

The long awaited education white paper - *Every Child Achieving and Thriving* was published last month, and, along with it, a consultation document from the DfE on SEND reform - *Putting Children and Young People First*. It's important that providers understand the implications of the far-reaching plans which are expected to become law in the near future.

The ALIGN steering group has read the documents and can offer the following digest of key points for the sector:

The reforms

- The universal inclusion offer will be improved through a suite of measures including access to expert input and 'thousands of new places in internal inclusion bases'
- Targeted and Targeted Plus offers will provide additional in-school support for those requiring additional support over and above the universal offer
- Any child with additional needs will be provided with a Individual Learning Plan (ILP)
- Specialist Support Packages will be provided for children with complex needs which cannot be met under Universal, Targeted or Targeted Plus offers. SSPs will underpin EHCPs
- 'Commonly occurring needs' are expected to be met through improved universal provision
- A national expert panel will set out 7 packages and each child who needs an SSP will receive the package which is 'best fit for their presenting needs'
- 'Complex needs' will refer to those which fall within the range of what can be met by SSPs
- Funding currently available through the High Needs Budget will be 'rebalanced' in favour of mainstream core budgets
- Schools will be expected to pool resources in creating inclusive mainstream environments where SEND needs can be met
- The measures set out in the white paper are expected to be fully operational by 2029/30

Key issues for NSAP

- The reforms, white paper and Ofsted framework put emphasis on greater inclusion and will hopefully lead to better partnership work between schools and NSAP. Good relationships with schools may produce good opportunities for providers
- Redirected funding into schools' inclusion budgets may lead to increased flexibility in commissioning NSAP interventions
- The new National Standards will be implemented and checked and will give added credibility to the sector

- The government project that the number of EHCPs will hold at the current level until 2035
- It's probable that many of the barriers to inclusion experienced by children currently placed in NSAP would be defined as 'commonly occurring needs'. Under the new legislation, this would mean an expectation that many of the same children would receive additional support in school without referral to external services
- The consultation paper refers to 'complex, low incidence needs' which are usually catered for by the Independent Special School (ISS) sector. Under the new legislation the use of these placements will be restricted due to the financial burden they entail for LAs. It is likely that referrals for children who are assessed at this level of need are reduced significantly. This will impact some NSAPs who also work with children with complex needs
- Children will be referred to internal inclusion bases where possible
- NSAPs are urged to focus on outreach and time-limited placements
- All referrals will come through Local Authority compliance frameworks
- The amount NSAP settings can charge is likely to change as a national costing framework is implemented

As providers we should do all we can to engage in the conversation – very few providers contributed to the NSAP consultation; there is an opportunity to give your thoughts in the SEND consultation and we urge you to do so.

<https://consult.education.gov.uk/send-strategy-division/send-reform-putting-children-and-young-people-firs/>