

**Support and aspiration:  
A new approach to special  
educational needs and disability**

**A consultation**

**March 2011**

# The case for change

- Around **two million children and young people** identified as having a special educational need or who are disabled;
- Their life outcomes are **disproportionately poor**;
- Post-16, young people with SEN are **more than twice as likely** to be not in education, employment or training (NEET) as those without.
- They can feel frustrated by a **lack of the right help** at school or from other services;
- Children's support needs can be **identified late**;
- Parents say the system is **bureaucratic**, bewildering and adversarial; and
- Parents have **limited choices** about the best schools and care.

# Our vision

**A radically different system that:**

**supports better life outcomes for young people**

**gives parents more confidence by giving them control**

**transfers power to front-line professionals and to local communities**

**The Green Paper proposes:**

a new approach to identifying SEN

a single assessment process and 'Education, Health and Care Plan'

a local offer of all services available

parents to have the option of a personal budget by 2014

giving parents a real choice of school

greater independence to the assessment of children's needs



# The Green Paper – Five Chapters

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Department for  
**Education**

Chapter	Title
1	Early identification and assessment
2	Giving parents control
3	Learning and achieving
4	Preparing for adulthood
5	Services working together for families



# 1. Early identification and assessment

Children's needs should be identified as early as possible so that the right support is put in place for them and their family.

We propose to:

- **help professionals identify problems as they emerge**, with a robust system of early checks for children involving education, health and social care
- **put in place a reformed assessment process** for children with complex needs, with a single multi-agency approach and 'Education, Health and Care Plan' for 0-25, focusing on outcomes, giving parents the same statutory protection as the current statement of SEN
- in the meantime, **speed up the process** for families, by reducing the time limit for statutory assessments



# 1. Early identification and assessment

To work towards this, we will:

- ✓ test how to reform the statutory SEN assessment and statement system to create an 'Education, Health and Care Plan' through **local pathfinders**
- ✓ explore whether the **voluntary and community sector** could coordinate assessment and bring greater independence to the process



## 2. Giving parents control

Parents to be at the heart of decisions made about their child and feel confident that support will be put in place.

We propose to:

- **make services more transparent for families**, with local services publishing a ‘local offer’ of what is available
- strengthen the choice and control given to parents, with the option of **personal budgets** by 2014 for all families with children with a statement of SEN or a new single plan
- **support families through the system**, with trained key workers to help parents navigate services
- ensure parents have a real **choice of a range of schools**
- ensure that parents and local authorities **always attempt mediation** before making an appeal to the Tribunal



## 2. Giving parents control

To work towards this, we will:

- ✓ local authorities and health services will explore how to extend the scope of **personal budgets**
- ✓ we will give parents of children with statements of SEN the right to express a preference for **any state-funded mainstream or special school**, including Academies and Free Schools



## 3. Learning and achieving

All children must receive a high quality education whether in mainstream or special schools.

We propose to:

- **address over-identification** of SEN with a new single early years-setting and school-based SEN category to replace School Action and School Action Plus
- **sharpen accountability** on progress for the lowest attainers, introducing a new measure into school performance tables
- better equip teachers and support staff to address SEN and poor behaviour through **training & CPD**
- **give schools more autonomy** to innovate and transform SEN provision, and allow special schools to become Academies



### 3. Learning and achieving

To work towards this, we will:

- ✓ produce **clearer guidance** on SEN identification
- ✓ support the best schools to **share** their practices
- ✓ introduce an indicator in **performance tables** that gives parents clear information on the progress of the lowest attaining pupils
- ✓ ensure that all maintained special schools will in due course have the **opportunity to become Academies**
- ✓ enable parents and members of local communities to establish **new special Free Schools**



## 4. Preparing for adulthood

All young people should make a successful transition to adulthood and enjoy making a full contribution to society.

We propose to:

- increase the range and quality of **learning opportunities**
- provide effective help for young people to move into **employment**;
- **improve joint working** across paediatric and adult health services, with GPs providing annual health checks for disabled young people over 16
- help young people to **live independently** by working across government to reflect this in the forthcoming disability strategy



## 4. Preparing for adulthood

We will take forward a programme of action so that by 2015 disabled young people and young people with SEN will have:

- ✓ **early and well-integrated support** for, and advice on, their future as part of the proposed 'Education, Health and Care Plan
- ✓ access to **better quality** vocational and work-related learning options so that they can progress in their learning post-16
- ✓ **good opportunities and support** to get and keep a job
- ✓ a **well-coordinated transition** from children's to adult health services

We will set out more detail on these plans by the end of the year.



## 5. Services working together for families

The Green Paper vision requires a strong role for local government alongside schools, health agencies and social care.

We propose to:

- set out a strong role for **local authorities as champions** of families and vulnerable children
- encourage **greater collaboration** between local authorities and between services in local areas
- explore a national framework for funding specialist provision for children with SEN that **improves consistency** across areas and allows continued local flexibility



## 5. Services working together for families

To work towards this we will:

- ✓ explore with **GP consortia pathfinders** how best to commission healthcare services for disabled children and those with SEN
- ✓ **reduce bureaucratic burdens** by simplifying and improving the statutory guidance
- ✓ work with the educational psychology profession and local commissioners to review future training arrangements for **educational psychologists**
- ✓ provide targeted funding to **voluntary and community sector** organisations
- ✓ explore how the different **funding arrangements for special provision** pre-16 and post-16 might be better aligned

# Next steps

**Four-month period of consultation and a period of testing proposals in local areas from September 2011.**

By June we will invite expressions of interest from groups of local authorities to:

- Start piloting a new approach involving a single assessment process and plan, including testing how the voluntary and community sector can support this process
- Join the existing Individual Budget Pilots and how the scope of personal budgets could be increased

**We will set out detailed plans by the end of the year.** This will form the basis of any necessary legislative changes to be taken forward from May 2012.

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**[www.education.gov.uk/consultations/](http://www.education.gov.uk/consultations/)**

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