



PLANNING FOR LIFE AFTER 16

Education - making the school SEN system work for you

If your son or daughter has a statement

As in earlier years, it is important that the statement accurately describes your son or daughter's needs and clearly specifies what support should be provided. Make the most of Annual Reviews to ensure the statement remains up-to-date, and remember that from year 9, Annual Reviews also incorporate the Transition process. This involves future planning for your son or daughter's move into adult life. For more information on the Transition process, see the factsheet on *Transition*.

If your son or daughter does not have a statement

If your son or daughter is on School Action or School Action Plus, he or she should continue to have an IEP (Individual Education Plan) until he or she either leaves school or is no longer considered to have special educational needs (SEN). Some school SENCOs (special educational needs co-ordinators) appear to believe that the *SEN Code of Practice* only applies up to the end of year 11, but it does not say so either implicitly or explicitly, and as the sections on statements clearly apply to young people in sixth forms, it is reasonable to suppose that the rest of it does too. It is important to make sure your son or daughter's IEP meets his or her needs, and the regular reviews provide an opportunity to keep it up-to-date.

If, despite having a reasonably good IEP, your son or daughter is struggling at school with the work, social side or anything else, you might wish to consider requesting statutory assessment. This is the process that precedes the issuing of a statement. Remember that you must do this before your son or daughter reaches 16. It would also be advisable to contact Connexions and ask them to draw up an assessment profile of your son or daughter, with a view to carrying out a Section 139a assessment during their final year at school. For more information about Connexions and Section 139a assessments, see the factsheet on *Transition*.

If your son or daughter is struggling at school and has a weak IEP or no IEP at all, or is not even recognised as having SEN, then your first step should be to approach the SENCO. Try to secure a strong IEP specifying an appropriate package of support. If this fails to improve matters, or you cannot reach agreement with the SENCO, it might be appropriate to request statutory assessment and involve Connexions as above.

Demonstrating the need for a specialist SLCI school

The Annual Review process should inform decisions made by local authorities about future placements. So it is important that the evidence submitted to Annual Reviews from year 9 onwards makes it clear that your son or daughter will not cope in a mainstream school or college and requires an intensive, language-based environment.

If your son or daughter currently attends a specialist SLCI school, the staff will probably provide the necessary evidence in their reports. It might be trickier, though, if your son or daughter attends a mainstream school or language unit, as the staff might not be aware of the existence of SLCI schools, or realise the importance of spelling out the extent of your son or daughter's needs. It is worth discussing this with them. If, however, they prove unhelpful, it might be worth obtaining reports privately.

Do also bear in mind, if you have a supportive Connexions adviser, that a thorough Section 139a assessment might be useful additional evidence. It might also be necessary to obtain letters from two local FE Colleges saying they could not meet your son or daughter's needs. For more information about colleges and how they support students with special needs and disabilities, see the factsheets: *Colleges and Special Needs Support in Colleges*.

If, in spite of strong evidence, your local authority insists your son or daughter's needs could be met at the local FE College and inform you that they intend to discontinue the statement when he or she reaches the end of Year 11, then you have the right to appeal to the Tribunal.

If you are convinced that an SLCI school is the only setting that could meet your son or daughter's needs at 16+, and he or she does **not** currently have a statement, then you should initiate the statutory assessment process immediately.

For more information on any of these issues, see the factsheet *Education: Sources of Further Information* or contact the **Afasic Helpline on 0300 666 9410 or 0207 490 9420.**

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