

## MEDIA RELEASE

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# The National Association for SEND, nasen, responds to the SEND and Alternative Provision Green Paper

nasen – the National Association for Special Educational Needs (SEND) – the leading charity that exists to support and champion those working with, and for, children and young people with SEND and learning differences, has today (29.03.22) welcomed the release of the **Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Review: Right Support, Right Place, Right Time – the government’s SEND and alternative provision (AP) green paper**.

Annamarie Hassall MBE, nasen CEO and Chair of Whole School SEND, said: “The release of the SEND and AP green paper represents a pivotal moment and we recognise the hard work that has gone into the process so far. nasen will play a key role in engaging members of the workforce to respond to the consultation. By taking collective action, including mobilising nasen’s community of 56,000 members – representing over half of schools – we can ensure this framework is shared widely. The paper’s ambitions must become a reality, and make a real difference in classrooms and all settings across England.

“Achieving access to an equal and excellent education, for each and every child and young person, is rooted in high aspirations and inclusive environments. From the early years through to supporting our young people at age 25, access to a high-quality education, which identifies and meets needs effectively, offers choices, and establishes routes to meaningful employment, is a fundamental human right – it should not be ‘luck of the draw’. In 2022, given everything we know about what works and best practice, continued inequalities between learners with SEND and their peers is unacceptable, and must be addressed.

“nasen shares the government’s vision for a stronger national system to support children with SEND and their families. Put simply, we want to see better outcomes for learners with SEND being delivered. Our hope is that real change will lead to improved attainment, greater attendance, fewer exclusions, enhanced family satisfaction in provision, better preparation for adulthood, improved mental health and wellbeing, and ultimately more successes in higher education, employment and independent living.

“We currently face the sad reality that, despite there being lots of excellent practice for SEND in education, our system remains fragile, and has been for years. It has been pushed further to the brink by a long and brutal pandemic, resulting in a staggering impact on the mental health of children and young people, increased absences from school, and a stretched workforce that has operated above and beyond to support children and their families in these challenging times.

“This paper clearly recognises that we must urgently resolve the postcode lottery around securing an education, health and care Plan (EHCP). We need to simplify the EHCP process, making it more flexible with less red tape, and supporting parents and carers to make informed decisions without them feeling like they are regularly battling the system. By improving oversight and transparency, we will help drive better outcomes.

“It is also critical that we resolve the inequalities in funding that supports pupils with SEND, and those with additional needs. These inequalities are currently leading to the rationing of vital therapeutic services, such as speech and language therapy, and mental health support. Proposals to strengthen accountability across the education, health and care systems, enabling it to be more transparent and consistent, will boost parent and carer confidence. We welcome this aspiration to make the right services available at the right time, when they can make the biggest difference, irrespective of where a young person lives.”

nasen would like to see the SEND and AP green paper consultation addressing some fundamental principles, including:

- **Changing the culture and practice in mainstream education to be more inclusive, and better at identifying and supporting needs.** In order to achieve this, high-quality ‘joined up’ universal provision must have a strong emphasis on inclusion by design to achieve person-centred support with co-production at its core.

Increasing the knowledge and confidence of the workforce is vital to empowering teachers to help ensure children and young people with SEND have their needs identified and met earlier. Embracing the ethos of “every teacher a teacher of SEND” creates a culture of inclusion, and whole-school approaches can build on this to foster a sense of belonging for everyone in a school/setting.

Importantly, we must learn from those with lived experience, putting the voice of children and young people, parents, carers and wider family members, at the heart of the SEND and AP green paper next steps.

- **Improving workforce training.** nasen wants to ensure that SENCOs routinely have the opportunity to influence strategic decision-making at leadership level, and that ongoing professional development and training is provided for school-based SENCOs.

The same level of high-quality training must be extended to early years education, with early years settings having regular access to a SENCO. Championing training, such as the accredited SENCO Award in Early Years, will help to ensure that early years practitioners in pre-reception settings have the knowledge and skills required to identify when children are struggling, or not developing to expected levels.

Overall training must be improved, and this needs to start with enhancing Initial Teacher Training (ITT) to ensure that all teachers are equipped to be a teacher of learners with SEND and learning differences, right from the start of their career.

Adding to the details of these principles, Annamarie Hassall MBE continued: “nasen has ambitious plans to work with key strategic partners across all phases of the education system. For too long, children and young people with SEND have experienced worse outcomes than their peers. We are ready to engage in solution-focused conversations on the toughest challenges, whether that’s exploring fairer funding systems that start with desired outcomes, effective routes for dispute resolution, or sustainable models of workforce training. The release of today’s paper is an important opportunity for us to unite as a workforce, and to respond to the consultation by setting out solutions; sharing our collective experience on what works to improve life chances, so that we can get this right for children and young people.

“Our ambition is to turn hopes into reality. We believe we can become a nation that provides the best education for everyone – a nation that can inspire and act as a guiding beacon for others globally. nasen stands with children, young people and families, as well as the workforce that supports them. We will not rest until we live in a world where learning is meaningful and accessible for every child and young person.”

nasen will be working to support the SEND and AP green paper, and to engage in the public consultation taking place over the next 13 weeks, through action including:

- Consultations with nasen members, the Whole School SEND consortium and wider partners, on this and the wider policy landscape – including the Schools White Paper, Levelling Up White Paper, Independent Review of Children’s Social Care and reforms to health commissioning
- The sharing of a written submission to the House of Lords that calls for evidence on the Children and Families Act 2014
- The leading of bold conversations in the sector to tackle complex issues – convening discussions, leading working groups, and facilitating solutions.

The SEND and AP green paper sets out the government’s vision for a single, national SEND and AP system that will introduce new standards in the quality of support given to children across education, health and care. It has been published as part of a package of education measures being announced this week, and follows on from yesterday’s release of the [Schools White Paper, Opportunity for All: Strong schools with great teachers for your child.](#)

In England, there are 1.4 million school-aged children and young people with SEND or learning differences, and this number is growing. The figure currently represents 15.9% of all pupils – children who need support in every class in every school – who face a growing gulf in outcomes between themselves and their peers without SEND.

**To follow’s nasen’s response, and activities linked to the SEND and AP green paper, visit:**  
[nasen.org.uk/news/sendgreenpaper](https://www.nasen.org.uk/news/sendgreenpaper)

**nasen’s full response on the Schools White Paper is available at:**  
[nasen.org.uk/news/schoolswhitepaper](https://www.nasen.org.uk/news/schoolswhitepaper)

**To access the government’s SEND and alternative provision (AP) green paper, and find out about upcoming consultation events, visit:**  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/ambitious-reform-for-children-and-young-people-with-send>  
[sendreview.campaign.gov.uk](https://sendreview.campaign.gov.uk)

**The consultation is open from Tuesday 29th March for 13 weeks, and closes on Friday 1st July at 23.45pm.**

-ENDS-

#### **Further Information**

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## Notes to Editors

### About nasen

- nasen – the national association for special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) – is the leading membership charity that exists to champion, connect and support those working with and for children and young people with SEND and learning differences
- A fully inclusive and equitable education must be the aspiration for all children and young people. We exist to champion, connect and support all those involved in the education community - from the early years to schools, post-16, specialist schools and wider settings - to make this a reality
- Our free membership network, leading campaigns, trusted experience and training are empowering a generation of knowledgeable and effective leaders and practitioners who are transforming outcomes for the learners they serve day in, day out. We will not rest until we live in a world where learning is meaningful and accessible for every child and young person
- As we mark nasen's 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary, we have worked in partnership with over 56,000 education practitioners across more than 10,000 schools and settings, and are deeply committed to ensuring that our expertise in SEND is available to every school and setting in the UK
- nasen's work spans the delivery of international programmes of support through to direct, 'on the ground' engagement with schools and settings in the UK through the DfE-funded, Whole School SEND consortium and wider project and programmes
- For further information, visit [www.nasen.org.uk](http://www.nasen.org.uk)
- Follow nasen on Twitter [@nasen\\_org](https://twitter.com/nasen_org), Facebook [@nasen.org](https://www.facebook.com/nasen.org) or LinkedIn [@the-national-association-for-special-educational-needs-nasen](https://www.linkedin.com/company/the-national-association-for-special-educational-needs-nasen)

### About the Whole School SEND Consortium

- Whole School SEND is a thriving community network that connects schools, settings, teachers and educators with leading specialists and organisations to empower a more connected, confident and effective workforce
- Built on collegiality and collaboration, our network unites schools, settings, teachers and educators with leaders and specialists of special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) to share solutions and effective practice at local and national levels
- Hosted by nasen – the National Association for Special Educational Needs – the Whole School SEND Consortium delivers the Department for Education SEND Schools' Workforce Support Contract and a randomised control trial funded by the Education Endowment Fund
- To find out more about the members of the Consortium, visit [www.sendgateway.org.uk/consortium-partners](http://www.sendgateway.org.uk/consortium-partners)
- Each region has a Whole School SEND Regional SEND team, formed from school-based SEND practitioners, to support prioritisation of SEND across the region. The Whole School SEND regions reflect the Department for Education's Regional Schools Commissioners areas
- The Whole School SEND consortium regularly publishes resources to support educators with all aspects of SEND. These include SEND Review Guides and Frameworks, leaflets for parents, practical resources to support work in educational settings, resources for specific contexts such as COVID, continuing professional development and learning (CPDL) webinars, and more
- CPDL is available on a wide range of topics, hosted by the Whole School SEND regional team leads and a range of guest speakers within education. All CPD is fully funded by the Department for Education and is free to attend
- Be part of a stronger, more connected and effective education workforce today. To find out more visit [www.nasen.org.uk/page/about-whole-school-send-wss](http://www.nasen.org.uk/page/about-whole-school-send-wss)
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- Access the Whole School SEND events calendar at [www.sendgateway.org.uk/events](http://www.sendgateway.org.uk/events)