



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 June 2020



## Introduction

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

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*“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*

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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 \(GSP/APDR\)](#) 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 SEN Team to be considered at the weekly review panel.

### **Senrequestsforassessments@shropshire.gov.uk**

If the request is agreed, documentation is returned to schools 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 SEN Team. 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.

*“Special educational provision is underpinned by high quality teaching and is compromised by anything less.”*

*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 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, parents/carers and any other services involved using person centred approaches. 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.

Completed forms and any supporting evidence need to be returned to the SEN Team via encrypted email at:

[Senrequestsforassessments@shropshire.gov.uk](mailto:Senrequestsforassessments@shropshire.gov.uk)

***For further information about this process please the [SEN Team](#)***