



Edward Timpson MP

Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Children and Families

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Dear Lead Members, Chief Executives and Directors of Children's Services

DEVELOPMENTS IN DELIVERING THE SEND REFORMS

The special educational needs and disability (SEND) reforms have now been in place for over six months. Real progress is being made and effective practice is emerging across key areas such as co-production and engaging children, young people and families. For example, today, InControl have published a report on the Personal Outcomes Evaluation Tool (POET) for Children and Young People with SEND (<http://www.in-control.org.uk/news/in-control-news.aspx>). The parents, young people and practitioners involved in the pilot report positive experiences of the Education, Health and Care (EHC) planning process and, for families, the potential impact of EHC plans on outcomes for both their children's and their own lives.

We recognise that the Children and Families Act 2014 requires significant cultural and procedural changes, which will take time to embed. In that context, I am writing to draw three developments to your attention:

- 1) Supported internships and other preparation for employment for young people with SEND.** Our ambition for the SEND reforms is that children and young people should be prepared for adulthood from the earliest possible years. At the moment, 93% of people with moderate to severe learning disabilities are unemployed. That is a tremendous waste of talent. Work experience helps young people with SEND flourish in the labour market. So the government has invested £5m in supported internships to enable local authorities to:
 - build strong relationships with employers – of all sizes – resulting in more work experience and supported internships for young people with special educational needs;
 - help further education colleges and schools to significantly increase the number of supported internships being offered;
 - embed preparation for employment in study programmes for all young people with SEND, including personalised and high quality work experience placements.

This funding will be distributed through a standard funding formula, but the average payment will be £33,000 per local authority. LAs will wish to note their detailed allocations, available from this link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/sen-and-disability-reform-s31-grant-determinations>. They may also wish to note the helpful resources

available from Preparing for Adulthood:

<http://www.preparingforadulthood.org.uk/what-we-do/supported-internships>

2) Support offer: Following a competitive procurement process, for 2015-16 we are continuing to offer help to parents, local authorities and other partners in working with the SEND reforms:

- **For parents**, we are continuing to invest in Independent Supporters and have a strategic grant in place with the National Network of Parent Carer Forums and Contact a Family to ensure that parents can help shape local provision and get the help they need. This will include a free, national helpline for parents and ongoing support through e-mail and websites.
- **Local authorities and their partners** will be supported by a network of nine SEND Regional Lead authorities, who will facilitate peer support and co-ordinate activity at a regional level. Regional Leads will receive additional funding to support the regional supported internships offer. Details of all nine regional leads are given here:
https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/410384/SEND_Regional_Leads_-_Grant_Determination_Letter_120315.pdf
- LAs will also get help from a new consortium made up of Mott MacDonald, The Council for Disabled Children and the National Development Team for Inclusion. They will manage the SEND adviser service, provide specialist advice and support to local authorities and their partners and deliver pilot training and development programmes aimed at senior SEN and disability managers in local authorities.
- Following an open competition, we have announced a range of new grants for 2015-16 across the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS). These grants will offer specialist advice on specific SEN and disabilities, including mental health. They include advice to LAs and their partners across education, health and social care in delivering the SEND reforms. The grants also include support to parents and young people.
- **DfE** will continue to receive support and challenge from the Council for Disabled Children in its capacity as Strategic Partner for the SEND reforms, drawing on feedback from parent carers, children and young people and the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS).

3) Accountability arrangements: To support local and national accountability, the Department has today set out details of a framework that will show how the SEND system is performing, which parts are working well and less well and whether outcomes are improving for children and young people. Developing this will be an iterative process over time and we will work with partners to agree success measures at a local level and develop and test the component parts. The framework draws on the importance of sharing and using innovative and best practice.

Yours sincerely,
Edward

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