

## Written Ministerial Statement

### Special Educational Needs Reform

**The Minister of State for Children and Families (Sarah Teather MP):**

#### ***Special educational needs and disabilities***

The proposals to reform provision for children and young people with special educational needs were first set out in the Special Educational Needs and Disability Green Paper *Support and Aspiration*, published in March 2011, and the subsequent *Next Steps* document published in May this year. The reforms are being tested in twenty pathfinder areas, covering 31 local authorities and their health partners.

We have today published draft provisions to improve the support provided to those children and young people, and to their parents. These provide for:

- New Education, Health and Care Plans which will ensure more streamlined and integrated support for children, young people and families than the current statement and learning difficulty assessment.
- A new duty for joint commissioning which will require local authorities and health bodies to take joint responsibility for providing services.
- A requirement on local authorities to publish a local offer of services for disabled children and young people and those with special educational needs.
- New protections for young people aged 16-25 in further education and a stronger focus on preparing them for adulthood.
- Parents and young people, for the first time, to be entitled to have a personal budget, extending their choice and control over their support.
- Further Education colleges for the first time and all Academies, including Free Schools, to have the same duties as maintained schools to safeguard the education of children and young people with SEN.

Previously further education colleges had not been subject to SEN duties. The provisions relating to Academies reflect the requirements currently in the majority of funding agreements signed since the introduction of the Academies Act 2010. Placing these requirements on the face of the legislation will give greater clarity to Academies, parents and young people and will ensure further education colleges face the same requirements for the first time. The draft provisions would ensure that parents, young people and children are on the same footing whether they attend (or wish to attend) a maintained school, an Academy, or a further education or sixth form college.

The Government looks forward to receiving views and feedback on the draft

clauses, whilst it continues to learn from its pathfinder programme, before introducing legislation at a later date.

With the Ministry of Justice, we are also publishing a number of draft clauses relating to family justice and will make a further statement after the close of the current consultation on cooperative parenting.