

## Appendix 4

**A summary of issues recorded at the public consultation meetings held by the Department of Education in 2009/2010.**

Review of SEN and Inclusion Consultation Road shows  
Breakdown of Attendance (From those who signed in on registration)

Date	Venue	Total attendees	Parents/ Carers	School Staff	Reps from voluntary orgs
Tues 08/09/2009	Glenavon House Hotel, Cookstown	29	0	25	0
Wed 09/09/2009	Marine Court Hotel, Bangor	48	1	41	2
Tues 15/09/2009	Everglades Hotel, Londonderry	50	2	39	4
Wed 16/09/2009	Killyhevlin Hotel, Enniskillen	47	2	32	4
Thurs 17/09/2009	Lagan Valley Leisureplex, Lisburn	49	5	23	10
Tues 22/09/2009	Leighinmohr House Hotel, Ballymena	61	4	38	14
Wed 23/09/2009	Strule Arts Centre, Omagh	27	3	17	1
Thurs 24/09/2009	Beechlawn House Hotel, Belfast	118	27	64	13
Mon 28/09/2009	The Lodge, Coleraine	64	4	54	1
Tues 29/09/2009	Canal Court Hotel, Newry	83	9	66	4
Wed 30/09/2009	Armagh City Hotel, Armagh	55	5	33	6
Thurs 22/10/2009	Stormont Hotel, Belfast	30	13	2	20
Thurs 19/11/2009	Millbrook Lodge, Ballynahinch	Meetings not organised by DE - attendees not recorded.			
Fri 27/11/2009	Horn Drive Community Centre, Belfast	Meetings not organised by DE - attendees not recorded.			
Wed 20/01/2010	Education Committee Meeting Long Gallery, Parliament Buildings	Meetings not organised by DE - attendees not recorded.			
Total number of attendees at all meetings :		661	75	434	79

Notes of the Education Committee meeting can be accessed by this link:  
[http://www.niassembly.gov.uk/record/committees2009/Education/100120\\_SENEvent.htm](http://www.niassembly.gov.uk/record/committees2009/Education/100120_SENEvent.htm)

## **Comments and questions from consultation meetings.**

### **General Comments/Questions.**

What is the timing for phased introduction of policy proposals?

Timing of review – time of flux for teachers e.g. revised curriculum etc, schools facing huge changes at present. Need to ensure adequate lead in period for new policy.

If children with AEN are brought into SEN, legislative change will be required to the definition – Confusion – overarching framework – definition of SEN in legislation

Comprehensive document but some questions not answered. Will children still have access to classroom assistants?

Want more detail before agreeing to proposals. Hard to commit without detail. Will there be a second consultation when details are in place?

Issue about children with statements not being counted in enrolment figures.

Where do educational psychologists fit in to the policy proposals?

ICAN - proposals great on paper but they already do early identification and collaborative working etc. They have to fight for funding each year therefore children are being discriminated against.

Perceived shortcoming of current system is inconsistency. Change of provision for SEN from Boards onto schools, therefore even more inconsistency?

Waiting lists for statutory assessment and statements are too long.

The need for change: What are the main perceived complaints and problems with the existing system, what evidence is there to verify them and what is the source of this evidence?

What does 'shared services' mean?

What does 'inclusion' mean in the title? Continuum of provision or inclusion of SEN children in mainstream?

Welcomes proposals.

Parent of autistic child - How many parents are at this meeting? How can we respond without knowledge of what the rights of the child will be? Autism is not the same as bereavement or being a Traveller etc.

Reference to news item this week re: cuts in education by Christmas. Where are they to be made?

Why not improve what we have: In England they considered whether to increase the effectiveness of the current system or create a new one and they opted, after a lot of consultation, for improving the current system. On what basis did the Department come to a different decision?

20 years ago – we were debating dyslexia – happening again. Not recognised. Children with different needs confirmed by medical professionals – should be safeguarded. On Board of Governors for 2 schools – disability not mentioned. Need specifically named conditions.

In 30/40 years, what will have happened to children who are now at school when changes have been implemented?

Everyday common sense things are not being looked at. Will every school be able to cater for every child and their individual needs?

Timing: Given the range and scale of these proposals, the fact that some Ministers in the Executive have concerns and the current delay in the establishment of the Education and Skills Authority, why does the Department think that this is the right time to introduce wholesale changes for disabled children?

Why now, amidst so many other changes - Transfer 2010, ESA, etc?

According to Irish News, Caitríona Ruane said legislation would be in place by December 2009?

ESA – redundancies of senior staff in merger of 5 ELBs – how many?

Will ESA be responsible for implementing new SEN policies?

System/provision is reasonable in Ballynahinch area. Wording of statements has changed. Want help early on, so later life is easier.

Will full answers be taken on board – from responses?

Attendees agreed that the meeting had helped to clarify some issues. They will submit responses which convey their views.

Parent of child who is almost 2 years old and has Down's syndrome. How long for proposals/legislation to be implemented?

Need for legislation: Would implementation of these proposals require legislative change? If so, in which areas?

Why are already established systems being thrown out and not fixed? To be replaced with vague, un-resourced and poorly detailed systems - this leads to

confusion, lack of confidence in a system and unnecessary fear for parents and teachers.

Parents are mentioned throughout the document, but their vital role in this policy is not central to its framework. Why is this?

The Inclusive Framework - will it disadvantage those with SEN? – will funding have to stretch further? or will additional funding be secured for this new proposed framework of AEN?

### **Consultation process – concerns of parents.**

The pre-consultation process: The current Code of Practice states that parents should be consulted, kept informed and regarded as partners. I have a young child with Down's Syndrome. I am worried that the Education Department's policy proposals as outlined in the document "The Way Forward for Special Educational Needs and Inclusion" are undermining parental confidence. Many of us parents are curious about the pre-consultation process. My question is in several parts and is about how parents as a primary stakeholder were engaged under your code of practice in this process. How did you undertake the pre-consultation which you say was carried out with parents and children? How were parents engaged in this process, how was it publicised, how were the venues selected, on what basis were parents invited to the meetings and how was their input at the meetings facilitated and recorded? Can we have a report of these meetings? How many parents have been told about meetings? Timing of meetings is not good for parents.

Were parents involved on steering group/advisory groups? Concerns re: decision/proposals.

Does DE understand anxiety which document has provoked? Concern – things not great at moment for children with SEN. Parent is scared [by document] that things will get worse.

Why were letters not issued directly to parents of children with SEN, instead of via schools?

Why were Belfast and Londonderry not selected as venues for pre-consultation meetings?

Why were consultation documents not posted directly to parents of children with SEN?

Why were all schools not notified of consultation meetings?

Why were hard copy letters not sent out?

Why did DE decide to start consultation process in August?

Parents were not advised of consultation. Parent does not believe it is schools responsibility to inform parents. Every parent of statemented child should have been advised in writing. Lots of parents didn't know about meetings in September. Areas of deprivation/high density disability – not made aware of this consultation. Document is too full of jargon. Going in the direction of English way of Education system. Not acceptable – not consulted as parents. Consultation is about welfare of children. Parents are distraught – know nothing. DE hasn't had courtesy to write to parents who have fought to get child statemented. Has submitted response – awaits answer. Wants parents to be included.

Hope this exercise isn't to tick a box.

There are 13,000 children with statements. Register access – courtesy to write out. Could DE not ask ELBs to write out to parents?

Do parents put trust in DE officials to reflect their concerns?

Statements fail to specify/detail/quantify what provision child needs. Parents want better system. Outcomes – inputs necessary.

Parents' confidence in the system: If each school is accountable for support for children, how will this be better for parents? How will parents be able to hold the school to account – what will be the mechanisms? And how will this make a difference to the relationship parents currently have with schools?

How are parents' comments taken into account for final document? Parents want better education system an effective way of working.

Parental confidence for future? Relationship with schools?

How will new proposals be better for parents?

Parents should be involved in drawing up CSPs. Were parents involved in multi agency groups?

Will parents be written to advise of changes? Circular letters?

Can there be more meetings like this to advise parents of updates? Local groups / meetings with parents.

Document doesn't put parents at top of agenda.

Parents need to have confidence – don't have that at present. Power comes from knowledge, and parents need more knowledge / information.

How are consultation responses analysed? Is all data gathered?

Was Assembly up and running in August?

In email, were schools asked to inform parents?

Impression of credibility of process – no venues in Belfast/Londonderry – no schools from these areas asked to attend.

What about parents who still don't know about consultation? Can hard copy letters be sent out?

The proposals will affect all children – resources in classroom affect children with and without SEN. Is document serious attempt to take views of parents?

Taking/having time – parents don't have time. Geographies – DE excluded large proportion of population in pre-consultation – venues?  
Document not friendly, not accessible, not easy to read.

Assessing our responses, as parents and partners we want to make our contribution to these decisions about our children. What system will you be using to ensure that every response to the proposals counts? How will you be collating responses across different formats – emails, letters, and the consultation booklets? Will the contents of each letter be collated along with responses from booklets? How will the responses from the consultation meetings be collated? Were they recorded and are they available in a report? How will they be counted – as one response or how will the concerns of each person at the meeting be recorded?

How are responses from this meeting recorded? Recorded as number of individuals, or as one group?

Was DE's communication adequate to alert parents to changes? i.e. Meetings, knowledge of document, etc. Feel inadequate work done. Pre-consultation? Steering group representation?

Parents need someone to advise/guide re responses.

Why was this document issued during summer holidays giving stakeholders less time to respond?

Why are the public meetings being held at a time where parents are either doing school runs, homework, in their work or disabled children are being transported home from school? EXCLUDES them

This document is very heavy reading and has too many abbreviations, jargon and is not in plain English. Why?

### **Co-ordinated Support Plan & Pupil Support Plan.**

Complex and multiple learning difficulties. What about MLD provision?  
Define complex and multiple barriers to learning.

Clarify who will qualify for CSPs? What is the definition of complex needs? Is ASD a complex need?

What is the timeframe of CSPs?

Who is responsible for CSP and how will disagreements be resolved?

What will funding be for CSPs?

Will ESA be responsible for CSPs?

How do you reassure parents that the CSPs will provide the necessary support for the child?

When child is identified as having a problem, what happens if ELB still refuses to help?

When child gets to CSP stage, will it be easier to understand i.e. will it state clearly what child needs to get? CSPs need to be simpler.

Asperger's Network - if statements taken away, what about classroom assistants. Also, what about transport? How will parents get a classroom assistant? No clarity in proposals.

What will be the legal status of CSPs? Who is accountable for the provision to be made in these?

What is the role of ESA in relation to CSPs? What about stage 3 provision? Will Boards be required to provide this?

4% of children have statement. Will less than 4% have CSPs?  
Will CSPs be a new title for the same thing or a new approach to assessment?

Will there be a time-frame for when schools should intervene before going down the CSP route?

Can parents still ask for assessment if they are not happy?

Will there still be a role for going into schools and doing one to ones?  
National Autistic Society - clarity needed about parents involvement in statementing process. The parents are the experts. Where will they be involved?

SEN Tribunal - Will the rights under the CSP be the same as those in the Scotland Order for CSPs? How does this affect the rights of children? Where does the duty fall for children's' rights for a statement?

Funding is the main question. But also concern re. CSPs, in Scotland they thought they would reduce statements but they reduced rights for parents and children. Parents do like statements and regular reviews. They like specifics.

Requires legislative change - Change statement to CSP

The term “ to use best endeavours” – not enough, requires much more from schools.

Change statements – outcome focus. Could statements be improved as opposed to bringing in CSPs? Does secondary legislation need changed?

Legal status of CSPs: I also have a child with a disability and know there is a lot of concern and growing opposition to the proposed changes. My question is – do the proposed replacement co-ordinated support plans offer our children the same accountable legal protection that current statements require? What is the legal status of the proposed CSP?

Need for continual assessment because needs change. If we do away with annual review process we could miss out on child's needs.

Annual review - children continually assessed anyway, can that be made policy?

What is wrong with annual reviews?

Will CSPs change a classroom assistant's job?

Two types of assistants - General and SEN classroom assistant. To get a SEN assistant you need a statement. General assistants don't need to be qualified and are less well paid therefore this is a money-saving exercise.

Would CSP be legal document? PLP – how is teacher to cope with this – e.g. 5 children with SEN in class. Difficult for child to ask questions to teacher. Teacher getting annoyed – under pressure. Parent of 8 year old boy who has reading of 4 year old. Child doesn't want to attend school anymore. Child has self-esteem issues. Mother – at 12 years old was diagnosed with dyslexia, at 14 years old left school. Teacher won't have time to use PLPs.

Disability and complex needs: What do you foresee as complex and multiple needs – which disabilities and behaviours will be included? In your budget forecasts, how many children do you foresee having CSPs? What is the definition of disability for the purpose of these proposals?

Parent of 8½ year old son with Down's syndrome – assessment is to start in January. Will son receive CSP? Does DE understand parents' concerns? Will DE take concerns on board – in consultation responses?

CSP – will it replace a statement? Is CSP as legally binding as a statement? Change of name only? Will child lose rights /entitlement /provision of services if CSP is not as legally binding?

Parent doesn't want to scaremonger. Has child who is on SEN register. Legislative change not in until earliest May 2011. Has seen 2 cases of referral for statutory assessment not requiring statement. What is definition of complex

needs? Currently all children with Down's syndrome can expect to receive statement. In 5 years, has never encountered occasion where child with Down's syndrome does not have statement – until recently. Re hinting at outworkings – starting to come in now. Positive partnerships supporting children with Down's syndrome in schools. ELBs already behaving like proposals are in place – very worrying. Devolve responsibility to schools – greater inconsistency.

Earliest legislation may be agreed – May 2011. When child moves to secondary school, will they lose statement? Will statements be done away with?

Transition from a statement to CSP. How do DE officials not know if CSP will be legally binding?

Statements – ELBs – annual review

Responsibility of ELB

Board asks school to carry out review

Principal carries out review

Would ESA take over responsibility for this? Will it increase timeframe by moving to ESA? Told 6 months, but would it take longer?

What is CSP? What does it involve?

If children don't achieve outcome/meet goals defined on CSPs, then what? Would they receive extra support?

Lifespan of CSP – 4 years? - according to document. Would CSP bring legal entitlement, as statements do? Right of appeal, etc?

Does DE understand that parents are worried re possibility of no statement?

Children with disabilities for life e.g. Down's syndrome. Can't progress with some disabilities – therefore 4 year CSP is not applicable.

CSP – who designs plan? What is the length of time from the point that CSP is needed by child until child actually gets CSP? Statement took 2½ years to get for son. Nothing started until 1½ years after process was initiated, then another year to get statement. Parent is afraid – child has guaranteed full time classroom assistant now. Without that – child would not progress at all. Teacher said, "Maybe this isn't the school for your son." Why are teachers not trained to recognise learning difficulties and act accordingly?

What happens if child is falling between trigger points of reviews? Individual outcomes

How will needs be monitored if next review is 3 years later?

School set targets and outcomes. Who is assessing schools?

CSP's how will they differ from the present system of statements? Will the bar be raised in order to qualify for such a plan? Is funding going to come with each CSP? Need more detail as to what they are - Complex- what does this mean? Or multiple barriers to learning- what are these?

Issues of diagnostic testing - with PLP, what happens if a child has 2 conflicting psychology reports, one private, one Board? Will PLP empower teachers/schools to ensure correct diagnosis?

How will we prevent PLP being ignored like IEPs are? Because the statement is a statutory obligation it is a comfort to parents.

Any distinct differences between IEP and PLP?

What about PLPs? All that data is kept, will parents have input?

Removal of the statementing process equals the removal of rights. Code of Practice review strengthened parents' rights, why change it now to remove rights? Who is legally responsible for CSPs? At what stage will parent be allowed to ask for statutory assessment?

How will existing legislation/ESA affect this proposal?

Legal status – will CSP have this? Parents want to be able to track money given to schools. Expertise needs to be included in training programme. Low level diagnostic testing – subject to legal case in future if wrong. Teacher needs to be well skilled/equipped.

### **Funding & Resource issues.**

How much is spent by ELBs on statements? Not certain that schools will use the money saved from statements to best effect.

Will LMS funding be reviewed?

Funding - no clarity on LMS.

Will middle class children be discriminated against because FSM is used as an indicator?

Will ongoing funding be available for full implementation of proposals?

What about funding mechanisms? How will they work? What will the benefit to the child be?

OFSTED report quoted. Schools that were inspected were better funded than our primary schools. Need the right funding to help us deliver what we are expected to deliver

Is funding for whole school, not just SEN?

What are funding arrangements?

Will extra funding be available?

Will money saved go back into frontline?

Will funding be ring-fenced? What kind of accountability will there be for SEN funding?

Will teachers' sub-cover be funded?

Lots of good ideas but a lot of this work is being done already e.g. sharing good practice! Funding is the main issue.

If schools are given extra money, will the onus be on them to refer to Ed. Psych. or MG?

Big questions on funding - more needs to be done but with same pot of money.

How will it be redirected back into system? Do the proposals require more money for them to be implemented fully?

Majority of schools are good but need more funding to be better. Schools are spending more than they are allocated in LMS on SEN. There must be more recognition of good work going on already. Schools should be able to ask for more resources on the understanding that they will be more accountable. Put money in at point of need.

How will budgets be passed down to schools and monitored?

Support services are faced with cuts and being removed from schools.

What % of £24m will go to frontline services in schools?

Will schools get extra money? How will it be distributed?

LMS - will not work putting funding into schools through TSN. Need full accountability.

School - will give document fair hearing but has issues with outworkings - 52 recommendations in Annex. They are not costed. To effect change we need budgetary detail. Huge HR issues for schools e.g. SENCOs etc.

Must be costed. Also, need detail on what will be the role of the Educational Psychologist under new proposals.

Separate funding streams?

Funding of teachers – who will be responsible for making sure funding goes to children with SEN?

Financial ring fencing: committee member of several different support groups for children with disabilities. Like other parents, aware of the growing concern not about the principles behind these proposals but about how they will actually work. Concerned about the lack of ring-fencing of funding in the provision of special educational needs. There is a fear in teaching and parental circles that there will be a responsibility on schools to meet the majority of pupils' needs without adequate financial protection for those with a disability and this may sometimes result in discrimination. Will the ring-fencing of funding for children with special educational needs be changed? Fears re outworking.

Budget: How have the costs of these proposals been calculated and compared to the costs of the current system?

Costs calculated? Is DE looking to reduce costs? Enhance skills or reduce?

Increase in number of children with SEN. Assessment is gateway to resources.

Reference to costs. Concerns re efficiency savings - £370m savings to be made by Stormont. Will ELBs have to make savings?

Will funding be ringfenced for SEN?

Will schools have flexibility/capacity to use money which hasn't been ringfenced? Consistency required.

Is it difficult to move money from one area to another?

Not clear re budget – being diluted to assist/support AEN groups e.g. looked after children, school age mothers, Travellers, etc?

### **Early Identification & Intervention.**

Looking at nursery schools, outside support can be very slow and child can be in P1 or P2 before assessment happens.

What level of help will community playgroups get? Will it be for the whole setting?

What if a child doesn't have a funded place but has SEN?

Provision for early intervention re: playgroups - very bad experience from some playgroups. When child goes into P1 with a full assessment, same happens again - social services and education- need to work together better

Urge DE to look at early intervention.

How will the revised curriculum (foundation stage) be impacted upon with the need for early identification? e.g. dyslexic children don't get help until P4. How will proposals dovetail with that?

Would voluntary playgroups have a nominated SEN teacher?

Nurseries - work to be done with health boards. 30 month assessment has been removed so child comes to nursery with no assessment. Have to wait about a year to get a statutory assessment, then they are leaving nursery at that stage.

Ethnic minorities denied early assessment.

Early intervention - most effective, but programmes such as reading recovery have been removed. Why?

Will Surestart be affected?

Early intervention matters. Parent who has waited almost 3 years for intervention.

Speech and language needs – early intervention. Who will early intervention come from? Who do parents go to?

### **Learning Support Coordinator & SENCO.**

SENCOs under pressure. This will not get easier under these proposals. Will SENCOs have allocated non-contact time etc?

Very idealistic proposals. SENCOs should be senior, non-teaching and remunerated.

Re. statistics - number and increase of SEN in schools - taking pressure off teachers, any more funds in LMS to fund a full time SENCO in schools?

Are there plans for more time to be given to LSCs to do their job?  
Where does SENCO authority start and stop? Childrens problems being misdiagnosed. How much training will SENCOs get?

How many children will slip through the net or be misdiagnosed? What qualifications will SENCOs get? How can parent appeal?

SENCOs – daughter has dyslexia and granddaughter has autism. Anxiety – teachers under pressure. Want teachers to be capable of helping children with special needs.

What will the role of LSCs be?

Will LSCs have a diagnostic role?

Parents are concerned re 'diagnosis' term.

How valuable is job of SENCO? Who monitors SENCOs? How will parents know if their child is getting the help they need?

ESA will provide training. If SENCOs misdiagnose child will they be legally covered?

LSC's – why is this not a dedicated job given the importance of this key role in ensuring the whole system works?

### **Health & Social Care.**

Difficulties with physio, SLT or OT and access to these services. Staff in schools have no knowledge of certain conditions e.g. cerebral palsy.

Parent explained that child's social worker left and child now has no social worker - Education and Health are not working together.

Parent of child who was in hospital. After being discharged, child needed physio every day but didn't get it. Child now 2½ years old – has feeding tube – will there be people in school trained to insert feeding tube, e.g. physiotherapist?

Problem when child falls between Education and Health. Will support be linked up in future?

Not every school needs speech and language therapist. Could speech and language therapist train teachers to support child with speech and language difficulties? Parent partnership – could schools involve / engage parents more?

Child is central. Expertise should be shared.

### **Multi-Disciplinary Groups.**

What will be the criteria for MGs?

Will MG have role in providing consistency? Conflict between MGs and area partnerships? Will there be a role for parental involvement in MGs? UNOCINI - will there be a common framework which links with this?

Fully support NEELB MAST service for early intervention model.

Will therapists be part of MGs?

Will parents be involved with MGs?

### **Transitions.**

Only address issue re transitions at 14+.

Parent of 9 year old child with severe learning difficulties (P6). Child has mind of a 4 year old. Parents were handed yellow pages by schools for help/support. When child is moving to post-primary, will parents be given another yellow pages? Guidance/support required.

Are Transition Co-ordinators going to have a dedicated post and role are they to be integrated into a teachers role?

Why does Transition not look at pre school to primary and primary to post primary? these are also very key stages and come with many problems for all concerned but mainly parents not getting any answers

### **Training & Capacity Building.**

Any work with GTC re: specific teacher competencies?

£23m for capacity building - any strategic plans? Any pilot schemes?

Capacity building - will there be extra funding for it?

£24m capacity building - what does it buy? Wouldn't it be better to use it for extra teachers to reduce class sizes?

How many days training will each teacher get? If we don't know what the training will be how can we comment?

Will there be an ongoing package available or will funding run out?

If staff at voluntary playgroups go for training, will there be funding to cover them?

Teachers don't need training for barriers to learning such as 'bereavement' as they are already doing so.

School literature on dyslexia etc are useful but school teachers have so much to read and not enough time.

More resources needed for teacher training on how to utilise classroom assistants.

If teachers go out to other schools, what about the children left behind in the class?

What is the timeframe for implementation? Capacity building will take time. Need change in confidence building too, so parents/teachers don't always look for outside support.

Certain situations teachers cannot cope with therefore they need outside support; capacity building will not help in these situations.

Will voluntary sector be included in capacity building?

Concern over practicalities of proposals. Can we have assurance that we would have additional trained manpower? Total inclusivity equals additional training.

How does it link with revised curriculum?

Early Years Organisation - notes that there will be training for staff in PEAGS settings but what about those not in PEAGS settings - inequality?

How many disabilities will teachers be trained in? Endless list!

£24m for training is good but numbers of teachers /CAs trained needs to be increased.

SEN CAs - no budget for training SEN CAs now, will there be money available to train SEN CAs? What about general assistants? No money spent on their training.

Why not do capacity building/teacher training before making changes?  
2010 training – will happen regardless of proposals?

Ideal ethos in school – every child special. Curriculum in teacher training college – deficit in training – teachers need skills to deal with children with different needs. Teachers not even able to deal with mainstream, never mind Special Schools.

Parent of 8 year old child who has autism and complex conditions. Also parent of 17/18 year old who has no difficulties. Some teachers don't want to teach children with special needs. Training – 4 hours on autism – according to a recent teacher who qualified. DE should look at teacher training – there are more additional needs now and more areas of deprivation. There are more complex needs – not just learning difficulties. Training not specific enough.

Not everyone working with children with Special Needs is passionate enough.

Sub teachers – cost.

Stability/commitment of sub teachers – called into question. Sub teachers – retired mostly?

### **School Partnerships & Area Learning Communities.**

Welcome DE's commitment to special schools and at forefront for future, and re. drive to work collaboratively with mainstream schools.

SEND0 – regarding children with dyslexia who have no statement, within a learning community - could a child without a statement come to a special school for provision?

Sharing expertise is essential – helps / gives knowledge to more people

### **Implications for Special Schools.**

Learning support centres - feel they might lose out.

Role of special schools - will there be a further report on the role of special schools?

What will be the effect on special schools and how do the policy proposals strengthen the position of special schools and their funding? Will special school teachers be funded to go out to mainstream schools – a process needs to be put in place?

What is the position for funding for special schools?

Need funding for signing in special schools.

Refers in document to special schools still having a role with complex needs. Will that be just SLD or MLD also?

Special Needs schools – small numbers. Will Special Schools be given funding to extend teaching staff? Special School teachers – working with/training teachers in mainstream schools. Children lose out when teachers are covered for a day (subbing). Lack of Special Needs teachers. Will there be more Special Needs schools, especially post-primary? Increase in number of children with special needs.

Children being sent to mainstream – not capable beyond certain point. There should be more special needs provision after primary school.

Child is getting 25 hours at special school. Children in some schools not getting enough one to one help and support. Who monitors this? Classroom assistants are sometimes shared between pupils.

### **Implications for Mainstream Schools.**

Numbers of children in special schools are going down because mainstream schools are holding onto SEN children. Mainstream school children needs not being met.

Mainstream schools are not holding onto SEN pupils. Will there be extra resourcing for mainstream schools if they have more responsibility? Will LMS and current funding be reviewed?

One size fits all in some schools, in some post primary schools and FE colleges children disappear off the radar.

Time needs to be given for Classroom Assistants to meet with teachers so they can be involved in planning and delivery.

How can school ensure that provision given in the future is as good as current provision?

What is the budget /vision for nurture groups?

Small rural schools - how do they fit in with area planning and closure of small schools?

Some schools refuse SEN children. How will the proposals stop this happening?

Will school have less of a budget if they refuse SEN kids?

What is policy of those who make decisions regarding the placing in special schools of sensory impaired children? Is it a policy to send child to mainstream instead?

Teachers don't want to work with children with SEN – e.g. child with Down's syndrome. Teachers should teach children with disability – it's not a disease.

If DE engaged with parents in meaningful way it would save time. Principals and teachers are objecting to proposals also. Resisting change. Funding concerns – schools responsible in future. Arbitrary system at present – principal responsible. 50% of schools perform well. What about other 50% - different schools have different priorities. Lack of accountability. ELBs have difficulty being responsible – will schools be able to do a better job?

### **Monitoring & Accountability.**

Accountability - how do we monitor progress? Need targets.

Resolution and appeal mechanisms. Will they change? What will new framework look like?

Concerns about accountability – want less bureaucracy, but want money used appropriately

Robust way of examining how schools are coping with SEN – needs improvement. Classroom assistants are not represented well in document. When inspection happens - not reflecting reality of daily life at school.

### **Alternative Education Provider.**

AEP, will that still be there? What about behavioural units?

AEP - children falling out of system. It is vital to enshrine and embed the right to a statement. System of checks and balances needs to be put into place.

Also needs to be a robust tracking mechanism for how money is spent, and on outcomes

### **Meeting held for members of the Deaf community.**

Child's right and education. Haven't mentioned rights of parent – wants child to have access to education via signing. Issues of provision for children with hearing difficulties.

Special Schools, Units, Impaired Units – review – key stages – concerns. 90% of parents with deaf children are hearing. Children put into mainstream schools – need provision – 9/10 years old developing sign language – need interpreters in schools.

Very important for deaf children to have sign language parents. More deaf people employed? Identity issue.

Commends Department on setting up meeting. Own background – contracted meningitis at 5 years old. Isolated during school life. Friends and peers progressing. Started deaf school at 7 years old. Schools different now. Special school, unit or mainstream school. For children to have successful education, they need to be supported by staff with knowledge. School needs inspection – achievement.

Where deficit has been identified – are there enhanced accountability measures/structures – schools set own agenda. All schools should have same standard of provision and increased accountability in order to achieve this.

Has son who is hearing impaired. Issues - to do homework – needs support from parent. Lack of awareness in terms of support. Listening to spelling /reading – satisfactory standard? Assist – child – does school provide support. Access to parent teacher meetings. No family nearby. Delays with education of hearing child.

Parents may want to help child when they come home from school. Is there any process of support for parents who can't help children with homework? Flexibility of support to assist this?

Commends Department on setting up meeting. Address things we've experienced. Autism /SEN 'grouping' causes concern. Language issue – not necessarily a disability issue. Language issue – difference. Linguistic minority as opposed to special educational need. Don't want to be said to have SEN.

Rights – movement away from statements. More PLPs. If fewer children have statements, fewer parents will have rights. Concern – parents of children who are deaf. ELBs – service level 3. 'In School' service. Senior staff in ELBs – deaf children may not get statement of SEN. Children starting to get good provision – now losing rights – schools not held to account – step backwards. Teachers – train teaching assistants – not face to face time with deaf children. Parents value this. This is happening on ground at moment – is Department aware?

I am only deaf person in family. Parents didn't know sign language. When 5/6 months old, parents asked social worker if they should learn sign language but were told no; he should have oral education. Went to school in England – understands English better. Has attained a degree. He uses sign language with peers – doesn't miss as much as lip reading. European Parliament – delegate from Hungary – signing tutor – made comment about sign language in EU in 2014.

Reiterate what he said. Psychologists and peripatetic teachers – oral education. Not equivalent to sign language as means of communication. Very few professionals can sign and have understanding of deaf community. Access education via sign language.

Issues – deaf schools. Deaf people working in schools – working with people with sign language improved child's English. Access to employment – need good standard of English. Manual skills – need to be on par – need English. Being with other deaf people in school – school in England – different sign language – need access to deaf school in Northern Ireland - local education. Where are deaf schools? Big concern.

Deaf people – part of SEN wider group. Children have same GCSEs, same options. Comparing them to SEN group doesn't do that. DE doesn't know how many deaf/hard of hearing children it supports. People who are deaf should attain same educational standard as others, not those with SEN – much lower.

Person attended Jordanstown School. Deaf children can't fit in with peers in mainstream schools – not good for education. Schools should employ people like this.

A Principal of School with hearing impaired unit - Agree with some parts of document very strongly. Classroom teachers were given great level of support when deaf child entered class. Teachers need support. Classroom assistants need support. Pleased to hear about in-service training for all support staff in schools. Deaf children entering more schools – not in just one specialised school anymore. Support required to provide for this.

Deaf parent who has hearing children – one child struggling with education. Difficult to get support from school – educational psychologist and SENCO. Not taken seriously. Wants extra assistance for child. Disappointing experience.

ESA replacing ELBs – deaf parents to contribute to group – discussion. Equity of service. Invitation – to attend group??

Are colleges and universities included in this document? Transition period — astounded – access to interpreters. Problems accessing support. Things need to be booked far in advance. Problems – list of issues experienced.

Talking about child – school refused support. Works in Jordanstown school. Problems arise. Speech and language support. Remedial action required - less so if identified and addressed sooner.

Concerns identified by parents of deaf child – deaf school makes difference. If schools had deaf unit attached – parents would be reassured sending child there – best of both worlds.

Deaf pupil in mainstream school – family communicate with him. Ring fencing money for learning sign language – propose. Better for child to understand language so they know what they're signing. 2006 – 4 children – level 4. Suicidal? Needing therapies. Bridging gap project – lottery funded. Consider needs of deaf children – whole school community. Sign language partnership group – promote sign language. Access through lives.

Family sign language curriculum needed

Parents to stay ahead of child's sign language development

Oral initially – sign in teenage years

No ring fenced money – for parents /sign language – implants? – support. Not every child benefits. Procedure doesn't always work. Money used for sign language support – reduce frustration.

Minister – wants team to look at compliant with disability convention – planning of proposals. Work of sign language – how can review facilitate sign language within its work?

Attendees thanked DE officials for opportunity to discuss review and for listening to their comments.