**Graduated Approach Briefings February 2022**

**Updates including answers to V SEND FAQs**

EHC Request Forms

The new EHC request forms can be found here on the Local Offer: [EHC request forms – Lincolnshire County Council](https://www.lincolnshire.gov.uk/downloads/download/216/ehc-request-forms) Please note that the Early Years’ version has been updated since the Briefings to include the updated Areas of Learning.

Attendance at future Graduated Approach Briefings

Please remember to sign up to attend the April and June briefings via the online booking system here: [Graduated approach briefings – Professional resources (lincolnshire.gov.uk)](https://professionals.lincolnshire.gov.uk/homepage/54/graduated-approach-briefings)

The dates for next academic year will be available in July in the same way to enable you to book places for the full year.

Information about the Graduated Approach Briefings is also sent to School News in case we miss anybody so it’s worth checking the weekly email bulletins that come out on a Friday.  If you haven’t signed up to School News yet, it’s well worth doing so.  Email [SchoolNews@lincolnshire.gov.uk](mailto:SchoolNews@lincolnshire.gov.uk)  to ask to be added to the circulation list.

V SEND Online FAQs from all localities

* **Does the online VSEND tool has a review tab the same as the Excel version and is it therefore able to track progress over time?**  On the Excel version, this is called the Ratings Log (Final tab).  Apparently in the online tool, that function is still available, but it’s moved to the reporting section.  If you click through to ‘reports’, this defaults to reports for individual children. You then need to select the child you want to track changes for and then click ‘generate’:  it will show ratings over time, highlighting where needs and readiness have increased or decreased.  Impower have said that they should probably link to it from the child’s main page so that it is obvious, so they have added it to their list of developments to action.
* **How many people in a setting can have access to the online VSEND?** Settings can have as many Assessors as they want but we have asked that they limit the number of Administrators to max 5 for a large school. This is because admin have higher levels of security including the ability to change or delete users so we want to limit the chance of errors. This means that your individual teachers can all take responsibility for inputting a child’s levels once one of the administrators have registered that child on the system [Video 1 that we saw at the Briefings and available here:  [Universal – Professional resources (lincolnshire.gov.uk)](https://professionals.lincolnshire.gov.uk/downloads/download/199/universal) ]
* **Does the setting readiness section pull through to every child, so that you only have to complete it once? And is the system pulling pupil data from your school system?** Yes: the setting readiness does pull through to every child once you have completed it. The system is only able to pull data through from what your administrator inputs in the registration process for each child (See Video 1). It does not link to your data systems.
* **Are we able to set up profiles without UPNs? We don’t have them in independent schools.** The mandatory UPN requirement has now been removed from the form.
* **For the school readiness: which do you select if you have early years (nursery and reception) and 5-25 year olds?** You would need to use the 0-5 tool for the early years and then use the 5-25 tool for the school age children so you have the correct tool and appropriate setting readiness. The school readiness is set at organisation level so there will be one set of scores for the school which will prepopulate to the assessment. This can be changed manually if 0-5 and 5-25 are scored differently
* **Is there a privacy policy for the VSEND online tool? I am looking at GDPR.** Each setting is a controller for their own data and is therefore responsible for ensuring their own privacy policy reflects the data processing they undertake for this activity. A setting will also decide how best to communicate it. This is not a new purpose so it should already be captured within a setting’s privacy policy (the same data has been captured manually previously).  The fact it is going from manual to VSEND is almost irrelevant. Remember : you, as a setting, are not sharing any personal data with LCC or Impower.
* **Will an EHCP not be considered without the SEND tool?** The Local Authority are strongly recommending that you use the V SEND because we believe it is a very useful tool. However, we cannot insist on you using it and EHC Needs Assessment requests all have to be considered as part of our statutory duties regardless of whether a V SEND has been completed or not. Nevertheless, if the Panel do not consider that enough evidence has been submitted to warrant an EHC Needs Assessment, part of the feedback you receive will be for you to consider using the V SEND tool to identify needs and track provision and progress as part of your Assess Plan Do Review processes.
* **Will there be a point at which as a County, we are all directed to roll this out? Will it remain up to us?** We are strongly encouraging settings to use the tool because we feel it is a good tool. However, there are no plans to direct you to use it.
* **Are we expected to transfer our current excel VSEND pupils onto the online version?** There is no expectation for you to use the online tool. However, it has been designed to make things easier for you. You may wish to consider moving pupils onto the online version at their review but, equally, you may decide as a setting to only start using the online version for any new pupils.
* **I work in an Infant school (with a Nursery). If I start a VSEND in Early Years, will the online version allow me to move onto the next ‘age range' version? Or will I need to start a new VSEND when the child reaches the age of 5?** The age references are a guide and its important to use the most appropriate tool for the child’s individual stage of development. When you feel it is appropriate to use the 5-25 assessment you will need to complete a new assessment as the descriptors are different.
* **Can you change setting readiness at a later date if things change?** Yes: it would be a good idea to review setting readiness on a regular basis anyway but it can be changed at any point. As many SENCos will use the setting readiness to determine CPD opportunities, it would generally be a natural consequence for setting readiness to change as a result of any CPD undertaken.
* **What is the advantage of the online tool versus the excel version?** The online version allows other class teachers/staff members to complete the tool and add their own views and is saved on file, you can print individual sections as needed and it is quicker to fill in. The online version also enables the user to track progress through the reporting functionality.
* **How often would you review the VSEND tool for a child?** We would recommend that you review at least termly but more frequently if there are significant needs/worries that you would like to track.
* **Should we just be using this told for the most complex cases?** The tool can be used for any pupil to explore holistic view of their needs that you feel would be helpful to you.
* **If the child's presentation is not reflected by the descriptors because the descriptors don't represent the child's presentation, where can we share this information? Otherwise it looks like they don't have a difficulty in that area.** You would write this into the description box and then select the scoring that is most appropriate.
* **If we update, does it save over the existing one?** You will be able to see everything that you have previously saved when you update. VSEND saves all saved versions, so you have the full history. When you complete an assessment and tick the checkbox ‘Mark as completed’ the system creates a checkpoint in the history so you can easily find and review the completed assessments.
* **It looks really good. Do we move all our ILPs over to the V SEND Tool and how much of this is done by class teacher and how much by SENDCo?** That depends on you as a setting. You may wish to use the V SEND tool in place of IEPs or ILPs. If that is the case, take a look at the 3 different Using the V SEND: SENCo perspective videos and the SENCo Perspective Q&A video for ideas and support. If you do go down this route, you may find that you, as a SENCo, need to put in quite a bit of support initially but then it would be hoped that class teachers would be able to run with it and only come to you when they need guidance. Don’t forget that every teacher is a teacher of SEND and you are a SEND Coordinator; not the person who does everything to do with SEND!
* **The email address needed to register is not working**. What should I do? Please use the following address for all contacts for VSEND : [VSENDOnlineReg@lincolnshire.gov.uk](mailto:VSENDOnlineReg@lincolnshire.gov.uk) if there are any problems with this then Email: [Carrie.Forrester@lincolnshire.gov.uk](mailto:Carrie.Forrester@lincolnshire.gov.uk)
* **Where can I find the V Send Parental leaflet?** [**parent-and-carer-guidance-on-home-confidence (lincolnshire.gov.uk)**](https://professionals.lincolnshire.gov.uk/downloads/file/2053/parent-and-carer-guidance-on-home-confidence)
* **Printing was a nightmare in the Excel version. Is the online tool any better?** The online version allows you to export and print both the summary and the support plan to share with families and other agencies/professionals**.**
* **There is no section for the voice of the child. Can this be added, please? Also, is there any scope for getting some more free text room somewhere on the V-SEND so that settings can add in more information and get rid of the need for IEPs so they are only completing one document?** This suggestion has been passed to the Impower team. As the tool is used by other Local Authorities, the decision will be in the hands of Impower to determine whether all Local Authorities will want this. Impower are looking at setting up a user group to review and propose ideas for further development – anyone interested in joining this group please email: [Carrie.Forrester@lincolnshire.gov.uk](mailto:Carrie.Forrester@lincolnshire.gov.uk)
* **I am having a problem with working across two settings to get two separate accounts for the online VSEND tool.** For those of you who work across multiple settings, we are unable to use the same email address for more than one setting.  This is being reviewed by IMPOWER to find a workaround pending further development work around hierarchies. Some SENDCo have registered under an umbrella name / federation which allows assessors and administers for each school to see children from all schools under the umbrella. This will mean that your setting readiness scores will show as the same for all schools/ settings under the umbrella.  School readiness can be changed for each assessment manually, but the scores prepopulated will be the same.  The preferred solution is to create separate emails accounts for each school. If you are still having difficulties contact Carrie Forrester to discuss.
* **Can I use a generic email address (such as info@XXXX or setting name@XXX to register to use the online V SEND tool?** As V SEND Online uses your email as your unique identifier, this needs to be unique to the user.  Emails which can be accessed by more than one user do not meet data security requirements as the website holds child sensitive data nor do they enable a clear audit trail. Head teacher@ or manager@is acceptable as the headteacher/manager can easily be identified but the more generic emails which allow multiple users are not acceptable as part of our Information Governance requirements. If anyone has used a generic email but does have access to an alternative, please contact Carrie Forrester so we can resolve.
* **Do all staff have to access via password (sent to phone)?**

As VSEND is web- based it can only be accessed via two factor authentication to ensure security of the data it holds. The two factors are your log on email and a text message code sent to your mobile phone.

* **Is there a way to set up with Common Transfer Files (CTF) rather than individually?**

Data files can be uploaded successfully via Comma-separated Values (CSV) files. For further information, please contact [Carrie.Forrester@lincolnshire.gov.uk](mailto:Carrie.Forrester@lincolnshire.gov.uk)