



Independent review of ASDAN SEND provision: executive summary

In March 2018, ASDAN commissioned an independent review of its provision for learners with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). The aim of the review was to ensure that ASDAN's provision for children and young people with SEND is fit for purpose and future-proofed.

Introduction

The review was undertaken by Richard Aird OBE, a leading SEND expert with 30 years' experience as headteacher of four special schools, who has also provided expert advice to the Department for Education (DfE), most notably as a member of the Rochford Review (2016) and the Review of Teachers' Standards (2011).

ASDAN is very grateful to Richard, and the 114 centres in England that contributed to the review. This summary sets out the key features of the changing SEND landscape and the headline recommendations from the review. The recommendations will be addressed in forthcoming updates to ASDAN's programmes and qualifications.

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The changing SEND landscape

Policy and legislation

The principle of inclusive, mainstream education continues to dominate provision for SEND in the UK. However, there is increasing opinion that students with SEND require provision that is more distinctive and has a clearer focus on preparation for adulthood, especially independent living and employment.

In England, this changing focus has been reflected in the Children and Families Act (2014) and the SEND code of practice (2015).

The DfE and the Department of Health and Social Care have stated that the need for such distinctive provision is likely to remain pertinent throughout a student's life, at least between the ages of 0 to 25, but often also continuing into later adulthood.

Similar legislation is in place in Northern Ireland (2016) and Wales (2017). The pace of change in Scotland has been relatively slower, though amendments to the Additional Support Needs Act (2004), which came into force in January 2018, bring Scotland broadly in line with the rest of the UK.

Professional practice

All of the legislation above stresses the importance of person-centred planning for SEND learners.

Person-centred planning involves careful assessment of each student's unique profile of needs to inform a personalised, holistic package of provision designed to bring about beneficial outcomes in adulthood.

The process for achieving person-centred planning requires a continuous cycle of 'assess, plan, do and review', applied not only to academic aspects of learning but to the diverse catalogue of skills and concepts associated with four broad areas of need:

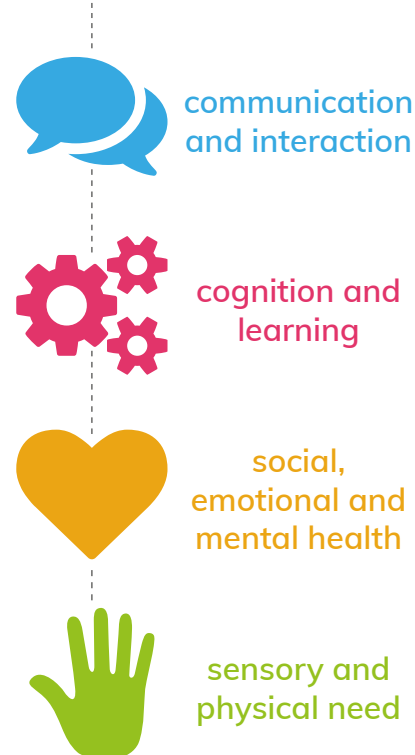
- communication and interaction
- cognition and learning
- social, emotional and mental health
- sensory and physical need

Statutory assessment

The Rochford Review recommended that requirements governing statutory assessment in England should be varied on behalf of students with SEND. This resulted in the DfE's decision to remove P scales from the process of statutory assessment.

The DfE has underlined the need for schools to ensure SEND provision promotes engagement, learning autonomy and good quality of life outcomes.

Figure 1: four broad areas of need for SEND



The incidence and complexity of SEND

The EPICure UK study¹ reports that 80% of children born at less than 26 weeks' gestation survive, and that over 50% of these have severe and complex disabilities.

Pre-term survival is resulting in a dramatic increase in the number of children and young people requiring additional support. An average mainstream primary school classroom can now expect to include two pupils born prematurely, with special schools also seeing a marked increase in children being admitted with pre-term related disabilities.

Added to the issues associated with prematurity, there has been an unprecedented increase in the number of children in the UK with foetal alcohol syndrome disorder (FASD), which is currently estimated as 1% of the school population.

Both prematurity and FASD are associated with relatively high incidence of disability and mental health issues including autistic spectrum disorder (ASD) and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD).

Reports published recently have also identified that an exceptionally high percentage of children and young people with SEND have social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) difficulties. Recognition of this additional need resulted in SEMH being included as an area of need in its own right within the SEND code of practice 2015.

Mental health disorders are considered to be the most pervasive complication in children and young people with SEND. For example, 36% of children and young people with SEND are believed to suffer from a diagnosable mental health disorder.

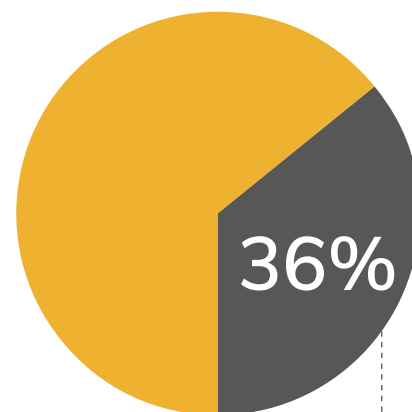
SEND in further education (FE)

Because the SEND code of practice concerns the 0–25 age range, the FE sector is also responding to the changing SEND landscape. In general, a much more holistic approach to SEND FE provision is being advocated.

The SEND FE Workforce Development Programme has emphasised the importance of responding to the needs and aspirations of an increasingly diverse student population².

The Education and Training Foundation states that FE providers should develop SEND provision characterised by clear, specific, ambitious and attainable destination goals for individual students that are properly measured and recorded².

Figure 2: SEND and mental health disorders



of children and young people with SEND are believed to suffer from a diagnosable mental health disorder

¹ Marlow, N., Wolke, D., Bracewell, M. and Samara, M. (2005) 'Neurologic and developmental disability at 6 years of age following extremely pre-term birth', *New England Journal of Medicine*, 352 (1), 9–19

² SEND FE Workforce Development Programme: Refreshing the Sector Needs Analysis: July 2017. Education and Training Foundation, SQW

Recommendations

Recommendations for ASDAN

- 1 Consider how the effective use of IT systems to manage student performance data could help mitigate workload pressures for teachers and teaching assistants running ASDAN courses.
- 2 Map ASDAN's courses to the four broad areas of need described in the SEND code of practice and ensure courses and modules can help in the effective management of education, health and care plans and transition planning.
- 3 Further develop ASDAN's provision for students with the most profound and complex disabilities, using the seven aspects of engagement for cognition and learning³.
- 4 Update ASDAN's personal and social learning courses so that they better reflect SEMH skills and concepts and enable schools and colleges to target the learning priorities of students with ASD, ADHD, conduct disorder, and obsessive compulsive disorder.
- 5 Revise the levels of support for learning framework so that it is more compatible with the concept of learning autonomy and ensures ASDAN accreditation recognises actual evidence of student progress.

³ The seven aspects of engagement for cognition and learning are: responsiveness, curiosity, discovery, anticipation, persistence, initiation, investigation.

