

Introduction

The 2014 Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Code of Practice came into force on 1st September 2014 and provides statutory guidance relating to the new Children and Families Act 2014. It outlines the new legal duties on organisations which work with and support children and young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

So What's New?

The 2014 SEND Code of Practice:

- Covers children and young people from birth until 25 years of age and applies to disabled children and young people as well as those with Special Education Needs (SEN).
- Has a real focus on involving children, young people and parents in decision making.
- Has an increased focus on improving outcomes for children and young people long-term.
- States that after compulsory school age (the end of the academic year in which they turn 16) the right to make requests and decisions under the Children and Families Act 2014 applies to young people directly, rather than to their parents.
- Replaces school action and school action plus with a single category of SEN support.
- Replaces statements of Special Educational Needs and Learning Difficulty Assessments (LDAs) with a co-ordinated assessment process and the new 0-25 Education, Health and Care plan (EHC Plan).
- Has a greater focus on providing support that enables children and young people with SEND to succeed in their education and to make a successful transition to adulthood.
- Provides guidance on the joint planning and commissioning of services to enable close co-operation between education, health and social care.
- States that Local Authorities must publish a Local Offer, setting out in one place information about provision they expect to be available across education, health and social care for children and young people in their area who have SEN or are disabled, including those without EHC plans.
- States that schools must also publish a school information report online. This should outline what SEN provision the school has in place.



What is Communicating the Code?

Communicating the Code gives additional information specifically in relation to children and young people with Speech, Language and Communication Needs (SLCN) to support practitioners to implement the Code of Practice well, to ensure children and young people's needs are identified and supported as effectively as possible.

Communicating the Code has been written specifically for people working directly with children and young people and is applicable to those working in early years, schools and post 16 settings.

It aims to:

- Summarise a number of areas in the new Code of Practice
- Highlight some key issues for SLCN in the new Code
- Identify some key strategies which may be useful in overcoming these issues
- Suggest some indicators of success
- Identify and signpost to examples of good practice, and other useful information

We have drawn on the latest evidence base, including the recent landmark *Better Communication Research Programme*¹ and have worked with partners and practitioners across the sector. We are keen to continue consulting with practitioners working with children, young people and their families to make sure all of the information we provide is current and useful. Do [contact us](#) with any further information that would be useful or to share best practice.

Communicating the Code aims to complement other resources and guides which are available to support the implementation of the SEND reforms through focusing on SLCN, rather than duplicate SEND guidance in general.



Children and Young People with Speech, Language and Communication Needs

Speech, Language and Communication Needs (SLCN) is an umbrella term coined by the Bercow review in 2008. It applies to all children or young people who have difficulty with speech, language and/or communication. These difficulties could be:

- as a primary need (a Specific Language Impairment or SLI) in the absence of any other difficulties
- as part of another condition such as autism, learning difficulties, deafness or cerebral palsy
- resulting from social and/or environmental disadvantage.



There are a number of challenges in how children and young people's SLCN are described and recorded by settings and schools, as SLCN can be a primary need but is also a feature of most other areas of special educational needs. Estimates suggest that around 10% of all children have long-term and persistent SLCN.

SLCN as a primary need is the most prevalent SEN identified by schools; however, research suggests there continues to be significant under-identification across all ages and phases, both in terms of long-term and persistent SLCN and in language delay relating to social disadvantage.

So, a key challenge for all practitioners is ensuring that all children and young people who have SLCN are identified as early as possible.

For those with identified needs, not all have statements currently or will have EHC plans in the future. It is also highly likely that the majority of children and young people with SLCN as a primary need may fall into the SEN support category and not qualify for EHC plans. Yet their SLCN require support and intervention if they are to achieve their potential, academically, socially and also economically.

The Children's Workforce therefore plays a key role in identifying and supporting all children and young people with SLCN – as a primary need or as part of other SEND – so the information contained in this resource is applicable to the majority of children and young people presenting with special educational needs/disabilities.

How to use *Communicating the Code*

Communicating the Code is divided into sections which can be read separately, or as part of a whole. Within different sections, there is cross referencing between sections to avoid unnecessary duplication.

The following pointers will help you to find the information you need:

- For general principles and an overview, please read the **Introduction**.
- To go to specific area of interest within *Communicating the Code*, use the links on the first page to skip to the relevant section.
- Each section can be downloaded individually or the entire document can be downloaded [HERE](#).



Throughout *Communicating the Code* you will see additional information highlighted.

- Text in **Blue** tells you a bit more about a term used in the code and adds some background information.
- Text in **Orange** shows you an example of the code in practice. More examples can be found in our [Examples Bank](#).
- Text in **Purple** refers you to the research that backs up communicating the code.
- References can also be found at the end of each section.

There is a wide range of other guidance available to help you deliver the Reforms which *Communicating the Code* seeks to add to rather than duplicate. Follow this [link](#) to find additional resources and support. This document can also be downloaded from our website at web address here.

Follow this [link](#) to see examples of good practice and case studies relating to SLCN and the Code of Practice. This document can also be downloaded from our [website](#).



About The Communication Trust

The Communication Trust is a coalition of over 50 voluntary and community organisations with expertise in speech, language and communication. We harness our collective expertise to support the children's workforce and commissioners to support all children and young people's communication skills, particularly those with SLCN.

We do this by raising awareness, providing information and workforce development opportunities, influencing policy, promoting best practice among the children's workforce and commissioning work from our members.

The Trust was founded in 2007 by children's charities Afasic and I CAN together with BT and the Council for Disabled Children.



References

1. <http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/soc/cedar/better/>
2. The Communication Trust, *A Generation Adrift* (2013) P 10
3. Strand, S & Lindsay, G (2012), *Ethnic disproportionality in the identification of SLCN and ASD: 2005-2011*, Better Communication Research Programme, p28.



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This document can also be downloaded from our website at www.thecommunicationtrust.org.uk
