



Department
for Education



Department
of Health

8 April 2014

To: Lead members for Children's Services; local authority Chief Executives; Clinical Commissioning Group Chairs; and Health and Wellbeing Board Chairs

Dear Colleague

Support and aspiration: implementing the new 0-25 special needs system

We wrote to you in December about changes to arrangements for supporting young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). The Children and Families Act received Royal Assent on 13 March and implementation will commence from this September.

Thank you for the work you are doing to prepare for implementation. We know some local areas are advanced in their preparations. As well as new legal duties, the changes offer an opportunity to think widely about SEND in the context of local reform to child and adult services, for example early intervention and a life course approach. The Mandate to the NHS also highlights the importance of SEND.

In the spring, the Department for Education will publish the SEND Code of Practice for Parliamentary approval, together with transitional regulations and guidance. We are enclosing an information planning pack with this letter and want to draw your attention to three aspects in particular:

- Local offer: from 1 September 2014 local authorities will be required to consult with families and providers of services and publish a local offer of provision for children and young people who are disabled or have SEN, so that parents, carers and young people understand the range of provision available. A significant change is a 0-25 focus. Partners, including health, colleges, schools and early years, need to co-produce the local offer.
- Education, Health and Care plans: from 1 September 2014 local authorities will be required to consider new requests for an assessment of special educational needs under the new legislation, and co-ordinate services around a child or young person. No new assessments for statements of SEN or Learning Difficulty Assessments (LDAs) will be offered from 1 September 2014. Children and young people should be transferred to the new system in a phased way, prioritised at key transition points. LDAs should be phased out by September 2016, and statements should be phased out by April 2018 – although this can happen more quickly if desired. For children and young

people assessed as needing an EHC plan, they will have the right to request a personal budget so they can choose the services which are best for their family.

- Joint commissioning: from September 2014, local commissioners will be required to work together in the interests of children and young people with SEND. These arrangements must be robust enough to reach a decision in every case, and regularly reviewed. In the SEND Code of Practice, we will encourage local authorities and CCGs to agree shared outcomes, using a joint analysis of intelligence and data about the area – drawing, for example, on registers of disabled children in their area, including children with impaired hearing and sight.

Support for implementation

£70m has already been allocated to local authorities in 2014-15 through the SEND Reform Grant.

The Government is committed to funding new burdens on local authorities and will provide further information about additional funding shortly.

Additional funding is also being made available to support parent involvement in implementing the reforms, and to support families with the new assessment and planning processes.

A core offer of support is now available to all local authorities to help prepare for implementation of the SEND reforms with their health partners. This can be accessed through regional pathfinder champions, who have experience of implementation. Further details are in the enclosed [planning pack](#).

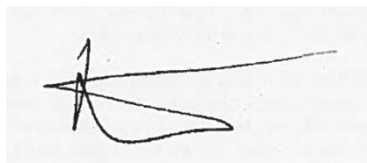
We trust you will use the period between now and September to ensure your local authority is fully prepared for these fundamental reforms and, from September onwards, you will maintain the focus on a successful implementation.

This letter is copied to local authority Directors of Children's Services, Directors of Adult Services, and elected lead members for children's services.



EDWARD TIMPSON MP

Parliamentary Under Secretary of
State for Children and Families



DR DAN POULTER

Parliamentary Under Secretary of
State for Health