

01 Terminology

Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND)

A child or young person (aged 0-25) has SEND if they have a learning difficulty or disability that means they need special health and education support.

The Graduated Approach

Is the offer of support along a continuum to meet the needs of children or young people, in the right place, at the right time.

Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs)

An EHCP is a legal document that describes a child or young person's special educational, health and social care needs, the extra support required to meet those needs and how this support will enable a child or young person to achieve their aspirations.

02 The Legal Framework

The Children and Families Act 2014

The Designated Clinical Officer (DCO) role was introduced to support health services in the implementation of the Children and Families Act. The DCO supports health services to meet their obligations outlined in the SEND code of practice.

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How to contact the DCO

Knowsley and St Helens

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DCOs in Cheshire and Merseyside

DCOs can be recruited from either allied health professional or nursing clinical backgrounds.

DCOs work at Place within a Local Authority area and are supported working in a team of DCOs across Cheshire and Merseyside from a variety of clinical backgrounds.

The Role of the DCO

The DCO has a strategic role of ensuring health services are meeting their statutory duties in relation to SEND.

The role has 4 areas of responsibility:

- Assuring delivery of health services – compliance and quality
- Championing co-production; Advice on meeting health needs engaging young people and their families
- Assuring co-ordination and quality of health contributions to the EHCP process
- Assurance of commissioning, working jointly with the local authority

DCO work is based on:

- The Joint SEND Strategy
- The Joint Strategy Implementation Plan
- The Joint Commissioning Strategy
- The NHS Long Term Plan
- The NHS Transforming Care Programme

The Designated Clinical Officer SEND

DCO workstreams

- SEND strategy and improvement plan implementation
- Health input into EHCP process
- Co-production
- SEND workforce development
- SEND pathways and transformation

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