



SEND Support and Provision Neurodiversity Needs

Torbay's Guide to the Graduated Response for Inclusion

All human beings can be described as neurodiverse. We vary in the way our brains work. We take in information in different ways. We process it in different ways and therefore, we behave in different ways.

When we talk about neurodivergence, this covers a wide range of neurological differences which may either enhance or be a barrier to learning. These differences can affect a number of developmental areas and be observed as characteristic that are indicative of Autism, ADHD, Dyslexia, Dyspraxia, Dyscalculia, Classic Tic Disorders, Developmental Coordination Disorder, Intellectual Disability and Developmental Language Disorder (DLD).

These differences can affect a number of developmental areas. The young person may or may not choose to self-describe in this way.

Having a common understanding of neurodiversity among education, health and social care staff working with children and young people is important, as well as acknowledging how it is integral across all areas of the Graduated Response.

Therefore, this section on neurodiversity should not be read on its own. Education, health and social care staff working with neurodivergence should read the Graduated Response for cognition and learning; speech, language and communication needs; social, emotional and mental health; and sensory and physical needs.

It is important that all professionals refer to the other need toolkits of the Graduated Response for detailed strategies and interventions related to key areas of need.

Parents and carers should be seen as the experts in their own Child or Young person's needs.

Every school, health setting, social worker and community support worker will:

- Have a supportive ethos and environment which promotes neurodiversity
- Have clear processes in place to:

- capture each child and young person's voice
- respond to concerns raised by parents/carers/children and young people/professionals
- Involve parents, discuss barriers to learning and share strategies/training for parents to understand neurodiversity
- Share appropriate information with partners as part of a multi-disciplinary team approach to understand the child/young person's strengths and needs
- Have systems in place to review whether an environment is 'neurodiverse friendly' and make reasonable adjustments as necessary
- Have systems to implement a whole school/setting/workplace approach
- Provide opportunities for all workforces to audit the key skills and knowledge needed to support the neurodiverse needs of children and young people
- Provide training for all staff to develop understanding and confidence around supporting neurodiverse needs that is relevant to their role
- Support parents/carers and professionals by signposting to resources and sources of information
- Adapt teaching and learning styles (e.g., online vs face to face). Wider theories of neurodivergence suggests monitoring students' progress and adapting to their preferred approaches for future lessons accordingly.

SEND support strategies or interventions

1) Executive Functioning Skills

Executive function can include many developmental areas. Three core areas include:

- inhibition (which includes selective attention, and self-control)
- working memory
- flexibility of thought (included metacognition). [Find out more](#)

Inhibition

- Selective attention (concentration) and self control
- Organised and clutter free resources, workspaces and classrooms
- Planned movement breaks
- Adjust activities to use special interest as a tool to engage and maintain concentration
- Use simple verbal or visual reminders to re-engage
- Personal Organisation / Independence Skills
- Use visual timetables, prompts and checklists – these can support a young person to develop routines in school and support welfare

- Break tasks down into manageable chunks. Post-it notes can be sequenced and moved around so all parts of an activity are crossed off as they are completed.
- Identify safe care and self-awareness needs (e.g not knowing when your face is dirty). Instigate routines to support this in the young person's plan. Checklists or social stories may help here.

Working memory

- Break tasks down into manageable chunks. Post-it notes can be sequenced and moved around so all parts of an activity are crossed off as they are completed.
- Use visual timetables and prompts.
- Reduce the information a young person has to 'hold in mind' – use mind maps, give additional processing time, use lists, post-it notes and highlighting text instead of writing notes.

Flexibility of thought

- Learning materials that are adapted and personalised with pupil's special interests

Regulation

- Set and communicate clear classroom code of conduct.
- Introduce a personal energy level plan.
- Have a relational support plan to support the young person with regulation; this will ensure the young person has a safe space and known routine to re-regulate.

Masking (when young people camouflage their level of need for periods of time)

- Introduce a personal energy level plan which considers sensory and regulation needs.

Managing Change / Transition (this can be both vertical (e.g one year group to another, primary to secondary, preparation for adulthood) and horizontal (e.g lesson to lesson, breaktime to learning time, playtime to bedtime))

- Use visual timetables and prompts, use of calendars explaining changes i.e term time / holiday time.
- Visual timers / count downs
- Social stories to explain change
- Consistent routines for beginnings and endings of days
- Use Now, Next, Then prompts so pupil knows what they need to do, how long for and what they can do after the activity has been completed.
- Treat transitions as a separate learning activity. Plan transitions carefully with the young person and parent/carer (and other professionals who might be supporting the young person), perhaps creating a personal transition plan.

2) Sensory Processing differences & Motor Skills

- Organised and clutter free resources, workspaces and classrooms

- Choice of learning spaces alongside peers within class based on sensory preferences as well as dedicated quiet learning spaces away from peers to be accessed for a short period of time
- Planned movement breaks
- Consider the different sensory perception or sensitivity the child may be experiencing. Ask children to consider how an activity may be felt in different parts of their bodies.
- Introduce a personal energy level plan.
- Timetabled sensory diet throughout the day
- Have a designated safe space(s) for a young person to use when required.
- Identify safe care and self-awareness needs (e.g. not knowing when your face is dirty). Instigate routines to support this in the young person's plan. Checklists or social stories may help here.

3) Communication & Interaction

- Verbal / Communication & Interaction
- Social Communication & Social Meaning
- Set and communicate clear classroom code of conduct.
- Have knowledge of a pupil's special interests to gain their attention, motivate engagement, regulate or re-direct focus.
- Provide an action or resource that makes unhelpful or undesirable behaviours difficult for the child / young person to perform. Plan times for when a child / young person can do these things alongside this.

Suggestions for the SENCO

- Ensure all members of staff understand neurodiversity and neurodivergence and the range of needs and conditions that this includes.
- Ensure that all relevant adults have a shared understanding of individual strengths and needs.
- Ensure that appropriate targeted interventions are planned for and delivered using the 'Assess, Plan, Do Review' model.
- Consider referrals to parent programmes listed under referral section

Helpful Resources for specific needs

Please note that the following list of need is not exhaustive:

Autism

[Autism Education Trust \(AET\) School Autism Standards \(5-19\)](#)

[National Autistic Society – Autism Accreditation Autism accreditation](#)

[Autism progress tracking tool for education professionals | Autism Education Trust](#)

[Framework Documents | Autism Education Trust](#)

[AET autism-training](#)

[National Autistic Society online training](#)

[Raising a child with autism: Carrie and David | Nip in the Bud](#)

[Girls and Autism: Flying under the radar | Nasen](#)

[Autism and Tics - Support for schools and settings \(devon.gov.uk\)](#)

[Supporting communication: a 1 minute guide about autism - Children and Family Health Devon](#)

[Parent Guide for Working Together with Your Child's School \(autismeducationtrust.org.uk\)](#)

ADHD

[ADDISS – ADHD Information Service - Family Hub](#)

[Home - ADHD Foundation : ADHD Foundation](#) The ADHD Foundation Neurodiversity Charity provide materials for ADHD as well as wider neurological differences

Dyslexia

[What is dyslexia? - British Dyslexia Association \(bdadyslexia.org.uk\)](#)

[Specific Toolkits for SENDCos: Specific Learning Difficulties \(SpLD\) - Family Hub](#)

Dyspraxia/Developmental Coordination Disorder

[Dyspraxia \(DCD\) - British Dyslexia Association](#)

[Developmental co-ordination disorder \(dyspraxia\) in children - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](#)

Dyscalculia

[Dyscalculia - British Dyslexia Association \(bdadyslexia.org.uk\)](#)

[What are Specific Learning Difficulties? - The Dyslexia Association](#)

[Dyscalculia - The Brain Charity](#)

Classic Tic Disorders

[Tics - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](#)

[Video - What are the differences between Tourette Syndrome, classic tics and functional tics](#)

Intellectual Disability

[Learning Disabilities - Torbay and South Devon NHS Foundation Trust](#)

[Children & Family Health Devon – Children’s Learning Disability - Family Hub](#)

[Learning disabilities - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](#)

[What Is A Learning Disability? See Our Definition | Mencap](#)

[Learning disabilities: applying All Our Health - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)

Developmental Language Disorder (DLD)

[Clinical information on developmental language disorder \(DLD\) | RCSLT](#)

[RADLD | Raising Awareness of Developmental Language Disorder](#)

[Developmental Language Disorder \(DLD\) - Speech and Language UK:](#)

[Changing young lives](#)

[ICAN webinar SLCN and DLD: what every teacher needs to know](#)

[ICAN webinar- introduction to DLD for Primary School](#)

[ICAN webinar building effective practice to support CYPs with DLD](#)

[Mind Your Words – SLCN and mental health e-learning course | RCSLT](#)

FASD – Foetal alcohol spectrum disorders

- FASD South West - Fasd | Fasdsouthwest.org

Further resources including local support available

Autism Education Trust – The Autism Standards Framework can be used by education setting leaders/leadership team to support the implementation of Good Autism Practice across a whole organisation: [Framework Documents | Autism Education Trust](#)

Framework aimed at workforces to support the speech, language and communication development of all children and young people: [The Speech, Language and Communication framework](#)

IPAACKS – A profiling tool and framework for workers in health, education, social care and third sectors to identify knowledge, skills, values and commitments required to deliver a quality service to children/young people and adults who use augmented and alternative communication (AAC): [IPAACKS competency levels \(AAC\)](#)

Communication Access Symbol – Free training package and standards to help businesses and organisations support people with communication difficulties. [Communication Access UK Register – Communication Access UK \(communication-access.co.uk\)](#)

Mayfield Outreach Service – Can be accessed through the differential approach (i.e. there is no need to have a plan). [Outreach Services - Family Hub](#)

Chestnut – including SEMH accessed through Mayfield [Mayfield Chestnut - Family Hub](#)

Educational Psychology - [Educational Psychology & Specialist Teaching Service \(TEPATS\) - Family Hub](#)

LEANS – A teaching module for teachers to teach children the concept of neurodiversity. It teaches children that the classroom/education setting is a place where the different needs of all children should and can be respected. Large time commitment. The whole programme can be downloaded for free to look at from: [Learning about Neurodiversity at school](#)

SEMH – Trauma Informed Schools training (planned adaptations through a Relationships Care Plan) and ELSA interventions.

My Health Devon – A guide to help find support, information and resources for children, young people and families: [Neurodiversity - Getting Advice and Getting Help](#)

Assessment tools

It is important that all professionals refer to the sections of the graduated response for assessment tools related to key areas of need:

- Cognition and learning
- Speech, language and communication needs
- Social, emotional and mental health needs
- Physical and sensory

Professionals need to take the ‘team around child’ approach, capturing the voice and experiences of child and family.

Service offer or referral pathway

‘First Steps’ Multi-Disciplinary Drop-in – For education settings held online every month (Child Health and Children and Family Health Devon). This is available for education staff and any professional working with a child or young person (e.g., Early Help team) with a focus on the wider environment as well as individual children.

Child and Family Health Devon - Telephone advice line (0330 024 5321) for referrers and families wanting information about Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS), therapies (Occupational Therapy, Physiotherapy and Speech and Language Therapy) and Community Nursing services for children.

- [Speech and Language Therapy Speech and Language Therapy Service: Drop in sessions - Children and Family Health Devon](#)
- CFHD All age Advice line 0333 321 9448 (Mon-Fri 2pm-4.30pm)
- [CFHD Facebook preschool](#)
- [CFHD Facebook School Age](#)
- [CFHD Toolkits](#)
- [CFHD Drop In Sessions 0-3 yr olds](#)
- Access to Speech and Language Therapy Service – advice and support provided as well as referral into assessment and intervention

Devon Partnership NHS Trust (DPT) – For adult autism and ADHD and learning disability services (for those 18+). Access to evidence-based competency frameworks and training resources specific to areas of SEND and/or types of need. [Learning disability | DPT](#)

0 to 19 Torbay Small Steps (formerly FIPCAN) – A group run by the Portage Team to give parents information and play opportunities with children with additional needs or a disability. A weekly booking, however, you can book in advance of up to four weeks. Free for under-fives: [Torbay Portage Service - Family Hub](#)

Consider referral to **Early Help/Family Hubs**: [Torbay Early Help Hubs](#)

Refer to **Education Psychology** [Educational Psychology & Specialist Teaching Service \(TEPATS\)](#) - [Family Hub](#) service through planning meeting with link educational psychologist

Children and Family Health Devon-provided **parent programmes** offered for families with a diagnosed child as well as education staff:

- Early Bird +
- Early Communicators
- VERVE
- DLD and me

0 to 19 Torbay have a free online course: 'Understanding your child with additional needs'. This can be accessed via [In Our Place](#) Free access code 'Tamar'

0 to 19 Torbay Sleep Workshop for low level sleep issues both for under 11's and over 11's
Bisnet/ CEDA – parenting courses and support for young people who have been newly diagnosed.

Access to Mayfield Outreach service which can be accessed through the differential approach (i.e., there is no need to have a plan). [Outreach Services - Family Hub](#)

Access to Chestnut – including SEMH accessed through Mayfield [Mayfield Chestnut - Family Hub](#)

Access to Educational Psychology – [Educational Psychology & Specialist Teaching Service \(TEPATS\) - Family Hub](#)

Torbay and South Devon Foundation NHS Trust Community Paediatrics – The First steps Handbook is given to all families on the waiting list.

Torbay Council - Portage service [Torbay Portage Service -](#)

Torbay Council - Attention Builders for Early Years – delivered by the Torbay Council Early Years team alongside speech and language therapists. This can be delivered as a whole class approach rather than child specific. [Supporting the prerequisites to verbal communication – Early Years – Communication and Interaction - Family Hub](#)

This document can be made available in other languages and formats.

For more information please contact EHCP@torbay.gov.uk
