SIBT Framework: The SEND Experience Index

A Strategic Deep Dive for Parent Carer Forums (PCFs) and Local Partners

The **SEND Experience Index** is the operational engine of the SIBT Framework. Rather than treating inclusion or belonging as vague, subjective concepts, the Index converts the lived experiences of children, young people, and their families into a **structured, measurable metric**. Its primary purpose is to move local areas away from purely administrative KPIs (such as EHCP completion timelines) and toward a true, qualitative measure of systemic impact and child wellbeing.

1. Data Architecture: The 5-Domain Matrix

The Index standardises tracking across the entire local area. Each domain features specific qualitative indicators, ensuring that every survey response, piece of feedback, or piece of data directly influences strategic planning.

Domain	Qualitative Indicators / What We Measure	Data Capture Focus
1. Access	Timeliness of support; awareness of adjustments; access to specialist pathways; reduction of physical/sensory barriers.	Service timelines, Parent surveys, Local Offer engagement data.
2. Participation	Meaningful choice in learning; volume/quality of student voice; inclusion in trips/clubs; peer interaction quality.	YP surveys, activity registers, school council feedback.
3. Inclusion	Staff confidence/knowledge; flexibility of environment/curriculum; proactive co-production with families.	School self-assessments, workforce surveys, PCF feedback logs.
4. Belonging	Psychological safety; peer and staff validation; absence of stigma; freedom to be oneself authentically.	Standardised psychological belonging scales adapted for SEND.
5. Thriving	Self-esteem levels; development of independence; confidence during transitions; clear, collaborative aspiration pathways.	Transition outcomes, student self-evaluations, destination data.

2. Methodology: Triangulating Lived Experience

A single data source creates blind spots. The SEND Experience Index continuously **triangulates multiple streams of insight** to eliminate bias and build a dependable, multi-dimensional view of the local system:

- **Quantitative Surveys:** Short, highly accessible pulse surveys sent to families and young people via existing networks (schools, PCF newsletters, short breaks forums).
- **Qualitative Lived-Experience Evidence:** Focus groups, open text boxes, and casework trends translated into recurring thematic codes.
- **Existing Local SEND Data:** Layering local authority baseline data (e.g., permanent exclusions, persistent absenteeism, elective home education spikes) directly onto the 5 domains.

3. Why the Index Matters for Parent Carer Forums

For PCFs, the Index shifts the dynamic of co-production from a reactionary model to a proactive, strategic partnership:

- **Evidence-Based Advocacy:** Instead of presenting isolated individual issues, the PCF can point to area-wide, multi-source index data showing a distinct dip in a specific area, like *Inclusion* or *Belonging*.
- **Anonymous, Safe Insight:** The data is collected and processed anonymously at the local area level. This empowers vulnerable families to speak with absolute honesty without fear of personal or school-level blowback.
- **Early Warning System:** Drops in *Access* or *Belonging* reliably predict subsequent drops in attendance or spikes in mental health crises. The Index highlights these vulnerabilities months before they manifest as critical statutory challenges.

4. Core Governance Principle: Growth Over Rankings

A fundamental guardrail of the SEND Experience Index is its intended usage. It is **explicitly not a league table** or a performance ranking mechanism. Creating competition among local providers or schools naturally drives data manipulation and defensive practices. Instead, the Index serves as a reflective mirror for self-evaluation. It acts as a neutral space where health, education, social care, and parent carer forums can sit together, examine real human trends, and ask: *'What changes must we make to move our children from merely accessing a service to genuinely thriving?'*