



Graduated Response Listening Event Questions And Answers 23rd May 2022

- Q. Graduated response –What is the graduated response? What is the process and how is this communicated to schools and families clearly?
- A. Carol Taylor responded - The graduated response is everything that sits below the EHCP assessments and it's what schools are using. Schools are aware of this and what we are trying to do is promote the resources and understanding of that. Locally schools have something called a notional SEN budget, they are expected to use that budget to support children and young people at that level, without the need for an EHCP. We would expect that support types are very different across different settings, but this roughly equates to around 13 hours of support per young person or child within the setting to look at their educational needs. This is over and above what's called quality first teaching, which is about a whole school approach and all teachers and staff being made aware of the adjustments they can make. The 13 hours can be worked in in different ways and isn't necessarily one to one. This gives an idea of the obligation schools have to provide a substantial amount of support at this level, so we don't go to EHCP's for every child or young person that has SEN, it's a small percentage that go through to that level.
- Schools are aware of the graduated response but we are trying to look at all agencies so there is a graduated response in all, this is something that's been developed more recently.
- Vicky Whitehead commented – The link to the SENDCo resource had been added to the chat facility <https://sendcorotherham.co.uk/> There is lots of information that schools can access on the platform, we need to make it easily accessible on the Rotherham Local Offer. It has very clear pathways to take when the graduated response isn't enough to support a particular child or young person.
- Q. Local offer – We know there is information on the local offer, but this doesn't feel relevant or accessible for families and young people – Are there plans to improve this?
- A. Vicky Whitehead responded - There is work due to start on this within the next couple of weeks. This will help to support parents when they need to attend school, the information they need, and pathways will be clearly laid out.



Q. SEN register – How are children’s and young people’s needs identified, to trigger the graduated response who makes that decision and how is this communicated with parent/carers? We have heard comments from parents who were unaware their child was on the SEN register.

A. Carol Taylor responded – If your child is on the SEN register then you should always know about it, that should be discussed with you before it happens. The schools are the ones who make the decision about if the child needs to go on the SEN register, that means there are different levels of intervention. It might be that within school they are saying your child needs a bit more support, we need to be aware of this and possibly need to consider an Individual Education Plan. This will need to be reviewed and depending on the outcome school can look at getting advice but not going any further than that. There will be a number of young people in school who are fine with that level of support, and they make progress, you as a parent should be involved in that and it should be explained to you. The next step would be when the school feels they need to involve some outside agencies which could be the learning support services. If your child has a visual or hearing impairment support can be looked at for all of those areas. If it’s felt that school need more help and advice then they will ask for the Educational Psychologist team to get involved (or equivalent if they use a private service). At that point we would go into school and see what support can be put in place, but this would not be done without your permission and knowledge. We would look to work with the graduated response, give schools ideas then look to evaluate those ideas to see what impact they are having. For the majority of children and young people that’s where that involvement would stay. If it’s felt that your child needs more support than is available through the graduated response, then it might be that you make a request for an EHCP. All of the information would be brought together, parents’ views are key and will be looked at as part of the assessment as is the child’s view. This would happen at the graduated response stage but also as you progress to the EHCP. If the parent has concerns, they should first approach the child or young person’s teacher and SENDCo, the next steps should be looked at together.

Q. Parent involvement –How do you ensure parents are involved as equal partners throughout the process? – families often say they don’t feel believed and are involved early enough; parents are often not communicated with. How does the review – plan – do work?

A. Carol Taylor responded - The review – plan – do, works firstly by doing and assessment, then planning what’s needed, the school then goes ahead with the intervention whatever that may be, finally after an agreed time the review takes place in school to look at how the child has progressed on that intervention level. That’s how you get the best information as to what is needed. We have heard that parents don’t feel they are believed, this is why the Charter and Four Cornerstones were developed. If you have gone down the route of speaking to your child or young persons teacher, SENDCo and Headteacher and still aren’t getting anywhere then there are other avenues.

SENDIAAS are an impartial free service who will be there to support you with issues with school. They can accompany you to meetings in school and support throughout the whole process.

Rachel Amos commented – The portage service works with children from birth up to F1 who have been identified as having significant additional needs or delayed in two or more areas of their development. Lots of services can refer to the portage service, parents can refer themselves. Once a referral is made, the portage service will visit and if they aren't the right service they will ensure that you're linked to the correct agency. Portage is a home visiting service who will visit at home and offer practical support and advice. Over time whilst working with the family, there will be the opportunity for close observation. When the time comes for the child to go to an educational setting Portage encourage the setting to visit the child at home and liaise with the education setting staff about how to encourage the child's learning.

Q. Young person involvement - Does the young person have their voices heard within SEN Support?

A. Carol Taylor responded – It's essential that young peoples voices are heard, there are different ways of working with the child or young person to get their voice and get it heard.

Q. What does SEN support look like post 16?

A. Tanya Gerstmar responded – From the RNN group which is a group of post 16 collages. The process is slightly different from primary and secondary, we very much involve the young person post 16. We don't have an identified SENDCo but we do have a team of people in the additional support team. They would meet with the young person prior to enrolment, if they disclose they have additional learning needs or if they had additional support at school we need to make sure that the transition is successful from school to post 16. We capture what the young person is saying, they need to overcome any barriers that they feel they might experience on a college course. We would meet with the young person and gather information in order to make recommendations so that the teaching staff are differentiating in terms of their teaching strategies and a need for additional support is identified.

Q. Diagnosis led – How do we ensure the graduated response is a person-centred approach led by need not diagnosis or the recourses available to schools/settings? Families have told us that some schools and settings have said they cannot support until a diagnosis or there isn't enough time or resource within the system.

A. Carol Taylor answered – It absolutely isn't the case that a school can't support without a diagnosis. In terms of the autism pathway, there is lots of support that schools can give that are at the graduated response level and that aren't dependent on a diagnosis. Lots of services don't depend on a diagnosis but they are fewer, and less education based. However, you do still need a diagnosis to access some of our resource spaces, which is still an issue.

But schools have lots that they can do to support a child or young person pre-diagnosis and a number of services are available when they child or young person is on the autism pathway. The aim is that all of the information comes together at the point of the child or young person receiving a diagnosis or not. There should still be effective interventions. If you are waiting for a diagnosis which inform the diagnosis as diagnosis is contextual, it isn't just about going into a clinic, having an assessment then getting a diagnosis, it's very much contextual how your child operates in different settings.

What we want ideally that at the point of diagnosis there is no difference in terms of the support and resources you can access and whilst we aren't at that stage yet, we are working towards it in education. If you are told at school that there isn't support available without a diagnosis then this needs to be questioned and speak to SENDIASS, the Forum or speak to any other professionals you may be involved with. Rachel Amos commented – With younger children the vast majority don't have a diagnosis and we work very much with the needs of the child. We very much operate on need as families are often at the very beginning of the pathway and in terms of any active involvement within portage the diagnosis isn't part of our thinking.

Julie Day commented – All schools have an SEN notional budget, this is divided using a formula, the biggest part of the formula being the deprivation index. The notional budget doesn't cover every child on the SEN register and many schools say that it isn't enough to be able to offer the support needed for the number of children or young people they have on the SEN register. The idea of this from the government is that that budget goes into school, and it is the managers decision of how the notional budget is utilised to meet the needs of the children and young people. If it's felt that the child or young persons additional to interventions are costing more than £6,000 then the school can apply for a statutory assessment. The council would look at how the school is using their notional budget and the provision map provided by the school.

The green paper is looking at notional funding for SEN, we would like this to be ringfenced instead of being notional then it can only be used for SEN.

- Q. Accountability– Who's responsibility is it to ensure that schools and settings follow the graduated responses assess, plan, do review cycle with families? And what happens if schools don't follow this?
- A. Julie Day answered – The accountability is multi layered, every teacher should be a teacher of SEN, the teacher should have meeting in school which include a discussion around their class and meeting the needs of the class (including the SEN pupils). Every year the Senior Leadership Team, including the head of the school, should be involved in a discussion with the teacher about the classes needs being met. They look at the progress data, meeting the needs of the class and anything that is causing concern. At this point any concerns about a child or young person's needs in the class links in with the SENCo. The SENCo has to have an overview of what are the main needs and what are the barriers to this child's learning, how are we going to meet those needs and how are we going to improve the provision in different layers? The SENCo should be pivotal in supporting the development of quality first teaching in scaffolding and in differentiation.

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They should be able to facilitate training on how to support and understand autism. The SENCO should be evaluating with the teachers and SLT about what's happening with the children, what are the needs? What are we doing about it and it is working? The SENCo will have a one-to-one meeting with the head teacher therefore, there will be accountability there also. If there are then concerns that come through as parents or concerns that need to be escalated the SEN governor should have meetings with the head and SENCO to understand what practises are in place in the school, how effective it is and if anything needs to be changed.

I think what you are probably referring to is when the school isn't providing the graduated response that you'd like to see?

Kayleigh H responded – It's more when a parent has asked for an assessment, but the Local Authority says the graduated response should cover this, but school haven't done the graduated response. So, you have the LA saying the school should be doing the graduated response, but the school aren't following the process.

Julie Day responded – As it about school the first point of call would be to follow the complaints procedure with school.

Q. Could there be a standardised process/form for all schools/settings to follow?

A. Julie Day answered – There is discussions about standardised support plans, often the support plans match as close as they can to the EHCP. This is so people become used to using the titles in the plan for the assess, plan, do, review process. The green paper has talked about forms and templates, we are in discussions about a standardised form, so that when everything does come in, it's consistent. Up until now as long as the document gives us the information we need and forms the robust conversation between the parents, child or young person and the practitioners then we have been ok because its doing what it's needed to do but getting consistency will help.

Q. Traded services – Is there any plans to stop services being traded, we often hear of a postcode lottery as to which school buy in which services and how much time – children are often waiting a term or more due to the number of hours being bought in.

A. Carol Taylor responded – Traded services came about because of the way funding is organised; the funding is given directly to schools then it's up to schools how they spend that funding. Traded services within the SEND, Educational Psychologist and Inclusion Support, schools do buy different amounts in and that is up to the head teacher and how they organise the resources. There are lots of pressures within school of how to spend funding, for example getting a roof repaired or buying in services from an EP. The majority of schools do buy into the EP service and some buy in to private EP services. We do reach out to schools via the core offer. Some schools do buy in a substantial amount of time. This enables us to do work that isn't just about working with individual students but around training, whole schoolwork or particular themes that school may want to follow up, other schools buy far less.

Since traded services has started in Rotherham it has enabled us to grow our services as such a lot of schools in Rotherham buy in a considerable amount of time (I know this isn't across the board). It's enabled us to employ more EP's than you would find in many other areas. It is constantly being looked at and we are look at if trading services is the best way within education.

Julie Day commented – We would expect there to be EP involvement, especially if we have a request for an EHCP but it is purely down to the school to do that. We then have to make sure it's happened, we cannot penalise the school for not using our services. Our EP's will look at the reports that the independent EP's have written, so that there is an oversight and a consistency of approach but we can't force academies to buy into our services.

Rachel Amos commented – In our early year's settings it's a slightly different arrangement as the early years EP is centrally funded. We have set times where we will offer consultations to settings and all early years setting have access to EP's free of charge.

Carol Taylor commented – Post 16 is different RNN do buy in to EP services allowing EP's to attend the settings and work with individuals.

Tanya Gerstmar commented – One of the difficult things at post 16 is that we don't know early on in the academic year when and who will need access to that. We do work closely with the EP's and most of the time it's about supporting the transition of students that's already happened, them moving to a different provider or leaving education. It is difficult to pinpoint exactly when and where there will be the need for EP involvement. We try to buy in to the service at times where we feel it may be more beneficial.

Catherine asked about traded services around healthcare.

Vicky Whitehead commented – There are some traded services particularly around speech and language where some schools will decide that instead of delivering what speech and language have advised they would like to buy more time in for speech and language to do it directly but again, this is the schools choice.

- Q. Multi agency approach - Focusing on a multi-agency approach it's brilliant on paper but for it to be effective each agency needs to understand each other's processes. This lack of understanding builds frustration and breaks down trust. I'd like to know how the agencies can work together with more transparency. To become an effective team around the Family.
- A. Vicky Whitehead replied – Individual services work really hard do deliver the best that they can but where it goes wrong is the bits between services. The first port of call would be an early help assessment, this brings us all together and doesn't need to be led by an early help worker. Regarding EHCP we can make more use of the reviews and in Rotherham we are looking at a piece of work about how to get better health representation in the EHCP reviews. I think it's about knowing what does good look like. There is a piece of work with special schools to see how schools work with staff, services and parents, to try and make sure that the process is smooth, and everyone understands their roles and responsibilities.

There is a part on the online resources for mainstream schools, which is similar in terms of making suggestions about how to get the most out of visiting practitioners. There is a large part in there about partnership working with parents and young people themselves. There is work going on about what does a good transition look like when a young person is moving into adult services. For the most complex young people with ASD and or learning difficulties there's a lot of work around the dynamic support register which is another way of bringing agencies together to avoid a crisis for a young person.

Carol Taylor commented – One of the things where more progress needed is to get the message about SEND processing right across all agencies. We did do training across agencies and offered it across agencies, take up was good to begin with but people don't always have the time. What we are doing is filtering out the messages around processes to ensure consistency across all partners and it is getting better. Progress is being made around everyone understanding the system and then being able to advise parent carers and young people clearly and consistently.

Julie Day commented. That's why a lot of emphasis is being put on the SENCo networking events because the SENCo's role is to facilitate the multi-agency working. I know that there are some SENCo's that don't send invites out to practitioners in time. It's about getting that done and coming together to support the needs of the child or young person, including any early health workers or practitioners, EP's or specialist inclusion team. We do want the multi practitioner involvement to be very obvious.

Q. Would Charter Gold apply to Academies as well?

A. Kristian responded – Yes it would.

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