

Special Educational Needs and Disability Strategy 2021 - 2024



in partnership with



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Introduction

Middlesbrough Council and its partners recognise that “Middlesbrough Children Matter” and are the next generation who will ensure the success and prosperity of the town. It is therefore imperative that we invest in their development and create an environment in which they can grow and prosper.



Who does this strategy support?

This strategy supports children and young people with special educational needs and or disabilities aged 0-25

This strategy demonstrates through a clear vision how partners across Education, Health and Care will ensure improvements are made in how we deliver provision, support and develop services to meet the needs of children and young people aged 0-25.



Definition of Special Educational Needs

(as written within the SEND Code of Practice 2014)

Children have special educational needs if they have a learning difficulty which calls for special educational provision to be made for them.

Children have a learning difficulty if they:



A Have a significantly greater difficulty in learning from the majority of children of the same age; or



B Have a disability which prevents or hinders them from making use of educational facilities of any kind generally provided for children of the same age in schools within the area of the Local Authority;



C Are under compulsory school age and fall within the definition at A or B above or would so do if special educational provision was not made for them.

Definition of Disability

The Equality Act 2010 states a person has a disability if:

A They have a physical or mental impairment; and

B The impairment has a substantial and long term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities

The Government guidance states that the term substantial means more than minor or trivial. The term physical and mental impairment implies that a disability can arise from a wide range of impairments such as:

- Long term medical conditions such as asthma and diabetes.
- Fluctuating or progressive conditions such as rheumatoid arthritis or motor neurone disease.
- Mental health conditions such as bipolar disorder or depression.
- Learning difficulties such as dyslexia.
- Learning disabilities such as Down's syndrome and autistic spectrum conditions.
- Cancer.
- Multiple sclerosis.
- HIV / AIDS.
- People with severe disfigurement will be protected as disabled without needing to show that it has a substantial adverse effect in day to day activities.

National Context

The Special Educational Needs and or Disabilities (SEND) Code of Practice came into force on the 1st September 2014. The code covers the 0-25 age and sets out the statutory guidance on duties, policies and procedures for all organisations who work with and support children and young people with special education needs and disabilities.



Key Policy Drivers



The Children and Families Act 2014, the Care Act 2014 and the Single Equalities Act 2010 form the backbone to the Special Educational Needs and or Disabilities reforms. Together they identify:

- Children and young people with more complex needs will access a coordinated assessment process.
- Education, Health and Care Plans (0-25 years) replace statements and Learning Difficulty Assessments.
- Coordinated support should meet the identified needs of children and young people, improving their outcomes, as they seek to reach their aspirations.
- All children and young people are encouraged to make decisions about their future, their support and to participate in designing services.
- Planning for adulthood should begin from the earliest opportunities to promote independence and full participation in their community.
- Children, young people and their families are given the option to receive a personal budget or direct payment to pay for their support or services.
- Public bodies have a duty to proactively meet the needs of disabled children and young people and ensure they are not disadvantaged.
- Local authorities must have an online 'Local Offer' detailing all support available for children and young people who have special educational needs.
- Services should be jointly planned and commissioned by the Local Authority and Clinical Commissioning Groups.
- Parents are able to ask for a carers assessment in their own right and receive appropriate support for identified needs.

Local Context

Situated on the North-East coast of England, Middlesbrough is at the heart of the Tees Valley. The minority ethnic population of the town is one of the highest in the region. It is very diverse with 55 different languages being spoken from 49 different countries, a factor that must be reflected and considered when designing and planning services for children and young people.

The town currently has a range of early years settings, 41 primary schools, 8 secondary schools, 5 special schools, an Alternative Provision Academy and a range of post-16 provision including Middlesbrough College and Northern School of Art.



There is also a number of specialist provision within mainstream settings which deliver support to meet the needs of children and young people with Special Educational Needs and or Disabilities. All settings have a duty to adhere to the Special Educational Needs Code of Practice and to ensure that they are as inclusive as possible



Numbers of children and young people with Special Educational Needs and or Disabilities (SEND) 0-25 in Middlesbrough: 4,800 (approx)

1,300

children and young people have a have an Education, Health and Care Plan

3,500

children and young people 0-25 have a SEN Support Plan

What is an Education, Health and Care Plan?

An Education Health and Care Plan is for children and young people aged up to 25 who need more support than is available through special educational needs support. It is a legal document that describes a child or young person's special educational, health and social care needs. It explains the extra help that will be given to meet those needs and how that help will support the child or young person to achieve what they want to in their life.



What is a SEN Support Plan?

A SEN Support Plan is a non-statutory plan which supports settings to evidence how they utilise their existing resources to support a child or young person. The plan will show a graduated response in terms of the support offered, prior to a request for an EHCP assessment. SEN plans are portable and will follow a child or young person between settings, reducing the need for them or their family to tell their story more than once. We have our own template which was developed in partnership with settings and which captures the needs of the child or young person. Additional resources through the SEN High Needs Funding Matrix can be made available if a need is identified and evidenced in the plan. Admission to High Needs Bases / Units in mainstream settings can also be accessed on the basis of SEN support details plus recommendations of professionals e.g. Educational Psychologists.

For further information regarding Education, Health and Care Plans and SEN Support Plans please see **Appendix 1: The Graduated Support Model (page 34)**



Key commitments across Education, Health and Social Care



We have an agreed set of commitments across Education, Health and Social Care. Through these we will ensure that:



Children and young people have the best start in life.



Children and young people are not disadvantaged as they move into adulthood as a result of COVID.



Children and young people with special educational needs and or disabilities and their families, are fully involved in discussions and decision making about the services and the support they receive through meaningful and ongoing co-production.



All children and young people with special educational needs and or disabilities will have equitable access to services through a review of the support planning and the Education, Health and Care Planning (EHCP) process, including robust quality assurance and moderation of plans and evidence of partnership working.



We have a clearly defined system of governance and accountability.



Our strategic leaders and staff at all levels have a clear understanding of the needs of children and young people with special educational needs and or disabilities through strategic leadership, robust data sharing across Education, Health and Care and through an embedded culture of effective training.



Our strategic planning is more responsive to local need through strong partnership working across Education, Health and Social Care.



Provision for children and young people is needs led, flexible and responsive and will provide choice and control.



Everything we do has the child, young person and their family at the centre.



We have integrated children's service provision that offers planned services responsive to need rather than diagnosis.



We improve the overall quality, responsiveness and equity of access of our services to meet all needs of children within an appropriate setting.

Our Vision



Underpinning our vision is a set of principles that we will uphold when developing and delivering services for children and young people, which are:



Working and committing resources together to effectively deliver improved outcomes for children and young people and their families.



Together we will work with integrity, trusting each other in an open and honest manner, exercising moral courage in all that we do.



We will be creative and develop new ideas to deliver a better future for children and young people and their families.



We will make services and learning opportunities available for all children in the community that respond to their different needs whilst focusing relentlessly on their communication and language skills and social and emotional development.



Commissioning budgets from all organisations will be utilised more effectively to monitor and evaluate outcomes of services and the impact they have on the target group.



Through continuous improvement, we will develop the best and most effective services for children and young people.

What has changed
as a result of our
2018-2020 strategy?



Through working together we developed:

- A new integrated early years model which has increased the number of children with special needs able to access mainstream provision getting the health and education support they need.
- A Single Point of Contact through which parents and professionals can receive the information they require.
- Improved data systems which have supported our planning of required provision.
- Improved Local Offer and made it more accessible for families and professionals.
- Improved ways for capturing the voice of children and young people to ensure that we can use this information to support developments.
- A range of training opportunities which have been delivered for parents and developed key information which families find useful.
- A new and improved Speech and Language offer which means a much more personalised approach.
- A new Inclusion model which supports early identification of need to ensure children and young people with SEND receive the support they require in a timely and coordinated way.

Through our Strategic Leadership we:

- Increased the number of children and young people accessing mainstream provision with an EHCP which means these children and young people have the opportunity to have their needs met in mainstream where mainstream is appropriate to offer the inclusive support identified in their EHCP rather than moving into specialist provision.
- Ensured all schools and Post 16 settings took part in a SEND Peer Review which helped everyone understand what they needed to further develop.
- Delivered a range of training to staff who shared that they feel more confident in their role and understanding the needs of children and young people with SEND.
- Improved the quality of Education, Health and Care Plans.
- Received a positive outcome in the July 2019 Local Area revisit where inspectors found that we had made good progress against the areas identified within the Written Statement of Action.

We developed our data systems across Education, Health and Care to ensure all agencies understood the needs and changing needs of children and young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities. We used this information to develop local provision where gaps were identified.

This included:

- Improved support within our Early Years Specialist Support Service
- Increase in the number of local specialist placements including the development of a secondary autism base within a mainstream setting resulting in more children and young people accessing the support they need within the local area
- Approval for a new Free Special School which will be open in September 2022 which will provide additional capacity
- Increase in the number of Supported Internships which has resulted in more young people accessing the most appropriate Post 16 pathways
- Health Data dashboard developed to monitor the number of children accessing A&E and therapy services with an Education Health and Care plan, this will improve monitoring of incidents, involvement and inform future commissioning



Through our work around Joint Commissioning we have:

- Developed a Joint Commissioning Strategy in partnership with children, young people and their families
- Established a young commissioners panel
- Jointly commissioned a Speech and Language therapy service with agreed performance outcomes, which is jointly monitored and captures the views of the children engaging in the service
- Developed a children's equipment service
- Developed an all age autism strategy. A needs-led neurodevelopmental pathway has been developed and is planned for implementation throughout South Tees in September 2021
- Completed a review of Occupational therapy support for 0-25, this review resulted in all OT provision being provided by the same organisation
- Regular contract reviews of joint service provision through the joint commissioning panel with South Tees authorities and clinical commissioning group representatives, exploring future opportunities of joint working

We increased the number of people using our Local Offer. This was achieved through:

- Advertising the Local Offer on a range of Billboards across the town
- Ensuring posters of the Local Offer were visible across a range of settings
- Engaging with families to understand how we could improve the Local Offer
- Offering Drop in Sessions to families
- Running competitions

The impact of this work has supported more families and professionals to understand what support is available within the local area.

Key Priorities 2021-2024



To support development across the Local Area the key priorities within Middlesbrough are:



To develop **strategic leadership** across Education, Health and Social Care and identify and remove barriers to learning and support which have been a result of COVID.



To ensure **greater involvement of children, young people and families** to support coproduction and ensure that their voice is heard regarding the services and support they need.



To ensure greater analysis and use of information to ensure that there is sufficient **local educational provision** and to drive improvement in provision through the use of **data** and improve systems for capturing **outcomes** for children and young people who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.



To further improve strategic planning to support **jointly commissioning** services across Education, Health and Social Care.



To improve processes and opportunities for children and young people in **preparation for adulthood**.



To have a **trained and competent** workforce in understanding how to meet the needs of children and young people with SEND.

How will we achieve these priorities?



We will achieve these priorities through:

Strategic Leadership

We will build on the already strong partnerships and shared vision across Education, Health and Care at a strategic level to ensure that children and young people with special educational needs and or disabilities have access to a range of services and that all agencies understand their responsibilities.

What will this mean for you?

Children and young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities will be supported by competent and knowledgeable staff. Their needs will be identified and outcomes in place which will support them to achieve and meet their aspirations.

Parents and carers will receive the support and information they require to ensure the needs of their children are met.



We will achieve these priorities through:

Greater involvement of children, young people and families

Children, young people and their families will be at the centre of the planning and development of services from the start. Services will be co-produced by parents and young people and resources will be designed with and for young people.

What will this mean for you?

Children, young people and their families will be involved in the planning, delivery and evaluation of services. Services will be flexible and accessible to ensure that the child is at the centre of all planning and that their voice is heard throughout the process.



Sufficient local educational provision through the use of data and improved systems for capturing holistic outcomes

We will continue to analyse our data and ensure that we develop the required educational, health and care provision within the local area based on identified needs. We will use our data to identify commissioning opportunities to inform what provision is required and ensure we have robust systems in place to capture holistic outcomes of children and young people with SEND.

What will this mean for you?

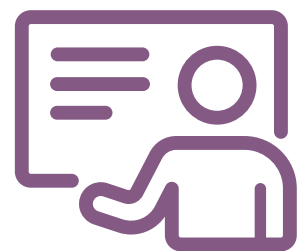
Children and young people will access local provision which meets their identified needs. This provision will support them to achieve their identified outcomes across education, health and social care.

Joint Commissioning

We will further improve Joint Commissioning in partnership with children, young people and their families. Joint commissioning of services will continue to improve outcomes for children and young people.

What will this mean for you?

Children, young people and their families will see a more co-ordinated approach accessing the right services at the right time.



We will achieve these priorities through:

Preparation for adulthood

We will further develop the pathways and provision available for young people at post 16 to ensure that young people achieve their outcomes when they finish their education, and that they are prepared for employment, independence and remain in good health.

What will this mean for you?

Young people will be able to access a range of support and provision to help prepare them to progress to greater employment and independence and make a positive transition to adult life.

Trained and competent workforce

Staff across Education, Health and Social Care through effective training will fully understand their responsibilities towards children and young people with special educational needs and or disabilities.

What will this mean for you?

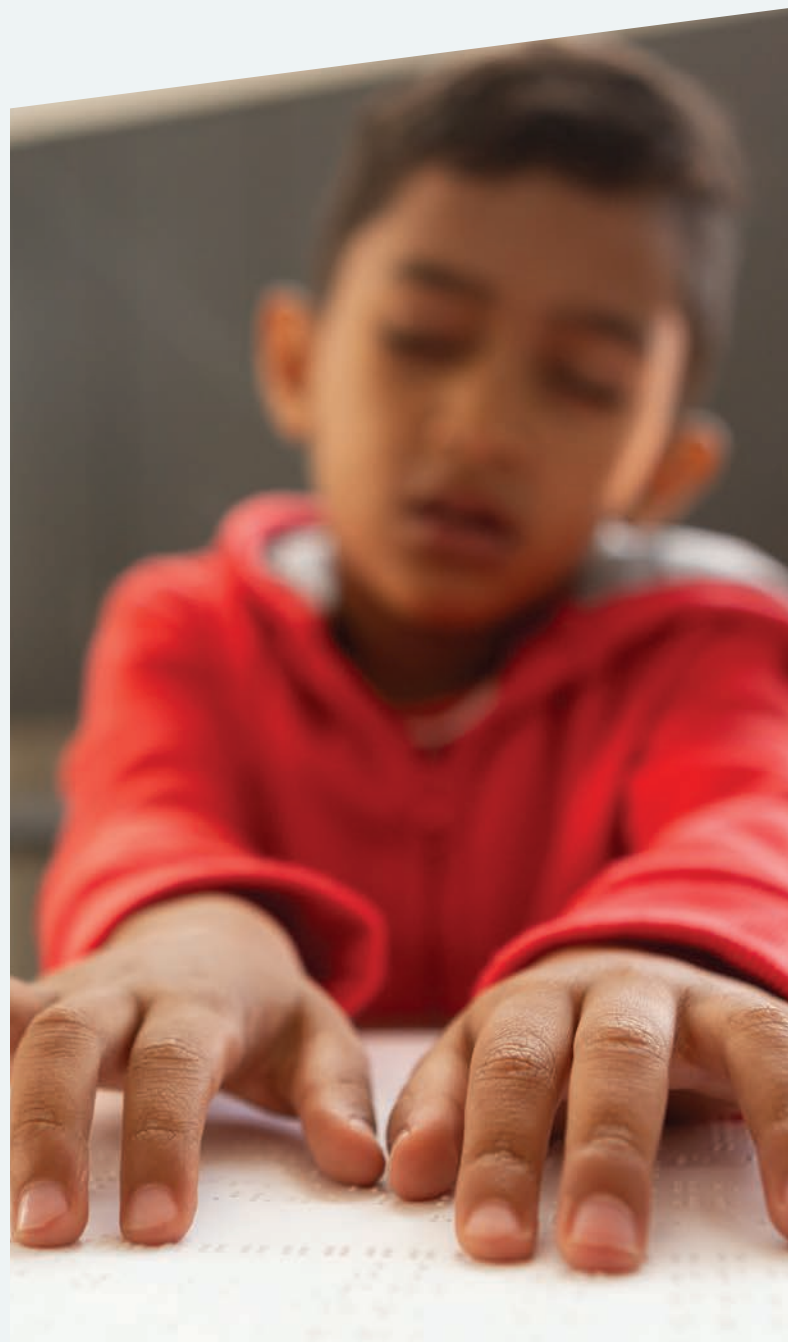
Children and young people with special educational needs and / or disabilities will be supported by competent and knowledgeable staff. Their needs will be identified and outcomes in place which will support them to achieve and meet their aspirations and identified outcomes.



How does the Special Educational Needs and Disability strategy link to other key strategies?

This strategy and vision links to the Council's Strategic Plan and Tees Valley CCG Children and Young People's Plan.

The table opposite demonstrates the links between these three plans.



Middlesbrough Council Strategic Priorities

TVCCG Children and Young People Plan

Special Educational Needs and or Disabilities priorities 2021-2024

We will show Middlesbrough's children that they matter and work to make our town safe and welcoming and to improve outcomes for all children and young people.

We will work to address the causes of vulnerability and inequalities in Middlesbrough and safeguard and support those made vulnerable.

Further refine needs assessment and gap analysis.

Continue to develop effective and meaningful data flow to improve strategic understanding of current and future cohorts for children and young people with SEND, based on Data Sharing agreements, EHCP cohort data and key performance indicators.

Children's equipment pathways to be considered for joint commissioning opportunities. Continue to develop Tees Community Equipment Stores.

Undertake review of therapy services including speech and language, occupational therapy, physiotherapy and learning disability physiotherapy and jointly commission.

Work with Local Authority and Education Partners to improve outcomes for children and young people with SEND via workstreams.

Work with Local Authority and Education partners to identify and pursue other joint commissioning opportunities.

We will further develop strategic leadership across Education, Health and Social Care and ensure that children and young people achieve their identified outcomes.

We will continue to involve children, young people and families around discussion and coproduction of the services and support they need

We will ensure further improvement of strategic planning to support jointly commissioning services across Education, Health and Social Care.

We will work with young people, their families, local partners and national leads to further improve processes and opportunities which will support young people as they move into adulthood.

We will ensure that we have a trained and competent workforce across Education, Health and Social Care.

How will this strategy be monitored?

There will be a clear action plan in place which will support the delivery of the Special Educational Needs and Disability Strategy. This action plan will be monitored through the SEND Strategic Group and Children's Trust Board.

Feedback on delivery of the strategy will be sought from children and young people and their families using a variety of formats to ensure the needs of children and young people are met and that local changes are made to ensure children and young people achieve their outcomes and aspirations.

Where will you find out about the progress of this strategy?

Updates on progress against the priorities within this strategy will be published on the Local Offer website. Information will also be published in the Disabilities Matters newsletter, Parents4change newsletter and key service updates and newsletters.

When will this strategy be reviewed?

The Special Educational Needs and Disability Strategy will be reviewed and updated every 12 months.

For further information please contact

Single Point of Contact

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Appendix 1

Graduated Response

The reforms included a greater emphasis on SEN Support for children/young people in educational settings and the recommendation of the use of a SEN Support Plan.

Good SEN Support Plans can be valuable tools to help evidence the graduated response.

A well written SEN Support Plan demonstrates effective practice and evidence of steps taken and progress made as part of a Graduated Response including any Early Help Assessment. It demonstrates an awareness and evidence of the use of SEND processes in the SEND Code of Practice.

SEN Support Plans are flexible non statutory working plans which will be written and reviewed by educational settings, facilitate portability between settings, and follow a child or young person when there is movement between educational settings.

Education Health and Care Plans

The majority of children and young people with special educational needs will have their needs met in the child's local mainstream school or setting, sometimes with the help of outside specialists. In some cases, children attend specialist bases in mainstream schools or special schools depending upon the needs of the individual child.

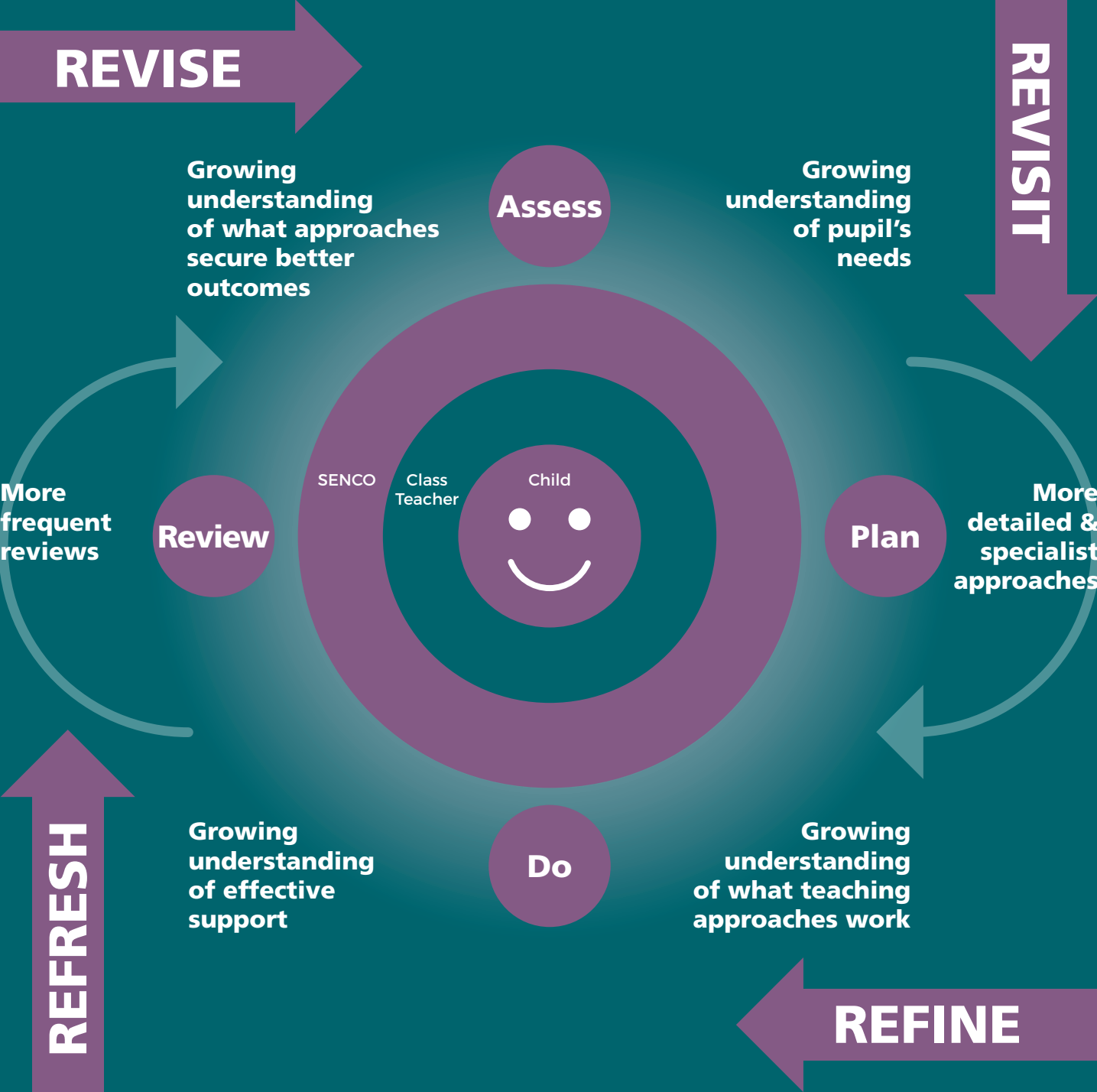
Most children and young people will have their needs met without the need for an EHCP however they may have a SEN Support Plan produced by a setting in dialogue with other professionals and parents, carers and children/young people, which identifies need, appropriate outcomes and support.

For those with the most complex needs, a statutory (EHC) assessment may be requested via an appropriate referral from a setting, professional, parent/young person. The statutory assessment of SEN covers a child/young person's education, health and care needs however in all cases, children/young people must be identified as having a special educational need to have an EHC assessment. The assessment is coordinated by the Local Authority's Inclusion, Assessment & Review Team.

Timescales for making assessments & issuing Education Health and Care Plans (EHCP)

The process of EHC assessment and EHC plan development must be carried out in a timely manner. Local authorities must ensure that they have planned sufficient time for each step of the process, so that wherever possible, any issues or disagreements can be resolved within the statutory 20 week timescale.

Graduated Support Model





Middlesbrough Local Offer

Useful information for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) and their families.

Who is it for?

- Children and young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) from birth to 25 years
- Parents, carers and families
- Professionals

 www.middlesbrough.gov.uk/localoffer

