

1. When we say 'ICB area', can we define what we mean by area and whether the size of the ICB 'area' will be reflected in the available funding for these roles?

The ICB geographical area covers a number of different Local authorities each of which will have received funding to support the implementation of the recommendations. The detail of this can be found in the associated guidance <https://www.myhsn.co.uk/top-tip/nhs-england-regions-and-integrated-care-boards-icbs/>.

The recommendations state that each ICB area will have a **minimum** of 1 SLT advanced practitioner, however each ICB implementation plan will outline their proposed clinical model which will be based on local priorities and may include more roles as needed.

2. Is there the SLT workforce available to fulfil these roles? What banding and qualifications would be needed for the role?

The SLT workforce has had limited opportunities for advanced practitioner roles, particularly in paediatric and education settings. There are a large number of highly experienced SLTs working in these settings who would be able to fulfil the requirements of the SLT advanced practitioner role. This will also allow for career progression opportunities across the SLT career pathway as SLTs move into the SLT advanced practitioner roles and open new opportunities for graduates in services as SLTs move into new roles.

The SLT advanced practitioner role is the equivalent of an 8a SLT, which is required as a minimum as part of the funding. Individual ICB's model may propose the use of a SLT Consultant which would be the equivalent of an 8b, 8c or 8d role depending on the identified needs and model proposed. The principles to be included in a job description and associated documents has been written by Expert ref group led by the NHS England CAHPO team and key lead in the NHS England National SEND team (SLT), with support from RCSLT and DfE, this will be available in July 2026, however organisational job descriptions can be used. If further support is needed prior to the release of the principles document, then NHSE can provide further information.

The experience of the SLT will determine their ability to apply and carry out the role, the 'Advanced Practitioner' qualification is desirable but there is an acknowledgment that not all SLTs will have been able to achieve the 'Advanced Practitioner' qualification due to a number of contributing factors and therefore a related MSc, level 7 study or experience will be considered. In post the post holder will be supported to undertake Advanced Practice MSc – we are working to achieve appropriate clinical content for these roles or the portfolio route to ensure the roles are recognised at the level of practice they are .

3. What assurance will there be that expert at hands funding will be spent on SLTs and not utilised to employ specialist teachers or other roles? Will the local plans be challenged if they don't include SLT posts?

The funding for the SLT advanced practitioner is included in the experts at hand and local authority SEND transformation grant as per [Experts at Hand & Local Authority SEND Transformation Fund: funding for local authorities 2026 to 2027 - GOV.UK](#)

The Department for Education (DfE) regional advisors and NHSE regional SEND leads will support and challenge ICBs if the SLT advanced practice role is absent from their local area SEND reform plans or if they are not delivering against their proposed plans.

4. What is the support or infrastructure will be in place at a local and national level to ensure that this role is well supported and connected with local networks / colleagues?

At a local level support will be provided by NHSE and DfE. As part of the 'leadership' associated with the SLT advanced practitioner role there will be an expectation to work with the local authority to connect with SLTs working within education settings and a range of key stakeholders (e.g., Local area SEND Partnership, ICB SEND Senior Responsible Officers, Chief AHPs, SLT service leads, Education settings). The SLT advanced practitioners will need to draw support from their local SEND partnerships and consider how they build networks across their ICB areas to understand the local context from a population health perspective.

In addition, the RCSLT will establish a community of practice supported by DfE and NHSE for the SLT advanced practitioner roles.

5. What is the timeline on the further guidance being available?

The guidance will be shared in July 2026.

6. How do we fund these posts in 3 years when the current funding stops?

The funding associated with the recommendations are for 3 years from the financial year starting April 2026, which will allow for a review of effectiveness and need moving forward. This will provide the opportunity to consider the amount of roles and type of roles (e.g., consultant practitioner) are required and to understand more about the deliverables of the role. During the 3 years the SLT advanced practitioner will be expected to draw on the 'leadership' and 'research elements of the role to support with the evaluation and building the case of need for the future. RCSLT will be supporting the SLT advanced practitioners with possible evaluation and outcome measure tools, alongside the DfE evaluation tools.

7. Would it be possible to employ these roles within NHS provider organisations to ensure they have access to colleagues, networks, and support structure?

The roles have been designed to be employed by the organisation that will be able to deliver and implement the SLT advanced practitioner role effectively, this may be within the NHS, local authority, or independent practice as examples. The important consideration is the infrastructure and support that will enable the SLT advanced practitioner and the experts at hand to effectively deliver on the recommendations.

8. Will there be another opportunity to hear more about ELSEC as this will probably be the model rolled out?

The interim evaluation report for the Early Language Support for Every Child has been published with the full evaluation being due in Autumn 2026. [Early language support for every child: interim evaluation report - GOV.UK](#)