

An evaluation of

the discrete provision for learners
with special educational needs
and/or disabilities in Northern
Ireland's further education sector

August 2026



Education and
Training Inspectorate
Empowering Improvement

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Executive Summary

Introduction

The Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) was commissioned by the Department for the Economy (Department) to evaluate the effectiveness of the discrete provision for learners with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEN/D) in Northern Ireland's further education sector. The evaluation aims to inform the Department's policy development in respect of further education SEN/D provision, reflecting the Economy Minister's commitment to improve access, progression and outcomes for learners with SEN/D.

The evaluation focuses on access to provision, the quality of the learner experience, and progression and outcomes for learners with SEN/D. It considers the current provision within further education and provides a system-level* overview of how effectively the existing arrangements support learners to prepare for and transition to adulthood, including progression to further education, employment, independent living and community participation.

The evaluation also recognises that supporting learners with SEN/D beyond compulsory schooling is a shared responsibility involving the further education colleges, the Department for the Economy and other relevant agencies. Accordingly, it considers both the quality of provision within colleges and the effectiveness of the wider arrangements across Northern Ireland's education and training system that underpin learner progression and post-school outcomes.

Evaluation overview

The further education colleges provide high-quality, safe and supportive learning environments for learners with SEN/D, underpinned by effective teaching and learner support leading to positive learner experiences. This is reflected in the questionnaire responses, with almost all of the learners (96%) indicating that they are glad they chose to attend college and most parents/carers (87%) reporting that they are happy overall with the provision.

College leaders and staff demonstrate a clear commitment to inclusion and to supporting learners as they transition to adulthood, including progression to further education, employment, independent living and community participation. However, provision has developed within current post-school SEN/D arrangements in which learners move from a statutory school SEN framework to a further education system regulated primarily by the Special Educational Needs and Disability (Northern Ireland) Order 2005, which does not provide equivalent statutory SEN regulations for assessment, planning or review.

While the [Interim Policy for Students with Learning Difficulties and Disabilities in Further Education](#), introduced in 2020, establishes shared expectations for greater consistency across the further education sector, the evaluation found that post-school assessment and support arrangements remain inconsistent; departmental funding has remained largely unchanged despite increasing demand;

and common measures of learner progress, progression and outcomes have not yet been established. Taken together, these findings indicate that the current interim policy arrangements for SEN/D provision in further education have not secured sufficient continuity and consistency of assessment, planning and support for post-school learners across Northern Ireland.

Overall, learner access, progression and long-term outcomes are unduly influenced by differences in colleges' curriculum offer, transition arrangements, accommodation and the availability of transport and personal care support. Limited regional planning and the absence of consistent progression and destination data constrain strategic oversight and limit the sector's ability to evaluate system-wide effectiveness and equity. The findings highlight the need for a more co-ordinated, data-informed and cross-departmental approach to ensure that provision is sustainable, equitable and responsive to the growing and increasingly complex needs of learners with SEN/D.

Next steps

The evaluation has identified the following as key next steps:

- ❖ establish a statutory SEN/D framework for further education, including a shared curriculum model and high expectations and standards for support and progression;
- ❖ implement a statutory post-school assessment and support model, aligned with transition planning from age 14, to ensure continuity of provision beyond school;
- ❖ develop and implement a dual-pathway curriculum framework, with routes for accredited progression and for independence, life skills and community participation;
- ❖ introduce regional commissioning and capacity planning informed by school-leaver data and projected demand;
- ❖ create a regional dataset on progression and destinations, with annual reporting to support evaluation and accountability; and
- ❖ develop cross-departmental strategies on transport and personal care to remove structural barriers and ensure equitable access.

Main Report

Background information

Context

Further education occupies a distinctive position within the Northern Ireland education and training system. It is the next phase after compulsory schooling and the point at which statutory school-based Special Educational Needs (SEN) protections, including statements, end. For young people with SEN/D further education provision within the six regional further education colleges represents a critical bridge between school and adulthood.

The scale of SEN/D need in Northern Ireland is significant and growing. In 2024/25, over 70,200 pupils (19.8%) had some form of SEN/D, with nearly 29,500 (8.3%) in receipt of a statement. There are increasing numbers of pupils with SEN/D in special schools and specialist provisions, while college capacity has remained largely unchanged. This is placing increasing pressure on transition, with limited strategic alignment between post-school further education capacity and school-leaver trends.

Legislative framework

Provision for learners with SEN/D in further education is governed by two key pieces of legislation. The Further Education (Northern Ireland) Order 1997 requires further education colleges (colleges) to have regard to the needs of learners with learning difficulties who are over compulsory school age. The Special Educational Needs and Disability (Northern Ireland) Order 2005 (SENDI) places a duty on colleges to make reasonable adjustments so that learners with disabilities are not placed at a disadvantage.

Although these duties are significant, neither Order prescribes a common regional framework for how discrete SEN/D provision should be structured, staffed or delivered across the further education sector, nor do they provide statutory access to a designated or needs-led further education curriculum. In this report, discrete SEN/D provision in further education is used to describe a distinct model of provision funded by the Department for those with learning difficulties and disabilities; it is not a term defined, specifically in legislation. Learners enrolling in this provision generally progress from special schools or from specialist provision within post-primary schools.

In the absence of statutory SEN arrangements in further education comparable to those that apply during compulsory schooling, the Department, in conjunction with the colleges, developed, in 2020, the Interim Policy for Students with Learning Difficulties and Disabilities. The Interim Policy establishes expectations for the delivery and evaluation of additional support.

Within these arrangements, colleges have developed locally responsive approaches to provision. While these approaches have enabled colleges to respond flexibly to local needs, they have also resulted in significant variation across the six colleges in curriculum offer, accommodation and resources, transition processes and progression pathways.

Evaluation methodology

The evaluation was conducted over the course of the 2025/26 academic year and included scoping visits, evaluation visits and ongoing engagement with all six further education colleges in Northern Ireland.

Its purpose was to evaluate the effectiveness of the current arrangements for discrete SEN/D provision, including the quality of learners' experiences and the wider policy, planning and oversight arrangements that support that provision. The evaluation was designed to consider both the quality of provision experienced by learners within colleges and the effectiveness of the wider arrangements supporting that provision across the further education sector.

The evaluation was informed by evidence gathered over an extended period. Following initial engagement with the Department for the Economy, inspectors undertook scoping visits to each college to understand the context of its discrete SEN/D provision and inform the focus of the evaluation. Throughout the evaluation, inspectors maintained regular engagement with college leaders to explain the methodology, discuss evidence requirements and ensure a consistent understanding of the inspection process.

Evidence was gathered through meetings with senior leaders, curriculum managers, lecturers, learning support staff, learners, parents/carers and representatives from the Department for the Economy, the Department of Education and the Education Authority. Inspectors observed learning and support, scrutinised strategic and operational documentation, analysed available performance information, considered confidential questionnaire responses from learners, parents/carers, teaching staff and learning support staff, and held learner focus group discussions.

To strengthen the evidence base and provide wider professional context, inspectors engaged with special school principals and inspectorate colleagues from Wales and the Republic of Ireland. Senior leaders from special schools and inspectors from Wales and the Republic of Ireland also participated in aspects of the evaluation alongside ETI inspectors. A study visit to Wales further informed inspectors' understanding of approaches to supporting learners with special educational needs and disabilities.

Emerging findings were reviewed and moderated throughout the evaluation to ensure consistency of judgement and the reliability of the evidence. Oral feedback was provided to each college at the conclusion of the inspection visit, followed by a written feedback letter summarising the college-specific findings and areas for further development.

The Terms of Reference for the evaluation are set out in Appendix 1.

Main Findings

1. Strategic vision, planning and oversight

Findings

- The colleges demonstrate a strong commitment to widening access for learners with SEN/D. Senior leaders articulate a clear responsibility to provide accessible learning and pathways to further education, training or employment, recognising the colleges' role in supporting social inclusion and economic development. Relationships with parents, schools and external partners are well established and support planning and transition. Questionnaire responses from parents/carers were similarly positive, with most (87%) reporting that they are happy overall with the provision and almost all (94%) indicating that the college listens to their views and acts upon them if necessary.

- The capacity for discrete SEN/D provision in the colleges has remained broadly static over a prolonged period, despite a sustained increase in the number and complexity of learners with SEN/D coming from the school system. This reflects stasis in historic funding allocations rather than current or projected demand. Colleges continue to operate within allocated funding, limiting the sector's ability to respond strategically to demographic change and rising levels of need.
- The colleges' College Development Plans reference SEN/D reform and outline associated specialist provision, but do not include detailed analysis of enrolment trends or projected demand. Data on outcomes and targets for retention, achievement, attendance, and progression is too limited, and there is no sector-wide mechanism for capacity planning, commissioning or benchmarking.
- Learners who require personal or medical care services whilst studying at college, in line with the Interim Policy, will need to arrange this through their local health trust or social services department. In one college, with support and training from the local Health and Social Care Trust, learners receive personal and medical care while attending college. As a result, learners with a broader range of needs are able to access further education provision.
- System-level planning is further complicated by the absence of common regional criteria for determining access to discrete SEN/D provision and funded additional learning support. Colleges therefore make decisions within their own local provision, capacity and available support. While this enables colleges to respond flexibly to local circumstances, it also means that learners with similar educational and support needs may experience different opportunities to access and progress through further education across Northern Ireland.

Evaluation of findings

The commitment of college leaders to social inclusion and SEN/D provision is evident across the further education sector. The sector, however, mostly operates as six autonomous local models with insufficient regional planning to ensure equitable access for all learners with SEN/D wishing to progress to post-16/19 further education. The current legislative and policy arrangements, together with significant local operational autonomy and limited regional planning, have resulted in variations that do not align sufficiently with the scale or complexity of need. In the absence of comparable progression and destination data, the Department is unable to evaluate fully how effectively the further education provision supports learners transition to adulthood, employment, independent living or community participation.

Considerations for next steps

A regionally co-ordinated framework should be established, informed by demand modelling that draws on school SEN/D data, school-leaver trends, and projected transition flows. A shared policy and curriculum framework should set clear expectations for progression routes, support standards, and personal care

responsibilities, and links with Health and Social Care Trusts and other relevant agencies, while allowing flexibility for local innovation. This should be underpinned by a regional dataset on progression and destination outcomes to support sustainable system planning.

The Department for the Economy should work with the Department of Health, Health and Social Care Trusts and the further education colleges to review and develop common models of personal care support across the further education sector.

In the interim, colleges should work with the Department and the Department of Education to review their local SEN/D provision against increasing projected demand and strengthen internal curriculum and resource planning to meet the changing needs of prospective learners.

2. Transition and information sharing

Findings

- Transition arrangements into further education are a critical determinant of successful access and participation for learners with SEN/D. While the colleges demonstrate strong practice within their control, wider system factors continue to influence learner choice and outcomes.
- The colleges support transition well through early engagement with schools, parents and professionals, including taster days, familiarisation events and pre-entry planning. Questionnaire responses indicate that college-led transition arrangements are effective for learners and families, with almost all learners (96%) reporting that their views were listened to in planning their move to college.
- The effectiveness of Education Authority transition arrangements is inconsistent. Stakeholders describe the process as difficult to navigate at times, with gaps in communication and a lack of clarity about available pathways.
- Where transition planning is well co-ordinated, communication between schools, families, Education Authority Transition Officers and the college is clear and supports a smoother transition. Where it is less well co-ordinated, limited communication and unclear pathways create additional challenges for learners and families.
- When learners leave school, statutory SEN/D statements cease and there is no equivalent regionally consistent post-school framework for identifying, assessing and supporting need, without timely or complete information from education or health services, often leading to duplication of assessment and uncertainty for families at the point of transition.

- Transport remains a significant structural barrier to participation in further education and, in practice, operates as a pre-condition for access rather than any peripheral support. Post-school transport arrangements are variable, non-statutory and often unclear, with differences in eligibility, affordability, journey times and access to suitable vehicles.
- Families frequently report uncertainty about whether transport will be available and when decisions will be confirmed. This can restrict pathway choice, delay transition decisions, reduce attendance and contribute to non-participation in further education, regardless of learner readiness or motivation.

Evaluation of findings

The transition from school to further education represents a significant discontinuity for learners with SEN/D. Their educational and support needs continue, but the statutory arrangements that co-ordinate assessment, planning and review during compulsory schooling do not continue in the same form in further education. The evaluation found that this discontinuity is reflected in variation in transition experiences, access to provision and progression opportunities.

Transition into further education is well supported by the colleges; however, system-level arrangements beyond further education reduce clarity and consistency for learners and families. Exit pathways and progression to adulthood are not sufficiently defined, and the absence of destination tracking limits the ability to evaluate long-term outcomes. Transport and personal care entitlements remain unresolved cross-departmental issues that act as barriers to equitable access.

Considerations for next steps

A statutory post-school assessment and support model, as indicated by the Economy Minister, should be introduced and aligned with transition planning from age 14 to ensure continuity of support. Clearer progression pathways beyond further education should be defined and supported by the systematic collection and reporting of destination data. Cross-departmental strategies on transport and personal care should be developed to remove structural barriers and support equitable access to education and training post-school.

The Education Authority Transition Service should be standardised across Northern Ireland, with clear regional guidance for early planning, information sharing, pathway guidance and co-ordination with further education colleges.

Colleges should, in turn, continue to strengthen early engagement with schools and families and ensure clear communication of available pathways and support arrangements.

3. Curriculum, pathways and relevance

Findings

- Once learners access further education, the structure and relevance of the curriculum become a key determinant of their experience, engagement, and longer-term outcomes for employment and/or independent living.
- All of the colleges provide a structured curriculum based on accredited qualifications, with a strong focus on personal and social development, essential skills and employability. Small class sizes, consistent routines and clear expectations support learner engagement and confidence. This is supported by questionnaire responses, with most learners (79%) indicating that their course is preparing them well for the future, including life skills, employment or further learning.
- In the absence of a regional curriculum framework, programmes and progression routes vary unduly across colleges. The predominantly qualification-led model does not reflect fully the needs of all learners, particularly where longer-term outcomes relate more to independence, wellbeing and social participation rather than to formal accreditation of their learning.
- Learners can remain in further education for prolonged periods, and in some cases for five or more years. This reflects both the positive engagement with the provision and the absence of sufficiently clear progression and exit pathways.
- Access to practical, vocational, and creative learning opportunities is not consistent enough across the sector and, in some cases, remains too limited. This restricts opportunities for meaningful progression and learner choice, particularly in the development of occupationally related skills.

Evaluation of findings

The curriculum provides structure and supports engagement; however, it does not sufficiently differentiate between accredited progression routes and pathways focused on independence, life skills and community participation. Undue variation in programme offers, particularly in vocational and practical learning, further constrains progression and learner choice.

Considerations for next steps

A dual-pathway curriculum framework should be developed: one pathway focused on accredited progression to programmes such as Skills for Life and Work, Traineeships, ApprenticeshipsNI or further education; and a second pathway focused more on independence, life skills and community participation. This should be supported by clear progression and exit pathways, including opportunities for vocational and community-based learning. The pathways should be interlinked or standalone, depending on learner needs and progression opportunities.

Colleges should prioritise a review of their current curriculum offer to ensure a better balance between accredited provision and pathways focused on independence, life skills and community participation, which is more closely aligned with the changing needs of learners.

4. Teaching, learning and support

Findings

- Teaching and learning across the discrete SEN/D provision are consistently effective.
- The classrooms are calm, respectful and purposeful learning environments. Learners report feeling safe, supported and valued, and safeguarding arrangements are secure and well embedded across all the colleges. Questionnaire responses reinforce this positive picture, with almost all learners (91%) reporting that staff give them help when needed and almost all learners (97%) indicating that they know who to talk to if they have a worry or concern.
- Assessment and review processes within the colleges are well established. However, inconsistencies in information sharing at transition mean that colleges often reassess needs already identified in school, with increased risk of curriculum duplication and lack of meaningful progression in learning and achievement.
- Access to appropriate accommodation varies across the colleges. In some cases, learners are taught in mainstream classrooms without consistent access to specialist spaces. In others, provision is located off the main campus for most or all of the programme. These arrangements unduly limit opportunities for integration and can reinforce separation from the wider college community.

Evaluation of findings

Effective teaching and learner support underpin positive learner experiences and represent a key strength of the sector. The evaluation identified highly effective practice in inclusive teaching, learner support, transition engagement with families and the creation of respectful, learner-centred environments. These approaches are making a demonstrable contribution to learners' engagement, independence, wellbeing and progression and provide valuable models for wider dissemination across the sector.

Considerations for next steps

The SEN/D accommodation should be prioritised within strategic resource planning to ensure equitable access to appropriate learning environments. This should include consideration of how provision is integrated within the wider college setting to support inclusion. Baseline assessments at entry, supported by regular progress reviews, should be implemented alongside a sector-wide framework for tracking learner progress.

Colleges should prioritise a review of accommodation and delivery models to maximise inclusion and access to the wider college experience.

5. Assessment, support and quality improvement

Findings

- Assessment and support processes within further education are well established, and colleges respond effectively to individual learner needs.
- Quality improvement activity focuses primarily on teaching and learner experience, both of which are effective. This is reflected in questionnaire responses from learners and parents/carers, which were notably positive in relation to support, communication and overall satisfaction with provision. However, the absence of shared success measures and destination data limits the ability to evaluate the impact of provision both at local and system-level.
- There are currently no regional dataset tracking progression and destinations for learners with SEN/D in further education. As a result, it is not possible to assess consistently how effectively provision supports transition to employment, independent living or community participation.

Evaluation of findings

The colleges are effective in supporting individual learners; however, inconsistent use of data and the absence of shared indicators limit the ability to evaluate outcomes meaningfully and drive system-level improvement.

The quality improvement processes in the colleges are strongest in relation to teaching, learner support and learner experience; however, they are less well developed in evaluating longer-term progression, destination and wider outcome measures. This limits not only local improvement but also the sector's ability to plan effectively, allocate resources and evaluate long-term impact.

Considerations for next steps

A regional quality improvement framework should be developed, including agreed indicators for learner progress, progression and destinations. This should be supported by the systematic collection, tracking and reporting of outcome data at both college and sector level. The Department should receive an annual report from each college on outcomes for learners with SEN/D in further education to support strategic oversight and continuous improvement planning.

6. Child protection and adult safeguarding

At the time of the evaluation, the evidence provided by all the colleges demonstrates that the arrangements for child protection and adult safeguarding align to the current statutory guidance.

7. Examples of effective practice

During the evaluation, inspectors identified the following examples of effective practice that should be shared more widely to empower continuous improvement.

1. Integrated vocational skills and classroom-based learning

Learners participate in programmes that combine accredited classroom learning with vocational and practical experiences. This integrated approach enables them to develop occupational, personal and social skills in authentic contexts while reinforcing classroom learning through practical application. The balance between academic and vocational learning increases learner engagement, strengthens confidence and provides more meaningful preparation for further education, employment and adult life.

2. Community-based learning as preparation for adulthood

Community-based learning extends the curriculum beyond the college environment and provides learners with regular opportunities to apply their learning in real-life settings. Through participation in community activities, learners develop communication, decision-making, travel, social and independent living skills that are difficult to replicate within the classroom. These experiences build confidence, increase independence and support successful participation in community life.

3. Work-related learning and employability pathways

Structured work-related learning combines vocational learning within college with internal and external work experience placements. Learners progressively develop employability skills, workplace behaviours and an understanding of employer expectations while applying their learning in authentic working environments. This graduated approach strengthens progression pathways and prepares learners more effectively for employment, further education and training.

4. Learner support planning informed by high-quality information systems

Comprehensive learner support planning is underpinned by well-developed information systems that provide staff with timely access to learner profiles, support needs, targets and progress information. The consistent use of this information enables teaching and support to be adapted to individual needs, strengthens communication across staff teams and provides a coherent approach to monitoring learner progress. As a result, learners benefit from a more personalised and responsive educational experience.

5. Wellbeing-centred provision

Dedicated wellbeing provision is integrated effectively within the curriculum to support learners' emotional wellbeing and personal development. Through structured wellbeing programmes, mindfulness activities and therapeutic spaces, learners develop emotional regulation, resilience, self-confidence and positive relationships within safe and supportive environments. This contributes to improved engagement in learning, strengthens learners' readiness for increasing independence and enhances their preparation for adult life.

6. Digital accessibility and learner participation

Digital technologies are used effectively to enhance accessibility, communication and learner participation. Accessible digital platforms enable learners to access information, communicate more independently and engage confidently with college life through resources designed around their individual needs. By reducing barriers to participation and promoting greater independence, these approaches strengthen inclusion and enable learners to participate more fully in both learning and the wider college community.

These examples demonstrate what can be achieved through strong local leadership, effective teaching and responsive learner support. They represent a firm foundation for further development of a curriculum that will potentially meet even better the needs of learners with SEN/D.

Conclusion

The further education sector in Northern Ireland provides high-quality, safe and supportive learning environments for learners with SEN/D. Teaching, learner support and the learner experience are consistently effective within the local context of each college. Questionnaire responses from learners and parents/carers reinforce these findings, particularly in relation to learner satisfaction, support and confidence in the provision. The evaluation also identified examples of effective practice in inclusive teaching, learner support, transition engagement with families and the creation of respectful, learner-centred environments. As a result, current outcomes reflect the experience of those learners who access provision, rather than how well it meets the needs of the full population of learners with SEN/D transitioning from school.

In addition, in the absence of consistent destination data, it is not possible to evaluate fully how effectively provision supports learners transition to adulthood, employment, independent living or community participation.

College leaders have acted responsibly within existing constraints; however, the current model relies too heavily on local arrangements rather than a co-ordinated regional approach. These issues reflect wider system-level fragmentation across education, health and employment pathways. Without a clearer vision and an associated policy direction, improved access and use of key data and cross-departmental alignment, inequity and inconsistency will persist.

These wider system-level issues mean that access, progression and long-term outcomes remain unduly influenced by variation in colleges' curriculum offer, transition arrangements, accommodation and the availability of transport and personal care support.

The Interim Policy for Students with Learning Difficulties and Disabilities (2020) represents a considered approach to achieving greater consistency through non-statutory arrangements. However, five years after its introduction, significant variation remains in learner access, assessment, support arrangements, progression opportunities and outcomes. A central conclusion of the evaluation is that the

current post-school arrangements have not secured sufficient continuity, consistency and equity in assessment, planning and support for learners whose educational and support needs continue beyond compulsory schooling. While colleges have developed local provision, the Interim Policy has not secured a common entitlement to assessment, planning and support, nor sufficiently consistent implementation across Northern Ireland. Stronger regional arrangements are therefore required. The evidence from this evaluation indicates that policy expectations alone have not been sufficient to secure the necessary consistency. A statutory framework would, therefore, provide a clearer, common entitlement to assessment, curriculum offer, planning and support for learners beyond their compulsory schooling.

Progressing these improvements will require co-ordinated action between the Department for the Economy, the Department of Education and further education colleges. System reform, including policy, funding and data infrastructure, must be developed alongside strengthened college-level practice in curriculum design, progression planning and outcome tracking. Neither system-level reform nor local improvement alone will be sufficient to deliver consistent and equitable outcomes for learners with SEN/D.

The findings in this report are consistent with, and provide further evidence for, the Department for the Economy's Review of Post-School Education, Skills and Training Provision for young people with Special Educational Needs.

Next steps

The evaluation has identified the following as key next steps:

- ❖ establish a statutory SEN/D framework for further education, including a shared curriculum model and high expectations and standards for support and progression;
- ❖ implement a statutory post-school Assessment and Support Model, aligned with transition planning from age 14, to ensure continuity of provision beyond school;
- ❖ develop and implement a dual-pathway curriculum framework, with routes for accredited progression and for independence, life skills and community participation;
- ❖ introduce regional commissioning and capacity planning informed by school-leaver data and projected demand;
- ❖ create a regional dataset on progression and destinations, with annual reporting to support evaluation and accountability; and
- ❖ develop cross-departmental strategies on transport and personal care to remove structural barriers and ensure equitable access.

Appendix 1: Terms of Reference

Evaluation of discrete SEN provision in Northern Ireland's further education colleges

The key objectives of the evaluation were to determine the extent to which discrete SEN/D provision in further education is:

1. accessible to learners with special educational needs and/or disabilities transitioning from school provision, and supported by timely information and guidance processes;
2. responsive, flexible and adaptive in meeting the individual needs and expectations of learners, with suitable curricular options and appropriate learning support resources and adaptations; and
3. enabling progression, through the development of new skills and capabilities necessary to progress to the next stage, including independent living, work, or further education and training.

To evaluate the extent to which discrete further education provision is meeting the needs of learners with SEN/D and wider Programme for Government priorities, the evaluation included the following key areas.

Key areas of evaluation

1. Strategic vision and oversight

- The extent to which college leaders and managers work with key stakeholders to review, evaluate and adapt discrete SEN/D provision to meet the changing and increasingly complex needs of learners.
- The extent to which discrete SEN/D provision is reflected in college development planning processes, particularly to ensure learner inclusion, manage recruitment trends and pressures, and provide suitable progression pathways aligned to government priorities.

2. Transition

- The extent to which transition arrangements, in collaboration with schools, other service providers and key stakeholders, are effective in supporting learners' transition to discrete SEN/D provision in further education, including onward progression to further education, training, independent living or work.
- The effectiveness of information-sharing arrangements between key stakeholders to enable learners to transition smoothly to further education and continue to make steady progress.

3. Curriculum

The extent to which the curriculum is appropriate and relevant, including:

- providing progression from school that builds on prior attainment;
- enabling the acquisition of new skills for future progression options; and
- reflecting the individual needs and interests of the learner.

4. Learning, teaching and training

- The extent to which learning, teaching and training successfully meet the varied needs of learners, ensuring they achieve in line with personalised goals and targets at the most appropriate level.

5. Assessment and support

- The extent and timeliness with which learners' varied needs are identified, assessed and met through individualised learning plans, reviewed regularly to monitor progress and inform future curriculum provision, learning and support.
- The extent to which additional learner support is individualised, matched to identified needs, kept under review and consistent within and across all colleges.

6. Quality improvement planning

- The effectiveness of quality improvement processes in informing college development planning and bringing about sustained improvement in provision, including the sharing of effective practice with other colleges and key stakeholders, including schools.

7. Child protection and adult safeguarding

- The effectiveness of arrangements for child protection and adult safeguarding.

8. Highly effective practice

- The identification of areas of highly effective practice for dissemination.

Appendix 2: Quantitative Terms

In this report, proportions may be described as percentages, common fractions and in more general quantitative terms. Where more general terms are used, they should be interpreted as follows:

Almost/nearly all	-	more than 90%
Most	-	75% - 90%
A majority	-	50% - 74%
A significant minority	-	30% - 49%
A minority	-	10% - 29%
Very few/a small number	-	less than 10%

Appendix 3: Notes

Page 1

system-level*

This represents the combined role of the Department in policy creation, strategic development and financing of the statutory further education sector and, the individual duties of the further education colleges, as non-departmental public bodies, in delivering provision to support economic success and social inclusion.



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