

# Living My Best Life – Derby Inclusion Tool

## Frequently Asked Questions

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## 1. Summary

This document responds to frequently asked questions (FAQs) to the LMBL- DIT approach and tool. This document will be updated regularly to support professionals and settings with the City-wide roll-out of LMBL- DIT across Derby.

## 2. General

### What is LMBL- DIT?

LMBL- DIT is an approach to understanding the needs of children and young people, with the aim of:

- Improving their long-term outcomes and inclusion
- Supporting schools to enhance their ability to respond to and cater for children with SEN needs
- Improving the experience of families and professionals across the system

LMBL- DIT provides a single, rounded picture of children/young people's needs and the support they need to prosper. This can be used as the foundation for planning, commissioning, evaluating support, and enabling earlier, more coordinated intervention.

### What support will settings receive?

Each setting will receive on-going support from Derby's SEND & Inclusion Manager, Catriona Rowan-Smith, plus our LMBL-DIT Champions. Some of this support may include:

- Developing and agreeing how you will use LMBL- DIT within your setting
- Supporting your school/ setting with setting readiness planning
- Providing on-going coaching and guidance to individual staff involved in LMBL- DIT

All schools/settings will be invited to join regular huddles to discuss how they are using the tool, providing peer support opportunities, problem-solving together and providing feedback to continue helping us to develop the approach.

## **How will LMBL- DIT support the council's wider plans to improve outcomes for children and young people with SEND?**

As part of the city-wide roll out, you will be making an essential contribution to the wider work to improve outcomes for children and young people with SEND. Derby Council will use the insight and learning from the tools completed to gain a comprehensive picture of SEN in Derby and to inform our future transformation activity and planning. This may include the services we commission, our strategic priorities, how we set our budgets, the workforce development and inductions we offer. As we move through the roll out, we will learn from your feedback to understand how other settings can get the most from this approach and any additional support that may be required to do so.

### **3. Using the tool**

#### **How should I complete the 'Setting Readiness' Section?**

The setting readiness section is designed to be completed in the first instance by you (the SENCo) – but then tested and agreed with your head teacher, SLT and teaching colleagues. This can be done individually or within a joint meeting. You should take the perspective of setting ratings for what the school is able to provide as its standard SEN Support offer, rather than what support you provide to a particular child.

'Whole school setting readiness' should be agreed across the domains to ensure there is a shared understanding of the provisions available and confidence levels in delivery across the school. This will then help enable the school to consider workforce development needs, skills required within recruitment and where/what services need to be commissioned.

#### **Why do we need to send our Setting Readiness ratings back to you?**

There are several reasons that we ask for your setting readiness rating to be returned. These include:

- We will be able to pre-populate a standard template with your 'setting readiness' scores so you do not have to complete this section each time you complete a tool.

- It enables us to build a good picture of the services we may need to commission or the training /support we need to offer to help support our schools / settings / children and young people.
- It will enable us to strengthen our approach to school consultations/phased transition placements for children/young people with SEND.
- It will enable us to support you if there are any particular areas where your setting readiness is lower than average- providing you with advice, guidance and any 1:1 support required.

### **What if the CYP we are completing LMBL-DIT for has an EHCP/higher level of support being provided to them than our normal setting readiness?**

We would suggest in this case that you complete a second version of the tool highlighting the setting's readiness to meet needs with an EHCP in place. This can then be used to demonstrate to parent/carers how your provision has changed from what you are able to meet at SEN Support level with the additional funding that is now in place. This can also help appease any concerns that parents/carers/teaching staff have in relation to placements required.

### **We are a mainstream setting with an Enhanced Resource Unit- should we complete two tools?**

Yes, we would recommend this as it is highly likely that your standard support offer will vary between your two provisions, and it is important to demonstrate the child's needs against the provision they receive.

### **How often should we review our Setting Readiness?**

This should be completed with your head teacher, SLT and the teaching/teaching assistant staff as one of the first activities as you start to embed the approach. Your Setting Readiness scores should then be reviewed on an annual basis or if there are any significant changes to your SEN Support Offer (for example, if your staff have received training or new services have been commissioned).

### **Which children and young people can I complete this tool for?**

The tool has been designed for use for any child/ young person with additional needs, from birth through to age 25, whether in a mainstream, enhanced resource or specialist setting and regardless of whether the child/ young person has an Education, Health and Care plan or is in receipt of or suspected of needing SEN support. You can therefore use this tool in any case where you feel it would help improve your understanding of a child's needs and the support they may require.

There are 2 versions of the tool – one for early years (0-5) and one for ages 5-25.

### **When should I complete the tool?**

The tool can be completed at any point in time to better understand a child/young person's needs and any extra help they may require. To get the most out of the approach, it is best to use the tool:

- a. As soon as SEN is suspected/identified, to inform early discussions about needs and to support early intervention
- b. Consistently, completing regular reviews of the ratings within the tool as part of the assess, plan, do, review cycle.

Consistent use of this tool will allow a clear picture of how needs change over time, both for the individual child/ young person and the setting.

We also recommend use for key phases in a child/young person's journey, for example:

1. Identifying suspected SEND
2. Prior to requesting an EHCP
3. Annual Reviews
4. Transitions – whether this is a phased transition, a child/young person reintegrating back into school following a period of absence or exclusion or where a child is 'stepping-down' from specialist or enhanced resource provision into a mainstream setting

### **How long does it usually take to complete a LMBL- DIT tool?**

When you first start using the tool it can take a little while to become familiar with the functionality and needs descriptors. The feedback we have received from SENCos has indicated that it will usually take around 15 minutes to reflect the child's needs. Your school 'setting readiness' scores will have been completed already following your training so should only need to be updated on an annual basis or following any changes to your school's SEN support offer. These scores can be pre-populated into the the DIT.

Completing the home confidence section may take some additional time, as there is a need to have a conversation with parents and carers to reflect on their confidence in meeting needs. Similarly, the support planning section of the tool will benefit from the wider input of professionals to agree specific actions to meet the child or young person's needs.

### **Should I provide a completed tool as evidence when applying for additional support for a child or young people (e.g. an intervention, specialist service or an EHC Needs Assessment)?**

Yes –providing a completed copy of the LMBL- DIT Tool will help inform an objective and holistic discussion to identify any further support required by the child/young person. Completing the tool prior to requesting additional support should also help give you confidence in your assessment of the child's needs and in your application of the graduated approach to date. It is also intended to support a common language between professionals, to ensure a consistent understanding of the needs and approaches to meeting them.

However, to get the most out of the LMBL- DIT approach and tool it should be completed before this point, ideally as soon as additional needs are identified, and reviewed consistently as part of the assess, plan, do, review cycle.

### **Will the LMBL- DIT replace any existing assessment forms or paperwork?**

Yes – the LMBL- DIT Tool will replace the threshold criteria questionnaire element of an EHC request. We anticipate that other documentation, for example annual review forms and specialist placement request documentation will also change so documents are streamlined

and not duplicated. We want to co-design these changes with you however and any new paperwork will be launched separately with ample notice.

### **How will the LMBL- DIT be used as part of decision-making on an EHC Needs Assessment Request?**

LMBL- DIT will help inform decision-making by providing a holistic view of a child/young person's needs, and the 'readiness' of the school to meet these needs (including what support has been implemented as part of the Graduated Approach). This will enable decision-makers to understand 'gaps' in support and the interventions that are required to meet need and that sit outside of SEN Support or the normal resources of a school/setting.

Where the home confidence section has also been completed, LMBL-DIT will also assist decision makers to make recommendations for the home setting and signpost them to appropriate support.

As the tool is completed for more children and young people across Derby, the objective nature should also help ensure that decision-making is more equitable and consistent, with additional support being proportionate to need. It is intended to complement other forms of evidence submitted – such as a detailed support plan evidencing application of the graduated approach to date, or specialist teacher report – rather than replacing them.

### **Should I use the tool to support annual reviews for children with EHC Plans?**

Yes – LMBL- DIT can help you revisit the child/young person's needs and the support in place. It can help highlight potential areas where progress has been made, meaning needs are reduced, and the child/young person can manage more independently, with less support, or where needs have increased, and different strategies that may be required. To get the most out of this approach, it is important to involve the parent/carer in this conversation and any other relevant professionals and, as appropriate, the child/young person.



Derby's SENCos involved in the initial trials of this new approach co-designed a best practice model for completing annual reviews incorporating LMBL-DIT. You will receive training on this and will also be provided with guidance documents to help further support you.

### **Should I use to support transitions between settings?**

Yes – the tool is beneficial for supporting transitions between settings (phased transfer or 'step-downs' from specialist/enhanced resource settings) or transitions back into school following a period of absence/exclusion. To get the most out of the approach in these cases the tool should be reviewed or completed collaboratively as part of a discussion between the two settings. This will help the new setting to understand the needs of the child/young person as well as what support strategies have worked well for them previously. They may also be able to anticipate potential gaps in support in the new setting (e.g. as staff to child ratios change) and to work together to identify ways to address these. It is also recommended that parents/carers are also involved in these discussions.

Derby's SENCos involved in the initial trials of this new approach co-designed a best practice model for completing phased transitions, incorporating LMBL-DIT. You will receive training on this and will also be provided with guidance documents to help further support you.

### **Should the tool replace the support plans we currently use for children with SEN?**

There is a support planning tab within the tool that can record outcomes for the child and details of different support strategies, identifying who should implement these and when. There is also a 'ratings log' page which will allow you to track the child's progress over time. However, the tool does not currently include a section where the child's voice (including aspirations) can be captured – an essential part of any support plan. Therefore, this would need to be included as a separate document if your setting wanted to use LMBL- DIT as the basis of your support plans.

### **Should the tool be used and shared with parents and families?**

Yes – LMBL- DIT seeks to present a picture of the holistic needs of children and young people. It recognises the importance of understanding the family's role in supporting them

and what happens within an education setting. The link between these two sources of support is vital. As such, LMBL- DIT is intended to be part of an on-going conversation between parents/ carers and the setting.

### **Does the tool signpost to Derby services?**

No – the tool does not currently signpost to Derby information or support services. It does, however, provide high-level support prompts which should be a useful starting point for support planning. If you need support to identify services that may be able to assist with the support of your children/young people, please contact Derby SAL.

### **Can it be used to audit needs and support at cohort, setting or whole area level?**

Yes – completion of the LMBL- DIT tool for all children/ young people with additional needs in any given setting or even across a wider cohort (e.g., a multi-academy trust or locality area) will provide a much richer picture of the types of needs present – and therefore of the types of support required.

To do this, settings should regularly (at least annually) review the needs profiles across the whole setting, within year groups and within classes, to understand the complexity of needs' mixes and the prevalence of different needs' types. This information can then be used to inform staff development and the types of interventions commissioned and where investment is directed.

Whilst you are being supported to embed the approach, we will collate this data for you and will provide you training on how you can do this on a continued basis. This is currently a manual process; however, an online tool is currently under development and this system will be able to generate reports for you.

### **How will the data from the complete tools be utilised?**

Your completed tools will be held centrally by our performance team and the needs assessment, setting readiness and home confidence scores will be analysed at both a setting level and Derby-

wide level. This will help us build an in-depth understanding of SEN provision against needs and will help inform setting level and strategic planning.

Data for your setting will be shared with you during your locality roll out. The information that will be captured includes;

- Primary area of need
- Percentage of CYP needs met/unmet per domain
- Breakdown of need/provision against age group

The data will be amalgamated across settings and viewed by the Local Authority and will be held by our Performance Team and Roll-out leads.

During the roll out you will be supported to capture and report on this data at a setting level so you can continue to inform your setting planning and development once the roll out in your locality has been completed.

### **How often should I complete or review the tool?**

The tool should be completed, in full, on an annual basis, unless there are any significant changes to the needs of the child/young person.

The tool can then be reviewed at quarterly intervals to monitor progress, update against the support plan and to then help inform the next annual review.

### **Can I share the tool with other local authorities (e.g. for children/young people who are not resident in Derby, or who move to a setting out of county)?**

Yes – you can and should share the tool and any other supporting information wherever necessary to support a consistent understanding of and approach to meeting the needs of an individual child/young person.

However, please be aware that the use of the LMBL- DIT Tool has been commissioned by Derby Council. The tool and approach should therefore not be shared more widely unless necessary to inform support planning for an individual child/young person.

## **4. How to complete the tool**

### **Where can I find the tool?**

Each version of the tool and the support prompts will be provided to you after you have attended the initial training sessions. The tools are downloaded as blank templates, which you then complete for each child/young person.

We are currently looking to find the most suitable place for the tools and supporting information and guidance to be located. Once this has been confirmed, we will share this link with you.

### **There are 2 versions of the tool – which version should I use?**

There are 2 versions of the tool for use with different age groups – one for early years and one for ages 5-25. For children who are 'on the cusp' of the two tools (e.g. children aged 4-6) you may need to make a judgement call on which tool is most appropriate to use. For example, you may feel it is more appropriate to use the early years' tool for a 5 year old child.

To determine which tool is the most appropriate to use, look at the needs' descriptors and setting readiness prompts within each version (beginning with what you feel is the most prominent area of need) and consider which descriptors you feel are most relevant to the child in question.

### **I started completing one version of the tool but now want to switch to the other version - can the information I have already be easily transferred from one version of the tool to the other?**

This cannot be done easily at present as the needs' descriptors are different for each version of the tool. You will therefore need to start again when switching to the other version of the tool.

If you are unsure of which tool to use, it is a good idea to look at the needs' descriptors and setting readiness prompts within each version first (beginning with what you feel is the most

prominent area of need) and consider which descriptors you feel are most relevant to the child in question.

### **5-25 feels like a really big age range – why isn't it split into multiple versions?**

We want to try to keep the approach as simple as possible, so we have only produced two versions of the tool. Most people find the 5-25 tool works well across this age group, and only using one version of the tool in this period means you get a more consistent picture of changes in needs and support over this time.

### **I can't enter the child's name within the summary page – how do I record this?**

There is no box to record the child's name as this allows the information in the tool to be kept anonymous – something which is important whilst the data is being analysed centrally. As we move to the online tool, you will be able to do so. In the meantime, you could consider saving the child's name as the file name.

### **When completing the needs' assessment, I felt that multiple descriptors within each row could apply to this child/young person – should I select them all?**

No – you only need to select one descriptor within each row, and this should be the highest rated descriptor that is relevant to the child. For example, if you feel descriptors within one row for ranges 3-4, 5-6 and 7-8 are all relevant to the child/young person, you should only select the descriptor in row 7-8.

### **What should I do if none of the needs' descriptors in a row or domain are relevant to the child or young person?**

You should not select any descriptors that are not relevant to the child or young person. It may be that the child you are working with has none of the identified needs within a particular row or even a whole domain – e.g., a child may have no additional sensory or physical needs. In this case you do not select any needs' descriptors within that row or domain. This will not impact the functionality of the tool; the tool will generate a recommended rating of 0 for that row / domain. You still need to confirm this rating by entering it in the yellow cell to the top left-hand side of that page (cell B4).

### **How should the home confidence section be completed?**

This section should be completed by parents or carers on behalf of anyone supporting the child or young person at home. It may be helpful for you to support the parent/carer to do this, or to be involved in the conversation – feedback suggests this can be a valuable way to ensure the home and setting are working well together to support the child/young person.

The parent/carer should read through the prompts and questions relating to each domain of need and assess their confidence on a generic scale of 1-10, with 1 being low confidence and 10 being high.

### **I want to use the tool to regularly review needs and support – is there a way I can track changes in ratings for the pupil's level of need to show progress over time?**

LMBL- DIT is intended to be used consistently as part of the regular review of needs and provision. The ratings log (the final tab or page within the tool) enables you to record the needs ratings and date each time you complete the tool, so you can record changes over time.

### **How can I capture the child or young person's voice in the tool?**

LMBL- DIT does not include a dedicated section for capturing the child or young person's voice, including their aspirations currently. This is something that is being considered for inclusion in a future version of the tool. This information should be captured within a separate document in the interim.

### **How do I capture the needs of children who mask their needs in the education setting?**

The LMBL- DIT approach is designed to support an on-going discussion between the setting and parents and carers. Where a child or young person is felt to be masking their needs at nursery, school or college, it is even more important to involve the parent/carer when completing the tool (to get a better understanding of the needs that parents / carers see at home to rate these accurately within the tool). It is also important to understand

how confident the parent/carer feels in supporting their child and what they feel the setting could do to help. Concerns about 'masking' of needs within the setting should be highlighted within the free text boxes and any accompanying support plans/documentation used.

SENCOs have fed back to us that in cases where there is a concern with masking, it is particularly beneficial to complete the needs assessment part of the tool with the parent and carers – this way an agreed rating can be set and understanding further developed on the needs of the child and the beneficial support that could be put in place for the home setting.

**The support prompts that appear in the support planning page seem quite high-level – how helpful are they in identifying specific support required?**

The support planning prompts are intended to provide a helpful starting point for support planning rather than detailed advice. Further information, advice and guidance can be found via the [Derby Local Offer](#) website or by contacting Derby SAL.

**Can the tool be completed for a child with non-verbal communication?**

Yes – it is possible to complete the tool for a child who communicates non-verbally, in the same way as you would any other child. As in any other case, you should only select needs' descriptors that are relevant to the child/young person.

**Do I have to start a new copy of the tool each time I review needs and support?**

Yes – currently the tool is completed as an Excel document, meaning you will need to either complete a new copy or overwrite the previous one each time you review it. You can record any previous needs ratings in the ratings log (the final tab or page within the tool) to enable you to track this over time. You can also save older radar charts if these support your discussions on progress being made or where needs may be escalating.

**We have a high number of children/young people on our SEN Register or with an EHCP in place – I am worried about the increased workload and impact on SENCO capacity?**

We will take a phased approach to completing LMBL-DIT for all of your children and young people and will provide guidance on how to prioritise completing the tool for your setting based on the areas of most value and impact highlighted by our trial settings. This includes prioritising:

1. Where you are considering an EHCP or are unsure of the next steps for the child/young person
2. Where you suspect a child /young person may have SEND
3. Where an annual review/transition is due to take place
4. Where there is a disparity between the school/setting and parent/carer view of the child's needs or where there is tensions in the relationship with parent/carers about support in place.

As the setting readiness section is completed as a 'whole school approach' this data will be the same for each tool completed and we will create you a pre-populated template to use. It is not expected that all children will have a DIT completed immediately, but that this will be the case in the longer run and that the DIT tool itself will save you time spent as it will:

- i) Identify the right support at the right time for the child/young person and the planning of support with teaching staff
- ii) Improve/help support relationships, dialogue and planning with parents/carers.

## **5. Resolving technical issues**

**When I try to click on a cell, I get an 'error' message, telling me it is a protected sheet – why is this happening?**

If you are getting this message, make sure you are trying to enter information in the right place. You only need to enter information in cells that are highlighted yellow. Most of the other cells within the LMBL- DIT Tool are protected or locked, to ensure the tool functions correctly.



**I have completed the sections on need, but the radar chart is not populating – why is this happening?**

On each of the needs' assessment pages or tabs you will see a yellow cell (B4) in the top left-hand corner – make sure you have entered your final need rating here, as this is the information that will populate the radar chart.

**I think I have discovered a different error in the tool – what should I do?**

If you have discovered a problem with the tool which isn't listed here, then please email: [ndurso@impower.co.uk](mailto:ndurso@impower.co.uk).

**Will moving the tool online cause a duplication of work for those CYP we have already completed the excel version of the tool for?**

We will take a phased approach to moving children and young people's data on to the online version, this for example would be done at the point of an annual review, issue of an EHCP or transition. Once the online tool is ready to launch. We will also provide ample notice and ensure an offer of support is in place to help you.