

The following has been sent by Janet Grauberg who is a senior policy advisor working with Sarah Teather. She has asked me to forward the following text to LDEA members.

This is a copy of the 'Call for Views' which the Department for Education is putting on its website today. Sarah Teather, Liberal Democrat Minister for Children and Families, has said that she would very much like the views of members of the Liberal Democrat Education Association as she draws up plans for a Green Paper to be published later in the autumn. Please also do pass the information on to colleague governors, teachers or parents, so that they can give their input too.

The call for views is open until 15th October and can be reached via the DfE website at [_http://www.education.gov.uk/consultations/_](http://www.education.gov.uk/consultations/) (<http://www.education.gov.uk/consultations/>) .

GREEN PAPER: CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITIES WE'D LIKE TO HEAR FROM YOU

One of the first commitments made by the new Minister for Children and Families, Sarah Teather MP, was to improve the wellbeing and achievement of children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities, as well as the support for their families. In the Autumn the Minister will publish a Green Paper to outline the Government's approach, and what it means for children, parents and those who work with them.

In preparation for the Green Paper, Ministers and officials have been listening to and meeting people who know a lot about what is and isn't working, including parents, teachers, and representatives from local authorities, charities and campaigning groups. A number of recent reviews in this area have contributed to our understanding, along with reports from the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted).

If you have a special educational need or disability, or your child needs extra help for this reason, or you work closely with young people or families with these needs, we want to hear from you too. Your views and perspectives will help make sure that policies affecting you have been developed with your needs and your experiences in mind. Your ideas about where improvements could be made – big or small, national or local, specific or general – will all be considered.

The questions below are based on the topics frequently raised, but please use the templates on the website to pass on your views about any aspect of current policy or services. We are particularly keen to hear about areas or examples where things are working well, so we can help to share successful practice through the Green Paper.

We will make good use of your responses. They will help us to develop proposals for the Green Paper.

Thank you for taking the time to contribute.

Supporting document:

Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Green Paper

Why a Green Paper?

Children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities each have ó like all children ó unique gifts and their own particular contribution to make to society. They come from a range of backgrounds and experiences. Many are amongst the most vulnerable members of society, and each deserves the best possible chance to fulfil their potential. The right opportunities ó in and outside of school ó are really important to their happiness and future wellbeing.

Parents rightly have high aspirations for their children. The Government shares those aspirations. Some progress has been made in recent years, but too many children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities are failed by the services designed to help them. In the current economic climate difficult decisions have to be made by everyone, and we must make the most effective use of recent substantial investment. All of us need to work together, with the available resources and expertise, to develop policies that work, and make the further improvements that children and families deserve.

Recent reviews have contributed to our understanding of the issues faced by children, young people and their families, and the services that support them, including:

- * Brian Lamb (on parental confidence in provision for children with SEN and disabilities);
- * Toby Salt (on provision for children with severe learning difficulties and profound and multiple learning difficulties);
- * John Bercow MP (on meeting the needs of children with speech, language and communication difficulties); and
- * Sir Jim Rose (on teaching children with literacy difficulties and dyslexia).

We also have relevant recent reports from Ofsted and others.

We know that:

- * children with SEN have been making progress in their learning, but improvements in attainment have been from a low base with significant gaps remaining between the attainment of pupils with SEN and their peers;
- * whilst support for children has improved, the system is still complex to navigate, with different assessments at different times and for different reasons. We can do more to bring together education, health and social care to meet the needs of children and families, particularly where children have complex needs who may also have a statement of SEN;
- * too many young people with learning difficulties and disabilities, and those with SEN find it very difficult to make the transition from school to an adult life that is as independent and purposeful as possible; and
- * some parents feel they don't have sufficient choice or confidence in the schools their children attend or the services they receive. They can feel they need to battle the system to get the support their child needs.

Guiding principles

We will make proposals in the Green Paper that seek to address these problems, building on the commitments we gave in our programme for government.

We expect the guiding principles of the Green Paper to be:

- greater transparency so that parents know how their child is to be supported, what provision is available including special and mainstream school, how decisions are made and how their child is progressing;
- increased involvement of parents in decision-making, not just about their child's education but about the design and delivery of services so they feel that they are partners in the system;
- more effective use of limited resources, particularly in a very tight Spending Review, and ensuring that we get the best value from investment for children with SEN and disabilities;
- less bureaucracy to free professionals up to spend more time with children and families;
- high expectations of participation in society and the economy for young people with special educational needs and disabilities; and
- more local solutions to enable localities to develop provision that makes the best use of staff and specialist resources.

Priorities

The Green Paper will consider how we can achieve:

- better educational outcomes and life chances for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities from the early years through to the transition into adult life and employment;
- better early intervention to prevent problems later;
- greater choice for parents in the schools their children attend and the support and services they receive, whether in a mainstream or special school setting;
- public services centred on the needs of the family and child in the round, joining up support from education, social care and health, particularly for those with the most severe and complex needs and at key transitions; and
- streamlining assessment systems so that parents don't feel they have to struggle with the system to get the support they need.

How you can help us

We want to hear from anyone who has experienced services for children and young people with special educational needs or disabilities or those who use them, and those who provide, or commission them. People's perspectives are varied and understandably deeply felt. We want everyone to have their say, and the opportunity to influence our future direction.

Please tell us about your experiences and the problems and priorities from your perspective. Share your ideas for practical solutions. Where things are working well, let us know why they work, or how they save money or time.

Questions (these are only a guide to the topics you may want to address in your response)

- (1) Are the SEN and disability statutory frameworks including the SEN statementing process - helping children and young people to get what they need? If not, what changes could help?
- (2) How can we identify children's special educational needs earlier, and make sure that they get the support they need as quickly as possible?

(3) How can we improve the processes for special educational needs and disability - in schools, in assessments, and across all services - so that professionals can spend more of their time with children and their families?

(4) How can we ensure all schools and colleges have high expectations for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities, and help young people to develop the skills for employment and their future potential and contribution to society?

(5) How can we improve the choices of schools and services available to parents and improve opportunities for them to be involved in decisions that affect their family?

(6) How can we improve the transition from school to adult life for young people with special educational needs and disabilities and the support provided for their families throughout?

Ideas and examples of what's working well

Summary: 150 words

Ideas

- What is it?(brief description)
- Who is it for?
- How would it work?

Examples:150 words

- * Where is it?
- * What was done, by whom, how and when?
- * What resources were required?
- * How was the work funded?

A bit about you: 100 words

- Tell us a little about yourself and your role

Permission to use:

- * Please confirm a contact name from whom permission has been granted to use the example in the Green Paper