

Lead practitioner information

What is the role of a lead practitioner?

A lead practitioner will be involved in all aspects of support to those pupils with autism. This may include:

- Being an advocate for pupils with autism
- Supporting pupils, families and staff
- Having a secure knowledge of the key areas of difference experienced by those pupils with autism.
- Understanding and being able to respond to the ways in which autism may present a barrier to learning.
- Helping to train other staff in the setting, being the 'go to' person for advice on which resources/ strategies to use.
- Accessing support from outside agencies, where necessary and keeping up to date with relevant training and good practice.

What support will the lead practitioner (s) receive?

- Support from STARS: training/ meetings/ email advice/ phone calls.
- Access to STARS resources
- Drop in sessions once a month and access to free workshops
- Regular support meetings with other lead practitioners in your area

Which member of staff should be the lead practitioner (s)?

- This is up to the setting to decide. It could be anyone who has the interest/ skills/ experience to take on the role, e.g. a teaching assistant, HLTA, SENCO or deputy head. It is worth considering that whoever takes on the role will need to be given some time out of class to ensure that staff and pupils are supported. Best practice and impact is shown when two lead practitioners are chosen to work together in a school. One having a senior leadership role and the other having time to make resources and share strategies/ advice with other members of staff.

What are the benefits of having a lead practitioner?

-More staff feeling confident/ empowered to meet the needs of pupils with SEN and autism. Having a 'go to' person helps reduce crisis situations with pupils and staff as issues can be resolved more easily.

-Following the level 3 Autism Education Trust training, each lead practitioner will be invited to the support meetings led by STARS where they will have chance to network and have access to continued support, help and advice.

-Great opportunity for the member of staff chosen for the role to develop their skills and enhance their professional development.

What are the National Standards and how can schools use them?

A set of standards from the Autism Education Trust, to enable educational settings to evaluate their practice in addressing the needs of pupils on the autism spectrum. STARS will be supporting schools to develop their whole school practice by focusing on the national standards.