

Support and Aspiration: A New Approach to Special Educational Needs and Disability

Consultation Response Form

The closing date for this consultation is: 30 June
2011

Your comments must reach us by that date.

Department for
Education

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Please tick if you want us to keep your response confidential.

Reason for confidentiality:

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If your enquiry is related to the Department For Education e-consultation website or the consultation process in general, you can contact the Consultation Unit by telephone: 0370 000 2288 or e-mail: consultation.unit@education.gsi.gov.uk

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An easy read version of the Green Paper will be available shortly from the Department for Education e-consultation website:

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If you require other alternative formats please contact:

send.greenpaper@education.gsi.gov.uk

Please mark ONE box which best describes you as a respondent.

<input type="checkbox"/> Parent/Carer	<input type="checkbox"/> Child/Young Person	<input type="checkbox"/> School/College
<input type="checkbox"/> Headteacher/Teacher	<input type="checkbox"/> SENCO	<input type="checkbox"/> Governor
<input type="checkbox"/> Local Authority	<input type="checkbox"/> National Voluntary Organisation	<input type="checkbox"/> Local Voluntary Organisation
<input type="checkbox"/> Children's Service	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Professional Association/Union	<input type="checkbox"/> Educational Psychologist
<input type="checkbox"/> Parent Partnership	<input type="checkbox"/> Consultant/Professional	<input type="checkbox"/> Academic
<input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify)		

Please specify

TACTYC is the Association for the Professional Development of Early Years Educators. We have over 400 members, including academics, local authority officers and practitioners in both maintained and non-maintained sectors. Our aims are:

- To promote the highest quality professional development for all practitioners in early childhood education and care;
- To pursue matters of current educational concern and to act as a voice for all those who work with children;
- To facilitate effective communication and support for early years tutors, trainers, advisers and practitioners in schools and other settings;
- To support the effective professional development of the early years workforce through the dissemination of national and international evidence based research and practice;
- To further the educational well-being of all children.

TACTYC has responded to those questions which are of direct relevance to its membership and stated aims.

Chapter 1: Early Identification and Assessment

1 How can we strengthen the identification of SEN and impairments in the early years, and support for children with them?

Comments:

Practitioners within the early years settings need to have a good understanding of the diversity of ways children meet developmental milestones. Therefore they need access to training that supports them in their knowledge of Special Educational Needs in order to be able to identify and address SEN.

Practitioners also need to know about the social and medical models of disability through use of tools such as the Index for Inclusion. They should be aware of legislation governing the rights of children and parents. The Early Support model of multi-agency training, where practitioners discuss SEN and its implications within mixed groups, is a proven method. Experience shows this has been particularly effective when parents are co-trainers or are trained alongside practitioners.

The Local Authority Early Years services such as Area Special Educational Needs Co-ordinators (SENCOs) and Inclusion Officers that have been supporting practitioners in their work with children with SEN and disabilities have a key role. Similarly Portage and other specialist services make an important contribution in empowering parents to support their children effectively. There needs to be parity of support across types of provision within Early Years, and this includes parity of professional development opportunities in SEN and Disability for the whole of the workforce.

2 Do you agree with our proposal to replace the statement of SEN and learning difficulty assessment for children and young people with a single statutory assessment process and an 'Education, Health and Care Plan', bringing together all services across education, health and social care?

3 How could the new single assessment process and 'Education, Health and Care Plan' better support children's needs, be a better process for families and represent a more cost-effective approach for services?

4 What processes or assessments should be incorporated within the proposed single assessment process and 'Education, Health and Care Plan'?

5 What is the potential impact of expanding the scope of the proposed single assessment process and plan beyond education, health, social care and employment?

6a) What role should the voluntary and community sector play in the statutory assessment of children and young people with SEN or who are disabled?

6b) How could this help to give parents greater confidence in the statutory assessment process?

7 How could the proposed single assessment process and 'Education, Health and Care Plan' improve continuity of social care support for disabled children?

8 How could the arrangements for provision of health advice for existing statutory SEN assessments be improved?

9 How can we make the current SEN statutory assessment process faster and less burdensome for parents?

Chapter 2: Giving Parents Control

10 What should be the key components of a locally published offer of available support for parents?

11 What information should schools be required to provide to parents on SEN?

12 What do you think an optional personal budget for families should cover?

13 In what ways do you think the option of a personal budget for services identified in the proposed 'Education, Health and Care Plan' will support parents to get a package of support for their child that meets their needs?

14 Do you feel that the statutory guidance on inclusion and school choice, *Inclusive Schooling*, allows appropriately for parental preferences for either a mainstream or special school?

15 How can we improve information about school choice for parents of children with a statement of SEN, or new 'Education, Health and Care Plan'?

16 Should mediation always be attempted before parents register an appeal to the First-tier Tribunal (SEN and Disability)?

17a) Do you like the idea of mediation across education, health and social care?

17 b) How might it work best?

Chapter 3: Learning and Achieving

18 How can we ensure that the expertise of special schools, and mainstream schools with excellent SEN practice, is harnessed and spread through Teaching Schools partnerships?

Comments:

Expecting schools to work alongside others in partnership and in similar ways, gives recognition to early years settings who are effective in working with a wide range of children. There is a wealth of good practice in early years settings, for example in Children's Centres where staff take a parent and child-centred approach.

It is important that excellent SEN practice is evaluated, with the children's views fully represented as service users in the evaluation. Opportunity Groups, pre-school playgroups for children up to 5 years with a range of additional needs and their siblings, and other provision set up by charities, have valuable experience to share with local schools and nurseries, and should be included in training and professional development. Early Years settings have longstanding experience of working in local partnership with different kinds of provision; children with SEN and disabilities have attended different settings simultaneously and there are lessons to be learnt about ways of sharing information and practice.

19 How can we ensure that we improve SEN expertise, build capacity and share knowledge between independent specialist colleges, special schools and colleges?

See response to Question 18.

20 How can we continue to build capacity and SEN specialist skills at each tier of school management?

Comments:

Effective support is required to enable every practitioner to put into practice the common core of skills needed by all those who work with children who have SEN. It is essential that managers and governors are included in training to update them on SEN and disability issues. Furthermore, leadership qualifications and professional status such as NPQH, NPQICL and EYPS should ensure that those in leadership positions are confident in their understanding of SEN and disability issues and the need to ensure that support for children with SEN and disabilities to permeate all aspects of the organisation of any settings.

21 What is the best way to identify and develop the potential of teachers and staff to best support disabled children or children with a wide range of SEN?

Comments:

Enable all staff to develop the confidence to work with all children, and see the children as individuals, rather than the label. Support an understanding of children's rights, and the perspectives of children and their parents. Develop teachers' and practitioners' understanding of how to work with other professionals so that they a) have good understanding of the areas of expertise of different professions and b) have the confidence to work together to integrate therapy targets and programmes into the group's activities. Ongoing research is showing that practitioners prefer this to be delivered by frontline workers from different agencies.

There are other training issues here concerning ways to work with the full range of individuals involved the children's workforce, including untrained volunteers and support assistants, and with practitioners outside schools whose working hours prevent them attending sessions in the working day. It is particularly important that careful thought is given as to how to provide support for child-minders and child-minder networks.

The funded training for new-to-post SENCOs has been well received but this reaches only a small proportion of the workforce. Existing SENCOs would benefit from the opportunity for funded study too – as well as TAs in schools and the support assistants and volunteers in preschool settings who work with children with SEN and impairments in non-school settings. Further training for support assistants is an essential element which contributes to the professionalisation of this significant role, in the context of more salaried posts in schools and less hourly paid generic help for children with SEN or disability.

22 What is the potential impact of replacing School Action and School Action Plus and their equivalents in the early years with a single category of SEN in early years settings and schools?

Comments:

This will limit a staged response to SEN and increase the likelihood of SEN being labelled as a single category that is difficult to move out of or indeed to move into. This would in turn delay practitioners in responding and identifying a child's needs, as they may be reluctant to apply a single "serious" label or category to the child. This may work against an early intervention approach.

It is important to recognise that children develop in different ways and at different rates (DCFS 2008) so a concern at the age of 3 may disappear by 5. Adopting a single category approach encourages a medical, within child model and reduces the likelihood of taking a wider social model of disability. It is useful to have a staged approach to identifying, registering and responding to such a concern - especially when children move between settings, as can happen frequently in the early years.

23 How could changing the school and early years setting-based category of SEN embed a different approach to identifying SEN and addressing children's needs?

Comments:

An important element of training and professional development for all working in the early years is to consider children as individuals, and develop skills in observation and reflection. It is these skills that will successfully underpin any approach. However, if the categorisation is changed, this will necessitate a comprehensive training programme to inform the whole workforce. It is helpful for SEN support to be viewed as a right rather than a need as all children have needs and rights.

24 How helpful is the current category of Behavioural, Emotional and Social Development (BESD) in identifying the underlying needs of children with emotional and social difficulties?

Very helpful Helpful X Not very helpful
 Not at all helpful Not sure

Comments:

The term behaviour may not be helpful to the child or those who work with him/her, and it is important for practitioners to understand each child's underpinning emotional and social needs. This label can promote a negative within child understanding of the difficulties whereby the child's needs are viewed as being the responsibility of the children, whereas an ecosystemic view would analyse the environment and other factors as also having an influence on the child. In addition this can result in becoming a catchall category for children who are difficult to deal with.

25 Is the BESD label overused in terms of describing behaviour problems rather than leading to an assessment of underlying difficulties?

Yes No Not Sure

Comments:

Careful consideration of children's behaviour and the contexts in which it is occurring is a crucial element in training and professional development for early needs, ensuring staff realise that behaviour should be understood as an expression of inner disposition and response to external circumstances, rather than a simple description.

26 How could we best ensure that the expertise of special schools in providing behaviour support is harnessed and shared?

Comments:

Outreach approaches are used successfully by special schools to help practitioners in mainstream develop their knowledge and confidence in working with a wide range of children. We must however, be careful not to allow special schools to turn into places to house children whose behaviour is not tolerated in mainstream schools.

27 What are the barriers to special schools and special academies entering the market for alternative provision?

Comments:

This needs to be carefully considered as there is potential danger that such schools might be less enthusiastic to support children's return to mainstream provision as this will have implications for their numbers on roll and thus their funding.

28 What are the ways in which special academies can work in partnership with other mainstream and special schools and academies, and other services, in order to improve the quality of provision for pupils with SEN and disabilities?

29 What are the barriers to special academies becoming centres of excellence and specialist expertise that serve a wider, regional community and how can these be overcome?

30 What might the impact be of opening up the system to provide places for non-statemented children with SEN in special free schools?

31 Do you agree with our proposed approach for demonstrating the progress of low attaining pupils in performance tables?

32 What information would help parents, governors and others, including Ofsted, assess how effectively schools support disabled children and children with SEN?

Chapter 4: Preparing for Adulthood

33 What more can education and training providers do to ensure that disabled young people and young people with SEN are able to participate in education or training post-16?

34 When disabled young people and young people with SEN choose to move directly from school or college into the world of work, how can we make sure this is well planned and who is best placed to support them?

35a) Do you agree that supported internships would provide young people for whom an apprenticeship may not be a realistic aim with meaningful work opportunities?

35b) How might they work best?

36 How can employers be encouraged to offer constructive work experience and job opportunities to disabled young people and young people with SEN?

37 How do you think joint working across children's and adult health services for young people aged 16 to 25 could be improved?

38 As the family doctor, how could the GP play a greater role in managing a smooth transition for a disabled young person from children's to adult health services?

39a) Do you agree that our work supporting disabled young people and young people with SEN to prepare for adulthood should focus on the following areas: *(please tick those with which you agree)*

39b) What else should we consider?

Chapter 5: Services Working Together for Families

40a) Do you agree with the following three core features of the role of local

authorities in supporting children and young people with SEN or who are disabled and their families? *(please tick those with which you agree)*

40b) Are there others? If so, please specify.

41 How can central government enable and support local authorities to carry out their role effectively?

42 What would be the best way to provide advice to GP consortia to support their commissioning of services for children and young people with SEN or who are disabled and their families?

43 What would be the most appropriate indicators to include in the NHS and public health outcomes frameworks in the future to allow us to measure outcomes for children and young people with SEN or who are disabled?

44 What are the ways in which the bureaucratic burdens on frontline professionals, schools and services can be reduced?

45 In addition to community nursing, what are the other areas where greater collaboration between frontline professionals could have the greatest positive impact on children and young people with SEN or who are disabled and their families?

46 What more do you think could be done to encourage and facilitate local services working together to improve support for children with SEN or who are disabled?

Comments:

In order to continue establishing shared outcomes for children, it is important to clarify the status of the Every Child Matters (ECM) agenda as the workforce is unclear and confused. ECM has been very helpful in capturing succinctly the principle that all in the children's workforce work together for the wellbeing of all children (and the whole child) in all contexts. Having common outcomes and goals, alongside integrated working tools such as CAF, Early Support and integrated support teams, the workforce is more likely to work in a multi-agency and information sharing way. If the phrase is to be avoided people need to know why and what to use instead. There is more work to be done in the design and provision of multi agency training to support all staff to continue to communicate and use Early Support approaches which are child and family centred.

The recommendation in the review of the Early Years Foundation Stage that practitioners working with children aged around two should contribute an assessment to complement the routine developmental check at this age is a

practical way of bringing together different perspectives on children's physical development and their learning, and fostering collaboration between professionals. The stated intention of the Minister to scrap the duty of schools to cooperate with other agencies to promote the wellbeing of children is a serious concern.

47 How do you think SEN support services might be funded so that schools, academies, free schools and other education providers have access to high quality SEN support services?

48 What are the innovative ways in which new models of employee-led organisations, such as mutuals and cooperatives, could improve services for children and young people with SEN and their families?

49 In addition to their role in the assessment process, what are the innovative ways in which educational psychologists are deployed locally to support children and young people with SEN or who are disabled and their families?

50 How do you envisage the role and service structures of educational psychologists evolving to meet local demands?

51 What are the implications of changes to the role and deployment of educational psychologists for how their training is designed and managed?

52 What do you think can be done to facilitate and encourage greater collaboration between local authorities?

53 What do you think are the areas where collaboration could have the greatest positive impact on services for children, young people and families?

54 How do you think that more effective pooling and alignment of funding for health, social care and education services can be encouraged?

55 What are the ways in which a Community Budget approach might help to improve the ways in which services for children and young people with SEN or who are disabled and their families are delivered?

56 What are the ways in which we could introduce greater local freedom and flexibility into the ways in which funding for services for children and young people with SEN or who are disabled is used?

57 What are the areas where the voluntary and community sector could have the greatest positive impact on services for children and young people with SEN

or who are disabled and their families, and what are the ways we can facilitate this?

58 How do you think a national banded funding framework for children and young people with SEN or who are disabled could improve the transparency of funding decisions to parents while continuing to allow for local flexibility?

59 How can the different funding arrangements for specialist provision for young people pre-16 and post-16 be aligned more effectively to provide a more consistent approach to support for children and young people with SEN or who are disabled from birth to 25?

60 Please use this space for any other comments you would like to make

61 Please let us have your views on responding to this consultation (e.g. the number and type of questions, was it easy to find, understand, complete etc.)

Thank you for taking the time to let us have your views. We do not intend to acknowledge individual responses unless you place an 'X' in the box below.

Please acknowledge this reply

Here at the Department for Education we carry out our research on many different topics and consultations. As your views are valuable to us, would it be alright if we were to contact you again from time to time either for research or to send through consultation documents?

X Yes No

All DfE public consultations are required to conform to the following criteria within the Government Code of Practice on Consultation:

Criterion 1: Formal consultation should take place at a stage when there is scope to influence the policy outcome.

Criterion 2: Consultations should normally last for at least 12 weeks with consideration given to longer timescales where feasible and sensible.

Criterion 3: Consultation documents should be clear about the consultation process, what is being proposed, the scope to influence and the expected costs and benefits of the proposals.

Criterion 4: Consultation exercises should be designed to be accessible to, and clearly targeted at, those people the exercise is intended to reach.

Criterion 5: Keeping the burden of consultation to a minimum is essential if consultations are to be effective and if consultees' buy-in to the process is to be obtained.

Criterion 6: Consultation responses should be analysed carefully and clear feedback should be provided to participants following the consultation.

Criterion 7: Officials running consultations should seek guidance in how to run an effective consultation exercise and share what they have learned from the experience.

If you have any comments on how DfE consultations are conducted, please contact Donna Harrison, DfE Consultation Co-ordinator, tel: 01928 738212 / email: donna.harrison@education.gsi.gov.uk

Thank you for taking time to respond to this consultation.

Completed questionnaires and other responses should be sent to the address shown below by 30 June 2011

Send by email to send.greenpaper@education.gsi.gov.uk or by post to:
Consultation Unit, Department for Education, Area 1C, Castle View House, East Lane, Runcorn WA7 2GJ.