COUNCIL FOR DISABLED CHILDREN

CDC Digest

Spring 2022

Dear all,

We reach the end of a week which has seen the publication of both the Schools White Paper and the SEND and Alternative Provision Green Paper. It is a week that has also highlighted the living challenges faced by families of disabled children and which has introduced new approaches to living with Covid.

So, it is probably a good idea that in most places it also marks the end of term! There is a lot for us to take in and take some time to reflect on.

In terms of the Green Paper, the response has been relatively muted. The overall impression is of a sector that is in thoughtful mode – interested in the headlines and the ideas but really trying to look at these in detail and test out what they feel works and what doesn't.

The balance between national standards and local delivery is going to be key, as is the development and power of the co-production levels needed to support a local inclusion plan, which delivers effectively for children, young people, families, and professionals.

The relationship with other moving parts of the system is also important. At CDC we are trying to ensure liaison with the emerging integration work in children's health with the needs of children with SEND and disability reflected in the Independent Review of Social Care and the changes to Multi Academy Trusts.

At the heart if it all is a simple question: will the proposals lead to better outcomes for children and families?

Simple question, complex answer.

The important action over the next 13 weeks is to make sure as many people as possible respond to the consultation. Special Needs Jungle have already produced some very helpful tools which support this and CDC, working with DFE, will run a number of general events in May, which we will then follow with some more specific themed events in June. Please do check in with our dedicated Green paper page on our website for more information.

We have waited a long time for this. We now must make the most of the opportunity.

I do hope many of you have a good and restful break over Easter and come back refreshed and energised as we move into a busy Summer!

Best wishes,

Dame Christine Lenehan

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Difference and Disability

Philippa Stobbs

CDC is launching a new guide for schools on the disability duties in the Equality Act. To accompany the launch of the new guide Philippa Stobbs is providing a series of blogs that focus on different aspects of the duties that provide some challenges for schools.*

**A new guide for early years settings is also about to be published.*

Many of the disability duties in the Equality Act require different treatment for disabled pupils: we have to make reasonable adjustments and we can treat disabled pupils more favourably without discriminating against pupils who are not disabled. It's also worth noting, not least because of the overlap between disabled pupils and pupils with special educational needs, that the SEN legislation requires us to make additional and different provision for children with SEN.

But that different treatment can be difficult for schools to handle. There is much encouragement for schools to have policies that are applied consistently to all children and often that very consistency is seen as the essence of fairness: we treat all children fairly; we apply the same policies and rules to all children in the same way. A school doing exactly that was found by the Tribunal to have discriminated. The judge said:

To treat everyone the same, to apply the school's rules and procedures on behaviour management regardless of disability, is to discriminate against a pupil whose disabilities call for a proportionate response, or adjustments, to be made.

On the other hand, emphasising difference can stigmatise. There are real risks that we see the disability before we see the child, that we make assumptions about what they will be able to achieve, that we compromise ambitions, and, in much of the educational narrative, we talk about *stretch and challenge for our brightest pupils* and we talk about *help and support for those who struggle with learning* (quotes from articles in the education press).

So when does different treatment emphasise difference, tend to exclude rather than include, hold disabled pupils back and potentially lead to discrimination? When does treating disabled pupils the same ignore the differences for which we need to make adjustments?

It seems to me that this is more to do with how we make adjustments and how we promote acceptance of difference. Some of this is embedded in the culture of each school.

One of the first claims of discrimination that went to the Tribunal involved a child with diabetes, who needed a high calorie snack mid-morning. The school had a *healthy snacks policy* and this meant only fruit could be consumed in the playground at break. Hannah was sent to eat her biscuits outside the headteacher's

office, so missed her recreational time with her peers. Not only that, but most children who get sent to sit outside the head's office tend to have misbehaved and have been sent there as a punishment. The Tribunal found that the school had discriminated.

I tend to put myself in the position of the staff on duty in the playground and wonder how I would have explained why Hannah was allowed to have biscuits while others were condemned to their apples and oranges. This is where I think we are missing a trick: young children accept incredibly readily that, to achieve the same ends, we may need to do things differently: *Hannah has to have biscuits to keep herself healthy*; we need to eat fruit to keep ourselves healthy. At a young age, life is pretty bizarre and endlessly fascinating and here's another thing about how different people stay healthy.

So, how we encourage that openness to difference is important, how we celebrate difference and the great variety of humankind is a good indicator of how comfortable everyone feels in their school.

At the same time, the more we can incorporate those adjustments into our day-to-day school practices, our policies and how we organise ourselves, the less we need to intervene individually and risk singling out individual children. Or, as Lani Florian[1] and her colleagues put it:

Instead of providing something different or additional for children who experience difficulties in their learning, inclusive pedagogy seeks to extend what is ordinarily available to everybody.

This is not just inclusive schools, this is inclusive teaching.

Best wishes,

Philippa

In her next blog, Philippa will be considering the definition of disability and whether, and if so how, we can know whether a child may count as being disabled under the Equality Act.

And if you would like to be notified on when the guide for schools on the disability duties in the Equality Act is published, please sign up to our mailing list here, selecting the option 'CDC Digest'.

1 Florian, L. and Black-Hawkins, K., 2011. Exploring Inclusive Pedagogy. Educational Research Journal, 37(5), pp. 813–828

Council for Disabled Children

Updates

Health

The Health team have been busy continuing to deliver the multi-agency working strand of the Delivering Better Outcomes Together (DBOT) programme. Recently included in this work was a national event for SEND leads and commissioners and a webinar on the much-debated topic of health advice compliance. Further DBOT work has included regional data workshops and bespoke support to local areas.

We have also produced a report, mapping the current early intervention offer in Rochdale and continue to support them in building their ordinarily available provision for Early Years and all SEND systems, as well as supporting them to build a data dashboard.

We have also started delivering our new Learning Disabilities & Autism contracts, and this month, we were pleased to hear that partly as a result of our work through the Health Policy Influencing Group (HPIG), the government have made three legislative concessions to the Health and Care Bill and will develop bespoke children and young people's guidance. These changes put meeting children's health needs at the heart of the new Integrated Care Systems and commit to action on information sharing. You can find out more on our website.

Early Years SEND

The EYSEND partnership have continued to deliver training sessions to parents and practitioners on a range of topics within the early years. This includes training in the Equality Act and the duties within the early years and developing the 'ordinarily available provision' in the Local Offer. The partnership also includes direct action learning sets with local authorities to develop their ordinarily available document and support transitions for young children into reception. We have held three face-to-face events in York, Birmingham and London, with guest speakers such as Ofsted, DfE and researchers, along with partner workshops to celebrate the successes of the partnership.

Special Educational Consortium (SEC)

The SEC has held a range of meetings with different divisions in the DfE and with Ofsted, with a big focus on the SEND review. The SEC has met with DfE officials to discuss the consultations on school attendance and behaviour and exclusions. The SEC has published a range of consultation responses including accessible arrangements, the online education accreditation scheme, educational challenges for children from Gypsy, Roma and Traveller backgrounds, the future of post-16 qualifications, and school attendance. You can view our responses here.

The Information, Advice and Support Services Network (IASSN)

Since January the IASSN have focused on wrapping up the delivery plan for this year and working on the delivery plan for next year.

We have completed our annual survey of services to understand what worked and did not work this year and have also completed our service user feedback report which analyses feedback from children, young people and their families for IAS services nationally. Both are historically affirming to complete with positive feedback on both our work and the work of IAS services and this year is no exception. Once again, the IASSN report shows IAS services appreciation of our work and the service user feedback report shows how vital and valuable SENDIAS services are to children, young people and their families.

We are happy moving towards the end of March that we have met our key aims and outcomes for the year and are looking forward to the new challenges next year will bring.

Participation

It has been a busy time for the participation team, following our successful Youth Voice Matter Conference where we received fantastic feedback from the young people who attended. Including "it means a lot to say how I feel", "[the conference] helps to open up our experiences to non-disabled people too" and "hopefully this can help us change the way disabled people are perceived". NCB's youth-led podcast programme, Our Turn to Talk, have been busy developing their third podcast! Previous episodes have explored accessing mental health services as a young person and addressing child poverty, you can give it a listen here.

Our Young Advisory Group met to advise us on ways that young people could be involved at NCB in the future and FLARE gave us insights into how young people could be better supported in employment and preparing for adulthood. We have also developed Factsheet #9: Facilitating Safe Online Spaces which highlights some of the ways that we can ensure online engagement methods and delivery feel like safe spaces, where young disabled people can participate meaningfully.

Social Care

The Social Care team has been busy delivering sessions through the social care strand of the Delivering Better Outcomes Together (DBOT) programme; in March we held the Social Care and SEND National Learning event, which focused on sharing outputs from the Council for Disabled Children's Accelerated Working Group, as well as facilitating Regional Action Learning Set sessions to develop local area and regional action plans.

Additionally, we held the second workshop for the Social Care and SEND Champion Train the Trainer.

Further to our busy work on DBOT, the team have continued to deliver bespoke training sessions to individual local areas, including: Wandsworth; Blackpool; and Bath and North East Somerset. We have also delivered a training workshop open to practitioners and foster carers through our Navigating Transitions for Disabled Young People training, and our next upcoming open training session will be focused on Decisions, Capacity and EHC plans.

As a part of our role as Strategic Reform Partner (SRP), work is underway to co-produce a Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) and SEND toolkit.

Council For Disabled Children

SEND and Alternative Provision Green Paper

Introduction

On Tuesday 29 March, the government published the SEND and Alternative Provision green paper. The green paper sets out its vision for a single, national SEND and alternative provision (AP) system that will introduce new standards in the quality of support given to children across education, health and care. The green paper is the result of the SEND Review, commissioned to improve a system that too often leaves parents facing difficulties and delays accessing the right support for their child.

The plans to reform the system will be open for a 13-week public consultation, giving families the opportunity to shape how a new system will work in the future – and give them confidence that their local school will meet their children's needs so they can achieve their full potential.

What do proposals mean for children, young people and their families?

- A vision for a stronger national system to support children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and their families;
- Setting new national standards across education, health and care to build on the foundations created through the Children and Families Act 2014, for a higher performing SEND system;
- A simplified Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) through digitising plans to make them more flexible, reducing bureaucracy and supporting parents to make informed choices via a list of appropriate placements tailored to their child's needs, meaning less time spent researching the right school;
- A new legal requirement for councils to introduce 'local inclusion plans' that bring together early years, schools and post-16 education with health and care services, giving system partners more certainty on who is responsible and when;
- Improving oversight and transparency through the publication of new 'local inclusion dashboards' to make roles and responsibilities of all partners within the system clearer for parents and young people, helping to drive better outcomes;
- Changing the culture and practice in mainstream education to be more inclusive and better at identifying and supporting needs, including through earlier intervention and improved targeted support.

Other key proposals include

- Improving workforce training through the introduction of a new SENCo NPQ for school SENCos and increasing the number of staff with an accredited level 3 qualification in early years settings; and
- A reformed and integrated role for Alternative Provision (AP), with a new delivery model in every local area focused on early intervention. AP will form an integral part of local SEND systems with improvements to settings and more funding stability.
- A new national framework for councils for banding and tariffs of High Needs, to match the national standards and offer clarity on the level of support expected, and put the system on a financially sustainable footing in the future.

Funding announcements

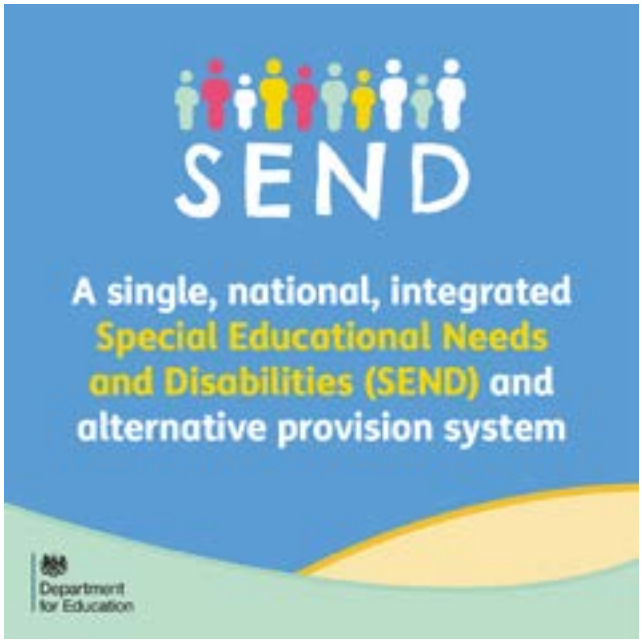
- The proposals are backed by new funding to implement them, worth £70 million. This will build on the £9 billion government investment in local authority high needs budgets next year and £2.6 billion for new places for children with SEND over the next three years.
- Capital funding allocations worth £1.4 billion have also been published today for councils to pay for new places and improve existing provision for children and young people with SEND, or those who will benefit from high-quality AP. This funding will help stabilise local systems ahead of any further legislation from the green paper proposals.
- Low-income families with seriously ill or disabled children will be further supported through investment of £27.3 million next year. This funding will help pay for equipment, goods or services – from washing machines and fridges to sensory and educational equipment that they might not otherwise be able to afford.
- Over £10 million will also be invested to train over 200 more educational psychologists from September, to give advice and input into EHCP assessments, advise schools on how to support pupils with SEND and offer wider wellbeing support to them, their families and teachers.

Dame Christine Lenehan, Director of Council for Disabled Children, said:

I am very happy to welcome this Green Paper. It shows that Government has listened to the frustration across the sector and the toll that has taken on parents, children and professionals alike. The Green Paper proposes a welcome framework for change which should support children and families getting the services and support they need close to home. However, this is just a framework and so the consultation response to it will be key as it develops into a programme that delivers the change we need to see. We hope that everyone takes the opportunity to respond and support that happening.

To visit our dedicated web page for more information on the SEND and alternative provision green paper and for information on how to take part in the consultation process, please click here.

You can view the Department for Education webpage here.



4th Making Participation Work Children and Young People's Conference: Youth Voice Matters

On Wednesday 23rd February, we held the Youth Voice Matters Children and Young People's Conference. The conference is designed and delivered by young people for young people. The annual conference is an incredible opportunity for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities to build on their participation skills, develop their voice and feel empowered to participate in decision making at a local, national and strategic level.

The Government Minister for Children and Families, Will Quince, gave a keynote address to all delegates before attending a roundtable with the Department for Education's national young SEND advisory group (FLARE). Will spoke about what amazing work young people have done over the course of the pandemic and about the importance of supporting mental health:

"It's so important that we have young people like you, who are so passionate about participation to ensure that you have an equal say in the policies that affect you and your families".

Minister for Children and Families, Will Quince.

After this the Chatterboxes' Natalie spoke about the importance of Youth Voice and what it means to them:

"I hate not having my voice heard, I am an intelligent and articulate young woman and I have a lot to say about almost any subject".

Natalie, The Chatterboxes.

The workshop's held at this year's conference covered a wide variety of topics. Some young people signed up to hear from finance experts at MyBnk to get an introduction to manage their own finances, whilst others heard from NCB's Hope, to learn about how to prepare to speak to decision makers about the issues they are passionate about.

The Chatterboxes delivered an amazing workshop about how to get the right support in school for you, and the SEND Review team from the Department for Education gave Young People the opportunity to have their say on the SEND Review. CDC's Ciara and FLARE member Grace gave their top tips on how to advocate for yourself! FLARE member Carys and NCB young trustee Bethan developed an informative and fun workshop on Youth voices in action, where they discussed how to make your own podcast.

Council for Disabled Children

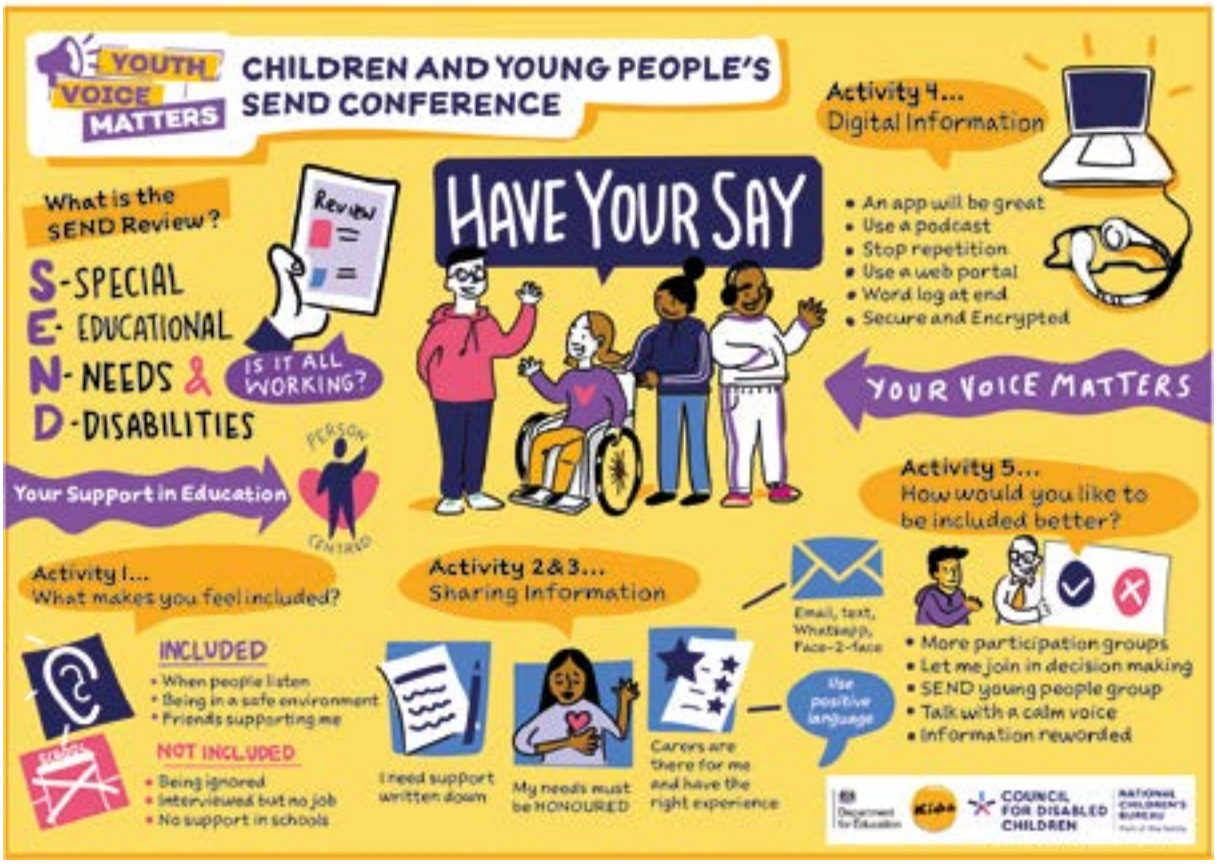
4th Making Participation Work Children and Young People's Conference: Youth Voice Matters

Ways to stay updated on the Making Participation Work programme:

Sign up to our participation newsletter here

Join the Making Ourselves Heard Forum here

Follow us on Twitter

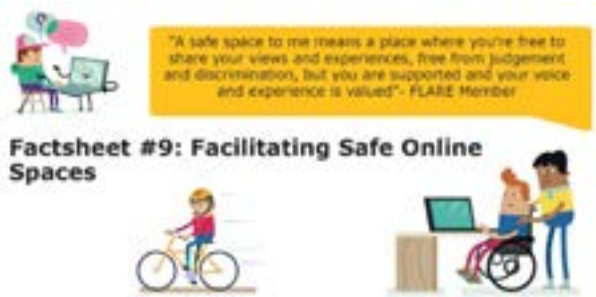


Council for Disabled Children

Resources, Events and Research

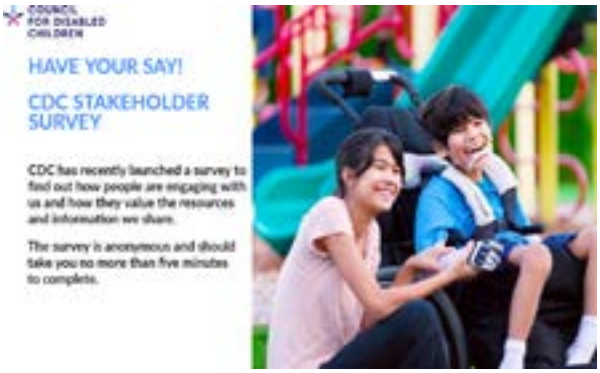
Resources

Our FLARE members regularly write blogs on issues that matter to them. FLARE's blogs offer an accessible and accurate insight into the lives of young disabled people from across England. For World Autism Month Louise is sharing a piece about the issue of autistic people and people with learning disabilities being detained in assessment and treatment units. Read here.



Online engagement with children and young people has become increasingly commonplace, it is important that children and young people also feel that their voices are heard in these digital spaces.

This new resource explores some of the ways that we can ensure online engagement methods and delivery feel like safe spaces, where young disabled people can participate meaningfully. View here.



Please complete our survey so that we can find out how people are engaging with us and how they value the resources and information we share.

The results of the survey will be used internally to improve the information and resources that we provide to you. We will analyse and use the survey results to inform the ways in which we produce and share resources in the future with parent carers, practitioners and other key stakeholders.

The survey is anonymous and should take you no more than five minutes to complete.

Please complete the survey here.

Ambitious About Autism has launched the UK's first online platform for autistic young people aged between 16–25 years.

The network is a safe and moderated online space designed to help you understand your autistic identity and connect with others.

On the platform young people will be able to:

- Apply for upcoming paid opportunities
- Sign up and access peer support sessions
- Receive updates from groups and panels
- Instant message other Youth Network members
- Access a live feed of information.

Events

Registration for shared support April is now open. You are invited to join us on Thursday 21st April between 11–11:45am.

The theme for this session will be discussing the building blocks of strategic participation, including:

- How can we ensure we understand the communities in which we are working?
- What are the challenges of creating sustainable spaces and opportunities for young people?
- How do we make links within our teams as well as with other practitioners and organisations?
- What are the range of skills we need as practitioners to both successfully deliver and progress, and how do we skills share as a participation community?

Register here.

Research opportunities

We are looking for parents or caregivers of children or young people under 18 with long-term health conditions to take part in a focus group. You are invited to participate in one online focus group. The session would take about 60 minutes of your time and will involve a facilitated group discussion with 6–8 other participants, who also have experience of seeking healthcare for their child during the pandemic. Deadline for enquiries Monday 4th April. More info here.

The Council for Disabled Children are looking to partner with 3 existing groups of children and young people, whether a youth group, a class at school, an after-school club, or a participation group, to work alongside FLARE. FLARE are the young advisors to the Department for Education supported by the Council for Disabled Children.

This partnership will give opportunities to the children and young people you work with and support them to feed in directly to the Department for Education.

More information here.

National Children's Bureau

School attendance – NCB's vision

In response to the Department for Education's consultation on school attendance, NCB has set out its vision of an inclusive education system that empowers children to attend schools and fulfil their potential in a safe and respectful environment.

Attendance is a crucial indicator of how well our education system is delivering for all children.

The data shows that the vast majority of variation in attendance is linked to the characteristics of children within schools, not between schools or local authorities.

Children with SEN and disabilities, children from some Black and Minority Ethnic communities, and children from low-income households are far more likely to be persistently absent that their peers.

It is therefore imperative that both national and local approaches seek to addresses the structural barriers and discrimination that lie at the heart of these inequalities in attendance. Many of the reasons for poor attendance at school begin early, so any effective long-term strategy must also focus on access and inclusion in early years settings and supporting children's transition into reception.

The starting point for removing these barriers must be an understanding of the views of children and parents. This is true whether considering action at the individual, school, local authority or national level. Only by engaging with the experiences of children themselves – including their access to learning, feelings of safety, and emotional wellbeing – can we deliver sustainable improvement in levels of attendance.

Our proposals include:

- Requiring schools to have an attendance policy, and have regard to statutory guidance on the expectations of schools, academy trusts and governing bodies of maintained schools on attendance management and improvement
- Introducing guidance on the expectations of local authority attendance services, including a minimum set of expectations for all LA attendance services; collecting data, sharing best practice, whole family support is provided (i.e. early help workers), making use of legal powers, fixed penalty notices and prosecutions if support does not work or not engaged with.
- Creating a clearer more consistent national framework for the use of attendance legal intervention, including a new regulatory framework for issuing fixed penalty notices for absence.

Read the full briefing by clicking on the link here and find out more about the DfE consultation here.

National Children's Bureau

HIV in Schools – guidance for teachers

In collaboration with CHIVA, NCB has produced a good practice guide to supporting children living with and affected by HIV.

Schools are experienced in providing support to children living with many chronic illnesses. However, the stigma surrounding HIV means that families are often reluctant to share the diagnosis with schools because of concerns about confidentiality and are therefore unable to access this support. The vast majority of children living with HIV have not notified their school, for fear of the response.

Through a series of case studies looking at the real experiences of children and families living with HIV, this publication provides those involved in education with an insight into the issues for those affected and the impact of current practices.

It is in the interest of all children that schools provide accurate information about HIV as part of relationships and sex education. It is therefore essential that teachers and staff are equipped with accurate knowledge and understanding about HIV and routes of transmission.

This guide provides schools, governing bodies and local authorities with practical information and suggestions on ways to support the needs of children living with HIV.

It addresses schools' concerns about HIV and sets out some simple ways in which a school can provide a supportive environment for a child living with, or affected by, HIV. This is set in the context of the support that schools already provide to all pupils with health needs.

The guide is relevant to all schools, including academies; free schools; maintained nursery, primary, secondary and special schools; independent schools; and PRUs. It is for all the staff who work in them – including local authority personnel, governing bodies and school leaders – and external bodies who have regular contact with schools.

It will also be of use to those providing services to children, such as youth workers and early years practitioners.

This guide has been developed in consultation with a number of schools, local authorities, parents/carers, and children living with HIV.

Download the full guidance here.

Contact

Direct payments for disabled children's social care: parents top questions answered

Contact's Facebook Q&A about accessing direct payments for children's social services last week was one of the charity's most popular yet, with over 120 parent carers asking questions to our advisers. Here we've put together a round-up some of the top questions Contact's parent advisers were asked including how they can get direct payments and what they can be used for. Find out more in Contact's Services and Support parent guide and in our Personal Budgets factsheet.

Children with SEND have higher rates of severe absence from school

Last week the Children's Commissioner estimated that 1.8 million children are persistently absent from school. Contact knows from calls to their helpline that there is a sizeable number of children with SEND who are not in school or only there part-time. And we have seen an 8% increase in calls to the charity's SEN helpline on attendance issues in the last six months compared to the same period last year. Children with disabilities and health conditions have historically had more absences for a number of reasons: health issues, lack of support in school, waiting for a suitable school place, waiting for a first or updated Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP), as well as being subject to higher rates of exclusion and illegal exclusion. Take a look at Contact's advice on absence from school for parents, going back to school after absence, information about fines for non-attendance and more.

Help with energy bills

The chancellor Rishi Sunak set out the government's plans to help families with the cost of living crisis in his Spring Statement last week. But there was very little help announced for carers and families with disabled children facing soaring bills. Contact's recent Out of Energy campaign research shows that families with disabled children are already paying £600 more for energy than other households. That's before the unprecedented energy price rises coming in April.

There is help available to make sure parent carers are getting everything they are entitled to. It is worth checking to see if families can decrease the amount of energy you use. Parent carers struggling with finances and debt can try Contact's online benefits calculator, use the online grants search or read Contact's list of 6 things parent carers can do now to ease the cost of living crisis.

NHS England & Improvement

Keyworking services move from the pilot phase towards full geographical cover

The NHS Long term Plan includes a commitment that 'by 2023/24 children and young people with a learning disability and/or who are autistic with the most complex needs will have a designated keyworker'. To deliver on this, Keyworking services have been introduced in pilot and early adopter areas to work with young people, families and services to avoid unnecessary admissions to mental health hospitals and to facilitate timely discharge with the right support in place.

Building on learning from these pilot and early adopter areas, Phase 3 of the Keyworker programme now sees the remaining areas of the country developing plans for their Keyworking service. Local areas are being asked to work closely across partner agencies to ensure that the service they develop delivers the Keyworking functions and ensures children, young people and their families get the right support at the right time to achieve the outcomes they need.

Visit the NHS England and NHS Improvement website for more information and case studies which demonstrate how Keyworking is making a difference to young people's lives in Heywood, Middleton and Rochdale and South Yorkshire. The NHS Futures platform has a workspace for everyone involved in Keyworking pilots to connect with each other, talk about hot topics and share ideas, information and learning.

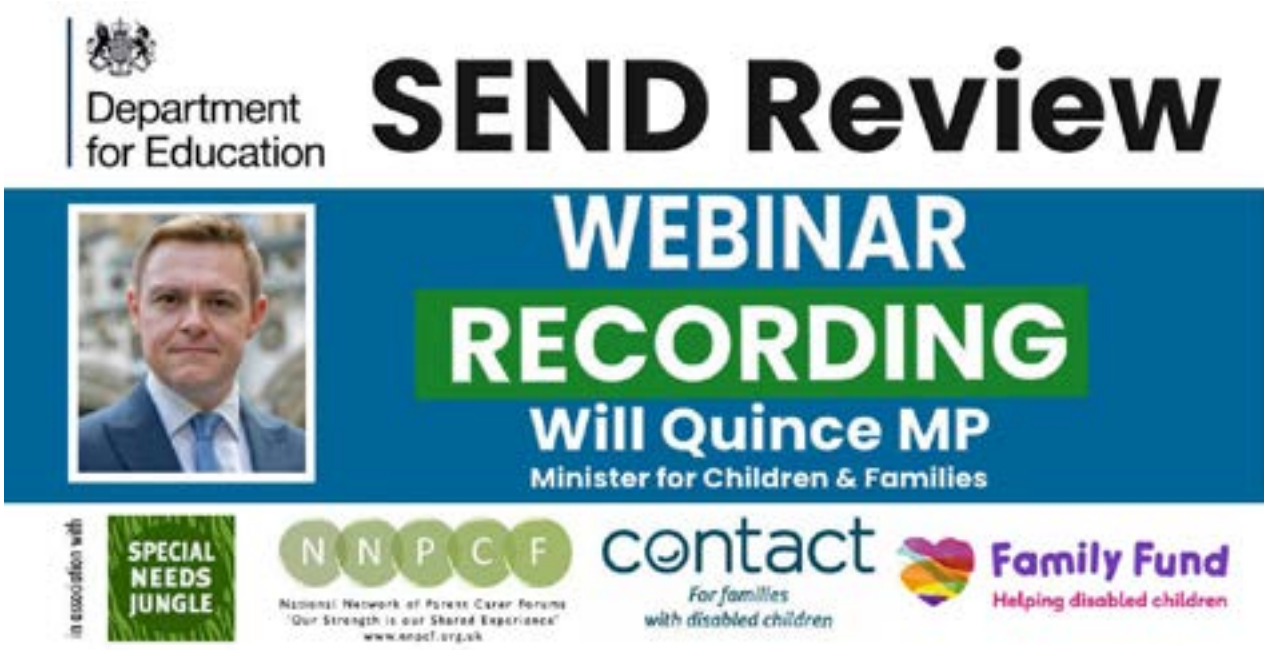
Special Needs Jungle

SNJ hosted Minister Quince this month for a webinar on the SEND Review, in collaboration with the NNPCF, Contact and Family Fund. SNJ enjoyed working alongside Tina and Sarah to present the webinar which was massively over-subscribed and participants fielded over 200 questions in 45 minutes. SNJ has sent the unanswered questions to the DfE. You can find the recording of the webinar here. They'll be holding a further webinar with Mr Quince, and hopefully a podcast, in the coming months.

SNJ have also been working with the SEND Review team to suggest ways to ensure the upcoming consultation is as accessible as possible for parents and young people, considering the limited time and access only to mobile devices many have.

SNJ will be dividing the Green Paper into separate articles to help parents, young people, and practitioners understand the implications and respond. SNJ plan to offer a way to enable those who do not feel comfortable responding on a government website to submit their views through them.

SNJ have also published their Race and SEND report, which has been welcomed by the SEND Review team.



Disabled Children's Partnership

Campaign update from Disabled Children's Partnership

Aidan Smith – Campaign Officer at the Disabled Children's Partnership (DCP) – gives an update on the #CountDisabledChildrenIn campaign, outlines their upcoming campaign on the SEND Green Paper, and tells you how you can get involved.

A huge thank you to everyone that took action for the #CountDisabledChildrenIn campaign, calling on local councils to increase their investment in the health and care services that disabled children and families deserve. Together we pushed our local politicians to show they care about the human rights of families with disabled children, and fought for fairness.

With councils now having set their budgets for the next financial year, the campaign has closed. So, how did it go? And what's next for the campaign?

Standing up for disabled children and families across the country

Hundreds of campaigners up and down the country got involved and pushed for the support families with disabled children deserve during the campaign.

- Over 1,000 people emailed their local council leaders.
- Together we managed to send a message to nearly every local authority in England.
- Many parent campaigners went the extra mile, writing blogs, recording videos, and sending press releases to local news outlets.

We've started to hear back from councils, with many leaders thanking campaigners for sharing their views, and giving detailed and interesting replies. Regardless of how much extra funding we have secured, we can be proud to have raised the profile of disabled children and families at a local political level – making a case to politicians that may not have considered the issue before.

What new funding has been released?

We won't be able to know the true impact of the campaign on local funding until later in the year, when data on council budgets are released. When this is ready, we'll go over the results and publish some thoughts on how the campaign went and the state of funding levels in disabled children's services generally.

What's next?

With budgets set for the next year, our campaigning attention is now moving to the forthcoming SEND Green Paper. As I'm sure many of you will know, the government is due to release a set of recommendations on changing the way disabled children's services work and consult the public on how the system should change.

At the DCP, parents and young people have consistently told us how broken the system is. It's rife with parental blame, bureaucracy, and confrontational processes that do not join up. Families with disabled children have the right to support to live a good quality of life, and have the same opportunities as their peers, without having to fight constant, exhausting battles to get it.

We'll be launching a public campaign to tackle this issue and help ensure the voices of disabled children and families are heard by those in power.

How can I get involved?

To get involved in our SEND Green Paper campaign, and to stay up to date with all of our work, you can sign up to our campaign network at support.disabledchildrenspartnership.org.uk

We know our campaigning makes a difference. Our #CountDisabledChildrenIn campaign has had an impact at local level. And at national level, the government recently announced a new £30 million fund for disabled children's social care. Although only a first step, this

was a key goal for our campaign and showed what can be achieved when a broad group of campaigners and organisations work together to fight for the rights of disabled children.

Together, we can continue to push for a fairer system for every disabled young person and parent carer.

You can follow the Disabled Children's Partnership on Twitter at @DCPCampaign, or on Instagram and Facebook at @ DisabledChildrensPartnership. Visit their website here for more information on their research, and other campaigns.

Aidan Smith – the Campaign Officer at the Disabled Children's Partnership

Disabled Children's Partnership

Shining the Spotlight

CDC Members

We are really proud of our members and will jump at every chance to shout about them and their achievements! This is a dedicated place to showcase our members and to shine the spotlight on their projects. Keep scrolling to hear from our new member **TACT: The Adolescent and Children's Trust (TACT)**

How it works?

TACT is the UK's largest dedicated fostering charity, our foster carers looking after 600 children in 9 regions and countries across England, Scotland and Wales. Over 60 of the children and young people look after are disabled or have a special educational need.

We recruit, train, supervise and support foster carers to provide a secure and nurturing family life where children and young people can thrive and, either progress to an independent adult life or to successfully return home or to permanency elsewhere. We also support families in the community through providing regular planned short breaks.

Many young people stay with their carers beyond fostering and in Scotland we are a registered Continuing Care provider for young people up to 21 years old.

TACT also acts as a voice for care experienced children across the UK, seeking to influence policy and campaign for change.

What has been achieved?

Our Education Service works to ensure that all children have a EHCP in place where this is appropriate and advocate to secure the appropriate school provision.

We have secured National Lottery Community Fund support to provide TACT Connect, through which we provide a lifelong supportive community of care experienced people including disabled young people. TACT Connect also enables care experienced young people to mentor others, undertake paid employment with TACT, develop life skills, have their voice heard, and undertake roles supporting the recruitment and approval of foster carers.

One of our team has particular knowledge of Foetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD), which we believe is under diagnosed in fostered children. They deliver training to all staff and foster carers and offers advice as needed.

Next Steps

TACT receives many referrals from Local Authorities seeking fostering families for disabled children, however, finding a family can be difficult. We would like to be better able to offer this opportunity to more disabled children and those with special educational need.

We are only at the beginning of this journey. We know we need to develop our training and support to our foster carers, so they can feel confident to care for a child with different or complex needs. We also need to invest in recruiting more foster carers who would be particularly motivated to care for a disabled child.

We want to also make sure that all children

and young people achieve the best possible outcomes in our care and we are establishing a Health Service that will enable us to provide more expert advice and support to our foster carers and work with other agencies to access the interventions the child needs. TACT also encourages young people to participate in activities and in the life of the organisation and we want to also ensure that all young people are included in these opportunities.

We are keen to learn from others and share ideas. We would welcome contact from any other members interested in our work or could work in partnership with us on our aims.

More information:

Website: www.tactcare.org.uk

Twitter: twitter.com/TACTCare

FaceBook: facebook.com/tactcare

YouTube: www.youtube.com/user/TACTCare

CDC Staff

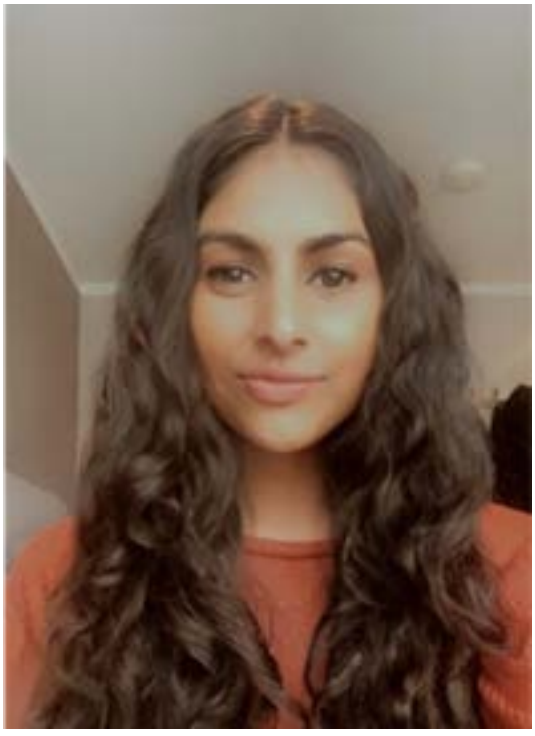
We want to shine a spotlight on some of the lovely people that work at CDC and make lots of great things happen.

Hello!

My name is Pooja and I joined the Education & Equalities team at the Council for Disabled Children in May 2021 as the Senior Development Officer. A core part of my role is to co-ordinate our early years programme, where we provide training and support to local areas to help improve and sustain outcomes for young children with SEN and disabilities. This includes delivering training on the duties in the Equality Act, how to improve provision that is Ordinarily Available, hosting regional events and preparing reports for the DfE. I also help co-ordinate the Special Educational Consortium (SEC), which is a membership organisation that aims to protect and promote the rights of children and young people with SEN and disabilities.

As part of this role, I have learnt so much in all areas of SEN. I contribute to consultation responses on a wide range of issues such as Exclusions, attendance, domestic violence, post-16 qualifications and accessible arrangements. I am grateful that this role allows me to have new experiences, meet a lot of interesting people and really widened my knowledge.

I have always been interested in working within the special needs sector and am passionate about improving outcomes for children and young people. Before joining CDC, I managed a team within the local authority who were responsible for the assessments and reviews of Education, Health and Care Plans. I also engage in research and have published articles within the area of SEN. I am thankful that I get to use my skills within this role, such as contributing to research projects and analysis of data, liaising with local areas where I feel I can use my previous experience to show my understanding of the pressures within the sector, and continue to support children and young people. I feel I am now in a position to implement change and work with others to improve outcomes, that is the most rewarding part of the job.



About the digest

The CDC Digest is a quarterly round-up of all the essential policy, practice and other news involving disabled children and young people, and their families.

If you would like to be added to the list to receive this digest, please visit our website and tick 'CDC Digest'

About CDC

The Council for Disabled Children (CDC) is the umbrella body for the disabled children's sector in England, with links to other UK nations. We are the only national body that brings together the diverse range of organisations that work with and for disabled children to support the development and implementation of policy and practice. Our work impacts on over 800,000 disabled children and their families. CDC hosts Making Ourselves Heard, the IASS Network, the Special Educational Consortium, the Transition Information Network, and the Independent Support programme.

Find out more

councilfordisabledchildren.org.uk

facebook.com/councilfordisabledchildren

@CDC_tweets

linkedin.com/company/council-for-disabled-children/

INFORMATION, ADVICE & SUPPORT PROGRAMME

INFORMATION, ADVICE & SUPPORT SERVICES NETWORK

MAKING OURSELVES HEARD

SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL CONSORTIUM

TRANSITION INFORMATION NETWORK

COUNCIL FOR DISABLED CHILDREN
Part of the family

COUNCIL FOR DISABLED CHILDREN

United for disabled children

The Council for Disabled Children brings people and organisations together to drive change in society and deliver a better childhood for disabled children the UK. We interrogate policy, uncover evidence and develop more effective ways of supporting disabled children and their families. Together with National Children's Bureau we are united for a better childhood.

Let's work together: 020 7843 6000 | cdc@ncb.org.uk

London: 23 Mentmore Terrace, London, E8 3PN

Part of the family
NATIONAL CHILDREN'S BUREAU

National Children's Bureau is registered charity number 258825 and a company limited by guarantee number 00952717. Registered office: 23 Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN.