

13 March 2024

Department of Education
Special Education Review Team

Issued via email to Transitionsurvey@education-ni.gov.uk

Enhancing Transitions Services for School Leavers with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities: Public Survey

We note the focus of the Consultation on those with direct experience of the transition process for children with SEN (voluntary and community organisations, parents and carers, and school practitioners / health advisors), to offer specific advice on how systems may be reformed to improve transition services for children with SEN. While noting this, we take the opportunity to reiterate our overarching recommendations regarding SEN, alongside emphasising the importance of ensuring effective processes to enable successful transitions from youth to adult services, including for children with SEN.

The Commission has longstanding positions on ensuring quality of education for children with SEN. The Commission has consistently highlighted concerns regarding SEN education, waiting lists for placements, and the importance of children with disabilities and special educational needs having the same access to a full range of educational facilities and opportunities as children without a disability/SEN. The Commission considers that educational bodies should embed the principles and practices of equality of opportunity and good relations into their core business and constantly strive towards greater equality. This includes for children with SEN.

The Commission welcomes the Department's End-to-End Review of SEN, including the component on Enhancing Transition Services for School Leavers with SEND.

The Commission considers it essential that young people with SEND are not left without support simply due to a change in their age.

Overarching policy processes are needed to provide early planning and preparation for adolescents during their transition to adult life and to identify any required additional services or support that they may require. For example, with regards to Health and Social Care, the Commission has long recognised the importance of effective transition from child to adult services¹.

¹ For further details, please see: ECNI (2017) [Age Equality Policy Priorities and Recommendations](#).

We note that young people with specific care needs often experience a lack of support when making the transition from one service to another². It is essential that children with SEN leave school with adequate preparation and support to transition to adult life so that they are assisted to pursue the opportunities in further / higher education and employment, alongside other young adults without SEND.

The Commission has a key interest in the SEN End-to-End Review and requests that the Department continues to keep us informed about upcoming consultations in this area. Please send any relevant correspondence to publicpolicy@equalityni.org.

The Commission remains available to discuss any specific equality issues or queries the Department may have. The Commission has developed extensive education policy positions, which include recommendations and evidence related to children with SEND. Please see: <https://www.equalityni.org/Education/Policy>.

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² For further details, please see: Care Quality Commission (2014) [From the Pond to the Sea: Children's transition to adult health services](#)