

Appendix 3

Campaigns and petitions received from individuals and organisations.

Petitions.

1. Petition presented to Northern Ireland Assembly - 1245 signatures.

We, the undersigned, are concerned that the changes being proposed in the NI Department of Education's review of Special Educational Needs consultation "Every School a Good School: The Way Forward for Special Educational Needs and Inclusion" WILL NOT MEET THE NEEDS OF CHILDREN with Autism and/or any other Learning Difficulties.

1. Keep our Statements of Special Educational Needs along with the annual review as a legally binding document.
2. Money for Special Educational Needs must be ring-fenced AT ALL LEVELS. It must NEVER be handed over to the Principal of individual schools for allocation.
3. Keep our classroom Assistants.

PROPOSAL DOCUMENT – 'THE WAY FORWARD FOR SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND INCLUSION

SAY NO TO THIS DOCUMENT BECAUSE WE NEED TO:-

1. KEEP OUR STATEMENTS OF EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AS A LEGALLY BINDING DOCUMENT
2. PROTECT OUR CLASSROOM ASSISTANTS
3. RING FENCE FUNDING FOR SPECIAL NEEDS

2. Longstone Special School petition - 65 signatures.

We the undersigned support the concerns of the "Cotton Unit" and "Longstone Special School" and are concerned with the lack of consultation by the Department of Education on the closure of these facilities.

3. Down's Syndrome Association petition - 9 signatures

We, the undersigned, petition the Minister of Education to ensure that Statements of Special Educational Need and the legal rights that accompany these are retained in Northern Ireland.

Changes are proposed to the way that children with special needs get allocated their education provision. These changes mean that parents' rights and the rights of children with Down's syndrome to get the education that they need could be compromised.

We want to ensure that:

- Statements of Special Educational Need and the legal rights that accompany these are retained in Northern Ireland. There is a need for legal enforceability in all areas of Special Education Need
- The Code of Practice, particularly in relation to the drafting and the review of Statements, is implemented fully, with quality monitoring of all SEN provision (including school-based stages) rather than the paper exercise it is now.
- Mechanisms are introduced for the delivery of support in educational need, with accountability for that provision and a legal duty to provide those services required eg Speech and Language Therapy & Occupational Therapy.

Campaigns.

1. Down's syndrome campaign - 315 responses.

Dear Sir/Madam

I refer to the Department's policy proposals as outlined in the document "The Way Forward for Special Educational Needs and Inclusion".

I am a { space } of a child with Down's syndrome and am very concerned that these proposals will lead to a reduction in the number of Statements of SEN and will dilute parental rights in relation to e.g. requesting Statutory Assessment, annual review and appealing decisions regarding my child's educational provision.

I strongly disagree with the introduction of an inclusive framework based on the wider concept of additional educational need AEN (consultation point 1).

I welcome the proposals extending SEN support to pre-school settings and the establishment of early intervention officers (consultation point 4) but am concerned that there may not be adequate resources to implement these proposals.

I strongly disagree with the proposals relating to Learning Support Co-ordinators (consultation point 7)

I strongly disagree with the proposals relating to Co-ordinated Support Plans (consultation Point 8)

I strongly disagree that DARS and SENDIST should remain unchanged (consultation point 12)

I believe that legal enforceability, monitoring and accountability of SEN provision needs to be strengthened at all levels, including school-based stages and within special schools. Special Educational Needs funding should be ring-fenced and all spending fully accounted for.

Yours sincerely

Signature

2. Parent of a deaf child campaign - 26 responses.

Dear Sir/Madam

I am a parent of a deaf child and am concerned at the changes being proposed in the report “Every School a Good School: The Way Forward for Special Educational Needs (SEN) and Inclusion.”

I am particularly concerned that the proposals will lead to a substantial reduction in Statements of Educational Need, which will mean a loss of rights for parents and deaf children. I would like to see the legal protection provided by a Statement of Educational Need extended and not reduced.

I also believe that parents should have the right to appeal decisions relating to their child’s special educational needs, including decisions made by the individual school.

I believe it is also important that schools should recognise the expertise and experience of existing Teachers of the Deaf and the importance of detailing special education services for deaf children, including face to face support for deaf children in order to help them access the curriculum.

I also believe that funding for special education should be ring fenced and only used for special education. All spending should be fully accounted for by the school principal and not allowed to go to waste.

Yours faithfully,

Your Name and Address

3. Angel Eyes Campaign - 49 responses

Date

Dear Sir/Madam

I am a parent of a child who is significantly visually impaired and I am deeply concerned at the changes being proposed in the report “Every School a Good School: The Way Forward for Special Educational Needs (SEN) and Inclusion.”

What worries me is that current provision for my child through a Statement of Special Educational Needs could be replaced by a Coordinated Support Plan or even a Personal Learning Plan. I am unsure what the criteria is for either of these options and would like to know what the implications to the support my child receives could potentially be.

I am concerned that my rights as a parent and the rights of my child to be educated in the school of my choice could be compromised by these proposals.

The current budget is only for Special Educational Needs but it is proposed that this will include children with Additional Educational Needs – I would like DENI to ensure the budget is ring fenced for SEN only, and all spending to be fully accounted for by the principal.

I would like to be informed of further consultation on this report as I felt that parents were not adequately informed of the public roadshows that were held in September.

Yours faithfully

Signature

4. Longstone School campaign - 70 responses

“Every School a Good School: The Way Forward for Special Educational Needs and Inclusion” – DENI document.

1. **Changes to the Statementing Process:** We are very concerned about the removal of statements without them being replaced by a document with a similar legal status to ensure our children’s right to specialist provision.
2. **The Annual Review of Statement:** If the Statement is removed then we feel that we will not have a legal right to be part of the annual decision making process concerning our child’s education. We are concerned about the lack of detail surrounding this proposal and in particular the time frame proposed for the review of pupil’s needs.
3. **Appropriate Placement for Pupils:** While we agree that this process needs to be accelerated we do not see how our children would have been appropriately placed any quicker by these proposals.
4. **Current Provision:** As a parent of a pupil in a Special “M” school I would like to indicate that I am very happy with this placement as it is an important part of the current inclusive continuum of provision for pupils in Northern Ireland. **I want this system to continue.**

Name

Address

Telephone

E-Mail

Signed

(Parent/Guardian)

5. Longstone School Booklet Responses - 235 Responses.

Consultation Point 1 - Inclusion

(Reference: paragraphs 3.1 to 3.8)

1 Do you agree with the introduction of an inclusive framework based on the wider concept of additional educational need (AEN)?

Strongly agree	Agree	Don't know	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
			✓	

Any other comments:

I believe that an inclusive framework is already in existence.
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Consultation Point 2 - Key Principles of the Proposed Policy Framework

(Reference: paragraphs 4.1 to 4.6)

2 Do you agree with the key principles on which the policy proposals are based?

Strongly agree	Agree	Don't know	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
			✓	

Any other comments:

The key principles have value but in so many ways lack necessary detail for adequate preparation and delivery e.g. finance
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Consultation Point 3 - Early Identification and Intervention

(Reference: paragraphs 5.1 to 5.5)

3 Do you agree with the proposals relating to early identification and intervention?

Strongly agree	Agree	Don't know	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
			✓	

Any other comments:

I don't believe that these proposals will lead to early identification and intervention -- it appears to be a lengthy and bureaucratic process.

Consultation Point 4 - Pre-School Settings

(Reference: paragraphs 6.1 to 6.3)

4 Do you agree with the proposals relating to pre-school settings?

Strongly agree	Agree	Don't know	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
		✓		

Any other comments:

Sounds good in theory but in reality would be extremely difficult and costly to put into practice.

Consultation point 5 - Primary and Post Primary

(Reference: paragraphs 7.1 to 7.5)

5 Do you agree with the proposals relating to primary and post primary?

Strongly agree	Agree	Don't know	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
				✓

Any other comments:

I have major concerns with regard to the responsibilities and accountability that will be placed on primary and post primary schools. MLD pupils will only thrive in small, safe educational environment such as offered by our school.

Consultation Point 6 - Training and Development

(Reference: paragraphs 8.1 to 8.5)

6 Do you agree with the proposals relating to training and development?

Strongly agree	Agree	Don't know	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
		✓		

Any other comments:

Lack of detailed information e.g. who is delivering this training. Who is so well qualified and/or experienced to enable them to train other teachers in dealing with a wide diversity of need.

Consultation Point 7 - Learning Support Coordinators

(Reference: paragraphs 9.1 to 9.4)

7 Do you agree with the proposals relating to Learning Support Coordinators?

Strongly agree	Agree	Don't know	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
				✓

Any other comments:

Will the LSCs be upgraded to the appropriate salary scale for a Senior Leadership position? Will they be released from their teaching commitment in a mainstream class to carry out their new and demanding role?

Lack of detail as to how this is to be financed.

Consultation Point 8 – Co-ordinated Support Plans

(Reference: paragraphs 10.1 to 10.6)

8 Do you agree with the proposals relating to Coordinated Support Plans (CSP)?

Strongly agree	Agree	Don't know	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
				✓

Any other comments:

The demise of statutory statementing must not be a Trojan Horse for reduced funding for Special Educational Needs.

Consultation Point 9 - Transition Points

(Reference: paragraphs 11.1 to 11.7)

9 Do you agree with the proposals relating to transition points?

Strongly agree	Agree	Don't know	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
				✓

Any other comments:

I do agree that sharing of information is important but I have concerns regarding funding and timetabling issues to allow for professional discourse.

Consultation Point 10 - Developing Effective Partnerships

(Reference: paragraphs 12.1 to 12.30)

10 Do you agree with the proposals relating to the development of effective partnerships:

(a) Within school and pre-school settings? (paragraphs 12.3 to 12.5)

Strongly agree	Agree	Don't know	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
				✓

Any other comments:

These proposals are wildly unrealistic and will detract from a school's core responsibilities for teaching and learning.

10 Do you agree with the proposals relating to the development of effective partnerships:

(b) Across educational settings & learning communities? (paragraphs 12.6 to 12.7)

Strongly agree	Agree	Don't know	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
				✓

Any other comments:

See reason in 10A

10 Do you agree with the proposals relating to the development of effective partnerships:

(c) Between mainstream and special schools? (paragraph 12.8)

Strongly agree	Agree	Don't know	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
				✓

Any other comments:

See reason in 10A

10 Do you agree with the proposals relating to the development of effective partnerships:

(d) Between Education and Health and Social Care (e.g. Education and Skills Authority and proposed Regional Health Boards)? (paragraphs 12.9 to 12.17)

Strongly agree	Agree	Don't know	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
				✓

Any other comments:

Even more unrealistic than 10A, B and C

10 Do you agree with the proposals relating to the development of effective partnerships:

(e) Between the Department of Education (DE) and the Department of Employment and Learning (DEL)? (paragraph 12.18)

Strongly agree	Agree	Don't know	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
		✓		

Any other comments:

10 Do you agree with the proposals relating to the development of effective partnerships:

(f) Through the establishment of Multi-disciplinary Groups?
(paragraphs 12.19 to 12.25)

Strongly agree	Agree	Don't know	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
				✓

Any other comments:

The composition of MGs and their remit is a major concern. It is not appropriate for Health and Social Care staff to make judgements on educational provision.

10 Do you agree with the proposals relating to the development of effective partnerships:

(g) With parents and carers? (paragraphs 12.26 to 12.28)

Strongly agree	Agree	Don't know	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
			✓	

Any other comments:

This effective partnership is already in place. This is not a new proposal.

10 Do you agree with the proposals relating to the development of effective partnerships:

(h) With children and young people? (paragraph 12.29)

Strongly agree	Agree	Don't know	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
			✓	

Any other comments:

This is not always appropriate.

10 Do you agree with the proposals relating to the development of effective partnerships:

(i) With voluntary organisations? (paragraph 12.30)

Strongly agree	Agree	Don't know	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
		✓		

Any other comments:

This situation already exists but could be further developed with appropriate levels of funding.

Consultation Point 11 - Outworking of the Proposed Model

(Reference: paragraphs 13.1 to 13.9)

11 Do you agree with the replacement of the sequential stages of 1-5 of the current CoP by the proposed 3 strand model (Within School, Within School plus External Support, Co-ordinated Support Plans)?



Strongly agree	Agree	Don't know	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
				✓

Any other comments:

There is no guarantee of additional resources see part 13.3 in DENI document.

Consultation Point 12 - Resolution and Appeal Mechanisms

(Reference: paragraph 14.1)

12 Do you agree that the current informal appeal, dispute avoidance and resolution and formal appeal arrangements (SENDIST) for children with SEN should remain unchanged?

Strongly agree	Agree	Don't know	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
		✓		

Any other comments:

I feel that this process needs to be more user friendly.

Consultation point 13 - Funding

(Reference: paragraphs 15.1 to 15.5)

13 Do you agree with the proposals relating to funding?

Strongly agree	Agree	Don't know	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
				✓

Any other comments:

There is no indication of costing – this was referred to as “low level detail” by members of ETI at the Consultation meeting held in Bangor.

When will the Department release their financial projections?

Consultation Point 14 - Monitoring, Review, Evaluation & Accountability

(Reference: paragraphs 16.1 to 16.5)

14 Do you agree with the proposals relating to monitoring, review, evaluation & accountability?

Strongly agree	Agree	Don't know	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
				✓

Any other comments:

We already accept the fact that ETI are part of the Monitoring and Evaluation process in schools. Why is it necessary to have the MGs as part of this process?

Consultation Point 15 – Roles and Responsibilities

(Reference: paragraphs 17.1 to 17.19)

15 Do you agree with the proposals relating to the roles and responsibilities for:

(a) The Department of Education (DE)? (paragraphs 17.1 to 17.2)

Strongly agree	Agree	Don't know	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
	✓			

Any other comments:

15 Do you agree with the proposals relating to the roles and responsibilities for:

(b) The proposed Education and Skills Authority (ESA)? (paragraph 17.3)

Strongly agree	Agree	Don't know	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
			✓	

Any other comments:

I am glad to see that the ESA are going to provide a range of educational settings to cater for the wide range of pupils needs, however, I have concerns over the establishment of MGs; level of accountability and the establishment of "regional teams".

15 Do you agree with the proposals relating to the roles and responsibilities for:

(c) The Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (DHSSPS)? (paragraphs 17.4 to 17.6)

Strongly agree	Agree	Don't know	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
			✓	

Any other comments:

<p>I have concerns regarding non-educationalists making decisions pertaining to schools.</p>
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15 Do you agree with the proposals relating to the roles and responsibilities for:

(d) Multi-disciplinary Groups (MGs)? (paragraphs 17.7 to 17.8)

Strongly agree	Agree	Don't know	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
				✓

Any other comments:

<p>See previous comments.</p>

15 Do you agree with the proposals relating to the roles and responsibilities for:

(e) Mainstream schools and other educational establishments?
(paragraphs 17.9 to 17.16)

Strongly agree	Agree	Don't know	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
			✓	

Any other comments:

I feel that mainstream schools will be overloaded with increased levels of responsibilities – the role of the MLD school has not been clearly identified as part of the continuum of educational provision.

15 Do you agree with the proposals relating to the roles and responsibilities for:

(f) The Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI)? (paragraphs 17.17 to 17.18)

Strongly agree	Agree	Don't know	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
			✓	

Any other comments:

This is not a new proposal.

15 Do you agree with the proposals relating to the roles and responsibilities for:

(g) Children's Services Directors? (paragraph 17.19)

Strongly agree	Agree	Don't know	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
			✓	

Any other comments:

This seems to be creating another layer of bureaucracy which takes the focus away from the point of need which is in the classroom.

Consultation Point 16 - Proposed Phased Introduction of the Policy

(Reference: paragraphs 18.1 to 18.7)

16 Do you agree with the proposed phased introduction of the policy?

Strongly agree	Agree	Don't know	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
				✓

Any other comments:

I do not agree with the fundamental thinking behind this policy. It is ill conceived and ill thought out.

It is no way child centred.

A. Additional Comments – 78 responses.

Additional Comments

If you have any additional comments you wish to make about the proposals please use the box below.

As an interested party I wish to express my concern at the consultation process for the Department of Education document "Every School a Good School, The Way Forward for SEN and Inclusion".

There was only one Public Consultation meeting in my area, on Wednesday 9th September, from 4 – 6pm. This was very early in the new school year and I had not had time to read what was a very long and detailed consultation document.

The timing of the meeting made it very difficult for parents to attend.

I also feel that the questions in the response booklet were worded in such a way as to invite agreement.

The issues of most concern to me are:-

1. **Changes to the Statementing Process:** I am very concerned about the removal of statements without them being replaced by a document with a similar legal status to ensure a child's right to specialist provision.
2. **The Annual Review of Statement:** If the Statement is removed then I feel that a parent/guardian will not have a legal right to be part of the annual decision making process concerning their child's education. I am concerned about the lack of detail surrounding this proposal and in particular that a child's needs may only be reviewed every three to four years.
3. **Appropriate Placement for Pupils:** While I agree that this process needs to be accelerated I do not see how these proposals would speed up the process of assessment for any child.
4. **Current Provision:** I would like to indicate that I am very happy with the current inclusive continuum of provision for pupils in Northern Ireland, including Special Schools for pupils with Moderate Learning Difficulties. **I want this system to continue.**

B. Additional Comments – 157 responses.

Additional Comments

If you have any additional comments you wish to make about the proposals please use the box below.

At Longstone we were reluctant to fill in the tick boxes on the Consultation Response document. We feel the questions are worded in such a way as to invite agreement. To disagree appears to be “unreasonable” or “not politically correct”. However, we have voiced very serious concerns about many of the ideas put forward in this consultation document.

We want the very best education possible for children with special needs and their families. We believe this can only be achieved with a **true continuum of educational provision**. This excellence has been confirmed by a recent ETI Inspection Report. **We would underline that the present continuum of provision and choice for parents and children must be maintained.** We really feel that the children we currently have at Longstone are happy and progressing – not just in academic terms but in terms of social skills, emotional intelligence and in controlling their behaviour. We don't feel they would make the same progress in mainstream, busy classrooms, or indeed in a special needs unit attached to a mainstream school. We don't think “our” children would cope or thrive in such situations. We therefore emphasise that the current range of provision must be maintained and that children's entitlement to extra support, if they have additional education needs, must be **safeguarded** by some form of statement of their needs and a regular review of their progress and placement.

We also believe that placing most children with special or additional need in a mainstream classroom would adversely affect the progress of many pupils, including those with no additional needs. We think the model of inclusion outlined in this document is expecting teachers in mainstream classrooms to “do the impossible” and will result in a great deal of stress and medical problems for those expected to carry it out. There is already great diversity in mainstream classes with a perception from some parents that their more able children are disadvantaged by the amount of time and attention the teacher has to give to pupils with special needs. We feel *every* child has the right to achieve their full potential. We believe the consultation document is very full of idealogy but when we have asked questions of the DE representatives at various meetings they have admitted that the details have not been worked out! **We do not want to risk disturbing the current system and perhaps changing the ethos of many excellent schools for something that hasn't been thought through and resourced properly!** We would like to highlight that so many children benefit from MLD schools such as ours and from the outreach support of the teachers who go out from Longstone to mainstream schools to help teachers with behaviour modification, pupils with dyslexia and pupils with moderate learning difficulties. These children are getting a “real education” suited to their needs. The consultation document is putting forward an ideology of inclusion without really examining the benefits of the present system. **We urge you to reconsider and do a thorough review of all the proposals, consulting schools and workforce unions, before going any further.**

The Principal and staff, Longstone School