# **SEND Code of Practice 2014: areas of SEN need**

6.27 These four broad areas give an overview of the range of needs that should be planned for. The purpose of identification is to work out what action the school needs to take, not to fit a pupil into a category. In practice, individual children or young people often have needs that cut across all these areas and their needs may change over time. For instance speech, language and communication needs can also be a feature of a number of other areas of SEN, and children and young people with an Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) may have needs across all areas, including particular sensory requirements. A detailed assessment of need should ensure that the full range of an individual’s needs is identified, not simply the primary need. The support provided to an individual should always be based on a full understanding of their particular strengths and needs and seek to address them all using well-evidenced interventions targeted at their areas of difficulty and where necessary specialist equipment or software.

## **Broad areas of need**

### **Communication and interaction**

6.28 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.

6.29 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**

6.30 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.

6.31 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**

6.32 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.

6.33 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).

6.35 Some children and young people with a physical disability (PD) require additional ongoing support and equipment to access all the opportunities available to their peers.

There is an additional area of need you can include in your application or Plan:

### **Self-Help and Independence**

The area should focus on the child or young person’s ability to manage self-care tasks and how independent they are. This should look at their level of these skills in comparison to a typical child of that age.

### **Information about the nature, extent and context of the child or young person’s SEN**

Using these headings highlight the issues and difficulties your child experiences in each area. Below are some questions that might help you focus your thoughts. These are just some of the questions you may want to think about, you may have other issues that you need to mention. You will need to expand your answers to give details and if you have quotes in the Professionals reports which back up what you are saying then you can refer to these specific quotes.

Think about the elements of their condition(s) that cause problems, eg

* Inflexible
* Literal
* Difficulty with change
* Follows their own agenda, prefers adult-led tasks
* Controlling
* Difficulty understanding a task, following a task, completing it
* Understanding social cues, following the rules of the classroom.

**Communication and Interaction**

* Does your child have/did they have a speech delay?
* Do they have difficulty expressing themselves verbally, do they mix their words up, use words correctly, do they have limited vocab, or have a big vocab but use it incorrectly?
* Do they sound very scripted and just seem to be echoing what they have heard without really understanding what they are saying?
* Do they use visuals, Makaton, BSL, SSE, PECS or any other forms of communication to communicate?
* Any difficulty understanding what others say? Do they need time to process verbal information? Do instructions and questions need to be broken down and issued one at a time in order for them to process and remember them? Do they need visual support to help them understand?
* Do they interact with their peers? Do they understand the rules of society? Are they blunt and have no filter? Do they interact appropriately with adults?
* Do they struggle to initiate a friendship, maintaining/repairing a friendship?
* Do they understand the rules of friendships? Are they overfriendly and do they tend to get obsessed with people and try to force friendships on people?
* Taking turns in games/work, waiting for their turn.
* Do they have playdates with other children? Are they excluded from parties?

**Cognition and Learning**

* Do they struggle to work together in a group, following teacher instructions, remembering a list of instructions, needing things broken down into small chunks in simple language?
* What are their difficulties with reading, ie are they behind their peers, do they have difficulty understanding?
* Do you have any idea generally about how far behind they are in relation to his peers, in other subjects?
* Writing – do they have physical difficulty eg holding pencil properly, writing legibly, or with writing their ideas, or all these?
* What is their attention span like? Are they easily distracted and need to be brought back onto task regularly?
* Do they need regular movement breaks, or do they need to be able to fiddle or fidget?
* What are their listening skills like? Do they respond to their name?

**Social Emotional Mental Health**

* Do they have depression? Are they self-harming? Are they under CAMHS?
* Do they experience anxiety? Are they school refusing? Do they hate the school environment?
* Do they mask their issues at school and then meltdown when they get home?
* Social skills – playing with other children, or alongside them, or on their own?
* Are they socially/emotionally vulnerable, easily manipulated? Easily teased or picked on?
* Any difficulties in the playground? Do they end up controlling the play? Do they have a strong sense of justice and keep ‘tattling’ on their friends?
* Understanding others, eg that they have their own feelings and thoughts
* Not understanding the impact of their words/behaviour/actions on others
* Emotional regulation – understanding their own feelings and not being able to express them appropriately, in acceptable ways
* Do they get frustrated, upset, anxious?
* What kind of things make them anxious – could be lots of things, eg too much sensory input (noise, movement, smell etc), too much language, not understanding, something changes, feeling unsafe…
* Are they vulnerable in their environment, eg lacks a sense of danger, understanding of stranger danger, road safety etc

**Sensory and Physical Needs**

* Any physical issues with both fine and gross motor skills? Do they struggle to use cutlery pens appropriately? Can they jump and ride a bike and other age appropriate activities?
* Any medical conditions that can manifest physically like Hypermobility, EDS, epilepsy, diabetes, Microcephaly, Down Syndrome, Cerebral Palsy.
* Do they require the use of walkers or wheelchairs?
* Sensory difficulties – are they over or under sensitive, if so, what to?
* What would trigger them? What senses do they struggle with?
  + Vision (bright lights, do they seek dark, small spaces?)
  + Hearing (are they sensitive to crowds? Loud noises? Certain pitches of sounds?)
  + Smell (strong smells such as air fresheners)
  + Touch (Do they hate certain fabrics and clothing? Do they hate being touched? Do they like big, deep pressure hugs?)
  + Taste (Are they picky eaters? Do they tend to favour certain textures? Can the food touch other food or do they need to be separated)?
  + Proprioceptive Issues (muscles and body awareness) (Are they moving constantly? Do they appear to be very clumsy and uncoordinated? Do they slam doors or apply too much pressure when writing, or not enough?)
  + Interoceptive Issues (awareness of internal bodily functions) (Do they know when they are hungry or thirsty? Do they know when they are full? Can they feel their heart beat? Are they aware when they hurt themselves? Do they register pain appropriately?)
  + Vestibular Issues (Awareness of self in space, this works very closely with the proprioceptive system) (Do they appear to be dizzy and all over the place. If they fell into a swimming pool would they know which way was up?)
* What behaviours do these over or under registrations produce?

**Self-help and Independence**

This section looks at how independent the child or young person is able to be. All children and young people can have a level of independence in their lives and this should highlight the level they are currently working at.

* Is the child toilet trained or still in nappies?
* Do they need assistance with dressing and undressing?
* Do they need someone to help feed them or are they tube feed?
* Can they use cutlery age appropriately?
* Do they need assistance with washing and personal cleanliness, including prompting to use shower gel or flannels?
* Can they manage money?
* Can they organise their own lives and maintain their social diary or timetable?
* Can they travel safely on their own or do they need to be escorted?
* Do they have any road safety awareness or stranger danger?