

## SEND Consultation Full Responses

1 We want children, young people and their families to be involved in making better, evidence based decisions about SEND, both in their local area and across the country. How can we make sure children, young people and their families have a genuine say in these decisions?

- Respondent 02: Structured check-ins, open feedback forms, and (full disclosure) resources available for all to learn about the process for support.
- Respondent 03: This can be achieved by prioritising direct and accessible communication with children, young people and their families, ensuring their experiences and needs shape decision-making from the outset. Additionally, collaboration with SEND specialists and organisations can help interpret and embed these insights into evidence-based practice. Creating structured opportunities for feedback, such as surveys and community forums, could ensure their voices are not only heard, but meaningfully influence any decision-making.
- Respondent 04: It's important that children, young people and their families are always taken seriously and worked with in collaboration. Families should be clearly presented with all options possible, and not only the options that school or organisations want them to choose. All options should be explored with them, and in a manner they are comfortable. Families should be offered the opportunity to choose what is best for their child, not what's best for the setting, school, or organisation. Young people should have the opportunity if they wish to experience a setting or project, or trial a way of working, before committing or making a decision. There should be no assumptions made; Just because they 'coped' with a setting, this does not mean it's their first choice or that they liked it or felt safe. While it should be avoided, I acknowledge that sometimes it's necessary to make a decision without the family, particularly in the case of safeguarding. If a decision is made absent of the family, a transparent conversation with the family must be had, where there is a clear explanation of why the decision was made and why it was necessary to be made without them.
- Respondent 05: By asking them.
- Respondent 10: I rarely feel confident enough to discuss what I require face-to-face with adults. Personally, I prefer to write things down or type them so I can take those extra moments to make sure what I am saying is how I feel. I also feel this allows my answers and feelings to be passed to multiple people, rather than having lots of different conversations where the questions/answers will change slightly each time.
- Respondent 11: Tejiri and mum Marian have details of Qs and invoice, given deadline Fri 8th "

2 How can we make sure that high-quality evidence and best practice inform decisions about SEND? Please share examples.

- Respondent 02: Evaluation processes should be standardised/formatted to show overarching themes/behaviour. This way, examples can be drawn from child to child, and then measured in terms of effectiveness (information/examples used with the correct safeguarding practices).
- Respondent 03: This can be achieved by considering the resources available in the area of SEND, and ensuring that schools and organisations are aware of different approaches, such as the social model of disability. Providing access to up-to-date research, guidance and training can support more informed decision-making. For example, using evidence from inclusive education research to adapt teaching strategies, or learning from local authorities that have successfully implemented co-produced SEND provision.
- Respondent 05: Firstly, I think we need a definition of the term “high-quality” and “best practice”. Secondly, who decides on the universal definitions of these terms? I imagine it’s adults rather than the young people themselves. In my opinion “high-quality evidence” is evidence that prioritises input (in whatever format that may take) from young disabled musicians themselves. "

3 How can we ensure that children are best supported by the Universal offer

- Respondent 02: They have an understanding of their preferred learning environments and modes or know how to communicate when they do not feel comfortable to learn.
- Respondent 05:  
“Setting leaders making plans for how to be more inclusive” = do setting leaders know how to be more inclusive? Have they been trained by someone with lived experience? If so, one person’s lived experience will never be diverse enough to capture everyone’s needs.  
“Support is based on what works and can help early, as soon as someone needs it.” = I think this is great. But make sure the children have a choice. One thing that works for one person may not work for another. Give the children clear, accurate information in a format that is accessible to their understanding and support them to make a choice rather than it being prescriptive.  
“Teaching is high quality, and lessons are designed so everyone can learn” = is this realistic? What is high quality teaching? There is no one-size-fits-all approach so is it achievable to expect everyone to learn in the same content, in one classroom, with one teacher? Access needs can contradict each other. Providing everything in braille for one student makes the lesson inaccessible to everyone else. Some people learn in creative ways (see Creativity Collaboratives funded by Arts Council England) others need structure and routine.  
“Everyone has the opportunity to take part in activities beyond their lessons, like music, sport or art.” = this is great! But again it shouldn’t be prescriptive it should be the child’s choice, not based on whether the parents can afford extracurricular activities or peer

pressure. But also if someone is masking throughout the school day then that is incredibly damaging to their health – if they then have to stay longer in school to engage in extracurricular activities then this might not be ethical. Also these activities would have to be accessible to everyone – not just a select few.

“The setting is safe and respectful, where everyone feels they belong and wants to come.” = who decides whether the space is safe and respectful? Likely the teachers? It needs to be the students, ask them what a safe and respectful space means for them. “Families and support services work closely with the setting.” = do families and support services have the capacity? What if a child has many siblings? It’s important this doesn’t become a burden to families because children are likely to pick up on this. “Spaces and support are inclusive and keep improving so everyone can take part.” = Great! As long as it’s genuine and not tokenistic. It needs to be standardised otherwise different places will do these things differently. Provide standardised training from live-experience perspectives.

- Respondent 10: The Universal Offer is a good concept as EHCP’s are difficult to get and more importantly, very difficult to obtain an EHCP that actually meets the needs of the child and helps their provision. I think its good that all staff are receiving mandatory training. I do wonder if all staff want to have the training and whether they will apply it. Having access to education psychologists is fantastic, but I do feel these meetings need to be face-to-face rather than online to obtain the full picture of the child (i.e, fidgeting, body language etc.) I still feel there might be postcode lottery aspect to this and some areas will have better access than others. "

4 How can we ensure that children in the Targeted layer, are best supported?

- Respondent 02: An access document is developed with them alongside an inclusion base.
- Respondent 05: Make sure the teacher has enough capacity to meet the students support needs in a mainstream classroom. Make sure that this support isn’t really obvious to all the other students – i.e. being removed from lessons (such as music) in order to “catch-up” in core subjects. "

5 How can we ensure that children in the Targeted Plus layer, are best supported?

- Respondent 02: Children are taught how to bring and use their ISP in other learning environments.
- Respondent 05: Make sure everyone involved in this layer has time to do their jobs properly, otherwise this will not work. Who will be in charge of coordinating the school, local authority and health professionals – that’s a separate role in itself. It needs to be clear where the responsibilities lie and who has the ultimate responsibility in key decisions. "

6 How can we ensure that children in the Specialist layer are best supported?

- Respondent 02: Maintain a learning objective with creative activities inc music, art, dance according to interest of child

- Respondent 05: I think this is excluding children with mental health difficulties. You need an EHCP as proof to access all sorts of reasonable adjustments beyond school and for leisure activities. It sounds like the specialist layer is very much aimed at those with severe or progressive physical disabilities. "

7 How do you think early years settings, schools, and college can best support the mental health and wellbeing of children and young people?

- Respondent 01:

1. Personalised support plan: a 'one size fits all' approach does not work. Each child or young person with SEND should have a tailored plan based on their individual strengths, needs and access requirements.

2. Whole-setting approach to wellbeing: Embed emotional literacy, safe spaces, sensory regulation tools and trauma-informed practice across the environment and all teaching spaces.

3. Strong key adult relationships: a consistent, trusted adult/s that rotate on a monthly basis to reduce codependency improves confidence, engagement and emotional regulation.

4. Reasonable adjustments: flexible timetables, quiet areas, sensory adaptations and assistive technology.

5. Family collaboration: regular communication ensures consistent strategies between home and setting.

6. Early intervention: access to counselling, educational psychology and wellbeing programmes.

- Respondent 02: Resources and further support with the behaviour/effects of poor mental health/well-being. E.g., Overwhelm into next best step, how a child can engage effectively with planning to be in these settings.

- Respondent 03: This can be achieved by openly discussing mental health and wellbeing, and actively working to minimise stigma in these environments. Encouraging schools, early years settings and colleges to take part in initiatives such as Mental Health Awareness Week can help students, staff and families become more conscious of these issues. Providing safe spaces for open conversation and ensuring access to appropriate support can further strengthen this approach.

- Respondent 04: To begin with, it's of utmost importance that all staff are actively trained on mental health, neurodiversity, and SEND. The training should be regular. This will help them identify the signs, understand behaviour, and act accordingly. There's so many schools that do not have this training, and it costs young people their wellbeing. I would encourage all settings to look into 'anti-behaviourism' policies. Though I know not everyone aligns with it, the principles are very relevant when focusing on mental health and wellbeing. All children should be treated as individuals, and when considering a child's well-being,

adaptations should be put in place to respond to needs as soon as they arise. There shouldn't be crisis management here.

- Respondent 05: Remove timed assessments – this will help young people to stop comparing themselves with their peers and the national average. School was an incredibly damaging time for me, caused me to have a mental breakdown, which led to an autism regression – I'm now 26 and I am still not back at the point where I was when I was 14 despite all sorts of medications, therapies and adjustments.
- Respondent 10: I think there are considerable issues around Senior Schools and telling children their predicted grades for exams. If predicted a good grade then the individual might not think they have to work as hard. If predicted a low grade then they might think what is the point of trying. I don't think that sort of pressure is acceptable for kids age 14-15 years old. Kids need to know the band they are likely to achieve higher grades so they can tailor their work and revision, but do they need actual grades. They need to be motivated and not scared and put off. "

8 Do you agree that the refreshed 'areas of development' will support educators to understand and address barriers to learning and participation? Please explain your answer.

- Respondent 02: I agree with the areas of development but it could be improved by greater access to training and diagnoses as barriers are addressed for child, teacher and parents.
- Respondent 05: I'm not sure. I think figure 5 is a good overview but it should be more person centred than a list of potential areas of development. For example, "generating sound" in the "speech, language and communication" section – for someone like me (with selective mutism) yes it is an area that might need to be developed but people need to understand that progress looks different for everyone and the wording "generating sound" gives anxiety which feeds the selective mutism.
- Respondent 10: Yes. Put simply the more people who understand SEND issues the better. Having more people on the 'look out', especially in primary schools and can only help. As long as they are encouraged to ask for help themselves and no when to pass cases along when they have reached the peak of their knowledge, then it can only be a plus. Passing people on when they can do no more will also help with their individual workloads and stress levels. "

9 What arrangements would best support effective joint working between early years providers, Best Start Family Hubs, health, local authorities, and parents for children with SEND in the early years?

- Respondent 01:
  1. Clear shared accountability between early years providers, health visitors and local authorities.

2. Single shared support plan to reduce duplication.
3. Named key workers for each child to coordinate services.
4. Regular multi-agency meetings with parents fully involved.
5. Joint training across sectors to build shared understanding of SEND.

- Respondent 02: Access documents which can be worked on across teams, and key objectives/milestones can then be communicated across stakeholders. Child-led lessons/learning - to see learning styles / interests informing how all stakeholders can support in the child's progress.

- Respondent 03: This can be achieved through early identification and the development of a tailored support plan for each child with SEND. Effective joint working requires clear communication and collaboration between early years providers, family hubs, health services, local authorities and parents, ensuring everyone is informed. This approach should support the child's individual needs while minimising disruption to their everyday childhood experiences.

- Respondent 04:

1. Facilitated and collaborative meetings, discussing the young person's needs together, and coming up with practical and bespoke solutions.
2. The parent(s) should be valued in these meetings.
3. Parents and providers should know exactly who to contact about the young person, ideally a named person who can take it to the relevant places.
4. Any documentation should be available on request and be clear.

- Respondent 05: There needs to be an interlocutor – someone independent from all these services who coordinates and understands (and has been trained about – from those with lived experience) the value of child participation and input. Otherwise, everyone would just pass the responsibility around and nothing would get done.

- Respondent 10: I feel having someone like my SendCo in school, but on a bigger scale to help me navigate through my childhood and teenage years. Basically, a go to person who can explain what the different organisations I come across, what they do and help me deal with them. I also feel more of my information should be available to different organisations (some sort of shared IT system) so people know I have autism spectrum disorder when I first come into contact and that I don't have to explain it every single time. "

10 How can the early years foundation stage (EYFS) two-year old progress check and the Healthy Child Programme development review be improved so that children's needs are identified and supported more quickly? Please share examples.

- Respondent 01:

1. Quicker referrals: Automatic referral pathways if developmental concerns are identified.
2. Follow-up checkpoints within 3–6 months.

Example: If speech delay is identified in a two year old, referral to speech and language

therapy should happen immediately, alongside early language interventions in nursery rather than a “wait and see” approach.

- Respondent 02:

1. Learning modes Child-led lessons - to see learning styles / interests
2. Giving support on how the teaching is done, parents/carers being able to contribute/respond to what is recorded for each child.
3. Training to reduce stigma for all stakeholders.

- Respondent 05: I think that at the moment there is an assumption that parents and Early Years staff will be able to identify children's needs at such a young age. When I was at nursery I wasn't able to speak, despite being quite communicative at home. I was later diagnosed with selective mutism, anxiety (and given medication for this), autism, ADHD, dyslexia and Irlen syndrome. I am an only child – my parents didn't know what to look for or realise that I had any additional needs at this stage of my life. The Early Years staff and school staff told my parents that I was shy and would grow out of it – in reality I created lots of unhealthy masking and coping mechanisms for myself that have now led to early onset arthritis and chronic back pain. To the school staff I was a model student – I did what I was asked without any fuss – I think this proposed system will only work if staff are trained to see the “mask” and the behaviour's which are not obvious. I was invisible throughout early years and school – I don't see this new system helping young children like me. When I was in better health I used to work for a charity called Kids (the Lincolnshire County Council contract is now under EYA (Early Years Alliance)) and I did some work for this section: <https://www.eyalliance.org.uk/projects/lincolnshire-support-services/early-support-learning-provision/>

Early Support Learning Provision The Early Support Learning Provision (ESLP) service provides families with children who have a disability or complex health condition in their early years up until they transition into full time education (Reception Year) provides social and learning opportunities for children as well as offering parents/carers a suitable break from their caring responsibilities at the 'Time to Play' (previously named KIDS creche) sessions. Time for parents and carers and to Play for children In the FREE Time to Play sessions children in their early years will be supported by our highly experienced and qualified Practitioners who understand your individual situation and who will encourage your child's development and independence and support the transition to be ready for pre-school and reception helping them to achieve their full potential. . Our skilled and experienced Practitioners who understand have a shared responsibility with parents and carers to ensure children are safe at home, school and in their community and will support access to other services and navigate the local offer with tips and advice. Time to Play are planned to the Early Years Foundation Stage and in an enabling environment where they can thrive and be the best they can be. It will operate for 1 hour and 59 minutes with time before and after for you to safely handover. To access the Early Support Learning Provision, you will need to be registered with your local Children Centre, we can support you to do this

if you are not already. <https://www.lincolnshire.gov.uk/joinchildrenscentre>

This was a really good service but most children needed 1-2-1 staff support and the size of the rooms limited how many children and staff could be present (i.e. 5-6 children + 6-7 staff is an overwhelming amount of people in one room). Therefore, there was always a long waiting list. I think more services like this would be really useful because we used to support the parents through the applying to school process and getting EHCP's etc. It really helped that the senior practitioner who I worked under had a child with PMLD (profound and multiple learning difficulties) and could therefore relate to the parents and support them from a lived-experience point of view as well as an experienced EYFS professional. "

10 What should the top three priority areas be for building and sharing evidence within the National Inclusion Standards?

• Respondent 01:

1. What works in inclusive mainstream practice (evidence-based strategies).
2. Early intervention impact data.
3. Effective co-production models with families and young people.

• Respondent 02:

1. Access to assessments (for diagnoses) at key learning stages, not necessarily picked up during the classroom or at home.
2. Teacher resource - learning objectives with a structure on how to deliver the curriculum according to different learning styles, without adding to workload. E.g. choices on delivery.

• Respondent 05: Firstly: "Without clarity on what good inclusive practice looks like for children with additional needs, support is inconsistent across settings and regions" – see Mawby's 2018 PhD research:

[https://etheses.whiterose.ac.uk/id/eprint/24097/1/Mawby\\_THESIS\\_MASTER\\_FINAL.pdf](https://etheses.whiterose.ac.uk/id/eprint/24097/1/Mawby_THESIS_MASTER_FINAL.pdf). In chapter 5 she spoke to multiple stakeholders to establish what 'best practice' meant for music provision in SEND school settings. They were:

1. Adapting Provision to Suit Pupils' Needs
2. Adapting Provision to Suit Pupils' Preferences
3. Knowing the Students
4. Offering Musical Opportunities
5. Making it Accessible
6. Making it Participatory
7. Having fun

Secondly, what happens after the age of 25? Thirdly, the UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) aims... they also have a goal to make the field of academia more diverse (i.e. by encouraging those with protected characteristics to become involved with academia). I am currently doing a PhD about music and disability and I am a disabled musician – ticking the box for their objective one. However, whilst this UKRI goal sounds great there are flaws... for

example there is no funding for reasonable adjustments (other than through the DSA and the university). My PhD is funded for 36 months, very few people (disabled or not) complete their PhD within the funding timeframe. Although, as a disabled researcher I am more likely to use the allocated 13 weeks of sick leave yet the funding cannot be extended beyond the 36 months. So if I don't finish my PhD within the funding timeframe then it will likely remain unfinished, unpublished and therefore not used. The alternative is I will have to work in order to fund the PhD and given my fatigue this is unlikely to work.

- Respondent 10: I like the fact they are focusing heavily on PE and giving the chance for all students to participate in sports. I think more sports have to be offered during PE lessons and though it is good when able bodied and disabled people can play at the same time (ie, tennis with the 2 bounce rule) but their needs to be alternative versions offered as well. As already stated, the ability for my own individual SEND information to follow me wherever I go is important and must be implemented as soon as possible to ensure a consistent approach. Schools must state how they have met Government SEND targets and be accountable for failures as well as state how they are going to turn things around in the future "

12 What are the most important issues for national training to cover, to help support children and young people with SEND?

- Respondent 01:

1. Neurodiversity-affirming practice.
2. Trauma-informed approaches.
3. Mental health awareness and training.
4. Adaptive teaching strategies.
5. Legal responsibilities under the Equality Act and SEND Code of Practice.
6. Effective communication with parents and guardians.

- Respondent 03: Inclusivity: how to ensure that children and young people can engage and feel included in settings beyond a SEND environment.

- Respondent 04: Mental health first aid, trauma informed practice, autism awareness, disability awareness, etc. I also believe that schools should look into anti-behaviourism as a way to treat each young person as an individual.

- Respondent 10: I would like the training to ensure each school builds a register of teachers with SEND themselves. As a person with ASD, if I have an issue I would like to talk to a teacher who has ASD themselves as they are most likely to be able understand and emphasise my issues and be able to help progress a solution, rather than someone who has no experience of my feelings. In effect its getting the best qualified person to help and that's not always qualifications, but people who have been through it before. "

13 What practical actions can help teachers, educators and leaders manage workload whilst implementing these changes?

- Respondent 02: Clear processes and suggestions on how to implement changes, including on how to deliver the criteria laid out in the SEND system. More training that is accessible to all. Does not have to be attached to a school. Allowing for specialist workers unrestricted to barriers be more equipped to develop practical actions. Direct links to medical providers or specialist SEND workers to get advice on implementing changes.
- Respondent 03: When attending training or learning more about SEND, involving not only specialists but also individuals with lived experience of SEND can make the content more practical and meaningful. Hearing directly from someone with that background can make the learning feel more personal rather than purely theoretical, helping educators understand key issues more quickly and apply them more effectively in practice, which can support workload management.
- Respondent 04: All training should be paid, and built into contracts and their working hours. Regular check-ins with line-managers about workload and the implementation of these changes.
- Respondent 10: I don't think it would take much work to implement a centralised school list of the teachers SEND conditions. Obviously the issue of if a large number of kids see a teacher who has the same condition they have and want to speak to them, then that could cause problems. But I feel you would only find this out through trial and error, you can't predict when a SEND individual wants to chat in the future as you don't know what day to day problems they will come up against. "

14 How should the Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO) role evolve to better meet the needs of children and young people with SEND?

- Respondent 02: Schools need more than one SENCO worker to deliver differentiated lesson plans, such as specialised SENCO teams for access needs or lessons needing extra support.
- Respondent 10: As my SEND needs are reasonably, after 3 years at my current school I have had little contact with my SENCO. If I did have a difficulty I'm not sure I would know where to go and who to speak too ( hence my previous answers regarding individual teachers and their personal SEND diagnosis). I would like a regular check-in, even once a year with the SENCO just to talk about any changes that have happened to me in that time and what I might need going forward. "

15 What would provide assurance for families that an Individual Support Plan (ISP) is high-quality and contains the essential information?

- Respondent 02: ISP should include Input from child, to families, to teacher, to SENCO, to localised services to government, and then developed with the family for assurance that it is working for each child.
- Respondent 03: For ISP providers to regularly communicate with parents and guardians, especially at the initial stages, ensuring that the plan is tailored to each individual. Ongoing

communication and review can help ensure the ISP remains relevant, clear and reflective of the child or young person's needs, thus reassuring families.

- Respondent 04: It should be accurate to the young person in a way that the family recognises. Families should be allowed and encouraged to ask questions or raise any concerns, and then clear information should be provided about why sections are there or why it's worded in that way.
- Respondent 10: When the plan is first introduced, I feel it needs to be revisited by both myself and the education provider at least termly to ensure that every need and trait is picked up and then recorded accurately. It needs to say what I struggle to do, but it also needs to highlight what I do well so it shows what I can achieve and don't require help with and is a positive document. "

16 How can we ensure Individual Support Plans are clear, concise and practical for professionals to use?

- Respondent 01: Limit to 2–3 pages maximum.
  1. Clear sections: needs, outcomes, strategies, responsible staff, review date.
  2. Written in plain English.
  3. Include child/young person voices.
  4. Visual summary page for quick reference.
  5. Reviewed termly and updated promptly.
- Respondent 02: Simple language - untrained people can also understand the plan or provide resources to understand how to use and implement the plan.
- Respondent 03: By incorporating a structured framework with clear, accessible terminology that is easy to understand not only for professionals, but also for parents and guardians. During my secondary school, I had an EHCP and found it difficult to read and understand, as some of the language was not accessible. Using more digestible and comprehensible language would make Individual Support Plans clearer and more practical to understand by the individuals and families they are designed for.
- Respondent 04: My support plan was detailed, yet felt inaccurate to me and I didn't understand why information was in there as it was never explained to me. I believe that they should contain accurate information (obviously), and actionable steps that can be taken to support the young person.
- Respondent 10: I think having names/job roles (a go to person) assigned to a specific need would cut down on bureaucracy. For instance, for myself who has issues with Social Situations and Anxiety in speaking to people, the last thing I would want is the need to speak and meet with a number of different people from different organisations. I would rather one specific contact who can help me and share my issues with others. "

17 How can we best support transition for young people with SEND, so that they are well supported into post-16 provision and further education, training or employment?

- Respondent 01:

1. Begin planning by Year 9 at the latest.
2. Include careers advice tailored to SEND.
3. Supported internships and work experience with a separate pot of money for access needs.
4. Transition visits and phased starts.
5. Clear sharing of support plans with colleges.
6. Independent travel training where appropriate.

- Respondent 02: They are empowered to know how they need to develop and given resources to develop their own access document/ISPs themselves.

- Respondent 03: As mentioned previously, by ensuring that inclusivity work is in place so that young people with SEND feel comfortable and safe beyond a SEND environment. Signposting them and their families to relevant specialist institutions and charities can also support continued development post-16. For example, organisations such as FOCUS provide support for visually impaired individuals across the UK regardless of their age.

- Respondent 04: Earlier transition timescales, and direct contact and involvement with the young person, allowing them to be a part of the process as early as possible. Many young people don't know what's available for them, so ensuring that they are offered all the options is essential to making sure they can choose the best fit. Transition from child to adult services should not feel rushed, and support should not be dropped. They should be able to move services without fear of not qualifying as an adult, even though their needs haven't changed.

- Respondent 10: For myself, a linked national IT system that allows education establishments or employers to go in and download my Individual Support Plan and see my history and be able to contact the relevant person if required to find out about me the individual. I certainly would not like to start explaining at the age of 17 to someone new, the difficulties I had when I was a 10 year old. If this information is recorded at the time, it should be available for the relevant parties to see, "

18 How can we make sure that every area can meet the full range of the needs of children and young people through Inclusion Bases?

- Respondent 01: Clear entry/exit criteria.

1. Flexible placement models (full-time and part-time).
2. Staff trained in diverse SEND profiles.
3. Adequate funding and staffing ratios.
4. Strong link with mainstream curriculum but adapted for SEND students.

19 How can we make sure that Inclusion Bases help children and young people succeed in mainstream settings?

- Respondent 02: Taught how to take how they learn in these bases into mainstream settings e.g. learning techniques
- Respondent 10: Bases need a wide range of specialist teachers to ensure this. Often, bases are staffed by cover or temporary teachers who cannot offer the level of help required. "

20 Through the Experts at Hand offer, we want to ensure that mainstream settings can get quick specialist support for children and young people. What arrangements are needed between local area partners (education, health, social care) to deliver this Experts at Hand offer effectively?

- Respondent 02: Easy to use booking systems or drop in sessions, can be legally recommended.

21 What needs to be in place so that children and young people with low incidence, highly complex needs can always access the right specialist placement?

- Respondent 01:
  1. Regional specialist hubs.
  2. Guaranteed funding pathways.
  3. Nationally consistent eligibility criteria.
  4. Cross-authority commissioning agreements.
  5. Parent advocacy support.
- Respondent 02: Schools with specialist teams developed, locally, nationally and internationally.
- Respondent 04: Treat every child as an individual, and offer them every option as stated above. "

22 How can Specialist Provision Packages be designed to effectively support the main types of need we currently recognise?

- Respondent 01:
  1. Based on primary need categories (e.g. autism, SEMH, sensory impairment).
  2. Include therapy access.
  3. Defined staffing ratios.
  4. Curriculum adaptation guidance.
  5. Outcomes framework with measurable progress indicators.
  6. Not a "one size fits all" model.
- Respondent 02: Those who implement the package should be trained in the main of types of need and trained to make a specialist provision package to meet the needs of each child.

- Respondent 03: By placing the needs of the individual and their lived experiences at the centre of the design. This ensures that provision is tailored to the specific needs of children and young people, rather than a one-size-fits-all approach.
- Respondent 10: For me, I like to be in small groups when I do communicate people. Trying to do this in an area such as the school canteen when you're fighting against the background noise of 200 others is something I find challenging and scary. Personally, I would like small breakout areas where I can shut the world out and talk to a small group of people without the hassle and bustle of a lot of others. This links with the Government's adaptation of physical environments within schools. I would like it to be a non-teaching space, but an area where I can relax and try to have a conversation at my own speed. "

23 We propose that EHCPs will guarantee educational provision set out in a Specialist Provision Package, with day-to-day provision captured in Individual Support Plans. What is needed to make these proposals work effectively?

- Respondent 02: Access to learn is laid out for each subject objective & learning mode.
- Respondent 10: As stated by the Government, getting rid of the postcode lottery. You can only be helped by what is accessible to you, and some areas (especially more rural) this isn't much "

24 "We propose creating a more direct route to Specialist Provision Packages and EHCP assessments for children under 5 with complex needs. How can we make sure this works in practice?"

- Respondent 02: Developing an assessment in early years and key learning stages to ensure no child or carer of a child does not know access needs.
- Respondent 03: By encouraging parents and guardians to seek this support through clear signposting and early conversations with professionals. For example, a GP or health visitor could raise the option during routine check-ups or developmental discussions. It should not be mandatory, but it should be communicated more consistently so families are aware of the route available to them. "

25 What would you expect to be considered as part of the needs assessment, for example evidence and expert or professional input?

- Respondent 02: How best to make the process simpler to diagnose.
- Respondent 03: Discussions with the individual and their guardians, and professional input following a period of observation, alongside discussions with parents and guardians. This should include evidence from different professionals involved with the child, as well as insights from their everyday experiences at home and in educational settings. "

26 What factors should LAs take into account in proposing to parents and young people a list of potential settings to name on a plan?

- Respondent 02: Be aware of all the learning dynamics and how different environments affect the potential settings.

27 What information and support do parents need to make a decision about which setting will be best for their child?

- Respondent 01:

1. Transparent data on outcomes.
2. Clear explanation of support available in each setting.
3. Visits and open days.
4. Honest discussion of strengths and limitations.
5. Peer support networks.
6. Information about transport and funding.

- Respondent 02: Encouragement and resources for parents to find the best setting for their child, under recommendation or consultation of stakeholders to the child.

- Respondent 03: A clearer and more accessible and digestible explanation of what each setting can provide for their child, so parents can make informed decisions. Access to a specialist would also help clarify any questions or concerns they may have. This information and support should be easy to access and available early in the process.

- Respondent 04: The long term prospects that provision could provide, a named individual to communicate with, including asking questions, have all options offered, and all the information including who will finance provision, how the setting will support their child, and how travel will work and be financed.

- Respondent 10: For me, what was happening out of school hours was as important as the school lessons. Being a musician (drummer) the ability to have different groups and bands available in afterschool clubs where I can express myself and be given a more of a free reign with what to play and how was important. Academically, I am a high achiever and rarely worry about lessons and tests. But I do have worries that my social needs and my love of music ate met, so enrichment and after school clubs where I get to be the real me are incredibly important to me. "

28 What do you think is the right maximum length of time for a temporary placement in Alternative Provision (AP) schools? Please explain your rationale.

- Respondent 02: Provision should only be taken away if the development needed has been done or the learning is now accessible.

29 "We have set out our plans to regulate Independent Special Schools (ISS) sector.

Do you agree that these proposed changes will lead to suitable placements being available at a fair cost? Please explain why."

- Respondent 02: There should be funding for all children to access ISS if unsuitable care has been provided previously in non-ISS.

- Respondent 10: Mostly yes. The Local Authority having more control on who can go there and stopping the schools 'cherry picking' their students must be seen as plus. The price bands are also a welcome inclusion as parents will know what they have to work with. I feel that this has been needed for some time as it is a lottery in trying to obtain a place. It's a same that Schools have until 2030 to implement the guidelines as it means a large number of kids will fall by the wayside before then. "

30 How should settings be held accountable for how they spend their Inclusive Mainstream funding?

- Respondent 02: Satisfaction from a board of parents, carers, teachers and SENCOs on the budget and OFSTED grading into a chids supports.

- Respondent 10: So mainsteam funding should by default mostly benefit many people at the school and not the chosen few. There is other accessible funding available for that purpose. Schools should state how they have spent the money and most importantly how it has improved the daily lives of the majority of people at the school. It should also show evidence on how it has done this and how it has aided in inclusion. "

31 Do you agree that more SEND funding should sit directly within mainstream budgets? Please explain why.

- Respondent 01: Only if:

1. There is strong accountability.
2. Funding is ring-fenced for SEND provision.
3. Schools are supported with oversight and auditing.
4. Early intervention is prioritised.

- Respondent 02: SEND funding needs to make sure children are not missed and access needs are delivered. Which budget sits on is irrelevant.

- Respondent 04: Yes. Many pupils have to await diagnosis or EHCP's to support their needs, meaning they are trapped in a system that will not support them due to finance and budgets. An increase in SEND funding within mainstream allows for pupils to be better supported through these processes and beyond, and it would support some pupils to remain in mainstream provision with the right support. This in turn would lessen the strain on the special education sector, who often have limited places as it is. "

32 In relation to pooled funding, we propose that every school becomes part of a local SEND group. Do you agree that this proposal aligns with our aim for all schools to be part of high-quality, community-based trusts?

- Respondent 02: For equitable resources are affordable and known to schools.

- Respondent 03: Yes, as this could foster stronger connections and awareness of SEND, allowing individuals to share strategies and experiences in the field. This would support collaboration and more consistent high-quality practice across schools and positively impacting the community. "

33 How should disagreements about membership, provision, or funding in groups of schools for SEND be resolved?

- Respondent 02: Processes are transparent, and disagreements can be mediated by a local specialised worker who represents the SEND group, with regular, clear communication that minimises disagreements.

34 How can we ensure the most effective use of these local partnership groups? •

Respondent 02: That they actually improve equitable access for every child under the group.

35 Which stakeholders are important for the success of local partnership groups, and why?

- Respondent 02: Community leaders, parents, carers, SEND young people,

36 How can we build stronger collaboration and a culture of improvement through local SEND strategic plans?

- Respondent 01:

1. Co-production with families and young people.
2. YOUNG PEOPLE AT THE CENTRE OF THIS.
3. Shared measurable targets.
3. Annual public reporting.
4. Cross-sector leadership boards.
5. Joint training programmes.

- Respondent 02: Encouragement to build collaboration and improvement across the entire world to provide SEND care through, easily accessible resources e.g. a public online database. "

37 What information, advice and guidance can best support children, young people and their families to ensure greater fairness across the system?

- Respondent 01:

1. Clear national standards.
2. Accessible Local Offer websites.
3. Independent SEND advice services.
4. Easy to understand documentation offered in numerous languages and formats.
5. Advocacy for families who need support navigating the system.

- Respondent 02: Ease of communication and access to resources clear lines of legal responsibility for a child Guidance on how everyone can contribute to the system equitably.

- Respondent 04: All information needs to be standardised, where young people aren't pulled in multiple directions or told completely different things between them. Young people steering groups that genuinely impact and change things.

- Respondent 10: For me, although I do come under the SEND banner, my personal issues are relatively minor compared to others. So the SEND 'label' should not be a one fits all description. I can do anything non-SEND person can do both physically and mentally. It just takes me longer sometimes to verbalise my thoughts and opinions and to speak up in front of strangers. Everyone is different and every case of SEND is different, it doesn't mean I am unable to take part in the same things that everyone else does. "

38 Do you agree that a SEND specialist (e.g. a SENCO) should sit on the school complaint panel, when the complaint relates to SEND support and provision? Please explain why.

- Respondent 01: Yes. When complaints relate to SEND provision, having a qualified SEND specialist ensures:

1. Accurate understanding of legal duties.
2. Fair interpretation of reasonable adjustments.
3. Confidence for families that expertise informs decisions.

- Respondent 02: Yes, as they directly impact the support and provision whilst being to offer direct insight.

- Respondent 04: Yes, as this person should have knowledge of SEND and know the young person in question. Often panels are held without anyone having an in-depth knowledge of SEND, leading to decisions being made that are ill-informed.

- Respondent 10: Yes I do, though I think the SENCO should be independent from the school so that they can contribute specialist knowledge without necessarily having input in the final decision. SENCO's from schools from outside the immediate area would be best, as they have experience of the issues but no link to either party involved. "

39 This consultation outlines a series of measures intended to reform the SEND system. Some of these measures have already been finalised, and this is clearly indicated within the document. With this in mind, is there anything further you would like to contribute to help inform the remaining proposals that are still under consideration?

- Respondent 02: In summary: improve help and support for children and young people with SEND across the 0 to 25 years support needs are noticed and acted on as early as possible, making sure that different services/professionals are working together

- Respondent 04: The current system is not only hard to navigate, but it's hard to fight against. Many families do not know the support they can access, nor the way to access it without meeting a million barriers, such as funding, bias, misunderstanding, etc. Education establishments can often be gatekeepers of support or provision, causing more challenges and leading to crisis management instead of support from the beginning. No one should settle for what they have when it's not the most accessible provision for a young person.

- Respondent 10: I welcome the vast majority of the changes that have been stated in the various documents. I do think some of the timescales for some of it (i.e, 2030) is a bit too long but am glad they see that change is needed. "