

## NPQ for SENCOs

### Programme Overview:

Our NPQ for SENCOs programme supports leaders to develop their knowledge and skills around SEND leadership in schools. This programme aims to develop broad expertise in school leadership domains through a SEND lens alongside specialist expertise required to excel as a SENCO.

**For:** Mostly current SENCOs in mainstream schools, for whom the programme is mandatory within three years of starting the role. Also available to aspiring SENCOs, other school leaders, and leaders in specialist settings.

**Length:** 18 months.

### Programme Components

Course	Input	Aims/Key content
<b>Conference</b>	Face to face conference	<p><b>Aim:</b> Introduces the programme and gives participants opportunity to experience the core components of each course.</p> <p><b>Key content:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; The importance and challenge of SEND leadership.</li> <li>&gt; The importance of developing expertise as a SENCO.</li> <li>&gt; Overview of the NPQ programme as a vehicle for developing expertise.</li> <li>&gt; Introduction to the simple model of memory and what it means for SENCOs and teachers.</li> <li>&gt; Module principles, study and application modules and clinics are all explained and modelled with opportunity for practice.</li> </ul>
<b>Course 1</b>  Culture	3 x asynchronous modules (study then application)  1 x synchronous clinic	<p><b>Aim:</b> Develop an understanding of the importance and ingredients of an inclusive culture.</p> <p><b>Modules:</b> Inclusive school culture; Staff expectations &amp; attitudes; Positive pupil culture</p> <p><b>Key content:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; How SENCOs can contribute to a truly inclusive whole-school culture expressed through policies, practices, artefacts and interactions.</li> <li>&gt; The importance of staff expectations and how SENCOs can help to shape these.</li> <li>&gt; How SENCOs can contribute to a positive pupil culture in which all pupils feel safe, supported and accepted as part of the school community.</li> <li>&gt; Statutory and legal considerations linked to culture.</li> </ul>

<p><b>Course 2</b></p> <p>Teaching</p>	<p>3 x asynchronous modules (study then application)</p> <p>1 x synchronous clinic</p>	<p><b>Aim:</b> Develop an understanding of high-quality teaching and its role as the primary means of improving outcomes for children with SEND.</p> <p><b>Modules:</b> Science of learning; High-quality teaching; Adaptive teaching</p> <p><b>Key content:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; The simple model of memory, its importance for learning for all pupils, and how SENCOs can support teachers to use it to improve teaching.</li> <li>&gt; The building blocks of high-quality teaching: explicit instruction, explanations and checking for understanding.</li> <li>&gt; How teachers can gather and respond to information about learning and adapt their teaching accordingly, including for pupils with SEND.</li> <li>&gt; The SENCO's strategic role as a leader of teaching &amp; learning.</li> <li>&gt; Statutory and legal considerations linked to teaching.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Course 3</b></p> <p>Behaviour &amp; Safeguarding</p>	<p>3 x asynchronous modules (study then application)</p> <p>1 x synchronous clinic</p>	<p><b>Aim:</b> Develop an understanding of effective practice with regards to behaviour and safeguarding.</p> <p><b>Modules:</b> Whole-school approaches; Tailored support; Bullying &amp; safeguarding.</p> <p><b>Key content:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; The importance and characteristics of effective whole-school approaches to behaviour to promote safe, positive and predictable environments.</li> <li>&gt; The need for tailored behaviour support for some pupils, and how to identify, plan, deliver and evaluate such support.</li> <li>&gt; The vulnerability of pupils with SEND to bullying and the importance of effective anti-bullying policies and practices.</li> <li>&gt; The SENCO's role in safeguarding children with SEND.</li> <li>&gt; The SENCO's strategic role as a leader of behaviour and pastoral support.</li> <li>&gt; Statutory and legal considerations linked to behaviour and safeguarding.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Course 4</b></p> <p>Identification &amp; Assessment</p>	<p>3 x asynchronous modules (study then application)</p> <p>1 x synchronous clinic</p>	<p><b>Aim:</b> Develop an understanding of the identification and assessment of pupils with SEND.</p> <p><b>Modules:</b> Areas of need; Assessment; Recording &amp; reviewing</p> <p><b>Key content:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; The four broad areas of need and their role in providing a starting point for identification of pupils with SEND – but emphasising the need to know pupils as individuals.</li> <li>&gt; The processes involved in identifying pupils with SEND and sources of information to draw on.</li> <li>&gt; The importance and application of the graduated approach.</li> <li>&gt; Effective recording, reviewing and reporting of SEND information.</li> <li>&gt; Statutory and legal considerations linked to identification and assessment.</li> </ul>

<p><b>Course 5</b> Provision &amp; Intervention</p>	<p>3 x asynchronous modules (study then application)</p>	<p><b>Aim:</b> Develop an understanding of how to manage whole-school SEND provision and effective intervention.</p> <p><b>Modules:</b> Leading whole-school provision; Leading intervention; Support staff</p> <p><b>Key content:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; How SENCOs can lead and manage whole-school SEND provision, including consideration of budget and workload whilst meeting pupil needs.</li> <li>&gt; The properties of effective interventions, and how to plan, deliver, review and adapt these.</li> <li>&gt; The effective training and deployment of support staff, including teaching assistants.</li> <li>&gt; Statutory and legal considerations linked to provision and intervention.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Course 6</b> Professional Development</p>	<p>3 x asynchronous modules (study then application)  1 x synchronous clinic</p>	<p><b>Aim:</b> Develop an understanding of effective professional development to improve practice and outcomes for pupils.</p> <p><b>Modules:</b> Developing expertise; Leading behaviour change; Enabling continuous improvement</p> <p><b>Key content:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; The importance of behaviour change as the key indicator of successful professional development.</li> <li>&gt; The nature and importance of staff expertise, and how SENCOs can help develop this.</li> <li>&gt; How SENCOs can work with others to design and deliver professional development to create and sustain behaviour change.</li> <li>&gt; The importance of a supportive culture to enabling effective professional development, and how SENCOs can help create this.</li> <li>&gt; Statutory and legal considerations linked to professional development.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Conference 2</b> Working across the school</p>	<p>Face-to-face conference</p>	<p><b>Aims:</b> Develop an understanding of how to lead strategically across the school and make effective decisions.</p> <p><b>Key content:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; How to build relationships and understand colleagues' priorities.</li> <li>&gt; Appreciating the complexity and interconnectedness of school systems and working to bridge the gaps between them.</li> <li>&gt; Managing up, across and down to ensure SEND is everyone's responsibility.</li> <li>&gt; Tools for effective decision-making.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Course 7</b> Working in Partnership</p>	<p>3 x asynchronous modules (study then application)  1 x synchronous clinic</p>	<p><b>Aims:</b> Develop understanding of working beyond the school to meet statutory requirements and improve provision for pupils with SEND.</p> <p><b>Modules:</b> Specialists &amp; agencies; Working with families; Building capacity</p> <p><b>Key content:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; The importance of good relationships and open communication with other agencies, including Local Authorities.</li> <li>&gt; Roles and responsibilities and the school's role in the Local Offer.</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; When and how to work with specialists such as educational psychologists or Speech and Language Therapists.</li> <li>&gt; The importance of co-production and how to build and maintain positive relationships with families.</li> <li>&gt; How to use external partnerships to build internal expertise and capacity.</li> <li>&gt; Statutory and legal considerations linked to working in partnership.</li> </ul>
<b>Course 8</b>  Implementation 1 (Explore)	3 x asynchronous modules (study then application)  1 x synchronous clinic	<p><b>Aim:</b> Develop understanding of how to select, diagnose and approach problems and priorities for improvement.</p> <p><b>Modules:</b> Picking the right problem; Diagnosing a problem; Selecting a solution</p> <p><b>Key content:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; How to use data and an understanding of the school’s strategic direction to select the highest-leverage problem to focus on.</li> <li>&gt; How to diagnose the causes of a problem and the barriers to solving it.</li> <li>&gt; Using evidence, assessing fit and working with others to select a solution that will work in context.</li> <li>&gt; Statutory and legal considerations linked to implementation.</li> </ul>
<b>Course 9</b>  Implementation 2 (Prepare; Deliver; Sustain)	3 x asynchronous modules (study then application)	<p><b>Aim:</b> Develop understanding of how to effectively implement a change.</p> <p><b>Modules:</b> Prepare; Deliver; Sustain</p> <p><b>Key content:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; How to prepare the school for change by engaging with beliefs and considering workload and sustainability.</li> <li>&gt; How to deliver a change through a carefully planned sequence of implementation activities.</li> <li>&gt; How to sustain a change by modelling, monitoring and modifying the active ingredients.</li> <li>&gt; Statutory and legal considerations linked to implementation.</li> </ul>
<b>Assessment Preparation Package</b>	1 x asynchronous webinars (in two parts)  1 x synchronous clinic	<p><b>Aim:</b> Develop an understanding of the NPQSENCO assessment process.</p> <p><b>Key content:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; The format of the NPQ assessment.</li> <li>&gt; Applying knowledge and understanding to an example scenario.</li> <li>&gt; Understanding what makes an effective assessment response.</li> </ul>

### Curriculum Sequence

Our National Professional Qualification for Special Educational Needs Co-ordinators (NPQSENCO) is an 18-month programme, broken down into nine courses. Most courses correspond directly to a section of the NPQSENCO framework, with ‘Implementation’ split into two courses, ‘Working in Partnership’ drawn from across the framework, and statutory duties integrated throughout the programme. The order in which participants experience each course has been designed in such a way that previous knowledge is built upon logically. Below is an explanation of the curriculum decisions we have made, why we have made them and how we believe that these decisions will support SENCOs to keep getting better.

The first course that participants will encounter is culture. Culture is defined as the shared beliefs and behaviours of the school community. We have placed this course at the beginning of the programme because we believe that it is the foundation upon which every other course builds. We know that an inclusive culture is an enabling condition for improving SEND provision and outcomes. Such cultures emphasise high expectations with high levels of support, and motivate every member of the school community to contribute to a clear strategic direction.

Culture underpins the core activities of the school: teaching and pastoral support. These form the basis of the next two courses – ‘Teaching’ and ‘Behaviour & Safeguarding’. One of the core principles of the NPQSENCO is that the most effective first step SENCOs and other school leaders can take to improve outcomes (whether academic or pastoral) for pupils with SEND is to improve the universal provision. These two courses therefore position the SENCO as a strategic whole-school leader of teaching and learning, equipping participants with the expertise to address these core domains in a way that will support all pupils, including those with SEND.

In the fourth and fifth courses, participants develop their expertise around domains more specific to the SENCO role and SEND leadership more widely. First, they consider accurate and purposeful identification and assessment of needs. Next, they consider how to lead and manage effective SEND provision at every level – in the classroom, through intervention and through the deployment of support staff. The course on identification precedes that on leading provision, as the former provides the foundation for the latter.

The second half of the programme is designed to equip participants to implement the expertise they have gained in the first five courses to support improvement of SEND provision across their school. This begins with an understanding of effective professional development (PD) and links back explicitly to the courses on culture (as the enabling condition for effective PD), teaching and behaviour (as the core domains of PD) and intervention (as an example of an area that relies on effective PD).

Next, participants consider the vital role of partnerships in leading effective SEND provision. This builds on course 5 (Provision & Intervention) by emphasising the role of specialists and other agencies in building an effective package of support around a pupil. It also builds on course 4 (Identification & Assessment) by equipping SENCOs to work effectively with their local authority and other agencies in this process. The course also covers the vital role of families in supporting pupils with SEND, and the role of SENCOs in using partnerships to build internal expertise and capacity.

Finally, with all this substantive knowledge and expertise in mind, participants will spend the last two courses considering how to effectively implement it in their contexts. These two courses come last because they rely on the expertise gained up to this point in the programme to have the most impact for participants (*what* to implement precedes *how*). Participants will spend one course learning how to explore, select, diagnose and plan an approach to a problem. This acknowledges the need for SENCOs to be strategic amidst the myriad priorities they could focus on at any one time. It forms a solid foundation for them to approach the final course, which will look at preparing, delivering and sustaining change.

Statutory content (underpinned by section 2 of the framework and largely drawn from the SEND Code of Practice (2015)) will be interwoven throughout the programme. For example, participants will consider the statutory duties of SENCOs and schools in regards to decisions about behaviour *in the context of the behaviour course*. This design decision acknowledges that SENCOs rarely encounter the legal and statutory elements of their role as discrete problems, instead needing to consider them when approaching problems from across the other domains of the framework.

By designing our curriculum in this way, we hope that participants will see the links between former and future courses. We hope that their knowledge of culture will help them understand its importance as an enabling condition for change, and that the first half of the programme will provide them with the expertise in both whole-school and specialist domains that they need to be able to use the tools (PD; partnerships; implementation) covered in the second half to deliver real improvements in outcomes for pupils with SEND.

We acknowledge that there is no one way to sequence this material, but the above summarises our thinking.

