



Department  
for Education

## 0-25 SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITY UNIT

September 2017 Newsletter

Welcome to the September 2017 edition of the 0-25 SEND Newsletter.  
In this Newsletter we are focusing on:

**Letter to local authorities from Robert Goodwill MP, Minister of State for Children and Families**

**Spring 2017 local authority and parent carer forum SEND implementation surveys: headline findings**

**Contact a Family – now called Contact**

**Transport Accessibility Action Plan consultation**

### **New reports and resources**

- Results of Achievement for All's NASENCO and SENCO project
- 'What Works' research report
- Publication of EBacc consultation results
- Publication of exclusions guidance
- New Contact resource for parents
- Special Provision Capital Fund

### **Upcoming events**

- Contact a Family (Contact) November Conference
- Understanding and implementing strategic participation for children and young people with SEND
- 'No Pens Day Wednesday' – 4<sup>th</sup> October 2017
- Professional Development Opportunities in Speech, Language and Communication
- The Communication Trust workshops for education settings, "Using evidence on the ground"

### **Annex A (Spring 17 Implementation Survey – High level findings)**

*This newsletter is intended for anyone working in special educational needs and disabilities – statutory and voluntary agencies across education, health and social care; and users of the system, such as children, young people and parents. Anyone is welcome to be on the mailing list, so please feel free to forward this e-mail to anyone you feel may have an interest. Those wishing to subscribe to future editions should contact the Department by e-mailing us at: [SEN.IMPLEMENTATION@education.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:SEN.IMPLEMENTATION@education.gsi.gov.uk)*

*With thanks. 0-25 SEND Unit*

## Letter to local authorities from Robert Goodwill MP, Minister of State for Children and Families

Robert Goodwill MP has today written to local authorities about their work to complete transfer reviews for children and young people with statements of SEN. His letter reminds them of the 31 March 2018 deadline for completion of this work; notes progress so far; offers clarity on the legal position regarding statements which have not been reviewed by the March deadline; and describes the continuing support available from the Department.

The letter is being sent out as an attachment to this newsletter.

## Spring 2017 local authority and parent carer forum SEND implementation surveys: headline findings

In May 2017, local authorities and parent carer forums were invited to complete their respective Spring 2017 SEND implementation surveys. We would like to thank all parent carer forums and local authorities for taking the time to complete them.

Through this newsletter, we are publishing today a summary of the key findings from both surveys. These are available at **Annex A**. Contact (formerly known as Contact a Family) has published a full report of the parent carer forum responses, which is available online at: <https://www.cafamily.org.uk/advice-and-support/resource-library/parent-carer-participation-9th-send-reforms-implementation-survey-report/>

The local authority and parent surveys are co-produced by Contact, the National Network of Parent Carer Forums, NHS England and the DfE. They help assess progress with the SEND reforms, and allow Government and other organisations to identify good practice and areas of challenge in order to prioritise available resources and identify areas for policy development. The views of both local authorities and parent carer forums are highly valued, and gathering feedback from both groups at the same time helps to provide a richer picture of local implementation.

Local authorities and parent carer forums were encouraged to work together when putting together their survey responses, with over three quarters of responding areas doing so. The feedback we have received indicates that working in this way helps to promote effective co-production and provides a helpful platform for discussion between local authorities and parent carer forums.

The next surveys will be launched at the beginning of **November 2017**, and will close at the end of that month.

## Contact a Family – now called Contact

**contact** *For families  
with disabled children*

Contact a Family has been working with families of disabled children to develop a new look designed to extend its appeal to young families; make its information and online presence more accessible; and bolster the support it provides to families

The new brand, reproduced above, sums up what Contact aims to achieve in every area of its work - whether that is putting families in contact with each other or with Contact itself.

As well as developing a new brand, Contact has overhauled its online and print information to make it easier for families to navigate. Contact's new website is mobile-optimised to support the growing number of families visiting on their phone or tablet. Contact's website address will be changing shortly to [www.contact.org.uk](http://www.contact.org.uk) but the new-look site is live now at [www.cafamily.org.uk](http://www.cafamily.org.uk), [so do take a look](#).

## **Transport Accessibility Action Plan consultation**

The Department for Transport has published a Transport Accessibility Action Plan consultation at [www.gov.uk/government/consultations/draft-transport-accessibility-action-plan](http://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/draft-transport-accessibility-action-plan).

The consultation seeks to understand what more needs to be done to improve transport accessibility and ensure that people with physical and hidden disabilities (including autism, mental health conditions, dementia) have the same access to transport and opportunities to travel as everyone else.

The consultation will close on Wednesday 15 November. A final version of the Accessibility Action Plan is expected to be published in 2018, post-consultation.

## **New reports and resources**

### **Results of Achievement for All's NASENCO and SENCO project**

Achievement for All was funded by the Department for Education in 2016-17 to undertake a project focusing on the National Award for SEN Co-ordination (NASENCO). The project had three strands and resulted in three reports:

1. An evaluation of the impact and effectiveness of the NASENCO
2. A review of the SEN co-ordination function in the early years and in further education settings, including recommendations for the NASENCO
3. A review of the NASENCO Provider Group's Quality Assurance Processes.

In brief, the project found that:

- there was clear, statistically-significant evidence that the NASENCO had increased trainees' confidence in professional knowledge and understanding; leading and coordinating provision; and personal and professional qualities.
- there was consensus amongst practitioners and providers around the merits of a SENCO qualifications pathway for early years and further education professionals.
- Government should consider:
  - a wider consultation with the early years and further education sectors about:
    - the qualifications pathway proposed
    - the duration and delivery model of the qualifications pathway
    - whether the NASENCO should be mandatory for early years and further education

- the NASENCO provider group’s recommendation that the Area SENCO should carry out an assessor role for those in early years accessing the pathway at Level 3.

The Government is considering these findings and the three reports can be accessed via the Achievement for All website at: <https://afaeducation.org/projects-and-services/>.

### **‘What Works’ Research Reports**

On 19 July 2017, the Department published four research reports relating to SEND.

Three of these come from the DfE-funded ‘What Works’ project, which looked at SEN support for pupils in mainstream schools and colleges. The fourth t looks at the wellbeing of secondary school pupils with SEN. The reports can be downloaded at the links below:

- [SEN Support in schools and colleges: survey](#)
- [SEN Support in schools and colleges: rapid evidence assessment](#)
- [SEN Support in schools and colleges: case studies](#)
- [The wellbeing of secondary school pupils](#)

### **Publication of EBacc consultation results**

The government’s response to a consultation on implementing the EBacc has now been published.

The consultation, which closed on 29 January 2016, attracted 2,755 responses. Through the consultation and discussions with stakeholders, the Department was made aware of the challenges that schools would face in increasing entry to the EBacc. Government is considering these carefully so that they can respond constructively – for example, with regard to recruiting and training teachers and in determining the right level for EBacc entry.

The response reflects the government’s ambition that 75% of year 10 pupils in state-funded mainstream schools will start to study GCSEs in the EBacc combination of subjects by September 2022. This is an important stepping stone to reaching 90% of year 10 pupils studying GCSEs in the EBacc subjects by 2025. The suite of core academic subjects that make up the EBacc include English, maths, science, history or geography, and a language. These are the subjects which, at A level, open more doors to more degrees, according to the Russell Group.

The response details the changes that will be made to school performance measures. As now, no single measure, including EBacc entry and achievement rates, will determine the outcome of a school inspection. It explains how Government will work with schools to help them to increase EBacc take-up, including supporting schools to learn from those that have already increased participation and working with the sector to support the improvement of the teaching of languages. Specific plans are also being developed to recruit additional high quality teachers to priority EBacc subjects, particularly languages, and those approaches are set out in this document.

The government is committed to ensuring that all students have access to a broad and balanced curriculum, and schools have a duty to provide this. The EBacc, while comprehensive, still enables pupils to continue to study additional subjects that reflect their individual interests and strengths. Evidence suggests that entries to arts subjects have not fallen as a result of the introduction of the EBacc.

Alongside the response to the consultation, the Department has published an [Equality Impact Assessment](#) and analysis which investigates the relationship between [EBacc and arts entry at school level](#).

### **Publication of exclusions guidance**

The Department has published a revised version of its 2012 exclusion guidance. The changes do not alter rights or requirements for schools, children or parents with regards to exclusion, but text has been updated in a number of areas to provide greater confidence and clarity for those involved in the exclusion process. You can access the revised guidance here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-exclusion>

As well as updating the statutory guidance, we are also issuing two non-statutory guides; one for head teachers and the other for parents. These provide a short summary of key elements of the exclusions process to help guide parents and schools. They can be found at the back of the statutory guidance as Annexes to the main document.

Finally, the Department has published a government response to the recent consultation on the proposed revisions. We would like to thank all individuals and organisations who responded to the consultation. You can access the government response to the consultation here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/school-exclusion-guidance-proposed-revisions>

### **New Contact resource for parents**

Contact, previously known as Contact A Family, is publishing a new free resource, *The Helpful Guide for Families with Disabled Children*. The book is for use by families in early days, who are unsure where to turn for help and support. It can be ordered via Contact's helpline on 0808 808 3555 or via the Contact website at <https://www.cafamily.org.uk/>

### **Special Provision Capital Fund**

Further guidance for the Special Provision Capital Fund has now been uploaded to GOV.UK. The guidance sets out how much special provision funding local authorities will receive from 2018 to 2020, as well as guidance on how to access the fund. You can access the guide at the link below, where you will also find templates for local authorities to complete, describing how they intend to use their allocation.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/send-provision-capital-funding-for-pupils-with-ehc-plans>

## **Upcoming Events**

### **Contact a Family (Contact) November Conference**

This year's parent participation conference, run by Contact and the National Network of Parent Carer Forums, is set to be the biggest yet. For the first time taking place over two days, it aims to attract around 200 parent carer forum members to the Etihad Stadium in Manchester on 27 and 28 November.

Forum membership has risen 30% in the last five years to nearly 82,000 across all local authority areas. As they approach the ten year anniversary of DfE grants for forums in 2018, delegates will be looking forwards as well as reflecting backwards on the first three years of the SEND reforms. Sponsored for the second year by Seashell Trust, the agenda was also co-produced with the DfE and NHS England, and, for the first time, local authority delegates from each region are being invited.

While this conference is primarily for forums, you can feed in your views via your regional lead authority or your own local parent carer forum. You can also follow events on the day by using the hashtag #lets participate

Further information is available on the conference programme, available at the link below:

<https://www.cafamily.org.uk/advice-and-support/resource-library/parent-carer-participation-2017-national-event-external-conference-pack/>

## **Understanding and implementing strategic participation for children and young people with SEND**

The Making Participation Work programme is DfE's national participation programme for children and young people who are disabled or have SEN. Jointly delivered by the Council for Disabled Children and KIDS, Making Participation Work is now in its second year.

Building on its successful national participation conferences last year, the programme is working with each region in England to deliver bespoke learning events for participation professionals working across the disabled children's sector.

These events will support managers and practitioners to gain a deeper understanding of how participation of disabled children and young people is central to the implementation of the SEND reforms. Co-designed with young people and with input from regional leads, the workshops have been developed to meet the specific needs of each of the regions. They will examine:

- What is strategic participation and why it is essential to the region
- Effective use of the region's support structures
- The key issues raised by OFSTED/CQC inspections
- Current barriers within the region affecting strategic participation

Bespoke elements of the learning event may also include:

- Working with young people with communication needs
- Engaging young people using social media
- Integrated working – developing a combined participation strategy
- Commissioning
- Gathering young people's evidence for joint area inspections

The events will also provide an opportunity for the regions and local areas to identify how they wish to draw down the bespoke training and coaching opportunities being delivered by the KIDS team as part of the programme.

For further information about these learning events, contact Joanna Carr, [jcarr@ncb.org.uk](mailto:jcarr@ncb.org.uk).



To find out more about Making Participation Work, visit the Council for Disabled Children's website: <https://councilfordisabledchildren.org.uk/our-work/participation/practice/making-participation-work>

### **'No Pens Day Wednesday' – 4th October 2017**

The full suite of free 'No Pens Day Wednesday 2017' resources for early years, mainstream and special schools and further education is now live on The Communication Trust website - including the 2017 activity pack and a selection of new posters.

This year, The Communication Trust has added a new section for Further Education resources, bringing fifteen new lesson plans to the site. One of the Trust's goals in extending the day to an FE audience is to ensure that young people have the communication skills that will allow them to thrive when they leave education.

To access all of these resources and to strengthen the focus on speech, language and communication skills in your school or setting, sign up [here](#).

Once you have registered, you will be able to take part in 'No Pens Day Wednesday' on 4th October 2017 (or whenever works best for you).

### **Professional Development Opportunities in Speech, Language and Communication**

The Communication Trust's recent [workforce consultation report](#) highlighted that 99% of practitioners recognise the importance of speech, language and communication skills, whilst 96% identified gaps in their learning in this crucial area.

The Trust's [Level 3 accredited qualification](#) in Supporting Children and Young People's Speech, Language and Communication aims to boost the knowledge and skills needed by practitioners to effectively support all children's speech, language and communication development and identify those who are struggling.

The Award is relevant for practitioners in a wide range of setting but it is particularly suitable for those working directly with children and young people in learning and development roles such as early years practitioners, teachers and teaching assistants.

Platform 3 is an online route to completing the Level 3 qualification.

[Watch the Platform 3 video to find out more about gaining the qualification online.](#)

### **The Communication Trust workshops for education settings, "Using evidence on the ground"**

The Communication Trust will be delivering an afternoon of workshops in London (**14th November**) and Manchester (**30th November**) to help those working in an education setting to make better use of evidence in their practice.

If you are a senior leader and you want to find out more on how to make evidence-based decisions or better show impact, these workshops may be for you. Please follow the link [here](#) to find out more.

## Annex A: Spring 2017 Implementation Survey Results

### Local authority key high level findings

### Parent carer forum key high level findings

#### Response rates

- The response rate for LAs completing the survey is 90%, this is down by 1% from the last survey.
- 76% of respondents had discussed their responses to the survey with their Parent Carer Forum, compared to 70% in the last survey.
- The response rate for parent carer forums completing the survey is 75%, this is down by 6% from the last survey.
- 79% of parent carer forums discussed their responses to the survey with their local authority; an increase from the last survey of 70%.

#### Completion of EHC Plans within the 20 week statutory timeframe

39% of local authorities that responded stated that they were issuing at least 90% of EHC plans within 20 weeks, this is an increase from the last survey of 3%.

The top five barriers for local authorities that did not manage to complete 90% of EHC Plans within the 20-week timeframe were:

1. Capacity of LA SEN teams (80%)
2. Timeliness in the response from an institution when consulted over being named in an EHC plan. (65%)
3. Timely advice from health professionals (64%)
4. Capacity of education psychologists to give advice (58%)
5. Quality of advice from social care professionals (45%)

45% of forums believe that their local authority is meeting the 20-week deadline to produce EHC Plans in 90% of cases, this is an increase from the last survey of 7%.

For the forums that believe their local authorities did not meet the 20 week deadline in 90% of cases, the top five barriers to completion were considered to be:

1. Capacity within the LA SEN team (74%)
2. The timeliness in advice from health professionals (67%)
3. Capacity of educational psychologists to give advice (66%)
4. Capacity of health professionals to provide advice (53%)
5. Timeliness in advice from social care professionals (53%)



## Effective co-production and user engagement

### Levels of engagement of children, young people and parents in strategic planning and co-production of SEND services.

- 20% of LAs that responded stated that children are fully or largely engaged in strategic planning and co-production of SEND services, an increase from 13% of LAs based on the last survey.
- 40% of LAs that responded stated that young people are largely or fully engaged in strategic planning and co-production of SEND services, which has increased from 30% of LAs in the last survey.
- 84% of LAs that responded stated that parents are fully or largely engaged in strategic planning and co-production of SEND services, compared to 83% of LAs in the last survey.
- 10% of forums stated that children were fully or largely engaged in strategic planning and co-production of SEND services compared to 7% on the last survey.
- 19% of forums stated young people were fully or largely engaged, compared to 15% in the last survey.
- 64% of forums feel that parents are largely or fully engaged in strategic planning with their local authority, compared to 60% on the last survey.

### How well engaged are children, young people and parents in making decisions about their own SEND provision?

- 50% of LAs who responded to the survey stated that children were fully or largely engaged in making decisions about their own SEND provision, compared to 52% of LAs who completed the last survey.
- 67% of LAs who responded to the survey stated that young people were fully or largely engaged in making decisions about their own SEND provision, the same proportion as the previous survey.
- 84% of LAs who responded to the survey stated that parents were fully or largely engaged in making decisions about their own SEND provision, compared to 87% of LAs in the last survey.
- 24% of forums reported that children are either fully or largely engaged in decision making about their own SEND provision, compared to 21% on the last survey.
- 34% of forums stated young people were fully or largely engaged compared to 27% on the last survey.
- 55% of forums stated parents were fully or largely engaged compared to 49% of parents on the last survey.

## Strategies used in the EY sector and in schools/academies and mainstream colleges to develop and maintain effective SEN Support systems

### The EY sector

The three most common strategies used by the LAs who responded to develop and maintain effective SEN support systems in the Early Years (EY) sector were:

- Offering training and workforce development opportunities to all EY providers (used by 98% of LAs who responded to the survey).
- Providing specialist services to support EY settings (98% of LAs).
- Making it clear how EY providers can access high needs funding where appropriate (98% of LAs).

The proportion of LAs that publish guidelines about the threshold for an EY EHC needs assessment and evidence expected was 84%.

80% of LAs who responded said that they provide Area SENCOs to support EY settings.

Ensuring the Local Offer has clear information about what to expect from EY providers was found to be a useful strategy for 78% of LAs who responded.

The three most common strategies that the PCF respondents identified the LAs to be utilising to develop and maintain effective SEN support systems in the Early Years (EY) sector were:

- 89% of forums that responded to this question stated that training and workforce development opportunities are offered to all EY providers.
- 91% of forums say that other specialist services are provided to support EY settings.
- 77% of forums said that the local authority makes it clear how EY providers can access high needs funding.

69% of forums now believe that their Local Offer gives clear information about what EY providers are expected to make available through SEN support.

73% of forums said that their local authority had published guidelines about the threshold for an EY EHC needs assessment and the evidence they normally expect.

### Schools, including academies

Common strategies used by the local authorities to develop and maintain effective SEN Support systems in schools, including academies, are as follows:

- 95% of LAs stated training and workforce development opportunities are offered to all schools and academies
- 92% of LAs stated that they were leading and facilitating regular SENCO forum meetings for both schools and academies.
- 91% of LAs said that they were ensuring the Local Offer has information about what is expected in relation to SEN support.
- 81% of LAs said that they were ensuring the availability and quality of School Information reports is monitored.
- 91% of LAs said that they were providing guidelines about the threshold for an EHC needs assessment.

Common strategies used by the local authorities to develop and maintain effective SEN Support systems in schools, including academies were also identified by those that completed the PCF survey.

- When asked about training and workforce development opportunities being offered to all schools 55% of the forums said that this was in place for both maintained schools and academies.
- 57% of the forums stated that the local authority leads regular SENCO network meetings for maintained schools and academy schools.
- 52% of the forums stated that the Local Offer has information about what the local authority expects to make available for SEN support pupils in maintained schools and academy schools.
- 40% said that the LA monitors the availability and quality of SEN Information Reports in both maintained and academy schools.
- 47% of forums said that the LA has published

guidelines about the threshold for an EHC needs assessment and the evidence they would normally expect for both academies and maintained schools.

## **Mainstream colleges**

86% of LAs said that they were either moderately or very confident that mainstream college settings provide good SEN support and that they enable learners to achieve good outcomes.

- The most used strategy for ensuring development of SEN Support systems in mainstream colleges is publishing guidelines about the threshold for an EHC needs assessment, which is used by 86% of LAs.
- 33% of LAs said that they are working effectively in partnership with post-16 providers to deliver SEND reforms, with 59% stating that they delivered this to some extent. Eight percent of LAs said that they were working effectively in partnership with post-16 providers to a limited extent.

39% of forum respondents stated that they were very or moderately confident that college settings provide good SEN Support and that they enable learners to achieve good outcomes. 45% said that they were not confident.

- 53% of forums state that their local authority provides a range of specialist services to support college settings with SEN support students, with 75% publishing guidelines about the threshold for an EHC needs assessment.
- 14% of forums feel that their local authority is effectively working in partnership with post-16 providers to deliver the SEND reforms. This is up 9 percentage points since the last survey. 49% of forums said that their LA were, to some extent, working effectively in partnership with post-16 providers to deliver SEND reforms. Four percent of forums say that their local authority is not working in partnership with post-16 providers to deliver the reforms at all.

## Joint Commissioning arrangements

**To what extent are local authorities meeting the expectation that partners will work together to monitor how outcomes in education, health and care are being improved as a result of the provision they make.**

83% of LAs are meeting the expectation either fully, or to some extent, in relation to education partners. 66% of LAs are meeting the expectation in relation to health partners and 71% are meeting the expectation in relation to social care partners.

52% of forums say that their local authority is meeting the joint commissioning expectations with education fully, or to some extent. 35% feel that they are meeting the expectation with health, whilst 33% believe that their local authority is meeting its expectations with social care. The expectation that partners will work together to monitor how outcomes are improved as a result of the provision they make is lower for forums than for local authorities.

**Local authorities and parent carer forums were asked how well do the joint commissioning arrangements between education, health and social care work.**

89% of LAs stated that arrangements are developed fully or to some extent in relation to education partners, 74% of LAs stated they were developed fully or to some extent in relation to health partners and 82% of LAs stated they were developed fully or to some extent in relation to social care partners.

When asked about how well developed those joint commissioning arrangements are, 53% of forums think that their local authority's arrangements with education are fully developed, or developed to some extent. The figure for health was lower at 36%, and for social care at 33%.