

CDC digest

Summer 2026

Dear all,

As we head into the summer, this edition of the CDC Digest reflects a SEND system that remains both under significant pressure and in a period of real movement. The SEND consultation has now closed, following extensive engagement across the sector, including with children and young people, parent carers, schools, local areas, health colleagues, social care leaders and voluntary and community organisations. We know that expectations for reform are high, but so too are concerns about whether change will translate into better day-to-day experiences for disabled children and young people and those with special educational needs, and their families.

At CDC, our focus continues to be on making sure that the voices and evidence from the sector are heard clearly as government considers its response. Through our own consultation response – based on member input, our work with children and young people, and the support we have provided to local areas developing their SEND Reform Plans, we have seen the same message come through repeatedly: reform must improve access to timely, joined-up and inclusive support, and it must be grounded in what children, young people and families tell us they need.

This Digest also comes at a moment when several important policy developments are beginning to connect. The new guidance on inclusion, including the guidance on Inclusion Bases, the emerging Expert at Hand model, the Inclusive Mainstream Fund and wider health developments all point to the need for systems to work differently. There is a welcome ambition to strengthen mainstream inclusion, but that ambition will only be realised if implementation is carefully designed, properly resourced and alert to the risk of creating new forms of separation within mainstream settings.

As ever, this edition highlights the breadth of CDC's work and the commitment of colleagues across the sector. You will find updates on policy, health, social care, participation, What Works in SEND, EYSEND, IASSN and SEC, alongside resources, training and opportunities to get involved. I am particularly pleased that we are able to share the work undertaken with children and young people during the SEND consultation. Their views must not simply inform the consultation process; they should continue to shape the reforms as they develop.

Thank you, as always, to our members, partners and colleagues for continuing to share your insight, challenge and practice with us. The months ahead will be important, and CDC will continue working with you to help ensure that reform is informed by evidence, shaped by lived experience, and focused on improving outcomes for disabled children and young people and those with special educational needs.

Best wishes,

Amanda



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Policy Update

In May the Government set out its agenda for the new session of Parliament in the King's Speech. This confirmed the Government will introduce legislation to reform the SEND system in an Education for All Bill.

Significant political changes followed, with Sir Keir Starmer resigning as Prime Minister. Nominations for Labour Party leader close on 9 July with Andy Burnham expected to succeed him.

During this political transition, few official policy developments or announcements are expected. It will take time to understand the new Prime Minister's priorities. CDC will continue working with the sector to advocate for action on issues affecting disabled children and their families.

A recent interview discussing his views on SEND reforms as Mayor of Greater Manchester is available [here](#).

SEND Consultation

Following thousands of submissions, regional workshops, and engagement events, the SEND Consultation has closed.

We received a wide range of feedback, with support for many proposals and significant concerns about others.

CDC submitted a response based on member feedback, highlighting key challenges in designing the reforms and identifying areas needing further development. The response is available [here](#).

The Department for Education will review responses over the summer. Their response and legislative proposals are expected in the autumn, though timing may be affected by the political context.

Local SEND Reform Plans

Before finalising reform proposals and legislative changes, the Government is investing in local systems. Each local authority and its ICB partner has submitted a Local SEND Reform Plan.

Plans must show how reform funding will strengthen mainstream inclusion over three years and align SEND reform with broader programmes such as neighbourhood health services, Best Start in Life, and Family Hubs. The Department for Education and NHS England will oversee approval, monitoring, and quality assurance. Approval is required to receive the additional High Needs Stability Grant, which covers 90% of historical overspends.

The Government has published detailed guidance for local systems on preparing to implement the reforms.

Expert at Hand Guidance

A key component of the plans is the development of the Expert at Hand Model to support mainstream settings.

Building on the White Paper proposals, the Department for Education and NHS England have outlined detailed expectations for the first year.

The guidance states that the Expert at Hand offer should prioritise early intervention and inclusion, providing earlier access to specialist advice and support in three areas:

- Support for children and young people, delivered with setting staff
- Support for settings and staff through a whole-setting approach
- Support at system level for mainstream settings across the local area

The guidance also specifies that funding is initially limited to four types of professionals:

- speech and language therapists – and support workers or assistants
- occupational therapists – and support workers or assistants
- educational psychologists – and trainees
- specialist teachers – both local authority-based and those based in specialist or AP settings

The guidance is available [here](#).

As local areas implement these changes, clear coordination is essential, especially regarding the local partnership's Expert at Hand offer and the responsibilities of education settings.

New Inclusion Guidance Published

The Department for Education has published a new set of non-statutory guidance for local authorities and mainstream education settings on mainstream inclusion.

These are:

Inclusive Education Estates guidance

The Government is investing £3.7 billion over the next three years to adapt buildings and create inclusion bases in mainstream settings. Guidance for local authorities and education providers outlines how to use this funding to make settings more inclusive. It includes advice on assessing space inclusivity and applying inclusive design principles during adaptations.

The guidance is available [here](#).

Inclusion bases in schools guidance

The White Paper proposed a new model of inclusion bases to replace the current mix of provision. The Department for Education has issued guidance to help local authorities and education settings develop high-quality Inclusion Bases.

CDC contributed to the development of this guidance, which outlines six principles of effective practice for Inclusion Bases, commissioning approaches, and best-practice examples. Our sector engagement emphasised the importance of increasing access to mainstream education without creating new barriers or unintentional segregation.

We believe this is an important step toward a more inclusive education system within a whole-school approach.

The guidance is available [here](#).

Developing an inclusion strategy using the inclusive mainstream fund

The Department is providing £1.6 billion directly to mainstream settings to help them meet a range of students' needs. The guidance outlines expectations for delivering the seven principles of inclusion and includes best practice examples and links to evidence-based programmes.

Settings must develop and publish a strategy by 31 December 2026, using the provided draft template. These strategies should explain how funding is addressing barriers to learning and participation.

The guidance for:

- Schools is available [here](#);
- 16 to 19 further education providers is available [here](#);
- Inclusive mainstream providers [here](#);
- And the early years model differs, with funding allocated to Local Authorities- guidance for the inclusive early years fund is available [here](#).

Health Service Developments

Children and Young People's Modern Service Framework and Health Bill

NHS structures and priorities are evolving following the implementation of the 10 Year Health Plan.

NHS England is developing a new Modern Service Framework for babies, children, and young people to establish a long-term vision for improving their outcomes.

The Health Policy Influencing Group has published a series of "Ten Tests" for the Modern Service Framework, focusing on the need for a clear vision for children's health, including disabled children, and a strong connection to SEND reform.

The 10 Tests are available [here](#).

A new Health Bill is progressing through Parliament. It will implement structural changes outlined in the 10 Year Plan, including the abolition of NHS England and the reorganisation of the Department of Health and Social Care. The Bill will also abolish Healthwatch and aims to improve data sharing by creating a **Single Patient Record**.

Together, the MSF and Health Bill present an important opportunity to shape the NHS's future role in supporting babies, children, and young people, including those with SEND and disabilities.

Mental Health Strategy Consultation

The Department of Health and Social Care has launched a consultation on a new Mental Health Strategy to inform the Government's long-term mental health policy.

It focuses on how mental health services should respond to changing needs, including prevention, early intervention, community-based support, and coordination with public services such as education, employment, and social care. The consultation also addresses support for the 'missing middle': individuals whose needs affect participation, including in education, but who do not meet NHS mental health service criteria.

The Consultation is [here](#).

Independent Reviews – Interim Reports Published

The Government has published interim reports from two independent reviews examining the changing needs of children and young people and implications for health, education, and employment.

The interim reports review the evidence and will be followed by final reports later this year, which will include recommendations for policy reform.

Independent review into mental health conditions, ADHD and autism

Chaired by Professor Peter Fonagy, this review examines changing demand and the factors influencing pressures across mental health, ADHD, and autism.

The report makes clear that simplistic explanations unhelpfully polarise the current public debate.

Instead, the interim report examines how changes in prevalence, diagnosis, and demand for support create a complex dynamic across conditions.

By examining population surveys, administrative data, and qualitative evidence, the review provides a nuanced account of how trends interact.

The report finds increasing mental health needs, especially emotional distress among young people. For ADHD and autism, it notes a divergence between rising diagnostic rates and stable underlying prevalence. Changes in diagnostic practice and the requirement for a diagnosis to access support, especially in education, contribute to pressure on diagnostic services.

The final report will expand on these findings and provide recommendations for how services and systems should respond to changing needs and demand.

The interim report is available [here](#).

Milburn Review of Youth Employment

Alan Milburn has published the interim report from his review of the rising number of young people not in education, employment, or training.

A central theme is the need to move beyond simplistic explanations for rising economic inactivity. The review rejects claims that young people are unwilling to work or that their mental health challenges are overstated. It is clear that young people have changed as their environment has been transformed. The report argues the issue is not a lack of effort, but a shortage of opportunity and support systems that have not adapted to this transformation.

The review highlights fragmentation across public services and the interaction between increasing ill health and changes in employment opportunities.

The education system is not working for many young people, including those with Special Educational Needs. A focus on academic attainment leaves them ill-equipped to transition into work.

The review recognises the opportunity presented by SEND reform and emphasises the importance of improving transitions from education to employment for disabled young people and those with SEND.

The final report will expand on this analysis and provide recommendations for how government and public services can better support young people into employment and improve long-term outcomes.

The interim Report is available [here](#).

Featured blog

A Postcard from Larnaca 2026

This year's Spring Biannual meeting was held in a somewhat celebratory mood, marking the 30th anniversary of EASNIE. While everyone involved with the work feels immensely proud of EASNIE's work, it seems clear that on one front we still need to push harder, and that is in exposing more people to EASNIE, its work and the resources it produces. So, if you are reading this, please do share with young people, parent / carers, teachers and early years practitioners, school leaders, and policy makers.

The anniversary has sharpened the focus of EASNIE's work, and I believe the words of the Director powerfully echo the direction of travel set by our own Government in the recent [SEND reform proposals](#) (notwithstanding reservations many in the sector have over some of them): *to foster environments where every learner is valued, supported and empowered*. EASNIE has created an anniversary programme of events, including a [series of webinars](#) focussed on different aspects of inclusive practice – all are free to watch and available through the link.

Crucially, the anniversary has promoted a future-thinking posture, and EASNIE has produced a document setting out the principles, or *pillars*, required for inclusive system transformation, in the form of its [Ten Pillars Shaping The Future Of Inclusive Education](#) document. Addressing aspects related to the social and human 'core'; Transformation of learning; and System conditions, these pillars can act as guidance for those considering reforming education systems with a view to becoming more inclusive – so suggested reading for us here in England. It will not provide the specific policies needed in any given country but can certainly provide a benchmark to test proposed reforms against.

The Biannual took place in sunny Larnaca, Cyprus, and as always included in the opening session, a presentation on the data EASNIE generates, known as EASIE (European Agency Statistics on Inclusive Education). Statistics are not always easy (if you'll excuse the overused pun) for the lay person to relate to, but a recent [report summarising data generating over the years 2018-2023](#) is useful, I think, in assessing system-level trends in Europe and considering their relevance to the realities we see in England, as well as policy directions. There is much to consider in the report, but here are a couple of things which caught my eye:

Falling numbers of pupils in primary education. This phenomenon is recognised in England as well, and has been a cause for concern for many, [especially in regard to associated funding 'per head'](#). However, EASNIE points out the potential to leverage this change in its policy recommendation: *Stagnation or even decline in the number of learners at primary education level provides an opportunity to leverage the existing human, financial and material resources for inclusive education*. This, incidentally, is very similar to the message from Paul Whiteman, general secretary of the NAHT, in a recent [Schools Week article](#), where he pointed to the "real opportunity here for the government to use these population changes to deliver positive benefits, like smaller class sizes and its ambition of more SEND inclusion in mainstream".

Separate placements of learners grew faster within than outside mainstream schools. This means that across EASNIE member countries there is an increase in the use of separated classes within mainstream settings. EASNIE considers the provision of education in these settings 'non-inclusive because it is not in line with the 80% time benchmark or the various proxies for this benchmark'. This is a helpful reminder to us in England as we consider the push for expansion of the newly termed Inclusion Bases: while they offer an opportunity to meet a greater variety of needs within mainstream, they also carry an inherent risk of becoming spaces of 'internal segregation'.

The key session during the Larnaca Biannual was run by Dr Alyssa Alcorn, and centred on the topic of neurodiversity in the classroom. In England, this is an important issue to consider, given [one in three pupils with an EHC plan](#) are identified with a primary need of ASD (more on the terminology in a moment). It is striking that, unlike other 'primary needs' (aside from PMLD and SLD), a larger proportion of those diagnosed with ASD have an EHCP than those on SEN Support. One obvious question this data raises is, are mainstream schools simply not built, structured and run in a way that is likely to suit a neurodiverse pupil body?

Our session touched upon these questions and set out clearly what the 'neurodiversity paradigm' is and what it means for practice. As a paradigm it shares some important tenets with the social model of disability, in that it sees neurodiversity as a natural, positive aspect of wider human diversity. It further rejects the normative assumption that there is a 'right', 'normal' or 'healthy' kind of mind, or learning. The social model rests upon contrasting the notions of impairment and disability; this is harder to do when discussing neurodiversity, but the neurodiversity paradigm does have a stance on disability: some neurodivergent people will be disabled; not all, and it will depend on their view of themselves, their environment and circumstances (health and other).

There is a complicated relationship between the neurodiversity paradigm approach and neurodevelopmental diagnoses: in short, the latter is rooted in the medical, 'pathology' paradigm, and so we see many people shifting between the two approaches and sets of terms, think of educational psychologists, for example, using ASD on formal correspondences (and as I did above, reflecting the terminology used in DfE data) but the neurodiversity language when speaking to family members. Dr Alcorn made the important point that we are not saying the same thing when we speak of a neurodevelopmental disorder versus saying someone is neurodivergent. The former implies a 'deficit'; the latter is an expression of a characteristic.

The key takeaway from the lecture and following conversations was that education systems must consider how well they are designed in their physical structures, routines and regimes for a wide range of needs associated with neurodiversity; namely, for differences in information processing, sensory processing, social interactions, and communication styles and needs. With that in mind, here are a couple of handy resources to support better fitting environments: [an open-access programme to support children to understand neurodiversity](#); and a [whole-school toolkit to support inclusive policies round neurodiversity and belonging](#). And, lastly, don't be the one making this mistake: an individual cannot be 'neurodiverse' – that is a characteristic of a group (and pretty much all groups are); individuals within a group

might be 'neurodivergent', by which we commonly mean that their traits diverge from those of the majority.

As is custom, we were treated to a cultural evening by the Cypriot Ministry of education: a guided walking tour through Larnaca, ending on the lovely promenade and marina, followed by traditional dancing and a gigantic meal in a traditional tavern. Our tour guide didn't shy away from reflecting on the complicated relationship between the Cypriot Greek community and their Turkish neighbours; for many tourists in the country, it is sometimes a forgotten fact that Cyprus is a divided country, with a capital divided by a [UN buffer zone](#). In the world of SEND, it's important to remember there is always much to celebrate and be thankful for, for example all of the brilliant parent / carers and professionals working for better outcomes – see [here](#) for a wealth of examples of good practice in a collaboration between EASNIE and UNESCO. We do, of course, remember that not all of our children and young people are currently enjoying the educational experience they deserve. Similarly, there was plenty of pride and beauty (and grilled meat) on display during our Cypriot evening; but also, a reminder that this small country still faces unresolved political strife. Here's to good news on both fronts. Yassou.

Events, training and resources

Access our new free eLearning on Inclusion Bases

The course has been created by the Council for Disabled Children (CDC), part of the National Children's Bureau (NCB), and funded by the Department for Education (DfE) as part of the RISE (Research and Improvement for SEND Excellence) Programme.

Through the learning, participants will explore how inclusion bases can support high-quality practice in a changing SEND landscape. If you are involved in developing or delivering SEND provision, this free course offers practical guidance to support planning, improvement and consistency across inclusion bases.

Access the free eLearning course [here](#).

SENDIAS and Parent Carer Forum Memorandum of Understanding Template

Created collaboratively by North Somerset SENDIAS service and North Somerset PCF, this template supports a cordial and effective working relationship. It sets out shared principles, working practices, and clearly defines organisation-specific roles and responsibilities.

Download the resource [here](#).

CDC National Webinar

We're excited to announce the next CDC National Webinar will be on the theme of "Experts at Hand and EOTAS" and will take place on Tuesday 21 July 2026, 12:00-13:30.

As part of our [Department for Education](#)-funded SEND systems improvement contract, we are hosting a **closed webinar only for Directors of Children's Services (DCSs)** to provide a chance to discuss opportunities, shared challenges and solutions related to EOTAS and Experts at Hand.

The session will include:

- An update from DfE
- Key messages and updates on guidance and consultation
- Chances for discussion on key topics.

If you are a DCS, please register for the webinar [here](#).

If you have any questions, please email RISE@ncb.org.uk

Latest CDC news and opinion

New Guidance on Inclusion

The government has launched guidance on creating dedicated teaching and support spaces for children with SEND. Amanda Allard, Director of CDC, said:

"We are encouraged to see the government providing strategic guidance alongside its investment in developing a more inclusive education system. There is still much to do, but this is an important step towards creating settings that can welcome, support and enable all children to thrive.

CDC is proud to have supported DfE in developing guidance on Inclusion Bases. These provisions have the potential to enable more children and young people to access education within their local community and mainstream settings and, when implemented well, can play an important role in a more inclusive special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) system.

Our engagement with the sector also highlighted potential risks, including unintentional segregation within schools. By setting clear expectations for inclusive practice at a system level, the guidance seeks to ensure Inclusion Bases improve access to mainstream education without creating new barriers."

Read the guidance [here](#) and CDC's statement [here](#).

CDC responds to ITV News report exposing deliberate delays in access to SEND services

System pressures cannot excuse poor practice or disrespect toward families and work is needed to rebuild trust between families and local services.

Responding to a recent ITV report which revealed that senior managers in a local authority were deliberately delaying access for families for Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) services, the Council for Disabled Children says:

"We know that local authority SEN teams are working hard in difficult situations, with insufficient resources to meet rising demand. Nevertheless, the management behaviours and the family experiences shown by ITV are never acceptable. System pressures cannot excuse poor practice or disrespect toward families.

We appreciate the intentions behind the SEND reforms and the investment to boost capacity and provide earlier support. These are positive steps for disabled children and young people and those with special educational needs. However, the current proposals still do not clearly explain how oversight, accountability, and intervention will help rebuild trust between families and local services.

The government needs to strengthen its proposed framework. This should include ensuring Department for Education regional advisers are equipped and resourced to both support and challenge culture and performance across local SEND systems.

They should regularly use evidence from Ofsted reports, Tribunal cases, parental complaints, Parent Carer Forums, SENDIAS services, and other local sources to review individual cases to inform timely and direct intervention where standards are not being met."

The statement is also available on our website [here](#).

Share your experience

On Friday 10 July the Department for Education (DfE) launched two consultations.

SEND reform: education otherwise than at school

The Department for Education is seeking views on improving support, quality and oversight for children and young people who are educated outside of school.

This consultation is for parents, carers, schools, local authorities and sector organisations. It seeks views on how to strengthen arrangements for children and young people who are educated outside school or further education settings.

The DfE wants to understand how support can be improved, how responsibilities should be clarified, and how provision can be better quality assured. The DfE is also seeking views on how arrangements can support improved outcomes, including progression and, where appropriate, reintegration.

This consultation closes at 11:59pm on 18 September 2026.

More information and to access the consultation can be found on the Government website [here](#).

Upfront funding for mainstream schools: creating a 'local SEND inclusion formula

This consultation explores how local authorities can provide upfront additional special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) funding to mainstream schools.

The DfE is seeking views on how best to rebalance the high needs and schools budgets in local authorities to increase the share of funding mainstream schools receive upfront to support their pupils' special educational needs (SEND).

This consultation closes at 11:59pm on 18 September 2026.

More information and to access the consultation can be found on the Government website [here](#).

What else we're doing at CDC

Health

As the SEND sector continues to plan for SEND reform, the CDC health team has been working to support areas in their preparation and delivery of significant change. Through April and May we delivered 30 Local Area SEND Reform Plan support sessions, delivered to leaders around the country to guide and shape their thinking. Our three areas of focus, Developing a Logic Model, Experts at Hand and Strengthening Effective Partnerships, saw several hundred attendees in the pivotal weeks between draft and final plan submissions.

Alongside that, we launched our RISE National Workforce Survey to understand what colleagues across the system want to know more about, and have begun to develop a wide-ranging curriculum to meet those needs and support the workforce at all levels through times of significant change. These trainings will be delivered across the year and you can keep an eye on the [Events & Training page](#) for when these free sessions are open for registration.

We've also been working with a range of local areas directly, supporting them in bringing the necessary stakeholders together and implementing these changes and resetting relationships at the same time. If you'd like to know more about this, or think your area may be interested in similar support, please get in touch at rethink@ncb.org.uk

What Works in SEND

The What Works in SEND (WWiS) programme has continued to build a wealth of evidence of both primary and secondary research. Recent examples of effective practice from the work of local SEND systems that meet our evidence standards include:

- [SEND School Improvement in Northumberland](#)
- [Tameside – Supporting Parents through the SEND Health Navigator Service](#)
- [Early Talk for York – Supporting children with speech, language and communication](#)
- [Rebuilding Relationships within North Somerset's local SEND system](#)
- [Telford & Wrekin's Key Stage 1-3 Alternative Provision Outreach Intervention Model](#)

At a RISE Programme National Event in June, What Works in SEND partners at the University of Birmingham shared headline findings from 25/26 research projects including a systematic review and qualitative study focussed on the use of educational learning needs assessment tools, and a Systematic Review of Effectiveness, Cost-Effectiveness and Stakeholder Perspectives into Special Units and Classes in Mainstream Schools. The full publications will be available soon the What Works website.

The programme will run three thematic learning communities from September this year until March 2027, recruitment is currently underway aimed at local area partnerships. The communities will be focussed on the following themes:

1. **Experts at Hand**
2. **Working with schools and trusts to build inclusive approaches**
3. **Working with parents and carers to maintain trust during the reforms**

Find out more about the WWiS programme by visiting our website [here](#).

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). Following the publication of DfE's SEND reform: putting children and young people first consultation on 23 February 2026, the Council for Disabled Children (CDC) were asked to deliver a series of stakeholder engagement events. These events began with a series of information webinars in March 2026, which were designed to support different audiences to understand key information relevant to them in the consultation. Six Information Webinars were held in total. Two sessions were held for parent carers attended by 287 people. Four separate events were held for health professionals, Local Authority Leaders, Education and Social Care attended by 548 people.

Following the information webinar series, the team delivered a series of in person and online SEND reform engagement events in partnership with the Department for Education which began on 20 April 2026 in Leicester and concluded on 14 May 2026 in Leeds. A total of 14 events took place during this period, with 680 attendees from across a range of stakeholder groups, including parent carers, education, health and social care.

We have also been developing more of our traded income work, in particular delivering safeguarding disabled children training for organisations. If you want to find out more, email us at cdc@ncb.org.uk.

Special Educational Consortium

Since the last update, the Special Educational Consortium (SEC) monthly meetings have been focused on discussions on SEND reforms and consultation writing for the recent SEND Consultation. SEC's response to the SEND Consultation can be found [here](#).

June's meeting was focused on updating SEC's strategy to align fully with current and ongoing changes in the sector and policy landscape.

We now have a break from meetings for the summer, but we all know the work does not stop and all members will be busy planning and preparing for what is sure to be a busy Autumn Term. To find out more about the consortium and our work, please visit the [website](#).

Early Years SEND (EYSEND)

The Early Years SEND (EYSEND) Partnership is a coalition of organisations committed to improving access and inclusion in the early years. CDC are the lead partner in the partnership, also working with ECU, Dingley's Promise, Nasen, Contact and Speech & Language UK.

Since March, the partnership has finished up a very busy quarter 4, including a hugely successful National Event (mentioned in the last edition). The National Event was held in person in Birmingham on Thursday 12 March and was attended by well over 100 people.

Quarter 1 of this financial year has been filled with planning and preparation for another busy year ahead, including the development of training and events specifically focused on the new Best Start Inclusion Practitioner (BSIP) role. You can find out more about training and other events from all six Partners on our training calendar or by signing up to our EYSEND [newsletter](#).

The Information, Advice and Support Services Network (IASSN)

This quarter the IASSN have been planning and delivering.

We've been planning face to face sessions in the autumn and new training and resources. And we've run legal training sessions and best practise webinars for SENDIAS staff, developed resources on AI, ways of working, infographics and impartiality, developed new online training and finalised our reports for last year.

Other than this we've spent a lot of time around the White Paper. We've been meeting with SENDIAS services to discuss their concerns and successes and running drop in events and developing resource packs to support locally. We know times of change can be challenging and we know this is a priority area for SENDIAS services and all in the sector and an area we'll be spending a lot of time on over the next year and beyond!

Participation

In June, we held our first Making Participation Work Practitioner's conference of the year, focussing on creating buy-in for strategic participation with senior stakeholders. This event was a great opportunity for practitioners to hear from different presenters about the work they have undertaken to promote young people's participation in strategic decision-making and to engage in group discussions about doing this meaningfully and effectively.

Our monthly online coffee mornings have continued. This quarter we have focussed on recruitment, exploring how to recruit for young people's opportunities and involve young people in organisational recruitment processes, and on digital participation and online engagement methods. You can find out more about our practitioner events, [here](#).

The [FLARE group](#) is continuing to support the Department for Education with policy thinking related to SEND through regular advisory group meetings. We have also recently recruited new members to the group.

Following the publication of the schools white paper Every Child Achieving and Thriving, the Participation Team have completed work to gather the views of disabled children and young people and those with special educational needs in response to the SEND reform: putting children and young people first consultation. The team delivered 27 online and in-person focus groups and gathered the views of 20 additional groups of young people through sessions run by teachers and group leaders across England. As well as submitting a collective response to the consultation, the team have produced three reports which explore the work and the information shared by young people, which you can [read here](#). The team are keen for this work to be a springboard for continued engagement of children and young people in policy-making and development as the reforms progress.

Get involved

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.

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.
- Committed to the CDC values and our [policy on inclusion](#).

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

Welcome to our newest CDC members

[REALLL Support CIC](#): a community interest company that offers support to parent carers in Warrington raising a child or young person with SEND. They offer drop in sessions and holistic support.

[Natchathiram CIC](#): a community interest company providing specialist SEND navigation and advocacy support to Tamil families across East and North East London.

[Eclipse Education ALP](#): an alternative provision provider commissioned by Bath and North East Somerset Council and local schools to provide education for students with EHCPs.

[Umbrella Derby and Derbyshire](#): a charity supporting and empowering disabled children, young people and their families in Derby City and South Derbyshire.

[National Star](#): an organisation running specialist education and care services including a post 16 college and satellite specialist education bases. They also support the development of policy and practice for disabled children and young people through specialist expertise in education, therapy and care.

[ConnectEd Scarborough CIC](#): provide compassionate, understanding support to children and adults in Scarborough, focusing on health-related trauma, complex health needs, disabilities and community integration.

[LOOK UK](#): a charity in Hereford offering mentoring, transformational events, online forums and parent support. They are the lead mentoring service in the UK for visually impaired young people, offering structured support for young people themselves, as well as their parents and carers through a mentoring project, support groups and events programme.

[Freestyle Performing Arts CIC](#): a community interest company and non-profit organisation supporting disabled children learning performing arts.

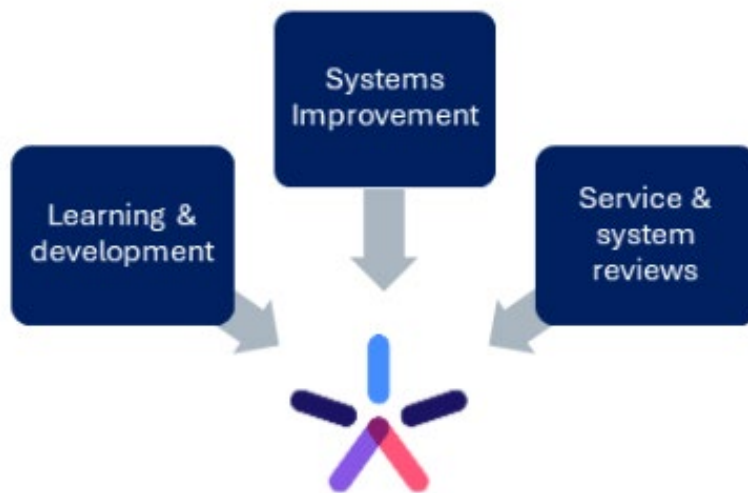
[Paralympics GB](#): world leading sports team winning medals across a diverse range of sports. Mission includes driving positive, sustainable change for disabled people in UK society, through social impact campaign 'Equal Play' which calls for equal access to PE and school sport for disabled children.

CDC's local 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 and 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 roundup 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

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



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COUNCIL
FOR DISABLED
CHILDREN
Part of the family



United for Disabled Children

CDC 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

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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.