

Frequently Asked Questions

Understanding SEND Training

Q: Can you share the census information with children's centres/health and break it down into local areas?

Answer: Yes. We will look at providing this information on the Local Offer from the 2016 and subsequent census reports.

Q: How can providers on the Local Offer ensure that the key words used to search will reflect their service? And is the database up to date?

A: Providers should ensure that as many key words as possible are used in the body of the text they submit, ensuring that the provider is identified in any searches.

The database is kept as up to date as possible, as FIS communications officers continually make requested changes. However, it is the responsibility of every provider to submit any changes or additional information to update one of the 3600 records held.

Q: How do we get the occupational therapy report template onto the Local Offer?

A: If you ensure that the template is readily accessible on your Health webpage, provide the link to the Local Offer administrator at fis@durham.gov.uk who will ensure that the direct link goes onto 'For Providers' page of the Local Offer.

Q: Can we have bespoke workshops for Health Visitors and School Nurses?

A: Please contact the Designated Clinical Officer (DCO) using the details given on the presentation slides, to suggest the need for these and for any other training needs relating to closer working between health/education/social care.

Q: Can we have extra copies of the parent's leaflets shown at the training?

A: Copies of all the parent's leaflets are now available for download on this section of the Local Offer.

Q: What is happening about places in special schools and how can mainstream schools manage a child who needs specialist provision when there are no places?

A: We are constantly reviewing the availability of special school places and enhanced mainstream provision in response to the recent surge in demand for specialist provision. For children in mainstream schools awaiting a specialist placement, there is a wide range of funding and specialist support available to schools and settings to call upon.

Q: Why are schools not forced to publish their SEND budgets and expenditure?

A: There is no specific requirement by national or local government, for schools to publish actual figures on SEND budgets and expenditure, but there is a requirement for them, through their School SEND Report, to describe what that funding is spent on and how pupils in each individual school are supported. Remember; schools **must** *'use their best endeavours to make sure that a child with SEN gets the support they need – this means doing everything they can to meet children and young people's SEN'* Code of Practice 0-25, (6.3) page 92.

Q: What is a "One Plan" and how does it relate to SEND?

A: An Education Health Care Plan (EHCP's) is the new plan which has replaced SEN Statements. In Durham this each completed plan is known as 'My Plan'. In other local authorities it might be called a 'One Plan' or something similar. The reason for this is to create a 'softer' more user friendly approach to the SEN process and final document.

Q: Can we get a list of SENCo's and their contact details?

A: No. As such a list would be out of date almost immediately. The most up to date way of getting those details would be to go onto any school website (through the Local Offer) and look on the SEND Information Report where SENCo details will be current.

Q: How does the Local Offer link with the Children and Young People's Network?

A: They are separate services both aimed at supporting families of children with SEND. Whilst everyone can access the Local Offer at the press of a button, families of children with SEND sign up to the [Children and Young People's Network](#) and receive regular additional information and access to universal/targeted/specialist short breaks depending on the needs of their child.

Q: What SEND support is out there and which services are best to mention to parents?

A: There is a massive range of SEND support available, but it depends on the needs of each individual child. Searching the [Local Offer](#) and helping a family to create their own 'short list' is a way to identify services appropriate to them. In school, the SENCo is best placed to decide which resources and services a pupil will need. Parents, carers and young people can contact the SENDIAS service to discuss their child's SEN at any time. Workers should be familiarising themselves with the Local Offer and what is available to their own client group. It contains thousands of records of organisations offering a service of some kind to families of children with SEND.

Q: Is there any additional funding for pre-school children? How is it accessed and what is the criteria?

A: There is additional funding for pre-school children. All of the information around early years funding and access criteria is available on the '[For Providers](#)' page of the Local Offer

Q: Can we have a list of pre-school funded places for SEND?

A: Any pre-school setting can provide a place for a child with additional needs. The setting then applies for funding to support a child with additional needs, should this be required. See the above Q&A on funding.

Q: What is the difference between Designated Clinical Officer (DCO) and Designated Medical Officer (DMO) and what are their roles?

A: Both roles are similar and many smaller local authority areas will have either a DCO or a DMO but Durham appointed both as the area is so large. Whilst both roles provide oversight and leadership in ensuring that all health providers are compliant with the SEND reforms, the DCO provides this on behalf of DDES Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) and the DMO provides this on behalf of ND CCG. Further information about these roles can be found on the third and fourth slides of the training presentation.

Q: Where does pupil premium fit in with SEND resources/finances?

A: Pupil premium is separate and additional funding that schools receive on top of the AWPU (age weighted pupil unit) funding. The AWPU was referred to in the presentation as Element 1 Core Education Funding. Pupil Premium can be used by schools to fund anything the head teacher and governors want to spend it on, including resourcing and support for

SEN, but remember, they also have Element 2 (the Notional SEN Budget) and Element 3 (top up funding) to assist them to meet the needs of pupils with SEN.

Q: How are support groups on the Local Offer approved?

A: Nothing advertised on the Local Offer is 'approved'. Central government asked every local authority to develop a local offer, ensuring that every organisation and group offering a service to children with SEND and their families in that area be included in their Local Offer. The quality and scope of individual groups/services/individuals found on the Local Offer has to be left up to individual users to investigate and assess for suitability of use.

Q: When a child has fallen out of education and is being home-educated, what support is available for parents trying to get the child back into education?

A: If a child is unable to attend school, but is still on a school roll, there is an ongoing responsibility on parents to attempt to get their child to attend. If the child is ill (either physically or because of mental health issues) then a referral can be made to the Education Health Needs Team to assist with their education and re-integration back to school.

However, if parents officially withdraw a child from Education and decide to educate the child at home, then all educational support ceases and there is no funding or support available to the child and family. Equally, there is no longer a responsibility on the parents to attempt to get the child to attend a school. There are a variety of 'home education' websites that parents can access and an officer of the local authority will be able to advise on parental responsibility around home education.

Q: How is the two year wait for SCAT being addressed?

A: CAMHS teams are trying hard to address the waiting list by extending their working days and working some Saturdays, cutting down on other work and focussing upon assessments only. Health commissioners are fully aware of the crisis in volume of referrals and are looking at further ways of tackling as a matter of urgency.

Q: How do you monitor schools' SEND provision?

A: As described in the presentation, all schools MUST publish a School SEND Report, outlining what they offer, including any specialism and specially trained staff. They MUST use their 'best endeavours' to meet the SEND needs of all pupils and if parents/carers believe this may not be happening they can contact the SENDIAS service who will explore

the provision and support that the school say their child is receiving. If concerns persist, SENDIASS will liaise with local authority Training Officers who will monitor the school's practice and support them to ensure children's SEND is met.

Q: How many SEN children leave one mainstream school to go to another?

A: This figure is variable as parents have a right to claim a mainstream place for their child (with or without any SEN) at any school where there is a place available in the appropriate year group. Some parents do choose to remove their child from one school and place them in another, because they believe the SEN provision to be better elsewhere, but the exact figures are unknown. And remember; ALL schools MUST use their 'best endeavours' to meet the SEN of ALL children.

Q: Is the 'Understanding SEND training' mandatory for teaching staff?

A: No. Teaching staff have their own regular training, including internal support from the school SENCo. There are regular SENCo network meetings across the County where SENCo's are updated and can request training on any issues relating to SEN.

Q: Is there a difference between "SEN" and "SEND"? What does the D stand for?

A: The D stands for disabilities. Disability can sometimes impact on a child's learning. The Equalities Act covers disability discrimination and describes expected support in terms of accessibility, reasonable adjustments and aids and adaptations.