

4Children Response to Department for Education consultation on Revision of the 'SEND code of practice: 0 to 25 years'

1 Does the Code clearly reflect the changes made to the consultation draft to take account of the amendments to the Children and Families Bill to include disabled children and young people in the provisions on identifying children and young people, integrating education, health and care provision, joint commissioning, the local offer and providing information and advice? (Chapters 1, 2, 3 and 4)

4Children is pleased that this final draft code has given due regard to previous feedback opportunities and consultation and now contains more detail and reference points. In particular we acknowledge the particular improvement that has been made by adding a dedicated section – Section 5 - on early years which raises its status and helps to support early years within the local offer.

The recent revised Early Years Foundation stage framework published by the Department for Education on 31 March has removed the requirement for a named Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO) for settings outside of nursery settings, and the additional early years chapter in the new code of practice 2014 can help to address this absence, something that will be strengthened further still through a new specific implementation guide / information sheet.

4Children, as the lead voluntary sector strategic partner for early years, are working closely with the Department for Education (DfE) on producing this new implementation guide which will help to strengthen the code of practice further, as well as add detail currently missing from the Early Years Foundation Stage Framework.

We remain concerned about the section in Chapter 5 which makes reference to Area SENCOs as anecdotal evidence suggests such roles are increasingly disappearing, and therefore may not be there to provide the support as outlined in this section. This should be reflected in any updated code of practice.

2 Does the Code clearly reflect the changes made to the consultation draft to take account of the amendments to the Children and Families Bill to include children and young people in the local authority duties to provide information and advice? (Chapter 2)

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9. Do changes to the Code, and the plans to produce supplementary materials, address the responses to the main consultation on clarity, layout and accessibility?

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