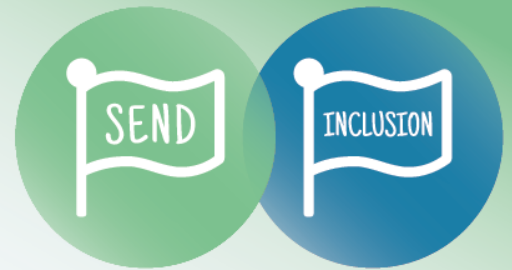


# Section ②



Meeting the Needs of Children and Young People with SEND  
(The Graduated Approach)

## 2.4 The Four broad areas of need

The SEND Code of Practice states:

*“A detailed assessment of need should ensure that the full range of an individual’s needs is identified, not simply the primary need. The support provided to an individual should always be based on a full understanding of their particular strengths and needs, and seek to address them using well-evidenced interventions targeted at their areas of difficulty and, where necessary, specialist equipment and software.”*

- Section 6.27, Code of Practice

*“My teachers know me well and know how I learn. I like it when they check in with me in a lesson just for a few minutes.”*

- Pupil from a SG secondary school

The four broad areas of need give an overview of the range of needs that a child or young person (CYP) may have, they are an indicator of the different needs that should be planned for. The purpose of identification is not to give the CYP a ‘label’ as in practice CYP may have needs that cut across all four areas and we know from working and listening to CYP and their families that every child and young person is different. By considering the four broad areas of need, within a graduated approach (see section 2.2), practitioners can assess need and work with parents/carers and the CYP to co-produce a plan of support.

The four broad areas of need are:

- Cognition and Learning
- Social, Emotional and Mental Health
- Communication and Interaction
- Sensory and/or physical

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Cognition and Learning	Communication and Interaction	Social Emotional and Mental Health	Sensory/and or physical
Moderate Learning Difficulty (MLD)	Autism Spectrum  Sensory Integration	Social and / or emotional dysregulation	Visual impairment (VI)
Severe Learning Difficulty (SLD)	Receptive/expressive needs	Attachment disorders	Hearing impairment(HI)
Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulty (PMLD)	Social communication needs	Pervasive impact of trauma or Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)	Multi-sensory impairment (MSI)
Specific Learning Difficulty (SpLD)	Articulation and Phonology	Mental Health needs	Sensory integration
	Speech, language and communication needs (SLCN)	Attention deficit hyperactive disorder	Physical disability (PD)

Children and young people may have needs across more than one category, called co-presenting needs. They may also have medical needs that require support and intervention. Considering primary needs is important and a useful first step, but we know a more detailed understanding of an individual CYP is required for action to be beneficial. Teachers should understand the individual characteristics of a CYP's needs, and how these relate to their classroom environment and the content that they are teaching. As highlighted in 2.1 Universal provision: High Quality Teaching, what is key is understanding the specific barriers CYP face to learning and what they need in order to thrive.

## Cognition and Learning

Within the code of practice cognition and learning is defined as follows:

### Paragraph 6.30

*'Support for learning difficulties may be required when children and young people learn at a slower pace than their peers, even with appropriate differentiation.'*

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*Learning difficulties cover a wide range of needs, including moderate learning difficulties (MLD), severe learning difficulties (SLD), where children are likely to need support in all areas of the curriculum and associated difficulties with mobility and communication, through to profound and multiple learning difficulties (PMLD), where children are likely to have severe and complex learning difficulties as well as a physical disability or sensory impairment.'*

### **Paragraph 6.31**

*'Specific learning difficulties (SpLD) affect one or more specific aspects of learning. This encompasses a range of conditions such as dyslexia, dyscalculia and dyspraxia.'*

Cognition and learning needs may encompass most of the curriculum, such as for pupils with MLD or SLD. However, cognition and learning needs may only impact on specific areas such as reading, writing, spelling and mental calculations. Cognition and learning needs generally account for difficulties in curriculum-related areas such as:

- reading, writing and spelling
- numerosity
- comprehension
- processing difficulties such as sequencing, inference, coherence and elaboration
- working memory
- short term verbal memory
- other types of executive function difficulties

## **Communication and Interaction**

Within the code of practice communication and interaction is defined as follows:

### **Paragraph 6.29**

*'Children and young people with speech, language and communication needs (SLCN) have difficulty in communicating with others. This may be because they have difficulty saying what they want to, understanding what is being said to them, or they do not understand or use social rules of communication. The profile for every child with SLCN is different and their needs may change over time. They may have difficulty with one, some or all of the different aspects of speech, language or social communication at different times of their lives.'*

Children and young people with ASD, including Asperger's Syndrome and Autism, are likely to have difficulties with social interaction. They may also experience difficulties with language, communication and imagination, which can impact on how they relate to others. Communication and interaction needs could include:

- difficulties with producing or responding to expressive or receptive language

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- difficulties uttering speech sounds
- difficulties understanding spoken and other communications from others
- difficulties with understanding age-related social conventions of interaction, such as turn-taking during conversations or appropriate level of physical contact during play

Autism is a spectrum and CYP with autism can be cognitively very able.

## Social, Emotional and Mental Health

Within the code of practice social, emotional and mental health is defined as:

### Paragraph 6.32

*‘Children and young people may experience a wide range of social and emotional difficulties which manifest themselves in many ways. These may include becoming withdrawn or isolated, as well as displaying challenging, disruptive or disturbing behaviour. These behaviours may reflect underlying mental health difficulties such as anxiety or depression, self-harming, substance misuse, eating disorders or physical symptoms that are medically unexplained. Other children and young people may have disorders such as attention deficit disorder, attention deficit hyperactivedisorder or attachment disorder.’*

### Paragraph 6.33

*‘Schools and colleges should have clear processes to support children and young people, including how they will manage the effect of any disruptive behaviour, so it does not adversely affect other pupils.’*

Children and young people may experience a wide range of social and emotional difficulties which can present themselves in many ways. These may include becoming withdrawn or isolated, or displaying challenging behaviour. These behaviours may reflect a range of underlying issues such as anxiety or depression. Other children and young people may have Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD), Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorder (ADHD).

It is important to recognise that these difficulties may reflect other underlying special educational needs or difficulties from other categories of need. Presenting ‘behaviours’ should always be considered as a symptom of a potential underlying need. Separating the behaviour from the child or young person is crucial by applying a ‘what’s happened (or happening) to them’ rather than ‘what’s wrong with them’ approach.

## Sensory and/or physical needs

Within the code of practice sensory and/or physical is defined as follows:

### Paragraph 6.34

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*‘Some children and young people require special educational provision because they have a disability which prevents or hinders them from making use of the educational facilities generally provided. These difficulties can be age related and may fluctuate over time. Many children and young people with vision impairment (VI), hearing impairment (HI) or a multi-sensory impairment (MSI) will require specialist support and/or equipment to access their learning, or habilitation support. Children and young people with an MSI have a combination of vision and hearing difficulties. Information on how to provide services for deafblind children and young people is available through the Social Care for Deafblind Children and Adults guidance published by the Department of Health.’*

### **Paragraph 6.35**

*‘Some children and young people with a physical disability (PD) require additional ongoing support and equipment to access all the opportunities available to their peers.’*

Physical and sensory needs cover a wide range of medical conditions in addition to those mentioned above. Some children with physical disabilities may be very cognitively able so the levels of support must be tailored to a person-centred needs analysis of each child’s needs and preferences, considering the views of children and their families.

## **Medical Conditions**

There are also medical conditions which affect various areas of development across the four broad areas of need; Some have specific definition; genetic (e.g. Prader-Willi) social/environment (e.g. Foetal Alcohol Syndrome).

*‘The Children and Families Act 2014 places a duty on maintained schools and academies to make arrangements to support pupils with medical conditions. Individual healthcare plans will normally specify the type and level of support required to meet the medical needs of such pupils. Where children and young people also have SEN, their provision should be planned and delivered in a coordinated way with the healthcare plan. Schools are required to have regard to statutory guidance ‘Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions’ (COP 2015, 6.11)*

[Supporting pupils at schools with medical conditions – guidance from GOV.UK](#)

See Medical needs section 2.10 for guidance.