

# Introduction to Valuing SEND

Valuing SEND Toolkit:  
November 2021

**IMPOWER**

**Lincolnshire**  
COUNTY COUNCIL   
*Working for a better future*

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# Purpose of Guidance

- This is universal guidance aimed at **anyone** wishing to develop their foundational knowledge of Valuing SEND.
- The aim of this guidance is to provide introductory and summary guidance on Valuing SEND to support the wider implementation of the 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



A Valuing SEND Toolkit has been developed providing more in-depth on Valuing SEND including a step-by-step guide on completing the digital tool which 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](#).

# Background and Context

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# A National Need for Change

Since 2014 reforms, there is wide agreement from professionals, OFSTED, Ombudsman, Government Select Committees, LAs and parents that provision for SEND in schools and settings can vary widely and does not reflect a whole school approach.

“There is too much of a tension between the child’s needs and the provision available”.  
- **‘Not Going to Plan’ Select Committee report 2019**

“The variation in support experienced by pupils, even when they had a similar identified need, suggests that the SEND system relies on particular individuals performing important roles well and working together effectively. This means that 2 pupils with similar needs, attending different schools, can have very different experiences. Absolute uniformity is unlikely when individual schools have autonomy to make provision for their pupils. However, despite individuals working hard and with care, significant variability in provision is not an indicator of a system working effectively for children with SEND.”

- **Research and analysis, supporting SEND OFSTED 2021**

# National SEND Review

## Further delays spark fears over much-anticipated SEND Review

Amid a third delay of the government review of special educational needs and disability provision, experts call on policymakers to use the time to ensure plans improve co-ordination of support across the children's system.



“All of the sector, from parents and young people through to the statutory agencies which support them, want to see a system that delivers better outcomes and sustainability but the solutions are not straightforward”.

**Dame Christine Lenehan, Director of the Council for Disabled Children**




“While the sector is waiting on the publication of the review, it should focus on what it can currently change and influence”.

**Leo Jones, director of public services consultancy IMPOWER**

# Lincolnshire's High Needs Strategy


- Valuing SEND forms a key part of the High Needs Strategy for Lincolnshire, strengthening the graduated approach.
- It also works alongside and supports the Inclusion Toolkit.



**High Needs Strategy for Lincolnshire**  
Quick Read Version

Lincolnshire COUNTY COUNCIL  
Working for a better future

Co-produced in partnership with Lincolnshire Parent Carer Forum



We are providing a set of tools to help settings support children and young people with SEND. **Valuing SEND** and the **Inclusion Toolkit** make it easier for teachers in Lincolnshire to understand the needs of children and young people with SEND and to plan the right support at the right time.

**Valuing SEND in settings**

The tool includes helpful prompts and questions in three different sections:

- ✓ Understanding the child or young person's needs
- ✓ Understanding how well the setting can support the child or young person's needs
- ✓ Understanding how confident the family feels about supporting the child or young person's needs at home

The first two sections of the tool are completed by teachers in the school, and the 'home confidence' section should be completed in partnership with the family.

**There are lots of good reasons for using the tool:**






It helps families and settings to talk about a child or young person with SEND and how they can be supported	It helps settings look at different ways to help and support a child or young person with SEND	The tool can help to identify any support families may need at home	It helps explore any differences between a child or young person's needs at home and at the setting
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**Valuing SEND for families**

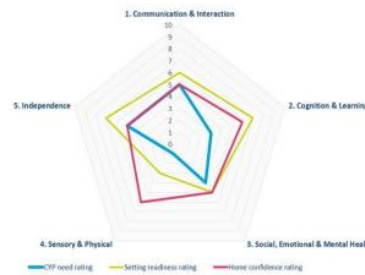
Working with settings, a child or young person's family will be asked to score their confidence between 0 (low confidence) and 10 (very confident to support the child or young person's needs).

There is no right or wrong answer, it is based solely on how confident a family feels.

It is important that the family feel they can be honest, as this can help teachers learn even more about a child or young person's needs and how they might best be supported. A family will be asked about their confidence in meeting the needs of their child or young person in the following areas:

 Communication and Interaction	 Cognition and Learning	 Social, Emotional or Mental Health	 Communication and Interaction	 Independence
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When completed, Valuing SEND provides a radar chart which can be used to discuss and plan the support needed for an individual child or young person.



The **blue line** shows the child or young person's level of need.

The **green line** shows the setting's readiness to meet the child or young person's needs across the 5 areas.

The **pink line** shows how confident a parent or carer feels in supporting their child outside of school and helps identify other support that may be of assistance.



We have designed an 'Inclusion Toolkit' to help setting in this planning of support for children and young people with SEND. The tool will show the range of help and support available in each of the Valuing SEND areas and will be full of strategies and resources to support SEND teaching and learning.

We will make the Lincolnshire Inclusion Toolkit available to all teachers in Lincolnshire following a pilot with some target settings.

**You will find the High Needs Strategy and Inclusion Toolkit on the [Lincolnshire SEND Local Offer](#).**



# Valuing SEND Journey so far

Valuing SEND was developed by IMPOWER alongside three local authorities in 2019 **in response to challenges** in the SEND system.



Valuing SEND was introduced in Lincolnshire in September 2020 **to improve children's long-term outcomes.**



Lincolnshire SENDCOs **triated** the approach **and contributed to its development.**



Increasingly, schools and settings are using Valuing SEND and report that the radar summary of needs **made forward planning more efficient.** One setting described Valuing SEND as **“their one stop shop for SEND”.**

- ✓ Valuing SEND provides a common language for SEND across services
- ✓ Valuing SEND has become an integral part of annual reviews
- ✓ Valuing SEND has become an integral part of Lincolnshire transitions protocol, supporting children to transition from special school to mainstream where they demonstrate a needs profile that might be suitable
- ✓ School and setting feedback is consistently strong

# What is Valuing SEND?

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# Vision for Valuing SEND

## 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

# Valuing SEND 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 a Whole School Approach

## Staff use Valuing SEND when:

- Greater access to curriculum and school life is needed
- Graduated response is required
- EHCP is in place
- Child or young person is in transition between phases and moving into Adulthood
- Interventions are being reviewed at SEN Support or in EHCP implementation (including Annual Reviews)
- Child or young person is at risk of exclusion

## In these cases, Valuing SEND can:

- ✓ Improve quality of conversation around need
- ✓ Inform levels of support and changes to interventions
- ✓ Guide discussions with child and young person
- ✓ Demonstrate progress to child and young person
- ✓ Enable parent and professionals to discuss child and young person's needs and progress
- ✓ Support requests for advice from Ask SALL and specialist services
- ✓ Inform support through observations, learning walks and moderation activities

# Feedback on using Valuing SEND

“We have used VSEND extensively – it has helped us to identify emerging needs.”- SENDco



“It gives us a very accurate view about where a child is (what their needs are) and what we are providing.” - SENDco



“The use of VSEND helped build our School Development Plan and to see where there were holes”  
-Headteacher attending a CHIPS meeting



'The support prompt section of the VSEND tool was an absolute revolution to me, I knew we could use this really well for our assess, plan, do review at our setting' - SENDco



# The Valuing SEND Tool at a glance

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# Valuing SEND has gone digital

- 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 detailed 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  
Valuing SEND  
Online

Step-by-Step  
Guidance on  
completing the  
Valuing SEND  
Tool

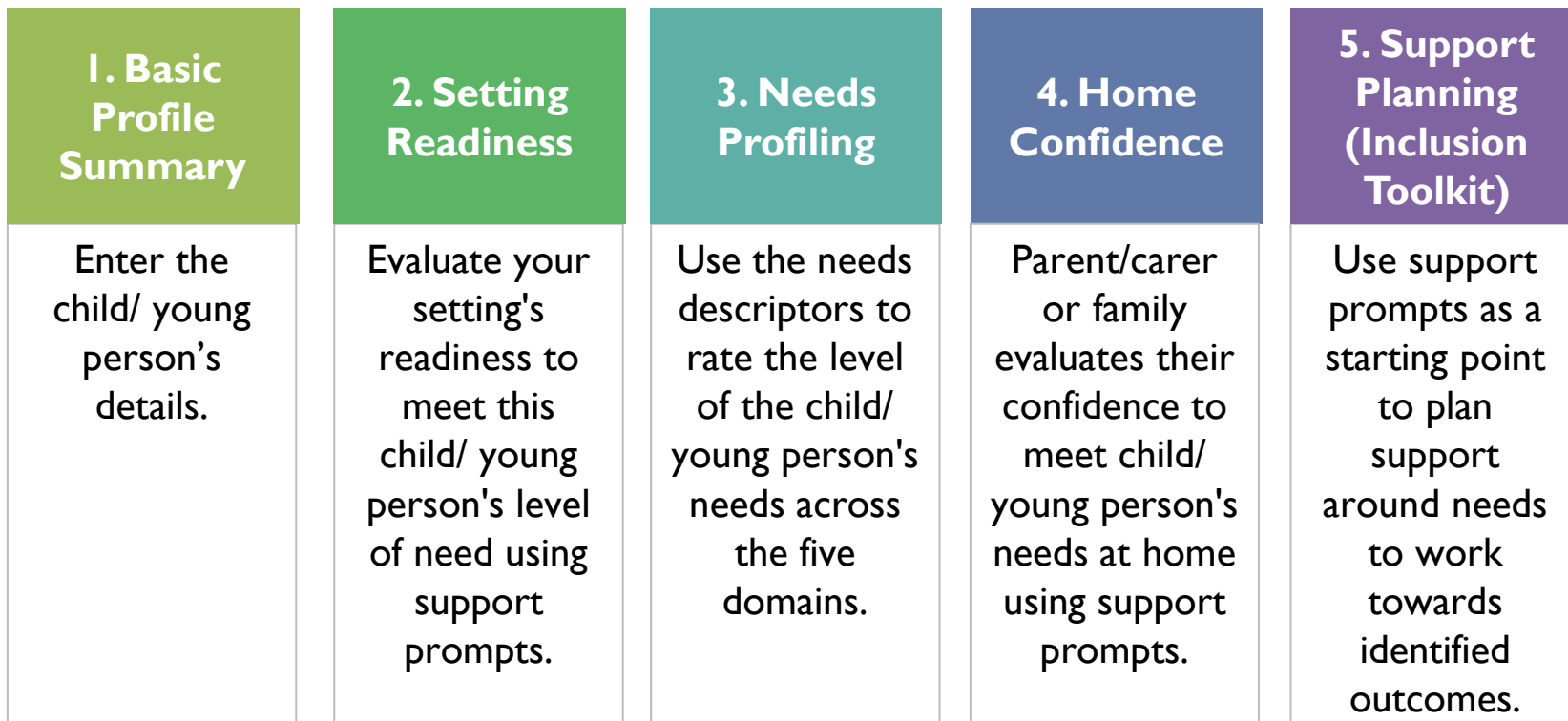
Instructional videos  
on completing the  
Valuing SEND  
Digital Tool

**These resources, along with the full Valuing SEND toolkit, can be found on the [Lincolnshire SEND Local Offer](#).**



# Valuing SEND Tool at a glance

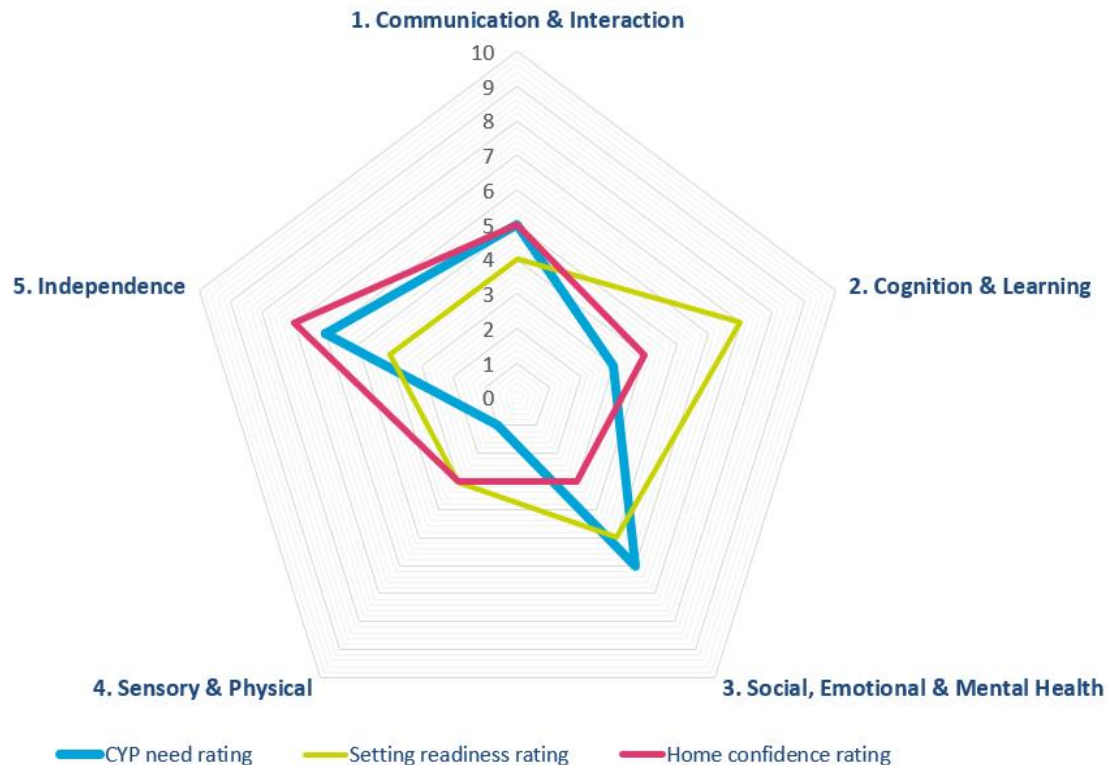
There are five sequential components to completing a Valuing SEND tool for a child or young person with additional needs using the new digital platform:



# Valuing SEND Ratings Chart

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

- The **readiness of the educational setting** to meet needs across the five domains
- 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 **confidence of the home environment** to meet needs across the five domains



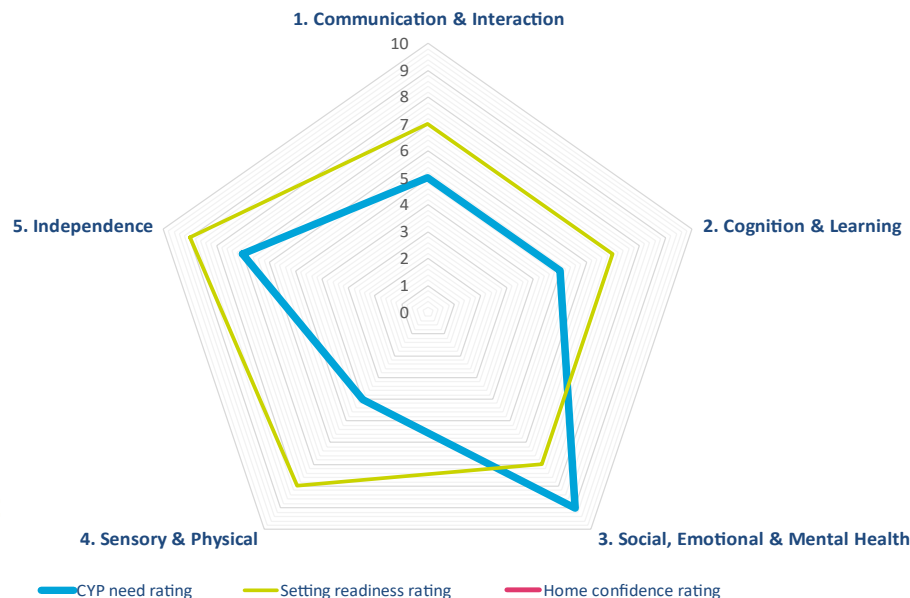
The ratings chart shows the 'gaps' between the child's level of need and the setting and/or home's readiness and confidence to meet at this point in time.

# Improving Outcomes through Valuing SEND



Tom has a diagnosis of ADHD. He displays highly sexualised language and behaviour. Tom's outbursts include swearing and inappropriate touching of peers. Mother reports similar behaviour at home.

**The SENDCo had significant concerns that Tom is at risk of permanent exclusion.**



**Valuing SEND clearly demonstrates that Tom's needs are being met largely by interventions in his mainstream school**

## **Actions taken:**

- Tom's sexualised behaviour to be further assessed through re referral to CAMHS
- Clarity of roles and responsibilities between services
- Parents to be supported re on line safety at home
- Review of impact of ADHD medication on his weight and behaviour
- Referral to school nursing re weight management
- The amended EHCP to focus on Tom's SEMH needs through a co-ordinated response from specialist services in school and at home

# Using Valuing SEND to support at the individual and strategic level

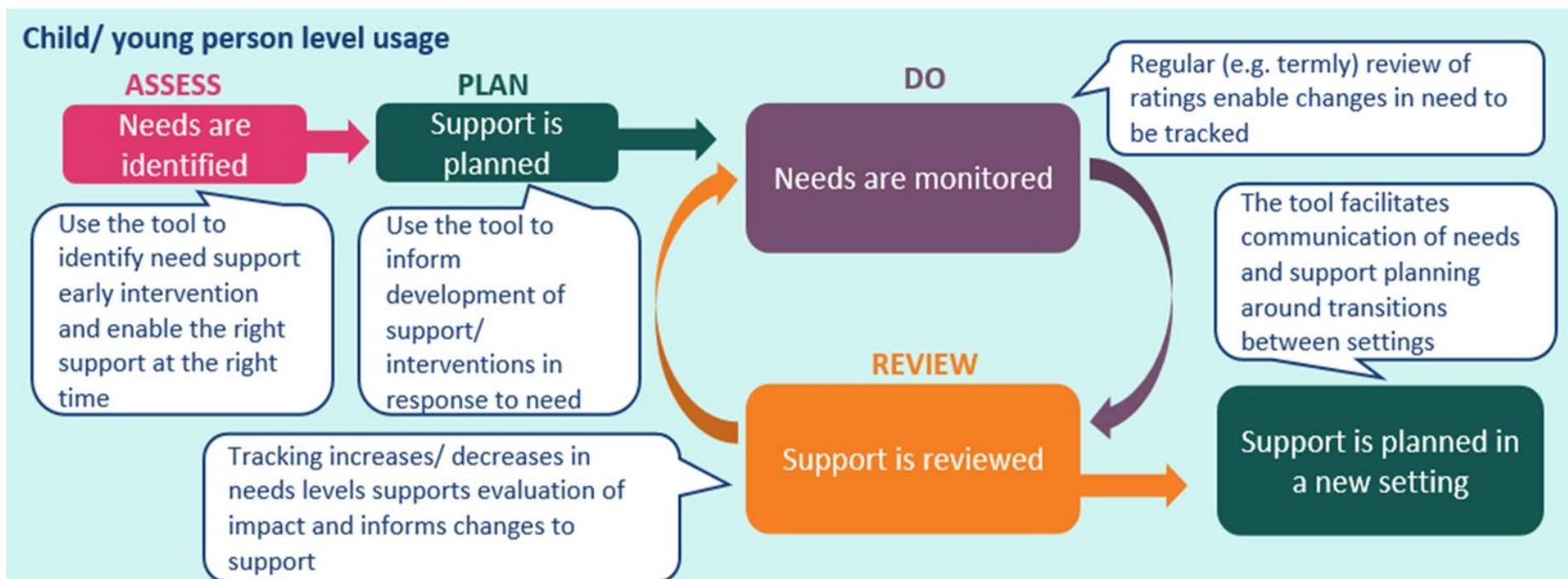
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# Valuing SEND across the child of young person's journey

The tool has been designed for use for **any child/ young person with additional needs**, from birth through to age 25. Whether **in a mainstream or specialist setting** and whether the child/ young person has an Education, Health and Care plan or not.

Consistent use of the Valuing SEND tool will **track how needs change over time**, both for the individual child/ young person, and for the setting, locality or local authority as a whole.



# For Setting Level Insight



- 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 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.

# For Locality or Local Authority Level Insight

When Valuing SEND is being used on a large scale, by all schools and settings within a locality, it can be used for strategic commissioning.

## **Widespread use of Valuing SEND can:**

- Map needs across a locality or county
- Provide evidence for commissioning services to localities based on an accurate picture of the needs that exist in that geographic area
- Feed into performance data
- Identify future peaks in demand e.g. requests for statutory assessment
- Identify best practice and facilitate school-to-school support



# 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](#).



# Further Information

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