



Department
for Education

0-25 SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITIES, ALTERNATIVE PROVISION AND ATTENDANCE UNIT

July 2018 Newsletter

Welcome to the July 2018 edition of the 0-25 SEND, Alternative Provision and Attendance Unit Newsletter.

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Annex A: Making Participation Work, Hot Topics: Wider engagement report

The Strategic College Improvement Fund

The [Strategic College Improvement Fund](#) has been [launched](#). The Fund totals £15 million and aims to partner strong colleges with those in need of improvement – to share best practice and drive up standards. Colleges that need support to improve will be able to apply for a grant to work with a stronger ‘partnering’ college and together they will create an action plan to tackle the issues they face. The Fund is available until March 2020 and is funded by DfE and administered by the ESFA.

The grant is available to colleges that were graded ‘requires improvement’ or ‘inadequate’ at their most recent Ofsted inspection for any of the following judgements:

- overall effectiveness
- 16 to 19 study programmes, adult learning programmes, apprenticeships, traineeships, provision for learners with high needs and 14 to 16 full-time provision
- leadership and management
- quality of teaching learning and assessment
- personal development behaviour or welfare
- outcomes for learners

Early Years Disadvantage (VCS) Grants 2018-20

We are making available up to a maximum of £6.5 million in early years grant funding to VCS organisations for an 18-month period (up to £2.8m from Oct'18-Mar'19 and up to £3.7m from Apr'19 - Mar'20). To help deliver activities in support of one or more of these two priority themes –

Priority 1 - Closing the Disadvantage Gap at age 5

Priority 2: Early Years Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (EYSEND).

The tender specification can be accessed through this link:

<https://www.contractsfinder.service.gov.uk/Notice/021931b1-6df4-45c5-9710-fc628fa6094c?p=@8=UFQxUIRRPT0=NjJNT0>

Standards Testing Agency - Inclusion experts required: forthcoming Invitation to Tender

The Standards and Testing Agency (STA) will shortly be procuring for a pool of Inclusion Experts with a range of specialisms to ensure that Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 national curriculum tests and professional Skills Tests in Literacy and Numeracy are inclusive and accessible for all.

The STA are looking to recruit Inclusion Experts specifically with knowledge and experience of the National Curriculum as well as working with pupils with disabilities, other protected characteristics, and/or SEN. The STA are looking for Inclusion Experts for the following specialisms:

- Autism spectrum
- Behaviour
- Communication (including dyslexia)
- Culture
- English as an Additional Language (EAL)
- Hearing impairment
- Other Special Educational Needs (including dyspraxia and dyscalculia)
- Visual impairment

An invitation to tender (ITT) for the provision of Inclusion Expert resource (ref: STA-0165) will be advertised on the Gov.uk website on 27 July. The timeline for this procurement is outlined in the table below:

Date	Stage
27/07/2018	Invitation To Tender (ITT) issued
Midday 20/08/2018	Deadline for clarification questions
Midday 07/09/2018	Deadline for submission of applications
26/09/2018	Notification to successful suppliers

The contract will run for a period of two years. Those who are awarded a contract can be expected to work between 5-15 days across the two years, although this may vary depending on your availability at the time and the number of contractors on the final framework.

If you are interested in applying for this opportunity, please email TendersTD.STA@education.gov.uk, and copied to rashida.akbar@education.gov.uk, so that the STA can alert you once the procurement is live and provide you with the relevant link.

If you are aware of any other inclusion experts who may be interested in applying for this opportunity, please do alert them to this opportunity.

Pre-key stage standards to be used from the 2018/19 academic year

We have published final pre-key stage standards at [KS1](#) and [KS2](#) in English reading, English writing and mathematics for use from the 2018/19 academic year onwards. We conducted a review of the standards, working with teachers and other educational experts, before publishing these final versions. The change follows a [government consultation on the Rochford Review](#).

Teachers will use the 2018/19 versions to make statutory teacher assessment judgements at the end of key stages 1 and 2 for pupils who are working below the standard of national curriculum assessments and above P scale 4. P scales 5 to 8 will no longer be used for statutory assessment from next year.

For 2017/18, schools should continue to use P scales and the ‘interim’ pre-key stage standards for those pupils working national curriculum assessments.

The government response to the consultation on the Rochford Review recommendations set out that we would pilot the Review’s recommended approach to statutory assessment for those pupils not yet engaged in subject-specific study, the 7 aspects of engagement for cognition and learning, before introducing it as a statutory assessment. To allow time for this piloting, we confirmed that the change would not happen before the 2019/20 academic year.

In the interim, P scales 1 to 4 will continue to be used for statutory assessment of pupils not engaged in subject-specific study at the end of key stages for the 2018/19 academic year.

SEND Tribunal: Single Route of Redress National Trial

The SEND Tribunal single route of redress national trial is up and running – the trial extends the powers of the Tribunal to make non-binding recommendations on health and social care aspects of EHC plans as part of a SEND appeal. For updates on the trial, including on the number of trial appeals registered, local area expenses information, training events and findings from the evaluation team, please sign up to the national trial newsletter by emailing SENDdeliverysupport@mottmac.com.

Guidance and practical materials for the national trial can be found on the toolkit at <http://www.sendpathfinder.co.uk/send-single-route-of-redress-national-trial>.

If you have any questions relating to your participation in the trial, how the trial will operate or the information in the guidance or toolkit, please get in touch with the trial helpdesk at Mott MacDonald (the trial facilitators) at: SENDdeliverysupport@mottmac.com, or by telephone on 0207 651 0308.

SEND mediation standards

On 23 May, the College of Mediators and the Civil Mediation Council, with the support of the Department for Education, published a set of SEND mediation professional practice standards and a system of voluntary accreditation at <https://www.collegeofmediators.co.uk/News/Events>. This is designed to ensure good quality SEND mediation that families can trust.

The standards were developed using examples of best practice by a working group from the SEND mediation field, including KIDS Mediation, Global Mediation, Prime Resolution Mediation, Steve Hindmarsh Ltd and the Together Trust.

The College of Mediators and Civil Mediation Council, through a panel of assessors, will approve SEND mediation training courses and accredit SEND mediators. They will operate a joint register of SEND mediators who have met the new required professional practice standards and which can be referred to by local authorities and other commissioners of SEND mediation. The register and application process for accreditation went live on 10 July 2018.

The Department for Education will fund new registration and training approval fees until March 2020 as we wish to encourage SEND mediation providers to register. If you or your organisation wish to have training approved or wish to register with the College of Mediators or the Civil Mediation Council as an accredited SEND mediator this will not incur an initial cost before March 2020, however annual re-registration fees will need to be met.

For further information, or if you are interested in these developments or applying for voluntary accreditation, you can contact: admin@collegeofmediators.co.uk or applications@civilmediation.org.

SEND Schools' Workforce programme of work

On 6 July Minister Nadhim Zahawi launched the SEND Schools' Workforce programme of work, which will be delivered by the [Whole School SEND](#) consortium, led by nasen, in partnership with University College London. The aim of the new, two-year, programme of work is to embed SEND into school led approaches to School Improvement in order to equip the workforce to deliver high quality teaching across all types of SEND. The programme of work will: drive education institutions to prioritise SEND; equip schools to identify and meet their training needs in relation to SEND; build the specialist workforce and identify and respond to any gaps in the training and resources available to schools. SEND regional leaders and deputy leaders will be appointed in each region, to help bring together the expertise and knowledge in the area and to share good practice, latest research and resources in order to ensure all pupils with SEND are supported effectively.

NHS England: Ask. Listen. Do

The Ask Listen Do project is aimed at supporting organisations to learn from and improve the experiences of people with a learning disability, autism or both, their families and carers when giving feedback, raising a concern or making a complaint.

As part of this, working in partnership with NHS England, the Department for Education asked Whole School SEND to work with families to co-produce questions they would like to ask schools to help improve outcomes for their children and young people. This resource is available to help all families in all schools:

<http://www.sendgateway.org.uk/resources.makingconversationswithschools.html>.

Simon Knight has also published a blog which can be accessed on NHS England's website at: <https://www.england.nhs.uk/blog/working-together-to-help-children/>.

Making conversations count is very much at the heart of the Children and Families Act. Supporting Ask Listen Do in your local area would be a good way to embed that. If you have queries or good practice to share, please email:

england.improvinghealthquality@nhs.net.

More information about the project and how your organisation can get involved is available here www.england.nhs.uk/learning-disabilities/about/ask-listen-do.

Ask Listen Do
The principles for organisations across health, social care and education

Ask

- The organisation asks people about their experiences and makes it easy for people to do this.
- The organisation makes sure that the person, their family or advocate know how to give feedback, raise a concern or make a complaint.
- People feel able to speak up when they have feedback, a concern or complaint.
- Everyone knows when a concern or complaint is a safeguarding or a criminal issue, and what must happen.

Listen

- The organisation really listens to what has been said and is not defensive.
- The organisation and staff have the skills to listen to and understand what it feels like for the person.

Do

- The organisation does something positive about it in good time and tells the person what they are doing to put it right.
- The organisation learns from the feedback, concern or complaint and changes things so the service can improve.
- The organisation improves its services by working with the people that use them, listening to and learning from people's experiences.

Actions

www.england.nhs.uk/asklistendo Making conversations count...

Education Psychology Research Project on the Workforce in England

We are commissioning a research project to examine reported shortages in the Local Authority Educational Psychologist (EP) workforce in England. The findings from this research will inform the Department's consideration of potential future reforms to the EP training provider commissioning model. We will be contacting Principle EP's, EP professional bodies and wider stakeholders to contribute towards this important piece of work. The project will start over the next few weeks with an end date of 28 September 2018. A report of the findings will be published before the end of the year.

Making Participation Work, Hot Topics: Wider engagement report

The [Hot Topics](#) are part of the [Making Participation Work](#) (MPW) programme, funded by the Department for Education and delivered by the Council for Disabled Children and KIDS. For the past two years, the Hot Topics have formed part of MPW's wider engagement work, which seeks the views of children and young people with SEND in order to promote understanding of their needs and wishes. These topics have been identified by the FLARE group of disabled children and young people, and shared with a wide range of groups and organisations to give input.

The information gathered has already been used to inform a series of [Factsheets](#) to support professionals in their work with children and young people with SEND. The Hot Topics report is intended to give policy-makers at all levels a small window into children and young people's lived experiences, encouraging them to make decisions which put these experiences at the centre. We also hope to demonstrate the value and feasibility of seeking these views and experiences, and encourage decision-makers to do the same.

The full report can be found at Annex A of this Newsletter. For more information on Making Participation Work, the Hot Topics, or strategic participation, please contact Joanna Carr at jcarr@ncb.org.uk

SEND statistics

Provision for under 5s

Education provision: children under 5 years of age, January 2018: This publication contains data, at national and LA level, of the number and percentage of 2-, 3- and 4- year olds in funded early education who are identified with SEN. For the first time this year the publication, also covers those benefitting from extended funded early education (i.e. the 30 hours). Further information can be found in the publication,

which is available here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/education-provision-children-under-5-years-of-age-january-2018>.

Publication of Statistical Release ‘Statements of SEN and EHC plans: England, 2018’

On 24 May we published the annual Statistical Release ‘Statements of SEN and EHC plans: England, 2018’. This publication includes statistics and analysis on statements of SEN and EHC plans in England, based on the annual SEN2 return from local authorities. Further information can be found in the publication, which is available here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/statements-of-sen-and-ehc-plans-england-2018>.

Update of annual publication ‘Special educational needs: analysis and summary of data sources’

On 24 May we also updated our annual publication ‘Special educational needs: analysis and summary of data sources’. This publication provides a summary of data published on special educational needs in a range of sources and presents summary findings, with links to source publications. Further information can be found in the publication, which is available here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/sen-analysis-and-summary-of-data-sources>.

Publication of research ‘Education, health and care plans: parents and young people survey’

In 2016, a national survey commissioned by the Department for Education (DfE) found variations in how EHC plan recipients experienced the EHC planning process across different local authorities. Based on these results, DfE commissioned two further research projects: a multivariate analysis of factors affecting satisfaction with the EHC planning process, and a qualitative investigation of user experiences of the EHC planning process.

The findings from this research can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/education-health-and-care-plans-parents-and-young-people-survey>.

Development opportunities and new resources

NatSIP resources available

Following a presentation by Dr Gail Deuce, NatSIP has produced a short video which introduces sensory processing. In the video, Gail talks about some of the differences between sensory integration (more often called Sensory Processing Disorder) and sensory impairment and looks at the impact of sensory processing difficulties in young people with sensory impairments. The video can be viewed here: <https://www.natsip.org.uk/3507-new-video-sensory-processing-disorder>.

NatSIP has published a practical guide and resource which will provide tools and tips on effective development, planning and promotion of a service for children and young people with sensory impairment and low incidence SEND. The resource can be viewed at: <https://www.natsip.org.uk/3506-new-publication-commissioning-guide-and-workbook-for-sensory-impairment-services>.

NatSIP are also running a 2-day course on 17/18 September for Teaching Assistants and other school or setting staff, working with hearing impaired children and young people. The course is suitable for teaching assistants and other education professionals new to working with deaf learners, or who would like a refresher course. More details are available at: <https://www.natsip.org.uk/calendar/77>.

Anti-bullying research reports

The department has recently published two new anti-bullying research reports, the details are:

[Approaches to preventing and tackling bullying](#) - a DfE commissioned qualitative research report that provides details of common strategies that schools reported to be effective for combating bullying, along with more detailed case studies that outline practical actions taken by the schools. It includes a case study showing approaches by both a mainstream school and a community special school to prevent and tackle bullying amongst pupils with SEND.

[Longitudinal study of young people in England: cohort 2, wave 3 - Bullying Research Brief](#) - New research which examines the prevalence and nature of bullying. The research is based on data from the second Longitudinal Study of Young People in England and shows statistics on different types of reported bullying along with the results for pupils with different characteristics (including those with SEN).

Autism Education Trust - new website

The Autism Education Trust (AET) has launched its new website www.autismeducationtrust.org.uk. The new online destination will support AET's drive to bring the highest quality evidence based autism training programme to all educational settings for 0-25 year olds. The site includes new functionalities including the event management tool, training material database and web shop.

The website launch coincides with the introduction of AET's new partnership scheme, allowing prospective partners to directly join its network delivering its unique autism programme backed by autism expertise. Local authorities or others interested in exploring a partnership with the AET should contact info@autismeducationtrust.org.uk. AET has been developing educational autism resources since 2007 and has facilitated the training of more than 170,000 delegates to date. Its programme offers a wealth of resources and all the necessary tools supporting practitioners in all aspects of their work.

Rights for Children - new website

This is new website for children and young people living in institutions. The site is packed with information about children's rights, on topics that are important to them. It has been created by Article 39 children's rights charity working with children and young people. The content is organised into four sections – *'Your life, your feelings'*, *'Where you live'*, *'When things are difficult'* and *'Moving and leaving'* – and covers a wide variety of children and young people's concerns, from pets, to privacy, to food and special diets, to restraint and use of force and making a complaint. The website can be viewed at: rights4children.

We hope this newsletter reaches as many people and organisations as possible with an interest in SEND issues. Please feel free to pass it on to anyone who doesn't currently receive it and invite them to join our mailing list. However, if you no longer wish to receive this newsletter, please contact SEN.IMPLEMENTATION@education.gov.uk and we will remove you from our mailing list.

Annex A: Making Participation Work, Hot Topics: Wider engagement report

The Hot Topics are designed to incorporate a wider range of children and young people's voices into the work undertaken by the FLARE group as part of the Making Participation Work programme. The decision to develop a mechanism for wider engagement came about partly because participation group leaders had requested a way for their groups to feed into the FLARE reports, but also because we recognise that the nature of the national FLARE group and the regional participation groups means that they cannot represent the views of all children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). A process for wider engagement would enable as many children and young people as possible to participate in discussions on issues that affect their lives, and have their voices heard at the national strategic level.

Hot Topics Summary

Topic	Launch date	Closing date	No. of responses	No. of unique page views
Work experience	02/05/17	26/05/17	3	169
Support in school/ college	04/09/17	29/09/17	3	107
Trust	28/11/17	23/02/18	3	96
A curriculum that prepares us for life	28/11/17	23/02/18	4	137
Teacher training to understand support needs	02/03/18	27/05/18	5	380

Development of the Hot Topics

Over 1.2 million students in England are recognised as having special educational needs,¹ and each of these children and young people have different lived experiences. Although children with SEND are often grouped together, their interests, strengths and support needs vary enormously, meaning that SEND policy must be informed by as wide a range of voices as possible. By using the Hot Topics to widen our engagement beyond the FLARE group, we aim to include these voices in the reports submitted in the course of the Making Participation Work programme.

The Hot Topics were developed in co-production with FLARE group members, who identified and prioritised five issues that they felt were key areas in which children and young people's voices need to be amplified. The Council for Disabled Children

¹ https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/633031/SFR37_2017_Main_Text.pdf

Participation team then designed a short series of questions to explore each of these issues in the context of the SEND reforms (Children and Families Act 2014). From Hot Topic #3 onwards, suggested session plans and resources were also developed to provide support to group leaders, which can be found in Appendix 1 of this report.

Each of these briefing documents was shared via direct email to professionals who had expressed interest in the Hot Topics, and via social media. Tweets and graphics cards were developed to promote each Hot Topic, and these were shared with supportive organisations in order to reach as many potential respondents as possible.

The Hot Topics format was chosen as it provides a framework for discussions, whilst enabling group leaders to adapt the tools and language used to their group members' particular interests and access needs. This allows for a broad range of children and young people to participate and explore the issue in a way that they find accessible and engaging. It also enables group leaders and facilitators to adapt the session to fit around their existing obligations.

Summary of findings

#1 Work Experience

Members of the FLARE group had said that they would like work experience to be easier to access, with a better range of opportunities offered. They also said that children and young people need better support to take up opportunities of work experience when they are offered. This Hot Topic aimed to get a broader range of perspectives on the challenges that disabled children and young people face regarding work experience, as well as examples of best practice to share with teaching staff who have a role to play in developing work experience placements.

Input was received from The Unstoppables (Somerset) and the Orchard Centre (Stourbridge), as well as from FLARE. The main issues that were drawn out of this data were:

- In order to challenge negative attitudes towards children and young people with SEND, employers must be aware of their obligations regarding equality and reasonable adjustments, as well as focusing on children and young people's strengths rather than the challenges they face.
 - 'People's opinions can get in the way – they need to learn to see past the disability.'
- For work experience opportunities to be meaningful, they must align with children and young people's own aspirations.
 - 'Young people are often just given a placement that reflects others' lack of ambition for disabled people.'
- Good quality work experience enables children and young people to build on their soft skills, but many need support in order to identify and articulate this personal growth.

- Support during work experience must be consistent but flexible.
 - ‘Good careers support help you find ways around the barriers.’
- Mutual respect is crucial for an effective and meaningful placement.

These themes were drawn together in Factsheet #2: Work Experience, which can be accessed at bit.ly/2ykuEtZ. This resource is intended to support teaching staff in developing high quality work experience placements for and with their students.

#2 Support in school/ college

Appropriate, consistent support is crucial in making sure that young people can not only access a good education, but also to have a fulfilling social life and be active in their community. The level of support a young person gets should also be balanced with their need to develop their independence and skills. This Hot Topic sought children and young people’s views on their support, how they prefer to communicate with the professionals who support them, and what they would like adult decision-makers to know when making arrangements for support.

Feedback was received from the KIDS South Young Person’s Engagement Group, Aiming High (Swindon) and the FLARE group. The main themes from this feedback were:

- Children and young people generally feel happy and confident in discussing their support needs, but may have specific individuals who they feel most comfortable discussing private issues such as personal care with.
 - ‘I talk to the workers, I would feel confident doing this.’
 - However some children and young people wait to be asked about their support, rather than feeling able to initiate discussions.
 - ‘They ask me what they can do to help.’
- Generally, children and young people felt that discussing their support needs resulted in positive change.
 - Seeing positive action after a discussion made children and young people feel proud, valued and important.
 - ‘I feel like I matter.’
 - However establishing support in the first place was often seen as a slow process with ‘excessive testing’.
 - ‘Young people are under extra strain to prove themselves.’
- Generally, children and young people thought their support helped them to feel happy and enjoy themselves.
 - ‘My supporter makes me happy, he asks me what I want to do.’
 - Exceptions to this were when supporters made a decision that was in opposition to the child or young person’s preference, but was concerned with safety or long term consequences.

- There was also a shift in older children and young people, who felt that support could be a barrier to socialising, exploring their interests, and accessing further/ higher education.
 - 'I want my support to be more arm's length as I get older, not right next to me.'

Note: As with any child or young person, those with SEND are entitled to make choices which may subsequently have negative outcomes; this is a natural part of growing up and building independence. Provided that children and young people have made an informed choice, supporters should not override children and young people's decisions. Of course, decisions should be made in line with a child or young person's evolving capacities.

- Supporters were seen as a positive resource for:
 - Accessing activities in the community
 - Shopping
 - Reaching academic potential (amongst younger children)
 - Simplification of language
 - Developing independence as there is less reliance on parents
- Supporters were seen as a barrier regarding:
 - Socialising amongst older children and young people, where supporters were seen as limiting options and encroaching on personal relationships, or marking individuals out as 'different'.
 - '[Your supporter] pushes everyone away from you like you are in a bubble. They shouldn't necessarily sit next to you.'
 - Learning at further and higher education levels, where supporters need in-depth knowledge of the subject matter in order to provide effective support.
 - 'If a teaching assistant doesn't understand Further Maths topics being taught, they cannot support by re-explaining a concept.'
- The main things that children and young people want in a supporter are:
 - An appreciation that each child or young person is an individual with different interests and needs.
 - Training in how to support them.
 - A sense of humour and willingness to have fun.
 - 'They [need to] know the person they are supporting, be friendly and fun, respect and listen to me.'

- Children and young people approach a range of different individuals if they have concerns about their support.
 - There is some awareness of organisations who may be able to provide advice (SENDIASS, Citizens' Advice Bureau), but this is not widespread.

#3 Trust

The reciprocal trust between adults and children and young people is an important aspect of developing responsive, inclusive communities, as well as promoting young people's independence, self-esteem, and resilience. As children grow up, they should be trusted to take increasing levels of responsibility in decision-making, in line with their evolving capacities. This Hot Topic aimed to find out how well children and young people feel that adults trust them to make good decisions, how well children and young people trust adults to act on the input they give, and how trust can be developed between children, young people and adults.

Input was received from the FLARE group, TYLER (East Riding), and KIDS (South).

The main learning from the data is as follows:

- Children and young people are trusted to make a range of decisions, in line with their evolving capacity.
 - These range from day to day decisions at the individual level such as what to wear or eat, up to strategic decisions in their local area.
 - However it is recognised that some children and young people find making decisions stressful, even if they appear to be capable of making them.
 - 'I find making choices really hard; people should not feel pressured to make choices when it's hard. I need more time.'
- The decisions that children and young people would like to be trusted to make can be divided into:
 - Independent living (life skills, travel etc.)
 - Learning (GCSE choices, further/ higher education)
 - Support (when, who and how)
 - Own capacity
 - Children and young people would like to be able to decide for themselves whether or not they are able to engage in an activity, rather than others deciding for them.
- When they have a meaningful role in decision-making, the vast majority of children and young people felt:
 - Nervous and/ or under pressure before and while making the decision.
 - Happy, confident and proud after making the decision.

- Rare instances showed regret or unhappiness regarding a decision, as might be expected in the general population
 - '[I chose] whether to move school or not – before I felt nervous and scared, now I feel confident and happy with my decision.'
 - '[I decided to go] back to a mainstream college. During [the decision-making process] I felt happy, excited and very nervous. After I started I felt very nervous but proud of myself. Now I feel regret, unhappy and annoyed.'
- Pleased to have been 'in charge'
 - Children and young people have said that these opportunities are uncommon, and are a contrast to their usual experiences of decision-making.
 - 'It felt great because sometimes they don't listen to me'
 - '[I am] glad that someone who met and talked to me believed me, when a board of people didn't.'
- Children and young people trust a wide range of individuals to support them in decision-making
 - Trustworthy adults are seen as those who:
 - Listen
 - Respond honestly
 - Act
 - Trust between adults and children and young people is eroded when:
 - Adults make promises which are not followed through.
 - Adults lack faith in children and young people's abilities.
 - 'I need adults not to doubt my decision.'
 - Adults use their position to influence children and young people's choices.
 - The feedback and next steps that children and young people receive from adults do not match reality.
- In order to build trust between adults and children and young people:
 - Children and young people must be informed that their thoughts and ideas have been received and considered.
 - There must be a record of input children and young people have provided.
 - Adults must listen to what children and young people have to say, and value their thoughts and opinions.
 - Adults must say thank you.
 - Children and young people must see change.

- 'It is important that children and young people are listened to and the importance of what they say is recognised. They are notified of changes.'

#4 A curriculum that prepares us for life

Developing academic skills and knowledge is only one part of a child or young person's time in school. A good quality education should also support them to develop their life skills, confidence and independence, thereby enabling them to become well-equipped and resilient young adults.

We wanted to hear from children and young people with SEND about their experiences of their education, focusing on how well it enables them to achieve their own goals and live rich, fulfilling lives, outside of their academic progress.

Feedback was received from KIDS (South), TYLER (East Riding), Post 16 Group (Poole) and FLARE.

Key points from the information received are as follows.

- Children and young people's personal goals can be categorised into:
 - Independent living
 - Family life
 - Responsibility for own money
 - Travel
 - Socialising and relationships
 - Involvement in extra-curricular activities
 - Career/ job
- Significant numbers of responding children and young people feel that school staff are not aware of their personal goals or that they are not supported to achieve their goals.
 - Some have not been supported to formulate their own goals.
 - 'They should have better conversations about what the pupil wants to do.'
- School/college staff are made aware of personal goals by:
 - One to one discussions
 - Events outside of the usual school routine
 - Via school/ college work
 - Via joining extra-curricular activities hosted by the school/ college
- Children and young people have said they know they are doing well because of:
 - Feedback and recognition from staff
 - 'School tells me when I am doing well.'

- 'I get reward points for good work.'
 - Feedback and recognition from family
 - Personal feelings of satisfaction
 - 'I actually caught the train with my carer as part of my travel training!'
 - The feedback was strongly weighted towards children and young people being informed by others of their successes, rather than children and young people being supported to recognise their own achievements and personal growth.
- The ways in which children and young people feel they are supported to build their confidence include:
 - Extra-curricular clubs and activities
 - Opportunities to see demonstrations of and practice various skills
 - Having an atmosphere which encourages children and young people to ask questions and share concerns
- The skills that children and young people feel they should learn at school/college can be categorised into:
 - Socialising/relationships
 - Domestic skills
 - Budgeting and money
 - Travel
 - Healthcare and wellbeing
 - Organisation
- The most prevalent concerns among the children and young people were:
 - Budgeting and money
 - Healthcare and wellbeing
 - Including cooking
- Children and young people reported seeking support for developing life skills from a broad range of individuals, ranging from family members to healthcare professionals.

#5 Teacher training to understand our SEND support needs

Flexible, responsive support at school and beyond can make a vast difference in a child or young person's life. Not only does it enable them to develop their skills and knowledge, but also empowers them to become confident, independent individuals with an active and fulfilling role in their community.

We wanted to hear from children and young people with SEND about how school staff work with them to ensure that the right support is in place and working effectively.

Feedback was received from FLARE, TYLER (East Riding of Yorkshire), Mencap Young People's Power Group (Ealing), Young Leaders (Darlington) and KIDS Young People's Engagement Group.

Key points from the children and young people's feedback were:

- Children and young people feel most comfortable talking about their support needs with school staff with whom they have a close, positive relationship. The most frequently identified were teaching assistants/ learning support assistants, family and teachers, in that order.
 - Children and young people also favour individuals who have a good understanding of their disability.
 - 'People can talk to someone who they work with on an everyday basis. Good relationship building is key.'
 - 'If teachers understood my disability I would want to talk to them more.'
- Children and young people feel that they should take increasing responsibility for the decisions made about their school/ college support as they get older, and on the whole this seems to be happening.
 - 'Unless something happens to you that means you can't make these decisions, you should take more responsibility.'
- Not all children and young people feel confident in initiating conversations about their support, and welcome opportunities to have these discussions:
 - '[I feel confident in talking about my support] because the staff regularly check in to see if needs have changed – every few months.'
 - 'Build in an opportunity to say "This isn't working for me."'
- Where children and young people felt they couldn't discuss their support needs with teachers, they often feel that teachers are ill-prepared to respond to the conversation:
 - 'Teachers do not communicate that they need help in finding solutions and they are worried they cannot help.'
 - 'Some teachers get defensive when you say things aren't right and blame you for them.'
- CYP also raised that it is not just professionals who can provide support in school, suggesting that other students are also instrumental in building a supportive environment:
 - '[When planning lessons,] work out where students can work together to support each other.'

- 'There should be different types of activities, like pairs and groups.'
- 'Trust with fellow pupils makes a more inclusive environment.'

Lessons learned

Although the Hot Topics were developed partly in response to requests from participation workers and had high numbers of unique page views, we have found that the response rate has been low. Feedback from group leaders showed that the initial response periods were too short to fit additional work in around the participation work they were already contracted to do, and that preparation was time consuming. As a result, we extended the response period for each Hot Topic from one month to three months, and provided a suggested session plan for group leaders to use or adapt as they saw fit. We also developed suggested session plans and resources for groups to use.

Despite extending the submission period, providing session plans and promoting the Hot Topics on the Making Ourselves Heard forum, we did not see a significant interest in responses.

However, there is clear interest in the Hot Topics, and seeking this wider engagement remains important. In order to build on the work done so far, and encourage further contributions, we recommend:

- Asking groups to submit existing reports for CDC staff to draw out appropriate information, rather than the other way round.
 - As many local area participation groups are working on issues relating to the SEND reforms, sharing their work would reduce duplication.
 - There has already been one example of this submitted from Ealing Mencap, which can be found in Appendix 2 of this report.
- Exploring digital methods of engagement:
 - Via online meetings using webinar software.
 - Informally using games and apps.
- More active outreach through regional roadshows in schools and clubs.

Using the Hot Topics information

The information gathered in the course of the Hot Topics has been shared with sector colleagues and the SEND team at the Department for Education. Where there is a clear need, it has formed the basis of resources such as Factsheet #2: Work Experience and Factsheet #6: Communicating SEND support needs (currently under development.)

The Council for Disabled Children would welcome further opportunities to discuss the issues and suggestions arising from the Hot Topics further with the relevant teams at the Department for Education, in order to develop solutions which have children and young people's voices at the centre.