

## **The Role of Sensory Champions within the Derbyshire local area approach to supporting children with Sensory Processing Needs**

The following briefing provides guidance regarding the place and role of sensory champions within the framework of Derbyshire's approach to supporting children with sensory processing needs. (SPN)

The SPN steering group feels that, in order to meet the needs of children with SPN, we need to move away from a medicalised model. Children's services and NHS colleagues are fully supportive of this premise. There is definitive agreement that professionals within all departments have understanding of and skills to meet the needs of this group of children.

In addition, the SPN feels that by further educating and empowering the workforce the majority of needs of children who have SPN will be met without escalation to private advisers or higher levels of expertise.

The sensory processing toolkit has been specifically written for professionals working with children who have SPN within schools and early years settings, and who have followed phase 1 of the guidance (as below). There is no additional specific training on the toolkit other than that provided via the SPN courses available from Derbyshire County Council. The toolkit is self-explanatory and follows a step-by-step methodology. It is intended to be implemented as part of the SEND graduated approach.

There may be some professionals who need further guidance when using the SPN toolkit. Occasionally a child may fail to show progress even in response to quality first teaching and implementation of the assess, plan, do, review model. In these instances, the workforce can call upon the expertise of **sensory champions**. Primarily sensory champions are found within Derbyshire County Council support services. Although support services do not have promoted positions for sensory champions, they do have expertise over and above that which may be usually available from within the school or early years setting.

This expertise is held within the early years SEN service, support service for children with SEN, autism outreach, behaviour support and educational psychology. The support can be accessed through the usual referral routes based on each service's criteria.

In addition, there may be individual staff from within Derbyshire County Council who have further expertise in this area and that can be called upon for support. For instance from within the early years improvement service or special schools.

To be clear, the role of the sensory champions is not to provide support and guidance for children new to the toolkit. The sensory champions provide additional advice on implementation for children not initially responding to strategies in the toolkit.

The following identifies what stage be involved in meeting the needs of children with a SPN:

## **DERBYSHIRE Local area approach to supporting children with SPN**

### **Phase 1**

- DCC Local area approach to supporting children with SPN-position statement (readability option also available)
- SPN leaflet – Understanding children with SPN
- Basic training in sensory processing needs. (Available through children's services support services).

The SPN steering group highly recommends that staff complete phase 1 before moving to phase 2.

### **Phase 2**

Sensory Processing Tool Kit.

Developed to help professionals support children with sensory processing needs as part of the SEN code of practice graduated approach

SPN Champions:

Champions are primarily selected from Children's Services Support services. The role of Sensory Champions is to support the use of the tool kit once the school or setting have completed appropriate cycles of assess, plan, do, review model.

### **Phase 3**

Higher level intervention.