

Debate Pack

20 March 2023

Number CDP-0069

By Rob Long,
Anastasia Lewis

Specialist workforce for children with special educational needs and disabilities

1	Background	2
2	Parliamentary material	5
3	News articles	8
4	Further information	8

Summary

A Westminster Hall debate has been scheduled for Wednesday 22 March on specialist workforce for children with special educational needs and disabilities. The debate will be opened by Geraint Davies MP.

This debate pack covers the SEND and alternative provision improvement plan for England, policy for Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland and relevant parliamentary material and news articles.

1 Background

1.1 England

Background

The [Children and Families Act 2014](#) provided for a major reform of the system for identifying children and young people in England with special educational needs (SEN), assessing their needs and making provision for them.

The statutory [Special Educational Needs and Disability \(SEND\): Code of Practice](#) sets out detailed information on the support available for children and young people aged 0-25 under the 2014 Act.

Improvement Plan

The Government published its [SEND and alternative provision improvement plan: right support, right place, right time](#) in March 2023. The plan responded to a [Green Paper consultation](#) from the previous year. The Implementation Plan confirmed the Government's intention to establish an integrated national system for SEND and alternative provision.

The Implementation Plan includes a focus on the skills of the workforce that would be required to enact its measures.

These include plans to introduce a new leadership level SENCo (Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator) National Professional Qualification (NPQ) for schools. Currently, SENCos must complete the mandatory National Award for SEN Coordination (NASENCo) within 3 years of taking the role. The green paper proposed introducing a new mandatory leadership level SENCo NPQ and strengthening the mandatory timeframe requirement in which the qualification must be undertaken. Details on timings and providers for the qualification have yet to be announced.

The Government said in the Plan it would fund up to 5,000 early years staff to gain an accredited Level 3 (A level or equivalent) early years SENCo qualification to support the early years sector, with training running until August 2024.

The Plan also said that the Government would:

- review the Initial Teacher Training and Early Career Frameworks starting in early 2023
- increase the capacity of SEND specialists, including by investing a further £21 million to train two more cohorts of educational psychologists in the academic years 2024 and 2025

- publish three practice guides for frontline professionals, focused on advice for mainstream settings, building on existing best practice
- propose new guidance on delivering a responsive and supportive SEND casework service to families when consulting on the SEND Code of Practice
- extend funding for the alternative provision specialist taskforce (APST) pilot programme to March 2025. The pilot is testing co-location of a diverse specialist workforce in selected alternative provision schools.¹

1.2 Wales

The [Professional Standards for Teaching and Leadership](#) in Wales set out the skills, knowledge and behaviours expected of teachers and school leaders. Standards for assisting teaching are also published.

The Professional Standards document requires:

Leadership ensures that all learners, including those with additional learning needs, gain full access to opportunities and achieve²

The Welsh Government has also published a collection of [Learning support guidance](#) to support pupils with particular conditions.

To become a teacher and teach in a maintained school in Wales, trainees need to gain [Qualified Teacher Status \(QTS\)](#). All trainees must meet the professional standards for teaching and leadership. The QTS Standards have statutory force.

The system in Wales has recently been reformed by the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018. [The Additional Learning Needs Code for Wales 2021](#) sets out the current requirements for supporting children with additional needs.

The Welsh Government has developed an Additional Learning Needs (ALN) professional learning programme ([the National Professional Learning Pathway for Additional Learning Needs](#) – NPLP ALN) for ALNCoS, aspiring ALNCoS, teachers and college lecturers.

¹ Department for Education, [SEND and alternative provision improvement plan: right support, right place, right time](#), CP 800, March 2023, p52

² Welsh Government, [Professional standards for teaching and leadership](#), September 2019

1.3

Scotland

The [Education \(Additional Support for Learning\) \(Scotland\) Act 2004](#) sets out the duties of education authorities and the rights of parents, children and young people to additional support for learning.

[Additional support for learning \(ASL\): statutory guidance 2017](#) provides guidance on all aspects of the 2004 Act and is a code of practice for education authorities.

The Enquire website provides [advice for professionals](#) who work with children and young people to provide ASL, including resources for professional development.

The General Teaching Council for Scotland's (GTCS) [Professional Standards for Teachers 2021](#) include requirements to support the needs of pupils with ASL.

The GTCS has published a [series of professional guides](#) focusing on additional support needs, in partnership with specialist bodies.

1.4

Northern Ireland

The Education Authority of Northern Ireland publishes [information and guidance](#) for parents, carers and schools to support children and young people with special educational needs.

The [1998 SEN Code of Practice](#) sets out the rules all schools must follow when making decisions about children who have SEN. The Department of Education is currently finalising a new Code of Practice which will replace the 1998 Code, as a key element of a [new SEN Framework](#).

A [Special Educational Needs and Disabilities \(SEND\) Transformation Programme](#) has been established to oversee reform of the system. The Education Authority says it is:

currently establishing forums and vehicles for engagement and consultation with all our stakeholders which will run across the full lifespan of the programme. That includes forums for practitioners such as school leaders, teachers & SENCOs and forums for other service staff.

2 Parliamentary material

2.1 Debates

[SEND and Alternative Provision](#) | 09 Mar 2023 | House of Lords | 828 c936

2.2 Written statements

[SEND and Alternative Provision](#) | 06 March 2023 | Ministerial statements | House of Commons | 729 cc53-70

Member: Claire Coutinho **Department:** Department for Education

[Special Educational Needs and Disabilities and Alternative Provision Improvement Plan](#) | 02 March 2023 | Written statements | House of Lords | HLWS581

Member: Baroness Barran **Department:** Department for Education

2.3 Parliamentary questions

[Special Educational Needs: Coastal Areas](#)

08 Mar 2023 | Written questions | Answered | House of Commons | 155213

Asked by: Damien Moore

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps her Department is taking to ensure that (a) children with and (b) schools for children with special educational needs and disabilities in seaside towns have an adequate level of support.

Answered by: Claire Coutinho | Department for Education

On 2 March 2023, the department published the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and Alternative Provision (AP) Improvement Plan in response to the Green Paper published in March last year. The Improvement Plan outlines the government's mission for the SEND and AP system to fulfil children's potential, build parent's trust, and provide financial sustainability. It is available

at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1139561/SEND_and_alternative_provision_improvement_plan.pdf(opens in a new tab).

The department will improve ordinarily available mainstream provision with new national SEND and AP standards to ensure we deliver consistent

experience regardless of the school a child attends, where they live, or their family background.

The department will reduce bureaucracy through new standardised education health and care plans, using digital technology wherever possible, and provide strengthened accountability across the system. To increase specialist provision locally, the department is investing £2.6 billion in special and AP places, including opening 33 new special schools, with a further 49 in the pipeline. We are also building a confident expert workforce, training up to 5,000 new early years special educational needs co-ordinators. Furthermore, an over 50% increase in high needs funding to over £10 billion by 2023/24, compared to £6.1 billion in 2018/19, will help children and young people with SEND in both special schools and mainstream schools to receive the right support.

The department will test our key reforms by creating up to nine Regional Expert Partnerships through our £70 million Change Programme. Oversight of reform will be driven by a new national SEND and AP Implementation Board, jointly chaired by Education and Health Ministers.

Special Educational Needs: Staff

03 Mar 2023 | Written questions | Answered | House of Commons | 151399

Asked by: Stephen Morgan

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many staff were employed to support pupils with special educational needs and disabilities in each year since 2010; and how much funding her Department provided for these staff in the same period.

Answered by: Claire Coutinho | Department for Education

The department is committed to ensuring that all pupils, including those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) can reach their potential and receive excellent support from their teachers.

Alongside excellent teachers, teaching assistants play an important role supporting pupils with SEND to fulfil their potential in mainstream and special schools.

Information on the school workforce in England is collected as part of the annual School Workforce Census each November. Information is published in the 'School Workforce in England' statistical publication, which can be accessed here: [https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/school-workforce-in-england\(opens in a new tab\)](https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/school-workforce-in-england(opens in a new tab)).

Financial information on local authority and school expenditure, including staff costs, is published in the annual official statistic 'LA and school expenditure.' This can be accessed here: [https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/la-and-school-expenditure\(opens in a new tab\)](https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/la-and-school-expenditure(opens in a new tab)). The latest figures available are for the 2021/22 financial year, in

which £11.7 billion was spent on teaching staff and £4.4 billion on education support staff.

Within that publication, information can be found on high needs place funding from both the individual schools budget and high needs funding from the local authority budget. High needs funding is specifically for supporting children with more complex SEND. In the 2021/22 financial year there was £1.1 billion of high needs place funding within the individual schools budget, plus £6.6 billion on high needs expenditure outside the individual schools budget.

Special Educational Needs: Hearing Impairment

23 Feb 2023 | Written questions | Answered | House of Commons | 143905

Asked by: Navendu Mishra

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, pursuant to the Answer of 7 February 2023 on Special Educational Needs: Hearing Impairment, for what reason the School Workforce Census data does not collect data on the numbers of Teachers of the Deaf employed by schools and local authorities; and whether her Department plans to collect these data.

Answered by: Claire Coutinho | Department for Education

Information on the school workforce in England is collected as part of the annual School Workforce Census each November. Information is published in the 'School Workforce in England' statistical publication, which can be accessed here: [https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/school-workforce-in-england\(opens in a new tab\)](https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/school-workforce-in-england(opens in a new tab)).

Information on the qualifications held by teachers is collected in the annual census. In the subject categories that the department collects, qualifications to teach children with a hearing impairment would come under the broader category of 'SEN – Sensory impairment', which covers other sensory impairments, such as visual and multi-sensory impairments.

There are currently no plans to change the collected list of qualification subjects to identify qualifications relating to sensory impairments at a more granular level.

The department is firmly committed to ensuring that children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), including hearing impairments, receive the support they need to achieve throughout their education.

3

News articles

[Council SEND deficit bailouts hit £1bn as 20 more issued](#)

16 March 2023

Schools Week

[Digital EHCPs could reduce SEND bureaucracy - but training a big issue](#)

8 March 2023

TES

[Children being 'consigned to bleak future' as waiting lists for special schools soar](#)

4 March 2023

Mirror

[Services in England for children with special needs to be 'transformed'](#)

2 March 2023

Guardian

[Overcrowded specialist schools: 'We're teaching in cupboards'](#)

20 February 2023

BBC

4

Further information

[#SENDintheSpecialists coalition writes to minister for Children and Families](#)

Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists

[RCSLT leads coalition calling for investment in the specialist workforce](#)

Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists

[How we can improve the SEND system for children with complex disabilities](#)

SENSE

[Yes, the SEND system needs a transformation, but this isn't going to do it.](#)

SENSE

[A Children's Human Rights Approach to Additional Learning Needs Provision](#)

Children's Commissioner for Wales

[#SENDInTheSpecialists coalition update: Claire Coutinho MP response](#)

Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists

[SENDInTheSpecialists: The campaign to boost investment in the SEND specialist workforce grows, and how you can get involved](#)

Special Needs Jungle

Disclaimer

The Commons Library does not intend the information in our research publications and briefings to address the specific circumstances of any particular individual. We have published it to support the work of MPs. You should not rely upon it as legal or professional advice, or as a substitute for it. We do not accept any liability whatsoever for any errors, omissions or misstatements contained herein. You should consult a suitably qualified professional if you require specific advice or information. Read our briefing '[Legal help: where to go and how to pay](#)' for further information about sources of legal advice and help. This information is provided subject to the conditions of the Open Parliament Licence.

Sources and subscriptions for MPs and staff

We try to use sources in our research that everyone can access, but sometimes only information that exists behind a paywall or via a subscription is available. We provide access to many online subscriptions to MPs and parliamentary staff, please contact hoclbraryonline@parliament.uk or visit commonslibrary.parliament.uk/resources for more information.

Feedback

Every effort is made to ensure that the information contained in these publicly available briefings is correct at the time of publication. Readers should be aware however that briefings are not necessarily updated to reflect subsequent changes.

If you have any comments on our briefings please email papers@parliament.uk. Please note that authors are not always able to engage in discussions with members of the public who express opinions about the content of our research, although we will carefully consider and correct any factual errors.

You can read our feedback and complaints policy and our editorial policy at commonslibrary.parliament.uk. If you have general questions about the work of the House of Commons email hcenquiries@parliament.uk.

The House of Commons Library is a research and information service based in the UK Parliament. Our impartial analysis, statistical research and resources help MPs and their staff scrutinise legislation, develop policy, and support constituents.

Our published material is available to everyone on commonslibrary.parliament.uk.

Get our latest research delivered straight to your inbox. Subscribe at commonslibrary.parliament.uk/subscribe or scan the code below:



 commonslibrary.parliament.uk

 [@commonslibrary](https://twitter.com/commonslibrary)