

# Valuing SEND Guidance for Headteachers and Senior Managers in Education

Valuing SEND Toolkit  
November 2021

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# Purpose of Guidance

- This guidance is aimed at **Headteachers and Senior Managers in Schools and Settings** wishing to develop their understanding of Valuing SEND, and its use to support children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities.
- The aim of this guidance is to provide summary guidance on Valuing SEND to support the wider implementation of Valuing SEND as a whole school approach across Lincolnshire.
- Specifically, the guidance will focus on:
  - **Context** of Lincolnshire's High Needs Strategy
  - **How** Valuing SEND developed, **where** it came from and with **whom**;
  - **What** Valuing SEND is, including aims and objectives;
  - **Why** Valuing SEND is beneficial – the positive impact in Lincolnshire
  - **Where** to find further information
  - **Example** Valuing SEND implementation plan to support rollout in your school/setting



A Valuing SEND Toolkit has been developed providing more in-depth on Valuing SEND and can be found on the [Lincolnshire SEND Local Offer](#).

# One Minute Summary

1. Valuing SEND was developed by three county councils in collaboration with IMPOWER in 2019.
2. **The shared ambition for Valuing SEND is to:**
  - Improve children's long-term outcomes and inclusion
  - Improve the experience of families and professionals across the system.
3. **Valuing SEND aims to achieve this by:**
  - Developing a single, rounded picture of the needs of children and the support they need to succeed and prosper
  - Using this as the foundation for planning and commissioning of support, monitoring of progress and evaluation of support at a child and cohort level, and to enable earlier and more co-ordinated intervention.
4. People in Lincolnshire who trialled the approach felt it would help to promote more inclusive and outcomes-focussed decisions about support.
5. The Valuing SEND approach - including the new digital Valuing SEND tool - is being rolled out across Lincolnshire as part of a wider transformation programme which aims to improve outcomes and inclusion for children and young people.
6. A Valuing SEND Toolkit has been developed to support those using Valuing SEND – a directory of resources can be found in this guidance document and is accessed through the [Lincolnshire Local Offer](#).

# Introduction to Valuing SEND

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# Valuing SEND Vision

Valuing SEND was developed by three county councils in collaboration with IMPOWER in 2019.

The shared **ambition for Valuing SEND** is to:

- Improve children's **long-term outcomes and inclusion**
- **Improve the experience** of families and professionals across the system

**Valuing SEND** aims to achieve this by:

- **Developing a single, rounded picture of the needs of children** and the support they need to succeed and prosper within and outside of their education - from birth to adulthood (across early years, primary, secondary, special and post 16 education).
- **Using this as the foundation for planning and commissioning of support**, monitoring of progress and evaluation of support at a child and cohort level, and to enable earlier and more co-ordinated intervention.

“It is straightforward and captures all the information in a succinct, meaningful way. It’s enabled us to sit down with parents and say ‘look, we’ve tried this, but not this, so we’re not ready to apply for an EHC plan yet.’”

*Lincolnshire head teacher*

# Aims and Objectives

## Valuing SEND will:

Provide a single, holistic view of every child / young person's special educational needs from 0-25

Establish a common codification and rating framework to communicate the type and level of need and show changes

Support education and home settings to evaluate readiness to meet need

Allow progress to be monitored through changes in rating – at child-level, school-level and county level

Ensure that planning for independence in adulthood is prioritised alongside other educational support needs

## Enabling:

Clarity and consistency for professionals, parents and children / young people as they grow up and move between settings, anchored in needs

Earlier and more consistent identification of need, to prevent escalation and improve outcomes

Professionals and families are able to work better together to plan actions and support, keep the child or young person at the centre

Professionals and families can see the impact of action, and commissioning agencies can evidence success or understand where there are gaps

Preparation for adulthood is embedded in work with children and young people from an earlier age – shifting the focus from provision to independence

# Valuing SEND is on a new digital platform

- The Valuing SEND tool has migrated to a new user-friendly digital platform which previously functioned in Microsoft Excel. The digital tool also has printable capability.
- A series of Valuing SEND training resources have been developed to support those completing the Valuing SEND digital tool for children and young people additional needs, and include:

Guidance on  
accessing the  
Valuing SEND  
Online

Step-by-step  
guide to  
completing the  
Valuing SEND  
Digital Tool

Instructional  
videos on  
completing the  
Valuing SEND  
Digital Tool

These resources can be found on the [Lincolnshire SEND Local Offer](#).



# The Valuing SEND Tool at a glance

There are five sequential components to completing a Valuing SEND tool for a child or young person with additional needs using the new digital platform:



# The Valuing SEND Tool at a glance

There are two versions of the tool available- one for children aged under 5, and another for children aged 5-25. Both tools include the following tabs:

Introduction

Sets out the tool's aims and how to use it.

Summary

Pulls through key elements from the following sheets to provide an overview. Most text is pre-populated, but this is where you enter the child/ young person's details.

Comms & Interaction needs

Cognition & Learning needs

SEMH needs

Physical or Sensory needs

Independence needs

The needs sheets ask you to rate the child/ young person's level of need using a set of needs descriptors.

Setting readiness

Evaluate your setting's readiness to meet this child/ young person's level of need using support prompts.

Home confidence rating

A parent, carer or family representative evaluates their confidence in meeting the child/young person's level of need using support prompts

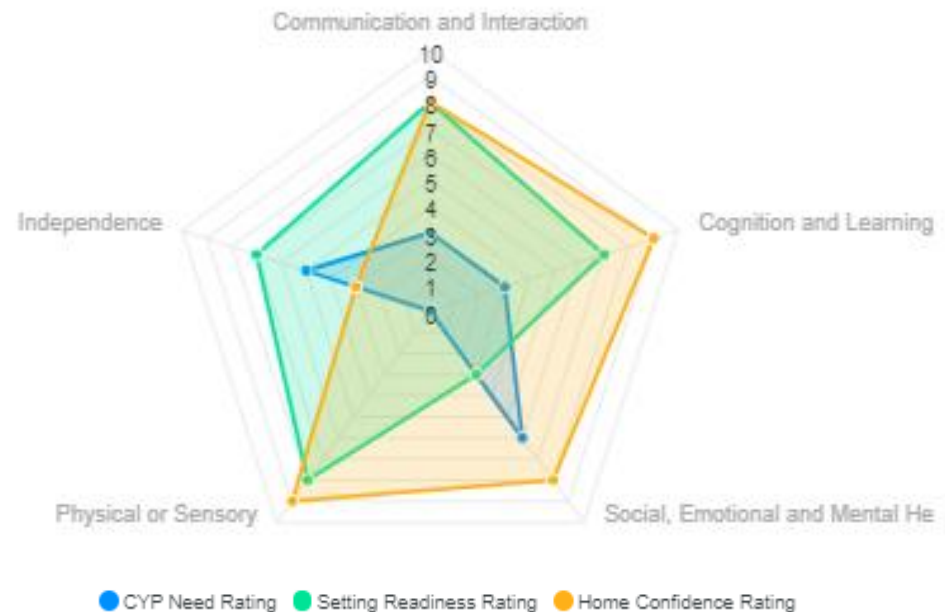
Support planning

Use support prompts as a starting point to plan support around needs to work towards identified outcomes.

# The Valuing SEND Tool at a glance

The tool produces an 'at a glance' ratings chart which maps:

- A **child or young person's needs** across five key domains – cognition and learning, communication and interaction, sensory and physical, social emotional and mental health and independence
- The **readiness of the educational setting** to meet needs across the five domains
- The **confidence of the home environment** to meet needs across the five domains



# Valuing SEND is a Whole School Approach

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# Whole school responsibility for SEND (Code of Practice 2015)

The Code of Practice outlines the responsibilities that schools must follow to best support children and young people:

'Teachers are responsible and accountable for the progress and development of the pupils in their class, including where pupils access support from teaching assistants or specialist staff.

High quality teaching, differentiated for individual pupils, is the first step in responding to pupils who have or may have SEN.

Additional intervention and support cannot compensate for a lack of good quality teaching.

Schools should regularly and carefully review the quality of teaching for all pupils, including those at risk of underachievement.

This includes reviewing and, where necessary, improving, teachers' understanding of strategies to identify and support vulnerable pupils and their knowledge of the SEN most frequently encountered.'

# How Valuing SEND is making a difference in schools



The unique approach of Valuing SEND enables schools to analyse the match between their whole school provision and children's needs and to identify and address any gaps.



It is an opportunity to reset the range of interventions in settings and schools and to ensure a common language and whole school approach is in place.



The approach will underpin transition across phases and between mainstream and specialist placements.

# What does success look like for Valuing SEND

Schools and settings are using Valuing SEND to plan their provision, and both map and meet the needs of all their SEND pupils.

Whole setting tool - understood and used by all professionals

Establishes common language when describing levels of need across all areas

Promotes collaboration between staff

Supports the child throughout the transition process

Identifies behaviour associated with learning needs

Active tracking and monitoring from SEND support to EHCPs/ARs

Becomes familiar to parents and assists discussions

Identifies gaps and areas for further development and training

Informs skills required when recruiting staff

Provides feedback on provision and celebrates best practice

Demonstrates SEND provision for Governors, SEN Annual Report

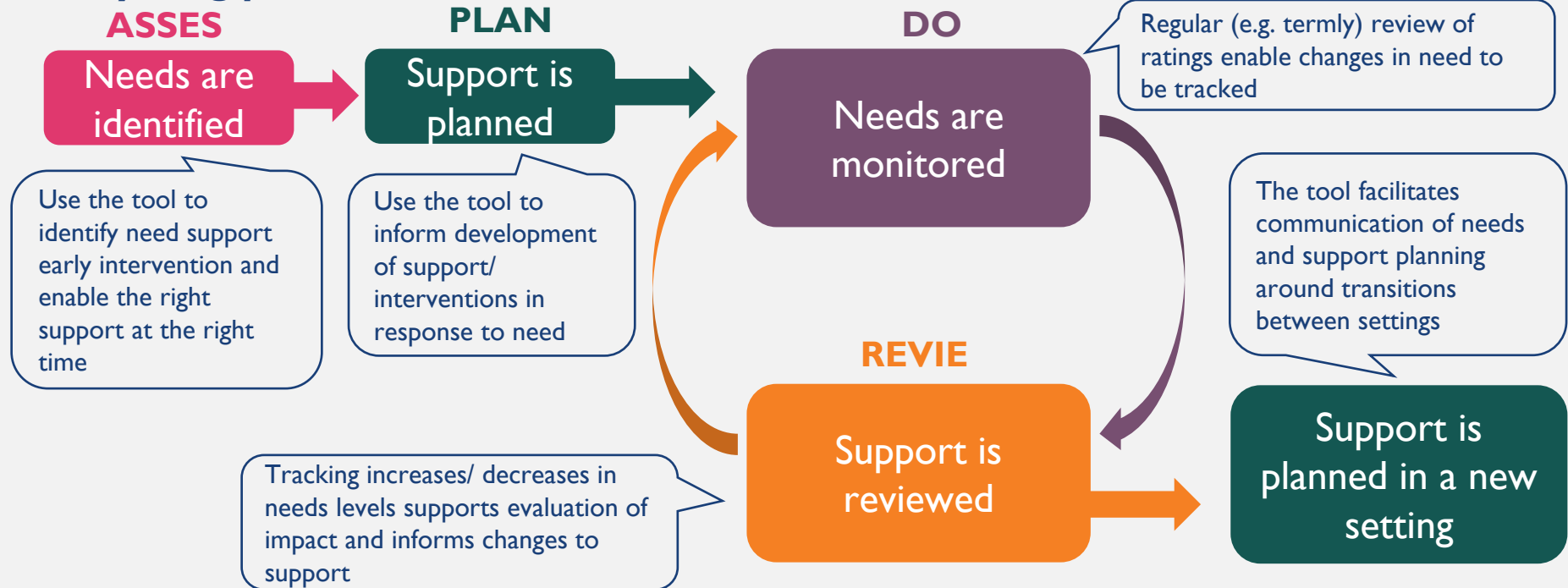
Clarifies requests for support and referrals to specialist services

**Supports the strategic and practical role of the SENDCO**

# How and when to use Valuing SEND

“Valuing SEND is simple and strategic. Its scale and statements provide information without jargon and this is crucial for getting parents on board. It really brings clarity to the graduated approach for staff and parents. I’ve only been using it since the pandemic and it’s still been brilliant, when we are able to be face to face with families I imagine the benefits will be even better still.” **Linconshire SENDco**

## Child/ young person level





# Using Valuing SEND at setting level



- Completion of the Valuing SEND tool for all children/ young people with additional needs will provide a much richer picture of the types of needs present – and therefore of the types of support required.
- Settings should regularly (at least annually) review the needs profiles across the whole setting, within year groups and within classes, to understand the complexity of needs mixes as well as the prevalence of different needs types.
- This information should be used to inform how the setting is planning staff development for the coming year as well as the types of interventions commissioned and where investment is directed.

# Benefits and Feedback

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# Some of the benefits

- Promotes collaboration between staff, establishing common language when describing levels of need across all areas
- Supports the strategic role of the SENDCo
- Active tracking and monitoring of progress during SEN Support and from EHCPs to ARs
- Supports the work of the SENDCo when carrying out learning walks and observations and training
- Supports the child throughout the transition process
- Identifies behaviour associated with learning needs
- Becomes familiar to parents and assists discussions with professionals
- Identifies gaps and areas for further development and training, informing training needs.
- Provides active feedback on provision and opportunity to celebrate best practice
- Demonstrates setting SEND provision for Governors, SEN Annual Report, website etc.
- Clarifies requests to Ask SALL and referrals to specialist services
- Informs skills required when recruiting staff



# Feedback from schools and settings

“[We are] going to do all tracking from the VSEND tool in future. We’re finding it hard to track the SEND children on Tapestry even though using the SEND statements. Will do once a term to see if improved in any area.”

**Early Years SENDco**

“[VSEND has] been a real success at all SEND Reviews so far this term. Makes level of need and provision clear. Great guidance scaffold for staff to plan appropriate support. Gives parents a clear overview of need and why we put certain provision in place. A great tool to justify why or why not an EHC would be appropriate.”

**Mainstream school head teacher**

”[It] reminds you to use visual prompts, useful guidance, reinforces for the other members of staff in the team.”

**Early years SENDco**

“Really good tool and have asked four other members of staff to access the training.”

**Early years SENDco**

“I actually did [a Valuing SEND tool] for the first time last week as a professional, with the school and the parents and we all found the descriptors quite helpful under each of the 5 sections and particularly the visual diagram once completed. We then followed this with a call to askSAL where they signposted one extra service to us that we hadn't incorporated which was also useful. So first experience was a positive one!”

**Parent Carer Forum ‘week of SEND’ participant**

“I like the graph as its easy for everyone to see and understand. Parental part and next steps is good.”

**Early years SENDco**

“I have completed the forms for each child with an EHCP I now need to meet with the individual teachers to share the information and to check they agree with my scaling.”

**Mainstream SENDco**

# Further information and support

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# Further Information and support

Should you require any further assistance, please contact us at:

## **SEND Advice Line for Lincolnshire (Ask SALL)**



Email - [asksall@lincolnshire.gov.uk](mailto:asksall@lincolnshire.gov.uk)



Call - 01522 553199

# Appendix I – Directory for the Valuing SEND Toolkit

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# Directory for the Valuing SEND Toolkit

The Valuing SEND Toolkit is a suite of training materials to support the use of Valuing SEND. Some resources are intended for universal use (i.e. settings, families, champions or wider services), while others are tailored to specific audiences and purposes:

## Universal

## CYP & Families

## Schools/Settings

## Champions

Instructional videos on completing the Digital Valuing SEND Tool

Step-by-step guide to completing the Digital Valuing SEND Tool

Parent/Carer Guidance on Home Confidence

Guidance for Whole School/Settings on Valuing SEND

Training materials for SENDCOs to deliver in schools

Guidance for Valuing SEND Champions

Valuing SEND Summary Guidance Pack

Guide on accessing Valuing SEND Online

Quick Read High Needs Strategy

Valuing SEND summary for school governors

Graduated Approach Briefing on Valuing SEND Video

'Train the Trainer' Materials

Guidance on Strengths Based Conversation and Reflective Huddles

High Needs Strategy and Inclusion Toolkit

Quick Read Parent/Carer Transitions Protocol

Valuing SEND checklist for headteachers and senior managers

Valuing SEND Champions Training Video

List of Valuing SEND champions (as of Nov 21)

Many of these resources will be available on the [Lincolnshire SEND Local Offer](#).



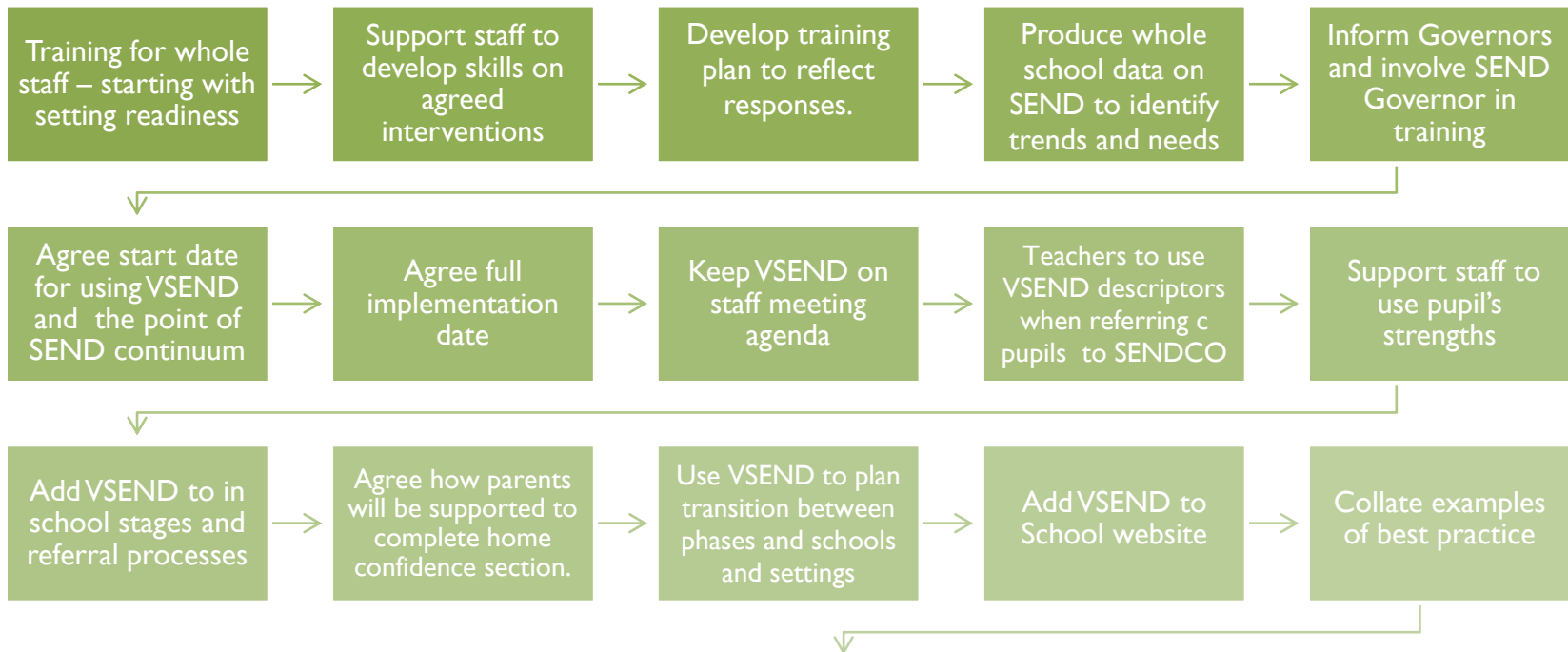
# Appendix 2 – Example implementation plan

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# Valuing SEND | Implementation Plan

Lincolnshire is committed to the wider rollout of the Valuing SEND approach to improve outcomes for children and young people with SEND across the county. Here is an example plan to support implementation in your school or setting:



SENDCO to include Valuing SEND summary and Ratings chart(s) when:

Discussing children and young people with Parents

Referring to: Specialist Services, Early Help, Ask SALL, LA for Statutory Assessment

Monitoring EHCPs and carrying out Annual Reviews