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**Newcastle SEND Descriptors of Need**

**Part 3**

**Guidance for Children and Young People with Social**

**Communication and Interaction needs:**

**The School Years **

Version 2 June 2025

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

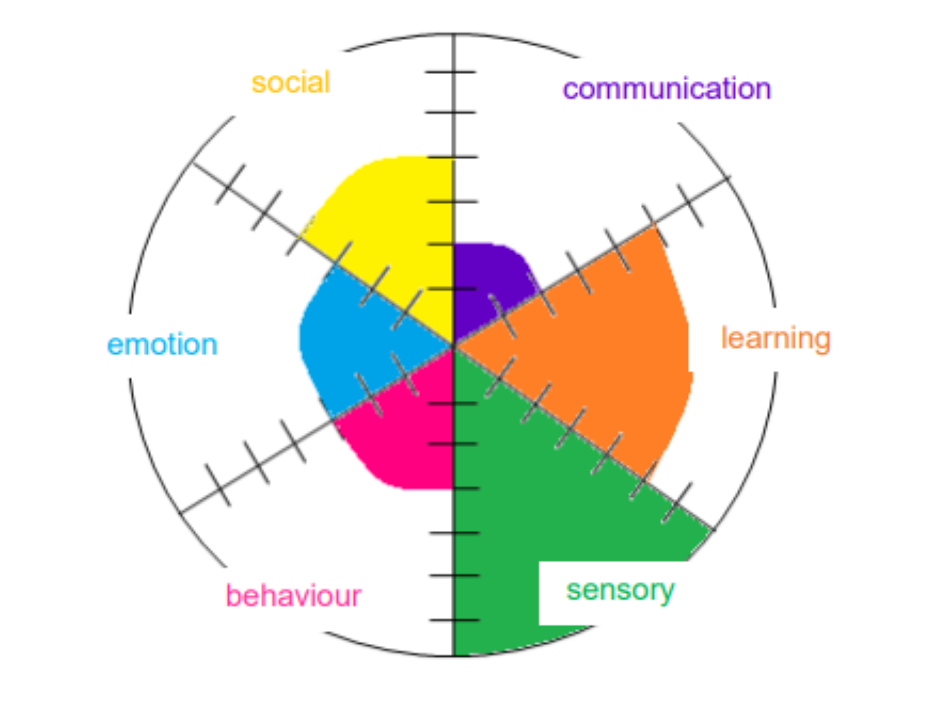
**Introduction**

In Newcastle, we aim to create inclusive environments that celebrate and support neurodiversity. Inspired by Steve Silberman (*Neurotribes*, *2015*), we view autism as a natural cognitive variation with unique strengths. We avoid deficit-focused checklists and see autism as a different, not deficient, way of being.

We recognise the need for a common educational language to explain the diverse needs and support required by our children and young people. Our goal is to create communities that celebrate children for who they are and help them feel a sense of belonging.

We commit to staying updated with the latest research on autism and maintaining open communication with autistic individuals to learn from their perspectives. We are mindful of the language we use, understanding the ongoing debate between 'person-first' and 'identity-first' language. We advocate for checking with individuals and their families to respect their language preferences.

We support viewing autism as a circular spectrum, reflecting the unique strengths and support needs of each autistic person.



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

There is growing recognition of the importance of relational approaches in fostering feelings of safety and belonging for all children, including autistic pupils. Emotional regulation is foundational and must be addressed before engaging in higher-level learning. Strong relationships within educational settings support this regulation and cognitive engagement.

Developing guidance on social communication differences is complex due to the diversity of strengths and support needs of children and young people within Newcastle. While general strategies can support many, some children—such as those with demand-avoidant behaviours—require more individualized approaches. When using this section, it is essential to look across the full range of descriptors of need, cross referencing with other areas such as Social, Emotional, and Mental Health (SEMH), Cognition and Learning, and Sensory Needs.

The guidance addresses a broad spectrum of social communication and interaction differences that impact learning and social inclusion. Not all pupils will fit neatly into these categories.

Children and young people with social communication and interaction differences / autism experience differences in three key areas (Autism Education Trust), 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 transitions 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 tables, below, should be read alongside the descriptors of the three areas of difference, above.

Students may display different combinations of differences, 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 differences may also have needs which cut across other areas such as ‘cognition and learning’, ‘social, emotional and mental health’ and ‘sensory’ – therefore it is important to consider needs across all 4 main areas.

**Resources Available to Schools**

* Refer to the Local Offer [Newcastle Support Directory | Newcastle Support Directory](https://www.newcastlesupportdirectory.org.uk/) for information about local charities and organisations offering support
* Autism Education Trust (AET) training is available to schools (can be booked via ‘Services to Schools’ or contact your link SENDOS Communication and Interaction teacher)
* Support from the Communication and Interaction Team through the SEN ASAP panel
* Early Help – Early Help can also signpost on to a range of services e.g. ‘Skills for People’ key worker service
* Educational Psychology
* Refer to the [Autism Directory](https://padlet.com/NewcastleEP/autism-directory-99vei82yvq7tlvht) (Educational Psychology) for links to a range of different support and resources locally and nationally
* Refer to the [Universally Available Provision in Mainstream Schools.pdf](https://www.newcastlesupportdirectory.org.uk/sites/default/files/Local%20Offer/School%20Effectiveness/Universally%20Available%20Provision%20October%202023.pdf) and

[Universally Available Provision for Early Years.pdf](https://www.newcastlesupportdirectory.org.uk/sites/default/files/Local%20Offer/Early%20years/Universally%20Available%20Guidance.pdf)

* Refer to the [C&I Teaching and Learning Strategies and Resources](https://padlet.com/NewcastleCandITeam/c-i-teaching-and-learning-strategies-and-resources-tgmbp2xhhnf8o2vk) Padlet, which links to a range of strategies and services to support young people in school
* 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
* The North East Autism Society (NEAS) offer a range of support for families, including regular workshops and 1:1 sessions accessed via their ‘Autism Hubs’ across the city. Further information can be found here: [Our Services - North East Autism Society](https://www.ne-as.org.uk/family-development/our-services/)
* There are useful documents available from the AET, including the standards framework, the competency framework and the progression framework. [Framework Documents | Autism Education Trust](https://www.autismeducationtrust.org.uk/framework-documents) Please speak to your link SENDOS Communication and Interaction teacher for further information.

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| **Range 1** | **Range 2** | **Range 3** | **Range 4**  **Descriptors of Need Overview** | **Range 5** |
| Pupils present with some differences associated with social communication and interaction. For example:   * may show differences in understanding and using non-verbal communication and/or language * may have intense interests * may have difficulty transitioning between activities and may show increased anxiety at these times * may be over or under responsive to sensory input   See p4-5 for further examples. Pupils may or may not have a diagnosis of Autism.  Pupils **may** require support to access **some** aspects of the National Curriculum, and/or the social and emotional aspects of school life but this support is generally at whole school / whole class level.  With **quality first teaching** the child is making expected progress (across the curriculum and in the social and emotional aspects of school life) and is happy and settled in school. | Pupils present with differences associated with social communication and interaction (see p4-5 for examples). Pupils may or may not have a diagnosis of Autism.  Pupils will need **more focused support** (e.g., someindividual or small group)to access the National Curriculum and / or the social & emotional aspects of school life.  School have referred to the Universally Available Provision and are implementing **some** recommended strategies and approaches.  Without the appropriate environmental adaptations / support strategies (outlined above), the pupil might present with anxiety and / or some dysregulated behaviour. | Pupils present with differences associated with social communication and interaction (see p4-5 for examples); there are likely to be a number of differences across all three areas. Pupils may or may not have a diagnosis of Autism.  Pupils require a **moderate** level of support (including individualised support) to access the National Curriculum and / or the social & emotional aspects of school life.  Support will include a **number of strategies / approaches** outlined in the Universally Available Provision, possibly from more than one area e.g., Social Communication and Interaction, SLCN, SEMH, Cognition and Learning.  Without the appropriate environmental adaptations / a number of strategies from the Universally Available Provision, the pupil’s mental health and well-being will be impacted. This might be shown through dysregulated behaviour or anxiety. This is especially true in new and unfamiliar contexts. | Pupil may present with a more **complex combination of differences across a number of areas** as outlined in the descriptors (see p4-5) which is likely to necessitate a multi-agency response. Pupils may or may not have a diagnosis of Autism.  Pupils will require **significant** support (which is individualised and often requires a higher level of adult support) to access the National Curriculum and / or the social & emotional aspects of school life.  Pupils require the use of **a significant number of strategies / approaches** outlined in the Universally Available Provision, as well as some more specialist approaches such as those advised by external professionals or services.  Without the appropriate environmental adaptations / appropriate strategies / approaches, the pupil’s mental health and well-being will be significantly impacted which may lead to unplanned periods outside the mainstream classroom / anxiety around school attendance. | Pupil present with a more **complex combination of differences across a number of areas** (see p4-5 for examples); there are likely to be a **number of differences** **across all three areas**. Pupils may have **additional needs related to other areas** e.g., SLCN, Cognition and Learning, SEMH. Pupils may or may not have a diagnosis of Autism.  Pupils will require a **bespoke and individualised curriculum which supports development across a number of areas** e.g., SLCN, Cognition and Learning, SEMH.  **High levels of individual support and specialized strategies** are neededto access learning and all aspects of school life, even in known and familiar contexts with familiar people. Strategies and approaches are likely to include those recommended and reviewed by outside professionals.  Without the appropriate support, pupils are likely to present with significant sensory and emotional dysregulation, which could pose a risk to their own safety or the safety of others. |

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| **Range 6** | **Range 7** |
| There are **continuing, significant and complex** social communication differences,as well as significant **additional needs** (e.g. SLCN, Cognition and Learning, SEMH),which **impact access to the mainstream environment.** Consequently, pupilsrequirecontinued provision **outside the mainstream environment.**  Pupils will require a highly adapted, bespoke and individualised curriculum which is significantly different to that typically accessed by same-age peers: this will be accessed alongside peers with a similar profile of support need, and significant environmental adaptations will support access to school life. | 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 across a range of areas * Extreme distressed physical behaviour due to unmet/unidentified needs which places themselves or others at the risk of harm, on a regular basis. * Self-harming behaviour * Serious mental health issues which require specialist intervention * Long term emotionally based school avoidance * Extreme vulnerability in school and / or the community * Medical conditions that are potentially life threatening and cannot be managed without dedicated support |

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| **Range 1**  **Summary of Needs** | **Assessment and Planning** | **Teaching and Learning Strategies** | **Curriculum /Intervention** | **Resources and Staffing** |
| Pupils present with some differences associated with social communication and interaction. For example:   * may show differences in understanding and using non-verbal communication and/or language * may have intense interests * may have difficulty transitioning between activities and may show increased anxiety at these times * may be over or under responsive to sensory input   See p4-5 for further examples. Pupils may or may not have a diagnosis of Autism.  Pupils may require support to access some aspects of the National Curriculum, and/or the social and emotional aspects of school life but this support is generally at whole school / whole class level.  With quality first teaching the child is making expected progress (across the curriculum and in the social and emotional aspects of school life) and is happy and settled in school. | **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 | * The use of **Quality First teaching** approaches to support the development of social communication and interaction skills and to support access to the curriculum (e.g., strategies and approaches included in the EEF ‘Five-a-day.’ * Curriculum access will be facilitated by using a **whole class** structured approach to provision which should involve using visual systems or timetables and reducing language for instructions/ information giving | * 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 * Must have full inclusion to the National Curriculum but flexibility may be required to enable access | * 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. * The child may be discussed as part of an unnamed consultation with external professionals. |

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

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| **Range 2**  **Summary of Needs** | **Assessment and Planning** | **Teaching and Learning Strategies** | **Curriculum/Intervention** | **Resources and Staffing** |
| Pupils present with differences associated with social communication and interaction (see p4-5 for examples). Pupils may or may not have a diagnosis of Autism.  Pupils will need **more focused support** (e.g., someindividual or small group)to access the National Curriculum and / or the social & emotional aspects of school life.  School have referred to the Universally Available Provision and are implementing **some** recommended strategies and approaches.  Without the appropriate environmental adaptations / support strategies (outlined above), the pupil might present with anxiety and / or some dysregulated behaviour. | **As range 1 plus:**  **Assessment:**  As range 1 plus:   * Use of more detailed NC assessment tools. * Could also include other assessments relating to need, advice from SLT or OT advice (where applicable) * Consider the development of an SEN Support Plan with individual targets. * Pupil will be monitored using the *assess, plan, do, review* process.   **Planning:**  **As range 1 plus:**   * 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 | **As range 1 plus:**  Use of **some strategies / approaches** outlined in the EY Universally Available Provision and/or Universally Available Provision for Schools such as:   * Adaptations to the environment, such as a quiet area within the classroom for individual work, or access to a quiet area to support regulation. * Clear use of visual and written cues to support understanding of instructions, routines and timetables (may be individual). * Learning tasks that are broken down into smaller parts and presented visually, including during teaching time, when possible. * Consistent, clear routines with preparation for any changes, where possible. * Reduction of complex language, especially when giving instructions and asking questions. | **As range 1 plus:**   * Will have opportunity for small group and individual work (which may be outside the classroom) to supports targets which involve access to the curriculum including the social emotional curriculum and all aspects of school life. | **As range 1, plus:**  The child’s social communication needs require flexible use of additional support from within school resources, including.   * Support / advice from SENCo * Additional adults routinely used to support flexible groupings * Access to targeted group work in class * Access to intervention group work with appropriately trained staff * Staff have a good level of understanding about Autism and associated presenting differences – e.g., through training such as ‘AET Good autism practice’ * 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** |
| Pupils present with differences associated with social communication and interaction (see p4-5 for examples); there are likely to be a number of differences across all three areas. Pupils may or may not have a diagnosis of Autism.  Pupils require a **moderate** level of support (including individualised support) to access the National Curriculum and / or the social & emotional aspects of school life.  Support will include a **number of strategies / approaches** outlined in the Universally Available Provision, possibly from more than one area e.g., Social Communication and Interaction, SLCN, SEMH, Cognition and Learning.  Without the appropriate environmental adaptations / a number of strategies from the Universally Available Provision, the pupil’s mental health and well-being will be impacted. This might be shown through dysregulated behaviour or anxiety. This is especially true in new and unfamiliar contexts. | **As range 1 and 2 plus:**  **Assessment:**   * More specialised assessment tools may be needed e.g. AET Progression Framework. * Accurate and up to date assessment of individual levels must be kept as a working document to aid planning and to share with family * Assessment includes a profile of sensory needs * Consider the development of an SEN Support Plan with individual targets.   **Planning:**   * Planning may need to incorporate timetabled opportunities to support sensory and emotional regulation, which may include time out of the classroom. | **As range 1 and 2 plus:**   * + Use of a **number of strategies / approaches** outlined in the Universally Available Provision; this may include strategies / approaches across a number of different areas (e.g., Social Communication, SLCN, Cognition and Learning, SEMH).   + Examples include a low distraction environment, additional time for processing, adaptations to how learning activities / assessments are presented, regular movement/sensory breaks, alternative recording methods.   + Targeted support will be needed which may include support outside of the classroom during unstructured parts of the day e.g., start and end of school day, breaks, lunchtimes and trips out of school   + Planned and responsive opportunities to support sensory and emotional regulation, which may include time out of the classroom or in a designated safe space.   + Staff will need to implement any recommendations made by the SENCO or any outside professionals who are involved. | **As range 1 and 2 plus:**   * Inclusion within the mainstream classroom. However, there will be a need for an enhanced level of individual support. * Will need to make noticeable adaptations to the environment and curriculum to aid access and reduce anxiety. * Will need support in developing understanding of the differences between neurotypical and neurodivergent social communication using resources such as ‘Autism, Identity and Me (Rebecca Duffus), Understanding Me & Understanding Others (Autism Education Trust), Autistic and OK (Ambitious About Autism). This should be embedded within a curriculum which also supports neurotypical pupils to understand different communication styles e.g. Learning About Neurodiversity at School (LEANS – University of Edinburgh). | **As range 1 and 2 plus:**   * Advice and support for individual pupils from LA Specialist staff may be requested from SEN Advice and Support Allocation Panel (SEN ASAP) * Staff to access additional training to support the individual needs of the pupil e.g., Teenlife, AET Understanding Autism and Anxiety, AET Transitions in Schools, AET Developing Inclusive Leadership * Training in / use of more specialised resources such as the AET Progression Framework and AET Competency Framework   . |

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| **Range 4**  **Summary of Needs** | **Assessment and Planning** | **Teaching and Learning Strategies** | **Curriculum/Intervention** | **Resources and Staffing** |
| Pupil may present with a more **complex combination of differences across a number of areas** as outlined in the descriptors (see p4-5) which is likely to necessitate a multi-agency response. Pupils may or may not have a diagnosis of Autism.  Pupils will require **significant** support (which is individualised and often requires a higher level of adult support) to access the National Curriculum and / or the social & emotional aspects of school life.  Pupils require the use of **a significant number of strategies / approaches** outlined in the Universally Available Provision, as well as some more specialist approaches such as those advised by external professionals or services.  Without the appropriate environmental adaptations / appropriate strategies / approaches, the pupil’s mental health and well-being will be significantly impacted which may lead to unplanned periods outside the mainstream classroom / anxiety around school attendance. | **As range 1 – 3 plus:**  **Assessment:**   * Is likely to include assessment advice from other agencies, e.g., SLT/OT * Assessment should include details about sensory needs   **Planning:**   * Robust planning to meet objectives defined in support plans * To include all setting staff that come into contact with pupil on a daily basis * Planning must include adaptations to curriculum to ensure the development of independent learning and life skills and preparation for adulthood. | **As range 1 -3 plus:**  The use of a **significant number of strategies / approaches** outlined in the Universally Available Provision, as well as some **more specialist approaches** such as those advised by external professionals or services e.g., individual work systems or other significant adaptations to enable engagement in / recording of learning, daily speech and language programmes, OT sensory diet, focused strategies / approaches to develop early communication skills such as daily box time, language for play sessions or tap, tap box, focused support / opportunities to develop social relationships, focused and individual teaching / support for emotional regulation (5-point scale, Zones of Regulation).  An adult to check understanding at the beginning and throughout learning activities e.g., understanding purpose of the task, instructions, expectations.  Significant flexibility and adaptations to the school behaviour policy may be needed, to take account of individual special educational needs in line with relevant statutory guidance. | **As range 1- 3 plus:**   * Significant adaptations to curriculum, teaching methods and environment needed to access the curriculum. * Where appropriate an alternative curriculum must be offered to develop independence and life skills. | **As range 1 – 3 plus:**   * Staff to access external training related to any other specific support needs e.g. selective mutism, ADHD, Demand Avoidance. * Possible visits to specialist settings to develop practice (if appropriate). * Where children are taught by a range of staff, all staff will be aware of their specific needs and strategies to support them. * Pupil will have regular access to a trusted key adult, with whom they have individual time to reflect on school experiences. This may be especially important where pupils are taught by a large number of staff. |

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| **Range 5**  **Summary of Needs** | **Assessment and Planning** | **Teaching and Learning Strategies** | **Curriculum/Intervention** | **Resources and Staffing** |
| Pupil present with a more **complex combination of differences across a number of areas** (see p4-5 for examples); there are likely to be a **number of differences** **across all three areas**. Pupils may have **additional needs related to other areas** e.g., SLCN, Cognition and Learning, SEMH. Pupils may or may not have a diagnosis of Autism.  Pupils will require a **bespoke and individualised curriculum which supports development across a number of areas** e.g., SLCN, Cognition and Learning, SEMH.  **High levels of individual support and specialized strategies** are neededto access learning and all aspects of school life, even in known and familiar contexts with familiar people. Strategies and approaches are likely to include those recommended and reviewed by outside professionals.  Without the appropriate support, pupils are likely to present with significant sensory and emotional dysregulation, which could pose a risk to their own safety or the safety of others. | **As range 1 – 4 plus:**  **Assessment:**   * Accurate and up to date assessment of independent levels (e.g., using SCART) must be kept as a working document to aid planning and to share with family * Should 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.   **Planning:**   * Robust planning to meet outcomes in the support plan/ EHCP if applicable * Must include planning for whole day, including unstructured times   Planning must consider learning styles, identified strengths and learning needs. | **As range 1– 4 plus:**   * Bespoke, individualised learning activities based on individual targets, with significant time built into the school day to support regulation. * Adapted learning activities based on individual pupil interests, when possible. * A higher staff to pupil ratio to support the delivery of a highly adapted curriculum. * 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 support learning, including time in a quiet, distraction free environment * Daily opportunities to understand and manage their own anxieties. Collaborative work with a trusted adult to understand the source of the pupil’s anxiety and strategies that may help. This work may need to ongoing over a period of time. | **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 * Where appropriate, use of a range of alternative augmentative communication to support social and functional communication to enhance interaction and understanding (e.g., Makaton, electronic voice output communication aids (VOCA)) * 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. | **As range 1– 4 plus:**   * 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. * Long term involvement of education and non-education professionals is likely to be needed |

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| **Range 6**  **Summary of Needs** | **Assessment and Planning** | **Teaching and Learning Strategies** | **Curriculum/Intervention** | **Resources and Staffing** |
| There are **continuing, significant and complex** social communication differences,as well as significant **additional needs** (e.g. SLCN, Cognition and Learning, SEMH),which **impact access to the mainstream environment.** Consequently, pupilsrequirecontinued provision **outside the mainstream environment.**  Pupils will require a highly adapted, bespoke and individualised curriculum which is significantly different to that typically accessed by same-age peers: this will be accessed alongside peers with a similar profile of support need, and significant environmental adaptations will support access to school life. | **As range 1 – 5 plus:**  **Assessment**   * 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 * Assessment of emotional regulation, sensory needs, and medical needs must be used to inform the planning process * Risk assessment will describe procedures to keep safe the pupil, other staff and pupils, and property. An assessment of the risk of absconding and procedures described to manage such an eventuality   **Planning**   * Robust planning to meet the objectives in the EHCP * Targets must be individualised, short term, specific & reviewed * Long-term involvement of educational and non-educational professionals as appropriate in assessment and planning * Curriculum planning closely tracks levels of attainment and incorporates individual targets and therapy programmes * Individual care plan/protocol to be in place, where appropriate. | **As range 1 – 5 plus:**   * Small groups within a setting that provides more specialised provision for communication and interaction needs * Daily opportunities for small group and 1:1 teaching and learning * Where possible, opportunities to access mainstream learning activities and leisure opportunities * Teaching strategies should consider support needed for transfer of skills across contexts. * Teaching approaches should support social understanding, including the rules and expectations of the classroom. | **As range 1 – 5 plus:**   * 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. * 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. | **As range 1 – 5 plus:**   * 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 accompany pupils during transitions and support at times of crisis and stress * All staff trained and experienced in approaches which can support complex distressed behaviours. * Consistent staff team experienced in working with students who present with a range of needs related to being autistic. * 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** |
| 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 across a range of areas * Extreme distressed physical behaviour due to unmet/unidentified needs which places themselves or others at the risk of harm, on a regular basis. * Self-harming behaviour * Serious mental health issues which require specialist intervention * Long term emotionally based school avoidance * Extreme vulnerability in school and / or the community * Medical conditions that are potentially life threatening and cannot be managed without dedicated support | **As range 1 – 6 plus:**  EHCP is complete and pupil has been assessed as needing enhanced specialist provision.  **Assessment**  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 * Planning meetings will include parents/carers, the pupil and are multi-agency | **As range 1 – 6 plus:**   * Pupil is on roll at a specialist setting * This could be out of area and/or residential specialist setting * Pupil offered one to one support from an adult for some of the school day * There will be a greater ratio of adults to pupils and staff will have specialisms in supporting pupils who present with highly distressed behaviour * Key teachers have extremely high levels of knowledge about their pupils’ complex needs and behaviours. | **As range 1 – 6 plus:**   * 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 range 1 – 6 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 across all Descriptors of Needs documents. | | | |