

## **Glossary of special educational needs (SEN) terminology**

### **Annual review**

The review of a statement of special educational needs (SEN) that a local authority (LA) must make within 12 months of making the statement or, as the case may be, of the previous review.

### **Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD)**

ASD is a relatively new term that recognises there are a number of sub-groups within the spectrum of autism. Pupils with ASD find it difficult to:

- understand and use non-verbal and verbal communication
- understand social behaviour, which affects their ability to interact with children and adults
- think and behave flexibly, which may be shown in restricted, obsessional or repetitive activities.

Pupils with ASD cover the full range of ability and the severity of their impairment varies widely. Some pupils also have learning disabilities or other difficulties, making diagnosis difficult.

Pupils with ASDs may have difficulty in understanding the communication of others and in developing effective communication themselves. Many are delayed in learning to speak and some never develop meaningful speech.

Pupils find it difficult to understand the social behaviour of others. They are literal thinkers and fail to understand the social context. They can experience high levels of stress and anxiety in settings that don't meet their needs or when routines are changed. This can lead to inappropriate behaviour.

Some pupils with ASDs have a different perception of sounds, sights, smell, touch and taste, and this affects their response to these sensations. They may have unusual sleep and behaviour patterns.

Young pupils may not play with toys in a conventional and imaginative way but instead use toys rigidly or repetitively, e.g. watching moving parts of machinery for long periods with intense concentration. They find it hard to generalise skills, have difficulty adapting to new situations and often prefer routine.

Pupils with Asperger's syndrome should be recorded in this category. These pupils share the same triad of impairments but have higher intellectual abilities and their language development is different from the majority of pupils with autism.

### **Carer**

For the purpose of the Code, a carer is a person named by an LA to care for a child for whom the social services department has parental responsibility, i.e. a child who is the subject of a care order and who has been placed in a residential or foster placement. The carer may qualify as a parent for the purposes of the Education Acts because he or she has care of the child (see the definition of 'Parent'). If so, he or she will have a role to play in the consideration of a child's SENs.

### **Child protection register**

In each area covered by a social services department, a central register must be maintained that lists all the children in the area considered to be suffering from, or are likely to suffer, significant harm and for which there is a child protection plan. This is not a register of children who have been abused but of children for whom there are currently unresolved child protection issues.

### **Children 'in need'**

A child is deemed to be 'in need' if:

- he or she is unlikely, or does not have the opportunity, to achieve or maintain a reasonable standard of health or development without provision made by the LA
- his or her health and development is likely to be significantly impaired or further impaired without the provision of services by the LA
- If he or she is disabled (Section 17(10), Children Act 1989).

## **Disapplication**

Removal or lifting of a programme of study, attainment target, assessment, or any other component of the National Curriculum, or any combination of these, including entire subjects or the entire National Curriculum (see also 'Modification')

## **Dyscalculia**

Pupils with dyscalculia have difficulty in acquiring mathematical skills. Pupils may have difficulty understanding simple number concepts, lack an intuitive grasp of numbers and have problems learning number facts and procedures.

## **Dyslexia**

Pupils with dyslexia have a marked and persistent difficulty in learning to read, write and spell, despite progress in other areas. Pupils may have poor reading comprehension, handwriting and punctuation. They may also have difficulties in concentration and organisation, and in remembering sequences of words. They may mispronounce common words or reverse letters and sounds in words.

## **Dyspraxia**

Pupils with dyspraxia are affected by an impairment or immaturity of the organisation of movement, often appearing clumsy. Gross and fine motor skills are hard to learn and difficult to retain and generalise. Pupils may have poor balance and coordination and may be hesitant in many actions (running, skipping, hopping, holding a pencil, doing jigsaws, etc). Their articulation may also be immature and their language late to develop. They may also have poor awareness of body position and poor social skills.

## **Education supervision order**

This is an order that LAs, under section 36 of the Children Act 1989, can apply for to put a child of statutory school age who is not being properly educated under the supervision of the LA, with the intention of ensuring he or she receives efficient full-time education suited to his or her age, aptitude, ability and any special educational needs, and that sufficient support, advice and guidance are provided to the parents.

## **Education welfare officer**

This is a person employed by an LA to help parents and LAs meet their respective statutory obligations in relation to school attendance. Education welfare officers also carry out related functions such as negotiating alternative educational provision for excluded pupils. In some LAs, education welfare officers are known as education social workers.

## **Funding authority**

The Education Act 1993 provides for the establishment of two funding authorities: in England, the Funding Agency for Schools (FAS), which was established on 1 April 1994; and in Wales, the Schools Funding Council for Wales (SFCW), which the Act empowers the Secretary of State for Wales to set up by Order. No Order has yet been made.

The FAS is responsible for calculating and paying grants to grant-maintained and grant-maintained special schools and has responsibilities for the provision of school places in areas where there are significant numbers of grant-maintained schools. The SFCW has similar responsibilities.

## **Hearing impairment (HI)**

Pupils with an HI range from those with a mild hearing loss to those who are profoundly deaf. They cover the whole ability range.

For educational purposes, pupils are regarded as having an HI if they require hearing aids, adaptations to their environment and/or particular teaching strategies to access the concepts and language of the curriculum. A number of pupils with an HI also have an additional disability or learning difficulty. Hearing loss may be because of conductive or sensorineural problems and can be measured on a decibel scale. Four categories are generally used: mild, moderate, severe and profound. Some pupils with a significant loss communicate through sign instead of, or as well as, speech.

## **Independent school**

This is a school that is neither maintained by an LA nor grants and which is registered under section 70 of the Education Act 1944. Section 189 of the Education Act 1993 sets out the conditions under which an independent school may be approved by the Secretary of State as being suitable for the admission of children with statements of SENs.

## **Integration**

This incorporates the education of children with SENs together with children without SENs in mainstream schools wherever possible, and ensuring that children with SENs engage in the activities of the school together with children who do not have SENs.

## **Maintained school**

For the purposes of the Code, this refers to any county school, grant-maintained school, grant-maintained special school, voluntary school or maintained special school.

## **Moderate Learning Difficulty (MLD)**

Pupils with MLDs will have attainments significantly below expected levels in most areas of the curriculum despite appropriate interventions. Their needs will not be able to be met by normal differentiation and the flexibilities of the National Curriculum. They should only be recorded as MLD if additional educational provision is being made to help them to access the curriculum. Pupils with MLDs have much greater difficulty than their peers in acquiring basic literacy and numeracy skills and in understanding concepts. They may also have an associated speech and language delay, low self-esteem, low levels of concentration and under-developed social skills.

## **Modification**

This refers to the amendment or alteration of a programme of study, attainment target, assessment or any other component of the National Curriculum in order to give the child access to that area of the Curriculum (see also 'Disapplication').

## **Multi-Sensory Impairment (MSI)**

Pupils with MSI have a combination of visual and hearing difficulties. They are sometimes referred to as deafblind but may have some residual sight and/or hearing. Many also have additional disabilities but their complex needs mean it may be difficult to ascertain their intellectual abilities. Pupils with MSI have much greater difficulty accessing the curriculum and the environment than those with a single sensory impairment. They have difficulties in perception, communication and in the acquisition of information. Incidental learning is limited. The combination can result in high anxiety and multi-sensory deprivation. Pupils need teaching approaches that make good use of their residual hearing and vision, together with their other senses. They may need alternative means of communication.

## **Named LA Officer**

This is the person from the LA who liaises with parents over all the arrangements relating to statutory assessment and the making of a statement. LAs will inform parents of the identity of the officer when they issue a notice of a proposal to make a statutory assessment of a child.

## **Named person**

This is the person whom the LA must identify when sending parents a final version of a statement. The named person, who should usually be identified in cooperation with the parents, must be someone who can give parents information and advice about their child's SENs. He or she may be appointed at the start of the assessment process and can then attend meetings with parents and encourage parental participation throughout that process. The named person should normally be independent of the LA and may be someone from a voluntary organisation or parent partnership scheme.

## **Note in lieu**

This is a note issued to the child's parents and school when, following a statutory assessment, the LA decides not to make a statement. The note should describe the child's SENs, explain why the LA will not make a statement and make recommendations about appropriate provision for the child. All the advice received during the assessment should be attached to the note sent to the parents and, with their consent, also be sent to the child's school.

### **Non-maintained special school**

These are schools in England approved by the Secretary of State as special schools that are not maintained by the state but charge fees on a non-profit-making basis. Most non-maintained special schools are run by major charities or charitable trusts.

### **OFSTED — Office for Standards in Education / OHMCI — Office of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector (Wales)**

These are non-ministerial government departments established under the Education (Schools) Act 1992 to take responsibility for the inspection of all schools in England and Wales respectively. Their professional arm is formed by Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI).

### **Parent**

This is defined in section 114 (1D) of the Education Act 1944, as amended by the Children Act 1989. Unless the context requires otherwise, a parent in relation to a child or young person includes any person who:

- is not a natural parent of the child but who has parental responsibility for him or her
- has care of the child.

Section 114(1F) of the 1944 Act states that for the purposes of sub-section (1D):

- Parental responsibility has the same meaning as in the Children Act 1989
- In determining whether an individual has care of a child or young person, any absence of the child or young person at a hospital or boarding school and any other temporary absence shall be disregarded.

### **Parental responsibility**

Under section 2 of the Children Act 1989, parental responsibility falls upon:

- All mothers and fathers who were married to each other at the time of the child's birth (including those who have since separated or divorced)
- Mothers who were not married to the father at the time of the child's birth
- Fathers who were not married to the mother at the time of the child's birth, but who have obtained parental responsibility either by agreement with the child's mother or through a court order.

Under section 12 of the Children Act 1989, where a court makes a residence order in favour of any person who is not the parent or guardian of the child, that person has parental responsibility for the child while the residence order remains in force.

Under section 33 (3) of the Children Act 1989, while a care order is in force with respect to a child, the social services department (SSD) designated by the order will have parental responsibility for that child, and will have the power (subject to certain provisions) to determine the extent to which a parent or guardian of the child may meet his or her parental responsibility for the child. The SSD cannot have parental responsibility for a child unless that child is the subject of a care order, except for very limited purposes where an emergency protection Order is in force under Section 44 of the Children Act 1989.

A person holding parental responsibility may make arrangements for another person to exercise that responsibility on his or her behalf — for example when the parent is on an extended visit abroad or during a time in hospital. This delegation does not remove the original parental responsibility. The Children Act 1989 introduced a concept of enduring parental responsibility (section 2(6)), which can only be removed through a court and which confers duties as well as rights on all those who have such responsibility.

Parental responsibility is defined under section 3(1) of the Children Act 1989 as covering all the duties, rights, powers, responsibilities and authority which parents have with respect to their children and their children's property.

### **Peripatetic teacher (or specialist, advisory, or support teacher)**

This is a teacher with specific expertise who travels from school to school and is employed by the LA to give appropriate specialist advice and support to the child and the school. Often he or she will also teach children with SENs on a sessional basis, usually when an individual school does not justify the services of a full time teacher for the purpose.

### **Physical disability (PD)**

There is a wide range of physical disabilities and pupils cover the whole ability range. Some pupils are able to access the curriculum and learn effectively without additional educational provision. They have a disability but do not have an SEN. For others, the impact on their education may be severe.

In the same way, a medical diagnosis does not necessarily mean a pupil has an SEN. It depends on the impact the condition has on their educational needs.

There are a number of medical conditions associated with physical disability that can impact mobility. These include cerebral palsy, heart disease, spina bifida and hydrocephalus, and muscular dystrophy. Pupils with physical disabilities may also have sensory impairments, neurological problems or learning difficulties. Some pupils are mobile but have significant fine motor difficulties that require support. Others may need augmentative or alternative communication aids.

### **Playgroups - sessional playgroup**

This is a group registered as a sessional facility or service, offering sessional care and education for children mainly aged three to five years of age cared for with or without parents. No single session lasts more than four hours and no main meal is provided by the group. Such groups are known under a variety of names but they are all registered as playgroups.

### **Full and extended daycare playgroup**

This is a group that accepts children under the age of five, without their parents, for more than four hours in any day.

### **Opportunity playgroup**

This is a group that is set up primarily to provide for children with disabilities or learning difficulties alongside other children. The children often start at an earlier age than in a regular playgroup and staff usually have more specialised training in this field.

### **Parent and toddler playgroup**

This is a group of parents or carers with children under school age - most of the children below the age of three. These groups provide for both children and adults. Parents remain with the children throughout the session.

### **Portage**

This is a planned approach to home-based pre-school education for children with developmental delay, disabilities or any other SENs. Portage began in Portage, Wisconsin, USA, and there is now an extensive Portage network in the UK, which is overseen by the National Portage Association.

### **Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulty (PMLD)**

Pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties have complex learning needs. In addition to very severe learning difficulties, pupils have other significant difficulties such as physical disabilities, sensory impairment or a severe medical condition. Pupils require a high level of adult support, both for their learning needs and also for their personal care. They are likely to need sensory stimulation and a curriculum broken down into very small steps. Some pupils communicate by gesture, eye pointing or symbols, others by very simple language. Their attainments are likely to remain in the early P-scale range (P1-P4) throughout their school careers (that is below level 1 of the National Curriculum).

## **Regional Organisations Expert in Information Technology for Communication Difficulties**

This refers to the Aids to Communication (ACE) centres in Oxford and Oldham, the Centre for Micro-Assisted Communication at Charlton Park School, London SE7 and Communication Aids Centres funded under the NHS.

## **Responsible person**

This is the headteacher or appropriate governor that is chair of the governing body unless the governing body has designated another governor for the purpose. In the case of a nursery school, the responsible person is the headteacher. The responsible person must be informed by the LA when they conclude that a pupil at a school has SENs. The responsible person must then ensure all those who will teach the child know about his or her SENs.

## **SCEA**

This is the Service Children's Education Authority, which oversees the education of UK service children abroad. It is funded by the Ministry of Defence and operates its own schools as well as providing advice to parents on SCEA and UK schools.

## **SEN coordinator**

This is the member of staff of a school who has responsibility for coordinating SEN provision within that school. In a small school the headteacher or deputy may take on this role. In larger schools there may be an SEN coordinating team.

## **SEN Disability Tribunal (SENDIST)**

This is an independent tribunal set up by an Act of Parliament for determining appeals by parents against their LA about children's SENs, where parents cannot reach agreement with the LA. SENDIST also considers parents' claims of disability discrimination in schools.

## **Severe Learning Difficulty (SLD)**

Pupils with SLDs have significant intellectual or cognitive impairments. This has a major effect on their ability to participate in the school curriculum without support. They may also have difficulties in mobility and coordination, communication and perception and the acquisition of self-help skills. Pupils with SLDs will need support in all areas of the curriculum. They may also require teaching of self-help, independence and social skills. Some pupils may use sign and symbols but most will be able to hold simple conversations. Their attainments may be within the upper P scale range (P4-P8) for much of their school careers (that is below level 1 of the National Curriculum).

## **Special school**

This is a school that is specially organised to make special educational provision for pupils with SENs and is for the time being approved by the Secretary of State under section 188 of the Education Act 1993.

## **Transitional arrangements**

These are legal provisions that provide for a smooth changeover from the legal regime established by the Education Act 1981 and the Education (Special Educational Needs) Regulations 1983, to those established under the Education Act 1993 and the Education (Special Educational Needs) Regulations 1994.

## **Transition plan**

This is a plan that should form part of the first annual review after the child's 14th birthday and any subsequent annual review. The purpose of the plan is to draw together information from a range of individuals within and beyond the school to plan coherently for the young person's transition to adult life.