***On 19/9/17 Sharon Gest, Angie Kershaw and Suzanne Bradbury met to produce guidance on the issue of defining Severe Learning Difficulties (SLD). They considered a range of information from other EPs, LAs (Wakefield and Hampshire) and sources and are proposing the following criteria for SLD:***

**Assessment of Severe Learning Difficulties** (SLD) should be informed by a range of evidence not just one source (e.g. just psychometrics). Taking into account the chronological age of the child or young person, the range of evidence **could** include:

* **Psychometrics** (three standard deviations below the mean/ 0.1st centile/ standard score of 55 or below)
* **Academic assessment** (It is likely that a child with SLD will be working in P levels for all of Key Stage 1 and 2)
* **Cognitive/learning** (executive, processing, memory, attention, skills, etc.)
* **Social skills**
* Very immature social skills for their chronological age
* Is unable to appreciate or respond appropriately to common potentially dangerous situations and has little idea of reducing dangers in his or her environment
* **Personal independence skills** 
  + Is unable to dress/undress him or herself or able to do so only with considerable assistance or prompts
  + Needs adult assistance or prompts to eat or drink independently
  + Has limited or no toilet skills and sometimes not aware of that need
  + Is totally dependent upon an adult for all personal care
* **Adaptive function**
* Unable to adjust behaviour for different settings
* Unable to transfer skills from one area of functioning to another
* **Communication Skills**
* Little or no functional spoken language
* Little or no understanding of spoken language
* A need to sign and/or use a symbol system to aid communication
* communication skills that are only effective and functionally useful in a context where other individuals know the child well
* his or her own idiosyncratic means of communicating.

The CYP can be said to have SLD when Severe difficulties in attainment, social skills and adaptive functioning of the CYP persist despite access to appropriate educational opportunities. The CYP’s response to intervention (rate of progress) and level of support should also be taken into account.

These difficulties will be in evidence across all environments.

**This document has been based on :**

Reading of Policies from Hampshire and Wakefield

Feedback from EP Network

[http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20130402165640/https://www.education.gov.uk/publications/eOrderingDownload/DFES-0536-2003.pdf](http://mail2.nelincs.gov.uk:32224/?dmVyPTEuMDAxJiZkMWM3MTQwZWIxYzBlMWNiNj01OUE4MTM3Rl8yMzExM18xOTk3XzEmJjU0M2M4NWNhZWY1MTYxZD0xMjIzJiZ1cmw9aHR0cCUzQSUyRiUyRndlYmFyY2hpdmUlMkVuYXRpb25hbGFyY2hpdmVzJTJFZ292JTJFdWslMkYyMDEzMDQwMjE2NTY0MCUyRmh0dHBzJTNBJTJGd3d3JTJFZWR1Y2F0aW9uJTJFZ292JTJFdWslMkZwdWJsaWNhdGlvbnMlMkZlT3JkZXJpbmdEb3dubG9hZCUyRkRGRVMtMDUzNi0yMDAzJTJFcGRm)

[http://www.bps.org.uk/system/files/documents/ppb\_learning.pdf](http://mail2.nelincs.gov.uk:32224/?dmVyPTEuMDAxJiY5ODg3MDAxMWY3ZGNmNmQ5Nz01OUE4MTM3Rl8yMzExM18xOTk3XzEmJmQ0N2Q3MTBhMGY1MGMxZD0xMjIzJiZ1cmw9aHR0cCUzQSUyRiUyRnd3dyUyRWJwcyUyRW9yZyUyRXVrJTJGc3lzdGVtJTJGZmlsZXMlMkZkb2N1bWVudHMlMkZwcGIlNUZsZWFybmluZyUyRXBkZg==)

[https://www.acamh.org/knowledge/articles/issues-assessment-learning-needs-differences-between-learning-difficulties-and](http://mail2.nelincs.gov.uk:32224/?dmVyPTEuMDAxJiZkMWM2MDcxZGY3YzRlMWM1Nz01OUE4MTM3Rl8yMzExM18xOTk3XzEmJmU0ZWRmNWJhMWY5NGYxOT0xMjIzJiZ1cmw9aHR0cHMlM0ElMkYlMkZ3d3clMkVhY2FtaCUyRW9yZyUyRmtub3dsZWRnZSUyRmFydGljbGVzJTJGaXNzdWVzLWFzc2Vzc21lbnQtbGVhcm5pbmctbmVlZHMtZGlmZmVyZW5jZXMtYmV0d2Vlbi1sZWFybmluZy1kaWZmaWN1bHRpZXMtYW5k)

[http://ccea.org.uk/curriculum/sen\_inclusion/severe\_learning\_difficulties](http://mail2.nelincs.gov.uk:32224/?dmVyPTEuMDAxJiY5NDg2MTYwZmFhZGRlNmM5Nz01OUE4MTM3Rl8yMzExM18xOTk3XzEmJmM0ZWNmNTJlOWVmMDUxNj0xMjIzJiZ1cmw9aHR0cCUzQSUyRiUyRmNjZWElMkVvcmclMkV1ayUyRmN1cnJpY3VsdW0lMkZzZW4lNUZpbmNsdXNpb24lMkZzZXZlcmUlNUZsZWFybmluZyU1RmRpZmZpY3VsdGllcw==)