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Consultation – summary of responses

Report on a consultation with
children, young people, parents
and carers about the Welsh
Government's plans for additional
learning needs 2014

Date of issue: October 2014

Report on a consultation with children, young people, parents and carers about the Welsh Government's plans for additional learning needs 2014

- Audience** This document is aimed at all those with an interest in the provision of education for those with special educational needs.
- Overview** This is a report on workshops held to find out what children, young people and their parents/carers thought of the Welsh Government's plans for additional learning needs.
- Action required** None – for information only.
- Further information** Enquiries about this document should be directed to:
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- Additional copies** This document can be accessed from the Welsh Government's website at www.wales.gov.uk/consultations

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**This consultation and report
was delivered
on behalf of Welsh Government**

by



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A big thank you to all who took part!

THANK YOU to children and young people from:

- NPTC Newtown Campus , Powys
- Brynllwarch Hall School , Powys
- Connah's Quay High School , Flintshire
- Ysgol Bryn Teg , Carmarthenshire
- Builth Wells High School , Powys
- Bryngwyn , Carmarthenshire
- Penglais School, Ceredigion
- Maesteg Comprehensive, Bridgend
- Caerau Primary School, Bridgend
- Ysgol Hafod Lon , Gwynedd
- Ysgol Pendalar , Gwynedd
- Pen-y-Cwm, Blaenau Gwent
- Dylan Thomas School , Swansea
- Dereck Roberts Centre - Swansea

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- RCT Carer's Support Group, Rhondda Cynon Taff
- Connah's Quay HS, Flintshire
- Builth Wells HS, Powys
- Dylan Thomas School/ Derek Robert's Centre, Swansea
- Pen-Y-Cwm Special School, Blaenau Gwent
- Penglais School, Ceredigion

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Context

The purpose of this consultation was to find out what children and young people with additional learning needs (ALN), and their parents/carers, think about the Welsh Government's 'White Paper on Legislative Proposals for Additional Learning Needs.

The White Paper is broken down into three main goals:

1. A single law about how to support children and young people aged 0-25 who need help with learning.
2. One system of working together so that all services can step in early with the right support for children and young people who need help with learning.
3. Clear information, advice and support which is fair to everyone if things go wrong or if they don't like a decision.

This consultation looks at a series of questions associated with each of these goals. The questions asked in the consultation were taken from the Welsh Government's easy-read version of the White Paper which was called 'Plans for Additional Learning Needs - a consultation for young people'.

Delivery

Dynamix was contracted by Welsh Government to deliver this consultation with children and young people and their parents/carers. Dynamix used inclusive, participative methods to ensure good understanding and encourage children, young people and their parents/carers to address these questions.

The consultation cohort

Dynamix worked with

- ⤴ 14 groups of children and young people with additional learning needs; 174 children and young people with additional learning needs took part in total.
- ⤴ 6 groups of parents/carers; 55 parents/carers took part in this consultation in total.

The children and young people were aged between 8 and 20+ and came from a variety of education settings from primary, secondary and further education, including mainstream and special schools. All were registered with Special Educational Needs (SEN) or Additional Learning Needs (ALN) and on plans such as School Action, School Action Plus or had Statements of SEN and had a broad range of learning support needs.

The groups were situated across Wales. All of the groups were given the choice between workshops delivered through Welsh and English and Welsh language groups were specifically invited to take part. Two Welsh language special educational schools took up the opportunity to have the workshops delivered in Welsh.

Summary of responses about Goal 1 - A single law about how to support children and young people aged 0-25 who need help with learning.

Change in terms: The question of whether Additional Learning Needs (ALN) should replace Special Educational Needs (SEN) was most controversial with children and young people. Only half felt this was a good idea and others felt there was no need for a change, it would not make a difference to negative labelling or that any form of labelling is bad. The majority of parents/carers supported the change, though there was some concern about labelling, and also confusion about how broad the definition of ALN would be.

Individual Development Plans (IDP): Children and young people agreed that all children and young people who need it should have an IDP, but there were concerns that these should be confidential. Parents/ carers also agreed with this proposal but there were concerns about the financial resources available to implement the changes and some mistrust that the resultant support would be enough.

Replacing the old systems: Most children and young people agreed the new IDPs should replace the current systems, though some felt confused by the question because there was generally little knowledge about the plans there are currently subject to. Parents/carers mainly agree but were concerned about the confusion that changing the system might cause. There are some anxieties about this but for many, as long as IDPs hold at least the same legal power as the Statements of SEN and that it won't mean that resources are spread too thinly, they are happy for this change to go ahead

Schools meeting needs: Children and young people felt schools should do their best to make sure children and young people get the help they need, though there was some cynicism that this is currently not the case.

Guidance: Children and young people and also parents/carers felt guidance should be developed for professionals about the IDPs and support for children and young people with ALNs but some children and young people felt it should not be too dogmatic.

Over 16s: Two thirds of children and young people agreed that these plans should apply to over 16s, especially those that were close to this age. There was strong feeling that this support should change to adapt to their age, should be a matter of choice for the young people, and could involve less parental input as they get older. Parents/ carers agreed, but also felt there should be more information about what is available for over 16s, and parents/carers were concerned about who would be responsible for ensuring this is in place.

Schools meeting needs: Children and young people agreed that those with ALN should only go to schools that can meet their needs and parents/carers agreed with this, but would like more information about how this is decided.

Summary of responses about Goal 2 - One system of working together so that all services can step in early with the right support for children and young people who need help with learning.

Views of children, young people and their families: Children and young people and parents/carers agreed that Local Authorities should listen to their views when deciding support. However children and young people were concerned about the process of this, with many of those who had experienced meetings saying that they were daunting, boring or they hadn't felt heard.

Review of IDPs: Children and young people agreed that IDPs should be reviewed at least once a year and many proposed this it should be more frequent than this and also that there should be some flexibility about adapting it at other key stages when needed. Parents/carers agreed and many felt that they should be more frequent, but also expressed concern about using up both financial resources and professional capacity if they are too frequent.

Recognising ALN in young children: Children and young people and also parents/carers agreed that all those working with very young children should know what to do if they realise a child is finding learning difficult.

Professionals working together: The majority of children and young people agreed that professionals should work together in supporting children and young people with ALN, though there were concerns about how this can be achieved, and that in their experience this had been difficult to achieve. Parents/carers agreed and expressed the same concerns, though some parents/carers suggested that a centralised computer system for accessing and completing plans might make things more straight forward.

ALN Co-ordinator: Children and young people agreed that all schools should have an ALN Co-ordinator (ALNCo) but they also felt that all other school staff should support and understand ALN. Many stated that not only should ALNCoS be adequately trained themselves but that it should be part of their responsibilities to ensure that the right ethos and understanding is in place throughout the whole educational setting. Parents agreed with these points and also noted that there should be a consistently high quality of ALNCo support.

Looked after Children have the same plans: The majority supported the proposal that this same system should also apply to children who are looked after by the local authority in order to provide them with the support that they need.

A number of the children, young people and parents/carers felt reservations about commenting on issues affecting looked after children because many of them did not have direct personal experience.

Summary of responses about Goal 3 - Clear information, advice and support which is fair to everyone if things go wrong or if they don't like a decision.

Appealing decisions without the need for tribunal: In the event that people don't agree with the decisions that have been made about ALN support, children, young people and parents/carers agreed that information and advice should be available about what they can do to appeal and that problems should be resolved quickly and without the need for a tribunal where possible. Children and young people expressed concern about rushing decisions, and parents/carers highlighted that it should also be straight forward to go to tribunal if needed.

Tribunals: There was strong support from children, young people and parents/carers for a tribunal to be available when needed and for children and young people to get help from someone they trust if they wish to appeal a decision. All parties also supported the proposal that there should be someone to make sure the process is fair.

INTRODUCTION

Context

The Welsh Government has produced a White Paper on Legislative Proposals for Additional Learning Needs. The Welsh Government has also produced an easy-read version of the White Paper which was called 'Plans for Additional Learning Needs - a consultation for young people'.

The purpose of these consultation workshops was to find out what children and young people with additional learning needs (ALN), and their parents/carers, think about the proposals in this White Paper.

Welsh Government

This consultation is on behalf of the Welsh Government. It was led by the Additional Learning Needs Reform Branch of the Support for Learners Division, in the Department for Education and Skills, Schools and Young People Group in Welsh Government. The lead contact was Martha Howells.

Dynamix

Dynamix were contracted by Welsh Government to undertake the consultation workshops, collect the views of children & young people and also parents & carers.

Dynamix is a Welsh social enterprise that provides consultations along with its other education services and it has built up a good reputation in this area through its 25 year history. Dynamix specialises in giving people a voice using participative activities to engage inclusively. The lead consultation specialists from Dynamix were Jo Stephens, Phill Burton and John Daphne Thomas. The report was written by Jo Stephens.

Dynamix makes use of consultative, participative activities to ensure participants feel able to give their opinions and to maintain everyone's interest in the process. A range of techniques were used to cater to every person's individual preferences for giving their opinions, be that physically, visually, verbally in large or small groups. Literacy based activities were kept to a minimum and when used were entirely out of choice by the children and young people in the group. Games were used to ensure the atmosphere was both positive and spirited as well as to balance out the strong, contemplative activities with lighter, relaxing ones. This results in participants feeling comfortable and confident enough to participate fully in the experience using facilitated consultation, to feel included and to know that their thoughts and opinions count and are counted.

It is also important to note that the information is gathered in a non-standardised way and so statistical analysis is not appropriate. Instead, it delivers a rich, qualitative narrative, useful insights and valuable information, and a positive experience for those taking part.

Dynamix draws on a range of activities that have been tried and tested over many years. As well as drawing on well tested methodology Dynamix prides itself on being creative and adaptive to ensure fresh methods are used that meet the needs of the specific piece of work.

Dynamix methodologies are underpinned by our values of engagement through participation and enjoyment, respect, inclusion, co-operation and empowerment along with the co-operative values and principles. Dynamix are also strong advocates of the 12 Welsh National Principles of Public Engagement and the 7 Welsh Participation Standards. Dynamix's commitment to these:

- **Information:** The information and activities must suit the participants and are easy to understand for everyone. Being up front and clear about what we are doing and why in order to ensure everyone has enough information to get properly involved. We are clear about what difference the participants taking part will make, to whom we will give the information they give us and how it will make changes.
- **It's their choice:** Participants should be able to decide whether they want to take part. Once we have given the information at the start, we then consult them about how they would like to take part and in what ways. We use activities that enable the participants to take part as much as they want to.
- **No discrimination:** We make sure that everyone feels welcome and we use activities to enable the participants to take part, whatever their needs and interests. We advocate a good representative proportion of the people you are consulting.
- **They get something out of it:** We use enjoyable activities and games. We inform the participants and we value their opinions, which empower them and builds their confidence so that they benefit from taking part.
- **Respect:** We give everyone a chance to have a say using a range of methods to maximise their ability to take part. We make it clear that their opinions, ideas, views and experiences are important and we respect them, take them seriously and treat them fairly.
- **Feedback:** We are clear about what difference their contribution makes and how their ideas will be used. We advocate ensuring that everyone has access to the report.
- **Improving how we work:** We take very seriously the principle that the ideas the children and young people give are used to make an actual difference to the decisions that get made following the consultation.

METHODOLOGY

The questions asked during the consultation workshops were taken from the Welsh Government's Easy-Read version of the White Paper, called 'Plans for Additional Learning Needs', a consultation for young people document and the proposal therein.

The White Paper is broken down into three main goals and there were a number of questions that cover each of these three goals:

1. A single law about how to support children and young people aged 0-25 who need help with learning.
2. One system of working together so that all services can step in early with the right support for children and young people who need help with learning.
3. Clear information, advice and support which is fair to everyone if things go wrong or if they don't like a decision.

A participative programme was devised around these. This included activities to develop background thinking and discussion for each of the questions in order for the participants to feel more informed before answering. These background activities in themselves provided some important insights into being a young person with Additional Learning Needs and the impact it can have on their daily lives.

The participants were kept at the centre of the programme planning and delivery. We kept the language and concepts that we used simple and used methods that did not require the children and young people to read or write, although they could if they wished.

The activities we used encouraged everyone to have a voice if they wanted to without having to speak. As with all groups, some participants were more vocal and happy to share their thoughts than others. Similarly, we adapted methods so that they did not rely on moving around if this was something that was an issue for those taking part.

The ages and abilities of the participants varied greatly. This fact along with various practical elements had to be taken into account. For example some young people had to go off to attend different lessons; care needs needed attending to; having to fit around break times and so on. As a result of these factors each session was fairly unique in how it unfolded in terms of the amount of and which questions were asked, the depth that we went into with questions and in some respects how those questions were asked. We ensured that the key questions from the plan were asked in as many of the sessions as possible.

If individuals were struggling with the session then we adapted to this by using different activities to ensure engagement whilst meeting their needs.

In line with the participation standard that it must be your choice to take part, all participants had the choice to participate and also the choice to decide to what extent they wished to do so. Therefore, if participants wanted to stay yet be on the outskirts of the group then that was fine, and they were able to contribute when they wished.

We were clear that the consultations were intended to be enjoyable and empowering and that the opinions shared by the children and young people were incredibly valuable.

As part of our commitment to young people's participation we promoted the involvement of young people with additional learning needs at every stage of the delivery. This includes the delivery of the workshops. Dynamix has trained a team of young people to co-deliver consultations of this nature and a number of these young people have additional learning needs. There were restraints on these young volunteers ability to attend these workshops because timescale was tight and the young volunteers had other commitments in those weeks. However we were able to have a young person with additional learning needs co-deliver at one of these workshops. Please note, with more time, it might have been possible to have young people with additional learning needs co-delivering all of these workshops.

The workshops with the parents/carers were slightly different in that our approach and methods were adapted to suit the needs and expectation of the parents and carers. These workshops tended to be much more based on facilitated discussion than a series of activities. Parents & carers were clear about how they wished to communicate their opinions and Dynamix were responsive to these needs.

Understanding Current Terminology – for detailed definitions please refer to the Special Educational Needs Code of Practice for Wales

Special Educational Needs: Children have special educational needs if they have a learning difficulty which calls for special educational provision to be made for them.

School Action & School Action Plus: *School Action* refers to the additional support/interventions provided when a class teacher or the SENCO identifies a child with SEN. *School Action Plus* is used where the school will seek external advice from the LEA's support services, the local Health Authority or from Social Services.

Statements: If a child with SEN requires support then the LEA (Local Education Authority) will draw up a statement of the proposed special educational provision needed for the child.

Useful Links

For copies of Welsh Government's

(1) White Paper on the legislative proposals for Additional Learning Needs

(2) easy-read version of the White Paper, called 'Plans for Additional Learning Needs'

<http://wales.gov.uk/consultations/education/proposals-for-additional-learning-needs-white-paper/?lang=en>

For the current Special Educational Needs Code of Practice for Wales:

<http://learning.wales.gov.uk/resources/special-education-needs-code-of-practice/?lang=en>

QUESTIONS ASKED

Goal 1 - A single law about how to support children and young people aged 0-25 who need help with learning.

- Should the term ALN (additional learning needs) replace SEN (special educational needs)?
- Should all children/young people who need it have an Individual Development Plan (IDP) that says what help they need and who should give it?
- Should this (IDP) be instead of all other plans such as School Action and Statements?
- Should there be a guide to help the professionals who support you to know what needs to go into the plans and make sure it happens?
- Should schools do their best to make sure that children/young people get the help that they need?
- Should young people over 16 in education (like FE college) get the same kind of plan and support?
- Should children only go to schools that can make sure that they are getting the help that they need?
- Is there anything else that you want to say about this?

Goal 2 - One system of working together so that all services can step in early with the right support for children and young people who need help with learning.

- Should local authorities include children/young people and their families and listen to their views when they are deciding about what support is needed?
- Should IDPs be looked at at least once a year and changed if needed?
- Should people who work with very young children know what to do if they realise a child is finding learning difficult?
- Should the different people that are there to help, such as doctors, teachers and social workers, work together to make sure that children/young people are getting the help that they need?
- Should all schools have an Additional Learning Needs Co-ordinator (ALNCo)?
- Should children and young people looked after by the local authority (LAC) have the same kind of plans instead of what they have now (personal education plans/PEPs)?
- Is there anything else you want to say about this?

Goal 3 - Clear information, advice and support which is fair to everyone if things go wrong or if they don't like a decision.

- Should children/young people and their parents be able to get all of the information and advice that they need?
- Should problems about learning support be sorted as quickly as possible so that they don't get bigger /go to tribunal?
- Should children/young people up to 25 and their families be able to go to a tribunal to make sure that they are getting the support that they need.
- Should there be a person who makes sure the process is fair?
- Should children and young people be able to get help from someone that they trust if they want to complain about the support that they are getting?
- Is there anything else you want to say about this?

OVERVIEW OF THE CONSULTATION

When: The consultations took place throughout June and July 2014, during the last few weeks of the summer term.

Children and young people engaged: A range of mainstream schools, specialist teaching facilities and special schools were targeted. The mainstream schools were selected due to having above average percentages of children and young people with SEN or were examples of good practice according to ESTYN. In total 174 children and young people were consulted from fourteen groups.

Preparation: Copies of the White Paper for staff and invitations for the children and young people were emailed out to centres which showed an interest in taking part.

Additional Learning Needs of the children & young people: The children and young people covered a broad spectrum of learning support needs. These included severe and mild learning disabilities, dyslexia, autistic spectrum disorders and physical disabilities and impairments such as those affecting mobility, vision and hearing.

Engagement in ALN / SEN Support: The consultation included participation from children and young people on a range of current plans including School Action, School Action + and Statements of SEN.

Stage of Education: The children and young people engaged included primary school children, secondary school children (up to 19) and young people in F.E. Colleges. A number of those involved were at potential transition points with their plans, for example requiring more or less support or were due move on to the next level of their education (e.g. moving from primary to secondary).

Ages: The ages of those taking part was from 8 up to 20+.

Language: Groups were given the option to have workshops in English or Welsh. A range of dual and Welsh language schools were approached across Wales and actively encouraged to take part. Two groups opted to have the workshops in Welsh and the other groups opted to have the workshops in English. Those that took part in the consultation in Welsh were both Welsh language special schools.

Geographical spread: Geographically we worked with groups in nine local authorities across North, South and Mid Wales, including: Powys; Flintshire; Bridgend; Carmarthenshire; Ceredigion; Gwynedd; Rhondda Cynon Taff; Blaenau Gwent and Swansea. We ensured that this remit took in local authorities that currently have different approaches to supporting SEN.

Achieving engagement whilst adapting to need: The broad range of age, ability and specific needs of the participants led to variables in the numbers of responses for the questions in the consultation. In view of this, some questions were addressed by every group and other questions may only have been addressed by a few groups.

Parents & Carers: Additionally, we met six groups of parents and carers and there were 55 parents/ carers in total. The sessions for these were generally shorter than those with the children and young people. Some participative activities were used but quite often participants expressed a preference for facilitated discussion so their answers were recorded from these discussions.

A number of the parents/carers that we consulted had previously read the White Paper and some had already filled in an on line consultation.

Getting something out of taking part: We provided refreshments for everybody that took part as way of a thank you. We also ensured that participants were better informed as a result of taking part and we aimed to raise their confidence in expressing this opinion through taking part. Certificates and a letter of thanks will be sent out to all of the children and young people that took part in these consultation sessions.

CHILDREN'S AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S RESULTS

OVERVIEW OF THE CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE 'S RESULTS

The majority of the children and young and young people involved agreed with most of the proposals in principle, although the change from SEN to ALN was the most divisive question with almost equal numbers agreeing and disagreeing.

An observation of the Dynamix facilitators was that there is some difference in how pupils in mainstream education and those in special education responded; those in special schools tended to be happier and more secure with how things were and they were less likely to perceive any stigma attached to the title 'Special Educational Needs' for example.

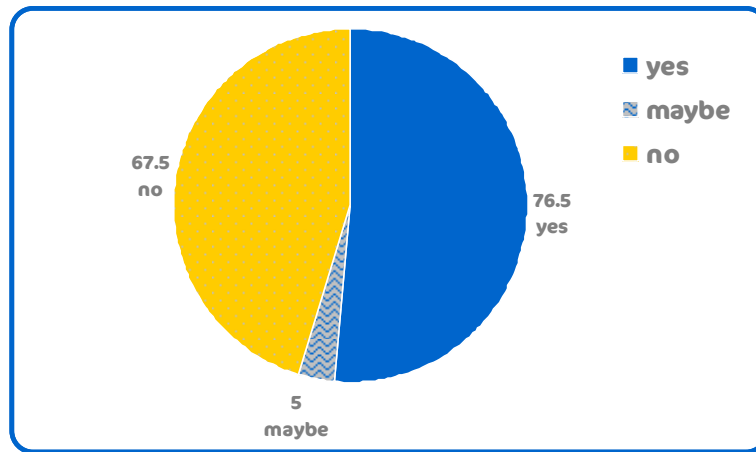
From the quantitative results alone it might look as though some of the proposals have complete agreement from the participants. However there were still concerns raised which will need to be carefully considered. The responses given by the children and young people are thoughtful, intelligent and often original and proved thoroughly how crucial it is that their views have been gathered and will be fed into the overall results of the consultation on these proposals.

RESULTS FOR EACH QUESTION:

GOAL 1

A single law about how to support children and young people aged 0-25 who need help with learning.

Should the term ALN (additional learning needs) replace SEN (special educational needs)?



This proposal is the one that met with the least agreement amongst the participants. Close to half of the children & young people felt that ALN should not replace SEN.

Key Issues Raised:

- ✓ Quite a number of the children and young people had not heard of Special Educational Needs, Additional Learning Needs, SEN or ALN, although more had heard of the term 'special needs'.
- ✓ Some settings are already using ALN rather than SEN in practice, albeit in the wider sense of encompassing other groups of young people such as More Able and Talented.
- ✓ One school clarified that many of their children on the ALN/SEN register would not know that they were, and neither would their parents. They might just be aware that they needed extra support with some elements of their learning.
- ✓ The majority of those against this proposal are sceptical about how much would really be improved by changing words or acronyms around and don't actually prefer either. They understand that SEN can have negative connotations but don't think that this would really change, for very long, by swapping it to ALN. For some, the whole need for such labelling is detrimental.
- ✓ Others against the proposal are quite happy with the current terms and see no need for change.
- ✓ Those who agree with the potential change are clear that SEN has a bad image, particularly the word 'special'. It was suggested that ALN would be better as fewer people would know what it meant and so it would not have the same stigma attached to it, and that it sounded better than SEN.

Selection of quotes:

' Call it FABULOUS or SEVERELY FABULOUS'

'Alternate Educational Requirement' – acronyms tippy toe around the issue'

'It's just politics'

'Why do WG love acronyms?'

'You need a lot of education to understand it'

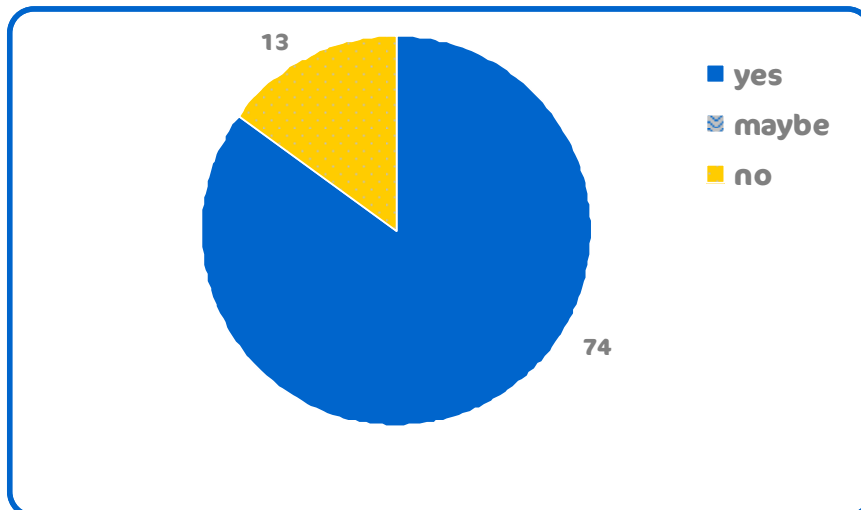
'It's just changing words around'

'Not SEN or ALN – just someone who needs help.'

' Prefer ALN to SEN because no-one else knows about it or what it stands for'

'SEN – label – thick, retarded, stupid' 'Special is patronising'

Should all children/young people who need it have an Individual Development Plan (IDP) that says what help they need and who should give it?



The majority of the participants agreed with this.

Key Issues Raised:

- ✓ It is generally agreed that plans for children and young people who need extra help and support would be helpful for both them and the adults who need to support them.
- ✓ However it is preferable for many that the fact that they have these plans should be kept fairly private and not drawn attention to.

Selection of quotes:

' It helps us and makes us better'

'So everyone knows and if there are visitors they can read them and understand straight away'

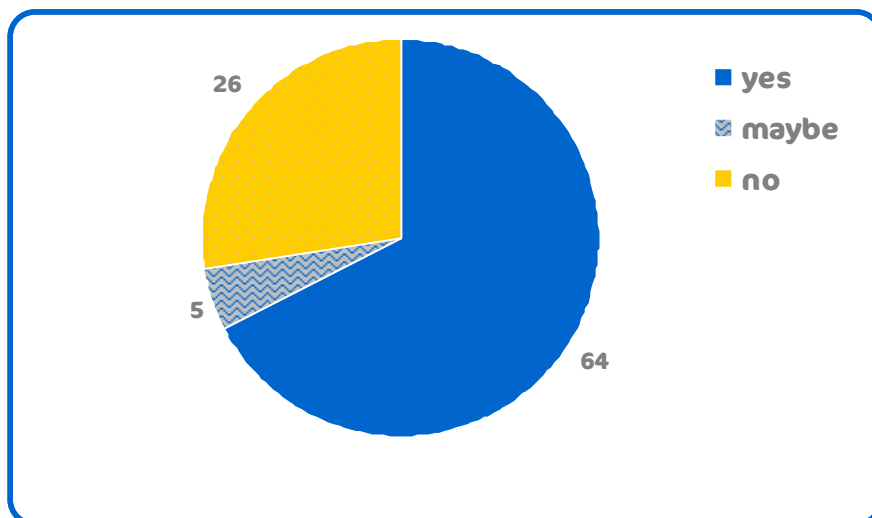
'Don't we already have one?'

'Gorgeous to have a plan'

'It will be useful'

'Don't highlight it – it brings bad attention'

Should this IDP be instead of all other plans? (e.g. School Action & Statements)



Around two thirds of those asked agreed with this.

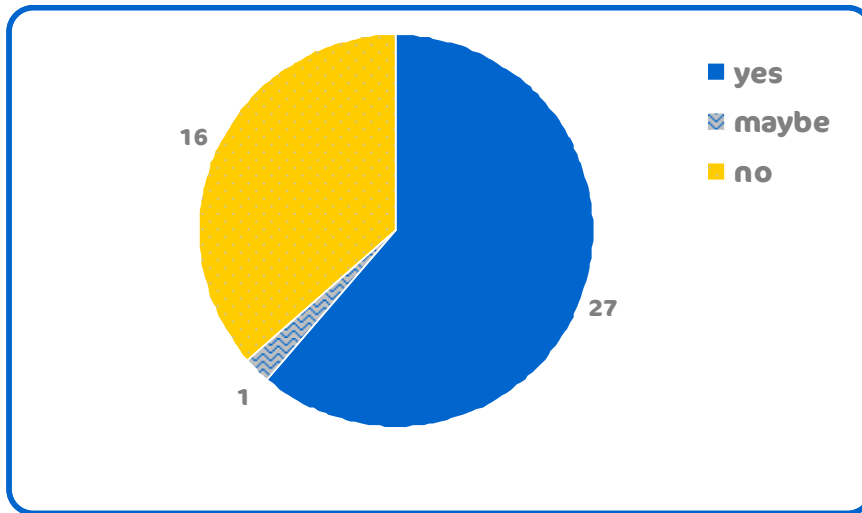
Key Issue Raised:

- ✓ The differences in opinion here are partly due to a lack of confidence in what the changes would mean and/or because they didn't have enough knowledge of how the current plans worked to be able to make an informed decision.

Selection of quotes:

'But if someone needs more help it should be in the plan'

Should there be a guide to help the professionals who support you to know what needs to go into the plans and make sure it happens?



Around two thirds of those asked agreed with this.

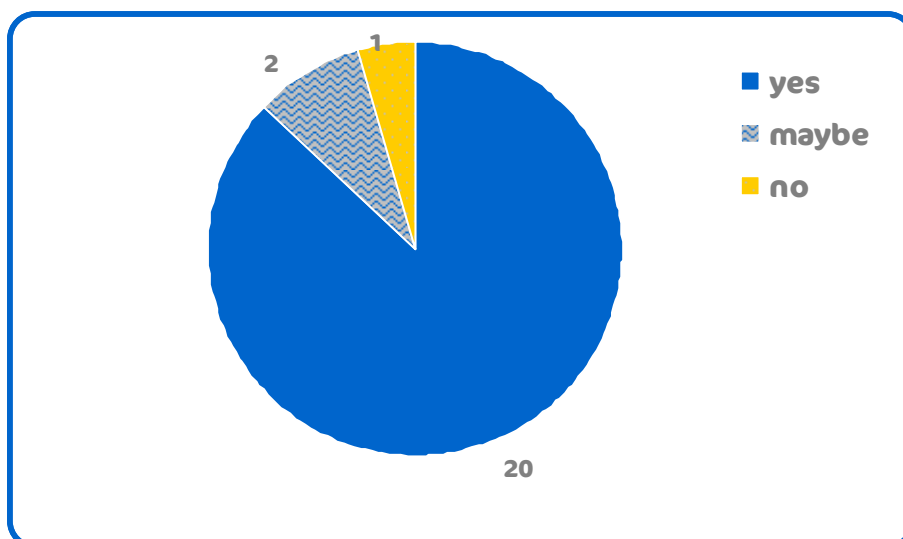
Key Issues Raised:

- ✓ Most of those who agreed indicated that it would be common sense
- ✓ There were some concerns that everybody having to do it the same way might not be for the best.

Selection of quotes:

'No, it confuses them. They have their own way of doing things.'

Should schools do their best to make sure that children and young people get the help that they need?



The majority agreed with this.

Key Issues Raised:

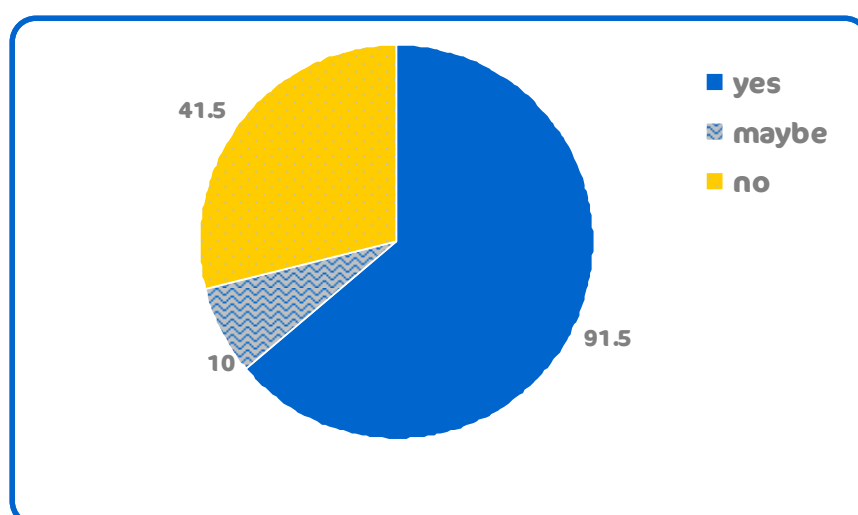
- ✓ Those that agreed viewed it as common sense
- ✓ Those that weren't so sure were partly commenting on how effective they believed the help they received is currently.

Selection of quotes:

'Staff can be helpful' 'Head teacher sometimes useful (if it suits them.)'

'Anyone with a responsibility for education'

Should young people over 16 in education (like FE college) get the same kind of plan and support?



Around two thirds agreed with this proposal.

Key Issues Raised:

- ✓ The Dynamix facilitators observed that the responses here tended to differ depending on the age of the participants; the closer they were to leaving school or already in college the more likely they were to agree with it.
- ✓ It seemed that the level of support that they saw themselves as needing also affected their feelings about this.
- ✓ On the whole those that disagreed felt that by the time you leave school you should be old enough and much more able to look after yourself. For them there is a difference between being a child/young person in school and being an adult,

including in how involved you want your family to be in decision making.

- ✓ A few thought that the plan should change as they left compulsory education when that era of your life changes.
- ✓ Those that agreed with it understood that they or others may still need extra help in their continued learning. They suggested that this is a time of transition that required some consistent support.
- ✓ A number of those who agreed with continued IDPs suggested that they should be extended to include, for example, training for work (including apprenticeships) and life skills courses.
- ✓ Others put forward the idea that it should be a choice and that you should be able to decide whether you want your plan to continue once you are moving on from school.

Selection of quotes:

'Vote with your feet – numbers are the best method – only go to colleges that can provide adequate support'

'he's growing up, he gets better'

'It should just go up to when you are 18 – because you are an adult at 18 and should be able to do it yourself.'

'because he's sorting a new problem'

'The plan needs to be changed as his life changes'

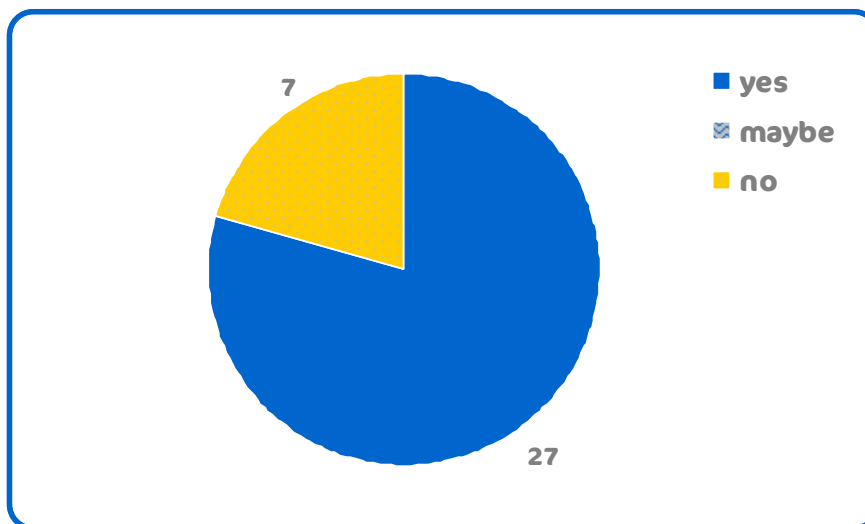
'You should be involved without your family once you are 16/18/20'

'You should have life coaching or help with exams that will help you to get a job'

'Help with feeding, spelling, travel around college, reading, cooking, art. They may need extra'

'If you want it'

Should children and young people only go to schools that meet their needs?



The majority agreed with this.

Key Issues Raised:

- ✓ It was acknowledged that some schools were well placed to help them with a wide range of skills and opportunities for different experiences as well as academically.

Selection of quotes:

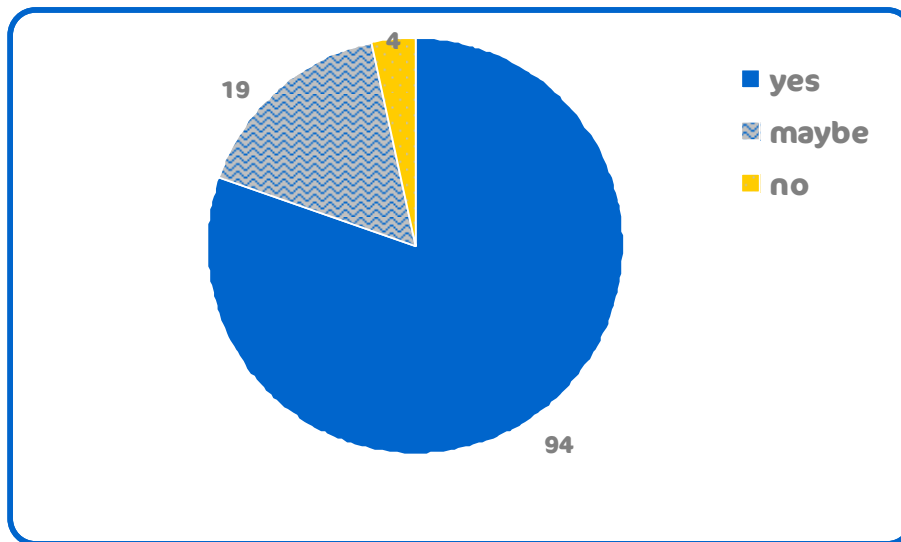
'When they help us it makes us learn things'

'Help with reading, writing, DoE, trips – canoeing, camping, bowling.'

GOAL 2

One system of working together so that all services can step in early with the right support for children and young people who need help with learning.

Should local authorities include children/young people and their families and listen to their views when they are deciding about what support is needed ?



The majority agreed with this.

Key Issues Raised:

- ✓ Although most of the children and young people agreed that they and their families should be able to attend meetings and have their views taken into account some of them had concerns about the process of this.
- ✓ For those that had been involved in some way in the past this has usually been in some kind of meeting, be it fairly informally in school or more formally with other professionals involved.
- ✓ Those that have attended meetings in the past (and not all had) have not always enjoyed the experience. Some stated that they haven't felt listened to, have found them daunting or boring.
- ✓ The timings of meetings were talked about, as with support sessions, and this might mean that they are missing important lessons, or some people might not be able to make it due to other commitments.
- ✓ There was a mix of opinions about at what age children should be involved. Some suggested that they should be in year 3 at least but an equal number proposed that this should be as soon as a child is able to understand or is aware that there is a problem. The due regard needed to be given to the UNCRC would support this latter view.
- ✓ Some stated that although children and their families should attend ultimately decisions should be down to the professionals involved as it is their job to know what they are doing.
- ✓ However most of those asked were clear that in order to get things right then it is essential to listen to children/ young people and their families in informing what goes into IDPs.
- ✓ Many thought that it was really important for the professionals to hear what the

parents would have to say, although they said that parents didn't always pass on decisions or information to them.

- ✓ The young people said that the people attending could be there for different reasons and that there are other people in their lives that knew them well, such as friends, who could add to the bigger picture of how things are. That some people could be there for support, some for sharing information and some for helping with decision making.
- ✓ More thought that it is crucial that they should also be heard and their views valued. Some stated that even parents didn't always know the whole picture and that the children themselves could give the most accurate account of how things were going for them.
- ✓ One young person pointed out that they were 'entitled' to have a say but other than this none of them seemed to know that it is their right (article 12, UNCRC). The benefit of involving children and young people in the IDP process is that this would also ensure that children and young people with ALN are kept informed about what is going on in terms of support rather than it just happening to them or being unaware of what is going on in their lives in other ways.
- ✓ A number of those asked suggested that it should be a choice and they should be invited but if they chose not to attend a meeting then they shouldn't have to go.
- ✓ With this feedback in mind, if children and young people are to be included as they should be, then those organising any meetings should ensure that they keep those young people at the centre of the process. The setting, timings and content should be accessible and welcoming to them and pay genuine attention to what they have to say.
- ✓ Similarly, if they are invited to share their views in other ways (rather than face to face) then this should be approached using appropriate, clear, simple to understand methods.

Selection of quotes:

'they might be nervous/scared/worried/ embarrassed – don't want to hear people saying bad things about you'

'They should be fun – interesting – and have sweets!'

'Some children are too young'

'It's your life, they don't know – they only have the information that's been passed onto them'

'We should be told but professionals know what they are doing'

'You should be in meetings to say what's working and what isn't'

'They need to know about what they have or what they don't need'

'Entitled to it – more insightful to hear their views'

'So can get more information from the young person to the person who writes the IDPs/reviews'

'They ask you questions – felt a bit out of my depth'

'Brother to have a say but not be involved in decision making'

'They might make stupid decisions if you/your parents don't have a say'

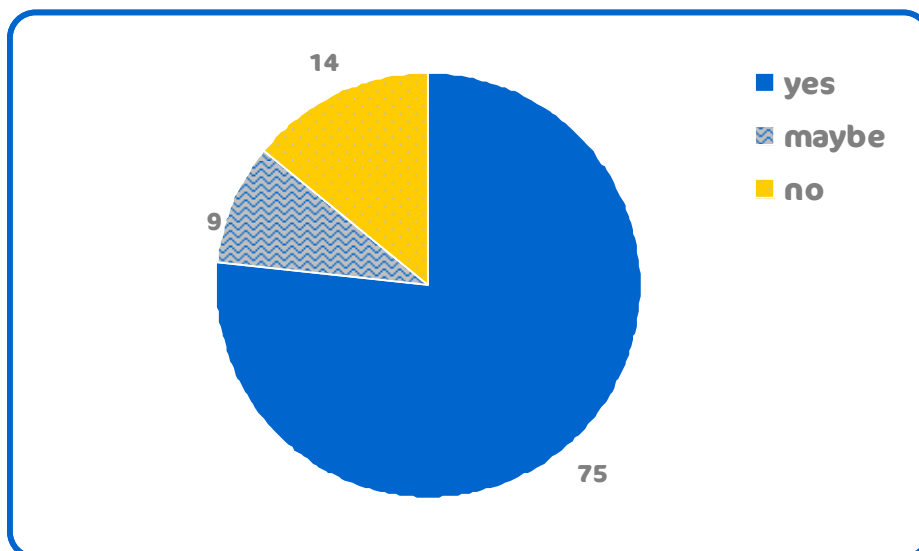
'It's normally only mum and dad/carer and they don't tell the children'

'Sometimes parents don't have enough info because children don't tell them.'

'Some people there would give support, some give information and advice (friends etc.)These are the most insightful. Experts.'

'Say what you need to say not sugar coat it'

Should IDPs be looked at at least once a year and changed if needed?



The majority agreed with this.

Key Issues Raised:

- ✓ The figures here are slightly misleading as most of those that didn't agree were actually clarifying that they thought reviews should happen *more* than annually; with this in mind there was almost full consensus of agreement with this proposal.
- ✓ Most advised that IDPs should be looked at around twice a year, or three times a year/termly. A number of participants did think that it should happen more often than this (varying from weekly to five times a year), although it was accepted that there could be mini reviews in place rather than full ones each time.
- ✓ It was suggested that the amount of reviews could depend on the individual, dependent on needs, or age, or through important times of transition and that they could be flexible and adapted when it is clear that someone has had a significant change in how they are coping.

Selection of quotes:

'At least once a year'

'Three times a year to fit in with each term'

'Five times a year – once each term plus a review during the school holidays to see if the needs of the pupil have changed'

'Have full reviews and mini reviews'

'Whenever you achieve something – big advances, not something trivial like getting out of bed'

'Check for improvements, see whether they have gone up or down.'

'Work out whether we still need this help'

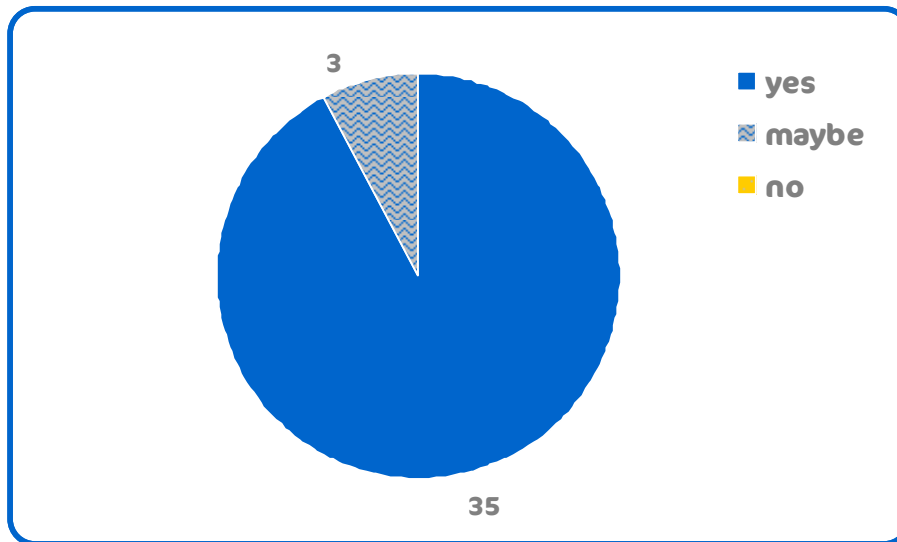
'Involved to make a new plan for the new school year – up to 25'

'IDPs should be looked at more often – at least every six months to check on progress and make quicker changes'

'Depends on the person – some people need more support, information and planning – some need less intervention.'

Should people who work with very young children know what to do if they

realise child is finding learning difficult?



The majority agreed with this.

Key Issues Raised:

- ✓ Most indicated that it was pretty much common sense for this to be the case and that early intervention was important.
- ✓ It was also recognised that it is possible for professionals to misunderstand signs at an early age and that they should be aware of this when making decisions about young children.

Selection of quotes:

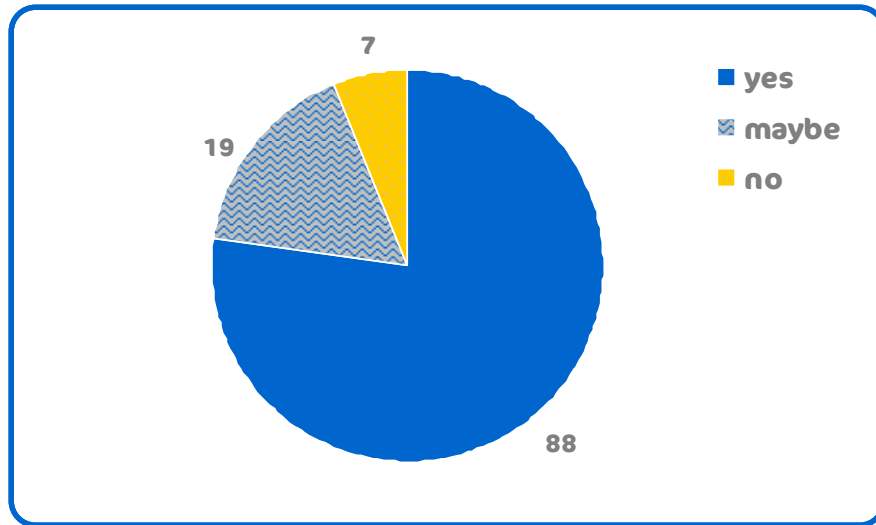
'They shouldn't be working with young people if they can't recognise that they need help early on.'

'They thought that our little brother had ALN but then they realised that he was just left handed.'

'Early intervention'

'They don't always get it right'

Should the different people that are there to help , such as doctors, teachers and social workers, work together to make sure that children/young people are getting the help that they need?



The majority of those asked agreed with this.

Key Issues Raised:

- ✓ Most of the children and young people agreed with this proposal but it was not without some concerns.
- ✓ The majority of participants focussed on 'working together' as a face to face meeting involving professionals as this is how many of them have experienced multi-agency working.
- ✓ Worries and advice around this proposal mainly focussed on face to face meetings. It may be necessary to recognise and maybe separate some of these practical concerns in order to inform how well other methods of joined together working might succeed. In principle, however, it is viewed as being a good idea.
- ✓ How practicable this proposal would be in reality was raised as an issue by some in terms of cost, capacity & workload of the different professionals and having enough space for everyone who needs to be there.
- ✓ There is a worry that having everybody together could dilute the skills of the individuals there. There was concern that there will be less focus in some areas, or that stuff could get lost. If this is to go ahead then effort should be made to ensure that everything is considered that needs to be. Similarly, care should be taken that face to face meetings don't feel chaotic. Only the people that needed to be there should be there rather than inviting all relevant professionals each time, or those with tenuous links to the child/young person at that time.
- ✓ Some of the young people wanted to clarify that there would be some things which would be kept confidential/private: for example visits with doctors.
- ✓ As stated earlier, this proposal is seen as very positive overall.

- ✓ Separate meetings can feel repetitive and can get too much. This way forward is seen as being generally much easier from the child/young person's perspective. It means that there is less interruption of their school life, and it is less of a challenge for them to speak to professionals. It's easier to do it once than many times, as they feel is often the case in the current system.
- ✓ Those asked hope that everybody working together would mean that things were dealt with much faster and more efficiently and that everyone will have a much clearer idea of the bigger picture meaning that planning will be much more effective.

Selection of quotes:

'Yes but it's costly by way of time, especially if it's frequent'

'Keep some stuff private'

'All work together, all understand'

'It could be too chaotic'

'You go to one meeting then another and they say the same thing.'

'If you are in too many meetings it could get too much'

'Separate, to make sure everything gets talked about'

'It won't interrupt lessons as much'

'Confidence – you will only have to explain your problems once'

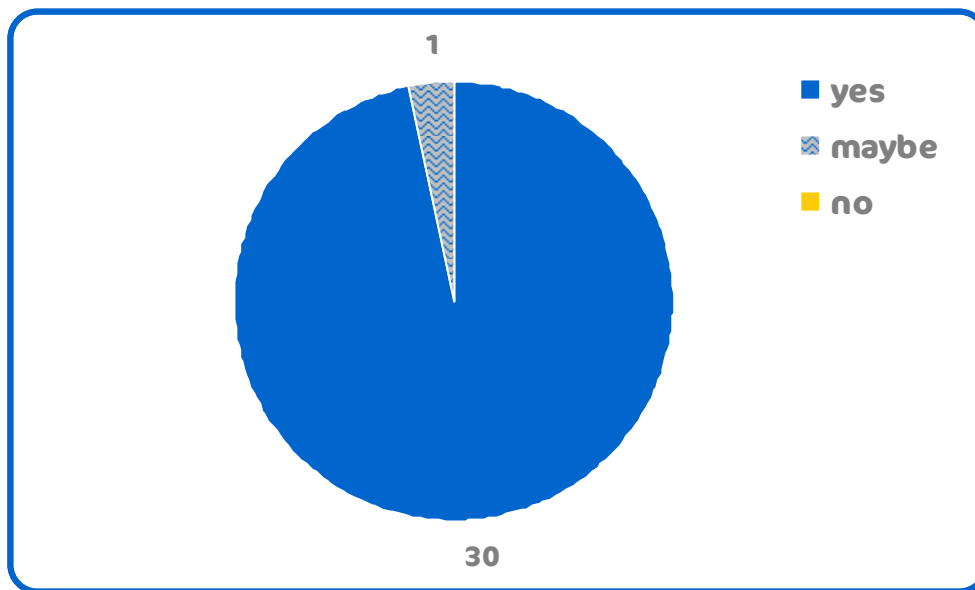
'It muddies things if you say it lots'

'Discuss each other's views, more insightful. Better for planning when information comes together.'

'Easier for the child to have all together'

'Not all of them have the same problems – not needing everyone'

Should all schools have an Additional Learning Needs Co-ordinator (ALNCo)?



The vast majority of participants agree with this.

Key Issues Raised:

- ✓ It is clear to the young people that having someone in school who can co-ordinate their support is a wise move.
- ✓ They do advise that this person should be well qualified for the job, be GOOD at their job and are available when needed. In an earlier question, many of the young people suggested that support and understanding for children and young people with ALN should extend to the wider school community through all support staff, mainstream teachers and beyond. Ideally an ALNCo would be somebody who could nurture this ideal and positive ethos.
- ✓ This proposal raised some discussion about special schools. Some pupils in mainstream education felt that they weren't a good thing, and that their experiences of them hadn't been positive. Others countered this by pointing out that for many young people this could be a more ideal setting to support different individual's needs.

Selection of quotes:

'Have a FABULOUS co-ordinator'

'Yes to ALNCo services'

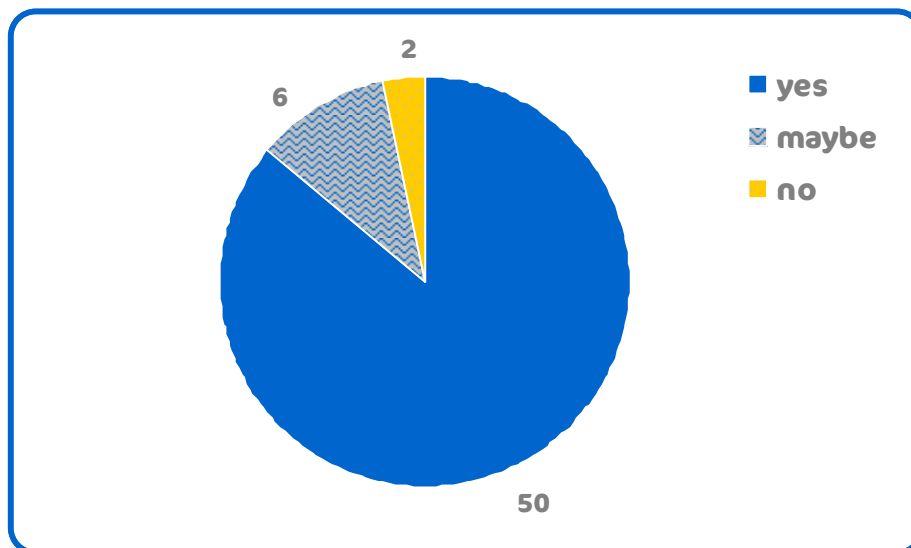
'when someone has a plan they will make sure it happens'

'you don't know if they can come in every day'

'they might be bad or forget bits that they need'

'Yes – and a department.'

Should children and young people looked after by the local authority (LAC) have the same kind of plans instead of what they have now (personal education plans/PEPs) ?



The majority who felt able to respond to this proposal agreed with it.

Key Issues Raised:

- ✓ Many of the young people that we spoke to didn't feel as though they had enough knowledge or experience of being a looked after child to answer this properly.
- ✓ Despite this, some were able to respond with more of an explanation and others through direct experience therefore there was a reasonable cohort of respondents.
- ✓ There was some questioning as to whether this should be based on need. There was some feeling that LAC had lots of extra help anyway and some that sometimes help was there when it wasn't really required by the young people in question; equally, others were concerned that looked after children might not get sufficient support .
- ✓ It was recognised that education was often very tricky for looked after children for a multitude of reasons, and that it was important that this was checked up on and supported as much as possible. It was felt that IDPs could make this consistent with other young people that needed extra support; essentially, anybody who needs additional help for whatever reason should get it.

- ✓ There was some concern that there was a danger of adding to the plans and labels that looked after children experience - however, if IDPs simplified the process they felt this might be a good thing.
- ✓ For a number of children and young people with additional learning needs respite care is an important part of their lives; if this respite care reaches a certain level then a young person is considered to be looked after. At least one young person was concerned that if plans changed and services were potentially cut in some way then it might affect their respite care.

Selection of quotes:

'They have extra emotional needs which do get in the way of learning'

'It's an extra way to look after them'

'Not everyone needs an IDP - or perhaps EVERYONE ought to have one - no stigma'

'Yes - if their learning is damaged they need an IDP to keep on track. Also that they are not worried by other stuff that's going on in their lives. Make sure they are really looked after and taken care of, and can get on with their work. '

'Sometimes it could affect their learning process but sometimes they don't need anything - one pupil has a Statement, ILP, PEP...'

'Keep it simple'

'All children should get the rights and help they need even in foster care or a family.'

'If things change I'm worried that respite could go too'

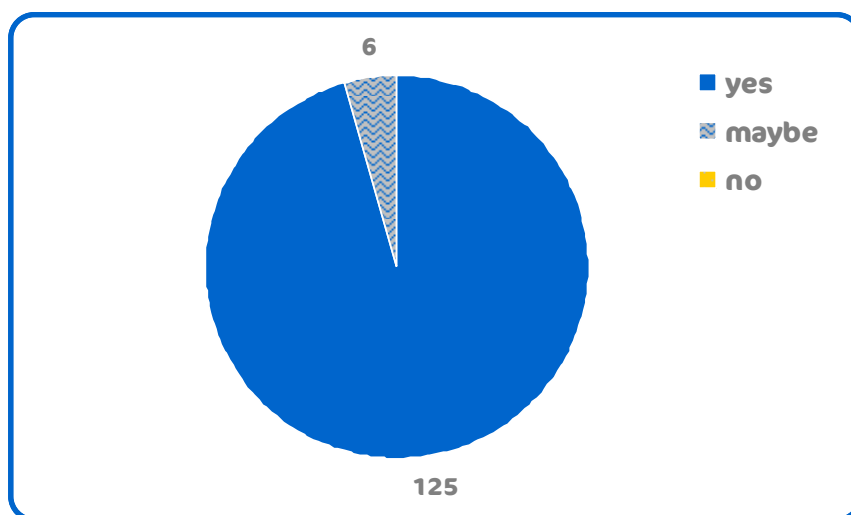
I think that looked after children should have the same plans and the same help. One person shouldn't get loads of help and other people get no help.'

'These children get too much help anyway when they might not need it. There are others who need help more.'

GOAL 3

Clear information, advice and support which is fair to everyone if things go wrong or if they don't like a decision.

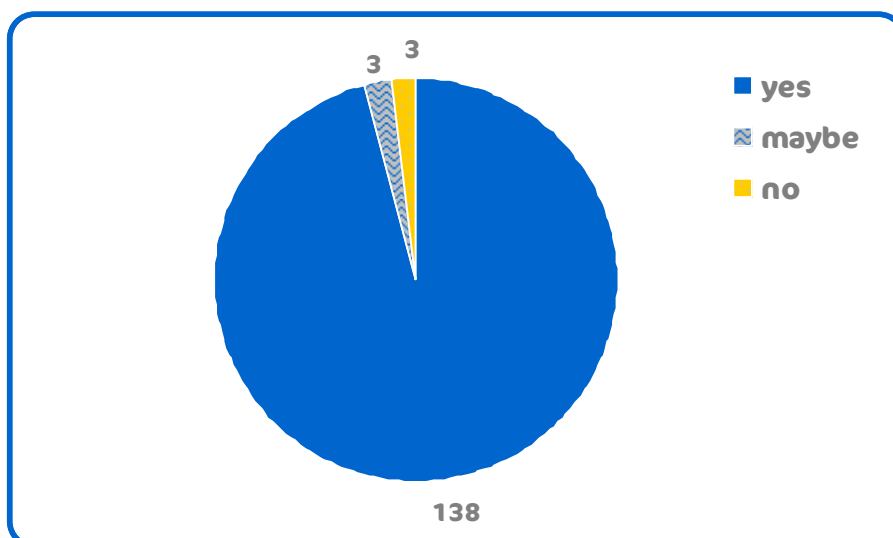
Should children/young people and their parents be able to get all of the information and advice that they need if things aren't right?



The majority agreed.

No comments were made

Should problems about learning support be sorted as quickly as possible so that they don't get bigger /go to tribunal?



The majority agreed.

Key Issue Raised:

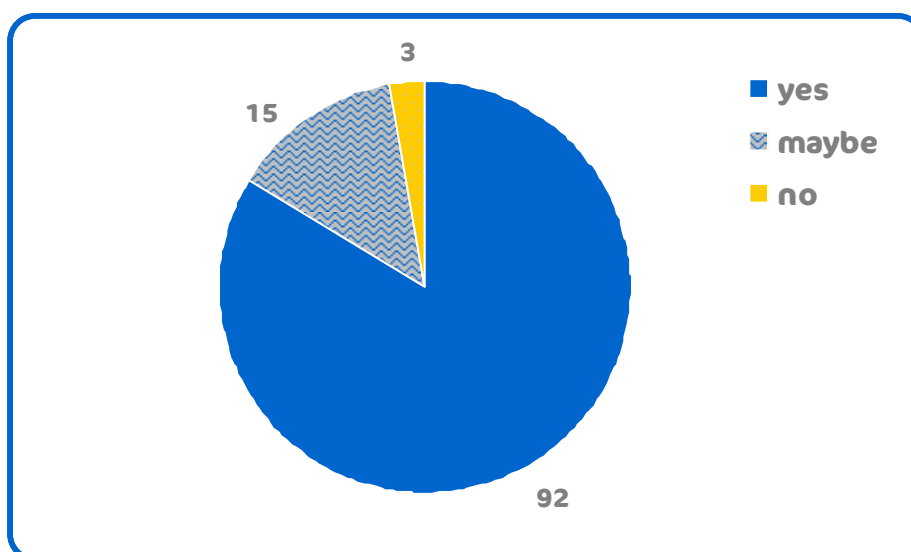
- ✓ Although most of those asked found this very straight forward to answer a few were very clear that this should not mean that things should be rushed for the sake of rushing and so complicating things or being completed shoddily.

Selection of quotes:

'Keep it slow and easy'

'If you rush things it won't be as good as when you take your time'

Should children/young people up to 25 and their families be able to go to a tribunal to make sure that they are getting the support that they need.



The majority agreed with this proposal.

Key Issues Raised:

- ✓ There was overwhelming accordance that should problems or dissatisfaction continue then young people and their families should be able to challenge this by tribunal. One concern was that this process should ensure that all of the important details were taken into account.
- ✓ The age aspect of this proposal was questioned; some would like to be able to challenge retrospectively should they need to (post 25) whereas others

questioned whether young people should have to involve their families once they are 16 and over. The issue of whether or not children and young people should have to involve their families was raised. It was interesting to note that this was a concern as currently anyone who has a statement of SEN (regardless of their age) can appeal to the Tribunal, without the need to involve their parents.

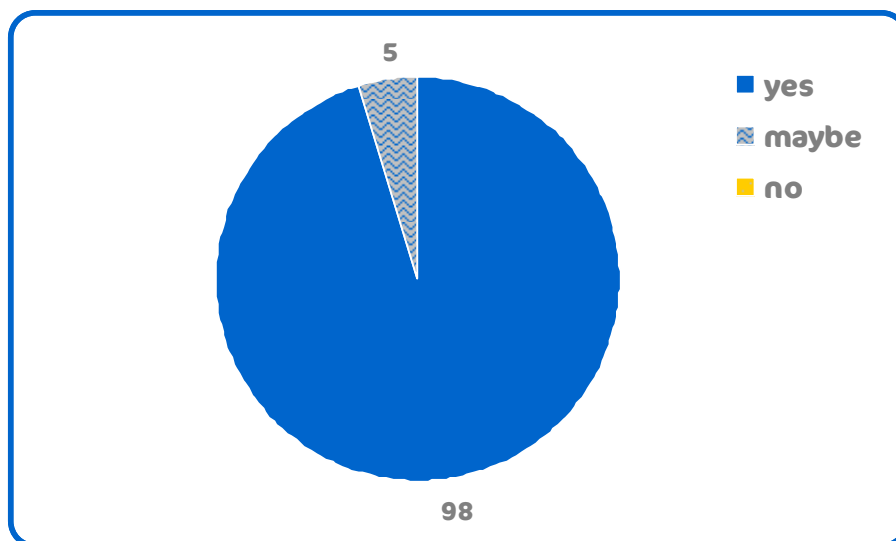
Selection of quotes:

'You might not get all of the information at the tribunal'

'over 25's should be able to do it too to get support' (if they are appealing about something that happened when they were younger)

'Over 16 you should be able to do it alone'

Should children and young people be able to get help from someone that they trust if they want to complain about the support that they are getting?



The majority agreed with this.

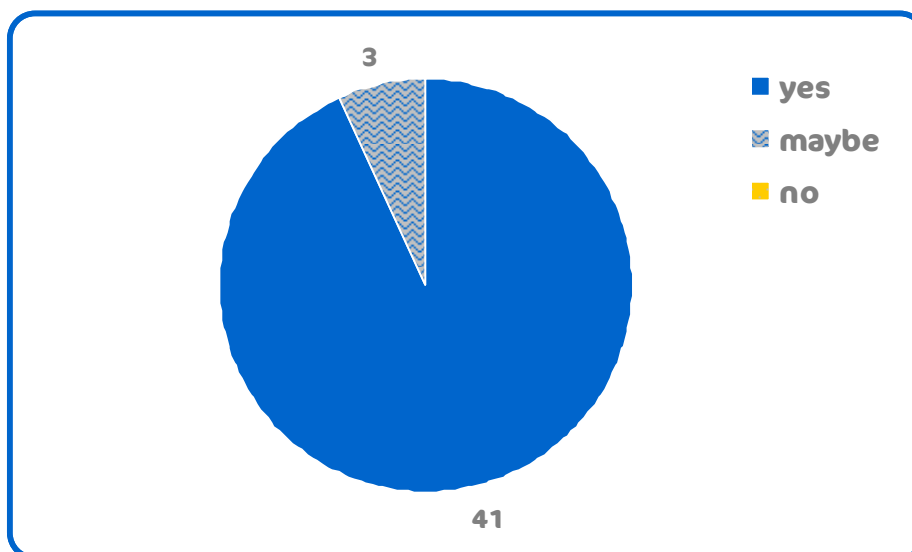
Key Issue Raised:

- ✓ As well as professional advocates the children and young people consulted would like to be able to have family and friends from their everyday lives to support and represent them.

Selection of quotes:

'parents, grandparents, friends, sibling, teacher.'

Should there be a person who makes sure the process is fair?



Anything else?

Selection of quotes:

'Why don't young homeless people get help?'

'Should be some improvements even if we can't see them at first – need to happen ASAP'

'Worry that things/schemes will change if the Prime Minister changes'

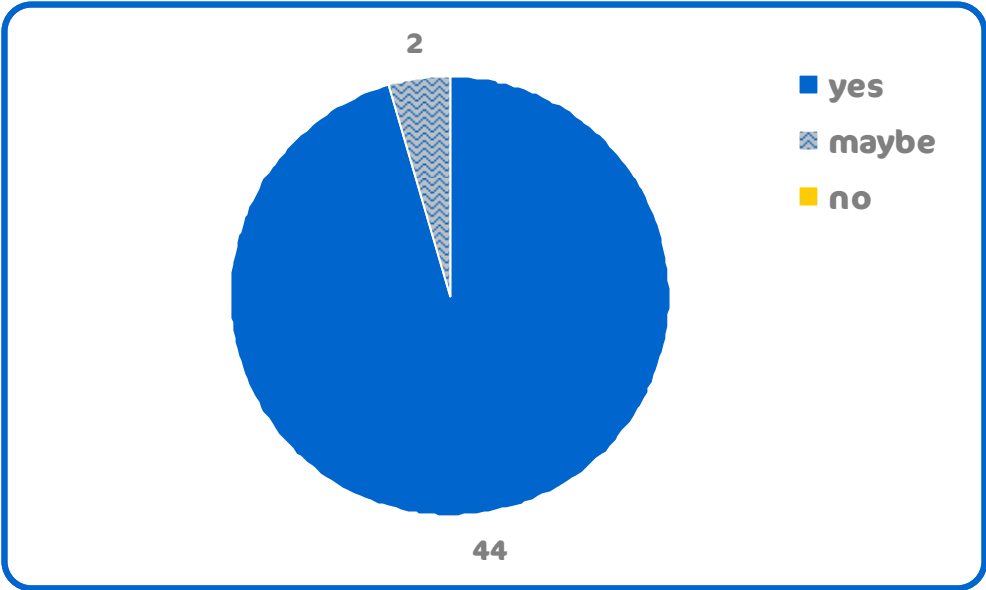
'More schools should have specialist units like the Dereck Roberts Centre – it's quicker if someone needs help, more teachers.'

'So much jargon in all of this – it's hard to understand. It needs to be kept really simple to make sure that young people can be involved.'

'More people should recognise things like autism/ADHD so stuff can be recognised early on.'

'People need to buck their ideas up and help people to have a better life.'

This should all be true for all children and young people with ALN.



PARENTS' AND CARERS' RESULTS

OVERVIEW OF THE PARENTS' AND CARERS' RESULTS

This part of the consultation reached 55 parents and carers. These included parents and carers of children and young people that had been consulted as well as those who had acted as carers for other children. The schools that their children attended were a mix of mainstream, special schools and specialist teaching facilities connected to mainstream schools.

Most of the parents agreed with most of the proposals in theory and felt that the suggestions are strong in principle.

There are concerns though that, as one parent put it, 'the devil's in the detail.' Many of them strive to keep on top of any changes but still felt as though they don't feel informed enough to have a say. A number stated that there are still too many questions that they have that the white paper doesn't answer that could affect their point of view; additionally there is scepticism and worry around some of the proposed changes; how will these things work practicably and would it mean that their children will lose things that they already have.

The effectiveness of the proposed legislation around IDPs was a big concern. They were worried as to whether the IDPs will hold the same power as Statements are currently perceived to have. This is further explored with the proposal for IDPs to become the single plan.

There were two key themes raised by parents & carers that are detailed below that should be understood before looking in detail at their full answers to the questions.

THEME 1: Accountability and implementation

Accountability is a concern; who will be holding the reins on their child's IDP to ensure that it is co-ordinated on a day to day basis and who is eventually accountable should the support not be satisfactory. There are also practical queries around when the changes would take place and criteria for admission to schools. Parents/carers would like to be assured that the proposed changes are followed through properly.

Selection of quotes:

'When will it be implemented?'

'Who will the onus be on to make sure working well? WHO is responsible for IDP? Leading it/driving it.'

'Will more onus be on schools that don't have skills/resources money to carry

out appropriate support?'

'The plan is viewed as work done. A box ticked. It is considered the main focus. What happens afterwards is rarely checked or followed through. IEP, dyslexic assessments are often ignored.'

'What are the criteria for admission to special schools if there's no statement system in place?'

'Head teachers mostly bothered about academic/sporting achievements – if WG setting standards what is going to happen?'

Will a change of government change the plans?'

THEME 2: Cost and capacity

Many parents/carers are concerned about the potential cost of implementing this scheme and the capacity of the professionals involved, in school and in health and social care provision in order to do the job properly.

There are lots of questions about the available funds for this if the scheme is to be rolled out successfully. There are fears that the pot will be spread too thinly if there is not enough money being put into making this all work, and that their children will lose out as a result.

There is a real worry from some parents that the whole system will become too diluted and that it is trying to do too much with too little.

Selection of quotes:

'Will resources from different counties be lost when counties merge, will individuals then lose out?'

'Will it mean that money is taken from things/ people that need it? '

'Funding – the Special Treatment Facility is pretty secure – mainstream not so much so. Does this lead us open to fail?'

'If there aren't enough resources how will this new system be implemented? '

'We don't have certain facilities and resources because we are not eligible. Will everyone suddenly have access because all children who need it will have IDP? We want this; we want a named key worker. We want impartial advice.'

'Once the IDPs have been put in place, will the children who need less support not get it as there's not enough budget?'

'Unless the overall budget is bigger this won't work, the service/support will be diluted.'

The parents were clear that the questions and concerns that they share should be properly explored and answered before proceeding with the proposals.

RESULTS FOR EACH QUESTION:

GOAL 1

A single law about how to support children and young people aged 0-25 who need help with learning.

Should the term ALN (additional learning needs) replace SEN (special educational needs) ?

Overall the majority of parents/carers are in favour of a change from SEN to ALN.

Key Issue Raised:

- ✓ Those in favour mostly indicated that this is due to the negative connotations of SEN, particularly the word 'special'.
- ✓ There is some scepticism about just how meaningful this change is and that it's just changing one set of letters for another which in the long term won't make any difference.
- ✓ There is a general concern about the stigma attached to having additional learning needs and any labels that are attached to this in order for their children to receive support.
- ✓ Although an explanation is given there is some confusion about what 'ALN' encompasses in these proposals as it is a term that has been used more widely to include other types of learning need such as More Able and Talented. For some this wider use is preferable to the suggested range of needs in the proposal.

Selection of quotes:

' It doesn't have the word special in front of it as a negative'

'The word 'special' has negative connotations now but in the future ALN will be the same.'

'I never wanted my child to be labelled but now he needs to be to get anything done.'

Should all children/young people who need it have an Individual Development Plan (IDP) that says what help they need and who should give it?

Everybody that we asked this to as an initial question agreed that all children who need extra support with their learning should have a plan to support this.

Key Issue Raised:

- ✓ There were some fears about what this would mean as a financial impact on the money provided to support children and young people with ALN. The fears were about whether it meant that more children and young people would be receiving the help that they needed and so the resources available would be spread much more thinly.
- ✓ There is some scepticism about how well this would work; a number of parents have had negative experiences about how long it has taken to get things in place for sometimes very little support. This is clearly something that would need to be taken into account.

Selection of quotes:

'It's a no brainer'

'Yes – should definitely be more person centred - you need to find out more about the child, see the bigger picture '

'It took two years to get one hour per week.'

'It is going under the radar – social workers don't know what the doctors are doing. It should be on a central computer – it should link together. '

'It took ten years to get a letter back from the health service'

Should this (IDP) be instead of all other plans such as School Action Plans and Statements?

Most of the parents asked about this agreed that it is a good idea in principle as long as the plans were thorough and took all needs and requirements into account.

Key Issue Raised:

- ✓ It was suggested that it might make the system fairer as it didn't always seem to make sense about who had statements and who didn't. It is also hoped that there might be less stigma attached to IDPs than there is with statements.
- ✓ There is however, particularly amongst the parents and carers of those with existing statements, a lot of concern and some questions to be answered around this before they feel they can lend their full support to the proposal.
- ✓ One of the main concerns is about the legislative power of the IDP, and at what point that would set in. A number of the parents talked about how hard they had fought for statements for their children, and that it was the main tool that they had in terms of getting what was needed.
- ✓ Again there is concern about whether having the same plan would mean diluting what was available for their children - whether it would mean that more children would be entitled to more support and the impact that this would have on the funding and capacity to provide existing support at the level they felt they had worked for.
- ✓ There is an understanding that the Statement system is not perfect; that there is inconsistency about who gets one and what support is offered; it is not always person centred; it is not always well adhered to and that it can be inflexible; but it is something that parents/carers feels gives them and their children an element of power and they feel they are better armed to get what they need.
- ✓ If parents and carers can be assured that their children will get the support that they should be entitled to with clear advice about the legislative underpinning of IDPs, that the IDPs will be thorough and deliver what they say and that the proposals won't mean a reduction in support then they will be much more in favour of agreeing to this as a system - but there is some way to go to allay the fears around it.

Selection of quotes:

'Statementing is wrong – some have it, some don't and they don't always get it right.'

'Better for the children – less stigma, less bullying.'

'If it is easier than a statement.'

'How does this replace and become a one size fits all plan? Where does the legality come into play?'

'Are we asking people to give up statements? There is too much risk in this. Will we still get the same support?'

'The language used has to be precise – Statement system is great at eye-level but in details it fails.'

Should there be a guide to help the professionals who support you to know what needs to go into the plans and make sure it happens?

Everybody who was asked this agreed that it was a good proposal.

Key Issue Raised:

- ✓ There was some advice that the forming of this guidance should involve those who will benefit from it - those being some of the parents and children in question.

Selection of quotes:

'Guidance would be good'

'As long as it doesn't take a year to produce.'

'It should bring in parents and carers ' we should have groups of parents to share experiences.'

Should young people over 16 in education (like FE college) get the same kind of plan and support?

Most of those asked this question agreed that it should be the case.

Key Issue Raised:

- ✓ It is understood that this may help with a smoother transition for those aged 16+ into continuing education. Most agreed with the age duration of the proposal with no one suggesting that they should finish earlier and some suggesting that they could be continued for longer.
- ✓ A number of parents would like there to be clearer information about what is available for their children post 16, and that advice and transition into adult services should be easier. There were questions about accountability for IDPs and the support they demand once a young person turns 18 and enters adult services, where there is often a significant change in who provides support and how it is given.
- ✓ There is a call for more information about what kind of support would be included - for example whether transport to and from the educational setting would be part of the plans.
- ✓ A lot of respondents also suggested that the remit of IDPs should include those doing training, exams and apprenticeships and potentially other kinds of schemes involving learning that would help young people to find employment.
- ✓ There are concerns around the implementation of IDPs at this level - who is going to manage the plans and make sure that they are carried out sufficiently.

Selection of quotes:

'Clear advice, information needs to be available at past 16. Who's responsible in post 16 education? Is there a key person to go to?'

'But look at IDPs to be more flexible after 16 - there is a difference between 6th forms and college.'

'Could the provision in post 16 also include training? So supporting ALN to 25 will be included in education and training 16-25.'

'How will the disabled children's team feed into adult services - e.g. social services (unless have learning difficulties)?'

'16+ - social worker needed to access current services but social worker won't turn up as no case to open.'

'Mistrustful of initiative because funding withdrawn from non-vocational and educational course.'

Should children and young people only go to schools that can make sure that they are getting the help that they need?

All of those asked agreed with this but would like more information about how this is decided by them and the local authority.

Selection of quotes:

'Children should know the schools that don't offer the right help'

'Can you still name a school in the new system?'

'A lot of independent schools can meet young people's needs better than LEA. Who decides who goes? Who decides which school does or doesn't meet an individual child's needs?'

GOAL 2

One system of working together so that all services can step in early with the right support for children and young people who need help with learning.

Should local authorities include children/young people and their families and listen to their views when they are deciding about what support is needed ?

All of those asked agreed with this proposal.

Key Issue Raised:

- ✓ There was a strong feeling that the only way to get plans right is to involve those at the centre of them.
- ✓ Parents and carers felt that they know their children best and that they can be there to speak up for them. They agreed that the children should be directly involved. Some thought that this should be from a young age, or as soon as the child understood that there might be an issue whilst others thought that the child should be at least towards the end of primary before they took part in meetings and formal reviews.
- ✓ There were some discussions about the kind of things that they and their children might want to share in decision making and meetings, such as approaches to teaching and learning and the impact of being taken out of different lessons.

- ✓ There is an issue of inconsistency at the moment with families even within the same authority being involved at different levels.
- ✓ The advice given here by parents is that parents/carers and the children should be really listened to and their views respected, and that it should not be over complicated.

Selection of quotes:

'Children & young people/families should be involved from the start'

'They should have a say when they are aware that they need help, when they recognise that they aren't keeping up.'

'Authorities don't know the children'

'Talked about even though they are there – not involved'

'And having a say in how they learn best and this being supported with alternative methods of completing work/assessment – more tailored to support individual needs.'

'Pupil will come to an annual review but not there when statemented.'

'Each individual parent had different experiences.'

'REALLY listen to young people and their families about what would help.'

Should IDPs be looked at at least once a year and changed if needed?

There was unanimous agreement for this proposal.

Key Issue Raised:

- ✓ Most of the parents/carers suggested that it should take place more often than once a year with a number suggesting that they should be reviewed termly.
- ✓ It was suggested that the frequency may well depend on the individual child and maybe more frequently when they are younger as more developmental changes are happening then. Any meeting should include positives rather than a list of deficits about the child.

- ✓ There are concerns around funding and capacity for this to be possible - whether the workload of those needed to be involved allow it and would the cost of this take from other important things elsewhere.

Selection of quotes:

'At *least* once a year , especially when younger'

'Meetings should be for looking at good points as well as deficits'

'LAC meetings are 2/3 times a year – why are these so often but not case in school (difference in responsibility)? Should all get enough support. '

'Will extra work be able to be done with current staffing levels?'

'What will it cost -will money be taken from somewhere else?'

Should the different people that are there to help, such as doctors, teachers and social workers, work together to make sure that children/young people are getting the help that they need?

Everyone agreed that this should be the case.

Key Issue Raised:

- ✓ The focus for most of the parents we consulted was around professionals meeting and talking face to face, with themselves and their children being involved.
- ✓ A few discussed the idea of a centralised computer system as potentially being a good way of operating this; however this was a suggestion offered when discussing whether all children who needed it should get support as it is seen as some slipping through the net because of different professionals not communicating with each other.
- ✓ In principle this is seen as a strong proposal but there is scepticism about how it will work in reality. Although the parents/ carers were able to share some good examples of multi-agency working there were many more stories of the difficulties of getting different people around the table in practice, and that co-operation between services was not always co-operative.
- ✓ It was suggested that this can be such hard work that once they are all together it can mean feelings are sometimes heated. There was also a worry that too many people together can feel a little daunting.

Selection of quotes:

'It is going under the radar – social workers don't know what the doctors are doing. It should all be on a central computer and link together. '

'(As it is now) – no-one knows what anyone else is doing'

'They should all be at all of the meetings'

'What's the point otherwise?'

'Getting three professionals in one meeting is like getting a winning lottery ticket.'

'It can be so hard to get them there that it can be combative once they finally get to meet. '

'They should but in reality it doesn't actually happen.'

'Get them to talk to each other – who drives it?'

'Too many people together can be daunting.'

'Differently funded bodies often don't co-operate – there needs to be more pressure on them to do so.'

Should people who work with very young children know what to do if they realise child is finding learning difficult?

Everyone agreed with this.

Selection of quotes:

'If support starts at age 0 how will this feed into the school system?'

Should all schools have an Additional Learning Needs Co-ordinator (ALNCo)?

All of those asked agreed with this.

Key Issue Raised:

- ✓ The parents and carers asked are keen to have someone who is leading the process within the school.
- ✓ They are also really keen for the support to extend from one person to all of those who have contact with their children. These should include well trained support staff and for mainstream teachers to have plenty of understanding, flexibility and ability to deal with children and young people with additional learning needs.
- ✓ There is a strong feeling from many that there is a wide variety in terms of quality of support given within schools and that this leads to a hit and miss scenario which can massively impact on the achievement and well-being of the children. A good quality ALNCo should ensure that this is not the case by ensuring all staff in the school community have the right ethos.

Selection of quotes:

'Parents rely on being allocated 'good' support staff – if they don't that's a whole year lost.'

'The coordinators should already be supporting staff. They should know their own jobs and have appropriate training. At the moment it really does depend on individual staff.'

'There should be up to date information and training which is mandatory for staff working with SEN. Include this in the code of practice.'

'Additional staff e.g. secretaries and dinner staff need training on ALN, promoting positive attitudes. '

'All staff in school should be responsible for learning as well as a class teacher having main responsibility.'

'Staff in schools aren't trained appropriately at the moment. Our children don't fit into boxes. They all have different needs; teachers should be equipped to deal with all of this through training.'

Should children and young people looked after by the local authority (LAC) have the same kind of plans instead of what they have now (personal education plans/PEPs) ?

Most of those asked agree.

Key Issue Raised:

- ✓ This was a difficult question for many parents to answer as most had little experience of the Looked After Children system. There were however a number who are familiar with PEPs. Others, after explanation were able to share an opinion.
- ✓ Some of those asked suggested that the change was obvious - as long as they were tailored to the individual and a consistent plan for as long as the child needs it.
- ✓ For others, the status of a child or young person with a PEP is an issue - with concern that they might lose this and be overlooked more easily.
- ✓ There was some scepticism about the plan making it off the paper, and suggestions that plans should stay with a child for as long as they need it once they have been adopted - currently PEPs stop at this stage.

Selection of quotes:

'It's common sense - I don't know why no-one has done it before.'

'Should be consistent and recognised from an early age.'

'Keep them (PEPs) - someone to stand up for children.'

'When children are adopted support is stopped - it should continue. The same plan should stay in place as the needs won't go away.'

'Yet another label.'

'PEPs statement top all that at the moment, will they lose this position? They are first to be provided for, will they lose this?'

GOAL 3

Clear information, advice and support which is fair to everyone if things go wrong or if they don't like a decision.

Should children/ young people and their families get all the information and advice they need if things aren't right?

All agreed with this

Key Issue Raised:

- ✓ The main advice here is that the information should be really clear, transparent and simple to understand by all. At the moment the system is considered intimidating and information is often inaccessible, particularly for those with additional learning needs (be that the children or their parents).
- ✓ This should help to build trust when dealing with the authorities which is lacking at the moment.
- ✓ There was also informal discussion about the general information and advice which should be easily available for children & young people/ their families from the start of the children being identified with ALN.

Selection of quotes:

'There should be clear pathways of what to do. CLEAR, CONSISTENT, VISUAL DIAGRAMS'

'The system is intimidating, who will help individual parents negotiate this? Some parents have needs themselves and just can't get the help needed for their children.'

'How will parents be informed that they do have rights from day one?'

'We want more literature in PLAIN English to explain to us – and that doesn't contradict itself.'

'There are too many unwritten rules at the moment depending on who you are dealing with, where you live. We want an independent, impartial person to advise parents.'

Should problems about learning support be sorted as quickly as possible so that they don't get bigger /go to tribunal?

All agreed with this.

Key Issue Raised:

- ✓ It was suggested that this is clearly better all round, particularly for the child, if things can be sorted quickly but effectively. It was also suggested that this might not always be possible - that sometimes things are too complicated for this to be the case.
- ✓ Many of the parents stated that they would like to ensure that the panel could be impartial and various possibilities for inclusion were identified.
- ✓ The fact that there is already an early complaints procedure was highlighted, and that it should still be straight forward to go to tribunal if needed.

Selection of quotes:

'Tribunals take time – valuable education lost.'

'It should be independent not the people who made the initial decisions.'

'Should have someone with special needs on the panel'

'Parent governor should be invited'

'But it needs to be done effectively. '

'Are resources going to be put into early complaints procedure?'

Should children/young people up to 25 and their families be able to go to a tribunal to make sure that they are getting the support that they need. Should there be a person who makes sure the process is fair?

Everybody agreed that this should be the case.

Key Issue Raised:

- ✓ Advice should be independent, the legislation around tribunals and IDPs should be clear and all parents of children with ALN should be advised of this.
- ✓ None of the parents, including those that clearly kept themselves very well informed, discussed the potential impact of cost in moving forwards with tribunal if no legal aid is available.

Selection of quotes:

'We want independent advice, not advice from LEAs. '

'If parents are not aware that young people have SEN, how can they challenge?'

'What time scales are going to be enforced in an IDP? If parents need to go to a tribunal or disagree with something, how long will it take to resolve? What are the legal timescales?'

Should children and young people be able to get help from someone that they trust if they want to complain about the support that they are getting?

Everyone agreed with this.

Key Issue Raised:

- ✓ This could be through advocates - who should be trained to deal with the nuances of all children/young people but particularly those with ALN. The process here should not exclude parents and the person who a child trusts could be someone other than an advocate, for example a family member.

Selection of quotes:

' Advocates need training for working with children with special needs'

'But don't exclude parents '

'No-one knows our children like we do - end of.'

This should all be true for all children & young people with ALN.

All agreed. There were no comments about this.

APPENDIX 1

Questions from parents and carers

PLEASE NOTE: Questions in bold are ones raised by a number of parents/carers.

'Is the child going to believe that they are getting the right/relevant support? What will the legislation of IDPs be now?- for some parents statements are all they have.'

'Will it be legally enforceable? At what point? Who by?'

'Any child who needs support should have it but we need legislation. Legislation from day one. When does it become legal? At what point is the IDP a legal document?'

'How does this replace and become a one fits all plan? Where does the legality come into play?'

'We have fought for statements. Are we legally allowed to abolish statements?'

'Are we asking people to give up statements? There is too much risk in this. Will we still get the same support?'

'How legal is this document? It's not clear. It's sketchy.'

'Who will enforce this new legislation? Who will audit all of this?'

'Can this be used by companies who might be employing 18-25 year olds?'

'Could the provision in post 16 also include training? So supporting ALN to 25 will be included in education and training 16-25.'

'How will the disabled children's team feed into adult services (e.g. social services) (unless have learning difficulties)?'

'Who is dealing with transition?'

'After school/college, what's the next step?'

'What if the young person chooses to stop education before 25?
What's available?'

How do they plan to police this new system in 16+ and further education?

It doesn't include support at university. Why not?

What's covered past 16? Can transport be included in the IDP? How else can young people get to college?

My daughter had to drop out of college for various reasons. She is 23. There is absolutely nothing out there for her now. How will this new legislation help her?

What is going to be classed an educational establishment +16? For example, the new Autism Centre? (Something which is in progress of being set up)

'Can you still name a school in the new system?'

'A lot of independent schools can meet young people's needs better than LEA. Who decides who goes? Who decides which school does or doesn't meet an individual child's needs?'

There's a lack of lead. Who will take responsibility on this? The white paper seems to be lacking on this.

'Will extra work be able to be done with current staffing levels?'

'What will it cost -will money be taken from somewhere else?'

'If support starts at age 0 how will this feed into the school system?'

'Get them to talk to each other - but who drives it?'

Is there a minimum requirement of training for staff who work with SEN? There should be.

'The system is intimidating, who will help individual parents negotiate this? Some parents have needs themselves and just can't get the help needed for their children.'

'How will parents be informed that they do have rights from day one?'

'Are resources going to be put into early complaints procedure?'

'If parents are not aware that young people have SEN, how can they challenge?'

'What time scales are going to be enforced in an IDP? If parents need to go to a tribunal or disagree with something, how long will it take to resolve? What are the legal timescales?'

'When will it be implemented?'

'Children with Downs Syndrome - who will set the criteria for the IDPs to be in place?
What are the criteria for admission to special schools if there's no statement system in place?'

'How do you prioritise who has access to extra help?'

'Head teachers mostly bothered about academic/sporting achievements - if WG setting standards what is going to happen?'

'Will a change of government change the plans?'

'Where will the money come from to fund it? Will this impact on what people already receive?'

'How will this be implemented staffing and capacity wise?'

'What will be the cost implications for this being implemented?'

'Will it mean that money is taken from things/ people that need it?'

'What will it cost -will money be taken from somewhere else?'

'Is this another cost cutting exercise?'

'Funding - the STF is pretty secure - mainstream not so much so. Does this lead us open to fail?'

'If there aren't enough resources how will this new system be implemented?'

'Will the current school budget now have to be stretched further which means statemented children? Is there a guarantee that support we have now will continue at that level for statemented children?'

'Once the IDPs have been put in place, will the children who need less support not to get it as there's not enough budget?'

Unless the overall budget is bigger this won't work, the service/support will be diluted. How will individual schools cope with their own budget changes if you take statements away?'

'We don't have certain facilities and resources because we are not eligible. Will everyone suddenly have access because all children who need it will have IDP?'

'Will resources from different counties be lost when counties merge, will individuals then lose out?'

APPENDIX 2

Summary of all comments from children and young people

NOTE: Comments in bold were raised by a number of children and young people.

Is ALN better than SEN ?

'Call it FABULOUS or SEVERELY FABULOUS'

'Alternate Educational Requirement' - acronyms tippy toe around the issue'

'SEN - label - thick, retarded, stupid'

'Just changing the acronym'

'Why do WG love acronyms?'

'You need a lot of education to understand it'

'Prefer ALN to SEN because no-one else knows about it or what it stands for'

'Not heard of SEN much'

'It's just changing words around'

'SEN is too much info'

'It's just politics'

'It's softer'

'Sounds better'

'More professional'

'Special sounds like people in wheelchairs'

'What we have is ok now.'

'Not SEN or ALN - just someone who needs help.'

'ALN doesn't sound like something evil'

'Don't like special'

'Special is patronising'

Should all children who need it have an IDP?

'But don't draw attention to it'

'Don't highlight it - it brings bad attention'

'It helps us and makes us better'

'So everyone knows and if there are visitors they can read them and understand straight away'

'Don't we already have one?'

'Nice to have a plan' 'gorgeous to have a plan'

'It will be useful'

Should this be instead of statements and other plans?

'But if someone needs more help it should be in the plan'

Should there be a guide to help adults to get it right ?

'No, it confuses them. They have their own way of doing things.'

Should schools do their best to make sure that children get the help they need?

'Staff can be helpful'

'Head teacher sometimes useful (if it suits them.)'

'Anyone with a responsibility for education'

Should young people >16 in school/college get the same kind of plan and help?

'Vote with your feet - numbers are the best method - only go to colleges that can provide adequate support'

'he's growing up, he gets better'

' It should just go up to when you are 18 - because you are an adult at 18 and should be able to do it yourself.'

'because he's sorting a new problem'

'It could be different at college'

'The plan needs to be changed as his life changes'

'Yes, I think they should'

'Once you are over 20 your parents rely on you to be responsible'

'You should be involved without your family once you are 16/18/20'

'If you are still at college or finding a job'

'Lessons to help you to get a job'

'You should have life coaching or help with exams that will help you to get a job'

'Engineering (apprenticeship) because they keep you in college'

'Help with feeding, spelling, travel around college, reading, cooking, art. They may need extra'

'I'm in the top set but people say I need extra support.'

'If you want it'

'Happy with how things are now - we don't like change'

Should children/young people and their families be involved/listened to?

'If you want to go'

'They might be nervous/scared/worried/ embarrassed - don't want to hear people saying bad things about you'

'Just don't want to go - boring' ' it might be too boring'

'They should be fun - interesting - and have sweets!'

'Young people should get paid for attending!'

'Definitely you'

'Not everyone needs to know - you, parents, teacher'

'Family should know and should all be taking part'

'Parents for young children should definitely be involved'

'Once you are 7/8; 9; 10 you should be involved'

'Some children are too young'

'It's your life, they don't know - they only have the information that's been passed onto them'

'We should be told but professionals know what they are doing'

'Experts should know what they are doing but parents should attend'

'Parents know better than strangers'

'You should be in meetings to say what's working and what isn't'

'The person should be involved to discuss their views'

'They need to know about what they have or what they don't need'

'Entitled to it - more insightful to hear their views'

'So can get more information from the young person to the person who writes the IDPs/reviews'

'It's better - you get to have a cuppa!'

'I haven't gone'

'They ask you questions - felt a bit out of my depth'

'I talk all the time anyway so I felt comfortable' 'I didn't - didn't feel right'

'Dad will probably be at work'

'Why would brothers and sisters be there - nothing to do with them' 'Support, especially if father can't be there'

'Brother to have a say but not be involved in decision making'

'Yes, you should have a say'

'Speaking your mind'

'Sharing your thoughts about what's been going on throughout the year'

'You should, and your parents too'

'Adults have more understanding'

'It is about you'

'They might make stupid decisions if you/your parents don't have a say'

'Need kids views to know that it will work'

'They should because they have got different opinions'

'It's normally only mum and dad/carer and they don't tell the children'

'Sometimes parents don't have enough info because children don't tell them.'

'It's the right thing'

'Some people there would give support, some give information and advice (friends etc.) These are the most insightful. Experts.'

'Say what you need to say not sugar coat it'

Should IDPs be looked at at least once a year?

'At least'

'Change it more - every week on a Wednesday or Thursday'

'It should be more often - twice a year' 'Twice a year' 'Three times a year' '2/3/4/5/times a year'

'Three times a year to fit in with each term'

'Five times a year - once each term plus a review during the school holidays to see if the needs of the pupil have changed'

Have full reviews and mini reviews'

'Once a month'

Once a week'

'Whenever you achieve something - big advances, not something trivial like getting out of bed'

'Check for improvements, see whether they have gone up or down.'

'Work out whether we still need this help'

'In the summer holidays to review help with everyone - what's working, what's not, what needs changing'

'Involved to make a new plan for the new school year - up to 25'

'If they are not doing their job they should get warnings and be fined £9,000'

'IDP's should be looked at more often - at least every six months to check on progress'

and make quicker changes'

'Depends on the person - some people need more support, information and planning - some need less intervention.'

Should people who work with very young children know what to do if they realise child is finding learning difficult?

'They shouldn't be working with young people if they can't recognise that they need help early on.'

'They thought that our little brother had ALN but then they realised that he was just left handed.'

'Early intervention'

'They don't always get it right'

Should different professionals should work together to help with learning?

'Yes but it's costly by way of time, especially if it's frequent'

'Certain people are good at certain jobs'

'Different people do different jobs'

'Keep some stuff private'

'All work together, all understand'

'It's your life'

'It could be too chaotic'

'People who know them well, are closest to you'

'You go to one meeting then another and they say the same thing.'

'It's too repetitive'

'If you are in too many meetings it could get too much'

'Separate, to make sure everything gets talked about'

'All together could be confused'

'Sort it all out at once'

'The child doesn't have to go to different meetings'

'It will be easier with one group'

'It won't interrupt lessons as much'

'Confidence - you will only have to explain your problems once'
'It muddies things if you say it lots'

'It would be faster and more efficient'

'Should do the best of their ability/professional judgement'

'Look at individuals on a case by case basis'

'Social workers have a lot of work to do anyway'

'They will learn more if they work together'

'More opinions, faster'

'More voices can be heard'

'Discuss each other's views, more insightful. Better for planning when information comes together.'

'Easier for the child to have all together'

'Should have separate meetings.'

'Not all of them have the same problems - not needing everyone'

'SPACE for meeting - could be too many people'

Should all schools have an ALNCo?

'Have a FABULOUS co-ordinator'

'Yes to ALNCo services'

'When someone has a plan they will make sure it happens'

'You don't know if they can come in every day'

'They might be bad or forget bits that they need'

'Yes - and a department.'

'No to special needs school - went to a school where retards went' 'Not in all cases - some young people can't cope with High School' 'Not all people who go , they may have extreme dyslexia' 'Ghetto schools' 'some people may be extreme'

Should LAC have the same plans instead of PEPs ?

'These children get too much help anyway when they might not need it. There are others who need help more.'

'They should ask them'

'They have extra emotional needs which do get in the way of learning'

'It's an extra way to look after them'

'Not everyone needs an IDP - or perhaps EVERYONE ought to have one - no stigma'

'Yes - if their learning is damaged they need an IDP to keep on track. Also that they are not worried by other stuff that's going on in their lives. Make sure they are really looked after and taken care of, and can get on with their work. '

'CCTV - all put on paper and sent to the government'

'That would be fair, easier for them, keep their minds clear'

'Sometimes it could affect their learning process but sometimes don't need anything - one pupil has a Statement, ILP, PEP..'

'Keep it simple'

'Not sure which option is best and whether looked after children should have the same kind of plan as pupils with ALN'

Should children & young people get all the information and advice they need if things aren't right?

No Comments

Is it a good idea to solve problems as quickly as possible?

'Keep it slow and easy'

'If you rush things it won't be as good as when you take your time'

If things get bigger should children/young people and their families be able to go to a tribunal?

'You might not get all of the information at the tribunal'

'Over 25's should be able to do it too to get support' (if they are appealing about something that happened when they were younger)

'Over 16 you should be able to do it alone'

Should children / young people be able to get support from someone they trust if they want to complain about the help they are getting?

'Parents, grandparents, friends, sibling, teacher.'

Should there be a person who makes sure the process is fair?

No comments

Should children and young people only go to schools that meet their needs?

'When they help us it makes us learn things'

'Help with reading, writing, DoE, trips - canoeing, camping, bowling.'

Anything else?

'Why don't young homeless people get help?'

'Should be some improvements even if we can't see them at first - need to happen ASAP'

'Worry that things/schemes will change if the PM changes'

'More schools should have specialist units like the DRC - it's quicker if someone needs help, more teachers.'

'So much jargon in all of this - it's hard to understand. It needs to be kept really simple to make sure that young people can be involved.'

'More people should recognise things like autism/ADHD so stuff can be recognised early on.'

'People need to buck their ideas up and help people to have a better life.'

This should all be true for all children & young people with ALN.

No Comments

APPENDIX 3

Summary of all comments from parents and carers

NOTE: Comments in bold were raised by a number of parents/carers.

Is ALN better than SEN ?

Why

'It doesn't have the word special in front of it as a negative'

Concerns

'Changing the name - what will this actually change? It just changes the title not the job'

'The word 'special' has negative connotations now but in the future ALN will be the same.'

'Transition to 25 sounds better'

'It dilutes the problem'

'Labelling.'

'I never wanted my child to be labelled but now he needs to be to get anything done.'

'ALN is better than SEN.'

'Don't have a strong feeling that name changing will mean any dramatic changes.'

Advice

Lessen the stigma of ALN (overall)

Should all children who need it have an IDP?

Why/concerns

'It's a no brainer'

'Lots of stuff getting missed'

'Stuff going under the radar - doctors don't know what social workers are doing. It should

be on a central computer.'

'Yes - should definitely be more person centred - you need to find out more about the child, see the bigger picture'

'It took ten years to get a letter back from the health service'

'I have a foster child statemented 20-30%'

Should this be instead of statements and other plans?

Why

'Statementing is wrong - some have it, some don't and they don't always get it right.'

Better for the children - less stigma, less bullying.'

'A's last statement was only good for drawing paper. We spent three hours on it then sent it off for adding amendments. It came back the same - autism wasn't added.'

Advice/concerns

'If it has everything on it'

'If it is easier than a statement.'

'Is the child going to believe that they are getting the right/relevant support? What will the legislation of IDPs be now ?- for some parents statements are all they have.'

'Needs to have same power of legislation behind it.'

'Any child who needs support should have it but we need legislation. Legislation from day one. When does it become legal? At what point is the IDP a legal document?'

'How does this replace and become a one fits all plan? Where does the legality come into play?'

'We have fought for statements. Are we legally allowed to abolish statements?'

'Are we asking people to give up statements? There is too much risk in this. Will we still get the same support?'

'How legal is this document? It's not clear. It's sketchy.'

'If they want our trust that everything will be implemented this IDP has to be a legal document from day one.'

'Concerned about legally binding outcomes.'

'Who will enforce this new legislation? Who will audit all of this?'

'Without a statement nothing is done'

'But if it's not so legislative there may be more flexibility'

'Scepticism about how closely statements are adhered to'

'The word SHOULD should not be used - it should be WILL'

'The words used will have a profound effect on the users of the service.'

'The language used has to be precise - Statement system is great at eye-level but in details it fails.'

Should there be a guide to help adults to get it right ?

'Guidance would be good'

'As long as it doesn't take a year to produce.'

'It should bring in parents and carers - we should have a group of parents to share experiences.'

'We want more literature in PLAIN English to explain to us that doesn't contradict itself.'

Should schools do their best to make sure that children get the help they need?

'But they don't '

Should young people >16 in school/college get the same kind of plan and help?

Most agree that it (IDPs) should extend to age 25.

Information

'More information is needed for over 18's'

'Clear advice, information needs to be available at past 16. Who's responsible in post 16 education? Is there a key person to go to?'

Duration

'It should be lifelong learning. 'It should be for all of their lives''

'Could be continuation for development plans'

'Education doesn't stop at 16'

'You are meant to be in education if you aren't working up to 18'

'But look at IDPs to be more flexible after 16 - there is a difference between 6th forms

and college.'

Training and jobs

'Yes, also for job centre + '

'Think you get more help after school through work and college than you do through school'

'Can this be used by companies who might be employing 18-25 year olds?'

'Could the provision in post 16 also include training? So supporting ALN to 25 will be included in education and training 16-25.'

Transition

'16+ - social worker needed to access current services but the social worker won't turn up as no case to open.'

'How will the disabled children's team feed into adult services (e.g. social services) (unless have learning difficulties)?'

'Who is dealing with transition?'

'After school/college, what's the next step?'

'What if the young person chooses to stop education before 25?
What's available?'

Concerns

'Mistrustful of initiative because funding withdrawn from non vocational and non educational course.'

'There's not enough choice for young people with ALN >16'

Further questions about implementation

How do they plan to police this now system in 16+ and further education?

It doesn't include support at university. Why not?

What's covered past 16? Can transport be included in the IDP? How else can young people get to college?

My daughter had to drop out of college for various reasons. She is 23. There is absolutely nothing out there for her now. How will this new legislation help her?

What is going to be classed an educational establishment +16? Does this include DIR? Autism Left Centre? (Something which is in progress of being set up)

Children/young people should only go to schools that can offer right kind of help.

Making choices

'Children should know the schools that don't offer the right help'

'Can you still name a school in the new system?'

'A lot of independent schools can meet young people's needs better than LEA. Who decides who goes? Who decides which school does or doesn't meet an individual child's needs?'

Should children / young people and their families be involved/listened to?

When

'Children/young people/families should be involved from the start'

'They should have a say when they are aware that they need help, when they recognise that they aren't keeping up.'

'Some were too young to be in school when first recognised.'

Why

'Authorities don't know the children'

'Someone has to be there to speak out for the children.'

'Talked about even though they are there - not involved'

'Issues raised around which lessons children taken out of - falling behind in important ones or missing the ones that they actually enjoy.'

'And having a say in how they learn best and this being supported with alternative methods of completing work/assessment - more tailored to support individual needs.'

'Pupil will come to an annual review but not there when statemented.'

'Each individual parent had different experiences.'

'Every county needs to have the same system.'

When

'As soon as they are aware.'

Advice/concerns

'Parents should be given information to make sure young person is on plan and how to begin it.'

'REALLY listen to young people and their families about what would help. '

'Some are listened to more than others - not consistent.'

'Agree - but in reality they don't'

'It needs to be simpler'

Implementation

There's a lack of lead. Who will take responsibility on this? The white paper seems to be lacking on this.

Should IDPs be looked at at least once a year?

How often

'At least once a year , especially when younger'

'As needed - some more , some less'

'Every 6 months'

'Every term when lesson plans change'

'Meetings should be for looking at good points as well as deficits'

'Once a year is not enough to review an IDP - I'd prefer a termly review'

'LAC meetings are 2/3 times a year - why are these so often but not case in school (difference in responsibility) Should all get enough support.'

Queries/Concerns

'Will extra work be able to be done with current staffing levels?'

'What will it cost -will money be taken from somewhere else?'

Should people who work with very young children know what to do if they realise child is finding learning difficult?

'If support starts at age 0 how will this feed into the school system?'

Should different professionals work together to help with learning?

Why

'(as it is now) - no-one knows what anyone else is doing'

'They should all be at all of the meetings'

'It's a no brainer'

'What's the point otherwise?'

Queries/Concerns

'Professionals are not turning up now.'

'Getting three professionals in one meeting is like getting a winning lottery ticket. It can be so hard to get them there that it can be combative once they finally get to meet.'

'They should but in reality it doesn't actually happen.'

'Get them to talk to each other - but who drives it?'

'Too many people together can be daunting.'

'Pupil centred reviews can be too centred on the pupil.'

'A doctor's report comes after a meeting which is unhelpful.'

'Differently funded bodies often don't co-operate - there needs to be more pressure on them to do so.'

Advice

'It's improved lately'

'Pushy parents and nagging helps!'

'Examples of other multi agency approaches - LRSP (local resource solution panel) in Powys give help to other agencies. Team around the family (social services)'

'Pupil reviews- not in primary'

'Although maybe would benefit from them to prepare pupils for future reviews.'

'Would like the educational psychologist to be there.'

'Key worker (dependent on needs) Tim Plant Enable - multi agency group which provides health OR social OR education.'

Should all schools have an ALNCo?

Advice

There should be a specific person to lead.
Parents rely on being allocated 'good' support staff - if they don't that's a whole year lost.

Is there a minimum requirement of training for staff who work with SEN? There should be.

The coordinators should already be supporting staff. They should know their own jobs and have appropriate training. At the moment it really does depend on individual staff.

There should be up to date information and training which is mandatory for staff working with SEN. Include this in code of practice.

Additional staff e.g. secretaries and dinner staff need training on ALN, promoting positive attitudes.

All staff in school should be responsible for learning as well as a class teacher having main responsibility.

Lack of teachers interest (not specialised) with coping /working with ALN e.g. VIP teacher helps but no-one oversees everything.

Staff in schools aren't trained appropriately at the moment. Our children don't fit into boxes. They all have different needs; teachers should be equipped to deal with all of this through training.

Should LAC have the same plans instead of PEPs ?

'It's common sense - I don't know why no-one has done it before.'

'Should have asked parents first it would have been better.'

Advice

'Tailor to the individual.'

'Should be consistent and recognised from an early age.'

'Keep them - someone to stand up for children.'

'When children are adopted support is stopped - it should continue. The same plan should stay in place as the needs won't go away.'

Against

'Yet another label.'

'As a foster carer I think it falls flat on it's face. It's great on paper but rarely gets put into practice.'

Queries/concerns

'PEPs statement top all that at the moment, will they lose this position? They are first to be provided for, will they lose this?'

'What's the difference between that and what they have now?'

Should children / young people get all the information and advice they need if things aren't right?

Advice/queries

'Make sure that it is SIMPLE so that everyone gets it.'

'There should be clear pathways of what to do. CLEAR, CONSISTENT, VISUAL DIAGRAMS'

'The system is intimidating, who will help individual parents negotiate this? Some parents have needs themselves and just can't get the help needed for their children.'

'How will parents be informed that they do have rights from day one?'

Concerns

'There are too many unwritten rules at the moment depending on who you are dealing with, where you live. We want an independent, impartial person to advise parents.'

'The trust would exist if LEA, council, schools etc. don't always try to pull the wool over our eyes by lying and trying to get out of doing anything.'

Is it a good idea to solve problems as quickly as possible?

Why

'Better for the child to get it all over and done with.'

'If the job is done properly then no need to sort.'

'Tribunals take time - valuable education lost.'

'There is already a pre-tribunal process'

Advice

'It should be independent not the people who made the initial decisions.'

'Should have someone with special needs on the panel'

'Parent governor should be invited'

'Not just fat cats '

'But it needs to be done effectively.'

Queries/concerns

'Are resources going to be put into early complaints procedure?'

'Sometimes issues aren't always simple and easy so complexity is required for the right level of care.'

'Tribunals shouldn't be harder to get to if needed.'

If things get bigger should children and young people and their families be able to go to a tribunal?

Advice

'We want independent advice, not advice from LEAs.'

'We want auditing of schools.'

'It needs to be within the legislation.'

Queries/concerns

'If parents are not aware that young people have SEN, how can they challenge?'

'What time scales are going to be enforced in an IDP? If parents need to go to a tribunal or disagree with something, how long will it take to resolve? What are the legal timescales?'

Should children / young people be able to get support from someone they trust if they want to complain about the help they are getting?

Why

'Some children need advocates'

'No-one knows our children like we do -end of.'

Advice

'Advocates need training for working with children with special needs'

'Advocates sometimes don't have a clue and don't understand that some children need more time and sometimes never understood.'

'But don't exclude parents'

'Some children agree with anything you say - take into context why the child said that. We just want our children to be recognised.'

'They are wiped off when they are 18.'

Should there be a person who makes sure the process is fair?

No Comments

This should all be true for all children & young people with ALN.

No comments

Big concerns and queries

Accountability

'When will it be implemented?'

'Who will the onus be on to make sure working well? WHO is responsible for IDP? Leading it/driving it - who is accountable? '

'Will more onus be on schools that don't have skills/resources money to carry out appropriate support?'

'The plan is viewed as work done. A box ticked. It is considered the main focus. What happens afterwards is rarely checked or followed through. IEP, dyslexic assessments are often ignored.'

'Children with Downs Syndrome - who will set the criteria for the IDPs to be in place? What are the criteria for admission to special schools if there's no statement system in place?'

'It's now down to the individual schools how much support is given and whether schools are pro-active.'

'How do you prioritise who has access to extra help?'

'Head teachers mostly bothered about academic/sporting achievements - if WG setting standards what is going to happen?'

'Will a change of government change the plans?'

Legislation

'Will it be legally enforceable? At what point? Who by?'

*** The majority of comments and queries around this follow the question around IDPs replacing all other plans. ***

Cost and capacity

'Where will the money come from to fund it? Will this impact on what people already receive support?'

'How will this be implemented staffing and capacity wise?'

'What will be the cost implications for this being implemented?'

'Will it mean that money is taken from things/ people that need it?'

'What will it cost -will money be taken from somewhere else?'

'Is this another cost cutting exercise?'

'Concern over funding - cuts create concern.'

'Funding - the STF is pretty secure - mainstream not so much so. Does this lead us open to fail?'

'If there aren't enough resources how will this new system be implemented?'

'Will the current school budget now have to be stretched further which means statemented children? Is there a guarantee that support we have now will continue at that level for statemented children?'

'There has to be more than the bottom dollar involved in a child's education.'

'Once the IDPs have been put in place, will the children who need less support not to get it as there's not enough budget?'

Unless the overall budget is bigger this won't work, the service/support will be diluted. How will individual schools cope with their own budget changes if you take statements away?'

'We don't have certain facilities and resources because we are not eligible. Will everyone suddenly have access because all children who need it will have IDP? We want this; we want a named key worker. We want impartial advice.'

'Will resources from different counties be lost when counties merge, will individuals then lose out?'

Capacity

Concerns

'Capacity with current staff levels could be a real issue'

'The work load for schools will be enormous.'

Advice

'Funding should be in one big pot so that everyone can get what they need'

'If a school has a statement now does the school gain financially/ We think yes, but will they get some money with this alternative?'

Eotas

'What will be the score for home schooled children?'

General/ Anything else?

Facilities

'We want more facilities - integrated didn't work for our children because of bullying'

Stigma

'Lessen the stigma of ALN'

How things are now v change

'There is good provision for ALN in this county.'

'We're worried about losing what we have now for something that might not work or be any better.'

'The current code of practice already includes all these things. It's not just terminology that's different. It really does depend on each school, what education experience your child has.'

'We don't like the change. The young people don't respond well to change.'

Value children not academic success

'Each child is an individual - if they have the right/enough support they will thrive.'

'It's hard to know what support you are entitled to - it needs to be clearer.'

'It's more convenient to push young people with ALN into special schools. Academic achievements are not the only outcomes valued from school. Invest now in young people.'

'There is too much focus on academic success and not enough stress on emotional/social success.'

'I have no faith in the education system - it sets young people up to fail.'

'Schools appear to be content with students who are not going to achieve, there are no aspirations to succeed with difficult cases.'

Having to be a pushy parent

'School is not responsive to individual needs, parents are frustrated. **If you are not a pushy parent your child loses out.**'

'Proactive parents are often labelled as unreasonable or troublesome, some of us know what we are entitled to and have to fight to get it. It should be automatic.'

'If parents are pushy they get the support, if they are not their children miss out.'

'Will fight to get things sorted for their children. Sometimes seen as problem parents.'

Other

'There's no provision outside hours for young people with SEN.'

'Concerned that the emphasis will be on marketing and packaging rather than services
Are you looking hard enough at good practice?'

'The different needs between children with ALN and with ALN and from a socially deprived background.'

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