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**Newcastle SEND Descriptors of Need**

**Part 3**

**Guidance for Children and Young People with**

**Communication and Interaction needs:**

**The School Years **

Version 1 September 2022

**Guidance for Children and Young People with Communication and Interaction Needs (Social Communication and Neurodiversity)**

**Introduction - Setting out our stall**

As educational professionals working within the Newcastle community, we aspire to create inclusive environments which celebrate and support neurodiversity and difference in our children and young people. In Newcastle, we adopt the perspective of researchers such as Steve Silberman who has written that “..conditions like Autism… should be regarded as naturally occurring cognitive variations with distinctive strengths, that have contributed to the evolution of technology and culture” (Silberman 2015). We therefore do not advocate checklists of deficits and dysfunctions. We advocate thinking of Autism as ‘a different way of being rather than as a ‘deficient’ or ‘disordered’ way of being’ (AET website).

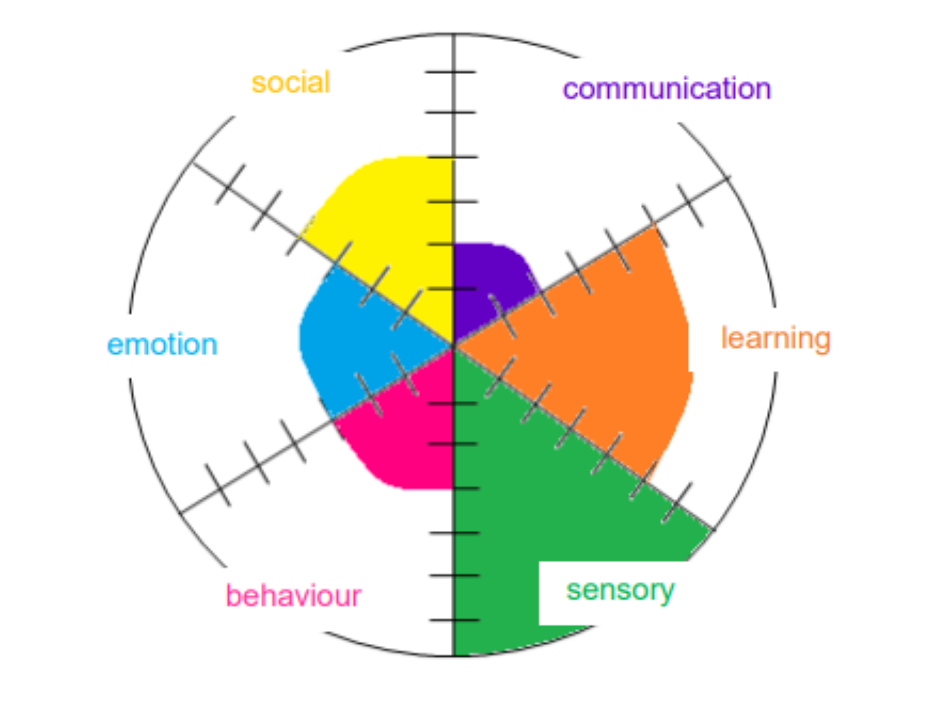
We understand the need for a common educational language which can help explain differences in need between our children and young people and, more specifically, differences in the level and nature of support required to enable our varied and individual children and young people to be included and make progress.

We aspire to create educational communities which celebrate our children for being exactly who they are, and which help them to feel ‘completely at home on earth’. (Silberman 2015). We acknowledge that the whole of society benefits from an inclusive ethos.

We commit to a continuing reflective outlook in relation to neurodiversity, which continues to incorporate up-to-date views and research. In particular we commit to having active, open and continued communication with children, young people and adults with autism in order that we can learn from their perspective.

We commit to being reflective about the language we use to describe children and young people with social communication differences within Newcastle. The debate is ongoing about the use of ‘person first language’ (e.g., person with autism) or ‘identity first language’ (e.g., autistic person) as the most appropriate means by which to describe autism. As a result, in Newcastle you may find professionals using these terms interchangeably – ‘person with autism’ or ‘autistic person’ - to refer to the children and young people they are working with. It is true to say that research within the autistic community indicates a majority preference for identity first language - ‘autistic person’ – (49% according to Bury et al, 2020). Some scholars have pointed out, however, that research within the autistic community may not necessarily represent the full spectrum of views amongst autistic people, since “the sample methods used can often result in samples who use a wider vocabulary, were diagnosed later in life, and have higher educational attainment” – indicating that autistic people with learning disabilities or who are less verbal or non-verbal can be left out of this conversation (Botha, Hanlon and Williams 2020). We advocate that best practice when working with autistic CYP would be to check in with the child/young person and their family members/carers in order to be sensitive to their preferences in terms of language use.

Whilst we acknowledge that Autism can be viewed as a spectrum, we welcome the development of viewing the spectrum as a circular spectrum rather than a linear one. This is to reflect that Autistic people have a range of different strengths and needs that will differ from one another because all autistic people are unique, in the same way that all neurotypical people are unique with a range of strengths and needs.



Autistic Spectrum as circular – developed by Speech and Language Therapy Service, Newcastle NHS Trust.

Increasingly we are developing an awareness of the importance of relational approaches to supporting feelings of safety and belonging for all children and young people, including neurodivergent children and young people. Emotional Regulation underpins feelings of safety and belonging, and increasingly evidence indicates that we need to start with regulation before it is possible to move on to higher level reasoning tasks such as learning. The development of key relationships within educational settings facilitates emotional regulation, which in turn enables our children and young people to settle to more cognitively demanding tasks. We therefore strongly advocate a relational ethos for all our children and young people, including those with social communication differences (Timimi, Mallett and Runswick-Cole 2016).

It has proven to be extremely challenging to put together a document which captures the complexity and diversity of differences in relation to communication and interaction that we might observe and experience within the city of Newcastle. It is important to note that the following guidance is an attempt to support understanding of neurodiversity and how social communication difference may present, but that there will be children and young people who require a completely individualised approach which may differ from the guidance offered in this section. For example, children and young people who may have social communication differences which present alongside demand avoidant behaviours do not tend to be supported well by strategies that we would typically recommend for social communication difference (such as high levels of structure and predictability). This is why it is essential to look across the range of descriptors and refer to other areas such as SEMH in order to tailor specific and appropriate support for individual children.

The children and young people to whom this guidance relates will present with a range of communication and interaction differences which affect their learning and social inclusion. Individual pupils display a range of differences which will vary, and which may change over time. It is not expected that any pupil will match all the descriptors listed below. There may be pupils who are not diagnosed as autistic who share some differences in social understanding and communication, flexibility, information processing, and understanding and sensory processing and integration seen in autistic pupils. The suggested provision and resourcing at the appropriate range will support effective teaching and learning for this group of children and young people.

Children and young people with differences in communication and interaction /autism have differences in the areas identified below. Use these descriptors to identify the needs of an individual pupil:

**Descriptors: Social understanding and communication**

* Different ways of feeling included and a sense of belonging which may impact on their experience of being part of a class, group, or wider social situation
* Different ways of being social and different experiences of social situations may result in intense emotional expression, withdrawal, social vulnerability and/or isolation
* Different ways of being empathetic (some children may appear to lack empathy while others may be hyperempathetic). Different way of showing imagination and playing which affect social experiences and impact on learning
* May sometimes show differences in eye gaze or eye contact
* Differences in use of facial expressions which may be particularly expressive, limited or reduced in range
* Differences in using or understanding non-verbal communication for example facial expressions, body language, gestures and posture can result in misunderstanding, confusion, and anxiety
* Differences with understanding spoken language or expressing wishes and feelings for example literal interpretations of language and learning which can impact on understanding of inference, implied meaning, figurative language, context, or sarcasm
* Speech may be delayed and have a different intonation pattern with immediate or delayed repetition (echolalia)
* Conversation may be focused on intense interests, sometimes to the exclusion of a wider topic base
* Channeled attention which can result in a high focus on areas of interest but also impact understanding of whole class instructions and general information
* Difficulties with predicting what will happen next and coping with change which may result in a high level of anxiety which can affect everyday activities
* Different perceptions of personal space - may get too close or find group work difficult
* May have limited awareness of danger for example may ‘run’ or ‘climb’ with no regard for hazards, or be unaware of hurting others
* May have strategies that enable successful social interaction with peers. However, during times of stress or anxiety may appear unusual and the ability to communicate may be significantly reduced.

**Flexibility, information processing, and understanding**

* + Small or unplanned changes in the environment or learning tasks may result in anxiety which could lead to distressed behaviour, withdrawal, or shutdown
  + May display an intense interest in a topic that is explored with a high level of frequency. Highly focused attention or interest in everyday objects, people, or toys, which may lead to expertise in a specific area or to difficulties with focusing on and finishing activities
  + Increased anxiety when managing transition between different environments or tasks
  + Attention and focus on learning tasks may be impacted by level of interest in the topic
  + Can be easily distracted or struggle to switch focus of attention easily

**Sensory processing and integration**

* + - Over- or under-responsiveness to sensory input e.g., touch or noise which may affect access to everyday events or activities

e.g., dining halls

* + - Can become overwhelmed in busy environments with a lot of people and noise
    - May show signs of delayed hand/eye co-ordination and/or fine/gross motor skills or display body movements such as flapping, toe walking, tics, or unusual posturing
    - May display particular sensory responses to the environment at times of heightened stress or anxiety
    - Sensory differences can affect physical milestones such as toileting and eating development; these can cause high anxiety in the child/young person and those who care for them

The table below should be read alongside the lists above of:

* + - Social understanding and communication.
    - Flexibility, information processing, and understanding.
    - Sensory processing and integration.

Students may display different combinations of the outlined behaviours, even at the lower ranges. It is important to note that if the school environment does not meet the needs of the child/young person this may significantly impact their mental health and well-being – even at the lower ranges.

It is important to note that children and young people with social communication needs may also have needs which cut across other areas such as ‘cognition and learning’, ‘social, emotional and mental health’ and ‘sensory and physical’ – therefore it is important to consider needs across all 4 main areas.

**Resources Available to Schools**

* Refer to the Local Offer for information about local charities and organisations offering support
* Autism Education Trust (AET) training is available to schools
* Support from the Communication and Interaction Team through ASAP panel
* Early Help
* Educational Psychology
* Children and Young People’s Service (CYPS)
* Where communication needs have been identified support should be requested from Speech and Language Therapy Service
* Where sensory needs have been identified support should be requested from Occupational Therapy Service

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| **Descriptors of Need Overview** | |
| **Range 1** | * Children will have been identified by staff, family or him/herself as presenting with some low-level features of social communication needs * pupil may show differences in understanding and using non-verbal communication and/or language * pupil may have intense interests * pupil may have difficulty transitioning between activities and may show increased anxiety at these times * pupil may be over or under responsive to sensory input * Please refer to descriptors outlined above in 3 main areas of difference on pages xxx * Pupils **may require support to access some aspects** **of the National Curriculum**, and/or the social and emotional aspects of school life. If the school environment does not meet the needs of the child/young person this may significantly impact their mental health and well-being * Pupils may or may not have a diagnosis of Autism made by an appropriate multi-agency team * School are providing quality first teaching and child is making expected progress and is happy and settled in school. * Example of support at Primary level - *School staff are using a structured teaching approach at the whole class level – e.g., whole class visual timetable and well-structured learning tasks.* * Example of support at Secondary level– *School staff are using visual teaching approaches and appropriately adapted language.* |
| **Range 2** | * Despite quality first teaching and range 1 interventions being in place, the child/young person continues to present with differences in social communication which are negatively impacting on them as identified by him/herself, family or school staff. * Pupils **will need some more focused support (e.g., individual or small group) to access a number of aspects** **of the National Curriculum**, including the social emotional curriculum and school life. If the school environment does not meet the needs of the child/young person this may significantly impact their mental health and well-being * Pupils may or may not have a diagnosis of Autism made by an appropriate multi-agency team * pupil may be over or under responsive to sensory input * School have recognised that the pupil needs additional support and are making reasonable adjustments such as minor environmental adaptations, adjusting language used, using visual support/AAC, support during transition times. * Pupil will be monitored using the *assess, plan, do, review* process. |

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| **Range 3** | * Despite quality first teaching and range 1 and 2 interventions being in place, the child//young person continues to present with differences in social communication which are negatively impacting on them as identified by him/herself, family or school staff. * Pupils **require a moderate level of support to access the National Curriculum**, including the social emotional curriculum and all aspects of school life. If the school environment does not meet the needs of the child/young person this may significantly impact their mental health and well-being. This is especially true in new and unfamiliar contexts * Curriculum delivery needs to consider differences and the possibility of the child having a ‘spiky profile’ (an uneven pattern of strengths and areas of need). Learning environment may need to be adapted (e.g., low distraction environment, individual work system, additional time for processing, assessment broken up into smaller chunks, regular movement/sensory breaks, alternative recording methods). * Curriculum content needs to be adapted to support the acquisition, retention and generalisation of skills. * Assessment approaches need to consider differences and the possibility of the child having a ‘spiky profile’ (e.g., low distraction environment, additional time for processing, assessment broken up into smaller chunks, regular movement/sensory breaks, alternative recording methods) * Pupils may or may not have a diagnosis of Autism made by an appropriate multi-agency team * pupil may be over or under responsive to sensory input * Pupils will be monitored using the *assess, plan, do, review* process. |
| **Range 4** | * Despite quality first teaching and range 1 -3 interventions being in place, the child//young person continues to present with differences in social communication which are negatively impacting on them as identified by him/herself, family or school staff. * Despite support and intervention, the child/young person may be highly anxious/distressed. If the school environment does not meet the needs of the child/young person this may significantly impact their mental health and well-being. This is especially true in new and unfamiliar contexts but will also affect access at times of high stress in some known and familiar contexts and with familiar support/people available. * Child/Young Person may present with a more complex combination of differences across a number of areas as outlined in the descriptors and is likely to necessitate an ongoing multi-agency response. * Pupils **will require a significant level of support to access the National Curriculum**, including the social emotional curriculum and all aspects of school life. * Curriculum delivery needs to consider differences and the possibility of the child having a ‘spiky profile’ (an uneven pattern of strengths and areas of need). Learning environment may need to be adapted (e.g., low distraction environment, individual work system, additional time for processing, assessment broken up into smaller chunks, regular movement/sensory breaks, alternative recording methods). * Curriculum content needs to be adapted to support the acquisition, retention and generalisation of skills. * Assessment approaches need to consider differences and the possibility of the child having a ‘spiky profile’ (e.g., low distraction environment, additional time for processing, assessment broken up into smaller chunks, regular movement/sensory breaks, alternative recording methods) * Pupils may or may not have a diagnosis of an Autism by an appropriate multi-agency diagnostic team * pupil may be over or under responsive to sensory input * Pupils will be monitored using the *assess, plan, do, review* process |
| **Range 5** | * The child presents with significant and complex social communication differences, which may be compounded by additional needs and sometimes require specialist provision outside the mainstream environment * **Pupils will require a bespoke and individualised curriculum, and high level of support to access the social and emotional aspects of school life**, even in known and familiar contexts and with familiar support/people available. * If the school environment does not meet the needs of the child/young person this may significantly impact their mental health and well-being. * Curriculum delivery needs to consider differences, including the possibility of the child having a highly complex presentation of differences which might cut across several or all descriptor areas. Learning environment will need to be adapted (e.g., low distraction environment, individual work system, additional time for processing, assessment broken up into smaller chunks, regular movement/sensory breaks, alternative recording methods). * Curriculum content needs to be adapted to support the acquisition, retention, and generalisation of skills. There may also be a focus on the development of life skills such as self-help skills. * Assessment approaches need to consider differences and the possibility of the child having a ‘spiky profile’ (e.g., low distraction environment, additional time for processing, assessment broken up into smaller chunks, regular movement/sensory breaks, alternative recording methods) * Pupils may or may not have a diagnosis of an Autism made by an appropriate multi-agency team * Pupil may be over or under responsive to sensory input |
| **Range 6** | * **There are continuing, significant and complex social communication differences, often compounded by additional needs and requiring continued provision outside the mainstream environment, including:** * Pupils will require a highly adapted and differentiated curriculum that will be accessed alongside peers with a similar profile of support need. * If the school environment does not meet the needs of the child/young person this may significantly impact their mental health and well-being. * Curriculum delivery needs to consider differences, including the possibility of the child having a highly complex presentation of differences which might cut across several or all descriptor areas. Learning environment will need to be adapted (e.g., low distraction environment, individual work system, additional time for processing, assessment broken up into smaller chunks, regular movement/sensory breaks, alternative recording methods). * Curriculum content needs to be adapted to support the acquisition, retention, and generalisation of skills. There may also be a focus on the development of life skills such as self-help skills. * Pupils may or may not have a diagnosis of an Autism made by an appropriate multi-agency team * pupil may be over or under responsive to sensory input |
| **Range 7** | **There are continued long term and complex social communication differences, necessitating a continued multi-agency response coordinated as annual, interim or emergency SEND review and met in specialist provision.** Needs may include:   * Highly complex needs identified * Extreme violent/aggressive behaviour due to unmet/unidentified needs * Self-harming behaviour * Serious mental health issues * Long term emotionally based school avoidance * Extreme vulnerability * Medical conditions that are potentially life threatening and cannot be managed without dedicated support |

**Descriptors of need for children and young people who have Communications and Interaction needs**

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| **Range 1**  **Summary of Needs** | **Assessment and Planning** | **Teaching and Learning Strategies** | **Curriculum/Intervention** | **Resources and Staffing** |

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| 1. Use the first section of this document to identify the relevant descriptors for the child or young person with whom you are working. 2. Consider whether the following statement describes how the pupil is affected within school:   Pupils at range 1 will have communication and interaction differences identified by the range descriptors that **affect their access to some aspects** of the National Curriculum, including the social emotional curriculum and school life.   1. If this statement accurately describes your child use the advice given in range 1. If not, you will need to consider descriptors for other levels.   There may or may not be a diagnosis of Autism by an appropriate multi-agency team. | **Assessment:**   * Will be part of school/setting and class teaching and assessments   **Planning:**   * Curriculum plans should include individual/group targets * Family to be involved regularly and support targets at home * Pupil will be involved in setting and monitoring targets, where appropriate * Information around specific pupil will be shared with staff in setting at pupil progress meetings * Planning may need to incorporate adaptations such as learning breaks, time allocated to sensory differences and processing needs | * Must be included in mainstream class with specific support for targets which involve access to the curriculum including the social emotional curriculum and all aspects of school life. * Should be offered opportunities for small group work within the usual classroom planning and management | **Resources/Provision:**   * The use of Quality First teaching approaches to support the development of social communication and interaction skills and to support access to the curriculum * Must have full inclusion to the National Curriculum but flexibility may be required to enable access * Flexibility may be required to enable the pupil to follow instructions and/or record work * Instructions may need to be supported by use of visual and written cues * Preparation for change and the need for clear routines will be required * Reduction of complex language, especially when giving instructions and asking questions, will be required. * Use of EY Universally Available Guidance and/or Universally Available Guidance for Schools. | **Setting:**   * Flexible use of resources and staffing available in the classroom * Staff have at least a basic level of awareness about Autism and associated presenting differences – e.g., through training such as ‘AET making sense of autism’ * Staff should have knowledge about supporting regulation. * Staff should understand that good relationships with children and young people are key to enabling the child to access all aspects of school life. |

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| **Range 2**  **Summary of Needs** | **Assessment and Planning** | **Teaching and Learning Strategies** | **Curriculum/Intervention** | **Resources and Staffing** |

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| Use the first section of this document to identify the relevant descriptors for the child or young person with whom you are working.   1. Consider whether the following statement describes this need:   At Range 2, the pupil will have communication and interaction differences identified by the range descriptors that  **affect access to a number of aspects** of the National Curriculum, including the social emotional curriculum and school life.   1. If this statement accurately describes your child or young person use the advice given in Range 2. If not, you will need to consider descriptors for other levels.   There may or may not be a diagnosis of Autism by an appropriate multi-agency team. | **Assessment:**  As range 1 plus:   * Use of more detailed NC assessment tools e.g., SCART * Could also include other assessments relating to need, advice from SLT or OT advice (where applicable)   **Planning:**   * Curriculum plans will reflect levels of achievement and include individually focused targets. * Planning may need to incorporate adaptations such as learning breaks, time allocated to sensory differences and processing needs | * Will be mainstream class-based and will have opportunity for small group and individual work to supports targets which involve access to the curriculum including the social emotional curriculum and all aspects of school life. * May need adaptations to the working environment such as a quiet area within the classroom for individual work   As range 1 plus   * The use of *Quality First* teaching approaches to support social communication. * Flexibility will be required to enable the pupil to follow instructions and/or record work * Clear use of visual and written cues will be useful to support instructions * Preparation for change and the need for clear routines will be required * Reduction of complex language, especially when giving instructions and asking questions,   will be required | As range 1 plus:   * Curriculum access will be facilitated by using a structured approach to provision which should involve using visual systems or timetables reducing language for instructions/ information giving * Teaching approaches should take account of differences identified within the range descriptors * Use of EY Universally Available Guidance and/or Universally Available Guidance for Schools. | As range 1, plus:  **Setting:**   * Will need additional professional support from skilled colleagues, e.g., SENCO, to aid curriculum modifications * Should consider staff training to ensure that they are trained to meet the needs of the students in their class * Will need additional professional support from skilled colleagues to develop their understanding of the differences in social interaction, social communication and social understanding * Will need use of additional school support to implement specific materials, approaches and resources as appropriate * Staff have at least a basic level of awareness about Autism and associated presenting differences – e.g., through training such as ‘AET good autism practice’ * Staff should have knowledge about supporting regulation. * Staff should understand that good relationships with children and young people are key to enabling the child to access all aspects of school life. * Schools are encouraged to have an Autism Champion in their setting |

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| **Range 3**  **Summary of Needs** | **Assessment and Planning** | **Teaching and Learning Strategies** | **Curriculum/Intervention** | **Resources and Staffing** |

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| * Use the first section of this document to identify the relevant descriptors for the child or young person with whom you are working. * Consider whether the following statement describes how the pupil is affected within school: * At Range 3, pupils will have communication and interaction differences identified by the range descriptors that **will moderately affect their access to the National Curriculum, including the social emotional curriculum and all aspects of school life.** This is especially true in new and unfamiliar contexts. * If this statement accurately describes your child use the advice given in Range 3. If not, you will need to consider descriptors for other levels. * There are differences in acquisition, retention and generalisation of information. The pupil may or may not have a diagnosis of Autism made by an appropriate clinical team.   **NC Levels**   * Across the expected range but with an unusual profile showing weaknesses in some areas and strengths in others. | **Assessment:**  As range 1 and 2 plus:   * More specialised assessment tools may be needed. * Accurate and up to date assessment of independent levels must be kept as a working document to aid planning and to share with family * Assessment includes a profile of sensory needs   **Planning:**   * Curriculum plans will reflect levels of achievement and must include individually focused targets * Planning may need to incorporate adaptations such as learning breaks, time allocated to sensory differences and processing needs – which may include time out of the classroom. | As range 1 and 2 plus:   * Inclusion within the mainstream classroom. However, there will be a need for an enhanced level of individual support * Targeted support will be needed which may include unstructured parts of the day,   e.g., start and end of school day, breaks, lunchtimes and trips out of school   * Support for areas of sensory needs which may include ‘time out’ space and other environmental adaptations to reduce stress and anxiety   As range 1 and 2 plus:   * + The use of Quality First teaching approaches to support social communication.   + Flexibility will be required to enable the pupil to follow instructions and/or record work   + Clear use of visual and written cues will be useful to support instruction.   + Preparation for change and the need for clear routines will be required   + Reduction of complex language, especially when giving instructions and asking questions, will be required   + Staff will need to implement recommendations made by the Autism lead/SENCO/outside professionals | As range 1 and 2 plus:   * Will need to make noticeable adaptations to the curriculum to aid access and reduce anxiety * Will need differentiation by presentation and/or outcome * Will need support in developing understanding of the differences between neurotypical and neurodivergent social communication skills (embedded within a curriculum which also supports neurotypical pupils to understand different communication styles) | As range 1 and 2 plus:  **Setting:**   * Advice and support for individual pupils from LA Specialist staff may be requested from SEN Advice and Support Allocation Panel (SEN ASAP) * Training from specialist teachers, AET resources and training, Teenlife, earlybird, etc. * Teaching approaches must take account of differences identified within the range descriptors * Schools should consider using the Autism Education Trust staff competencies to support development of specialist skills * Staff should have knowledge about supporting regulation. * Staff should understand that good relationships with children and young people are key to enabling the child to access all aspects of school life. * Schools are encouraged to have an Autism Champion in their setting   . |

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| **Range 4**  **Summary of Needs** | **Assessment and Planning** | **Teaching and Learning Strategies** | **Curriculum/Intervention** | **Resources and Staffing** |

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| 1. Use the first section of this document to identify the relevant descriptors for the child or young person with whom you are working. 2. Consider whether the following statement describes how the pupil is affected within school: At Range 4, pupil will have communication and interaction differences identified by the range descriptors that **significantly affect their access to the National Curriculum, including the social emotional curriculum and all aspects of school life**. 3. If this statement accurately describes your child or young person use the advice given in Range 4. If not, you will need to consider descriptors for other levels.   There are differences in acquisition, retention and generalisation of information. The pupil may or may not have a diagnosis of Autism made by an appropriate clinical team.  The pupil will have an uneven learning profile, but their attainment levels suggest they can access a differentiated mainstream curriculum.  **NC Level**  Across the expected range but with an unusual profile showing weaknesses in some areas and strengths in others. | As range 1 – 3 plus:  **Assessment:**   * Should include assessment advice from other agencies, e.g., SLT/OT * Assessment should include details about sensory needs   **Planning:**   * Increased level of understanding by teaching and support staff will require plans for developing whole school understanding of pupil’s needs * To include all setting staff that come into contact with pupil on a daily basis * Shadowing staff in specialist settings * Planning must include adaptations to curriculum to ensure the development of independent learning and life skills | As range 1 -3 plus:   * Robust planning to meet objectives defined in support plans | As range 1- 3 plus:  Must implement recommendations of relevant staff or outside agencies  As range 1 -3 plus   * Significant adaptations to curriculum, teaching methods and environment needed to access the curriculum. These will include conceptual understanding of everyday language and subject specific vocabulary; pace of delivery; significant pre- learning and over learning of concepts and functions and use of alternative recording methods * Where appropriate an alternative curriculum must be offered to develop independence and life skills * Will need support in developing understanding of the differences between neurotypical and neurodivergent social communication skills (embedded within a curriculum which also supports neurotypical pupils to understand different communication styles) | As range 1 – 3 plus:  **Setting:**   * Additional training of mainstream staff to support their understanding of curriculum modifications and social interaction, social communication and social understanding |

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| **Range 5**  **Summary of Needs** | **Assessment and Planning** | **Teaching and Learning Strategies** | **Curriculum/Intervention** | **Resources and Staffing** |

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| 1. Use the first section of this document to identify the relevant descriptors for the child or young person with whom you are working. 2. Consider whether the following statement describes how the pupil is affected within school:   At Range 5, **pupils will have communication and interaction differences identified by the range descriptors that severely affect their access to the National Curriculum, including the social emotional curriculum and all aspects of school life, even in known and familiar contexts and with familiar support/people available**.   1. If this statement accurately describes your child use the advice given in Range   5. If not, you will need to consider descriptors for other levels.  There are differences in acquisition, retention and generalisation of information. The pupil may or may not have a diagnosis of Autism made by an appropriate clinical team. | As range 1 – 4 plus:   * Must include detailed assessment for PSHCE, life skills and sensory needs * Assessment of behaviour and medical needs to inform the planning process where required * Where needed, risk assessments, and plans to support regulation and manage dysregulation - must be coproduced and shared with family. * Must include planning for whole day, including unstructured times * Planning must consider learning styles, identified strengths and learning needs * Accurate and up to date assessment of independent levels (NC/P Levels) must be kept as a working document to aid planning and to share with family * Long term involvement of education and non-education professionals is likely to be needed | As range 1– 4 plus   * Robust planning to meet objectives in the support plan/ EHCP if applicable * Access to a quiet area within the classroom must be available when needed to offer opportunities for distraction free learning * A variety of groupings must be used to ensure learning, including time in a quiet, distraction free environment * Daily opportunities to manage their own anxieties by graded access to a range of environments | As range 1– 4 plus:   * Curriculum modifications must be selected to engage with C&I differences/Autism in relation to curriculum content, peer group etc * Therapeutic approaches (e.g., OT and SALT) must be part of the curriculum and used to support the emotional wellbeing of the pupil * Access to specialist approaches and equipment as part of a holistic package to meet the individual’s sensory, social communication and understanding differences * Use a range of alternative augmentative communication to support social and functional communication skills to enhance interaction and understanding (e.g., PECS, Makaton, electronic voice output communication aids (VOCA) | As range 1– 4 plus:  **SETTING:**   * Flexibility of staffing available to accommodate need, especially during unstructured times * Key staff must have advanced training in C&I differences/Autism * Additional training of mainstream staff to support pupil specific curriculum modifications in relation to needs identified in the range descriptors |

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| **Range 6**  **Summary of Needs** | **Assessment and Planning** | **Teaching and Learning Strategies** | **Curriculum/Intervention** | **Resources and Staffing** |

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| 1. Use the first section of this document to identify the relevant descriptors for the child with whom you are working. 2. Consider whether the following statement describes how the pupil is affected within school: At Range 6, **pupils will have communication and** **interaction differences identified by the range descriptors that severely affect their access to the National Curriculum, including the social emotional curriculum and all aspects of school life, even in known and familiar contexts and with familiar support/people available**. 3. If this statement accurately describes your child, use the advice given in range 6. If not, you will need to consider descriptors for other levels.   There are differences in acquisition, retention and generalisation of information. The pupil may or may not have a diagnosis of Autism made by an appropriate clinical team.  Pupils within the Communication and Interaction specialist setting need an environment where interpersonal challenges are minimised by the adult managed setting. | **Assessment**   * Targets must be individualised, short term, specific & reviewed * Detailed pre-NC assessments (e.g., SCART) to inform planning/target setting * Ongoing teaching assessments including social communication skills, emotional wellbeing and life skills, including preparation for adulthood * Long-term involvement of educational and non-educational professionals as appropriate in assessment and planning * Assessment of emotional regulation, sensory needs, individual behaviour needs, and medical needs must be used to inform the planning process * Curriculum planning closely tracks levels of attainment and incorporates individual targets and therapy programmes * Individual care plan/protocol to be in place * Risk assessment will describe procedures to keep safe the pupil, other staff and pupils, and property. There will be an assessment of the risk of absconding and procedures described to manage such an eventuality | * Robust planning to meet the objectives in the EHCP * Small groups within a specialist provision for communication and interaction needs * Specialist educational setting * Daily opportunities for small group and 1:1 teaching and learning * Where possible, graded access to mainstream learning activities and leisure opportunities | * Curriculum access will be facilitated by using a predictable approach which may involve using visual systems or timetables and reducing language for instruction/information giving * Teaching strategies should consider difficulties with transfer of skills; teaching approach should take account of difficulties in understanding the social rules and expectations of the classroom * Use a range of alternative augmentative communication to support social and functional communication skills to enhance interaction and understanding (e.g., PECS, Makaton, electronic voice output communication aids (VOCA)) * Use of adapted teaching materials and resources to support teaching and learning for those with sensory and/or physical impairment * Enhanced PSHCE/life skills and SRE programmes to ensure skills embedded | * High staffing ratio to support teaching and learning with sustained opportunities for 1:1 support * All staff trained and experienced in working with pupils with Social Communication Differences/Autism * Additional staffing to escort pupils and support at times of crisis and stress * All staff trained and experienced in approaches which can support the management of complex behaviour needs (e.g., team teach) * Consistent staff team experienced in working with students who present with a range of needs because of their Autism diagnosis * Access to specialist approaches, equipment and therapeutic services (e.g., OT and SALT) as part of the curriculum |

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| **Range 7**  **Summary of Needs** | **Assessment and Planning** | **Teaching and Learning Strategies** | **Curriculum/Intervention** | **Resources and Staffing** |

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| Continued long term and complex social communication difficulties, necessitating a continued multi-agency response co-ordinated as annual, interim or emergency SEND review and met in specialist provision. Difficulties likely to include:   * Highly complex needs identified * Extreme violent/aggressive behaviour due to unmet/unidentified needs * Self-harming behaviour * Serious mental health issues * Long term emotionally based school avoidance * Extreme vulnerability * Medical conditions that are potentially life threatening and cannot be managed without dedicated support | EHCP is complete and pupil has been assessed as needing enhanced specialist provision.  Assessment will be an ongoing process to determine progress in learning, and also:   * Development of safe, positive relationships * Development of social and emotional skills and safe coping strategies through targeted/specialist intervention and support * There will be involvement from a range of specialist professionals in place, such as CYPs, Educational Psychologist * Multi-agency work continues, and continual assessment to feed into the cycle of annual reviews   Planning   * EHCP and appropriate short-term targets * Risk assessment will describe procedures to keep safe the pupil, other staff and pupils, and property. * Planning meetings will include parents/carers, the pupil and are multi-agency | * Pupil is on roll at special school * This could be out of area and/or residential special school * Pupil offered one to one support from an adult for some of the school day * There will be a greater ratio of adults to pupil and staff will have specialisms in managing pupils who present with challenging behaviour | * Provision is within a specialist environment with appropriate staff/ pupil ratios * Continued daily access to staff with experience and training in meeting the needs of pupils with highly complex needs * Intervention is planned and reviewed in line with pupil’s progress against specific targets | As for earlier ranges, plus:   * Personalised to the specific needs of the pupil * Advice available from relevant specialist services, including: * CYPS * Educational Psychologist * Social Care * Community Support Worker * Family Intervention * Voluntary Sector Organisations * Social Care * Prevent Services |

**Communication and interaction: PfA Outcomes and Provision**

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|  | **PfA Outcomes** | | | |
| **Employability/Education** | **Independence** | **Community Participation** | **Health** |
| **Reception to Y2 (5-7**  **years)** | Child will have the communication and interaction skills required to meet with adults from a range of careers and obtain information, appropriate to the child’s age and developmental level, in relation to different jobs to enable them to begin to think about what they may like to do in the future.  Child will engage with real world visits (fire stations, farms, etc.) and be able to communicate with adults present to obtain information relating to any questions they may have. | Child will have the communication and interaction skills required to enable them, with adult supervision support and modelling, to ask for things that they would like (ordering juice in a coffee shop, asking for a toy or food item at a shop counter etc.) | Child will be able to interact and communicate appropriately with peers to enable participation in teams and games, after school clubs and weekend activities.  Child will have the communication and interaction skills required to begin to develop friendships with peers. | Child will have the language, communication skills required to gain the attention of an adult at times when they feel unwell in order to access appropriate medical care as required.  Child will have the language and communication skills required to enable them to articulate choices relating to diet and physical exercise. |
| **Y3 to Y6 (8-**  **11 years)** | Child will be able to articulate their ideas in relation to different career and education options and will have the communication skills required to ask questions to support them in moving towards making choices.  Child will be able to engage with career related role models/sessions on different career paths from visitors in school to further increase their understanding of potential options/areas of interest. | Child will have the communication and interaction skills required to enable them to ask for things that they would like, to pay for things in a shop or school lunch hall, as step toward independent living.  Child will have the communication skills required to facilitate the development of age-related independent living skills to include cookery, travel time, money, being able to ask questions and seek support/guidance where required. | Child will have the communication and interaction skills required to develop and maintain friendships with peers.  Child will be able to interact and communicate appropriately with peers to enable participation in team games, youth and after-school clubs.  Child will have the language and communication skills required to outline any issues relating to bullying or safety online to an adult. | Child will have the language and communication skills required to explain the issue to an adult at times when they are hurt or feel unwell in order to access appropriate medical care as required.  Child will have the language and communication skills required to enable them to articulate choices relating to diet and physical exercise. |

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| **Y7 to Y11 (11-16**  **years)** | Child will be able to engage with structured careers advisory sessions, communicating their thoughts and ideas relating to potential career choices and having the interaction skills to talk with adults to obtain additional information/guidance as required to enable them to make informed choices.  Child will have the communication and interaction skills (written or verbal) required to facilitate the building of a personal/vocational profile within careers sessions, moving towards building a CV for application for further education/training or employment. Child will have the communication and interaction skills required to function within a workplace environment, either with respect to work experience/voluntary work or part time employment to enable them to gain work related experience and explain areas of interest. | Child will have the communication skills required to facilitate the development of age-related independent living skills to include cookery, travel time,  money, being able to ask questions and seek support/guidance where required.  Child will have the communication and interaction skills required to enable them to socialise with peers (unsupervised) within the community and to access activities within the local community in accordance with their preferences. | Child will have the language, communication and interaction skills to develop and maintain friendships with peers and to integrate successfully into a range of social groupings and situations.  Child will be able to interact appropriately via social media, online games and within the online community to maintain personal safety and lessen potential vulnerability. | Child will have the language and communication skills required to ask questions in order to obtain additional information relating to sex education managing more complex health needs, risks related to drugs and alcohol and support for mental health and wellbeing as required.  Child will be able to communicate, with adult support/prompting, any health needs or concerns to a GP to obtain appropriate medical care or support as required. |
| **Provision** | Please refer to detail provided within the Teaching and Learning Strategies and Curriculum/Interventions sections of the School Age Ranges Guidance: Communication and Interaction, SLCN and ASD. | | | |