



## **What are the roles of the different professionals my child may be involved with?**

If your child has a special educational need or disability, there could be a range of professionals involved in supporting them in school. Each has expertise in an area which is used to have as complete an approach to your child's needs as possible. Often, only a small number of professionals are involved and your child's class teacher, year group leader or SENDCo will explain who they are and what they do.

The process of assessment and support for a child with more complex SEND needs can be confusing and complicated. There could be many different specialists involved in different aspects of your child's needs. Below are some of the main professionals who may be involved.

**Class teacher.** Your child's class teacher is responsible for your child's safety and education. They will use their skills and knowledge to put in place any interventions or adaptations to ensure your child can access their learning successfully. Very often, the class teacher will be able to put in place everything which is needed without the need for professionals outside of school. They will discuss your child's progress at parents open days.

**Special Educational Needs and Disability Coordinator (SENDCo).** Every school has a teacher trained as a SENDCo. They have a wide role within school and may have their own class to teach as well. They do not deliver interventions as a SENDCo but are responsible for ensuring that the needs of children with SEND are being met. Their role includes: supporting the identification of children with special educational needs; coordinating SEND provision; liaising with professionals outside of school; supporting school to meet all its legal requirements; developing the strategic SEND policy with the head teacher and governors.

**Cluster.** Cluster are a group of professionals who support families of the local cluster of schools. Cluster offers expertise in family support, improving school attendance and supporting behavioural, emotional and developmental needs. They offer support through a range of strategies including therapies, counselling or courses all aimed at helping young people achieve their best. Cluster referrals are made via school or NHS services. The cluster has an important role in the Support and Guidance team. This is made up of a wide range of professionals including school who review more complex cases and have access to the full range of support available in Leeds including CAMHS

**Educational Psychologist (EP).** An EP is a highly trained specialist who supports children and young people with additional needs so that they can maximise their learning. EPs make an assessment of a child's strengths and difficulties and recommend either further investigation or actions aimed at improving a child's ability to access their learning successfully. An EP may become involved if the interventions available to school are not having the desired impact or if an assessment for an EHCP has been applied for. EPs are in very high demand and work on priority cases within school.

**Childhood and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS).** CAMHS are part of the NHS who assess, diagnose and treat young people with emotional, behavioural or mental health difficulties. They cover a very wide range of difficulties with a multi-discipline team including nurses, therapists, psychologists, support workers and social workers, as well as other professionals. Referrals to CAMHS are made via the MindMate Single Point of Access



(SPA) who are a group of professionals who identify the most appropriate service for children with social and emotional difficulties. Only GPs, social workers or Cluster Support and Guidance can refer to MindMate SPA.

Demand for CAMHS is very high and waiting times for the initial assessments are several months.

As from October 1st 2018, young people (13-17 years) or parents and carers of children (5-17 years) can talk directly to the SPA team. They can call 0300 555 0324 during office hours.

**Mindmate.** This is a dedicated mental health and emotional wellbeing website from Leeds NHS for young people (around age 12 – 25), parents and professionals who work with young people. It gives advice and support around mental health and wellbeing as well as explaining what is available in Leeds for those suffering from mental health or emotional issues.

**Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Information, Advice and Support Services (SENDIASS).** This team is a confidential and independent, arms length service provided by the Local Authority. They can support parents/young people at any stage of Special Educational Needs Support, EHC assessment, or reviews, including support around making an appeal. SENDIASS will ensure that parents or carers are: fully included in the Education Health Care (EHC) needs assessment process from the start; fully aware of their opportunities to offer views and information; consulted about the content of the plan. Their website can be found [here](#).

**SCOPE.** This is a disability equality charity which gives free, independent and impartial information and support on the issues that matter to disabled people and their families. They cover all ages and all types of disabilities and have a very good section for parents of children with SEND.