



IPSEA

Independent Parental Special Education Advice

IPSEA Press release

17th December 2009 1.30pm

IPSEA welcomes the recommendations of the Lamb Inquiry and looks forward to their speedy implementation.

If adopted as a whole package, they will be a positive push towards placing the education of children who happen to have a Special Educational Need and /or a disability at the centre of the schools agenda. Too often education of these children is marginalised – considered an optional extra or “add-on” to be provided by schools and Local Authorities only when forced.

Jane McConnell, Chief Executive of IPSEA says;

“Transparent communication and consistent Local Authority compliance with the legal duties which already exist are the cornerstone of parental confidence in the SEN system. These recommendations reinforce the cultural shift needed to make sure that all our children – whatever their needs – are seen as valuable citizens of the future”.

Recommendations of particular importance to parents are:

- Parents having direct access to the multi-agency teams based in schools or partnerships of schools.
- Parents having a right of appeal where the local authority decides not to amend a statement following an annual or interim review.
- The DCSF and the Local Government Ombudsman (LGO) working together to route SEN complaints against schools and local authorities to the LGO.
- The Government implementing a right of appeal to the Tribunal for children and young people.
- The professional bodies working with the Health Professionals Council to review their codes of conduct with a view to ensuring that the codes, or more detailed guidance, provide their members with clear guidance on the provision of professional advice.

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- The reasonable adjustment duty in the Disability Discrimination Act being amended to remedy the exclusion of schools from the requirement to provide auxiliary aids and services.

The issue of separating the duty to assess a child's special educational needs from the duty to arrange any subsequently recommended provision is still one that needs to be addressed. We cannot support the adoption of any alternative system unless it is based on clear evidence of bringing positive benefit to children's' education. We will be particularly interested to review any such evidence from the evaluation of different educational psychology service models the inquiry recommends.

IPSEA will be preparing a full response to the inquiry which will be released shortly.

NOTES FOR EDITORS

1. IPSEA is a national charity providing free legally based advice and support for families who have a child with Special Educational Needs and/ or a disability. For more information on our work please see our website www.ipsea.org.uk.
2. Jane McConnell, IPSEA's Chief Executive, has been an expert adviser to Brian Lamb throughout the inquiry.
3. For comment or explanation on any of the above please contact Jane McConnell, IPSEA Chief Executive, on 07808 470 253.