



## Learning example

### Supporting inclusive education: Newcastle's graduated response

#### Introduction

This learning example sets out Newcastle's approach to effectively implementing the graduated response to SEN support in mainstream schools and settings. It explores the development of their [SEND Outreach Service](#) which can be accessed via the SEND Advice and Support Allocation Panel (ASAP).

#### Aims and objectives

Newcastle observed an increasing number of requests for Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCP) where it was identified that, with the right advice and support, children and young people could have been more effectively supported in schools and settings without necessarily needing an EHCP. Newcastle had identified that Early Years support was working well. Feedback from early years settings and from parents/carers of children in early years gave high ratings of the support from the LA Early years team. Newcastle decided to build on the successful approach in Early Years.

At the time, the different services that were available to give advice and support to SENCO's and schools and settings, e.g. advice from specialist teachers, were in different teams or departments and joint working between teams was limited. It was difficult to access a holistic source of advice and support for schools and settings.

In order to support children with SEND to get the right support at the right time, Newcastle made the decision to bring the different advice and support services within Education and Early help together through one panel. This made them more accessible to schools and settings and enabled them to identify and meet the needs of children more effectively, improving their attendance and engagement, and reducing the need for unnecessary referrals for EHCPs.

The panel aims to:

- provide advice and support to help children access learning and make progress in their school or setting
- advise and provide a range of training to staff to enable them to plan appropriate interventions and support packages for children with SEND

In addition, for younger pre-school aged children, [SEND Outreach Service, Early Years](#):

- visits children in their own homes to provide teaching advice and support

- plan a range of opportunities to develop each child's play and learning
- provide specialist support and advice to help parents make informed choices about the education of their children

## Approach

In response to these challenges, and with the support of the Head of SEND in Newcastle, the SEND Outreach Service and the SEND Advice and Support Allocation Panel (ASAP) were established. The approach was developed in partnership with colleagues across the LA SEN and finance teams, mainstream schools, and special schools. Prior to the introduction of SEN ASAP, parents and carers said that they were unclear about what support was provided by the LA for SEN in mainstream schools and settings. Their confidence levels were low in relation to provision in mainstream particularly with regards to social communication (autism) needs. The SEN ASAP was therefore introduced partly in response to these concerns.

SEND ASAP provides a streamlined referral process into a single point of access for mainstream schools and settings who are working to meet the needs of children with SEND but who have exhausted the in-house expertise and ordinarily available provision in the school environment.

As part of the referral the school or setting is expected to demonstrate how they have made their own response to the needs of the children. Newcastle has SEND mainstream and Universal Guidance to support schools and settings in this and it is part of the guidelines that sit alongside the referral form. You can see more about the referral process and template forms on the [Newcastle SEND Local Offer](#).

The panel consists of the local authority SEN team, Educational Psychology Service (EPS), specialist teachers, special schools, SENCOs, Children Social Care/Early help, and also the LA finance team. The panel meets fortnightly and every referral to panel receives an initial response within 5 days of the panel meeting ensuring that children are able to access support in school or their setting in a timely way.

The types of support available are:

- Advice and support from SEND outreach service (0-25 years) & Educational Psychology Service
- Advice and support from specialist schools and settings
- Individual Pupil Support funding (IPS)
- Liaison with Health/Social Care/Early Help services and other external agencies (as appropriate)

There is also an Early Years Inclusion Panel which meets to respond to requests for some additional funding from Early years settings.

For all children referred to SEN ASAP for advice and/or support schools and settings should draft a SEN plan which needs to be monitored to ensure that the approach taken leads to the necessary progress.

### How does an IPS work?

IPS funding allocations will be granted for a time limited period, for a maximum of 1 year. Funding of up to £5000 from the High Needs Block is provided to support inclusion and/or reintegration into the mainstream classroom.

It is intended that funding will enable schools and settings to provide specific, short term and high-quality support and intervention which is individualised and bespoke to the pupil concerned, above and beyond what would normally be available. Applications should include evidence of inclusive practice.

The following list provides examples of successful uses of funding:

- A new approach to support and intervention as advised by an SEN specialist.
- Extending support/intervention that is already working successfully where monitoring and review indicates that a longer period of time is required for it to have full impact.
- A costly piece of specialised equipment or resource recommended by an SEN specialist.
- Some therapeutic work designed to support reintegration back into class for pupils who are finding it difficult to access the mainstream classroom.

The SEN ASAP may request schools/settings to provide reviews of progress and outcomes for the child where funding has been provided. This may include feedback to colleagues in other schools/settings at the SENCo Network meetings.

### Challenges and successes

#### Key challenges:

- Inevitably some schools use the service more than others however the SEND Outreach Service are working to target those schools that are less engaged.
- Secondary schools are more challenging to engage due to the larger scale of the organisation which can mean it is more difficult to provide the information to all staff. As such it is important that the SENCOs cascade the information and set up a robust system in the school. *(In response, Newcastle have also developed a 'Team Around the School' approach focused on secondary schools which will be shared in a separate learning example).*

- The most popular request is contribution for 1:1 support and the school will need to demonstrate which programme/intervention the 1:1 support will deliver and how it is going to support inclusion.
- SEN ASAP does not have Health representation at the moment in the panel however, there are strong links with SLT (speech and Language therapists). It is planned to explore how to support Health engagement on the panel moving forwards.
- Accurate data monitoring has been challenging because there are so many variables. For example, to see the impact that including specialist teachers in schools has on attendance has been difficult to measure, especially given that post- Covid, attendance has been affected by changing mental health needs. Newcastle are exploring how to effectively measure the impact of SEN ASAP.

#### **Key successes:**

- Newcastle held a re-launch event that was well attended by SENCOs and Headteachers with presentations and group discussions, including exploring case studies and outcomes for children. As a result, the number of referrals to the panel increased because there was more awareness of the support available. [Newcastle SEND Advice and Support Allocation Panel \(SEN ASAP\) \(newcastlesupportdirectory.org.uk\)](https://www.newcastlesupportdirectory.org.uk) provides the PP presentations and case studies that were provided as part of the event.
- The number and quality of requests has increased with the time which is an indicator that schools are identifying and responding earlier to children's needs.
- By encouraging schools to use advice that has been provided for other children with similar needs children get effective support more quickly and staff are supported to develop and apply their knowledge.
- Communication and joint working between teams through the SEN ASAP has led to greater understanding of roles across SEN and Social Care meaning that professionals are more aware of when it is appropriate to call upon colleagues for further advice regarding individual cases.

#### **Key learning for other LAs**

- Map the existing services available to share advice and support for schools and explore how to bring them together through a single referral pathway to improve accessibility and awareness.
- Consult with parent/carers, cyp, schools and settings to ascertain what is working well and identify any gaps in SEN expertise, advice and support
- Invest to save model based on the concept that accessing an additional resource or IPS funding to support inclusion can mean:

- Earlier intervention – maximum of 3 weeks to initial feedback from the panel;
- Prevention – clear plan and monitoring of progress to support de-escalation of needs;
- Reduced pressure on the EHC needs assessment referral system where children’s needs can be met with support from SEN ASAP.

Review the templates and systems in place in Newcastle on the SEND Local Offer

<https://www.newcastlesupportdirectory.org.uk/newcastle-send-advice-and-support-allocation-panel-send-asap>