

Help Sheet

0 – 25 Specialist Teaching And Support Service

How to use and complete the SDQ (Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire)

Why?

- The SDQ is an assessment tool which can be used to baseline students between the ages of 4 and 17, who stakeholders believe may have SEMH difficulties.
- It is free to use and easy to complete. sdqinfo.org/a0.html
- It can be completed by parents and teachers and can then help to identify different /similar viewpoints for further exploration/discussion. Children aged 11 and over can also complete an SDQ.
- The SDQ can be completed as soon as a child / YP starts at a setting as the teacher questionnaire can be left out if necessary.
- It can be re-done throughout the year/ yearly to map progress/change.

You will need:

- A printed copy of the SDQ you wish to use.
- Pen
- Scribe / reader if necessary
- The scoring guidance (also available online, free of charge)

How?

- The parent, teacher, or child (from 11 years) reads the 25 statements and categorises each as either 'not true', 'somewhat true' or 'certainly true'.
- The SDQ asks about 25 attributes, some positive and others negative. These are divided between 5 scales:
 1. Emotional problems
 2. Conduct problems

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Help Sheet

0 – 25 Specialist Teaching And Support Service

- 3. Hyperactivity/Inattention
- 4. Peer relationship problems
- 5. Pro-social behaviour

- The sum of the peer and emotional problems gives a total Internalising score (internal processing), whilst the sum of the conduct problems and hyperactivity strand gives a total externalising score (actions in the external world).
- The sum of the first 4 subscales gives a total difficulty score. In addition, each of the 5 scales is categorised as 'Close to average', '**High' or '**Very high' (* low/**very low for the pro-social scale)

Things to note:

- The SDQ doesn't provide any suggested strategies / approaches.
- Only children aged 11 or over can complete the SDQ
- Comes with a scoring guide.

Reference / Evidence base – informed by:

Goodman, R "Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire" 1997