

SEND & Inclusion Service Newsletter

Autumn 2023



Welcome...

to the Autumn 2023 edition of the SEND and Inclusion Newsletter.

In this edition we spotlight the inclusive work undertaken by Sedgefield Hardwick Primary Academy.

We also have some SENDIASS updates to the SEND Offer in the Family Hubs as well as details about an ELKLAN course run by the Communication and Interaction Team, Cognition and Learning news and SEND Casework/SEND Advisory advice and tips.

If you have any questions or comments about the information in this newsletter please contact Julie McClure in the first instance (see SEND Advisory Officer contact details below).

Durham's Local Offer is designed to help you find the very best support for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (0–25 years).



The Sensory Room at Bishop Auckland Family Hub, County Durham

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SEND Local Offer

www.durham.gov.uk/localoffer

SEND offer in the Family Hubs

The SEND Information Advice Support Service (SENDIASS) have started to run monthly drop-in sessions for parents/carers of children and young people with special educational needs or disabilities in all of our Family Hubs. We are really excited about this offer for our families.



The drop-ins can offer advice and support for parents/carers e.g. if they have questions about a child's educational needs or need more information or support in relation to SEND, if they need advice about transition to their child's next school, or have paperwork that they need support with.

Parents/carers can drop into any of the Family Hubs when there is a clinic taking place.

For information on the dates of the clinics please check with your Family Hub or click the link below. We would like professionals to make parents/carers aware of this offer.

[Durham SEND Information Advice and Support Service \(SENDIASS\) drop-in sessions - Durham County Council](#)



Also new to Family Hubs - Daisy Chain



Daisy Chain will be running coffee mornings for parents and carers of children diagnosed, on the pathway or who have been identified by a professional as having a need relating to autism, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), foetal alcohol spectrum disorder (FASD), sensory processing differences, anxiety and social and communication differences.

Find out more at www.durham.gov.uk/article/30513/Daisy-chain-coffee-morning

ELKLAN 11s -16s: Supporting Speech and Language for Secondary School Students

ELKLAN Course 2024

The Communication and Interaction Team are running an ELKLAN course in the spring term 2024 for staff in secondary schools.

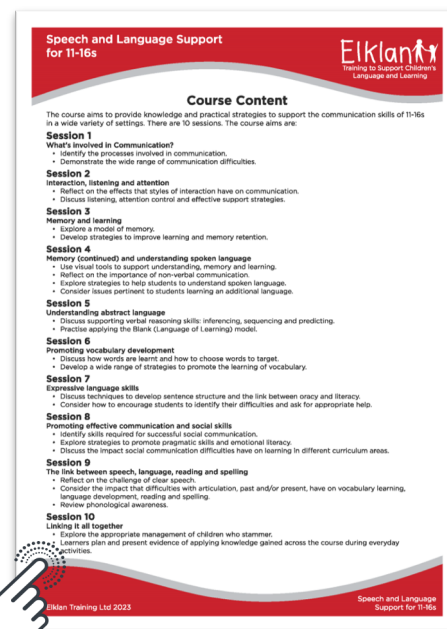
This is a comprehensive programme over 4 days which will help you to identify students who may be struggling with their language and explore ways to support them. The course costs either 2 credits or £650 per participant and this includes a substantial course handbook and the opportunity to achieve a Level 2 or 3 accreditation.

The course will be held at EDC on the following dates between 9am and 4pm each day. Refreshments and lunch will be provided.

- 15th January 2024
- 12th February 2024
- 4th March 2024
- 25th March 2024

For further information or enquiries please contact

Liz Mulholland: elizabeth.mulholland@durham.gov.uk



Save the Date!

Cognition and Learning Summer Conference 2024

Wednesday 10th July 2024

Educational Development Centre,
Spennymoor

Do not miss the opportunity to join us for an exciting and interactive one day event.

Our conference will explore latest research and practical ideas to meet the needs of your learners.

More details and registration information will be coming soon!

We look forward to seeing you at The Cognition and Learning Conference 2024!



What's New in Cognition & Learning

New Offer for Schools

What schools have said about us

'It was useful to have an advisory teacher in school all day and discuss ideas.'



'I didn't realise that the outcomes and recommendations would be the same as when a child has a face to face assessment.'



'I felt reassured that I was doing the right thing to meet the needs of a child in my class.'



What is a Cognition Clinic?

Cognition Clinic: Individual pupil input and record

This includes

- Half day (4 pupils) or full day (8 pupils max) of support .
- Approx. 30-minute discussion with staff to discuss pupil's needs and next steps.
- A short, written record including recommendations and strategies.

Cost:

- 1 credit/£325 half day(4 pupils)
- 2 credits/£650 full day (8 pupils)

What is an Online Consult?

Cognitive online consultation: Individual pupil and record

This includes

- Approx. 45-minute online discussion with staff and parents/carers to discuss a pupil's needs and next steps.
- A short, written record including outcomes, recommendations, strategies.

Cost:

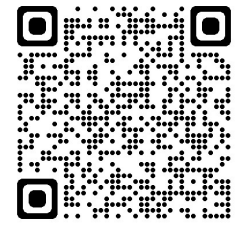
- 0.5 credit/£165



Interested?

Contact: cognitionandlearning@durham.gov.uk

Sedgefield Hardwick Primary Academy in NASEN magazine



World's Best School Prizes

Sedgefield Hardwick Primary Academy was recently shortlisted as one of the top 10 most innovative schools in the World's Best School Prizes. This accolade led the National Association for Special Educational Needs (NASEN) to recently publish an article about Sedgefield Hardwick's practice in their September/October 2023 issue. In the article, NASEN shines a light on the most effective practice at Sedgefield Hardwick, some of which has been shared below.

Curriculum Delivery/Teaching & Learning

Sedgefield Hardwick uses technology to deliver three-tiered lessons, which are progressive in content. The consistent approach to teaching and learning provides everyone with consistency, clarity and certainty. One-to-one iPads mean that pupils can download each lesson and be well supported through scaffolds such as modelling videos, examples of excellence, regular assessment checkpoints, word banks, sentence stems and paragraph frames. Assistive technologies are also used to support reading, spelling and knowledge acquisition.

Social & Emotional Learning

Teaching and learning about emotions, emotional regulation, positive interactions and effective communication are taught from the beginning. The school's Personal Development offer includes a Character curriculum which it teaches to all pupils, each day, coupled with universal regulation strategies that all pupils are encouraged to use. In addition, for some pupils who require additional teaching and support, the school has developed an Emotional Regulation Programme, which explicitly teaches pupils about sensory supports, calming techniques and thinking strategies so that pupils can develop a deeper understanding of their needs and how they can be met through a personalised 'toolkit' of support.

Collaboration

In recent years, the school has endeavoured to work in closer partnership with parents through termly SEND Parent Forums. The feedback received has proved particularly worthwhile and led to pupils at Sedgefield Hardwick now having access to:

- a silent disco in addition to the Halloween and Easter discos
- early access (alongside their parents) to the school's Christmas Fayre and Summer Carnival
- a 'soft landing' each morning, where they arrive at school ten minutes before their peers to 'check-in' with an adult and view the day's visual timetable
- additional transition arrangements before and immediately after the summer break, including a video for pupils to refer to over the summer break, which is created by their next teacher, showing the route into school, where to meet and the inside of their new classroom.

However, possibly the most powerful thing to come from the parental feedback through SEND Parent Forums, is the sense of collaboration between parents and school staff. Parents now feel that the school is working in partnership with them to support their child and as a result, the pupils are achieving better outcomes.



SEND IT System - Project Update

The SEND IT Project Team has made excellent progress with the new IT system for the SEND & Inclusion Teams and are busy working towards a go live date at the end of January 2024 for the core system.

The IT Project Team continues to develop and test the core system to ensure that it meets our requirements and ensure that data from our current system has been successfully migrated over to Liquid Logic. At the time of live migration there will be some system downtime, so please bear with us during this transition period, as it may take us a little longer than normal to respond to your queries.

Once the implementation of the core system is complete, work will start on the portals. The delegation portal will allow us to delegate tasks out to our schools and providers, as well as health and social care professionals, this will help us to digitise some of our processes. The parent/young person portal will allow us to proactively communicate with parents/young person and provide timely updates around the progress of an assessment, and the EHCP Review. We will keep you updated with progress in the new year.



SENDIASS held their first SEND Roadshow in August. The event was held in partnership with Fun with Food offering a pack lunch or tea alongside enrichment activities to 100 families. The event also hosted 50 information stands.

One parent said:

'Thanks for the event, it was good to see so many relevant services to use for parents. My son liked the balloons and magician, it's a long time since I heard him giggle like that'.



The next roadshow is being planned for April 2024.

SENDIASS are also now offering a fortnightly online SEND Clinic to families on a Friday morning via TEAMS:

- Meeting ID: 373 393 978 052
- Passcode: oWh7zp

SENDIASS have been and are able to attend to coffee morning or afternoon hosted by schools or setting to support families who have children with SEND. To book a date please contact lisa.kirton@durham.gov.uk

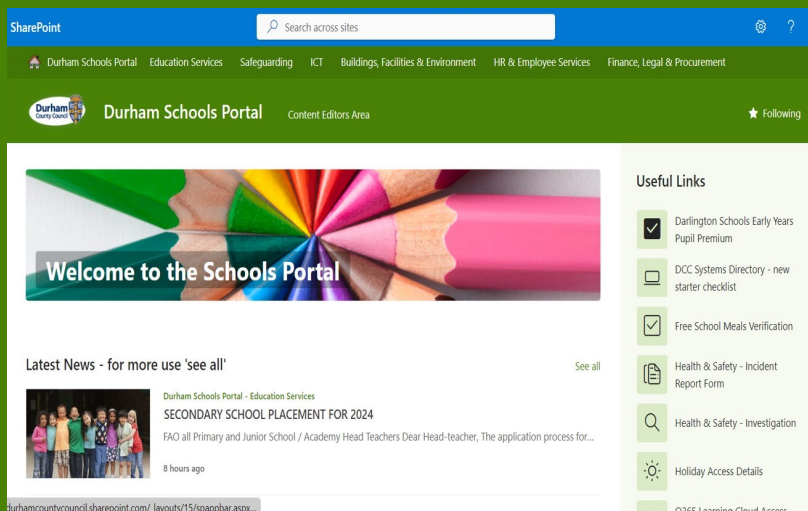
The new SENDIASS [Professionals Referral form](#) is available to support families to access the service.

[You can download a copy here.](#) (click for attachments panel)

Durham School Portal

Work is currently in progress for a dedicated SEND section which will include information from all SEND and Inclusion Teams.

Durham schools can gain access to the School Portal via their setting's super admin colleague.


[Essential Information](#)
[Referral Forms and Templates](#)
[SEND Training](#)
[SENCO Network Meetings](#)
[SEND and Inclusion Newsletters](#)
[Useful Documents](#)

Shortage of Medicines for ADHD

Information for Schools - October 2023

Information has been developed by the Integrated Care Board (ICB) around the shortage of medicine for ADHD. It would be helpful if it can be shared and used in school settings.

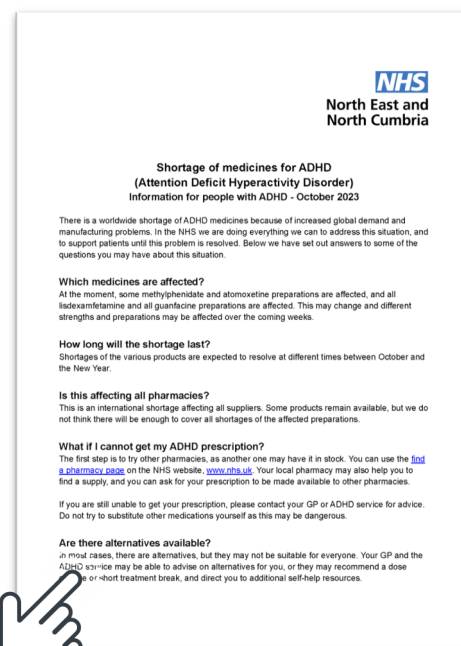
Unfortunately, there is a national shortage of some of the medicines used in ADHD. This has been caused by a combination of manufacturing issues and an increased global demand. Other ADHD products remain available, but it is expected that there is not enough supply of these to meet the increases in demand.

The shortages are expected to resolve at various dates between October and December 2023. All hospital trusts and GP practices are working with people with ADHD to either prescribe alternative medicines or identify other methods of managing behaviour and engagement.

Clinicians are identifying people who are in short supply and have been asked to:

- Agree an individual management plan with the person/carers according to their current supply, and current/expected availability of the product being taken
- Consider a treatment break, treatment-free days (e.g. on non-school days) or reduced dosage to extend existing supply
- Consider prescribing an alternative medicine or switching to a different brand

An information leaflet will be sent out to people with ADHD, parents and carers.



Impact

Where medications are being changed, the young person may have a reduction in their current medication before a new medication is introduced. In this time you may notice an increase in hyperactivity and a decrease in that person's attention.

Where medication dosage is reduced, you may see an increase in hyperactivity and reduction in attention and concentration.

During this period, you may need to consider making reasonable adjustments within your environment to accommodate the additional needs of children/young people affected by the shortage.

If you need advice and support about making reasonable adjustments in your environment, please contact your designated clinical officer.



Advice

- ADHD foundation advice for schools supporting children with ADHD in the classroom
- Young Minds advice for parents supporting a child with ADHD
- There is a range of other support groups and services which will be published on the North East and North Cumbria Integrated Care Board's website.



<https://www.adhdfoundation.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/Teaching-and-Managing-Students-with-ADHD.pdf>

<https://www.youngminds.org.uk/parent/parents-a-z-mental-health-guide/adhd/#WorkingwithschoolifyourchildhasADHD>

<https://northeastnorthcumbria.nhs.uk/>

SEND Advisory Training 2024

Date	Time	Advisory Training	Venue
24/01/24 and 12/06/24	9am - 3.15pm	New SENCO Training (£200 including lunch)	EDC Spennymoor

Book by emailing the SEND and Inclusion admin team at:

SENDInclusionAdmin@durham.gov.uk



SENCO Networks Spring 2024

Please note: SENCOs do not need to book a place onto the SENCO Network.

Date	Time	SENCO Network	Venue
07/02/2024	9.30am - 12 noon	Primary	Microsoft Teams
08/02/24	9.30am - 12 noon	Primary	Microsoft Teams
08/02/24	1.30pm - 3.30pm	Secondary	Microsoft Teams
09/02/24	9.30am - 12 noon	Special	Microsoft Teams
16/02/23	9.30am - 11.30am	Nursery	Microsoft Teams
27/03/24	1pm - 2.30pm	Post 16	Microsoft Teams

SEND and Inclusion courses



For more information about SEND & Inclusion courses, visit: www.durham.gov.uk/sendcoursedirectory

A brand new webinar - Understanding Autism

Parents and carers are often overwhelmed when the term autism is mentioned to them, especially in relation to their own child. Fiona and Lynda will come together to help you begin your journey into a better understanding of what it means to be autistic and how you as a parent/carers can feel more confident in supporting and understanding your child.

They will cover key areas and dispel common everyday myths using a range of materials and drawing on lived experience from autistic individuals.

This webinar has been coproduced by staff with support from their A Team (Autistic Advisory board) and the children and young people they work with.

Take a look at the poster for upcoming dates which are also available to view on their website.

To register for this session please complete the [online registration form](#).

The Toby Henderson Trust

UNDERSTANDING AUTISM

A webinar for parents, carers and family members

Dates

- Monday 22nd January 12:30pm-02:00pm
- Friday 1st March 09:30am-11:00am
- Monday 15th April 09:30am-11:00am
- Tuesday 21st May 12:30pm-02:00pm

Register

To register for this event please complete our online booking form via our website: www.tht.co.uk.

Alternatively you can book your place by emailing support@tht.co.uk or calling us on 0300 365 3055.

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We will cover key areas and dispel common everyday myths using a range of materials and drawing on lived experience from autistic individuals. This webinar has been coproduced by our staff with support from our A Team (Autistic Advisory board) and the children and young people we work with.



CREATED BY SPECTRUM GAMING &
REVIEWED BY THE SLEEP CHARITY

Autism and Sleep

WRITING LED BY ANDY SMITH AND COPRODUCED WITH THE SPECTRUM GAMING COMMUNITY



Also check out these awesome autism and sleep resources:

Autism and sleep information for autistic young people:
<https://autismunderstood.co.uk/health-and-wellbeing/autism-and-sleep/>

Learning about Sleep with Autistic Teens research:
<https://discovery.ucl.ac.uk/id/eprint/10145180/>

PDA Society: PDA and sleep resource:
<https://www.pdasociety.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/PDA-Sleep-1.pdf>

Autism and Sleep

A free new resource from Spectrum Gaming (reviewed by the sleep charity)

Many autistic young people struggle with sleep, but also find that typical "sleep hygiene

strategies" often aren't helpful.

Spectrum Gaming have worked with their community to write a guide to autism and sleep! This resource has been reviewed by the Sleep Charity.

[You can download the resource here](#)

Sensory strategies

What are sensory strategies?

When we are stressed/ anxious/ overexcited, it isn't very easy to sleep as the body feels very awake! That's normal. Some sensory input can make you feel more awake (such as loud sounds or bright lights) and some can make you feel calmer. Calming strategies at bedtime relax the brain and can help the body to feel more ready for bed.

I always say:

"Sensory strategies at bedtime are as annoying, but as important, as brushing your teeth. You don't want to do them as they can feel a bit silly or take a lot of time, but they are still really, really helpful for a good night's sleep".

When I started to go on a walk every night before going to sleep (which is an example of a sensory strategy), my sleep increased by about 2 hours per night!

Distractions that prevent the increase of stress:

One very common theme among autistic people is that we think a LOT. This means that lying in bed with nothing to focus on and trying to sleep can be *POSSIBLY* difficult.

Having distractions to reduce the chance of overthinking to stop our stress from increasing during bedtime is really helpful.

Remember, not all of these strategies will work for everyone. One size does not fit all so it's important to create a personalised, individual approach.

For example, if you are someone who needs to reflect on the day before you sleep every night, if it has been a busy day, there is more to reflect on, so it may take longer to fall asleep than a quieter day. For some people the opposite is true. A busy day might make it easier to fall asleep as you will be more physically/ mentally tired, then one that is quieter, leaving you full of energy in the evening!

Click on the Useful Resources information boxes below to visit the relevant website for more information.



sendgateway
powered by nasen

Whole School SEND Index
Looks at National SEND data in England. A variety of indexes to tell us what is happening for pupils with SEND, including identification, attainment, exclusions.



Beacon

Beacon School Support have produced a guide on how to try to help cope with the return to school.



Schools in Mind - Wellbeing and mental health issues that affect schools



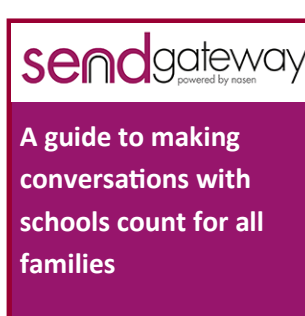
DSCP is jointly led by Durham County Council, Durham Constabulary and the Clinical Commissioning Groups who have responsibility for North Durham and Durham Dales, Easington & Sedgefield.



Speech and Language therapy for children



The DfE are carrying out a major review of SEND. The review aims to improve the services available to families who need support, equip staff in schools and colleges to respond effectively to their needs:



A guide to making conversations with schools count for all families



Support for pupils with SEND in England report
This report assesses how well pupils with special educational needs and disabilities are being supported.



SEND Advisory Team and Casework Team Updates

Communication between SENCOs and Caseworkers

There should be a named caseworker for all new assessments.

- Contact Duty Monday: Friday 9 am - 5 pm - Telephone Number: 03000 265 878 for any queries.
- Contact Theme 2 or 3 caseworkers to discuss EHCP reviews. All schools have an annual review caseworker linked to them who are there to answer EHCP review queries.
- It is vital to keep in communication to discuss any potential issues and before things reach 'crisis' point.
 - Theme 1: Casework Managers - Jill Harrison and Zelda Heney
 - Theme 2: Casework Managers - Fiona Whitehouse and Andrew Shaw
 - Theme 3: Casework Managers - Dianne Wilkinson and Peter Nicol.

Requests for EHC Assessments

Guidance Date for EHC Assessment Requests 2023-2024

Friday 1 March 2024 (this is a recommendation, not a cut off date).

When submitting a request for EHC assessment, please demonstrate a Graduated Approach.

Submit two x SEN Support Plans - there may be exceptional cases where these are not available.

If this is the case, please talk to the team or add reasons to the request form.

Include advice received and implemented from support such as Occupational Therapy, EWEL, ASC or Cognition and Learning Team.

Demonstrate that SEN Needs of child/young person are impacting on progress.

Pre-Diagnosis of Autism

A child on the Neurodevelopmental Pathway – on the waiting list or awaiting assessment - is not a reason for a request for EHC assessment.

Education Advice for Parental Requests

When parents/carers submit a request for EHC assessment, schools/settings should complete education advice when requested by LA.

Reminder

In most cases, there should only be a need for a 'light touch' review of an EHC plan. SEND Code of Practice 2015 makes it clear that only significant changes should be made on EHC plans (i.e. only a light touch review is needed).

Transition year groups: N2, Infant to Juniors (new school) and Year 6 - organise Annual Review as soon as possible in the first half of autumn term, where possible.

EHC Assessment Timescales

There has been an increased demand for statutory assessment which has had an impact on all aspects of the process specifically on the number of Education Psychology advices we can turn around swiftly. This is unfortunately leading to a delay in the process. As an LA we are trying to support this rise in demand and have invested very significant additional funding in locum support in an attempt to catch up with those advices stacked in the system and keep pace with new requests.

Theme 1 Team Manager

From 20 November 2023, Danny Meek will be joining the SEND Casework Team as Theme 1 Team Manager.

Clive Horton has reduced his working week to three days per week and is moving into a new Team Manager role within the SEND Casework Team.

Theme 2 Updates - Annual Reviews

Business Support sent out a list of pupils at the start of the academic year with a request to submit Annual Review dates.

Most caseworkers should have been in touch with schools by now.

A suite of documents are now available to help schools complete Annual Reviews and signpost to relevant teams.

Cut off dates for Annual Review paperwork to casework team

N2, Infant to Juniors (new school) and Year 6 - 5th December 2023.

Year 11 -12th January 2024.

Updates to Annual Review paperwork

We are currently working on an 'at a glance' Annual Review timescales document to sit alongside 'How to Guide'. 'How to Guide' will be updated again to reflect changes on new SEND IT system.

Data Breaches

Schools must ensure that current addresses are correct on SIMs, *EHCP and the Annual Review record before sending paperwork to the LA.

There is a prompt on the new Annual Review record (*N.B. addresses will be systematically taken off EHCPs, in preparation for the new electronic EHCP).

Liquid Logic

Go live date - end of January 2024.

Updated Top Up Documents September 2023

The documents listed below have been updated for September 2023:

- Mainstream Provision Descriptors and Funding Bands
- Appendix Funding Amounts for 2023/2024
- FAQ document
- New Request for SEN Support TU
- SEN Support Top Up Funding System Guidance.

New Process for SEN Support with Top Up Funding

If any of the required evidence for SEN Support Top Up is not submitted, the request will be immediately declined.

Once agreed, SEN Support Top Up funding will continue whilst a pupil attends the same school, pending receipt of Annual Review paperwork. The new Annual Review process for SEN Support Top Up will be launched in 2024 - further details to follow.

The school must undertake an annual review and provide information to the LA detailing the impact of the additional funding and evidence of the ongoing provision.

Schools must submit:

- Annual Review of Top Up Funding form, including parent/carer signatures
- Relevant professional reports that underpin current SEN and provision
- The previous 2 reviewed SEN Support Plans and the current SEN Support Plan (including parent/carer signatures) demonstrating all relevant and purposeful provision.

Continuation of SEN Support Top Up Funding after the Reception Year

For the SEN Support TU funding to continue after the Reception year schools are required to submit a full new SEN Support TU funding request in the summer term of Reception. School must submit the following documentation:

- A request for Top Up Funding form including parent/carer signature and a chronology of the relevant and purposeful action school have implemented in SEN Support Plans.
- A current SEN Support Plan on DCC format which clearly details the current provision for the pupil, including recommendations from professionals where applicable. Parent/carer signatures must be included.
- Two previous reviewed SEN Support Plans including parent/carer signatures and comments.
- Relevant reports and/or recommendations from professionals involved (usually within the last 3 years or at key points of transition).

Send all documentation to:
sencasework@durham.gov.uk

This will then follow the QA and panel process as a new request.

Local Authority Monitoring and Auditing of SEN Support Top Up Funding

A new monitoring and auditing process has just launched. A rolling programme of visits by SEND Advisory Officers started in November 2023.

Duration of visits will be up to half a day depending on the number of pupils receiving SEN Support Top Up.

Supportive visits will include:

- discussions
- observations and
- monitoring of SEN Support Plans.

Schools will be given approximately 2 weeks' notice by phone call or email.

