

Speech, Language and Communication Needs (SLCN)

Children and young people who have SLCN may have needs in one or more of the processes shown in the Communication Pyramid. These needs can range from mild to severe and may be transient (short term) or persistent. SLCN can be a primary/specific need, e.g., Developmental Language Disorder, or a secondary need, i.e., part of or the result of another difficulty, e.g., developmental delay, hearing impairment. The nature and impact of SLCN change as children get older and educational and social demands change.

In Leicester City there are high levels of socio-economic deprivation and turbulence and high levels of SLCN. It is essential, therefore, that all practitioners working with children and young people in Leicester City have a good understanding of language development, can identify SLCN and have effective practice in meeting these needs or make effective provision to meet these needs. Please refer to [Leicester City's SLCN strategy and pathway](#).

English as an Additional Language (EAL)

Bilingualism is an asset. EAL is not a SLCN but some children with EAL do have a SLCN. The Northern Association of Support Services for Equality and Achievement (NASSEA) EAL Assessment Framework can be used to assess children and young people who have EAL. The ideas and activities within the EAL Assessment Framework can be used to support teaching.

Potential Impact of SLCN

SLCN can have an impact on children and young people in the following ways:

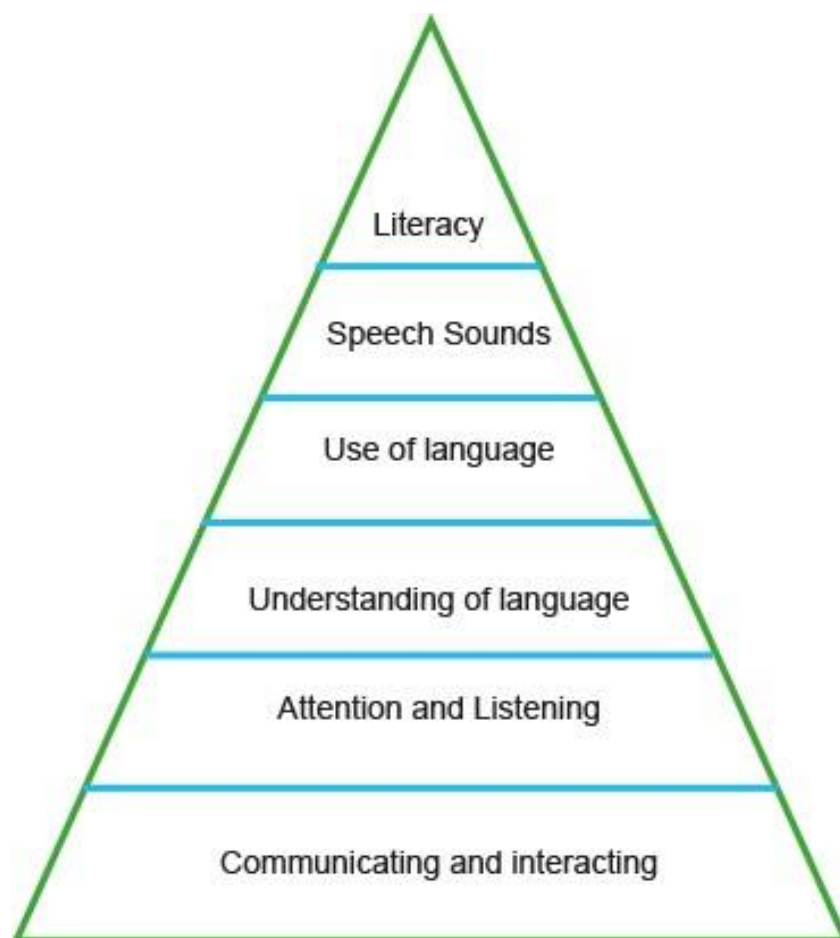
- social interactions, making and maintaining friendships and relationships.
- emotional health and wellbeing, anxiety, self-esteem, understanding, regulating and expressing feelings, behaviour.
- learning and attainment across all areas of the curriculum.
- children with SLCN may have stronger attainments in practical and visual based learning.

SLCN MIN 2.21-2.47

Better Communication CIC, 2019, ICAN Cost to the Nation, 2006IDP – SLCN, 2008

Best endeavours and reasonable adjustments: Speech, Language and Communication Needs

The Communication Pyramid Diagram:



Leicester City's approach to Speech, Language and Communication Needs

Leicester City's Special Education Needs and Disability (SEND) Services provides assessment, advice, and training to support children and young people with SLCN, including:

- assessment of SLCN and advice on strategies, interventions, and activities to meet these needs (targeted and specialist levels).
- advice to support high quality teaching for all children and young people and create communication inclusive spaces.
- Centralised and bespoke training courses at universal and targeted levels, including evidence-based training such as Elklan accredited training (0-3s, 3-5s, Primary, Secondary), and ICAN's Talk Boost (Early Years, KS1 and 2) Let's Talk and Primary Talk (see SEND Service training brochure [SEND Service training brochure](#) for more information on courses).

Leicester City's SEND Service provides maintained schools with named link teachers and a named educational psychologist. They work in collaboration with speech and language therapists and other health professionals.

People and services for children and young people with Speech, Language and Communication Needs.

Role and expectations of the school.

School leaders and staff will:

- understand the impact that SLCN has on learning and social, emotional, and mental health outcomes.
- understand that SLCN may be related to another condition (e.g. Down syndrome, Sensory Impairment, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD).)
- be aware of the development of language of bi-lingual children and young people.
- understand that SLCN will change over time and that the support needs to be timely proportionate and effective.
- be familiar with local guidance for SLCN e.g., MIN.
- work in partnership with parents to understand their child's SLCN and to plan intervention while valuing the child or young person's home language and culture.

School leaders will:

- support the development and implementation of a whole school language supportive environment.
- review SLCN provision within the school in the school improvement cycle and ensure provision of interventions and additional support/ resources for SLCN.
- identify key personnel responsible for speech, language and communication across the school/setting and curriculum.
- facilitate a graduated response to provision for speech, language, and communication.
- establish assessment, monitoring and reviewing procedures.
- establish and monitor a whole school/setting speech, language, and communication policy.
- develop and maintain expertise in speech, language, and communication by facilitating access to training opportunities for staff.

The SENCO will:

- follow the guidance provided through the Code of Practice for SEND.
- ensure that children with SLCN are identified, that their needs are met through appropriate provision and that they are enabled to access the curriculum.
- liaise and work with parents in the monitoring and review of progress of children with SLCN.
- liaise with outside agencies, e.g., Speech and Language Therapy Service, for children with SLCN and seek advice from an outside agency in assessment of SLCN and planning provision to meet these needs.

The class teacher (CT) and teaching assistant (TA) will:

- provide a language supportive environment in the classroom and outdoor learning spaces, including creating opportunities for children and young people to use, extend and generalise their speech language and communication (SLC) skills.
- ensure high quality teaching for all children and young people, including planning activities/tasks and using a range of strategies to support their speech, language, and communication skills.
- provide a good language model at all times.
- assess child or young person's SLCN (e.g., observation, language samples, screens and checklists).
- plan and carry out targeted interventions (individuals and small groups) for children who have SLCN, e.g., to teach attention and active listening skills, expressive and/or receptive vocabulary, sentence formation, sequencing, comprehension and inference skills, study skills, social interaction skills, alternative communication skills (e.g., signing, picture exchange and communication system (PECS)).
- implement advice from outside agencies, including Speech and Language Therapy Plans.
- monitor and record the progress of children receiving SLC interventions and adjust planning in response to the child or young person's progress and ongoing SLCN.
- provide feedback and advice to parents/carers of children and young people who have SLCN.
- regularly review SLCN provision in collaboration with the SENCO.
- ensure that records and reports from outside agencies are handed on to the new class teacher/school/college to ensure effective transition planning.

Role and expectations of the local authority

SEND Services will:

- attend Joint Planning Meetings twice a year to discuss and plan for children and young people with SEND including SLCN.
- support the SENCO in identifying SLCN across the school and of individual pupils.
- offer training in aspects of language and communication relevant to a school's/setting's individual needs.
- offer training and support in administering language assessments.

Environment for children and young people with Speech, Language and Communication Needs

Role and expectations of the school

SLCN MIN 3.23, 3.24, 3.26

Schools should:

- ensure that classrooms are calm, organised, and flexible learning environments.
- make consistent use of visual systems, e.g., objects of reference, visual timetables, cue cards, task planners.
- ensure that equipment/resources are well organised, accessible, and labelled using words and pictures.
- provide quiet / low distraction areas for individual and small group work (including listening activities, social skills groups, and language groups).
- create comfortable, inviting spaces indoors and outdoors to encourage social interactions, indoors and outdoors.
- maintain appropriate noise levels in the classroom.
Consider seating arrangements, e.g., pupils with SLCN seated closer to the teacher.
- ensure that displays support vocabulary and language development and include examples of children and young people's language.
- ensure children with SLCN are involved in planning and adapting the classroom and outdoor environments to support their learning.

Role and expectations of the local authority

SEND Services will:

- provide advice and support around completing an audit of the environment/ communication inclusive spaces.
- provide advice and support around making reasonable adjustments in relation to using and adapting the environment for individual children with SLCN.
- ensure that SLC training includes a focus on creating communication inclusive spaces.

Provisions and practice for children and young people with Speech, Language and Communication Needs

Role and expectations of the school

For communication and interaction schools should:

- use visuals to support child or young person's understanding of social rules e.g., cue cards, visual timetables, 'first and then' cards, 'Learning to play and Work Together' pack.
- use social stories to support social understanding and social behaviours.
- provide scripts to support social interaction and problem solving.
- provide opportunities to develop turn taking, speaking, and listening skills, social skills, and relationships with others in pairs and groups.
- set up social skills groups, e.g., Fun Time, Social Use of Language Programme (SULP), Quality Circle Time, Talkabout.

For attention and listening schools should:

- teach, develop, and reinforce attention and listening skills using visual cues, role modelling, games, and activities.
- use a range of visual cues to reinforce good attention and good listening e.g., a speaking object (to indicate whose turn it is to speak), good looking/listening/sitting/thinking cue cards, signs.
- use an auditory or multi-sensory cue to gain group attention.
- use a puppet or toy to demonstrate listening skills for EYs and KS1 children e.g., Listening Lola or role play for older children and young people.
- provide ear defenders to reduce noise/distraction.

For understanding and language schools should:

- simplify the language used with older children and young people with SLCN, i.e., using key vocabulary, short sentences with simple grammar, chunking/sequencing of concepts, etc.
- use visual cues to support understanding matched to the child or young person's cognitive level support their understanding of spoken language, e.g., objects of reference, now-next or first-then boards using photos or symbols, pictorial or written timetables, task planners and schedules (individual and class).
- use schedules, routines, and visuals to support transitions.
- use open ended and differentiated questioning.
- give the child or young person with SLCN extra time to process language and to respond.
- check the child or young person's understanding and support as required through repetition, rephrasing, explaining, and demonstrating.
- support the child or young person in identifying when they have not understood and to ask for help.
- differentiate tasks and use chunking to make achievable.
- use differentiated schemes of work which may include content from earlier years as appropriate.

- use collaborative, paired and group learning to support children and young people's understanding and to enable them to learn from good language models.
- use appropriate assessment tools and interventions e.g., Blank questions, Language for Thinking, TALC 1 (primary) and TALC 2 (secondary), WellComm Early Years and WellComm Primary.
- provide practical learning activities with real objects, apparatus, ICT, and role play.
- provide opportunities for multisensory, experiential learning around concepts. use a concept checklist to plan concept teaching.
- use of Colourful Semantics to support the child or young person's understanding of grammar.
- talk about books and teach inference, prediction, and analysis.

For use of language schools should:

- comment on the child or young person's play and learning, providing a good language model.
- repeat and expand what the child or young person says, extending their sentences.
- model back child or young person's language to reinforce correct vocabulary and grammar.
- teach vocabulary and provide opportunities for the child or young person to use new vocabulary.
- use word webs, word wheels, mind maps and topic webs to identify key vocabulary, illustrate/reinforce key language and develop knowledge of word relationships, e.g., PORIC and Word Aware and Word Aware 2.
- display key vocabulary (written language and pictures). Ensure word banks and glossaries are available
- play vocabulary games to support vocabulary, e.g., category cards.
- overlearn new concepts, reinforcing and generalising the use of key vocabulary.
- provide access and opportunities for the child or young person to use Alternative Augmentative Communication (AAC), such as signing and visual aids, including choice boards. use objects, photographs or symbols depending on the child or young person's cognitive level.
- include speaking activities in language groups, e.g. Let's Talk, Time to Talk, Talkabout.
- use sequencing cards and writing frames to support oral narrative, e.g., Black Sheep publications.
- provide access to an alternative means of recording, e.g., pictures, acting, talking tins, voice recorders.
- teach emotion vocabulary and provide opportunities to discuss thoughts and feelings.
- encourage the child or young person to ask questions and use critical thinking skills.

For speech sounds schools should:

- use listening games and phonological awareness activities to encourage the child or young person to discriminate sounds, including Letters and sounds Phase One Phonics.
- provide a good speech sound model.

- refer to the SLCN MIN (p104-5) for advice from the Speech and Language Therapy Service on supporting children or young people who have speech sound difficulties. For further advice, contact your link SALT.

Role and expectations of the local authority

SEND Services will:

- carry out assessments for individual children or young people with SLCN.
- give advice on and demonstrate/model a range of strategies and interventions to meet the needs of children and young people with SLCN.
- provide training and demonstration of appropriate SLCN interventions.
- support teachers and TAs to implement the advice of the speech and language therapy (SALT).
- provide advice as part of the child or young person's EHC need assessment
- provide support and advice at the Annual Review of Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP).
- contribute to reviews of progress for children at SEND Support.

Resources for learning for children and young people with Speech, Language and Communication Needs

Role and expectations of the school

Schools should:

- put processes in place to ensure that effective use is made of visual cues including the use of objects, photographs, symbols, and signs, as appropriate to the child or young person, to enhance understanding and promote communication.
- use the Leicester SLCN pathway to plan universal, targeted and specialist support for children and young people.
- teach children and young people to be independent in their use of strategies and resources.
- work with the child or young person with SLCN and their family and others who know them well to develop a one-page profile, which is shared with relevant parties, clarifying their SLCN and how they like to be supported.
- provide support to help the child structure / organise their learning, e.g., provide a homework diary/schedule.
- provide opportunities for regular home-school communication to ensure that parents/carers can support the completion of homework.
- provide practical experiences to support the development of new language and concepts.
- as part of reasonable adjustments, provide aids to facilitate access to the curriculum, such as an iPad or laptop.

Role and expectations of the local authority

SEND Services will:

- provide a template and guidance around developing one-page profiles.
- offer training and support around establishing the use of visual strategies within the school.
- signpost and provide training around interventions, resources, and websites to support children and young people with SLCN.
- Signpost families to relevant organisations and the on-line SLCN pathway (when published).