



SENCo newsletter Summer 2023

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Early Years Support Team

Disability Access Fund

Don't miss out! You may be eligible for funding to help with children with SEND in your care

All early year's providers including schools who deliver Funded Early Education (FEEE) places for 3 and 4 year olds are entitled to a one off payment of £800 per year for children in receipt of Disability Living Allowance.

Providers are responsible for identifying eligible children through a discussion with parents.

This payment is there to support providers to make reasonable adjustments in order to meet the needs of children with special educational needs and disability (SEND) and could be spent on training and /or resources.

For further details follow the link: [Disability Access Fund](#)

Useful links:

- [Speech, language, and communication pathway](#)
- [Inclusive spaces poster available for you to print and use in your classroom](#)

Funtime Bags

Funtime Bags are available to buy.

Cost: £180

Email: early.years.sen@leicester.go.uk

City Psychology Service

Supporting neurodivergent young people with the transition to adulthood

Neurodivergent young people (those with a diagnosis such as autism, ADHD, Down's syndrome, OCD, Tourette's, dyslexia) tend to have particular difficulties moving into adulthood. While young people with EHCPs will have access to support with preparing for adulthood, even those young people with lower levels of need are vulnerable at this time. They are less likely to be in further education, less likely to have friends, less likely to be in stable and well-paid employment and more likely to struggle with their mental health.

Transition support has been shown to improve outcomes. It can be challenging to put in place additional support for these more able young people due to resourcing issues, but if realised it can make a huge difference to their outcomes.

What might transition support look like?

- Evaluation of independence, work/study and relational skills
- Goal setting with the young person and putting together an action plan
- Group or individual intervention/guidance around common areas of difficulty
- Having pastoral support available for young people to talk through worries or concerns
- Enabling social support and relationships with other neurodivergent young people e.g. through drop-in groups

Good transition support typically has these features:

- Collaboration between parents and professionals: share knowledge and provide support, parents are often very anxious too
- Active involvement and empowerment of the young person, including differentiation according to preferred communication style
- Effective goal setting: personalised goals targeted at an appropriate level of challenge
- Trusting relationships enable young people to feel safe and receive support around more sensitive issues
- Aspirations: having goals and ambitions helps to motivate young people, but they may need support exploring what these could be. Concrete examples can be helpful.
- Space to think about issues around belonging and identity and inclusivity around both neurodiversity and other forms of diversity, particularly LGBTQ+
- Flexibility and consistency

Your school's link Educational Psychologist can help you think about what you might be able to put in place with the resources you have and ensure support is run as effectively as possible.

Guidance around preparing for adulthood can be found on the Local Offer website and on the National Autistic Society website.

A template has been developed to support with planning and goal setting which is available here: www.autismgm.org.uk/transitions-resources

ELSA (Emotional Literacy Support Assistant) 6 day training

In the Spring term, our first cohort of 18 ELSAs completed their 6 day training with the City Psychology Service. Our ELSAs came from across 16 schools, including Primary, Secondary and Specialist settings, and are now embarked on their ELSA roles in schools.

What is an ELSA?

ELSAs are teaching assistants and pastoral support staff who have received specific training from Educational Psychologists to help them plan and deliver programmes of support to pupils who are experiencing temporary or longer-term emotional needs. Programmes can be delivered one to one or within small groups and might cover a variety of areas. ELSA's work across both primary and secondary age ranges.

The ELSA project is based on the principle that emotional difficulties can create a barrier to learning. Increasing the capacity of school staff to identify pupil needs and provide appropriate interventions, within the context of a safe and supportive relationship, will help to improve pupils' mental health and wellbeing and enhance their ability to access learning in school.

ELSA's receive regular group supervision from an Educational Psychologist to provide ongoing support and development, and to maintain ELSA status.

The ELSA project is nationally recognised, for more information, [visit the ELSA Network website](#).

The training

The 6 days of training covers a wide range of areas relating to emotional literacy, including the core skills needed to be an effective ELSA

- Day 1 – Introduction to ELSA and Emotional Literacy; Beginnings and connections; Active listening and reflective conversations
- Day 2 – Building resilience & self-esteem: Security, selfhood, affiliation (including attachment, self-identity, belonging and friendships)
- Day 3 – Emotional awareness and emotional regulation; Introduction to ELSA with line managers
- Day 4 – Managing strong emotions (including anger and anxiety); Autism and emotional wellbeing; Social and friendship skills

- Day 5 – Loss and bereavement; Use of stories (therapeutic stories, social stories and comic strip conversations)
- Day 6 – Supporting Change; Referrals, outcome setting and planning

The course will train delegates to become ELSAs and to deliver ELSA interventions in their school.

Cost: £600 per delegate. This includes 6 days of training, and the first two supervision sessions. Ongoing supervision will be required to maintain ELSA status (at an additional cost).

Training evaluation:

- 100% of attendees rated the quality of the ELSA training as 9 or 10 out of 10
- 100% of attendees rated the quality of the course delivery as 9 or 10 out of 10
- 100% of attendees said that the content of the course had been valuable for their professional practice (rated 6 or 7 out of 7)

Feedback from ELSAs:

- Very well balanced, interesting and useful training
- Loved, loved, loved every minute of this training and will miss it
- Very well laid out activities leading on from the course materials, discussions
- I have a greater understanding of why some children behave the way they do and a greater empathy for the children I work with
- I have really enjoyed the sessions and I look forward to the supervision sessions as I know I will get relevant advice for any questions I ask
- The training overall is fantastic
- I'm feeling empowered to support children's emotional wellbeing
- I have a deeper understanding of a child's needs and way to help support

Our next training course will start in October 2023. For more information or to reserve a place for your school, please contact Zoe King, Senior Educational Psychologist zoe.king@leicester.gov.uk

Quality Inclusion Team

Quality Inclusion Updates

Ordinarily Available BERA Update

Improvements and adaptations to the Ordinarily Available BERA: Whole School, All Needs and Specific Audits have been underway with the support and guidance of the BERA working parties. These groups consist of primary, secondary and colleges in Leicester City.

What has happened?

The Ordinarily Available BERA. The Whole School Audit has been:

- Streamlined
- A prototype of an interactive form is being developed by Leicester City Digital Transformation Team
- Share with Heads and Secondary SLTs

The new format:

- RAG rating system and once a year upload
- We are hoping for links to tools, resources, exemplars to replace the current All Needs Audit
- Preparation for Adulthood and transition extended within the Whole School Audit
- Assistive Technology has also been extended within the Whole School Audit

The Ordinarily Available BERA: Specifics

These will remain in the same format as many of you have said that they have found them especially useful when supporting teachers with inclusion.

Element 3 - Specific BERAs will be requested when applying for Element 3

Advice on best use:

- Specific BERAs are used by class teachers and / or departments to plan their support for SEND and evidenced before any further SEND action is taken.
- By the SENCo / SLT during learning walks
- As general guidance to staff, some schools have produced short top tips for staff based on the Specific BERAs

The Ordinarily Available BERA: All Needs

- All Needs BERA working party have created a suite of downloadable exemplars, checklists and prompts which we hope will be hyperlinked to Whole School BERA or made into a bundle which we will signpost you to

Assistive Technology

Assistive technology - non sensory

- In Leicester City the Quality Inclusion Team works with settings and schools to ensure that children and young people can fully access school life utilising assistive technology (AT) where needed
- A referral to assess a child or young person's non sensory needs in a school or setting can be made by the school or relevant health care professional by completing the [AT referral form](#) and returning it to SEND-AssistiveTech@leicester.gov.uk
- This form is for non-sensory assistive technology only and therefore does not cover technology for [vision support](#) or [hearing impairment](#)
- For a child or young person's to qualify for an assessment, there must be a proposal for equipment/software which does not fall under Best Endeavours and [Best Endeavours and Reasonable Adjustments \(BERA\) Framework](#). Equipment that falls under BERA, such as laptops and iPads, must be purchased by the school
- If a child or young person qualifies for an assessment and the proposed equipment/software is approved, the school will be advised to invoice the finance team with the costs.

<https://families.leicester.gov.uk/send-local-offer/search-for-services/local-authority-services/assistive-technology-non-sensory/>

maggie.brooks@leicester.gov.uk

Designated Specialist Provisions (DSP) Update

Congratulations and good luck to Bernie at Spinney who open their Communication and Interaction DSP in September.

A big thank you to Fehmida at Thurnby – Mead Trust for the successful transition of 5 children with a hearing impairment into the SLCN DSP.

Element 3 Update

From September 2023, there will be an addition monthly panel meeting to support the efficiency of SENIF / E3 panels. There will be a reduction from 40 applications submitted at each panel to 25.

It is hoped that this will reduce the panel to an hour and make the pre reading for attending SENCos less onerous. We would love to see more SENCos attending panel, either as observers or members and feel that a reduction in pre-reading for panel would help with this. Training for all panel members is available to support SENCo confidence and panel expectations. Please see 'Hold the Date' (below) for upcoming dates. SENCos will be emailed the invites and links directly from sandra.cartwright@leicester.gov.uk

Panels will now be chaired by Nick Gilroy and SENDSS Team Managers. We would like to see SLT from schools and settings also attending panel. If you could ask SLT within your own schools to attend, this would be appreciated. **Please contact nick.gilroy@leicester.gov.uk if you or SLT within school are interested.**

Emergency E3 / SENIF Funding

A process for requesting emergency funding will be in place from September 2024. This is in response to the LA wishing to for increased transparency and rigorous processes in accountability of High Needs Funding and spend.

Please contact send-funding@leicester.gov.uk or qualityinclusion@leicester.gov.uk for the form if / as the need arises. This will be emailed to you and placed on the Extranet by the start of the new academic year.

The criteria for Emergency E3 / SENIF:

That the CYP has **significant** SEND needs and is known to LA SENDSS professional(s) e.g., link teacher / EP

- New International Arrival - Paul.Eden@leicester.gov.uk
- Crisis situation (Link teacher, EP)
- Significant escalation of behaviour (SEMH Team)
- Unidentified complex and enduring needs prior to starting school (EP, EY, LCI)

Emergency E3 / SENIF funding will be backdated to the date of the application. This is the process for all E3 / SENIF funding. Requests will be submitted to the next E3 / SENIF panel. All funding forms need to be submitted via send-funding@leicester.gov.uk

Element 3 Application Form

A request has gone into LA IT to amend the E3 form, following an on-going review of the process since the introduction of the form. We are hoping to:

- Remove the number and types of uploads
- Suspend the mandatory timetable input

From September 2023, E3 referrals will be return pre panel, if outcomes are not smart and related to provision. This is necessary due to the auditing process of the E3 Spend Reviews due to commence in October 2023. Forms will also be returned if provision is not explicit on timetables.

Training updates are planned for the autumn term. Please see 'Hold the Date'.

E3 Spend Reviews

Many thanks to the schools who have helped piloted E3 Spend Reviews. The Spend Reviews (auditing of E3 funds) will commence in October 2023. Schools will begin to receive their dates for a Spend Review following successful E3 applications in September 2023.

Finance Manager update

Nick Gilroy would like to pass on his Thanks for re-directing generic enquiries via send-funding@leicester.gov.uk

He included his remit to further explain his role:

- **Element 3**
 - Chair panels (with SENDSS Team Managers)
 - Produce funding schedules
 - Correct errors / omissions
 - Pay schools and academies
 - Agree banded rates
 - Provide support for issues with the online application form (via generic email address)
- **SENIF**
 - Chair panels (with SENDSS Team Managers)
 - Pay schools and settings

- Produce schedules (work in progress)
- Agree banded rates
- Provide support for issues with the online application form (via generic email address)
- **DSPs**
 - Produce funding schedules
 - Correct errors and omissions
 - Pay schools and settings

He is also responsible for all independent school, post 16 specialist, FE, academy and special schools' placements

Hold the date

18 September 2023 virtual 2-3:30pm SENIF / E3 Panel Attendee Training

19 September and 1 November 2023 virtual 2-3:30pm E3 Application Support Training / Updates

26 October 2023 SENCo Network Briefing 1-3:30pm

And finally, please remember that we are here to help in any way that we can; if not directly, we can signpost. Wishing you a relaxing summer holiday when it eventually arrives!

martine.hudson@leicester.gov.uk

qualityinclusion@leicester.gov.uk

Social Emotional & Mental Health (SEMH) Team

The secondary SENCo Network is setting up a working party with a focus on students awaiting SEMH special. The working party will develop a criterion to support the Special School Placement Panel process.

The first meeting is Thursday 6 July, 1pm, at Soar Valley College training centre. If you would like to be a part of the group, please contact Zoe Pedersen from the SEMH Team at zoe.pedersen@leicester.gov.uk for further information or to confirm your interest.

General Information

Young Researchers Young Voices Research Project: Leicester City Secondary Schools

The University of Derby is working with two young researchers with disabilities to investigate the support for young people with special educational needs and disabilities in Leicester City. The research team are particularly interested in hearing from years 8, 9 and 10 and participating young people don't have to have an EHCP.

The researchers are planning to host short fun polling/quiz sessions in Leicester City's secondary schools during the last week of June/ first week of July (26 June – 7 July). The sessions will focus on capturing the voice of young people regarding their provision and aspirations for their future with support available to participants. Individual's answers to the quiz will be kept anonymous but the result of this research will be used to better inform professionals about the experience of young people with SEND and highlight areas for improvement.

We ask that if your school would like to take part in the event that you contact molly.mcilveen@leicester.gov.uk who will then support the coordination of the session/s with the Young Researchers.

Molly Mcilveen
Project Manager
Planning, Performance and Transformation Team

SENCo Briefings 2023-24

LA Maintained Schools:

- [26 October 2023 1-3:30pm – via Teams](#)
- [21 March 2024 9-4pm – City Hall](#)
- [13 June 2024 9-4pm – City Hall](#)

Courses for Non LCC schools and academies:

- [26 October 2023 1-3:30pm – via Teams](#)
- [21 March 2024 9-4pm – City Hall](#)
- [13 June 2024 9-4pm – City Hall](#)