

# Threshold guidance Consultation response

February 2017

## What you liked about the guidance:

- Specificity and detail of the advice and guidance
- Clarity about the assess, plan, do review cycle
- Clarity about when specific diagnosis is not needed
- Enables transparency and parity
- Table format is easily accessible
- Comprehensive
- Easy to understand
- Will enable consistency between schools
- Presence of anti-bullying strategies for pupils with SEND in the document
- Emphasis on enabling pupil independence
- Emphasis on quality first teaching and clarity about expectations
- Wealth of ideas offered a useful tool to guide use of notional SEN budget
- Will support discussions between professionals and parents.
- Clear continuum between SEN support and statutory action (EHCP)

## Theme 1

Some respondents wished the guidance to name specific interventions or assessments.

The working party avoided doing this since no intervention works for every pupil even if they have a similar diagnosis. The working party also wished to avoid appearing to endorse any particular published programme or assessment package. We would expect the school SENCO to be able to make some recommendations and to have access to external advice that would relate directly to an individual pupil's need. If an intervention is named this is merely as an example.

## Theme 2

Respondents suggested improving the format by adding page numbers and colour coding the areas of need.

In the final version we will be using colour to improve the presentation and clarity. We will also include page numbers.

## Theme 3

Some respondents suggested that we should be including named diagnoses such as PDA in the description of need

The working party has avoided including many different diagnoses in each section since the Code of Practice is clear that assessment and intervention should be needs led, rather than dependent upon diagnosis of a particular condition. Where a diagnosis has been mentioned



we will seek to make it clearer that this is an example rather than a list of qualifying diagnoses.

#### **Theme 4**

Some respondents felt that the language had too much jargon or was too complex.

We will include a glossary with this document in its final draft. Some professional language will need to remain in order to keep the document as clear as possible and relatively short.

#### **Theme 5**

One respondent was concerned that requiring a pupil to be three years behind their peers before they reached threshold for an EHCP meant that the pupil would have been failing for three years before they got support.

The threshold guidance states in the introduction that 'Schools must identify pupils who have SEN quickly and respond to their needs with appropriate intervention without delay'. This is a requirement of the Code of Practice: all schools should be implementing the 'graduated response' and

- **assessing** the pupil's needs ,
- **planning** intervention (based on co-produced outcomes),
- **'doing'** the intervention, and
- **reviewing** the pupil's progress towards their outcomes and the effectiveness of the intervention.

The suggestion that pupils would be around 3 years behind their peers is about determining the level of need, rather than the time that should pass between identification and action.

#### **Theme 6**

Some respondents suggested we should make it clearer how the threshold guidance might inform the identification of a pupil who has multiple needs.

Whilst we recognise that pupils do not fit into neat categories and most pupils will have more than one area of need, we found when writing the guidance that it was confusing to try and represent this within the grids. We will draft a paragraph to include in the introduction that addresses this issue.

#### **Theme 7**

Some respondents wished to know how professionals would be supported to use this guidance effectively.

It is intended that SENCOs will be using the documents in their summer term network meetings for a mock exercise to agree thresholds for anonymous case study pupils. The SEN team will be using this document to inform decision making with the support and guidance of the SEN panel and Head of SEN. The Educational Psychology Service have been fully involved in the consultation on the guidance and will discuss it at a team meeting. Further dissemination to schools is planned through headteachers meetings. The guidance will be made freely available on the AfC local offer webpages.





