

Briefing: Valuing SEND in Hertfordshire Statutory SEND Process

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IMPOWER in partnership with HCC delivered a county-wide roll out of the Valuing SEND (VSEND) approach to support the SEND Transformation in Hertfordshire. The evidence from IMPOWER's phase 2 work showed that VSEND could have a significant and scalable impact on reducing statutory support demand and improving outcomes for children and young people. HCC must provide clarity about the expectations for schools to attend training, complete the tool, and outline how VSEND fits into the statutory process in order to increase uptake of the training and tool.

Overview

Since September 2022, Hertfordshire has seen a rapid and positive adoption of the VSEND tool and approach. 19 SEND training sessions have been delivered to schools and settings, and the tool is now used in 65% of schools. HCC partners such as Health, Youth Justice, and the Statutory SEND team have also received VSEND training. We want to make sure that, when necessary, these professionals can direct schools and settings to more appropriate interventions and support. Currently, 11% of schools have completed their setting readiness scores; this is a good start, and we want to ensure that the remaining schools attend training and that the VSEND momentum continues after direct IMPOWER support ends on 31st March.

The steps proposed in this briefing will demonstrate that VSEND is Hertfordshire's preferred tool and will complement the current work being done to meet the SEND Improvement Plan milestones:

- Incorporate VSEND within all HCC pathways including reviewing / revising practice and paperwork
- LMAG - to build VSEND into requests for EHCNAs paperwork and LMAG Graduated responses

VSEND expectations for success

The table below outlines the key expectations which should be met by HCC schools and internal teams. While it is not expected that these actions will be immediate it is necessary to set clear expectations as early as possible about the plans for VSEND.

SEND Process	HCC will expect all schools and settings to:
VSEND Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Attend Valuing SEND training as Hertfordshire's preferred tool.• Attend refresher training.
Tool completion and evidence submission	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Complete their setting readiness, working with senior leadership within the school to assess their readiness to meet need and identify and address gaps

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete needs profiles for children on their SEND register when asking for a new plan or approaching annual review, and as part of usual processes. • Carry out an analysis based on the SEND profile showing what interventions and approaches have been identified to meet the profile of need, which is not currently available to setting/school. • Submit a summary based on VSEND evidence as to why a statutory assessment is necessary and include home confidence where possible.
	HCC will:
Relevant teams involved in Statutory SEND work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attend VSEND training for partners and professionals • Record and evaluate assessments that include VSEND when submitted to the Local Authority as part of a statutory process, e.g. an annual review / request for a change of placement • Review the VSEND evidence and use as a basis for clarification with SENDCOs when engaging with HCC teams both for early intervention and Statutory SEND work • Flag schools where setting readiness indicates need for further development with VSEND champions • Ensure SEND Provision Panel and LMAG Panels use VSEND information provided to help support decision making
Proformas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Request for assessment completed by school • Top/crib sheet completed by HCC • Template for panel decisions recorded by panel • Refusal to assess / way forward letters • Panel terms of reference

Next steps

To ensure that these expectations are met, we recommend that regular communication about VSEND expectations be shared with schools and settings. This includes an initial letter from the project sponsor to headteachers and SENDCOs outlining the progress and expectations for completing setting readiness.

We also recommend that the process of revising the proformas to include VSEND be carried out between the relevant leads, including Mim Kendrick, Sally Glossop, Ann Marie Cottee, and VSEND delivery lead Katy Alexander.

Future communication and training to schools, settings, and partners will refer to VSEND as Hertfordshire's preferred tool and the above-mentioned expectations.