development Programme e-learning (Speech Language and Communication; Autism; Dyslexia)
- Team Teach De-Escalation Level 1 or PROACT-SCIPr
- MindEd e-learning portal

4. Ensure targeted interventions are considered and implemented where appropriate

If despite the above, children and young people are still not making the same progress as their peers in certain areas (e.g. phonics) targeted support should be considered to address needs. Tools such as Assessing Pupil's Progress (APP) are useful to help identify gaps in learning. Examples of Targeted Support include Springboard and Catch-up Programmes in Maths and English and PSHE and SEAL programmes for emotional and social skills.

Further examples can be found in, 'Improving Outcomes for Children and Young People with Additional Needs'

These children and young people may not necessarily have SEND. There may be other reasons why they have fallen behind their peers e.g. extended absence, difficulties at home such as poor housing, domestic abuse, drug and alcohol related problems, bereavement; bullying or lack of pre-school and learning opportunities. With appropriate input they should be expected to catch up in time. In some situations it will be appropriate to seek wider support for the family. If so, a Common Assessment Framework (CAF) should be completed.

5. Screen for SEN and gather a profile

Children and young people with SEN all have learning difficulties or disabilities that make it harder for them to learn than most children and young people of the same age.

If the child or young person presents difficulties that require support that is additional to or different from short term Targeted Interventions, then the school or setting should screen for SEN. To do this they will:

- Start to gather a profile of the child or young person based on a breakdown of the whole school tracking records, themed observations, work sampling etc.
- Listen to the parent's thoughts about their child's strengths, difficulties and aspirations.
- Listen to the child or young person's thoughts about the same.
- Use screening tools such as the Speech and Language Descriptors; Social Communication Descriptors; the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) and the Sensory Audit. These do not provide a formal diagnosis but will indicate the type and level of need and most importantly the strategies that need to be put in place immediately.

Children and young people do not have learning difficulties *just* because their first language is not English, although, of course, some of these children and young people may have learning difficulties as well.

The SEND Code of Practice 0-25 sets out four areas of SEN:

Communicating and interacting – for example, where children and young people have speech, language and communication difficulties which make it difficult for them to make sense of language or to understand how to communicate effectively and appropriately with others.

Cognition and learning – for example, where children and young people learn at a slower pace than others their age, have difficulty in understanding parts of the curriculum, have difficulties with organisation and memory skills, or have a specific difficulty affecting one particular part of their learning performance such as in literacy or numeracy.

Social, emotional and mental health difficulties – for example, where children and young people have difficulty in managing their relationships with other people, are withdrawn, or if they behave in ways that may hinder their and other children's learning, or that have an impact on their health and wellbeing

Sensory and/or physical needs – for example, children and young people with visual and/or hearing impairments, or a physical need that means they must have additional ongoing support and equipment.

Some children and young people may have SEN that covers more than one of these areas.

SEND Services offer consultation to schools and settings around the identification and support of SEND. For more information on core and traded services please contact Helen Phelan on 01223 714772.

6. Place on SEN Support and start a cycle of 'Asses, Plan, Do, Review'

If a child or young person has SEN, they will be able to access help – called SEN support – from their early years settings, such as nurseries or childminders; schools including academies and free schools; and further education institutions such as colleges and sixth form centres.

SEN support replaces school action/school action plus (in schools) and early years action/early years action plus (in early years settings). The four stages of SEN Support are:

- Assess
- Plan
- Do
- Review

Assess: The child or young person's difficulties must be assessed so that the right support can be provided. This should include, asking parents, the young person and professionals such as the class or subject teacher who work closely with the child or young person what they think. This needs to be reviewed regularly so that the support provided continues to meet the child or young person's needs.

Plan: The school or setting and parents need to agree the outcomes that the SEN support is intended to achieve: in other words, how the child or young person will benefit from any support they get. All those involved will need to have a say in deciding what kind of support will be provided, and decide a date by which they will review this so that they can check to see how well the support is working and whether the outcomes have been or are being achieved.

Do: The school or setting will put the planned support into place. The teacher remains responsible for working with the child on a daily basis, but the SENCO and any support staff or specialist teaching staff involved in providing support should work closely to track the child's progress and check that the support is being effective.

Review: The support the child receives should be reviewed at the time agreed in the plan. Together, schools/ setting and parent/ young person can decide if the support is having a positive impact, whether the outcomes have been, or are being, achieved and if or how any changes should be made.

7. Establish effective Communication Systems for SEN Support and keep up to date

A school wide system for sharing SEN information with home, staff workforce and child should be adopted e.g. Communication Passport or Learning Profile.

8. Ensure specialist interventions are implemented with pre and post measurements of impact

Support should be personalised and agreed with the child or young person and parents. At appropriate times, Specialist Interventions should be introduced in response to identified need. Specialist Interventions should be:

- Specific to current needs of child or young person
- Time-limited
- Evidence based
- Measurable with pre and post records of outcomes (quantitative and qualitative)

Evidence based examples of Specialist Interventions can be found in 'Improving Outcomes for Children and Young People with Additional Needs'.

Universal support always remains in place for **all** children and young people.

9. Sustain a Graduated Approach to 'Assess, Plan, Do, Review' that is used to flexibly respond to changing needs.

The cycle of Assess, Plan, Do, Review should continue in a flexible and graduated approach until the outcomes that the child or young person achieves indicate that they no longer need support that is different or additional to that which is being offered to most children and young people in the school or setting.

When this is the case, the child or young person should no longer be considered to have SEN.

If however, new needs emerge at a later stage the cycle can be revisited and the child or young person, once again placed on SEN Support.