

Briefing Note – Primary & Additional Need Guidance

What are Primary & Additional Need codes?

The Department of Education (DfE) have a set of 13 Primary Need codes, which give an understanding of the Special Educational Needs of a child. The thirteen codes cover four broad areas of need:

- Communication and Interaction
- Cognition and Learning
- Social, Emotional & Mental Health Difficulties
- Sensory and/or Physical Needs

These codes are applied to SEN pupils, and reported to the Department of Education through the termly School Census.

Primary Need codes are **not** designed to fully describe the needs of a child. It is an indication of what is considered the primary area of support that is necessary for a child.

Why do we need Primary Need codes?

Primary Need codes give partners across the Local Authority (LA) a common language when it comes to describing a child's additional needs. While not fully representative of what a child's additional needs are, it allows a common point from which to understand what support may be necessary. As a child with SEN may be involved with a number of agencies, it is important that need codes can help cut through the jargon that may exist in different areas.

Need codes help to provide an understanding of needs across the borough, particularly for pupils with SEN Support. This can help the LA commission and target specialist support for particular needs, in order to improve outcomes for Children & Young People.

What is the guidance for?

There is currently no guidance given on how to assign Primary and Additional Need codes. This document has been developed with Educational Psychology and Sensory Support teams, in order to provide a comprehensive description of each Need code and in what context it may be applied. It also gives a description of the support that you might expect to see to meet particular needs.

This document will help you understand what additional need a child may have, as well as know what support might be necessary. This applies to both identifying need and understanding a need classification that another agency has assigned to a child.

This document also indicates where specific medical diagnoses may produce specific needs (e.g. ADHD, dyspraxia). However, a medical diagnosis will not always automatically designate a specific need. It is more important to consider how a condition impact on a child's ability to learn, than consider the condition as designating a specific code.

Broad Area of Need	DfE Primary Need	Description	Other guidance										
<p>Communication & Interaction</p>	<p>Speech, Language & Communication Needs (SLCN)</p>	<p>May have difficulty saying what they want to, understanding what is being said to them, or do not understand or use social rules of communication (SEN Code of Practice).</p>	<p>CYP will have had assessment and intervention from a Speech and Language Therapist or other specialist assessment.</p>										
	<p>Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD)</p>	<p>Difficulties with social communication and interaction, but also potential difficulty with language, imagination and rigid thinking and unusual sensory experiences (SEN Code of Practice).</p>	<p>There will be a diagnosis in place from an assessment facility that is registered and follows NICE guidance. This may include Asperger's Syndrome or High Functioning Autism.</p>										
<p>Cognition & Learning</p> <p>A significantly reduced ability to understand new or complex information, and to learn new skills.</p> <p>A reduced ability to cope independently (impaired social functioning).</p>	<p>Moderate Learning Difficulties (MLD)</p>	<p>CYP learn at a slower pace than their peers, even with appropriate differentiation. They have a significantly reduced ability to understand new or complex information and to learn new skills. They have a reduced ability to cope independently and impaired social functioning.</p> <p>It is likely that difficulties would have been identified early in their childhood (pre-school) and that early intervention has not ameliorated difficulties. They will require support for conceptual skills, social skill and practical skills.</p>	<p>As a guide, see below</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="1393 545 1977 858"> <thead> <tr> <th>Chronological age (years)</th> <th>Estimated educational level</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>7</td> <td>Working within EYFS</td> </tr> <tr> <td>11</td> <td>Working within KS1</td> </tr> <tr> <td>14</td> <td>Working within lower end of KS2</td> </tr> <tr> <td>16</td> <td>Working within upper end of KS2</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>In addition to the above, there may well be indication of impaired social functioning and low independence skills.</p> <p>CYP should not be classified as MLD because they are working below age related expectations throughout their school careers. They are likely to be described as SEN Support.</p>	Chronological age (years)	Estimated educational level	7	Working within EYFS	11	Working within KS1	14	Working within lower end of KS2	16	Working within upper end of KS2
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<p>Cognition & Learning</p> <p>A significantly reduced ability to understand new or complex information, and to learn new skills.</p> <p>A reduced ability to cope independently (impaired social functioning).</p>	Severe Learning Difficulties (SLD)	<p>CYP likely to have only basic words and gestures/signs to communicate their needs. They are likely to need substantial support for understanding simple concepts, demonstrating social skills and carrying out practical tasks. They are often able to meet some, but not all, personal care needs.</p> <p>It is likely that difficulties would have been identified early in their childhood (pre-school) and that early intervention has not ameliorated difficulties. They will require substantial support for developing conceptual skills, social skills and practical skills.</p>	Often in specialist provision and following a personalised and modified curriculum, with a focus on communication and life skills.
	Profound & Multiple Learning Difficulties (PMLD)	Severe & complex difficulties in understanding their environment and learning, potentially accompanied by a physical disability or sensory impairment. Require very substantial support to communicate non-verbally or via a few words and symbols. (British Institute of Learning Disabilities). They will require very substantial support for personal care needs.	Often in specialist provision and following a personalised and modified curriculum with a focus on communication and life skills. Likely to need specialist equipment.
	Specific Learning Difficulties (SpLD) Including 'dys' terminologies	<p>Difficulties affecting one or more specific aspects of learning, such as reading or numeracy (SEN Code of Practice) e.g. for dyslexia/ dyscalculia, no fluency or automaticity at basic skill levels (decoding and encoding/numerical operations, times tables and conservation of number).</p> <p>For dyspraxia, difficulties in motor co-ordination, perception and processing; often mild difficulties in a wide range of areas that are interactive and additive in effect and result in reduced/inconsistent demonstration of skills; slow and effortful production of work; skills do not become fluent despite repeated practice.</p>	<p>It is not necessary to have a diagnostic label (dyslexia/dyscalculia) to be classified as having specific learning difficulties, but there must be evidence of severe and persistent difficulties acquiring basic skills despite appropriate interventions delivered over time.</p> <p>For dyspraxia, there will be a diagnosis in place from a paediatrician or multi agency assessment.</p>

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Social, Emotional & Mental Health Difficulties	Social, Emotional & Mental Health (SEMH)	<p>Sustained and pervasive difficulties making and/or maintaining relationships with peers and/or adults.</p> <p>May include becoming withdrawn/isolated or displaying challenging, disruptive or disturbing behaviour. (SEN Code of Practice). May have identified conditions, such as Anxiety/Depression, eating disorders, attention deficit (hyperactivity) disorder, attachment disorder.</p> <p>Difficulties remain despite involvement and intervention of appropriate external agencies.</p>	<p>Must consider other potential learning or developmental needs before classifying CYP as SEMH.</p> <p>Must have carried out Functional Behavioural Analysis (FBA) to see impact of environmental and contextual factors and for difficulties to remain despite interventions over time.</p> <p>SEMH is not to be used automatically for CYP whose difficulties are the result of temporary adverse life circumstances, including school placement breakdown.</p>
Sensory and/or Physical Needs	Visual Impairment (VI)	<p>Disabilities that prevent or hinder a CYP from making use of educational facilities generally provided. Specialist support and/or equipment is required to access their learning, and/or habilitation support (SEN Code of Practice).</p> <p>Will be known to the Sensory and Physical Support Service and will have a medical diagnosis.</p>	There will be a medical diagnosis in place and the CYP will have had assessment and intervention from a Qualified Teacher of the Visually Impaired.
	Hearing Impairment (HI)		There will be a medical diagnosis in place and the CYP will have had assessment and intervention from a Teacher of the Deaf.
	Multi-Sensory Impairment (MSI)		There will be a medical diagnosis in place and the CYP will have had assessment and intervention from a Qualified Teacher of the Visually Impaired and a Teacher of the Deaf, and/or a Teacher of Multi-Sensory Impairment.
	Physical Disability (PD)		Likely to be a medical diagnosis or medical involvement in place and the CYP will have had assessment and intervention from a member of the Team for Children with Physical Disabilities.

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<p style="text-align: center;">No Specialist Assessment</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">SEN SUPPORT (NSA) No Specialist assessment</p>		<p>Likely to include CYP with mild learning difficulties, i.e., not making reasonable progress despite high quality first teaching, and additional to and different from interventions.</p> <p>Code of Practice description of not meeting 'reasonable progress': Progress which:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • is significantly slower than that of their peers starting from the same baseline • fails to match or better the child's previous rate of progress • fails to close the attainment gap between the child and their peers • widens the attainment gap <p>It can include progress in areas other than attainment – for instance where a pupil needs to make additional progress with wider development or social needs in order to make a successful transition to adult life.</p>