

SENDCo Update Summer Term 2025

Virtual SENDCo briefing

Thank you to everyone who attended the virtual SENDCo briefing. You can [view the PowerPoint presentation](#) from the afternoon, if you have any difficulties accessing the links or have any further queries, please get in touch at qualityinclusion@leicester.gov.uk

Updates from Change Programme Partnership

We have had an update from the DfE, and they are going to continue with the Change Programme for at least another year. We are awaiting further details in terms of any new areas they wish to explore and if this work will be funded.

Speech, Language and Communication Toolkits

The Speech, Language and Communication (SLC) Toolkits are tailored suites of resources - one for parents, one for early years settings, and one for mainstream primary schools. Each toolkit contains 4-5 documents designed for fast access to practical support without overwhelm.

Each toolkit is tailored to its audience:

- The Parents' Toolkit offers straightforward, effective strategies to support communication at home.
- The Early Years Toolkit helps practitioners build strong foundations for speech and language in nursery and preschool settings.
- The school-Aged Toolkit equips teachers and school staff with practical approaches for identifying and supporting SLCN in the classroom.

Developed as part of the ELSEC pathfinders, by Sarah Jeffries and Rutland County Council, and inspired by the Bedfordshire SLC Toolkit, these resources have already been successfully launched in Rutland. Parents, SENCOs, and teachers have praised their clear structure, practical guidance, and ease of use.

To ensure accessibility, the toolkits will be available on Leicestershire Partnership NHS Trust's 'Health For' sites. You can find the PDF toolkits below (web pages still under development):

- [Health For Under 5's](#)
- [Health For Kids/Grownups](#)

Following their launch in Rutland, there is strong demand to expand the toolkits across Leicester and Leicestershire, ensuring more families, schools and early years settings can benefit from these valuable resources. We will update you as this project progresses.

ND Inclusion - Communications Update

The new Neurodiverse (ND) Inclusion workstream has now met for the first time and is actively working to clarify its scope. This workstream is focused on enhancing support for neurodiverse children and young people and is distinct from the ND Diagnosis Pathway, which remains unchanged.

Last week, we shared draft wording with key stakeholders for review, ensuring messaging reflects a shared approach. All feedback has been requested to be in by the end of the month, to ensure roll out of updates go ahead in March.

Our goal is to make sure everyone receives the right information in the right way, and we appreciate your patience as we refine these materials. More details will follow soon!

Special Education Service Updates

For Leicester City consultation responses please use: SEND-consults@leicester.gov.uk and SES-admin@leicester.gov.uk

SES news: Hannah Marlow has appointed as Interim SES Team Leader for 12 months; this is to cover Caitlin Dunn whilst on maternity leave.

Family Advice and Engagement Officers are available should parents need support with SES related matters including access to the portal, please email SES-admin@leicester.gov.uk if you would like request support for parents. Please State **Family Engagement Worker support required** in the email header to allow admin to triage your request.

Annual Reviews

The transition to the Professionals Portal for EHCP Annual Reviews is now live and can be accessed at: https://ems.leicester.gov.uk/ProfessionalPortal_LIVE/

All Annual Reviews for mainstream schools can now be submitted through the Professionals Portal, eliminating the need for email submissions. Special Schools and Colleges will continue to use the email system.

Work is underway on the Portal to add all schools and parents for annual reviews, should you need individual assistance please email the student's name, date of birth, and student ID to ehcp.annualreview@leicester.gov.uk to arrange a call back and the SES annual review coordinators can support you.

The aim of the updates is to streamline the EHCP process, enabling more efficient and timely management. EHCP documents for students can now be retrieved directly from the Professionals Portal in both PDF and Microsoft Word formats, eliminating the need to request them from SES.

For students who no longer attend your setting and are no longer required in your portal, you can delete them using the on-screen delete option.

A helpful guidance video is available on the [Schools' Extranet](#) to walk you through the process. Additional videos will be added to the Extranet in the coming weeks to assist professionals with the following tasks:

- Accessing the Portal and registering for an account
- Requesting Statutory Assessments via the Professional Portal
- Submitting Educational Advice via the Professional Portal

We encourage you to review the guidance videos for support as you navigate the new system.

Annual Review meetings should be child centred and focus on the child/young person's achievements and progress towards outcomes. An amendment to an existing Education, Health, and Care (EHC) Plan will only take place when:

1. The Child/Young Person is approaching transfer to the next key stage e.g. From KS1 to KS2 (Year 2), From KS2 to KS3 (Year 6), and so on.
2. There has been significant change in the Child/Young Person's needs. As evidenced by professional report.
3. The outcomes in Section E have been achieved.

If there are not any changes required to a pupil's EHCP following the Annual Review, you will not be required to upload the plan. Only fields marked with a red asterisk are mandatory within the Professional Portal. An updated version of the [Annex 2 form](#) can be found on the Schools' Extranet.

Amended plans should follow the following process:

- Any areas that are to be removed should be crossed through but left visible using Strikethrough.
 - E.g. ~~No longer required in plan~~
- Any new areas of wording / amendments should be typed in bold.
 - E.g. **This is an addition to the plan.**

E3/SENIF updates

Year 6 children and young people transitioning into Year 7

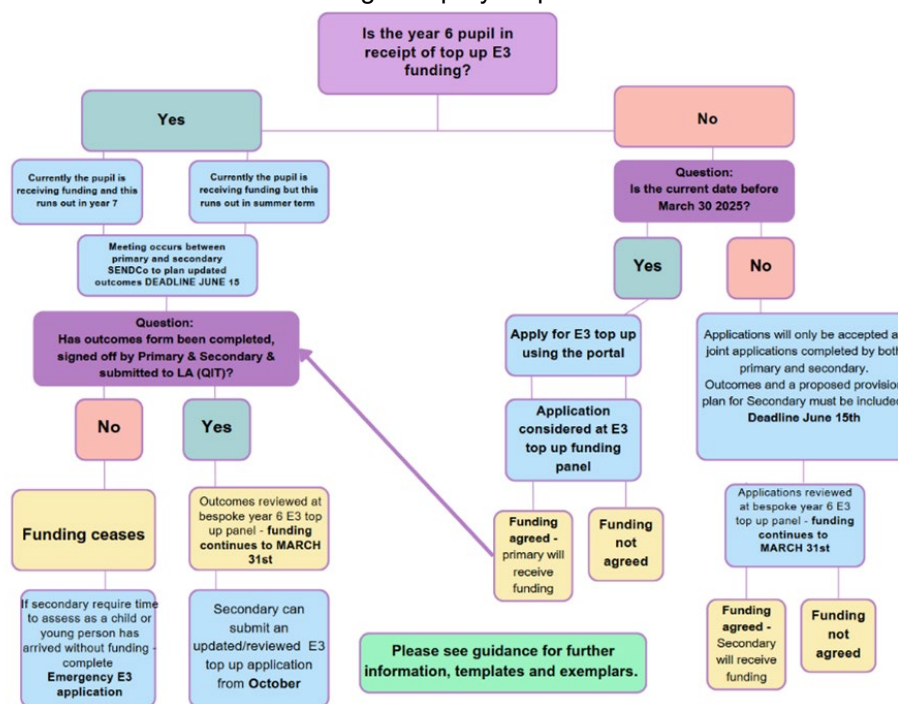
This academic year we will be piloting a process for Children and Young People (CYP) in Year 6 who are transitioning into Year 7 and either have E3 top up funding already or who schools feel may need it to support their transition and success at secondary school.

There will be 3 pathways:

- Pathway 1: Year 6 with funding end date into Year 7
- Pathway 2: Year 6 with funding that ends in summer term
- Pathway 3: Year 6 with no current top up funding

Decision making will take place at Bespoke panels in May and June and the deadline for these applications is 15 June 2025. All successful applications will secure funding to 31 March 2026.

All guidance and documents have been uploaded to the extranet including a step-by-step video and documents have been sent out to all SENDCOS.



Funding for CYP with barriers to attending and/or engaging with learning, education or school (EBSA)

The emergency funding criteria has been updated to include CYP who are struggling to attend school including EBSA. There will now be the option to apply for short term funding for CYP to re-engage them with their learning and education. We recognise that while these CYP do not match the typical emergency funding criteria, there can be a need for short term funding to support them. The criteria can be found below and within the attached, updated emergency funding criteria. The reviews for these requests will be undertaken in collaboration with the SEND professional involved.

Barriers to attending and/or engage with learning, education or school MUST include ATTENDANCE LEVEL

- CYP who have significantly low attendance or are not attending school or CYP who may be on school site but have significant difficulty in attending lessons e.g. may be wandering around school but not accessing any lessons.
- Expectation is that you have sought advice from professionals regarding supporting the CYP (a visit may not have happened) Funding is for additional staffing and support to build relationships with the CYP to prevent an increase in non-attendance or to support the reengagement of the CYP in education, school or in preparation for adulthood (this may not be within school)
- Funding is NOT for Alternative Provision (there is a separate pathway for this) or online tutoring, although your application may indicate where school is doing this.
- What provision or resource do the school/setting want to put in place with the funding? What will happen if the CYP is in school & What will happen if they don't come in? What is the hoped for outcome?

Early Years emergency funding

The emergency funding criteria has been revised to include settings, including children that have moved into settings mid-year and may be known to SENDSS but not yet known to settings. This has been shared with the Early Years team and comms will be shared at upcoming networks. As the emergency funding forms are new to settings, EYST and QIT will be supporting them with the process and panel may see a slight increase in numbers of emergency funding requests as we adapt to support our children in Early Years provision.

As these three processes are pilots, we are welcoming feedback from schools and settings.

Drop ins for SENIF & E3

QIT have offered E3 & SENIF top up funding drop in sessions to answer any questions schools or settings have about completing applications. Please let us know if these sessions have been useful and there is a need for them in the new academic year and we will explore holding more sessions. Thank you.

DSP updates

Phase two of the 150 place DSP expansion has been approved creating new places for students at Rushey Mead Academy (from September 2024) and The City of Leicester College, Lancaster Academy for C&I needs (Secondary) and Willowbank Hospital school for SEMH /C&I anxious students (year 9-11). All three provisions to open in September 2025. A 10-place SEND unit at Imperial Avenue Infants is also being piloted (Sept 2024).

The following DSPs are currently available for the academic year 24-25:

C&I Infant – F2-Y2	Catherine Infant	10
C&I Infant F2-Y2	King Richard III Infant	10
C&I Infant F2-Y2	Kestrel Mead Infant	10
C&I Infant F2-Y2	Imperial Avenue infant	10
C&I Junior Y3-Y6	Inglehurst Juniors	18
C&I Primary Y1-Y6	Sandfield	10
C&I Primary Y1-Y6	Rushey Mead Primary	10
C&I Primary Y1-Y6	Stokes Wood	14
C&I Primary Y1-Y6	Spinney Hill	10
C&I Primary Y1-Y6	Braunstone Frith	12
C&I Primary Y1-Y6	Shenton	10

SLCN Primary Y1-Y6	Barley Croft	15
SLCN Primary Y1-Y6	Thurnby Mead Primary	15
HI Primary Y1-Y6	Thurnby Mead Primary	5
Primary SEMH	Willowbrook Mead primary	12
SLCN – Secondary	Babington	30
C&I Secondary	Orchard Mead	12
C&I Secondary	Rushey Mead	20
C&I Secondary	Fullhurst	40 +10 for Sept

Alternative Provision (AP) Handbook

A copy of the AP Handbook is available for all SENDCos on the Schools' Extranet. Visit: schools.leicester.gov.uk/alternative-provision

It contains guidance for schools on the use of AP, including commissioner responsibilities and documentation to support quality assurance, monitoring, transition and reintegration.

Alternative Provision Directory

A directory of Alternative Provisions known to Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland is in development. This is **not a recommended list**, as the local authorities have not completed any form of quality assurance (QA) on the APs that have been included. It is currently the responsibility of schools to complete their own QA and for secondary schools, [LEBC - Leicestershire Education Business Company](#) can be used for health and safety and safeguarding checks. Schools are advised to visit APs themselves before use, to complete their own due diligence checks and ensure CYP needs can be met. Full guidance around commissioning and quality assurance can be found in the AP Handbook <https://schools.leicester.gov.uk/alternative-provision/>

Alternative Provision Funding

The Quality Inclusion Team are piloting a new top-up funding pathway for schools and colleges using Alternative Provision. This is to reflect the DFE's desire for AP to be used as an intervention, rather than a destination. Schools will be given short-term top up funding for a maximum of 2-days in AP, for a maximum of 26 weeks (a review will take place at 13 weeks to gauge impact). They will receive element 3 top up funding (at MB3) so that the school can support the pupil on the

days they are not in the AP After 26 weeks, AP funding will cease and, if the pupil has returned to full-time mainstream provision, 26 weeks of E3 top-up will be given to support a successful reintegration package. If the school continues to require top up funding for in-school support, when the final 26 weeks end, they should complete an Element 3 top-up funding application. Element 3 top-up funding will no longer cover Alternative Provision and any applications currently in the system will be passed to the new AP top-up funding panel for consideration.

The application form can be found on the Schools' Extranet, visit: schools.leicester.gov.uk/alternative-provision

Part time timetable forms

Just a reminder that a part-time timetable form needs to be submitted whenever a pupil is accessing alternative provision or is on a part-time timetable. The Ofsted inspection framework for Local Authority Children's Services includes a focus on children *who are missing education or who are being offered alternative provision*. The LA is therefore required to have knowledge and oversight of such arrangements. **This form is for schools to notify the LA about a pupil's provision when it is part-time and/or the pupil is attending alternative provision. The form should also be submitted when there is a significant change to previous details provided about a pupil's timetable.** You can find the form here: [School's Extranet](#)

BERA: Useful Resources for SENDCos

Useful resources for SENDCos, linked to the whole school BERA have been published on the Extranet. This area contains a wide range of links and documents that you will find helpful and that are often recommended for use by SEND Support service Teams. <https://schools.leicester.gov.uk/sendco-additional-resources>

Inclusive Provision Reviews

During the Spring term, QIT carried out Inclusive Provision Reviews (IPR's) at five schools across Leicester City. Prior to the reviews the school and QIT agreed joint foci then three reviewers spent the morning at the school, observing children and young people, visiting internal alternative provisions, meeting with senior leadership and members of the school SEND team and conducting pupil interviews. Following the visit, the school were given verbal feedback, followed up by a written report. We appreciate your support with the pilot review process and will be providing feedback in due course.

Supporting Positive KS2 to KS3 Transitions for Pupils with SEND – Workshops

SEND Services and Secondary Schools, who volunteered spaces, have been jointly working with primary schools in their catchment area to develop understanding and processes to support transition for pupils with SEND needs. The hope is that this will lead to further work next year to develop these processes further and to expand to consider further transition points. If you would like to be involved, please contact QIT.

Schools' information report – guidance & toolkit available

There are now two documents available for schools to use to support them with ensuring their SEND Information Reports meet statutory requirements while also being accessible to parents. The guidance document contains some helpful hints for what makes a good SEND information Report and then breaks down each of the statutory regulations, explaining what they mean and providing examples of best practice. There is also an audit tool that has been designed to be used by stakeholders including governors, SLT and parents to consider the content of schools current SEND Information Report. These resources can be found in the SENDCo additional resources section of the schools' extranet and can be accessed via this link: <https://schools.leicester.gov.uk/sendco-additional-resources> within the Policies, Assessment and Identification.

Medical – Individual Healthcare Plans (IHP)

An Individual Healthcare Plan (IHP) is a detailed, written document that outlines the specific medical needs and care requirements of a child attending school or a young person in an education setting. It's a collaborative effort between parents, the child (if appropriate), healthcare professionals, and school staff to ensure the child's medical needs are met while they are at school. Leicester City Council has now adopted the use of IHPs across all schools and education settings to support children with medical conditions and promote inclusive practice. The IHP template and supporting guidance can be found on the school's extranet.

<https://schools.leicester.gov.uk/sendco-additional-resources> within the Policies, Assessment and Identification.

Waiting well support – SEMH team:

To support children who are awaiting special school places, and are struggling to settle to learn, we have a team within the SEMH team who can provide additional input. This is available for primary and secondary schools.

The additional support will be bespoke. Some examples of this are:

- 1:1 sessional work alongside the child, including the child's voice
- Closer working with families
- Support around alternative provisions
- Working alongside key adults and SLTs
- Circle of adult / solution circles

If you have concerns about a child who is awaiting a place at SEMH special provision and they are struggling, please get in touch: bethan.pope@leicester.gov.uk

Speech Language and Therapy Service – New Referral Forms

Please note that the NHS Leicestershire Partnership Trust Speech Language and Therapy Service has produced new guidance and new referral forms for children and young people:

1. in their early years
2. at school
3. with eating drinking and swallowing needs

Not all children with speech, language and communication needs or with eating, drinking and swallowing needs will need specialist support from the Speech and Language Therapy Service, so these forms also provide guidance, advice and strategies to meet needs before a referral is made.

The new guidelines and referral forms are found at the [NHS LPT Speech and Language therapy service website](#). Please visit the website and use these new forms if you are making a referral, as they replace any previous referral forms.