

CDC Digest

Spring 2025

Dear all,

There has been an awful lot of attention on SEND in the media, especially over the last few weeks. It's very rarely positive and some of the possible reforms which have been 'leaked' have caused considerable consternation. What I have seen is a government which is seeking to understand the problem and construct a resilient solution that will deliver better outcomes for children and young people. The main issue is that they haven't yet felt themselves to be in a position where they can share their thinking, and we can kick the tyres on it. So, I'm really pleased to be able to report below on reassurance that this should soon change.

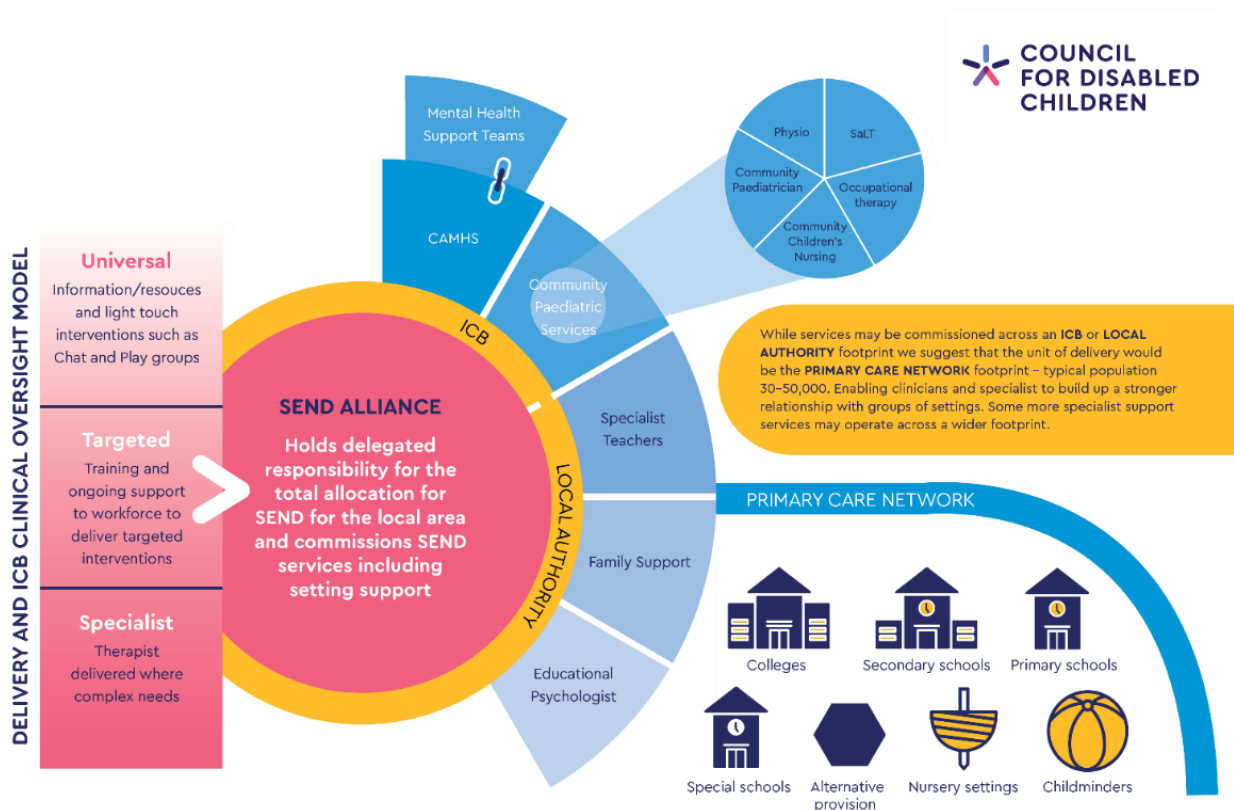
I had the privilege of speaking at the government's Child Poverty Taskforce recently. This is a cross-government group with the role of overseeing the development and publication of an ambitious cross-government child poverty strategy to reduce and alleviate child poverty. The meeting was chaired by Liz Kendall, Secretary of State for the Department for Work and Pensions. I was invited along with key representatives from the voluntary and community sector in order to talk about the link between disabled children and poverty. It was really heartening to see the Government keen to develop a clear understanding.

We were able to share statistics from the Disabled Children's Partnership on the impact that lack of, and waits for services have on the families of disabled children.

- 3 in 4 parent carers reported that they have had to give up employment, or their whole careers, due to the lack of support available.
- Over a third (38%) of parents had experienced marriage/relationship breakdown in the last 12 months as a result of a lack of support for their disabled child.
- 55% had sought formal support for their mental health and 46% had been prescribed antidepressants

Always keen to seize an opportunity I also talked the meeting through CDC's vision for integrated services for disabled children (you'll find it overleaf). This feels particularly important at the moment with cuts to Integrated Care Boards and the merger of NHS England and DHSC. We know that one of the key reasons for local areas failing their Ofsted and CQC inspections is therapy and autism assessment wait times and that leadership from the ICB on disabled children's services is really key. It is vital that as the health service goes through another reorganisation that the, already tiny, focus on children isn't lost. It was great to have a cross government opportunity to raise this issue.

After the meeting, I took the opportunity of talking to DfE Secretary of State Bridget Philipson and Minister of State Catherine McKinnell who were keen to reassure us that they will soon be in a position to share their thinking on SEND reforms, the first parent engagement session has since been set up.



Ahead of government announcements on SEND reforms CDC has been busy. We have now held two roundtables to look at some of the knottier issues that we know DfE are grappling with. Our first, was in partnership with the National Association of Special Schools and the Association of Directors of Children's Services. We wanted to look at how you might reimagine the role of the Special School in a world of more inclusive mainstream provision.

Our second we developed in partnership with the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health. It looked at what levers, including legislative change would need to be in place to deliver on CDC's vision of integrated community health services for disabled children. We're just processing all of the amazing input we received at both roundtables.

Anyway, onto the inside. In this issue of the Digest you will find updates from CDC teams, including a lovely article about the annual Youth Voice Matters conference which I had the great pleasure of Co-chairing with members of our fabulous FLARE young people's group. Do also look at the resources section, we've had great feedback on our Sensory Processing e-learning and it's free to access. If there is ever anything you want to share with CDC members and wider stakeholders do let us know we're always happy to highlight the amazing work going on.

Best wishes,

Amanda Allard



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SEND Policy Update

There continues to be a significant focus on how the Government will deliver its commitment to reform the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) System, and wider changes to education and health.

Department for Education SEND report Response

In April, the Department for Education responded to the Public Accounts Select Committee report on SEND, setting out its current position.

The Public Accounts Committee is made up of backbench MPs (those not in Government) from different parties and focuses on how the Government spends public money. The Government is not required to implement Select Committee reports, but they do have to formally respond and address the report's recommendations.

The Education Select Committee has also been holding a SEND inquiry that will take a broader focus, it is yet to publish its report.

The [Public Accounts Committee report](#) reiterated the message that has been consistently made in high-profile reports over the last 18 months, that the SEND system is in "crisis" and "inconsistent, inequitable and not delivering in line with expectations, which inevitably undermines parents' confidence in it"

It made a series of recommendations to the Department for Education, focused on improving understanding of data about need, provision and spending, improving local authority decision making, setting out plans for system improvement and addressing local authority finances.

In its response, the Department for Education's response agreed with all the Committee's recommendations and set out the actions it has already undertaken to address challenges in the SEND system, including establishing the What Works in SEND Programme, the SEND and Alternative Provision Change Programme, the ESLEC and PINs programmes, Appointing Dame Christine Lenehan as Strategic Advisory and establishing 2 task forces on Inclusion and Neurodivergence.

The Department also restated its "commitment to delivering plans for reforming the SEND system" and while it was unable to do this within the 6 month time frame set by the committee it recognised the urgency of the issues and would set out details later this year and committed to "work closely with parents, teachers and local authorities to take forward this work."

- Building a more inclusive education system based on early intervention
- Ensuring local authorities can deliver high-quality services for children and young people with SEND in a financially sustainable way as part of the transition period to a reformed system.
- Addressing the impact of SEND spending on local authorities' finances, including the current deficits accrued through the statutory override
- Guidance on partnership working on school transport

NHS Reform

The Department's response also references the upcoming NHS 10-year plan and the NHS Long Term Workforce Plan that will set the new strategic priorities for the NHS and ensure it has the right people to deliver them.

These plans are part of a transformation in the way the health service in England is organised as NHS England and the Department for Health and Social Care go through a merger process. Alongside this NHS England has published guidance to ICBS that sets out a blueprint for how the Integrated Care Board can operate in the changing landscape. This sets out the core activities for ICBS to focus on and setting out where ICB should consider changing their functions. SEND is included in the review for the transfer section, with guiding notes asking the ICB to test and explore options to streamline and transfer some activities out of ICBS. This guidance does not affect the statutory requirements on ICBS to deliver their services, and the document highlights that any accountability changes will require legislative changes.

The Health Policy Influencing Group has published a [roadmap](#) calling for children to be a central pillar of the NHS Ten Year Plan, including specific recommendations for disabled children and those with SEN.

CDC Statement on the Closure of NHS England

The decision to close NHS England marks a significant shift in how the NHS will meet the needs of disabled children, young people, and their families.

For over a decade, NHS England has played a central role in shaping how the health service supports children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND). We at the Council for Disabled Children (CDC) are proud to have worked alongside dedicated professionals within NHS England to deliver important changes to the SEND system—particularly in strengthening collaboration between the NHS, local authorities, and schools to provide joined-up services. This includes supporting the national network of Designated Clinical Officers, who help make this vision a reality at local level.

Together, we've also led the development and rollout of a key working model for autistic children and those with learning disabilities. This work has supported thousands of families—often in moments of crisis—when children were at risk of being unnecessarily admitted to inpatient units.

As the Department of Health and Social Care develops its 10-Year Health Strategy and the Government considers wider reforms to the SEND system, it is essential that this structural change does not undermine the focus on what truly matters: delivering high-quality services and creating new models of care that don't leave children and families waiting years for appointments, diagnosis, or treatment.

This transformation cannot be left to local systems alone. Strong national leadership is vital. As part of this transition, Government must ensure the Department of Health and Social Care is fully equipped—with the right skills, knowledge, and resources—to continue leading improvements for children and young people with SEND.

You can also read this statement on our website [here](#).

Featured Blog: Youth Voice Matters 2025: Celebrating Strength, Resilience and the Power of Participation

On Thursday 20th February 2025, Manchester came alive with energy, creativity and purpose as nearly 100 disabled children and young people – and those with special educational needs gathered for the Youth Voice Matters Conference 2025.



Now in its seventh year, and as part of the Department for Education-funded Making Participation Work programme, this annual event has become the largest gathering of its kind in England. Co-designed by young people from FLARE – the young SEND advisory group to the Department for Education – this year's theme, "Strength and Resilience", was chosen by young people, for young people.

The day was packed with inspiring, youth-led sessions that encouraged participants to:

- Reflect on their strengths and participation skills
- Explore how to build resilience while using their voices for change
- Gain tools to support their own wellbeing and uplift others

Workshops were co-delivered by young people and covered everything from emotional expression through rap with North Yorkshire's Flying High group, to peer support strategies with Kids, and an empowering look at children's rights in sport led by the Children's Coaching Collaborative.

FLARE's own session offered a safe and open space for delegates to talk about the emotional impact of sharing their stories and being part of decision-making processes. One highlight was the young delegates coming together to build a toolkit for how they can look after themselves and their wellbeing when sharing their voices.

The day also featured:

- A closer look at the powerful PullUpAChair 2,999 blanket, a stark symbol of school exclusions (picture on page 6)
- Input into national research on co-production in SEND with the Research and Improvement in SEND Excellence partnership

And what did young people think?

- 97% said they **learnt something new**
- 96% said they **had fun**
- 94% of supporters agreed young people **gained new skills**
- 100% of supporters said their young delegates were **satisfied or very satisfied**

Young voices from the day:

"I made new friends"

"[I loved] the skills I learnt such as what schools should improve when it comes to sport"

"Workshop went really well! I enjoyed it"

"Young people hosted space really well! Well done!"

To get a feel for the day's spirit and hear directly from those at the heart of it, don't miss our special highlights video featuring FLARE members – now live on our [Instagram!](#)

Head to our [website](#) to learn more about the event and how to get involved.

To stay up to date with our latest resources and events, don't forget to:

[Sign up for our newsletter](#)

[Join our online forum](#)

E-learning, Training & Resources

Moving from children's to adults' services and support

Explore our free e-learning course developed by the National Development Team for Inclusion (NDTI) and hosted by CDC.

This one-hour course supports professionals and families to better understand what a smooth, person-centred transition to adult services looks like for young people with additional needs. Access the course [here](#).

Sensory Processing: What it is and why it matters

Discover our free e-learning course introducing sensory processing and its importance for disabled children and young people and those with SEN.

Developed from training by the Early Years SEND Partnership and delivered through the DfE-funded RISE Programme, this 90-minute course offers practical insights into sensory systems, environments, and support strategies.

Start the course [here](#).

E-learning courses

Register to complete our free e-learning courses. Our training catalogue includes the following courses:

- Holistic Outcomes in Education, Health and Care Plans
- Expert Parent Programme
- SEND Basic Awareness Level 1 and 2

View our e-learning courses [here](#).

We now have a new e-learning page. Please visit: learning.ncb.org.uk/content/council-for-disabled-children

Here you will find training on a range of SEND-related topics. These are primarily intended for professionals and practitioners but are open to all, including parent carers.

[SEND and Alternative Provision Improvement Plan Hub](#)

Visit our SEND and Alternative Provision Improvement Plan hub for a range of resources to help you learn more about the plan. Resources include:

- An animation video
- Easy read version
- British Sign Language version
- A roadmap

Visit the hub [here](#).

[How to Spot a Loan Shark – Free Online Training for SENDIAS & Professionals](#)

The Information, Advice and Support Services Network (IASSN) is pleased to be working with Stop Loan Sharks England to offer free, online training to help professionals spot and respond to illegal money lending.

As part of the [Children and Families Act 2014](#), every local authority must ensure that children and young people with SEND—and their families—have access to impartial information, advice, and support. Funded by the Department for Education, the IASSN supports this legal duty by working with SENDIAS services to strengthen their capacity and share best practice.

This upcoming training is open to SENDIAS services and other professionals supporting children, young people, and families who may be at risk of illegal lending.

What you'll learn:

Spot the Red Flags

Understand the tell-tale signs of predatory lending and the tactics used to trap victims.

Protect Your Community

Learn how illegal lenders operate and the toll they take on lives, health, and well-being—so you can help keep your community safe.

Make a Difference

Know what to do if you suspect someone is being targeted, and how to refer them for support.

Training Dates: Six online sessions available throughout May and June. Register via Eventbrite: [Click here to sign up](#)

The IASS Network sits within the Council for Disabled Children at the National Children's Bureau. Learn more about our work: [Visit our website](#)

Family Help – Making it work for disabled children and their families

The Families First Partnership Programme (FFP) Guidance, which was published in March 2025, sets out the vision for a transformation in family support, to rebalance the system away from crisis intervention and toward earlier help.

CDC are committed to working with social care colleagues across the sector to ensure that the transformation considers the specific needs of disabled children and their families.

Building on CDC's national, regional and local work on:

- Needs-led eligibility and proportionate pathways to support;
- The role of Designated Social Care Officer (DSCO) for SEND; and
- Short Breaks - The legal framework and co-developing a commissioning strategy

We have developed a one-day virtual training programme covering the following:

- Introduction to the Families First Partnership Programme and what it means for disabled children and their families
- Proportionate assessment and person-centred planning
- Workforce: the role of the DSCO and the Family Help Lead Practitioner (FHLP)
- Short Breaks and the integrated Family Help model
- and more!

This training is designed for social workers, early help practitioners, multi-agency safeguarding partners responsible for implementing the transformation, DSCOs, Heads of Service, Commissioners, and senior decision-makers in local authorities.

We have delivered the first two sessions in May and you can sign up for our final session on 4 June [here](#).

You can also read two of our latest blogs, written by CDC's Deputy Director, Caroline Coady. One explores [the importance of getting Family Help right for disabled children and their families](#), and the other considers the [opportunity created through the transformation to Family Help to improve transition for disabled children and young people](#).

New research

Support Not Sanctions: Children with speech and language challenges are being unfairly punished at school

Speech and Language UK has published important new research revealing that children with speech and language challenges are being disproportionately penalised under current school behaviour policies.

Key findings include:

- **78% of teachers** say these children are unfairly punished,
- Nearly **half of teachers** report insufficient training to support children with speech and language needs,
- **44% of families** say their child has been punished due to lack of appropriate support.

This research raises serious concerns about how behaviour policies are interpreted in schools and the impact on the 2 million children in the UK with communication challenges.

In response, Speech and Language UK is calling for urgent reforms as part of the wider SEND system review, including:

- Updated government guidance on behaviour policies,
- Mandatory teacher training on speech and language needs,
- Proven tools and targeted interventions for all key stages.

Chief Executive Jane Harris said:

"Our research highlights the urgent need for action by the DfE – because despite teachers doing all they can to help these children, their dedication is undermined by a lack of specialist support and training. Our research paints a clear picture – the current guidance for behaviour management in schools is catastrophically failing the two million children with speech and language challenges."

Read the full report: [here](#)

Share your expertise

House of Lords: Call for evidence launched to mark World Autism Acceptance Day

To mark World Autism Acceptance Day, the [House of Lords Committee on the Autism Act 2009](#) has launched a Call for Evidence as part of its ongoing inquiry.

The Committee wants to hear from autistic people, their families, carers, professionals, and researchers to understand how well the [Autism Act](#), the [Government's autism strategy](#), and [statutory guidance](#) are working and to help shape future improvements.

They are particularly seeking views on key areas including:

- Improving public understanding and acceptance of autistic people
- Improving assessment, diagnosis, and post-diagnostic support
- Enhancing healthcare, education, community, and employment support
- Supporting autistic people involved in the criminal and youth justice systems

The Committee welcomes contributions from:

- Autistic people (with or without a formal diagnosis)
- Family members and carers
- Professionals working with autistic people
- Researchers focused on autism support

How to respond:

You can submit your evidence in several ways, including written documents or voice recordings. Support is available if you need help preparing your submission.

Deadline:

Submissions must be received by **Monday 2 June 2025**.

Submit your evidence:

- Online form: [Submit here](#)
- Email: HLAutismAct2009@parliament.uk (written submissions or voice recordings welcome)

For more details, including accessible versions of the Call for Evidence (Easy Read, audio), visit the [Committee's website](#).

Complex Needs Survey - Defining the "Local Offer" of services underpinning a commissioning blueprint for children and young people with complex needs

Following the publication of the National Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel Report on safeguarding children with disabilities and complex health needs in residential settings, the Department for Education and Council for Disabled Children hosted a series of roundtable discussions with partners including providers, local authority commissioners, health commissioners, voluntary organisations and parent carer representatives on how to take the recommendations forward. These roundtables discussed the need for a vision for this group of children, the barriers to delivering it and how these barriers could be addressed.

In our role as Strategic Reform Partner to the Department for Education we want to build on these discussions by gaining the insight from colleagues across education, health, social care and wider partners into the current models of commissioning to meet the needs of children and young people who may use residential provision.

Respondents will be asked to share their perspectives on:

- To what extent there is a shared understanding of what "blueprint" of provision local systems should have in place to meet the needs of this cohort of children and young people,
- What elements of the "blueprint" of provision local systems should reasonably be expected to deliver within the current legal, policy and funding framework
- What elements require coordinated action by national government to be achieved
- Specify and prioritise areas for action

You can access the survey [here](#). Responses will be analysed and shared with the Department for Education, NHS England and the Department of Health and Social Care to inform their thinking about current and future reforms.

The deadline to complete the survey is **Friday 6 June 2025**. For more information contact Simon Plummer Splummer@ncb.org.uk or Philippa Watts Pwatts@ncb.org.uk.

Get involved

Council for Disabled Children: Apply for CDC Membership

At CDC we know that we are stronger and have a bigger voice if we are together. The CDC membership is a collection of over 400 voluntary or community organisations that represent the various facets of the SEND and Alternative Provision sector.

By becoming a member, organisations will have the opportunity to actively participate in shaping policies, sharing best practices, and advocating for positive changes that directly impact the lives of disabled children and young people and those with SEN. CDC membership is free and provides access to a network of over 400 organisations across the sector, as well as resources and opportunities for collaboration and learning.

Benefits of becoming a CDC member include:

- Access to the CDC members online forum which provides the opportunity for peer-to-peer support on challenges and solutions, best practice, and information and resource sharing.
- Networking opportunities to connect with professionals, policymakers, and other organisations in the field.
- Policy Influencing by actively participating in discussions and initiatives aimed at influencing policies.
- Access to a wealth of resources including a monthly newsletter, quarterly digest and news alerts.
- Direct updates from the Department for Education.
- Invitations to join CDC working groups.

To become a CDC member your organisation must be:

- A registered charity or Community Interest Company with a special interest in disabled children and young people and those with SEN, and/or a provider of Alternative Provision;
- Based in England; and
- Committed to the CDC values and our [policy on inclusion](#).

To apply to become a CDC member please click [here](#).

Shining the Spotlight on Action-attainment CIC

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 member the [Action-attainment CIC](#).

How it works:

We are a parent-led training organisation working in partnership with families, schools and sports organisations to help neurodivergent children lead active lives. We help parents to advocate for children and support children to self-advocate understanding "what works" for their individual profile of strength and need.

What has been achieved?

We deliver teacher, parent and child training in inclusion strategies in collaboration with expert Occupational and Speech and Language therapist in a school-based programme Seeing STARS (Sensory Training and Regulation Strategies). We run regular sports groups to build community, friendship and skills for life, with partners Brentford FC CST and Active360. Our programmes are called "On the Ball" and "Fun in the Sun".

We identify how parents can take positive action to support their child's development from school into the work-place. Our programmes are called "The Parent Detectives" and "Action Learning"

Next steps

We see the UK's "SEND Crisis" as an opportunity for sharing our lived experience of co-production for systems change. We believe empowered, active communities are the key to improving outcomes for vulnerable neurodivergent children with skills learnt for life.

More information

Website: www.action-attainment.com

Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/actionattainment>

Newsletter: <https://www.action-attainment.com/get-in-touch>

What else we're doing at CDC

Health – Innovation & Support

The Innovation & Support team have supported a local area to develop a Working Together Charter and a SEND Outcomes Framework. We have been delivering focus groups with children, young people and parents and carers about what they think a new and improved Local Offer website should look like.

The team have also worked alongside NHSE and DCOs to update the DCO handbook and a draft version has now been designed and is awaiting sign off before being shared. Alongside this, the team has also worked with NHSE to organise this year's DCO/DMO Conference, which focussed on changing landscapes, updates and looking after yourself.

Health - Systems Improvement

CDC, as part of the Reaching Excellence and Ambition for all Children (REACH) consortium, continues to play a key role in supporting the delivery of the Change Programme, working alongside the DfE, local partners and Change Programme Partnerships.

The Change Programme is testing 'whole system' change in 32 local areas, working together as Change Programme Partnerships across the 9 regions of England. Initially developed to test reforms from the SEND and Alternative Provision Improvement Plan, the current phase of the programme is focused on inclusive practice.

This work is helping to build shared understanding across the sector and with the Department for Education about what needs to change – and how – to enable greater inclusion for children and young people, including disabled children and young people and those with special educational needs.

Social Care

The Social Care team has been busy delivering a variety of projects through our Strategic Reform Partner contract with the Department for Education (DfE), including convening the second Ministerial Roundtable with the Minister of State for School Standards, Minister McKinnell. We also held two Parent Carer SEND Stakeholder meetings in January and March, bringing together over 30 parent carers to feed into the work of the neurodivergence task and finish group and to gather insights on the best ways for DfE to engage with parent carers.

Our CDC Members meeting took place in January 2025 and focused on improving the support provided to neurodivergent children and young people. In addition, we conducted research on the SEND Specialist Teacher and Speech and Language Therapy workforces through surveys and interviews, and gathered evidence via an online survey to understand inclusive practice in early years and post-16 education settings.

The team also delivered nine training sessions on the role of social care in the Education, Health and Care (EHC) needs assessment and planning process.

Following the publication of the Families First Partnership Programme (FFP) Guidance, CDC's Deputy Director of Social Care, Caroline Coady, published a blog highlighting the opportunity this presents to integrate and reform the delivery of social care support for disabled children and families. In support of this, we are holding training sessions in May and June focused on Family Help – making it work for disabled children and their families. You can sign up for the final session on 4 June [here](#).

We've also been developing more of our traded income work – supporting local authorities to improve transitions from children's to adults' social care and delivering safeguarding training for professionals working with disabled children.

If you'd like to learn more, feel free to email us at cdc@ncb.org.uk.

Special Educational Consortium

The Special Educational Consortium (SEC) has had a particularly busy quarter, submitting a consultation response on Solving the SEND Crisis to the Education select committee in January and ramping up our parliamentary influencing work on the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill. Ellie Costello, our parliamentary vice-chair presented at the APPG for Children's meeting on our key priorities for amendments to the Bill.

We have a few asks of the Bill: to ensure accessibility of free breakfast clubs for disabled children and those with SEN, and establishment of an Attendance Code of Practice which prioritises a support-first approach, amongst others. Now that the Bill is in the Lords, we have been reaching out to our friendly Peer contacts to table our amendments in the upcoming Bill debates.

We were pleased to have Ofsted attend two of our meetings in January and March, strengthening our relationship with them as they consult the sector on their proposed approach to inspections. With a greater focus in their inspection framework on inclusion, we encouraged them to consider children and young people who have been persistently absent or excluded from school as they important indicators on the approach to inclusion a school. We were delighted to be joined by Dame Christine Lenehan, strategic advisor to the DfE at our meeting in March. She gave us an update on the direction of travel of the Government and took on board some of our asks to address some of the uncomfortable messaging and communication about parent carers coming from the Government.

Early Years SEND (EYSEND)

The EYSEND Partnership have had a very busy final quarter of the year, packed with strategic support, training, seminars and another regional event. All six members of the partnership have met several times in Quarter 4, focusing on developing the partnership's aims and outcomes for a potential extension to the partnership for 25-26. The Partnership delivered a second online recent regional event which focused on the Southwest of England.

We were joined by two speakers, Susan Richards and Nausheen Ali. Recordings of both of this year's regional events are available on our [website](#). All Partners continue to deliver a wide range of training for both practitioners and parents and carers, which is very often oversubscribed and highly praised by attendees.

If you would like more information on upcoming events and training, please sign up to our EYSEND Partnership [newsletter](#).

IASSN

Quarter four for the IASSN has been about wrapping up our year by delivering the last of our reports, training and resources and planning for next year's work.

With regards to training, our final figures are that we've delivered 44 training events and offered 1309 training spaces to SENDIAS staff this financial year. This has ranged from in-person events to workshops to legal training. The feedback on these training sessions has been positive with 98% of those attending feeding back that would recommend their colleagues attending the session.

This part of the year we also focus on painting a national picture of SENDIAS services through [our reports](#). Some key headline stats are that the average overall score given on any of the sequential 6422 feedback forms scores submitted to us by SENDIAS services, was 3.61/ 4. Considering that services are dealing with an increase in casework of 29% and helpline numbers of 7% with only enough additional funding for a staffing rise of 1.3%, that they continue to get such high feedback is a testament to their commitment and work.

It's been another year of being constantly impressed by the work of SENDIAS services and doing all we can to support this. We look forward to working with them all next year.

Participation

FLARE met with the Minister for School Standards to discuss inclusion in mainstream education. The group explored the positive impact of inclusion on disabled children's peers, how PE lessons and sport can be made more inclusive, and how inclusion can be done well when the services supporting a child work together. Through our Making Participation Work events for professionals, we have explored different elements of children and young people's participation. The January Making Participation Work Practitioners' Community of Practice invited delegates to reflect on the ways we can evaluate and evidence our participation and engagement work. In our monthly coffee mornings, we have discussed theories of autism and how they link to improving participation and how children and young people can be involved in co-designing and delivering workshops and training. You can keep up to date on our events by joining the [Making Ourselves Heard Forum](#) or signing up for our [newsletter](#) (tick 'participation').

What Works in SEND

Now in its fourth year the What Works in SEND programme has now started to build up a wealth of evidence both case studies and primary and secondary research. In January, we hosted a WWiS Learning Seminar focused on inclusive practice and the effectiveness of outreach in alternative provision, followed by the WWiS National Learning Event in March 2025, which welcomed over 120 attendees.

We have now agreed the research projects for 25/26 which will focus on:

- Educational learning needs assessment ('profiling') for neurodivergent children
- Specialist SEND Units/Provision in mainstream schools – Systematic review and survey
- Workforce - an initial mapping study of characteristics of the SEND workforce in primary and secondary mainstream schools.

It is hoped that the project on workforce will provide the foundation for a larger research study into how best to deploy, train and support SEND workforce resources in education contexts in England (including what delivers the best outcomes and improved experiences for children, young people and families

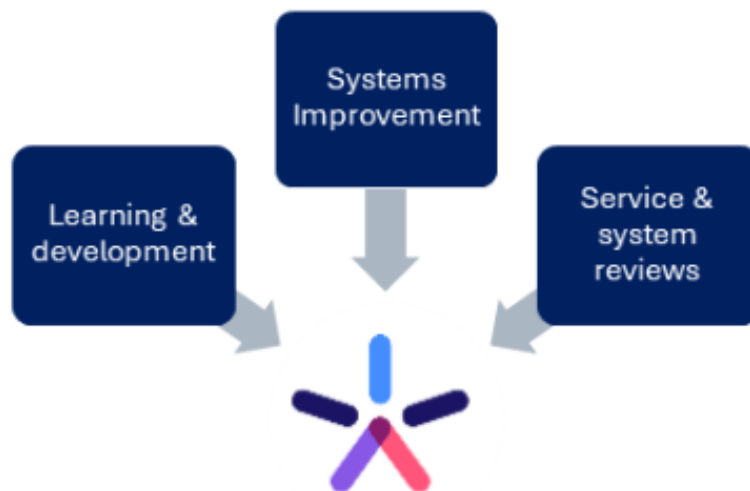
Read the latest research report 'Delivery of services for Children and Young People with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities' [here](#).

CDC's Local Area Support Offer

Were you aware that CDC teams can help local area leaders and their partners address challenges in local SEND systems?

Our teams bring a wealth of knowledge of SEND and insight into the policy and systems surrounding it. Using our experience of training and facilitation, we can help you to build partnerships, skills and knowledge, and effectively address your local challenges. We take a supportive, non-judgemental approach which combines a welcoming atmosphere, friendly facilitators and a focus on solutions.

Our wide-ranging expertise and flexible approach mean that we will always work with you to identify the most appropriate support for the challenges that you and your partners face. We bring expertise across the SEND system, including multi-agency working, health, social care, participation and much more.



Recent pieces of work have included:

- Training on The Equality Act, Challenging Conversations, Data & Voice in Commissioning and Safeguarding Disabled Children
- Support to develop strategic outcomes frameworks, co-production charters, SEND strategies and Short Breaks strategies
- Reviews of a SENDIAS Service and a Keyworking Service

To find out more about our offer, please visit our website or talk a member of our team by contacting rethink@ncb.org.uk.

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 and the Transition Information Network.

Find out more



councilfordisabledchildren.org.uk



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NETWORK



MAKING
OURSELVES
HEARD



SPECIAL
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COUNCIL
FOR DISABLED
CHILDREN
Part of the family

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
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NATIONAL CHILDREN'S BUREAU

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