

ADDRESSING THE SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITIES (SEN(D)) CRISIS

Guide for education colleagues

The problem

- Over 1.5 million children in England have SEN(D), yet many wait years for assessment and support, harming education and wellbeing.
- Access to SEN(D) support is deeply unequal, with outcomes varying based on location, family income, gender, and ethnicity.
- Schools can identify and support pupils with SEN(D) early, but disjointed systems often cause delays, leaving many children without the support they need.

What you can do as school staff

- **Use existing school data** (e.g., Early Years Foundation Stage Profile) to identify children at higher risk of having SEN(D) early. Ensure EYFSP is integrated into data systems, including at secondary.
- **Advocate for the roll out and use of standardised non-academic assessments**, such as the Electronic Developmental Support Passport (EDSP) to track wider developmental needs.
- **Ensure all staff receive mandatory continuing professional development (CPD) on SEN(D)**, especially in areas such as motor skills, sleep, and trauma-informed practice. Check the QR code for ideas.
- **Support your SENCo's capacity** by providing time, training, and whole-staff collaboration for coordinated support planning.
- **Promote inclusion through small, practical adaptations** in the classroom (e.g., sensory-friendly environments, quiet spaces, and culturally responsive communication strategies).

Evidence-based insights

Only **49%** of EHCPs were issued within the statutory 20-week timeframe in 2022.

By the end of secondary school, the achievement gap between pupils with no identified SEN(D) and pupils with an EHCP is almost **3.5 years**. The gap between pupils with no identified SEN(D) and those receiving SEN Support is nearly **2 years**.

Examples of good practice that you may wish to explore:

Bradford Alternative Provision Academy (BAPA)

BAPA provides support to permanently excluded children and young people (CYP), operating via a multidisciplinary approach to help identify and support those with SEN(D).

Electronic Developmental Support Passport (EDSP)

Profiling initiatives such as the EDSP can help school staff identify barriers to education at an early stage in a child's life and create detailed support plans based on individual need.

Dixons Academies Trust

The school offers a 'mountain rescue' initiative as part of its ethos 'climbing the mountain to university'. The mountain rescue model is not limited to pupils with formal diagnoses but instead offers a streamlined approach to support all holistically.

Beaumont Hill Academy

The school tackled persistent absence in SEN(D) pupils by creating a family wellbeing team, using a case allocation system to implement innovative early help initiatives as well as developing stronger partnerships with the local authority to improve outcomes for CYP.

Check out the innovative approaches outlined in this briefing and **consider implementing these practices into your school.**



Scan the QR Code for the report

Please share this guide and start a discussion in your school about how we can all play our role in building a country that works for all children and young people.