



Shropshire protocol and
guidance for schools requesting
additional 'Top-up' funding to
provide targeted support for
children identified at
SEN Support

Graduated Support Pathway (GSP)

Updated February 2025



Introduction

In the Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Code of Practice: 0 to 25 years, it states that:

“High quality teaching that is differentiated and personalised will meet the individual needs of the majority of children and young people. Some children and young people need educational provision that is additional to or different from this. This is special educational provision under Section 21 of the Children and Families Act 2014. Schools and colleges must use their best endeavours to ensure that such provision is made for those who need it. Special educational provision is underpinned by high quality teaching and is compromised by anything less.”

Paragraph 1.24 SEND Code of Practice

The definition of **SEN** remains unchanged from Section 312, Education Act 1996:

Children have special educational needs if they have a learning difficulty which calls for special educational provision to be made for them. Children have a learning difficulty if they:

(a) have a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of children of the same age; or

(b) have a disability which prevents or hinders them from making use of educational facilities of a kind generally provided for children of the same age in schools within the area of the local education authority

Special educational provision in schools

The SEN Code of Practice identifies that teachers are responsible and accountable for the progress and development of the pupils in their class, including where pupils access support from teaching assistants or specialist staff. High quality teaching, differentiated for individual pupils, is the first step in responding to pupils who have or may have SEN. Additional intervention and support cannot compensate for a lack of good quality teaching. Schools should regularly and carefully review the quality of teaching for all pupils, including those at risk of underachievement. This includes reviewing and, where necessary, improving, teachers' understanding of strategies to identify and support vulnerable pupils and their knowledge of the SEN most frequently encountered.

In deciding whether to make special educational provision, the teacher and SENCO should consider all of the information gathered from within the school about the pupil's progress, alongside national data and expectations of progress. This should include high quality and accurate formative assessment, using effective tools and early assessment materials. For higher levels of need, schools should have arrangements in place to draw on more specialised assessments from external agencies and professionals.

Categories of Support

Within schools children fall into one of the following 3 broad categories:

- **Universal** – The majority of children fall within this category and will have their needs met through quality first teaching with some short-term targeted intervention as required.
- **SEN Support** – Children who have been identified by the school as have special educational needs and requiring some more prolonged targeted or specialist support.
- **Education Health Care Plans (EHCP)** – These children will have undertaken a statutory assessment which may have resulted in an EHCP being issued.

The Graduated Support Pathway (GSP) is not a separate category but is a funding mechanism which enables schools to request additional funding from the High Needs Block to support those children at **SEN Support**. Prior to submitting a request for GSP funding schools should demonstrate that they have implemented the expectations for SEN Support as detailed in Chapter 6 of the SEND Code of Practice.

More information regarding provision at each level of SEND is available in the 'Shropshire Provision for SEND guidance' booklet:

<http://shropshire.gov.uk/media/14214/shropshire-provision-for-send-a-guide-for-mainstream-schools-january-2020.pdf>

SEN support in schools

The majority of children will have their needs met through quality first teaching, which is universally available to all children, with a small amount of targeted intervention aimed at supporting the identified additional needs.

Where concerns are raised that a child may not be making expected progress in their learning, schools are expected to intervene early to implement appropriate and effective support to overcome the barriers to learning. This **SEN Support** should take the form of a 4-part cycle to develop a growing understanding of the pupils' needs, and identify what support is required to ensure the pupil secures good outcomes and makes good progress. This is known as the 'Graduated Approach'.

The Graduated Approach

The four stages are;

Assess – A **thorough and holistic** assessment is essential to ensure that the '*needs*' are accurately identified to ensure that the most appropriate and effective interventions are implemented. Assessments may be carried out by school staff (e.g. Dyslexia, Early Help – '*Family Webstar*') or may involve external agencies (Educational Psychologists, Specialist Outreach Support, Sensory Inclusion Service)

Plan – Once the key barriers to learning (Needs) have been identified it is possible to plan the most effective interventions. The teacher and SENCo should agree, in consultation with the parent and the pupil, the adjustments, interventions and support to be put in place. All teachers and support staff who work with the pupil should be aware of their needs, the outcomes sought, the support provided and any teaching strategies or approaches that are required.



Do – The class or subject teacher should remain responsible for working with the child on a daily basis. Where the interventions involve group or 1:1 teaching away from the main class or subject teacher, they should still retain responsibility for the pupil. They should work closely with any TA's to plan and assess the impact of support and interventions and how they can be linked to classroom teaching. The SENCo should support the class teacher and provide advice on the effective implementation of support.

Review – The impact and quality of the support and interventions should be evaluated, along with the views of the parent and child. The class teacher, working with the SENCo, should revise the support in light of the pupil's progress and development.

To accurately identify the barriers to learning and implement effective strategies and interventions it may be necessary to complete 2-3 cycles of the 'Graduated Approach'. During the assessment process it is important to ensure a meaningful and holistic review is undertaken and that, in addition to the views of the parents and the setting, information and advice is sought from appropriate external agencies to provide additional evidence that may contribute to the compilation of an effective plan.

If, during the assessment of a child or young person, it is considered that the barriers to learning may include social and/or emotional influences it may be necessary to initiate Early Help involvement.

Challenging Behaviour

It should not be assumed that children who present with challenging behaviour have special educational needs. The SEN Code of practice identifies that:

'Persistent disruptive or withdrawn behaviours do not necessarily mean that a child or young person has SEN. Where there are concerns, there should be an assessment to determine whether there are any causal factors such as undiagnosed learning difficulties, difficulties with communication or mental health issues. If it is thought housing, family or other domestic circumstances may be contributing to the presenting behaviour a multi-agency approach, supported by the use of approaches such as the Early Help Assessment, may be appropriate. In all cases, early identification and intervention can significantly reduce the use of more costly intervention at a later stage. (6.21)'

It is essential, therefore, that, where there are behaviour concerns, settings consider a multi-agency meeting, along with parents/carers, to ensure that all appropriate pathways are considered. Schools could consider calling a Pupil Planning Meeting (PPM) and involving the Education Access Service.

Following the assessment process, the child or young person may be identified as requiring **SEN Support**. A personalised plan will be produced to address the assessed needs of the individual. The child will require specific, **targeted** support to help overcome their barriers to learning. This plan will be shared with all appropriate stakeholders who are in a position to contribute and implement the strategies identified.

Funding to provide targeted support for a pupil identified at SEN Support is the responsibility of the school from the nationally prescribed threshold: currently £6000 per pupil per year. This notional budget is referred to as **Element 2** funding.

Shropshire's **Graduated Support Pathway** (GSP) is a mechanism that enables settings to request additional top up funding from the high needs block (Element 3) to meet the cost of targeted or specialist educational provision that is necessary to meet the special educational needs of an individual pupil once the notional funding threshold has been exceeded.

The Graduated Support Pathway Process

Support for pupils with Special Educational Needs (SEN) over and above schools normally available resources without the need for an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP)

Schools requesting additional funding from the high needs block will need to submit a completed [request form](#) to the SEN Team along with the necessary supporting paperwork.

Schools will need to evidence that they have followed the SEN Support process as detailed in the SEND Code of Practice.

This must include:

- Three detailed cycles of the graduated approach (Assess, Plan, Do, Review)
- A [costed provision map](#) that identifies the specific support and provision to be implemented (including duration and frequency), the cost of this provision.

Please note that it will not be sufficient to record a costed number of TA hours as general support needed for a pupil across the curriculum. Specific interventions, strategies and learning programmes with measurable outcomes need to be fully detailed to target the pupil's SEN/barriers to learning.

An Excel Template can be downloaded by following the link:

<https://shropshire.gov.uk/media/15310/costed-provision-map-template.xlsx>

- Schools must complete a [Person Centred Plan and Review \(GSP\)](#) for the individual which includes SMART outcomes.

More detailed information on what constitutes good outcome setting is given in Chapter 9; Education, Health and care needs assessments and plans (paragraphs 9.64 – 9.69) of the SEND Code of Practice.

In line with the principles outlined in the SEN Code of Practice, the process must be person centred and involve pupils and parents/carers and take account of their views at all stages, including agreement of the plan.

The completed forms and supporting documentation will be sent to the EQA Team via the SEND Portal to be considered at the monthly GSP panel. Each request will be triaged and if considered appropriate and complete, schools/settings will be sent an invitation to present their request at an online GSP panel.

If the request is agreed, documentation is returned to schools via the SEND Portal with funding agreement from the LA towards the expected outcomes written by the school. If the letter notes that outcomes should be amended this is done by the school, parents/carers and any services involved in the Graduated Support Plan. Comments/suggestions on provision may also be made. Funding will then be allocated to the school.

Children accessing GSP funding are recognised as being at SEN Support, which is a non-statutory process, and therefore schools retain responsibility for implementing the provision and ensuring progress towards outcomes.

If a request for additional funding is refused, the school will be informed of the reasons for this and any further steps they may need to take. Schools may re-submit a request once the identified actions have been completed. The LA can follow up as deemed appropriate.

Review of the Graduated Support Plan

The school will, as part of the usual SEN Support process, review the progress being made and the impact that the interventions are having, on a termly basis through the Graduated Approach. This will include consultation with parents/carers (**SEND CoP 6.65**). Four weeks prior to the GSP period coming to an end the setting will need to complete a summary evaluation to be submitted to the EQA Team via the SEND Portal. At this point the setting has two options, it may decide that they no-longer require GSP funding and that the child's needs can now be met using the notional funding or that they need to submit a further, updated, request for GSP funding. The funding will cease automatically if a further request is not received by the SEN Team.

[Please refer to these notes before completing and submitting a request for additional funding through a Graduated Support Pathway \(GSP\)](#)

Criteria for pupils - eligibility for GSP

- Graduated Support funding will be open to requests for Shropshire children and young people of primary and secondary age (Reception to Year 11) and those attending school sixth form, including those attending academies.
- Pupils with an EHC Plan will not be eligible for GSP funding. Schools/Parents Carers should not apply for an EHCNA and GSP at the same time.
- Parents Carers and schools can request an EHCNA at any stage if appropriate. It is not necessary to have had a GSP before requesting an EHCNA. It may be apparent that the pupil requires more specialised provision that is better supported by having an EHCP.
- Pupils must have significant barriers to learning i.e. requiring support above element 2 funding, so SEN thresholds remain at the same level.

- If a pupil receiving GSP funding leaves the school, is subject to an individual learning plan or engages in a shared placement (e.g. TMBSS) the school must notify the Local Authority immediately so that GSP funding can be adjusted, if appropriate. The funding is allocated to the individual pupil and therefore follows the pupil and cannot be transferred to another pupil within the school.

Completing the Request

The intention is to make the request process simple and efficient and to utilise evidence that already exists rather than generate additional work. As the child will already be at SEN Support, schools will be following the processes as detailed in the SEND Code of Practice and will therefore have most of the required evidence readily available. Therefore evidence, e.g. Costed Provision Maps, Person Centred Plans etc. can be scanned and emailed in the format that is used within the school as long as they contain similar detail to that recorded on the Shropshire Templates [See Appendices].

Requests should only include relevant details and should not include unnecessary, dated or duplicated information.

The Request Form

- All relevant sections must be completed fully to ensure the request can be processed without delay.
- **Pupils in receipt of other additional funding** – e.g. pupil premium
Enter the total amount received for the individual on the request form and attached details of how this is used and how the impact is monitored.
- **Funding Requested** – Enter a total cost for the provision/intervention being requested. A detailed breakdown of how this funding is being used to support the individual needs to be submitted on the **costed provision map**.
- Parent/carers will be required to sign the request document to consent to sharing information about their son/daughter with the Local Authority. This will include the sharing of information gathered by external agencies.

The Person Centred Plan / GSP

Children eligible for additional GSP funding will already have a detailed Person Centred Plan (settings may call these by alternative names) which identifies 'needs, outcomes and provision'. Rather than developing another process, the expectation is, therefore, to build on the current SEN Support system which will already be embedded into schools. The additional provision that is deemed to be necessary, for which the GSP funding is being requested, needs to be incorporated into the Person Centred Plan for the proceeding term/year and needs to include:

- A detailed and holistic assessment which accurately identifies the additional needs and barriers to learning.
- Long-term (yearly) outcomes – which must be SMART. These should then be broken down into short-term (termly) outcomes/steps
- Interventions and provision must be evidence based and also inspire greater independence. This will be evidenced within the provision map and through the termly review process.

- The interventions should, where possible, be delivered within the classroom, by the class-teacher. Consideration should also be given to offering small group work rather than large amounts of 1:1 work with an adult.

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Paragraph 1.24 SEND Code of Practice

- Schools must include parent carers in all aspects of the GSP process through meeting and planning together, to ensure their views and their child’s views are represented in all decisions.
- Parent carer and child views can be collected and submitted on a separate template if desired.

The Evaluation

4 weeks prior to the expiry date specified in the GSP the school must review the plan with child, parent carers and any other services involved using person centred approaches and complete the orange review section of the Pupil Centred Plan and Review (GSP) document. The evaluation will need to be completed and must include all evidence of progress towards outcomes and reports from any services involved. Following the evaluation there are 3 options:

1. That outcomes have been achieved and child’s the needs can be met through the usual resources available in school and the **GSP will cease or reduce**
2. The outcomes have been partially met and/or some progress has been made but the child needs the support provided by a **GSP to continue**. A new request for additional funding should be submitted with amended outcomes/provision.
3. Despite the additional input from the GSP the child requires more specialist provision and an **EHCNA will be submitted**. It is not necessary to wait until the review date if it becomes apparent at an earlier stage that an EHCNA may be required. However, best practice is to allow sufficient time for strategies and provision to embed before making an EHCNA request.

Completed forms and any supporting evidence need to be returned to the EQA Team via the SEND Portal:

[shropshire-send-portal-guidance.pdf](#)

For further information about this process please contact the EQA team:
EQA@shropshire.gov.uk

Graduated Support Pathway (GSP) Panel

Terms of Reference 2024-2025

Panel members for 2024/25 academic year

Sarah Court, Education Quality Adviser, SEND and AP (Panel Co-Chair)

Emma Simkins, Education Quality Adviser, SEND and AP (Panel Co-Chair)

Heidi White, Education Quality Adviser, SEND and AP (Panel Co-Chair - reserve)

Laith Al-Asmar, SENCo, St Mary's Primary School, Shawbury

Ruth Bennett, Assistant Headteacher and SENCo, William Brookes School

Sian Bowdler, SENCo, Meole Brace Primary School

Rachel Butterfield, Trust SENCo, Empower Multi Academy Trust

Gemma Davies, SENCo and SEND Hub Lead, Ellesmere Primary School

Sue Dix, SENCo, St. Martin's 3-16 Learning Community

Kate Hare, SENCo, Meole Brace School

Lucy Lee, Executive Principal, Severndale Specialist Academy

Sarah Longhurst, Assistant Headteacher and SENCo, Mary Webb School

Catherine Lyth, Primary Headteacher, TMBSS

James Pearson, Secondary Headteacher, TMBSS

Angela Poole, Assistant Head and SEND Hub Manager, Pathway Primary Federation

Su Quye, Assistant Headteacher and SENCo, Church Stretton School

Carl Rogers, Executive Head, Pathway Primary Federation

Rachel Stokes, Assistant Headteacher and SENCo, The Corbet School

Ronan Walsh, Headteacher, Gobowen Primary School

Cheryl White, Assistant Headteacher and SENCo, The Priory School

Panels will be split into Primary and Secondary and panel members will be expected to attend the panel for which they have the most expertise although cross phase attendance is welcome to support with discussion around transition.

Members of the following teams/services may attend if staffing levels allow:

- Educational Psychology Service (EPS)
- EHCP Team (Senior Case Officers and Team Lead)
- Other Pupil Support services as required e.g. Virtual School, Education Access.

Graduated Support Pathway (GSP) Panel

Terms of Reference for Panel Members

General

1. The name of the panel will be the Graduated Support Path Panel (GSP Panel)
2. The panel will be co-chaired by Sarah Court and Emma Simkins (Education Quality Advisers, SEND and AP, Shropshire Council) with Heidi White providing Chair cover if needed.
3. The panel has been created in response to SEND changes nationally and promotes the key principles underpinning the Children & Families Act 2014 and the new 2014 SEND Code of Practice.
4. The panel will consider applications for advice and guidance and / or Graduated Support Plan Funding.
5. Advice and guidance will be considered for all children and young people from YR to Y11.
6. The panel will only consider funding requests for children without an Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan.

Function of the panel

1. The panel will provide advice and guidance to mainstream schools, provide support and challenge and signpost to services.
2. To decide whether the child meets the criteria for GSP funding, determined by the quality of the graduated approach.
3. To support the inclusion of children and young people with SEND in mainstream schools and through transition into secondary school.

Confidentiality

1. All members of panel must ensure that information, which has been shared or discussed at the meeting, is treated as strictly confidential in accordance with the [Data Protection Act, 1998](#).
2. No details of individual cases, or panel discussion, should be discussed or continued outside the meeting on the day of the discussion, or at any other time.
3. It is the responsibility of panel members to raise any potential conflict of interest as appropriate.

Operational Principles

1. Panel members should endeavour to attend all allocated meetings to discuss cases.
2. Panel members will be allocated to panels on a rota where panel membership levels permit. If a panel member cannot attend any of their allocated panels, it is their responsibility to contact another panel member and arrange cover.
3. The panel will meet up to 11 times a year. (Panel will not meet in August)
4. A panel member will only be considered to have a “conflict of interest” if the request is from the same school (or from the same MAT or federation if they have a wider role), if they have a financial interest in the application or know the child/family personally. In this instance the panel member will be requested to leave the room at the point of discussion and decision making.
5. The panel can only be held if there is a quorum of 5 (minimum) including at least one Local Authority Chair and school representatives
6. All panel members are expected to have read through the cases in preparation for the meeting.
7. Applications to the panel will be administered by the Local Authority (EQA Team and Business Support)
8. The panel will decide if each application meets the threshold for GSP support. The decision regarding which banding will be allocated, if applicable, will be taken by the Local Authority (decision will be made by the GSP Panel Chairs and EHCP Team).
9. The Local Authority will communicate their decision on funding in an outcome letter from the Local Authority within 10 working days of the panel.
10. The panel does not operate a formal appeals procedure. However, professionals can seek information from the panel as to why certain decisions have been made at any time, if these are not sufficiently clear in correspondence.

February 2025