



SENSS

Communication and Interaction Support Service Specialist Advisory Support for Schools Information for Parents

September 2019

From September 2019 the SENSS Communication and Interaction (C&I) Support Service will be changing the way in which we work to provide advice, training and specialist support to schools.

We will be adopting an approach which has been developed by SENSS advisory staff in discussion with school leaders and SENCOs. This is designed to ensure that specialist C&I Support Service advice is as effective as possible in empowering school staff to meet the needs of your child with confidence and in a timely way.

There are many skilled staff in mainstream schools who provide excellent support, differentiating teaching approaches in highly creative ways for children with SEN. As a service, we are ambitious about inclusion and we believe there is more that we can do to ensure that all schools become inclusive, welcoming and comfortable places in which children with C&I Needs can learn and flourish.

Our service has limited capacity, and in response to ever increasing demand, we have taken some bold decisions to ensure that our work continues to make a real difference. We want to work with schools to ensure that all staff have a good understanding of children with Autism and C&I needs, so that they enjoy school, make good progress and are included in the school community.

We know that some children with these needs may require a higher level of specialist input and we will still be available to provide this to schools. We also believe that most children with Autism do well in school if their teachers and support staff have a good understanding of how these needs impact on their learning and inclusion. Our vision is to give all school staff this understanding and make our schools places in which all children, whatever their different needs, can learn happily.

This leaflet tells you about services we will be offering going forward.

SENSS Ambitious about Inclusion

The Graduated Approach – What SENSS Offers

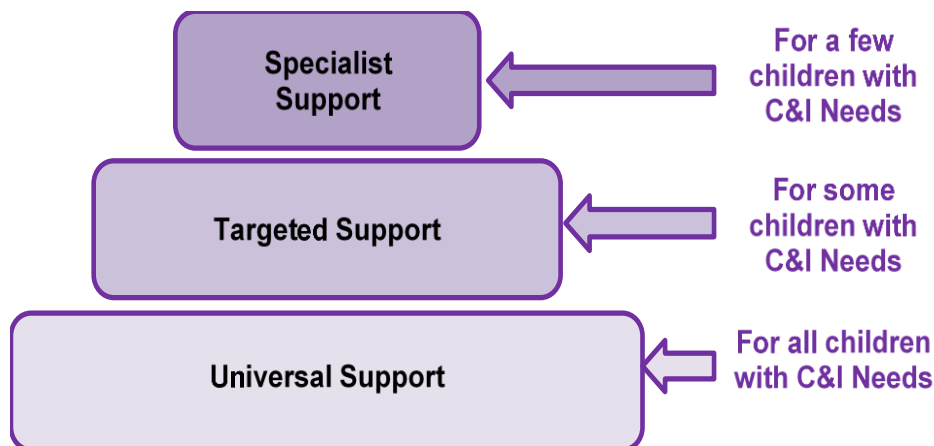
Universal Support	The focus at this level is on empowering school staff to adopt universal best practice for all children
<p>At this level, SENSS offers training, support and advice on effective strategies that will work across the whole school. We help with adapting the school environment to meet sensory needs, with adapting teaching to be more suited to the learning style of children with Autism, with putting consistent visual supports in place across the whole school, and with how to measure progress for children with Autism.</p> <p>All children will benefit from these approaches, but we do not work with individual children, at this level so there is no need for a referral to our service. The input is vital, however to ensure that schools make the adjustments that are needed to allow children with C&I needs to be fully included.</p>	
Targeted Support	The focus at this level is on using targeted support and advice to address identified areas of need.
<p>Children at this level are on the school SEN register and may or may not have an Education, Health and Care Plan. They typically need more input, including some specifically targeted support. Both Advisory Teachers and SENSS Advisory Support Workers may be involved, offering further advice and further training for schools including bespoke, training planned to address the needs of one or more students, informal 'on the job training' and modelling strategies for key staff.</p> <p>We will support the school to run groups to help children overcome their difficulties and SENSS staff may also attend meetings such as Annual Reviews. These children will be referred individually to the service after a conversation with the Advisory Teacher and parental consent is required.</p>	
Specialist Support	The focus here is on the individual student, advice and interventions tailored to address individual need.
<p>A higher level of individualised support is needed, the child may or may not have an EHCP, but their C&I needs are presenting significant barriers to learning and inclusion. The SAT will visit the child for observations, assessment and advice, a rolling advisory report will be provided for the school and shared with parents. At this level we can also work one to one with children on issues such as understanding their diagnosis, personalised transition support or support with emotional regulation.</p> <p>Typically, young people may be offered termly visits, but this will vary according to need. Advisory teachers will respond flexibly to the needs of your child at any given time.</p>	



SENSS Core Principles of Advisory Work in Schools

- **High aspirations for the inclusion of children with C&I needs:** We want children with C&I needs to do well and enjoy success in their local school alongside their friends.
- **Empowerment of the mainstream workforce:** We want all professionals working in schools to be confident, skilled and understanding in how they support children with C&I needs.
- **Getting in early to support teachers:** We want to make schools aware of the small changes they can make to help your child right from the beginning of their school journey.
- **Promoting school wide inclusive practice:** We want the whole school to be a communication rich and autism friendly place
- **Making the most of the time spent in schools:** We want SENSS specialist staff to work closely with teachers and support staff in schools and spend a bit less time writing reports.
- **A consistent but flexible service:** We are determined to offer a consistently high standard of service but also to be flexible, responding to the different ways in which different schools are improving their practice. One size does not fit all!

This is what the Graduated Approach looks like:



So what does this mean for you?

It could be that your child has already been referred to the SENSS C&I Support Service. If that is the case, we are already aware of their needs and will ensure that they continue to get support at the appropriate level in our new approach.

Over the coming months SENSS Specialist Advisory Teachers will be looking carefully at the list of children they currently support and identifying those children who currently need targeted or specialist support.

You may notice that there are fewer advisory visit reports sent home after our visits, but please be reassured that we are still working in your child's school and that you child's teacher can raise any concerns they have with us at any time. They still have access to our advice and support and we will be encouraging them to access the training we have to offer. We will keep a record of the support we have given to schools

If we don't yet know about your child, you may have received this leaflet along with a consent form for you to complete and sign. This is because your child's teacher and the Specialist Advisory Teacher agree that we need to put some targeted or specialist support in place for your child.

Once we know about your child we may remain involved for a short period, such as 6 to 8 weeks, or we may have ongoing input over a longer period. If your child has once been referred, we will keep their details on file and there will be no need to refer them again if they need some more support.

If you have any concerns about the information in this leaflet please discuss them with your child's teacher.



For information and guidance on SEND please visit Oxfordshire's Local Offer www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/localoffer

Oxfordshire County Council's [privacy notice \(pdf format, 204kb\)](#) explains how and why information about you will be used and stored by us