

WHOLE SCHOOL SEND CONSORTIUM 2020/2021 REPORT



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WELCOME FROM THE CHAIR OF WHOLE SCHOOL SEND

I am delighted to share this report at the end of our third year delivering the Strategic Support to the Workforce in Mainstream and Special Schools contract on behalf of the Department for Education. This report outlines the key activities and achievements of the Whole School SEND Consortium during 2020/2021.

The impact of the global pandemic has made the past year particularly challenging, but the work of nasen and the Whole School SEND consortium has continued. In addition to delivering the workforce contract for the Department for Education, there has been a continuation of the randomised control trial of the Whole School SEND Review in mainstream secondary schools in England, which is funded by the Education Endowment Foundation and evaluated by Manchester Metropolitan University.

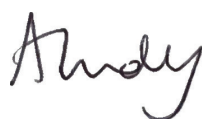
During 2020, there were some key staffing changes, including an expansion of the regional SEND teams, which facilitated a significant scaling up of the professional development offer for the sector. The Whole School SEND Director Anne Heavey moved to a new role at Ofsted, and I would like to take this opportunity to thank Anne for her sterling work in leading the consortium over the past two years. I would also like to formally welcome Alex Grady, who has been appointed as Head of Whole School SEND to lead us through the next phase of our work. Many of you will know Alex as she has been with nasen for some time having worked on numerous government contracts and brings with her a wealth of SEND expertise.

I am delighted that the government has extended the Strategic Support to the Workforce in Mainstream and Special Schools contract for a further year. This is a testament to the quality of the research, review tools and resources produced to date and the impact they are having in the sector.

Despite the successes of the past year it remains clear that high-quality SEND provision is not yet guaranteed in every school or every local area. The Whole School SEND Consortium will continue to promote best practice, share evidence informed resources and approaches, and seek to secure the best possible provision for every child and young person who needs it to achieve their potential.



Prof. Adam Boddison
Chair, Whole School SEND



Alex Grady
Head of Whole School SEND

THE AIMS OF WHOLE SCHOOL SEND

The Whole School SEND Consortium brings together schools, organisations and individuals who are committed to ensuring that every child and young person with SEND can achieve their potential at school.

The Whole School SEND Consortium is delivering the Department for Education's Strategic Support to the Workforce in Mainstream and Special Schools Contract 2018-2022 as well as an Education Endowment Foundation-funded trial of the Whole School SEND Review in secondary schools (see p. 8).

To support every school to deliver high-quality SEND provision, the Whole School SEND Consortium has delivered projects to meet the following four DfE contractual aims:

Aim 1: Drive education institutions to prioritise SEND within their CPD and school improvement plans including facilitating greater links between mainstream and special schools.

Aim 2: Equip schools to identify and meet their training needs in relation to SEND by creating and delivering a new LA support package that is responsive to the identified need of schools in 14 LAs.

Aim 3: Build the skills of teachers working in mainstream and special schools and of SENCOs and teachers of classes of children and young people with sensory impairments by promoting best practice.

Aim 4: Identify and respond to any gaps in the training and resources available to schools.

To deliver this contract we worked with a wide range of contract partners, including:

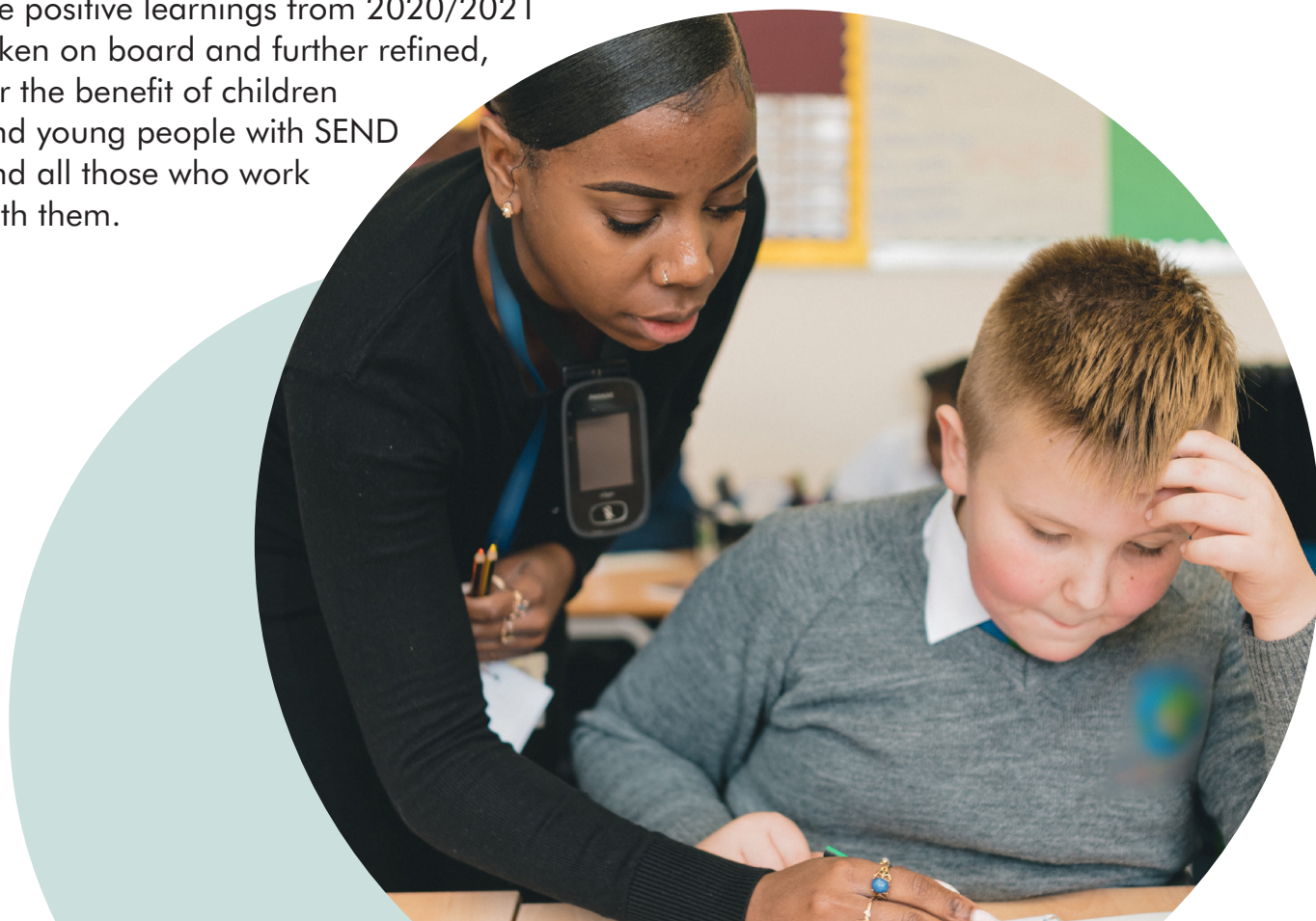
- Specialist organisations and charities
- Academic institutions
- Schools and school-based professionals
- Education membership organisations
- Parents and parental organisations
- Think tanks



A YEAR LIKE NO OTHER! REFLECTIONS ON THE CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC'S IMPACT ON WSS

No one could have predicted how the contract year 2020/2021 developed – with the coronavirus pandemic and subsequent lockdown coinciding almost exactly with the beginning of the year, the impact was significant. All planned activity had to be reconsidered and re-imagined to fit in to the new 'virtual' world, at the same time as our colleagues, including our regional SEND leaders, in schools and other educational settings were getting to grips with remote education and how to support children and young people with SEND as effectively as possible.

An extremely agile response from all involved, including the central team as well as the national and regional leaders, meant that it was possible not only to deliver on what had already been planned, albeit in a different way, but also to produce resources to support schools and others with their own responses to the situation (see p. 13). The central team have been working from home for almost every week of the contract year, and as new members of staff have been welcomed into the team, there are those who have not yet met each other 'in real life' yet have still produced an exceptional quality and quantity of work. The same is true of the regional SEND teams, where new leads have joined during the year, and many have not met even their own teams face to face – but effective ways of working have developed, enabling continued networking and other activity across the regions (see p 9). It is to be hoped that the coming months and years will see the positive learnings from 2020/2021 taken on board and further refined, for the benefit of children and young people with SEND and all those who work with them.



WHOLE SCHOOL SEND CONSORTIUM 2020/2021 IN NUMBERS

10000+
followers on Twitter

18
local authorities
offered bespoke
packages of
support

450+
people enrolled
on Online
SEND Reviewer
Training

22
Regional SEND
Leads

12000+
recipients of the
WSS e-news

50
consortium
partners –
including 16
new partners

20
contract
partners

154
national and regional
CPDL/training events:
50 run by our RSL teams,
24 run by consortium
partners and
81 LA sessions

11000+
attendees at these
CPDL/training
events

26
project contract
strands

CONSORTIUM MEMBERSHIP



Find information about our consortium partners on the SEND gateway:
<https://www.sendgateway.org.uk/consortium-partners>

GOVERNANCE AND OVERSIGHT

The Consortium Steering Group met three times over the year to support dissemination of WSS outputs and strategy for maximising the impact of the work. During the year, a Youth Steering Group of 16-25 year olds was established to support the work of this group, ensuring that learner voice informs the work of WSS – the chair of this group feeds back to the Consortium Steering Group.

nasen has a range of internal governance mechanisms:

The Contract Management and Delivery Assurance committee of the nasen trustees oversees the Whole School SEND contract and reports to the full Board of Trustees each quarter.

nasen's Executive Leadership Team hold monthly project governance meetings to ensure project delivery is on track, as well as maintaining weekly links with the contract team.

nasen and WSS sub-contractors report to the Department for Education using the quarterly reporting cycle, and the WSS hold at least weekly 'keeping in touch' meetings with the contract manager at the DfE.

An independent external evaluation of the work of Whole School SEND has been conducted and the report was published in March 2021. Whole School SEND is reflecting on the evaluation, paying close attention to the findings and successes which will inform strategies for improvement.

THE SEND GATEWAY – THE HOME OF WSS

January 2021 saw the launch of the newly-designed SEND gateway website, the home of Whole School SEND, where all funded resources, events and information can be accessed. The site has been streamlined to enable a smoother user experience, as well as improving its look and feel. The SEND Gateway is linked directly to the nasen website, with a single sign-in allowing users to move easily between both sites. This means that members are able to access all of Whole School SEND's and nasen's free/funded content, as well as being able to sign up to both e-newsletters, to be kept abreast of all developments in the world of SEND. The Gateway continues to provide access to the independent SEND Forums: the SENCO Forum, The SLD Forum and The SEND & ICT Forum.



EEF'S RANDOMISED CONTROL TRIAL OF THE WHOLE SCHOOL SEND REVIEW

In October 2019 a trial of the Whole School SEND Review in English mainstream secondary schools was launched, funded by the Education Endowment Foundation and evaluated by Manchester Metropolitan University. The aim of the programme is to improve provision for pupils with SEND in mainstream schools by helping schools to evaluate the effectiveness of their provision, and then implement a bespoke action plan to target areas of priority and drive improvement.

A significant pause due to the outbreak of COVID in March 2020 gave the trial team time to further refine the recruitment phase. Whole School SEND have successfully collected over 174 SENCO Surveys and data for 162 schools, the total number of schools taking part. With further school closures at the start of the spring term, randomisation and pairing of intervention schools will now take place in June and the initial SENCO training in July 2021. Despite a climate of uncertainty, the partnership has continued to adapt the trial schedule and maintain communication with the signed up schools through regular newsletters and virtual support sessions.



REGIONAL WORKING

Whole School SEND's regional teams saw an expansion in 2020, with an additional Deputy Regional SEND Leader post being created in each region; the year finished with a team of 22, as sadly two regional leaders have had to resign their posts due to the demands on their time because of the pandemic. This increased capacity has been greatly valued by the regions, enabling the further development of local networks as well as delivering regional online CPDL.

There have been positives and challenges to remote working. Webinars have allowed for huge increases in the number of people accessing CPDL (from an average of 30 per face to face session, to an average of around 200 for webinars, with one webinar attracting over 1,000 delegates) – reach has also been widened beyond mainly SENCOs to include more headteachers, classroom teachers and teaching assistants. This is one of the reasons why there has been a significant increase on the numbers signing up to receive communications from Whole School SEND. Remote working has also worked well to allow established groups to meet up i.e. where networks/links have been established face to face, but has made the creation of new networks/links more difficult. This will be something to monitor in the coming months.

The regional teams have worked with a wide range of organisations and individuals across the year, including:

- Teaching School Alliances
- MATs and standalone academies
- Local authorities
- Universities
- ITE/ITT providers
- Regional Schools' Commissioners
- DfE SEND advisers
- Local network groups such as SENCO networks
- WSS Consortium Partners

WHOLE SCHOOL SEND NATIONAL AND REGIONAL TEAM

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Malcolm Reeve	Email: malcolm@wholeschoolsend.com Twitter: @Malcolm_Reeve
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South Central England and North West London (SCNWLON) Katherine Walsh Matt McArthur Rebecca Jones	Email: RSL.SCNWLON@wholeschoolsend.com DRSL.SCNWLON@wholeschoolsend.com DRSL2.SCNWLON@wholeschoolsend.com
South East England and South London Amelie Thompson Tina Harvey Kerry Greene Clare Belli	Email: RSL.SESLON@wholeschoolsend.com DRSL.SESLON@wholeschoolsend.com DRSL2.SESLON@wholeschoolsend.com DRSL3.SESLON@wholeschoolsend.com
South West Erica Wolstenholme Alison Betts Emma Vyvyan	Email: RSL.SW@wholeschoolsend.com DRSL.SW@wholeschoolsend.com DRSL2.SW@wholeschoolsend.com
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WHOLE SCHOOL SEND ACTIVITY 2020/2021

Aim 1: Drive education institutions to prioritise SEND within their CPD and school improvement plans including facilitating greater links between mainstream and special schools

12 research-focused blogs, written by consortium partners have been published on the SEND Gateway, to enable members to engage with SEND-related research.

A further Ask, Listen, Do leaflet, 'Understanding SEN Support', has been co-produced to help parents and families understand the SEN system at a time when their child may be first identified as needing SEN Support and to empower them to ask relevant questions of schools.

50 CPDL events (online webinars) have been produced, delivered through WSS regional teams, to meet needs in their area. These have covered topics as diverse as 'Returning to school and making use of trauma-informed approaches', 'Governor accountability for SEND', 'Strategies to support students' working memory' and 'Every teacher a teacher of SEND, every leader a leader of SEND'. Many of these webinars have employed external specialists in their field. Due to the flexibility of online delivery, whilst attendance has been focused on a specific region, delegates from across the country have been able to attend the webinars of their choice, with distance no barrier – most regions have had in excess of 1,000 people attending over the year. A further 24 consortium-led webinars have also taken place, to support other strands of work.

Aim 2: Equip schools to meet their training needs in relation to SEND by creating and delivering a new LA support package that is responsive to the identified needs of schools in 14 LAs

The Department for Education selected 23 local authorities with whom WSS could work, particularly around supporting schools with developing good practice for SEND. Following initial conversations with the LAs, WSS have this year offered support packages to 18 LAs; work has been agreed with the LA along with the DfE's regional SEND advisers, to ensure oversight and join-up. WSS's regional SEND leads have been involved in the delivery of support, which has been led by one of our national SEND leaders.

This year, an online SEND Reviewer training package has been developed both to meet needs during lockdown, and to provide an alternative model of training for those unable to attend face to face, or who prefer an online module which can be taken flexibly over several weeks or months. More than 450 people have enrolled on the course, with 100% of those who have completed stating their intention to carry out a SEND Review in the next year.

Aim 3: Build the skills of teachers working in mainstream and special schools and of SENCOs and teachers of classes of children and young people with sensory impairments by promoting best practice.

The Teacher Handbook: SEND – *Embedding Inclusive Practice* has been produced to offer guidance on effective teaching and removing barriers for learners with SEND. This is a resource with wide breadth and depth, with subject specific sections, as well as information on supporting learners in the four broad areas of need, with an emphasis on reflective teaching and knowledge of the learner.

‘Deployment of specialists in mainstream settings’ is a resource pack to support school leaders in the effective commissioning and deployment of Speech and Language Therapists and Educational Psychologists, with the aim of improving early identification of needs, inclusive universal provision and strategic SEN Support provision.

The Autism Resource Suite contains resources for school leaders, teachers and learners in mainstream schools to support the delivery of high-quality SEND provision for learners, and staff, with autism.

The Preparing for Adulthood from the Earliest Years Review Guide has been revised on the basis of last year’s trial of the guide.

Aim 4: Identify and respond to any gaps in the training and resources available to schools.

The Teacher Handbook: SEND – *Embedding Inclusive Practice* (above) formed the basis for a set of resources to support Initial Teacher Trainers and trainees with understanding SEND – this resource also includes teaching scenarios and case studies to help trainees put their understanding into context and develop this alongside their mentor.

The Developmental Language Disorder webinars, guides and powerpoints raise awareness and understanding of DLD, and provide information on effective school level provision for this group of learners.

A trial of the Whole School SEND Review Guide in FE colleges was begun, to consider if or how the guide works in these settings, and whether an annex or a new guide will be needed to support colleges specifically. This trial was postponed due to the challenges that COVID presented, but learning has continued to be shared with DfE and the project will resume in the coming year.

COVID RESPONSE – RESOURCES

Whole School SEND responded to COVID-19 and the subsequent lockdowns by producing resources to meet the needs of the sector at this crucial time:

The COVID-19 Review Guide was produced, as a collation of key areas from other Review Guides, pertinent to understanding and delivering effective practice for learners with SEND as they return to school.

Two further Ask, Listen, Do leaflets were co-produced to support parental conversations with schools in this period: 'Transition planning for Y11' and 'Returning to school after a period of absence'.

The 'Securing Good Transitions' resource pack, and associated webinar, leaflet and blogs, focuses on supporting learners with SEND moving out of Y11, to help mitigate the risk of these young people becoming Not in Education, Employment or Training by providing information and training for school based professionals.

The 'Safe Returns' handbook ('Recovery, Reintroduction and Renewal'), webinars, leaflet and blogs highlighted evidence -informed practice relating to post-trauma and re-engaging with learning after a period of disruption, to support school based professionals to successfully return learners to school following a critical incident.

A webcast, 'Supporting a successful return to school for adopted children', provides guidance and support for this particularly vulnerable group.

A range of CPDL webinars also addressed the needs of the sector during this period, including 'Preparing for the transition back to school for children with SEND', 'Securing success after lockdown: behaviour strategies' and 'NQTs: Preparing for your first term in the current context'.

A series of webinars and blogs have been run to provide additional support to new SENCOs, who may not yet have started the NASENCO, and who are taking on the role in unprecedented times.



THE IMPACT OF THREE YEARS OF WHOLE SCHOOL SEND

Over the course of the workforce contract, Whole School SEND has produced more than 50 free-to-access, funded resources to support the schools' workforce and others. These include 9 review guides/frameworks (SEND Review Guide, MAT SEND Review Guide, SEND Governance Review Guide, SEND Reflection Framework, Early Years SEND Review Guide, Teaching Assistant Deployment Review Guide, Preparation for Adulthood from the Earliest Years Review Guide, Demonstrating Inclusion Tool, COVID-19 SEND Review Guide), 12 condition-specific videos, a range of reports (including Effective SEND Practice in ITT and Drivers, Demand and Supply of SEND CPD), 18 research-focused blog posts, Ask Listen Do leaflets, and other resources (including the SENCO Induction Pack, the DLD Guide, Autism Resource Suite and more).

Whole School SEND has also supported 46 local authorities with SEND across the three years, including by supporting the development of strategic planning, the use of data, and improving inclusive practice in schools. Evaluations of this work indicate a very high level of satisfaction and progress towards the intended outcomes; more than 1,800 people in the targeted LAs have attended support events/webinars.

'I think it would be really interesting to give to the subject leaders for them to look at their own subjects. Might inform them as to how they develop their curriculum ETC – All leaders are leaders in SEND.'

'It's really lovely to see a whole county initiative that can actually impact.'

'It is great to see that SEND is finally being thought about as a whole school issue.'

'SEND is part of our SDP and this will really help us refine our plans.'



Years 1 and 2 saw WSS delivering more than 120 regional face to face CPDL/ training sessions, including training 584 SEND Reviewers, whereas Year 3 has seen the move to online delivery (above). Webinars this year consistently show that more than 90% of attendees are likely to incorporate the learning into their practice and to share their learning; there have been more than 12,000 attendees at this year's webinars.

'Another invaluable webinar with a wealth of fantastic information that I will definitely try to implement into my teaching practice.'

'Thank you all so much – I found everything very useful and the presenters were brilliant! Lots of 'take aways' from today's event.'

'It was fantastic! Will definitely share with colleagues as part of our curriculum development. Thank you!'

'It was one of the best courses I've attended in a while. I will use much of what was discussed today. The speakers were relatable and clear.'

'Thank you very much. The session was well prepared with the handout information, practical despite being online which is amazing and very informative. Lots of things for me to take back into my school.'

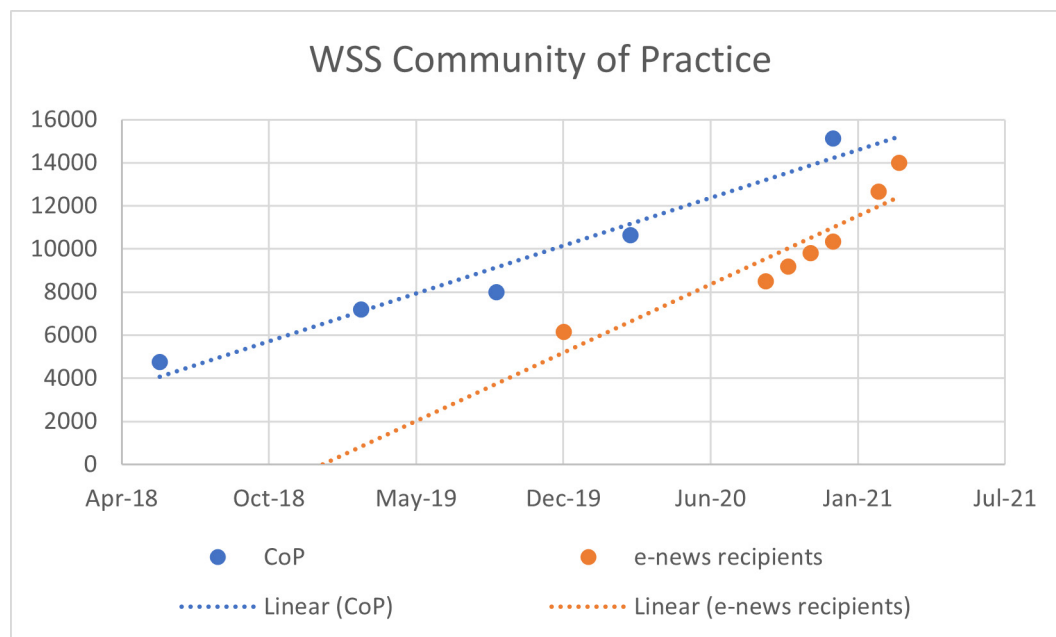
'Please can I also add that the sessions on the Graduated Approach to SEND have been fantastic and I am currently looking at restructuring our set up within school at the moment. The idea of such an approach impacts our student support services, our current register and has raised many thought provoking questions with regard to SEND provision as a whole. We are currently working through this minefield and the support provided by your WSS resources has been invaluable.'

Secondary SENCO

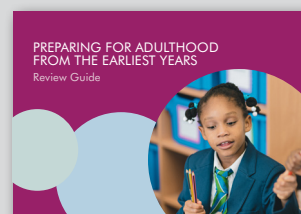
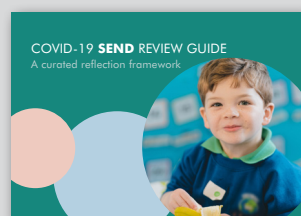
The word cloud reflects evaluations from WSS webinars:



The membership of Whole School SEND (Community of Practice) has grown significantly over the three year contract, indicating a high level of engagement and satisfaction with the offer. Recipients of the WSS e-newsletter (active members) now stand at more than 12,600.

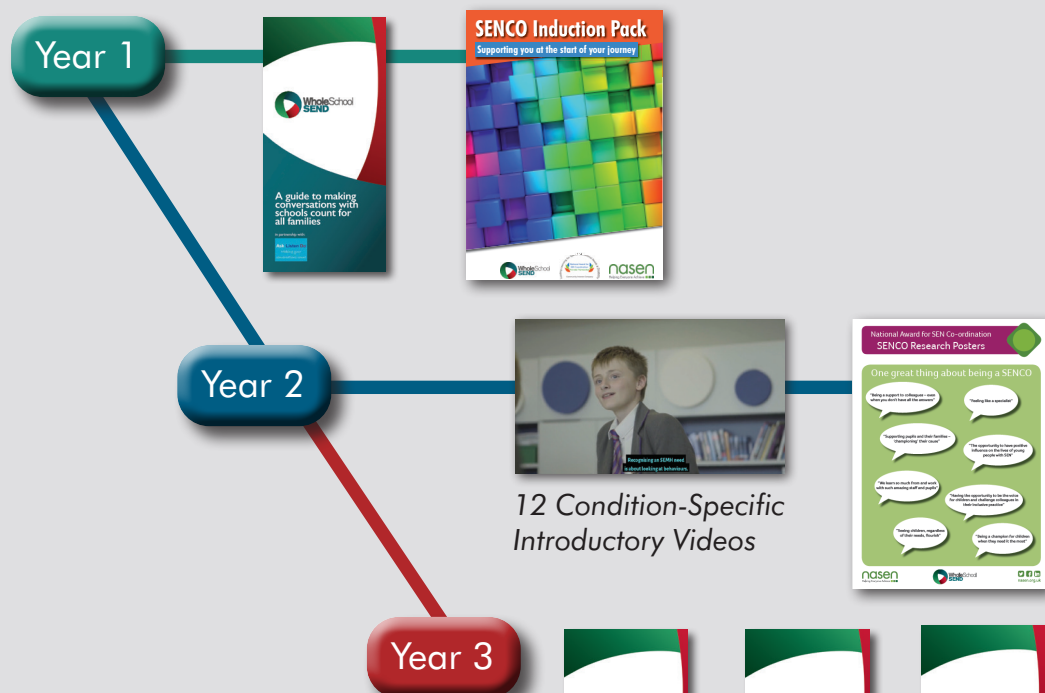


WHOLE SCHOOL SEND RESOURCES

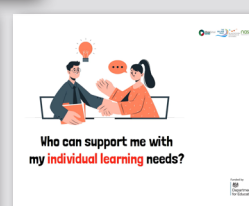
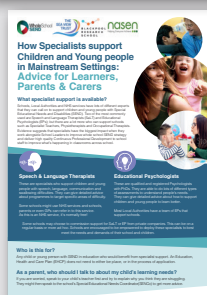
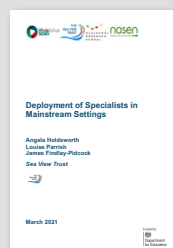
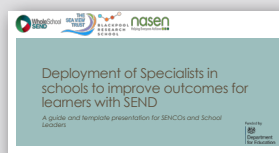
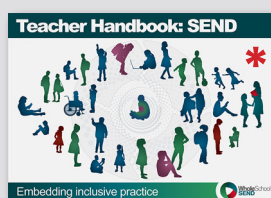


and many more

ALL WSS RESOURCES YEARS 1-3



Online SEND Reviewer Training Course



Learner Video Leaflet



* Coming Soon

THE VALUES THAT UNDERPIN OUR WORK AT WHOLE SCHOOL SEND ARE:

Inclusion We believe that every child is entitled to an education and opportunities that enable them to enjoy, achieve and thrive at school and beyond into adulthood. As well as being enriching and enjoyable for its own sake, education must prepare all children for independent living, fulfilling employment and happy relationships. The children and young people who took part in our consultation exercise stressed that they want their teachers to place their views and wishes at the centre of decision making and to hold high aspirations for them.

Diversity We believe that our best solutions are found from a diverse pool. We aim to bring education professionals together from across the broad continuum of provision. We value the contribution of those working in specialist and mainstream settings, be they support staff, teachers, SENCOs, or leaders. We equally value and seek the views of parents, carers, and children and young people, as well as other stakeholders with something to contribute to the discussion.

Strength based approach We know that there is much good practice in the education system, but we also accept that SEND provision is not yet good enough everywhere. We want to identify and disseminate good practice and empower education professionals to feel able to develop and refine their approach to SEND provision.

Research and evidence lie at the heart of the work that we do – so that we can be confident that resources are invested effectively, and we can measure the impact of our work. We respect that the experience of every learner is unique and that every education setting has a unique context – we do not believe that one size fits all.

If you want to improve your SEND provision, then our suite of free resources can help you identify your strengths and areas for growth as well as the next steps you can take.

Collaboration We believe that human connections and relationships are important. We aim to support local networks of education professionals to drive sustainable improvement to SEND provision. Our Regional SEND Leaders are working with existing local networks and influencers to create opportunities to reflect honestly on SEND provision. We create opportunities to share knowledge, ideas and experiences. We believe that we achieve more when we work together, and that collaboration is essential to deliver effective bespoke support to every child.

Integrity We believe in innovation and creative approaches to challenges; and in investing our resources wisely to achieve meaningful impact.

We are optimistic about the future of SEND provision, and realistic about the hard work that must be undertaken to achieve the improvements our children and young people deserve.

Funded by



Department
for Education