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**Newcastle SEND Descriptors of Need**

**Part 3**

**Guidance for Children and Young People with** **Sensory Needs:**

**Age 0-25 **

Version 1 November 2023

**Descriptors of need for Children and Young People with Sensory 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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| A mild sensory processing difference. The child/young person may present with some of:   * Mild differences identified by either home or school. * Mild differences with self-help and independence. * Mild differences in gross motor skills and coordination. | **Assessment**   * Part of continual school and class assessment. * Monitoring of developmental goals in line with National Curriculum. * SENCO aware. * Risk assessment carried out relating to one particular sensory difference.   **Planning**   * Use of Newcastle Universally Available Provision. * Normal curriculum planning including group or individual targets. * Care plan in place, if appropriate, written with specialist nurse/ school nurse. * Involve parents regularly to support targets at home. * Pupils involved in monitoring and setting targets. | * Mainstream class with occasional additional individual or small group support. * Attention to positioning in classroom. * First line strategies, based on advice and strategies given in training packages delivered by OT. | * Quality First Teaching * Follow school handwriting scheme with slight modifications. * Some differentiation to PE curriculum if appropriate. * Access to appropriate ICT provision   i.e., accessibility options on Windows.   * Staff awareness training of relevant medical conditions on a ‘need to know’ basis. | * Refer to Newcastle Universally Available Provision. * Flexible use of resources and staffing available in the classroom to assist with recording work, accessing text, pre- teaching vocabulary, modifying teacher talk, modelling responses, focusing listening and attention. * Main provision by class subject teacher with some age-appropriate programmes delivered one to one or in small groups. * Input needed from health professionals via SENCO e.g., specialist nurse/ school nurse. * OT may see children at any range due to open referral system. * Physio may intervene with children who have mild physical issues to prevent further. deterioration/reduce impact of condition / early intervention to achieve more successful outcomes.   **Resources/**  **Provision**   * Differentiated writing materials and equipment. * Non-slip mat (Dycem), adapted pencils, pens, scissors, foot stool, writing slope, cutlery. * Provide supportive / correctly sized standard school chair & table - this should be available to children in range 1 to support their postural stability i.e., a chair and table surface that fit the child – feet supported, table at the correct height.   etc.   * Reference made to Sensational Schools’ training and guidance. |

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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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| A mild – moderate sensory processing difference. The child/young person may present with some of:   * Need for support to manage sensory differences within school. * Mild issues with sitting still and attention. * Mild issues with coordination, gross and/or fine motor. * Lack of independence, at an age-appropriate level, with many areas of self-care. * Mild hypo/hyper-activity to sensory input and mildly atypical interests in sensory aspects of the environment. | **Assessment**   * As for range 1 but SENCO to be involved in more specific assessments and observations. * SENCO may seek advice from health professionals. * SENCO involvement if no progress apparent after targeted teaching approach.   **Planning**   * Newcastle Universally Available Provision. * Normal curriculum planning including group or individual targets. * Care plan in place, if appropriate, written with specialist nurse/ school nurse. * Alternative ways of recording work to minimise need for handwriting. * Involve parents regularly to support targets at home. * Pupil involved in monitoring and setting targets. | * As above but will be working on modified curriculum tasks. * Small group or one to one adult input to practice skills. * Buddy system * Attention to position in classroom. * First line strategies, based on advice and strategies given in training packages delivered by OT (Sensational Class room) and via drop-in sessions / telephone consultations with health professionals. | * Quality First Teaching. * Follow school handwriting scheme with further modifications and extra time for reinforcement. * Some differentiation to PE curriculum. * Opportunities to practice dressing and undressing skills. * Access to appropriate ICT provision. | * Main provision from class teacher or subject specialist with support from SENCO. * Occasional input from additional adult to provide targeted support under the direction of teacher. * Minimal support/ supervision may be needed to meet hygiene needs and/or to support outside play and lunch time. * Advice to be sought from Health Professionals E.g., Physiotherapist, Occupational Therapist. * OT may see children at any range due to open referral system (this may change following the therapies redesign). * Physio may intervene with children who have mild - moderate physical issues to prevent further deterioration / reduce impact of condition / early intervention to achieve more successful outcomes. * Staff awareness training of relevant medical conditions on a ‘need to know’ basis.   **Resources/**  **Provision**   * Differentiated writing materials and equipment. * Non-slip mat (Dycem), adapted pencils, pens, scissors, foot stool, writing slope cutlery. * Access to sensory equipment as recommended by the Occupational Therapist. |

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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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| A moderate sensory processing difference.  The child/young person may present with some of:   * A moderate sensory processing difference requiring more. individualised support. * Moderate gross and/or fine motor difficulties. * Require specialist input in order to access curriculum. * Evidence of sensory seeking or avoiding behaviours which require adult support and monitoring. * Need for support with areas of self-care. * Moderate hypo/hyper-activity to sensory input and mildly atypical interests in sensory aspects of the environment. | **Assessment**   * SENCO seeks advice from OT Team and health care professionals in order to discuss next steps. * Need handwriting/ fine motor advice from OT. * Requires time away from the classroom to assist with regulation and support from an adult for co-regulation.   **Planning**   * Newcastle Universally Available Provision. * Normal curriculum planning including group or individual targets. * Care plan in place, if appropriate, written with specialist. * Alternative ways of recording work to minimise handwriting. * Individual targets on support plan following advice OT and health professionals. * Modified planning play and school curriculum is likely to be needed. * Involve parents regularly to support targets at home. * Pupils involved in monitoring and setting targets. | * Mainstream classroom setting. * Small group or one to one adult input to practice skills and for co-regulation. * Individual skills-based work may need to take place. * Nurture group input may be necessary to support with sensory regulation and psycho-social and emotional development. * Attention to position in classroom. | **Need the following:**   * Teaching   Programme to support the development of handwriting skills as advised by Occupational Therapy.   * Differentiated writing materials and equipment. * A programme to develop fine motor skills. * Dressing and undressing skills programme in conjunction with Occupational Therapy. * More dependence on appropriate ICT for recording. * These children may form the basis of targeted assessment – assessment and advice to home and school with programme / strategies to follow. | * Main provision from class teacher or subject specialist with support from SENCO. * Flexible use of classroom support to access curriculum and develop skills in recording up to 16.5h/ week. * Schools would make referral to OT if first line strategies / advice and programmes have been trialled and evidenced but achievement is limited.   **Resources/**  **Provision**   * ICT equipment to aid recording. * Furniture and equipment assessed jointly by HI/VI Team and Occupational Therapy. * May need calm area/ designated space for regulation. |

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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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| A significant Sensory processing difference. The child/young person may present with some of:   * A sensory processing difference which requires daily monitoring and support. * Daily support required to carry out functional activities of daily living. * Inability to carry out self-care such as toileting and dressing without staff support. * Sensory processing factors impact on independent learning. * May not perceive pain or have a disproportionate reaction to pain, changes in temperature and, touch. * Occasional Unpredictable outbursts which may be either vocal or physical. | **Assessment**   * SENCO and specialists continually monitor and evaluate the need for the increased intensity of input from Speech and Language, Occupational Therapy, Physiotherapy as appropriate. * Personal care assessment. * Risk assessment relating to sensory processing difference such as chewing/ mouthing objects.   **Planning**   * Modified curriculum in some or all areas. * Care plan in place, if appropriate, written with specialist nurse/ school nurse. * Involve parents regularly to support targets at home. * Individual targets on support plan following advice from OT and health professionals. * Risk assessment and modified planning relating to outdoor play is likely to be needed. * Interventions should be incorporated across all activities throughout the school day. | * Mainstream classroom setting. * Individual skills- based work needs to take place. * Small group or one to one adult input to practice skills as advised by OT. * Nurture group input will be necessary to help with low self-esteem. * Physiotherapy/ Occupational Therapy programme to be done in school. * Attention to position in classroom. * Buddy system. * Specialist speech and language sessions (via health professionals). | **Will need one or more of the following:**   * Programme to support the development of handwriting/ fine motor skills. * Access to appropriate ICT for recording purposes. * Differentiated writing materials and equipment. * Differentiation to PE curriculum. * Dressing and undressing skills programme. | * Will need some 1:1 support to access aspects of the curriculum and to develop skills. * May need individual adult support for mobility and personal care needs as advised by Occupational Therapy, Physiotherapy and Healthcare Professionals. * OT intervention will be based on functional needs and not necessarily on diagnosis or medical condition. * Children in this category may require specialist sensory equipment via physio/OT services. * Members of staff require an understanding of sensory processing and are able to respond and support through co-regulation.   **Resources/**  **Provision**   * Occupational Therapy needs would be based on assessment on a case-by-case basis. * Sensory aware school able to utilise space to support with regulation. * Site adaptations to be considered in consultation with the Local Authority. * Will need some 1:1 support to access aspects of the curriculum and to develop skills in recording May need individual adult support for personal care needs as advised by OT. * Individual and small group teaching as appropriate, carefully organised to ensure full access to the curriculum. * Access to ICT to support independent learning, recording skills and communication as appropriate. * Access to specialist resources including specific teaching programmes such as sensory diet or regular movement breaks. * Accessibility of the whole school site, with facilities and practices that maintain the dignity of each pupil. * Access to specialist resources to meet the personal care and mobility needs of each pupil. * A time out area for rest periods and sensory regulation. * The range of resources should be reviewed at termly/annual planning meetings to ensure consistency and transparency as well as ensuring that schools have the appropriate specialist resources to meet the needs of pupils. |

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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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| A significant and complex sensory processing difference requiring a high level of support. The child/young person may present with some of:   * A sensory processing difference which requires very frequent monitoring and support. * A need for adult support to engage in all aspects of school. * Personalised sensory curriculum identified. * A need for regular liaison between teaching staff and OT. * Very high levels of hypo-/hyper- activity to sensory input and very highly unusual interests in sensory aspects of the environment. * High levels of adult support. | **Assessment**   * Formal assessment will have taken place or be in process. * The assessment of physical, sensory and learning needs to inform the planning process, including therapy programmes. * Risk assessments for frequent and unpredictable outbursts which maybe either physical or vocal.   **Planning**   * Curriculum planning closely tracks levels of achievement and incorporates individual targets, self-help and therapy programmes. * Targets are individualised, short term, specific and regularly reviewed. * Curriculum planning takes into account routine daily welfare and behaviour needs. * Individual care plan/ protocol to be in place. * Behaviour care plans in place if appropriate * Parents involved regularly and support targets at home. * Pupils involved in monitoring and setting targets as much as possible. | * Full time small group teaching in a specialist provision in a mainstream school or a specialist school. * Have access to Specialist Occupational Therapy advice. | Will need some or all of the following:   * Curriculum access will be facilitated using a structured approach which will take account of   + Individual learning styles.   + Personalisation to pupil needs.   + Small steps approach within the context of an appropriate sensory experiential curriculum. * Curriculum delivered at a pace that allows pupils time to assimilate information and then to respond appropriately. * Constant reinforcement and generalisation of skills is an essential priority. * Communication skills are an essential priority with the use of total communication environment to facilitate access to the curriculum e.g., PECS, Makaton, objects of reference, situational and sensory clues, simple voice output devices (Big Macs). * Use of adapted teaching resources and materials to support teaching and learning for those with sensory, physical and medical needs. * Specialist learning environment that supports pupils need to accept and develop pre-requisite skills required to access communication and learning. | * Individual and small group teaching as appropriate, carefully organised to ensure full access to the curriculum, which includes life and communication skills, and the realisation of each pupil’s potential in attainment/ achievement. * Individual specialist support for personal care needs. * High staffing ratio with specialist teaching and specialist non-teaching support to facilitate pupil access to the curriculum. * Staff trained and ‘signed off’ in medical / physical interventions and strategies as appropriate. * Access to specialist services e.g., educational psychologists, SEN services and health professionals. * OT intervention will be based on functional needs and not necessarily on diagnosis or medical condition. * Staff trained in the use of a range of specialist ICT and AAC equipment and software to support access to learning. * Access to specialist resources including specific teaching programmes and systems e.g., technological aids, ICT programmes, AAC. * Specialist seating, furniture and equipment. * Accessibility of the whole school site, with facilities and practices that maintain the dignity of each pupil and staff member. * Access to specialist resources to meet the personal care and mobility needs of individual pupil. * A suitably equipped room(s) in which therapies can be carried out. * Will have access to sensory room for rest periods and sensory regulation. |

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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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| Significant and complex sensory differences including following aspects:   * Requirement for intensive therapy support on a daily basis. * Constant challenges with regulation which disrupt an individuals physical, emotional and communication needs. * Risk of self-harm and potential of harming others. * Requires assistance for all personal care needs. * Has extreme sensory challenges and is extremely motivated to follow own agenda which overwhelms adult-led agenda. * Neurological factors that have a severe impact on functioning. * Extremely high levels of hypo-/hyper- activity to sensory input and very highly unusual interests in sensory aspects of the environment. * Unable to communicate and requires high levels of adult support/assistive technology access. | * As at Range 5 addressing the significant and complex learning difficulties. | * As at Range 5 but likely to require more 1:1 or 1:2 support. | As at Range 5, plus will need some or all of the following:   * Programme to support the development of physical (fine and gross motor) skills. * Highly differentiated recording/communication materials and equipment. * Highly differentiated PE curriculum. * Independent life skills programmes. * Sensory rich approach to learning in order to maximise their potential. | As Range 5 plus:   * Additional training and advice from specialist support service for teaching and support staff. * Individual and small group teaching as appropriate, carefully organised to ensure full access to the curriculum, which includes life and communication skills, and the realisation of each pupil’s potential in attainment/ achievement. * Fully equipped hygiene facilities to meet the needs of those who require hoisting for all transfers. |