

National developments, what's next?

Current developments in SEND thinking and policy

NNPCF Conference

Tuesday 4th February 2025

14.30 - 15.30

Ministerial commitment to SEND Reform



Department
for Education

The Government's ambition is that all children and young people with SEND or in alternative provision receive the right support to succeed in their education and as they move into adult life.

On 4th December 2024 we announced:

- **£740 million new funding** that can be used to adapt classrooms to be more accessible for children with SEND, and to create specialist facilities within mainstream settings that can deliver more intensive support adapted to suit the pupils' needs.
- This capital funding will be unringfenced funding so it can be used for EY and colleges as well as both mainstream and special schools.

Ofsted Reform

- We welcome Ofsted's response to the Big Listen, and we are working with Ofsted to strengthen the inspection of inclusion across education settings.
- Following the removal of single headline grades, the DfE and Ofsted will be consulting on plans for report cards and an inspection framework – with a specific new evaluation area for inclusion.

Curriculum and Assessment Review

- In July 2024, the government announced an independent expert-led Curriculum and Assessment Review chaired by Professor Becky Francis CBE.
- This will cover Key Stage 1 to 5 and seek to address the barriers that children and young people face in their education, with a particular focus on ensuring positive outcomes for pupils with SEND.
- A **call for evidence** gathered the views of education professionals and other experts, parents/carers, teachers, young people and other stakeholders. The feedback received will help the review group to consider its next steps and recommendations.

6,500 new teachers

- We are committed to recruiting an additional 6,500 new expert teachers across our schools, both mainstream and specialist, and our colleges over the course of this parliament.

Dame Christine Lenehan has been named as **Strategic Advisor on Special Education Needs and Disabilities**

Purpose:

- To provide advice and expertise to the Secretary of State for Education and the Minister of State for School Standards on aspects of the ongoing SEND reform programme.
- To play a key role in convening and engaging the sector to help Ministers communicate the Department's delivery of the key SEND reforms. Dame Christine will provide a route to get timely and strategic feedback from system leaders, practitioners, children and families to inform the development of the SEND reforms.
- Contribute to the work of the **Expert Advisory Group (EAG)** on inclusive mainstream and the **Neurodivergence Task and Finish Group**, supplementing policy development.

Expert Advisory Group (EAG) for Inclusion

Purpose: To advise ministers on how to improve mainstream education outcomes and experiences for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

The group will consider how reforms focused on improving inclusion will interact with wider system reforms including the Curriculum and Assessment Review and reforms to Ofsted and accountability.

Duration: From November 2024 to June 2025.

Focus Areas:

- **Inclusive Classroom Practice and Culture:** Embedding effective curricular and pedagogical approaches.
- **Partnerships with Families:** Enhancing collaboration with parents for successful mainstream inclusion.
- **Identification of Children with SEND:** Improving early and accurate identification of needs.
- **Additional Support:** Providing more targeted and specialist provisions.
- **Workforce Capability:** Building expertise and capacity within mainstream settings.
- **Enabling Conditions and Incentives:** Removing barriers and enhancing systemic support for inclusive education.

Membership:

- **Tom Rees**, CEO, Ormiston Academy Trust (Chair)
- **Susan Douglas**, CEO, Eden Academy Trust
- **Annamarie Hassall**, CEO National Association for Special Educational Needs
- **Dr Anne Heavey**, Director of Insights for Ambition Institute
- **Andrew O'Neill**, Headteacher at All Saints Catholic College
- **Claire Jackson**, Principal Educational Psychologist at Salford City Council
- **Heather Sandy**, Executive Director of Children's Services at Lincolnshire County Council

Neurodivergence Task and Finish Group

Purpose: To advise government on how to help improve inclusivity and expertise in mainstream settings in a way that works for neurodivergent children and young people.

Duration: From November 2024 to June 2025.

Membership:

- **Professor Karen Guldberg**, Former Director of the Autism Centre for Education and Research and Head of the School of Education at the University of Birmingham (Chair)
- **Anita Thapar Douglas**, Professor of Psychological Medicine and Clinical Neuroscience at University of Cardiff; Chair of the ADHD Taskforce
- **Dr Jo Bromley**, Service Lead and Consultant Clinical Psychologist for the Clinical Service for Children with Disabilities & CAMHS at Central Manchester University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust
- **Professor Duncan Astle**, Gnodde Goldman Sachs Professor of Neuroinformatics in the Department of Psychiatry
- **Professor Mark Mon-Williams**, Chair in Cognitive Psychology at the University of Leeds & Professor of Psychology at the Bradford Institute of Health
- **Tim Nicholls**, Assistant Director of Policy, Research and Strategy at National Autistic Society
- **Ellen Broomé**, CEO of the British Dyslexia Association
- **Dr James Cusack**, Chair of Embracing Complexity & CEO of Autistica
- **Heba Al-Jayoosi**, Assistant Headteacher and SENCO, Mayflower Primary School
- **Zoe Burlison**, Inclusion Lead at The Ruth Gorse Academy, Leeds
- **Hayden Ginns**, Assistant Director for Children (Performance and Commissioning) across Portsmouth City Council and Portsmouth ICB places (NHS)
- **Adam Micklethwaite**, Director of the Autism Alliance

How the groups will work

The two groups will engage with Dame Christine Lenehan and interact with other relevant departmental expert groups including the Expert Advisory Group for Early Years SEND.

In developing advice, the groups will draw on a wide range of inputs, including consultation with education professionals in both the mainstream and specialist sectors, alongside other experts, parents, children and young people, and stakeholders such as employers, colleges, trade unions, and charities.



Dame Christine Lenehan

Strategic Advisor on SEND



Tom Rees

Chair of Expert Advisory
Group (EAG) for Inclusion



Professor Karen Guldberg

Chair of Neurodivergence Task and Finish
Group

Questions

1. Inclusive Mainstream

What does the term "inclusive mainstream" mean to you?

Do you think it includes your child?

What is positive and negative about it?

2. Hopes and fears for reform

It is clear that reform is coming as the current system does not deliver the best outcomes for all children.

What do you hope from the reform and what do you fear?