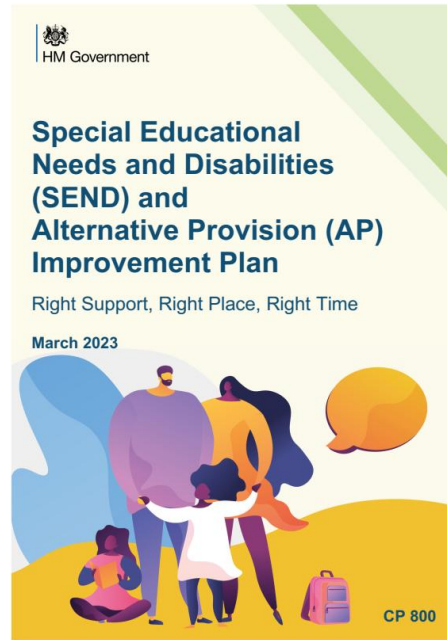


dialogue

Sector updates

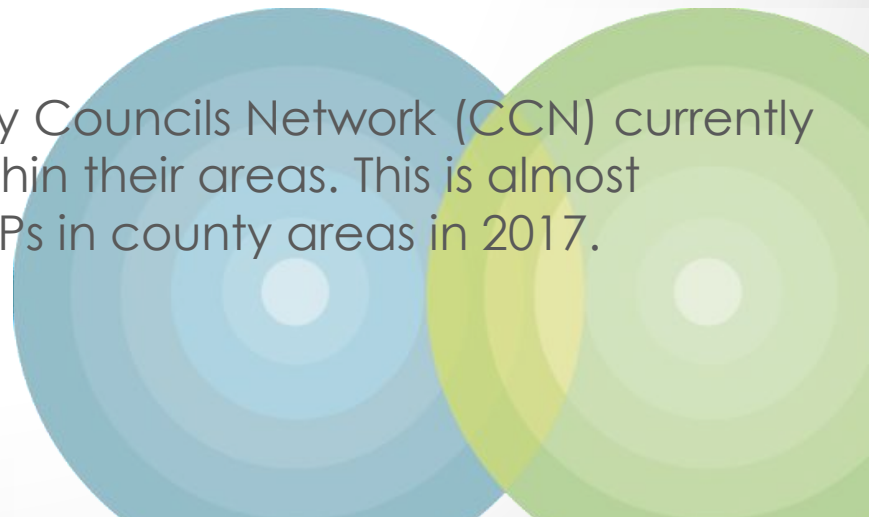
Chris Freestone.
September 2025

SEND plan.....will the SEND plan remain?



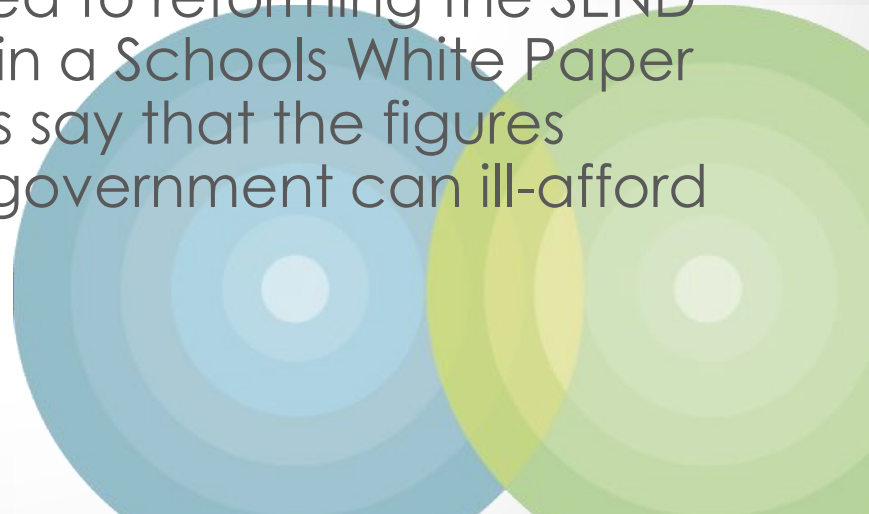
EHCPs

- Data released from the Department of Education shows that the number of pupils this year in receipt of an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP), a legal document outlining special needs support, has now reached over 638,000 young people. Across England, the number of young people in receipt of an EHCP has more than trebled since 2017.
- The data shows that more and more families or guardians are approaching their local authority for special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) support for young people: there were 423 requests on average a day last year and a total of 154,000 requests. In addition, 268 young people a day begun an EHCP across England in 2024 – a total of 98,000 new plans that were begun.
- County and unitary councils in the County Councils Network (CCN) currently have 286,000 young people on EHCPs within their areas. This is almost quadruple the number of people on EHCPs in county areas in 2017.



EHCP's continued

- If a child receives an EHCP, the school is only required pay the first £6,000 in support with the local authority financing the rest – often tens of thousands of pounds. With local authorities facing dramatic yearly increases in demand, the CCN says that the system does ‘not work for anyone’ with families facing long waits for support and councils building up unmanageable deficits. On current projections, these are set to reach £6bn nationally next March.
- The government has committed to reforming the SEND system and will set out details in a Schools White Paper in the Autumn. County leaders say that the figures illustrate a system in crisis, so “government can ill-afford to get reform wrong”.



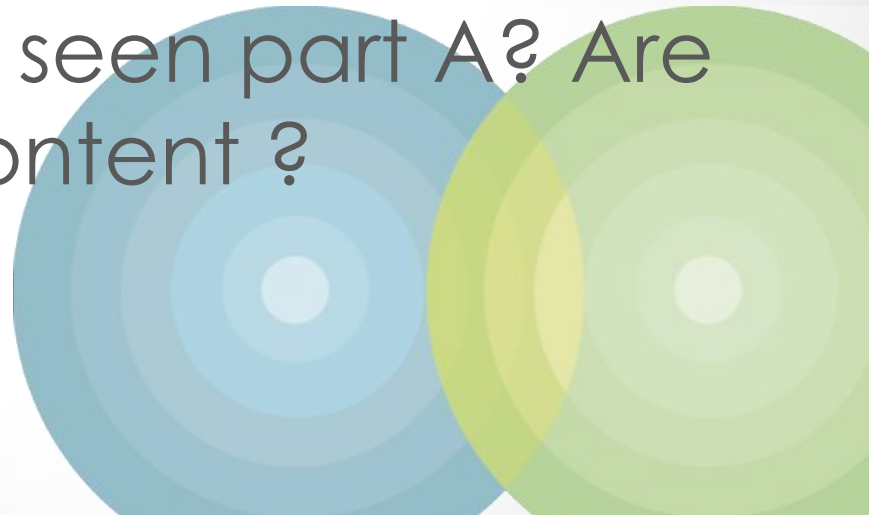
Your reflections on the current situation.....

- Any thoughts?
- Biggest risk at the moment, is the budget set aside for SEND budgets (LA's) - extension given. Decision on next steps spring 2027.
- How will this align to the new LA structures?



KCSiE

- No major changes
- Likely to be more changes next year when all the current legislation has gone through
- Have residential staff seen part A? Are RM's aware of the content ?



Sector updates

Crime and Policing Bill Stage 2 and Children Well being and Schools bill both at second reading stage

Sexual offences

Part 5 of the bill would introduce several measures aimed at tackling child sexual abuse and other sexual offending.

This includes implementing two recommendations from the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse. It would make grooming a statutory aggravating factor when sentencing an adult for a child sex offence and create a statutory duty for certain individuals to report child sexual abuse.

It would also introduce measures to tackle the creation and possession of child sexual abuse material and putting the child sex offender disclosure scheme, 'Sarah's law', on a statutory footing.

It would also introduce several new offences relating to the taking of intimate images and voyeurism.



Sector updates

Safeguarding vulnerable people

Part 4 of the bill would include measures aimed at protecting children and vulnerable people, including creating new offences of child criminal exploitation and 'cuckooing', often associated with county lines drug dealing.

It would also establish new offences of spiking and encouraging or assisting serious self-harm.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/crime-and-policing-bill-2025-factsheets/crime-and-policing-bill-overarching-factsheet>



Sector updates

- Youth radicalisation

Part 14 of the bill would introduce measures aimed at tackling youth radicalisation, announced as the initial response to the 'counter-extremism sprint' established by the government following the general election.

These would take the form of '**youth diversion orders**', a counter-terrorism risk management tool available to people under 21. The police would be able to apply to the courts for an order, which could require or prohibit certain conduct, if necessary and proportionate to mitigate terrorist risk.

The bill would also implement, or build upon, a number of recommendations of the independent reviewer of terrorism legislation, Jonathan Hall KC.

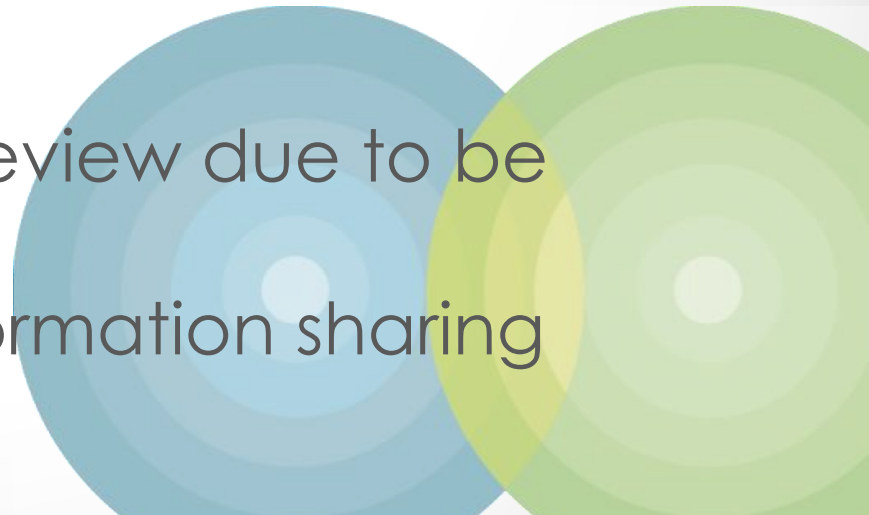
Sector updates

- Home Secretary announced secondary legislation to introduce a new criminal offence targeted against violence obsessed suspects- this following on from the Rudakubana and Prosper cases.



Useful to think about some focus areas which align with education focus areas at the moment

- Attendance - link to safeguarding / strategies in use
- Part time timetables - link to safeguarding
- Absence as risk
- Risk and contextual safeguarding
- Post pandemic impacts
- SEND
- Curriculum - curriculum review due to be published
- Communication and information sharing
-



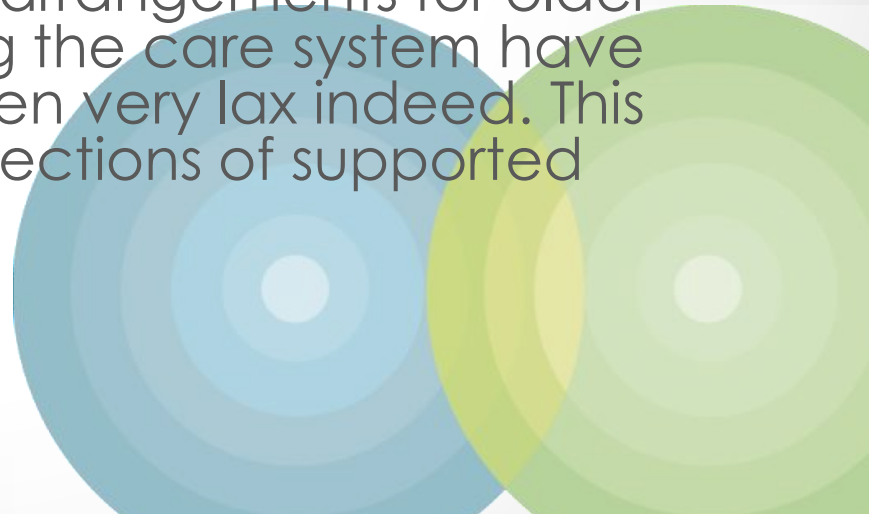
Information sharing

- <https://ico.org.uk/for-organisations/uk-gdpr-guidance-and-resources/data-sharing/a-10-step-guide-to-sharing-information-to-safeguard-children/>
- UK ICO video is useful <https://vimeo.com/864079799>
- <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/safeguarding-practitioners-information-sharing-advice>
- Still proving to be problematic in terms of safeguarding
 - are you clear about this and is it secure in your setting?
 - early Southport Inquiry challenging lack of information sharing.



Ofsted annual report-quote

- Our work as the regulator and inspectorate in social care is often less heralded than our education role – but it is critical and transformative.
- Our stated focus on the most vulnerable children is best exemplified through our work in social care. Whether inspecting and regulating children's homes, or the services of local authorities, we put the needs of children first. We continue to develop our practice to make sure we are serving their needs to the very best of our ability.
- This year, we began inspections in a new area: supported accommodation. Unregulated and not inspected for many years, the arrangements for older children on the cusp of leaving the care system have been sporadic at best and often very lax indeed. This year we carried out 50 full inspections of supported accommodation providers.



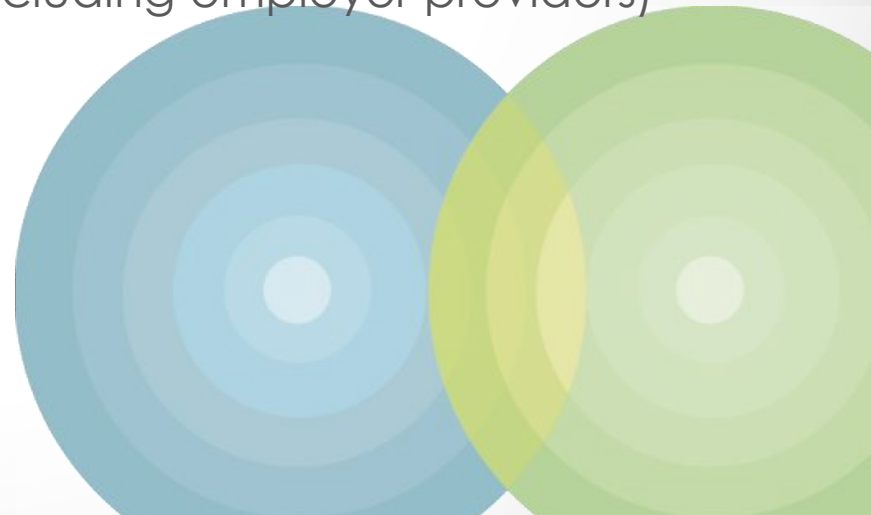
Ofsted annual report-remit 24/25

State-funded schools

- 380 nursery schools
- 16,700 primary schools
- 3,420 secondary schools
- 1,110 special schools
- 330 alternative provision schools

Further education and skills

- 160 general FE colleges
- 38 sixth-form and other colleges
- 140 adult and community education providers
- 1,220 independent learning providers (including employer providers)
- 77 -16 to 19 academies
- 110 higher education institutions
- 12 specialist FE colleges
- 130 independent specialist colleges
- 16 dance and drama colleges



Remit

Early years

- 27,500 childcare on non-domestic premises providers (nurseries)
- 32,900 childminders, home child carers and other childcare on domestic premises providers
- 7 childminder agencies (with 1,750 providers on roll)

Independent schools

- 1,170 non-association independent schools

Ministry of Defence establishments

- 120 prisons (which includes young offender institutions)



Remit

Social care

- 153 children's services and local area partnerships
- 13 secure children's homes and 1 secure school 1 secure training centre
- 180 settings where children board (such as residential special schools)
- 110 residential family centres
- 340 fostering agencies
- 58 adoption and adoption support agencies
- 10 residential holiday schemes
- 4,000 children's homes (excluding secure children's homes) 890 supported accommodation providers

The Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass)

Teacher training

- 220 ITE providers
- 9 ECF/NPQ lead providers

-



Ofsted social care publications

- <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/good-decisions-supporting-children-aged-16-and-17-who-need-help-when-they-are-homeless>
- <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/multi-agency-responses-to-serious-youth-violence-working-together-to-support-and-protect-children>



other

- Josh McAllister now parliamentary under – secretary for state in the DoE
- Cost of children's homes doubles but care can be poor, says report -
<https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/c4gj93d57pjo>



Other

- In April 2025 the DBS announced new Manual ID verification guidance:
- Standard/Enhanced Checks: [ID checking guidelines for Standard/Enhanced DBS check applications from 22 April 2025 - GOV.UK](#)
- Basic Checks: [Basic check ID checking guidelines from 22 April 2025 - GOV.UK](#)
- **What are the changes?**
- The DBS have provided more guidance around how to view documents, making it easier for ID checkers to comply with requirements. Example scenarios have been provided in the guidance linked above.
- There are changes to the process for checking identity virtually.
- There is no longer a different route for non-UK nationals to use. All applicants can have their ID verified using the three-route process for Standard/Enhanced checks and two-route process for DBS Basic checks.
- There is no longer a requirement for one of the documents to have the applicant's current address on it
- There is now a requirement to store details of documents used to verify identities for 2 years.
- If in person ID verification is impossible, a record must be kept explaining the rationale.
- The DBS have added to the list of Group 1 documents.
- The Group 1 passport validity has been updated. An expired UK passport can be used up to a maximum of 6 months post expiration.
- The DBS have added documents to the list of Group 2b documents, broadening the range of supporting documents applicants can use.
-
- Please note this list is not exhaustive and we strongly recommend you read the DBS guidance linked above.

Other

- **New Digital ID Verification Option**
- Following the implementation of the new DBS ID Guidance, we are pleased to announce that we will now be offering a Digital ID Verification route in the EmploymentCheck System which will be available to use from Monday 29th September 2025. EmploymentCheck have partnered with Yoti as their Digital Identity Service Provider (IDSP).
- This enhancement offers a faster, more convenient experience for applicants while helping your organisation save valuable time and resources. By removing the need for in person ID checks, you can streamline your onboarding process, reduce scheduling challenges, and maintain full compliance with a secure and user-friendly solution.
- From Monday 29th September 2025 you will be able to enable Digital ID Verification on the Employment Check System for Basic, Standard and Enhanced level checks.



Other

Employment Check System Updates

- Further updates will be made to the Employment Check system to support the new DBS ID Guidance:
- A method of recording the 'option' used to verify the identity of the applicant including reasons why the selected 'option' was used will be added.
- Group 1, 2a and 2b document lists will be updated.
- Additional document detail fields will be added to Group 1, 2a and 2b documents in line with the updated guidance to support the data retention changes.
- The default NI Number selection will be changed to 'Yes' for DBS Basics.
- Applicants will be able to enter their Passport and Driving Licence details which would then be presented to the ID Verifier to confirm.
- The non-UK national route will be removed.
-
- These changes will be live from Monday 29th September 2025.
-

DBS updates

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Other

- Changes to fees
- As per clause 10 of our Customer Agreement, Devon County Council may review and make amendments to our agreement as required, with written notice. We are notifying all existing customers of the following revisions:
- We are making changes to our fees in accordance with clause 3.1 of our Customer Agreement. Further information is provided below.
- Please be informed that effective Monday 29th September 2025, we will be increasing our handling fees by £2.15 (*per application*) for Basic, Standard and Enhanced DBS applications.
- We understand that price changes can be challenging, but we want to reassure you that this adjustment reflects a significant improvement to our service. In line with the latest DBS ID Verification Guidance, we've introduced Digital ID Verification - a secure, convenient option that streamlines the ID Verification process by speeding up the process for applicants and reducing the time and resources your organisation spends on manual checks. This enhancement ensures full compliance while delivering a faster, more efficient experience for everyone involved, providing real value for your investment.
- User Guides
- We are currently in the process creating user guides for Digital ID and are updating our existing Employment Check guides to ensure these reflect the new system changes. These will be available to download in the coming weeks - a link will be sent to existing customers.



Sector updates

- Any thoughts or queries?

Thank you- Chris

