

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

Guide for Local Authority Colleagues

The problem

- There are significant delays in identifying needs, long waiting times, and a lack of provision — all made worse by a postcode lottery and a severe funding crisis.
- Children and young people (CYP) with unmet SEN(D) experience poorer education outcomes, higher rates of exclusion, and are more likely to be not in education, employment or training (NEET).
- CYP from the most deprived areas are particularly at risk from the crisis in SEN(D) provision.

What you can do at a local level

- **Connect local education, health, and social care services** to enable the sharing of information, earlier identification of need, and better support, establishing robust monitoring and evaluation to review policy and practice to help identify what works on a regular basis.
- Improve **assessment processes and early identification tools** to enable a holistic approach to assessment and support. This helps with early identification of problems, ensures timely access to services, and prevents children from getting 'lost in the system'.
- Enhance **training and continuing professional development** for teachers, support staff, and administrative personnel. Focus on early identification, understanding diverse needs, and effective support strategies.
- Provide **local advice, information, and guidance services** for families so that they can more easily navigate the SEN(D) system.
- Develop **tailored mental health support** for CYP with SEN(D).

Evidence-based insights

99% of school leaders report that the funding they receive for pupils with SEN(D) is insufficient.

Over **1.5 million** pupils in England have SEN(D).

Examples of good practice that you may wish to explore

Alternative Provision Specialist Taskforce (APST)

Bradford Alternative Provision Academy (BAPA) use a multidisciplinary approach to identify and support children with unmet SEN(D) who have been permanently excluded from school. APST provides children with an extensive support network, helping reintegrate them into mainstream education.

Electronic Developmental Support Passport (EDSP)

The EDSP is an example of an early identification tool which empowers teachers to identify and support potential unmet SEN(D), allowing for needs to be addressed in the classroom, irrespective of whether a diagnosis has been made.

Dixons Academies Trust

Takes a multi-disciplinary approach to education, utilising shared spaces, combined resources, and collaborative leadership to meet the needs of all CYP.

Hilltop and Forest View School

A specialist educational school which integrates academic, therapeutic, and life skills education to meet the educational, health, and care needs of CYP with complex additional needs.

Check out the innovative approaches outlined in this briefing and **consider implementing these practices into your local area/constituency.**



Scan the QR Code for the report

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