

SEND Green Paper

A Local Authority View



Some Local Authority SEND issues

- Increasing number of EHCPs has put high pressure on staffing numbers, places and provision available whilst meeting statutory expectations.
- 50% of local areas receiving written notices of action highlights system problems
- As DfE acknowledge, adversarial nature of the system created by 2014 reforms causing huge tension/conflict within the system.
- Huge financial strain at LA level not helped by broader reductions in local authority funding generally.

Some Local Authority SEND issues (2)

- Lack of skilled SEND officers (for a very skilled role)
- Expectation from 2014 reforms that Social Care (where there are also considerable recruitment issues) and Health will easily work together
- Key SEND professions (EPs, SALT, Specialist Nurses, etc) are in short supply
- Mainstream schools not understanding the law as it applies to SEND and struggling to cope with increase in numbers and increasing complexity of need.

Some Local Authority SEND issues (3) AND YET

- Some brilliant specialist provision and many many very satisfied parents and children.
- Very committed and hard working workforce for the most part (over and above)
- Senior officers and members committed to service improvement.
- Close working with Parent Voice groups whilst recognising the limits of co-production on unpaid volunteers time

The Green Paper

- Good analysis of the issues in a general sense although the current system was introduced by the present government.
- Much which is sensible in terms of improvement such as digitalised EHCP, funding models, local structures (although local SEND boards and area plans are in place in many areas)
- Welcome the high level ambition

The Green Paper (2) - BUT

- How long will it take for the proposed changes to take place?
- It is not clear how the adversarial nature of the present system will change?
- Although the additional funding is welcome, it is clearly not sufficient – that is in terms of the HNB and keeping pace with demand, capital funds and inequity in Health provision/funding.
- A national banding system may be welcome – how will this work and how will it ensure independent specials are part of this process.

The Green Paper (3)

- There is little detail how the new regional boards which cover a vast area will work to hold all to account. Isn't this a further level of bureaucracy?
- The current system of school performance tables does not encourage an inclusive culture
- The consultation questions have caused some consternation!! – (hasn't this been done before: essay questions?)
- 2030 is a long way off !!

Green Paper - ?



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