



## What is SEND?

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### Summary

Everyone learns in different ways and at different rates. Many children and young people will therefore need extra help at some time during their education. In most cases, schools and settings will help them overcome any difficulties by providing work that is suitable for their level of ability. This is called differentiation.

However, some children and young people will have a learning difficulty or disability that requires special educational provision. This provision is something that is additional to and different from that generally available to pupils of the same age. **These children and young people may be identified as having special educational needs (SEN).**

This factsheet is designed to explain what special educational needs disability (SEND) is.



## What does SEND mean?

### SEN

The term special educational needs is described in law in the Children and Families Act 2014 as:

1. A child or young person has special educational needs if he or she has a learning difficulty or disability which calls for special educational provision to be made for him or her.
2. A child of compulsory school age or a young person has a learning difficulty or disability if he or she:
  - (a) has a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of others of the same age, or
  - (b) 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.
3. A child under compulsory school age has a learning difficulty or disability if he or she is likely to be within subsection (2) when of compulsory school age (or would be likely, if no special educational provision were made).
4. A child or young person does not have a learning difficulty or disability solely because the language (or form of language) in which he or she is or will be taught is different from a language (or form of language) which is or has been spoken at home.

### Disability

Many children and young people who have SEN may also have a disability. A disability is described in law (the Equality Act 2010) as:

‘a physical or mental impairment which has a long-term (a year or more) and substantial adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.’

This includes, for example, sensory impairments such as those that affect sight and hearing, and long-term health conditions such as asthma, diabetes or epilepsy.



## The four broad areas of need

The Department for Education has identified four broad areas which cover a range of needs. These are defined in the Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice – 0-25 years, January 2015.

### 1. Communication and interaction

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.

Children and young people with an Autistic Spectrum Disorder, including Asperger's Syndrome, are likely to have particular difficulties in this area.

### 2. Cognition and learning

Where children and young people learn at a slower pace than others their age, they may:

- have difficulty in understanding parts of the curriculum
- have difficulties with organisation and memory skills
- have a specific difficulty affecting one particular part of their learning such as in literacy or numeracy

The term 'learning difficulties' covers a wide range of needs, including moderate learning difficulties (MLD), severe learning difficulties (SLD) and profound and multiple difficulties (PMLD). Specific learning difficulties (SpLD) such as dyslexia, dyspraxia and dyscalculia come under this term.

### 3. Social, emotional and mental health difficulties

Children and young people may experience a wide range of social and emotional difficulties which present themselves in many ways. They may:



- have difficulty in managing their relationships with other people
- be withdrawn
- behave in ways that may hinder their and other children's learning or that have an impact on their health and wellbeing

This broad area includes, but is not limited to, attention deficit disorder (ADD), attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) or attachment disorder. It also includes behaviours that may reflect underlying mental health difficulties such as anxiety, depression, self-harming and eating disorders, among others.

#### 4. Sensory and/or physical needs

Where children and young people have visual and/or hearing impairments, or a physical need that means they must have additional on-going support and equipment.

Your child's learning needs could fall into one or several of these four areas and this could change over time.

#### What is SEN support?

Every child with special educational needs should have SEN support. This means help that is additional to or different from the support generally given to other children of the same age. The purpose of SEN support is to help children achieve the outcomes or learning objectives set for them by the school. Schools should involve parents in this process.

For more information please see our factsheet [SEN support in mainstream schools](#) or our animation [SEN Support in Mainstream Settings- The Graduated Response](#)

For further information on the Graduated Response in your area see;

[Graduated Response Herefordshire \(link opens in a new window\)](#)

[Graduated Response Worcestershire \(link opens in a new window\)](#)



## Education Health Care Plans (EHCP)

Many children and young people will need extra help at some time during their education. In most cases schools and settings will be able to meet individual needs through SEN support from their own resources and expertise.

However, some children and young people may need support that is over and above this and may benefit from an Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plan. Prior to an EHC plan being produced, an Education, Health and Care needs assessment must take place. To find out more please read our factsheets [Education Health and Care needs assessment](#) or [Education, Health and Care plans](#)

The Council for Disabled Children has also produced this video about [Education, Health and Care Plans](#).

Education, Health and Care plans must be reviewed at least every 12 months. This process is known as the Annual Review. The Council for Disabled Children has released this [animation on the Annual Review process](#) to help explain the procedure.

If you feel that your child may have SEND, Herefordshire and Worcestershire SENDIASS are here to offer free, impartial and confidential information, advice and support. We can also help families navigate through the EHC needs assessment process.

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