Department for Education

mencap
The voice of learning disability

Changes to special educational needs and disability support

Easy read guide for children and young people

Who is this guide for?

This guide will be useful if you:

- are a **child** or a **young person**
- have a learning disability

If you do not have a learning disability, this guide can still help you to understand the changes to the support that children and young people who have **special educational needs** and **disabilities** can get.

This guide sets out the new law for those with special educational needs or a disability. Some of the new law is not easy to summarise in a few lines, and we have had to simplify it for this guide.

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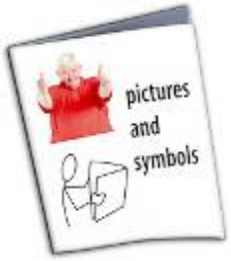
Introduction from the minister

	My name is **Edward Timpson**. I am the **Minister for Children and Families**.
	I work for the **government**. The government helps to run the country.
	My job is to think about how to give better support to children and young people and their families.
	The government has made some changes to how some children and young people and their families are supported. These changes are in the **Children and Families Act 2014**.

<table>
<tr><td> </td><td>These changes mean that children and young people and their families will:

• get the support they need earlier to help them learn and be healthy
• be more involved in making decisions about their lives and the support they need
• be able to find information more easily than before
• get help to prepare for their future, including getting a job, choosing where to live and getting involved in their community.</td></tr>
<tr><td>
</td><td>It is important that everyone is able to understand these changes.

This document is an easy read guide to the changes. If you are a child or a young person who has a learning disability, this guide will help you to understand them.</td></tr>
<tr><td> 
</td><td>I think it is important to provide information in easy read for children and young people with a learning disability.

Easy read information explains things using simple language and pictures so it will be useful for everyone; not just people who have a learning disability.</td></tr>
<tr><td> </td><td>I hope you find it helpful.

 </td></tr>
</table>

Important words

	This is a list of important words in the guide that you might want to know more about. These words will be in **bold** when they are used in this guide.

Important words in this guide.

A

	An **additional learning needs coordinator** is a teacher at a college who is in charge of making sure students who have special educational needs and disabilities get the support they need.
	An **advocate** is someone who can help children, young people and parents to say what they want if they find it difficult to do so.
	An **appeal** is what someone does when they want to try and change a decision about their support that they do not agree with.

	Apprenticeships, **traineeships** and **supported internships** are types of training for young people who are 16 years old or over. They help young people to learn skills to get a job. Young people doing these types of training do some learning in a classroom and some learning at work.
	An **assessment** is a way of working out what kind of support someone needs.

C

	Children are aged between 0 and 16.
	College is where young people go to learn skills that they might need when they are older. If someone is aged between 16 and 25 years old, then they can go to a college**.**

D

	Decisions are choices people make about what happens in their life. Some people may need support to make decisions. For example, having things explained in a different way.
	A person who has **disabilities**: • may have problems with their health • may find it harder to do things than other people
	Disagreement resolution services help to sort out problems where people do not agree with the support for a child or young person who has special educational needs or disabilities. You can find out about them from your local council.

E

	An **education health and care needs assessment** will look at what extra support children and young people with special educational needs might need in their life.

	An **education, health and care plan** says what support a child or young person who has special educational needs must get.
	Education support can help someone to learn things like reading and writing.
	An **educational psychologist** looks at how a child or young person can be better supported to learn. This includes children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities.

H

	Health support can help someone to stay healthy, like having physiotherapy.

I

	An **independent supporter** is someone who can support a young person or their family during an education, health and care needs assessment.
	An **information, advice and support service** is where children, young people and parents can go to find out more information about special educational needs and disabilities and how to get the support they need.

L

	Lacking capacity is when a person is not able to make a decision for themselves. Just because someone finds it hard to make one decision, it does not mean they are not able to make other decisions.
	A **local council** is the group of people who look after things in a local area like services to support children and young people who have special educational needs and disabilities.

	A **local offer** is information about the support and services that children and young people who have special educational needs and disabilities and their families can get.

M

	Mediation is a meeting to help people who disagree about something, like the support someone gets. They can meet to try and find a way of agreeing about it. There is usually someone else there to help them do this. This person is called a **mediator**.
	A **mental capacity assessment** is carried out to see if someone is able to make decisions. If someone can not make a decision by themselves, they should still be supported to have their say.

P

Parents are people who look after children and young people.

Often that is a mum or dad. But some children and young people are looked after by other people who act as parents. This could be:

- a grandparent
- a brother or sister
- a carer.

In this guide, the person who parents look after will be called ‘a child’. They will be called a child no matter what age they are.

A **personal budget** is money set aside for a young person or a parent by their local council.

It can be used to buy some of the support a child or young person gets in their education, health and care plan.

Sometimes a local council will keep this money and use it to buy some support that a young person or their family might need.

	Preparing for the future is when children and young people think about what they want to do when they are older.

R

	A **review** is a meeting where a local council, a school or a college, and some other people look at the support a child or young person gets and if it is right for them.

S

	School is where children and young people go to learn skills that they might need when they are older. If someone is aged between 2 and 5 years old, they can go to a **nursery school**. If someone is aged between 5 and 16 years old, they must go to a **school**.
	Social care support is the support someone gets to help them do things like washing, cooking and meeting up with friends.

	A **social worker** is someone who works with families to help make sure they get the support they need.
	A child or young person who has **special educational needs** may: • find it harder to learn than other people of their age • face challenges that make it hard to go to school or college • need extra or different support to learn.
	A **special educational needs coordinator** is a teacher at a school who is in charge of making sure students who have special educational needs or disabilities get the support they need.
	The **Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Tribunal** is a court that listens to appeals and decides if a decision should be changed.

	Special educational needs support is the support that children and young people who have special educational needs can get in school or college.
	A **speech and language therapist** is someone who helps children and young people who might find it harder to communicate.
	A **statement** is the document that used to be given to children and young people with special educational needs in school who needed a lot of support. It said what support someone needed to help them learn. This was called a **learning difficulty assessment** for young people in colleges.

T

	Training can help someone get the skills they need for things like getting a job, looking after their money, and getting on with their life. There are lots of types of training that support someone to do these things.

Y

	Young people are aged between 16 and 25

Introduction

Important words in this chapter

	• **Children** • **Young people** • **Parents** • **Advocate** • **Special educational needs** • **Disabilities**

What is this guide about?

	This guide is about the changes made by the government to the way that **children** and **young people** who have **special educational needs** and **disabilities** are supported.

<table>
<tr>
<td>
 </td>
<td>These changes will help children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities to:

• learn

• stay healthy

• get involved in their local community

• make friends

• get a job.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>
25</td>
<td>Children and young people who have special educational needs and disabilities can now get this support for longer.

Some people will be able to get this support until the age of 25.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td> </td>
<td>The government wants children and young people and their parents to have more say about the support they need.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td> </td>
<td>This means that children and young people should be asked:

• what support they need

• what they want to do in the future.</td>
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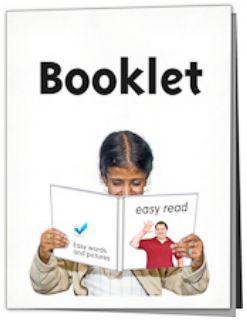
</table>

	This document is a guide to help **children** and **young people** who have **special educational needs** and **disabilities** to understand the changes to the support that they can get.

How can you use the guide?

	If you have **special educational needs** or **disabilities**, you might want to read this guide to find out more about the changes happening to the support you get in your life.
	You can ask a friend or a supporter to help you read this guide if you get stuck.
	You can ask an **advocate** to help you to do anything in this guide.

Making decisions

Important words in this chapter

	• **Decisions** • **Lacking capacity** • **Mental capacity assessment**

What do you need to know about making decisions?

	The government wants you and your **parents** to have more chance to say what support you get in your life.
	You could be asked to make **decisions** about: • what support you need • the **school** or **college** you want to go to • what you want to do in the future.
	If you are aged 16 or over, you will be the main person making **decisions**. You may still want to ask your **parents** to help you make **decisions**.

	If you are under 16, your **parents** will be the main people making decisions about your life. You should be asked to have your say about your life. You may need support to help you do this.
	Sometimes some **young people** will not be able to make decisions. This is called **lacking capacity**. If this is the case, someone will need to make a **decision** for the **young person**.
	If someone thinks that you are not able to make a decision for yourself, you might have a **mental capacity assessment**.
	If a **mental capacity assessment** says that you are not able to make a **decision** for yourself, someone else will make a **decision** for you. They must make sure they involve you and those who know you well.
	Even if you are not able to make a **decision** for yourself, your views are still important.

Things you might want to think about

Here are some things you might want to think about when deciding what **decisions** you might want to make about the support you get:

- What sort of **decisions** do you feel comfortable making?
- What sort of **decisions** do you not feel comfortable making?
- If you are aged 16 or over, do you want your **parents** to be involved in the **decisions** you make?
- Do you want anyone else to be involved in the **decisions** you make?

The local offer

Important words in this chapter

	• **Local offer** • **Local council**

What is the local offer?

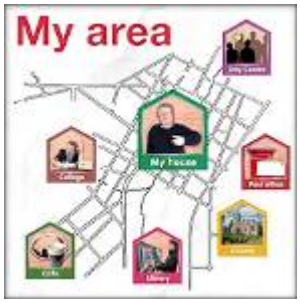
	The **local offer** can help you to find out more about the support and services: • you can get • your **parents** can get.
	Your **local offer** will tell you: • who to contact to find out more information • how you can contact them.
	You can find your **local offer** on your **local council**'s website. If you do not have access to the internet, you can ask your **local council** or your local **information, advice and support service** for information that is written down.

Your **local offer** will tell you what services and support you can get. This will include information about:

- **schools** and **colleges**
- transport
- support to get a job, like **training**
- support finding somewhere to live
- activities you can get involved in
- how you will be **assessed** to see what support you need.

Your **local council** must ask you what you think about your **local offer**. It must say what it will do about what you tell it.

What do you need to know about your local offer?



Every **local council** will have its own **local offer**. This will be different in every area.

You can have your say about what is in your local offer. You can tell your **local council**:

- what information you think should be in your **local offer**
- how easy it is to find the information that is in your **local offer**
- how it can make your **local offer** better.

Questions you might want to ask

You might want to find out more information about your **local offer**. Here are some questions you might want to ask your **local council:**

- Who can I talk to about my **local offer**?
- Where can I find my **local offer**?
- How can I have my say about what is in my **local offer**?
- What services in my local area can support me?
- Is my **local offer** available in easy read or other formats?
- How can I get support to help me to understand my **local offer**?

Support for children and young people in schools and colleges

Important words in this chapter

	• **School** • **College** • **Special educational needs support** • **Special educational needs coordinator** • **Additional learning needs coordinator**

How can schools and colleges support children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities?

	Schools and **colleges** must do their best to find out if a **child** or **young person** has **special educational needs** and give them the support they need to help them learn.
	If you have **special educational needs**, a **school** or **college** will work out how they can support you. They will look at: • what support you need • what they can do to give you the support you need.

	Your **school** or **college** will keep looking at the support they give you and if it is enough to help you to learn. You might need different sorts of support at different times.
	For most **children** and **young people** who have **special educational needs**, the support that a **school** or **college** can give is usually enough to support them to learn.
	This kind of support is called **special educational needs support**.

What do you need to know about the support a school or college can give you?

	You can have your say about what support you get at **school** or **college**.

	If you go to **school**, the people in charge of making sure you are getting the support you need are: • your teachers • a **special educational needs coordinator**.
	If you go to **college**, the people in charge of making sure you are getting the support you need are: • your teachers • an **additional learning needs coordinator**.

Questions you might want to ask

	You might want to find out more information about the support you get in **school** or **college**. Here are some questions you might want to ask your **school** or **college**: • What support does the **school** or **college** offer for students who have **special educational needs** or **disabilities** like me? • What sorts of things do I need help with? • What support can I get to help me? • What **decisions** can I make about my support? • Who do I talk to if I need more support?

Education, health and care plans and assessments

Important words in this chapter

	• **Education, health and care plan** • **Education support** • **Health support** • **Social care support** • **Education, health and care needs assessment** • **Personal budget**

What is an education, health and care plan?

	An **education, health and care plan** is a document that says what support a **child** or **young person** who has **special educational needs** should have.
	It sets out the **education support**, the **health support** and the **social care support** a **child** or **young person** needs.

Not every **child** or **young person** will need an **education, health and care plan**.

Education, health and care plans are only for **children** and **young people** who need a lot more support than their **school** or **college** can usually give them.

If you have an **education, health and care plan**, it will say:

- what things you need support with in your life
- what **education support** you will get to help you to learn
- what **health support** you will get in your life
- what **social care support** you might need in your life
- what things you want to do in the future.

This kind of document used to be called:

- a **statement** for **children** and **young people** at **school**
- a **learning difficulty assessment** for young people at **college**.

You might already have a **statement** or a **learning difficulty assessment**. If you do, you might get an **education, health and care plan** in the future.

Before you can get an **education, health and care plan**, you must have an **education, health and care needs assessment** to see what things you need support with.

What happens during an education, health and care needs assessment?

To have an **education, health and care needs assessment**, you must:

- be under the age of 25
- have **special educational needs**
- be in **school**, **college** or **training**
- need more support than your **school** or **college** can usually provide.

<table>
<tr>
<td> </td>
<td>If you are aged 16 or over, you can ask your local council for an education, health and care needs assessment.</td>
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<tr>
<td>

</td>
<td>Lots of different people will say what they think you might need support with.

These people might include:

• you

• your parents

• someone from your local council

• a teacher

• a doctor

• someone like a speech and language therapist or an educational psychologist.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td> </td>
<td>When they have done this, the people doing the assessment will decide if you need any more support than a school or college can usually give.</td>
</tr>
</table>

	If you do need more support than a **school** or **college** can usually give, your **local council** will give you an **education, health and care plan**.

What do you need to know about education, health and care plans?

	During the **education health and care needs assessment**, you will have the chance to say what things you might need support with.
	If you need any support when you are having an **education, health and care needs assessment**, you can ask for **an independent supporter** to help you.
	You can have your say about what is put in your **education, health and care plan**. You might be asked things like: • what support you think you need • whether you think your **education, health and care plan** will give you the support you need.

	You can also make **decisions** about things like: • the **school** or **college** you want to go to • what you want to do in the future • whether you want to use a **personal budget** for some of the support in your **education, health and care plan**.
	If you are aged 16 or over, you will be the main person making these **decisions** unless you **lack capacity** to do so. If you want to, you can ask your **parents** what they think about what support you need: • during your **education, health and care needs assessment** • in your **education, health and care plan**.
	If you are under 16, your **parents** will be the main people making **decisions** about the support you get. You should still be asked what you think even if you are under 16. You may need support to help you do this.

	Your local council must **review** your **education, health and care plan** every year.

Questions you might want to ask

You might want to find out more information about **education, health and care plans** and **education, health and care needs assessments**. Here are some questions you might want to ask your **local council** or your local **information, advice and support service**:

- Who can I talk to about **education, health and care needs assessments** and **education health and care plans**?
- How can I get an **education, health and care needs assessment**?
- How can I have my say during my **education, health and care needs assessment**?
- Who will be involved in my **education, health and care needs assessment**?
- What information is in an **education, health and care plan**?
- How can I have my say about what is in my **education, health and care plan**?
- What can I do if I do not agree with what is in my **education, health and care plan**?
- What happens after I have got an **education, health and care plan**?

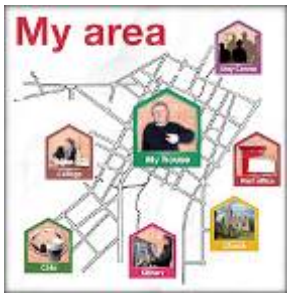
Preparing for the future

Important words in this chapter

	• **Preparing for the future** • **Training** • **Apprenticeships, traineeships and supported internships**

What is preparing for the future?

	Preparing for the future is when children and young people think about what they might want to do when they are older.
	Your **school** or **college** should support you to decide what you want to do in the future.



You have a choice about what you want to do in the future. You can do a lot of different things, including:

- Staying in education, like **college** or university
- doing some **training** to help you learn new skills
- getting a job
- finding a place to live
- getting involved in things that are happening in the area you live in.

What do you need to know about preparing for the future?

While you are at **school** or **college** you will be asked to think what you want to do in the future. You could be asked things like:

- whether you want to stay in **school** or **college**, or leave to do something else
- whether you want to go to university
- what kind of job you might want to get or what experience of doing a job you might want to get
- where you might want to live
- whether you want to do some **training** to learn skills. This might include:

  - **apprenticeships**, **traineeships** and **supported internships** to help you learn skills to get a job

  - help to support you look after you money

  - help to travel around

  - help to make friends and have relationships

  - help to get on with your life.

Questions you might want to ask

You might want to find out more information about preparing for the future.

You can talk to people at your **local council** or your **school** or **college**. Here are some questions you might want to ask:

- Who should I talk to about **preparing for the future**?
- How can I have my say about what I want to do in the future?
- What kind of **training** can I do to help me get a job or to learn skills to help me in the future?
- How can I be supported to do what I want to do in the future?
- How can my **school** or **college** help get me ready for the future and to get a job?

Disagreeing with decisions made about your support

Important words in this chapter

	• **Appeal** • **Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Tribunal** • **Mediation** • **Mediator** • **Disagreement resolution services** • **Information, advice and support service**

What can you do if you disagree with decisions about your support?

 	Young people can disagree with decisions that are made about: • what happens during an **education, health and care needs assessment** • **education support** they get in their **education, health and care plan** • support provided in **schools** and **colleges**, including support for those who do not have **education, health and care needs assessments** or **education, health and care plans**.

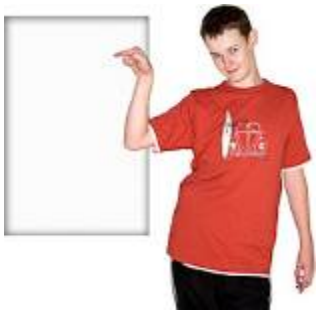
	If you do not agree with a decision that is made about your **education, health and care needs assessment** or your **education, health and care plan**, you can say so. You might be able to ask for the decision to be changed. This is called an **appeal**.
	A special court will decide whether a decision should be changed. This is called the **Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Tribunal**.
	Before you ask the **Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Tribunal** to change a decision, you will need to talk to your **local council** to see whether you can work out something that everyone is happy with. This is called **mediation**. Someone will help you to try and work out something that everyone is happy with. This person is called a **mediator**.
	If you do not want to try **mediation**, you do not have to.

If you do not have an **education, health and care plan**, your **school** or **college** will help support you to learn.

If you do not agree with the support you get from your **school** or **college**, you can try and change things by using your local **disagreement resolution service**. Your **school** or **college** has to agree to take part.

You can ask your local **disagreement resolution service** to set up a meeting between you and your **school** or **college** to help you work out something that everyone is happy with.

What do you need to know about disagreeing with decisions about your support?



If you are aged 16 or over, you can **decide** if you want to use your local **disagreement resolution service** or **appeal** about a decision that has been made about your **education, health and care needs assessment** or your **education, health and care plan**.

You can ask your parents to help you decide.

The things you can appeal to the **Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Tribunal** about include:

- your **local council's** decision not to give you an **education, health and care needs assessment** or an **education, health and care plan**
- what it says in the **education support** part of your **education, health and care plan**
- if you think you have been unfairly treated by your **school** or **college** because you have **special educational needs** or **disabilities**.

You can talk to your local **information, advice and support service** if you want more information or support about disagreeing with decisions about you.

Your local offer must tell you how you can disagree with any decisions about the support you get.

Questions you might want to ask

You might want to find out more information about disagreeing with decisions about your support.

You can talk to people at your local **information, advice and support service**. Here are some questions you might want to ask:

- Who can I talk to about making an **appeal**?
- What support can I get to help me make an **appeal**?
- What kind of things can I **appeal** about?
- What do I need to do if I want to have **mediation**?
- What do I need to do if I want to **appeal** to the **Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Tribunal**?
- Is there anywhere else I can go if I do not agree with a decision that is made about the **health support** and **social care support** I get?

More information

Important words in this chapter

	• **Advocate** • **Independent supporter** • **Information, advice and support service**

Where should you go to find out more information?

	If you want to **read** more information about the support you can get, you can: • look at your **local offer** • look at the government's guides for **young people** • look at your **school** or **college**'s website • look at some of the easy read guides in the 'other useful information' section of this guide.

	If you want to **talk** to someone about the support you can get, you can: • talk to someone who works in your local **information, advice and support service** • talk to someone at your **local council** • talk to someone at your **school** or **college**.

What support can you can get to help you make decisions?

	Information, advice and support service Your **local information, advice and support service** can help you to find information about the support you can get in your local area. You can find out more about your local **information, advice and support service** at the information and advice support services network website.

	Your local council Your **local council** can help you find out information about the support that you and can get in your local area. Your **local offer** will give information about the support and services that you can get. You can find it on your **local council's** website. You can find out who your **local council** is at the government's local council finder website.
	Advocate You can ask to have an **advocate** to support you to find out more information or to talk to someone. To find out more about **advocates**, you can ask your local **information, advice and support service**. You can ask your **local council** to help you get an **advocate**.

Independent supporter

For some decisions you can talk to an **independent supporter**.

An **independent supporter** is someone who can support you or your family during an **education, health and care needs assessment**.

To find out more about **independent supporters**, you can:

- ask your local **information, advice and support service**
- visit the council for disabled children's independent support website.

Family, friends and others

You might want to ask someone you know to help you get more information or support. You could to talk to:

- someone in your family
- a friend
- a **social worker**
- someone from a school or college, like a teacher or **special educational needs coordinator**
- a charity
- someone you trust.

Notes for a meeting

You might want to have a meeting with someone to talk about anything in this guide. You can get support to help you at the meeting.

Here are some things you might find useful to write down before and after the meeting:

Before the meeting:

- Who are you meeting?
- When and where are you meeting them?
- What do you want to find out?
- What questions will you ask them?
- What support do you need at the meeting?

After the meeting:

- Who else do you need to talk to about this?
- What did they say?
- What is going to happen next?