

A photograph of two hands raised against a solid red background. The hand on the left is open with fingers spread, while the hand on the right is closed with the index finger pointing upwards. The hands appear to be of a light skin tone. The background is a deep red color.

**How good are we at
Implementing the Additional
Support for Learning Act?**

How good can we be?

PLANNING FOR IMPLEMENTATION TRANSITION ARRANGEMENTS

What are we doing well?

- Education authorities have developed effective procedures for implementing the Act and their strategic management is strong.
- In the best practice, education authorities have fully involved other agencies in meeting the needs of young people with additional support needs.
- Implementing the Act has created good opportunities for reviewing inclusive practices.
- Education authorities and partner agencies have taken a broader view than before about how they can support young people.
- Key staff have a good understanding of legislation and its aims.

How can we do better?

- Develop quality assurance arrangements to ensure that plans for young people are acted on and monitor whether the action taken has made a difference to families and young people.
- Fully involve health and social work services in implementing the Act, together with other agencies including the voluntary sector.
- Involve parents and provide them and their children with more information about their rights under the new legislation and about the different plans and programmes being used in schools.
- Develop agreements with independent providers about coordinated support plans (CSPs) for children and young people in residential schools or secure accommodation.

What are we doing well?

- Most authorities use staged intervention to ensure that the additional support needs of children and young people are identified early and are supported.
- At the pre-five stage, integrated support teams have significantly improved the planning process.
- Transition from nursery to primary and from primary to secondary school is working well, with review meetings and support from home-school workers key factors in ensuring a smooth transition.

How can we do better?

- Ensure better coordination of agencies at the time of transition from secondary school to post-school options.
- Address any difficulties young people have in moving from children's services to adult services and in accessing adult services.
- Improve care and after-care planning for children and young people, particularly for those who are looked after and accommodated.

MEETING ADDITIONAL SUPPORT NEEDS

What are we doing well?

- Authorities are developing effective mechanisms to support children and young people with additional support needs, including joint assessment teams, shared assessment frameworks, and dynamic and flexible individualised educational programmes (IEPs).
- Education authorities use support services effectively, for example, school nurses, community and home-school link workers and speech and language therapists.

How can we do better?

- Combine assessment and recording procedures, including care plans and IEPs, to ensure consistent approaches in meeting all support needs.
- Give parents more information about CSPs including letting them know who has overall responsibility for the CSP.
- Ensure consistent practice across the authority in addressing the individual needs of those children and young people who are looked after and accommodated, have mental health issues and who are young carers.

RESOLVING DISAGREEMENTS

What are we doing well?

- The majority of authorities have recognised the importance of resolving issues and complaints at school level. Many disputes are resolved due to the positive relationships between staff in schools and parents.
- Advice from school staff and education psychologists has helped parents make important decisions about their children's needs.
- Education authorities have provided solution-focused training for staff, using case studies.
- Services for mediation and dispute resolution were effective.

How can we do better?

- Ensure looked after and accommodated children have access to advocacy services.
- Give key staff and families more information about the role of the independent adjudicator.

COORDINATED SUPPORT PLANS

What are we doing well?

- The multi-agency approach to overseeing CSPs is improving interagency working.
- Educational psychologists carry out coordination at school level and provide valuable advice and training about issues related to the Act.
- Policies and procedures have been shared with key staff.
- The quality of most CSPs is good.

How can we do better?

- Clarify what is meant by the term 'significant' so that it is easier to interpret the criteria for a CSP.
- Stop developing other kinds of plans so parents are not confused.
- Develop a clear understanding about how to implement a CSP to ensure the needs of children and young people are fully met.
- Ensure agreements are in place with residential special and secure accommodation providers regarding the opening of CSPs.
- Improve the consistency with which the legislation surrounding CSPs is interpreted.

WORKING WITH CHILDREN AND YOUNG FAMILIES

What are we doing well?

- Parents of children with a Record of Needs received information about their rights under the new legislation.
- Most authorities planned to meet with parents through the annual review process.

How can we do better?

- Involve parents more in strategic planning to implement the Act.
- Inform all parents of their rights within the new legislation.
- Involve and consult with children and young people with additional support needs by supporting their ability to communicate their views and ensuring they fully understand their rights and the nature of the support being provided.

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