



Guide to Resources about Educational Support

Version 1.0

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Introduction

This guide includes details of various websites and support organisations which provide information about education for children and young adults with Special Educational Needs (SEN) in England and Northern Ireland, Additional Support Needs (ASN) in Scotland and Additional Learning Needs (ALN) in Wales.

For each country, it has been divided into the following sections for ease of use:

- **General Information:** Websites which give an overview of the educational provision in England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales.
- **Legal Rights and Processes:** Web pages focusing on the legal rights of a child and their parents with regard to educational provision.
- **Template Letters:** Example letters which may be useful when drafting responses to the school or Local Authority (LA).
- **Getting Help and Advice:** Details of helplines and email addresses which you can contact if you need any additional help or advice.
- **Other Resources (where applicable):** Lists of other websites which may be helpful, including legal advisors and parent forums.

It is not intended as an exhaustive list of resources, but aims to cover useful topics.

If you know of any other organisations or resources which may be helpful for families affected by trisomy 13 or 18, please let me know through the feedback link here:

<https://forms.gle/18YoNXW8a6FqDKA87>

England

General Information

Contact

The Contact website has a lot of helpful information about SEN provision in England, including pages about:

- SEN Support in Early Years Settings and Schools
- Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plans
- Home Education
- Education after 16
- Education after 18

The information is accessible and gives an overview of the different topics, along with explaining the schools' obligations and your rights as a parent or carer.

The charity also has a YouTube channel which has helpful videos and webinars about these topics, as well as a podcast covering similar themes.

Website: <https://contact.org.uk/help-for-families/information-advice-services/education-learning/>

YouTube Channel: <https://www.youtube.com/@contactfamilies/videos>

Podcast: <https://contact.org.uk/help-for-families/information-advice-services/podcasts/>

IPSEA

This website has clearly-written explanations about different aspects of SEN provision, covering similar themes to the Contact website. It also explains topics such as:

- Asking for EHC plan re-assessments
- Personal budgets and direct payments
- SEN and disability statute law, regulations and guidance
- SEN and disability case law
- LA and the Local Offer
- Example questions

The website also includes template letters which will be discussed later in this guide, as well as training events and courses which may be helpful. This training starts from £65.

Website: <https://www.ipsea.org.uk/Pages/Category/get-support>

Training page link: <https://www.ipsea.org.uk/Pages/Category/training-for-parents-and-carers>

Mencap

Mencap's website also includes information about educational support, with similar information to Contact and IPSEA.

Website: <https://www.mencap.org.uk/advice-and-support/children-and-young-people/education-support>

Scope

Scope has a number of pages with accessible information about education. Again, this covers many similar topics to the previously-mentioned pages, as well as:

- College and university
- Funding for college and university.

Website: <https://www.scope.org.uk/advice-and-support/education/>

SOS SEN

The SOS SEN website has a number of pages relating to SEN provision, along with common myths and questions. There are also a number of webinars available at a cost of £10 each, which cover a number of relevant topics including checking draft EHCPs, appeals and tribunals.

Website: <https://sossen.org.uk/>

Webinars: <https://sossen.org.uk/services/webinars/>

Legal Rights and Processes

Mencap

Mencap has a useful overview page summarizing children's rights in education. These are explained briefly but clearly, with links throughout the page taking you to the appropriate page about relevant legislation.

Website: <https://www.mencap.org.uk/advice-and-support/children-and-young-people/your-childs-rights-education>

They have also put together a summary document about children's and young people's rights. This is useful for getting an overview, but does not refer to specific legislation unlike the previous page. It has more information about appeals, mediation and tribunals which may be helpful.

Website: https://www.mencap.org.uk/sites/default/files/2016-08/Rights_for_parents_and_young_people%20%281%29.pdf

Council for Disabled Children

The Council for Disabled Children has a link to a legal handbook with a chapter on education. This is a thorough document, making reference to various pieces of legislation.

Legal Handbook (Chapter 4 Education):

<https://councilfordisabledchildren.org.uk/sites/default/files/uploads/files/Disabled%20Children%20Legal%20Handbook-final-Education-Chapter%204.pdf>

They have also published a useful reference guide for Preparing for Adulthood detailing LA's and schools' obligations to young people. Each clause references a particular paragraph in the SEND Code of Practice, which may be helpful if you are looking to make reference to the legislation, for example, when writing letters.

Preparing for Adulthood Guidance:

<https://councilfordisabledchildren.org.uk/sites/default/files/uploads/attachments/Must%20Dos.pdf>

SEND Code of Practice

This is a link to the full SEND Code of Practice. This is a long document detailing the LAs' obligations towards children and young people.

SEND Code of Practice:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/398815/SEND Code of Practice January 2015.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/398815/SEND_Code_of_Practice_January_2015.pdf)

Template Letters

IPSEA

The IPSEA website has many different template letters which can be downloaded and edited. These cover a range of scenarios including:

- EHC needs assessments (e.g., requesting assessment, re-assessment, complaining about how EHC needs assessment was conducted)
- Amending EHC plans
- Annual reviews of EHC plans
- Making a complaint following an appeal
- Asking the school/LA for information

Website: <https://www.ipsea.org.uk/model-letters>

Getting Help and Advice

Contact

Contact has a free helpline which may be useful for parents and carers of children or young people with SEN. Although they are not able to provide legal advice, they can explain SEN identification and assessments.

Website: <https://contact.org.uk/help-for-families/information-advice-services/our-helpline/>

IPSEA

IPSEA has an advice line, tribunal helpline and tribunal support service which can be contacted to provide free advice and legal information.

Website: <https://www.ipsea.org.uk/Pages/Category/service-overview>

KIDS

KIDS provides a free mediation and disagreement resolution service to help settle disagreements with local authorities or schools/education providers.

Website: <https://www.kids.org.uk/send-mediation>

They also provide a short list of services which may be able to provide free legal advice, including: government legal aid, Citizen's Advice Bureau, LawWorks, Disability Law Service and Law Centres Network.

Links to additional legal support: <https://www.kids.org.uk/seeking-legal-advice>

Mencap

Mencap as a telephone and email helpline service, where they can provide information and advice about education and transition to adulthood.

Website: <https://www.mencap.org.uk/advice-and-support/our-services/learning-disability-helpline>

SEND Information Organisations Group

The SEND Information Organisations Group has put together a list of SEND information and advice providers. They have also issued some guidance for parents and carers who are looking to use a SEND advocate to help with tribunals and disputes. Due to the lack of regulation in this field, there are a number of questions that parents and carers are advised to consider before employing a SEND advocate.

SEND Information and Advice Providers:

<https://councilfordisabledchildren.org.uk/sites/default/files/uploads/attachments/SEND%20Orgs%20Info%20Sheet%20Update%20spring%202020%20Coronavirus%20specific.pdf>

Guidance:

<https://councilfordisabledchildren.org.uk/sites/default/files/uploads/files/Guidelines%20for%20Parents%20Carers%20Looking%20for%20Support%20with%20Tribunal.pdf>

Sky Badger

Sky Badger has a directory of other charities and organisations which may be useful. These have been grouped into categories including 'Appeals and Help', 'Resources' and 'Statements'. There is also a list of a number of organisations which can provide legal information and advice.

Education resources: <https://skybadger.co.uk/directory/?category=education>

Legal resources: <https://skybadger.co.uk/directory/?category=legal-stuff#educational-medical>

SOS SEN

SOS SEN also has a free helpline which can provide advice and support to families of children with SEN.

Website: <https://sossen.org.uk/services/helpline/>

Other Resources

Cerebra

Cerebra has put together a guide to accessing public services, with a focus on communicating with these services and overcoming common problems, which may be useful.

Guide: <https://cerebra.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/toolkit-jul21-low-res.pdf>

Contact

Contact has a webpage which allows you to identify your local Parent Carer Forum. These forums allow you to network with other parents and carers in your local area to ensure that local services are suitable for your children's needs.

Website: <https://contact.org.uk/help-for-families/parent-carer-participation/find-your-local-parent-carer-forum/>

Council for Disabled Children

This website has a small number of guides and checklists which relate to specific stages in a child's education, including:

- Preparing for Adulthood (Year 9 EHC Plan review)
- Funding of students aged 16-25 with SEND
- Final Annual Review Guide
- The Local Offer

Year 9 EHC Plan Review:

<https://councilfordisabledchildren.org.uk/sites/default/files/uploads/attachments/Year%209%20Annual%20Review%20Guide.pdf> and
<https://councilfordisabledchildren.org.uk/sites/default/files/uploads/attachments/annual%20reviews%20from%20year%209.pdf>

Funding of students with SEND between the ages of 16 and 25:

<https://councilfordisabledchildren.org.uk/sites/default/files/uploads/attachments/Funding%20of%20students%2016-25%20with%20SEND.pdf>

Final Annual Review Guide: <https://councilfordisabledchildren.org.uk/resources/all-resources/filter/inclusion-send/final-annual-review-guide>

The Local Offer:

<https://councilfordisabledchildren.org.uk/sites/default/files/uploads/files/Local%2520Offer%2520Guide.pdf>

Northern Ireland

General information

Contact

This website provides some information on the support system for children with SEN in Northern Ireland, including:

- The five-stage process of identifying and assessing needs

This system is in the process of being changed to a three-stage process. Further information about the three stages is available on the Education Authority and Special Educational Needs Advice Centre websites (both listed below).

Website: <https://contact.org.uk/help-for-families/information-advice-services/education-ni/>

Education Authority (EA)

This website has general information about SEN provision, including pages on:

- SEN Early Years Inclusion Service (SEN EYIS)
- Individual Education Plans (IEP)
- Statements of Special Educational Needs
- Statutory Assessments

Website: <https://www.eani.org.uk/parents/special-educational-needs-sen>

National Autistic Society

This website has a lot of information about the SEN support system in Northern Ireland.

Website: <https://www.autism.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/topics/education/extra-help-at-school/northern-ireland>

Special Educational Needs Advice Centre (SENAC)

This website has a lot of helpful information. It is thorough, but remains accessible, and covers a lot of different areas relating to SEN provision, including:

- Statements of SEN including annual reviews and transition planning
- IEP
- Complaints, appeals and re-assessments

Website: <https://senac.co.uk/>

Legal Rights and Processes

Education Authority

This website has a list of relevant legislature with links, as well as documents detailing current practice in Northern Ireland.

Website: <https://www.eani.org.uk/parents/special-educational-needs-sen/legislation-and-the-new-sen-framework>

Template Letters

SENAC

SENAC has a couple of template letters which can be copied and adapted. These include:

- Requesting information from the school
- Requesting an early review of the Statement of SEN
- Requesting a statutory assessment from the Education Authority
- Requesting a re-assessment.

Requesting information from school: <https://senac.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Info-request-pdf-Letter-.pdf>

Requesting early review of SEN Statement: <https://senac.co.uk/advice/what-will-happen-at-the-annual-review-and-transition-planning/>

Requesting assessment/reassessment of SEN: <https://senac.co.uk/advice/how-to-request-a-statutory-assessment-of-my-childs-needs-in-school/>

Getting Help and Advice

Contact

Contact has a free helpline which may be useful for parents and carers of children or young people with SEN. For parents in Northern Ireland, they can provide information or signpost to different sources of advice.

Website: <https://contact.org.uk/help-for-families/information-advice-services/our-helpline/>

Mencap

Mencap as a telephone and email helpline service, where they can provide information and advice about education and transition to adulthood.

Website: <https://www.mencap.org.uk/advice-and-support/our-services/learning-disability-helpline>

SENAC

SENAC has an advice phone line. The phone number can be found at the bottom of their website.

Website: <https://senac.co.uk/>

Other Resources

Education Authority

Education Authority has published a video walking people through the statutory assessment request process.

Website: <https://www.eani.org.uk/request-for-statutory-assessment>

NI Direct

This website has links to other organisations that might offer local support and networking opportunities. These include groups run by Health and Social Care trusts and carer support charities.

Website: <https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/support-groups-parents-children-disabilities>

Scotland

General Information

Contact

The Contact website has an overview of support in education in Scotland, including Individualised Educational Programmes (IEPs) and Co-ordinated Support Plans (CSPs)

Website: <https://contact.org.uk/help-for-families/information-advice-services/education-learning-scotland/>

Enquire

This is an accessible website with lots of helpful information about:

- Support
- Legal rights
- Attendance and exclusion
- Choosing schools
- Options post-16

There are a number of resources and factsheets on the website which may be helpful, and various Q&A webinars.

Website: <https://enquire.org.uk/parents/>

Resources: <https://enquire.org.uk/enquire-resources/>

Webinars: <https://enquire.org.uk/type/video/>

Enquire also has a YouTube channel with several videos which may be helpful.

Website: <https://www.youtube.com/@Enquireinfo/videos>

Talking about Tomorrow

This website is run by Contact and provides information about transition, with pages about finances, legal matters and learning opportunities.

Website: <https://www.talkingabouttomorrow.org.uk/>

Legal Rights and Processes

Enquire

Enquire has put together a factsheet explaining pupils' legal rights with citations. Although it does not provide references to specific clauses, it is a useful resource to understand learners' rights.

Website: <https://enquire.org.uk/parents/rights/your-childs-rights/>

Template Letters

Govan Law Centre

This website has a few template letters which can be downloaded and amended as required. They include:

- Letter requesting placement in special school or in specialist provision within mainstream school
- Letter requesting assessment of needs
- Letter requesting mediation
- Letter requesting CSP
- Letter requesting review of CSP

Website: <https://govalawcentre.org/elu-helpful-resources/>

Getting Help and Advice

Contact

Contact has a free helpline which may be useful for parents and carers of children or young people with ASN. For parents in Scotland, they can provide information or signpost to different sources of advice.

Website: <https://contact.org.uk/help-for-families/information-advice-services/our-helpline/>

Enquire

Enquire has a helpline which can offer further advice. There is also a webchat option.

Website: <https://enquire.org.uk/contact/>

My Rights, My Say

My Rights, My Say offers a free advocacy service for children. Advocates can listen to children's concerns, attend meetings and provide support.

Website: <https://myrightsmysay.scot/advocacy/>

Other Resources

Care Information Scotland

Care centres may be a useful source for advice and networking. This website has a list of centres sorted by area.

Website: <https://www.careinfoscotland.scot/topics/support-for-carers/carer-centres>

Enquire

Enquire has put together a guide to avoiding and solving problems, offering advice on communicating with the school and local authority, including formal complaints. It has a section at the end of the document about other useful organisations and services.

Website: <https://enquire.org.uk/3175/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/avoiding-solving-problems.pdf>

Talking About Tomorrow

This website has a page about Planning for Transition, which includes guidance on writing a transition plan. There are some tables on the right-hand side of this webpage which may be helpful.

Website: <https://www.talkingabouttomorrow.org.uk/planning-for-transition/>

Wales

General Information

Contact

Contact's website has a number of pages about support in Wales, including details about School Action and School Action Plus, as well as statements of SEN.

Website: <https://contact.org.uk/help-for-families/information-advice-services/education-learning-wales/>

Sense

Sense has some information about the ALN provision in Wales. It is only a brief overview but might be helpful.

Website: <https://www.sense.org.uk/information-and-advice/life-stages/childhood-and-school/send-education-special-education-needs-disabilities/additional-learning-needs-in-wales/>

Snap Cymru

This website has a number of pages covering topics such as:

- Individual Development Plans (IDPs)
- Getting help in early years
- Getting help at school
- Getting help at college/further education
- Getting help from the LA

Website: <https://www.snapcymru.org/get-support/>

Legal Rights and Processes

Welsh Government

This website explains what rights children, young people and their parents have within the ALN system.

Website: <https://www.gov.wales/guide-parents-about-rights-under-additional-learning-needs-aln-system.html#>

Template Letters

Snap Cymru

This website has a number of different template letters which can be downloaded, including:

- Requesting IDP reviews
- Request for LA to issue IDP notification
- Responding to decisions
- Requests to schools to make reasonable adjustments
- Complaining to schools

There are also a number of templates relating to the 'old' SEN system.

Website: <https://www.snapcymru.org/letter-templates/>

Getting Help and Advice

Contact

Contact has a free helpline which may be useful for parents and carers of children or young people with ALN. Although they are not able to provide legal advice, they can explain ALN identification and assessments.

Website: <https://contact.org.uk/help-for-families/information-advice-services/our-helpline/>

Mencap

Mencap as a telephone and email helpline service, where they can provide information and advice about education and transition to adulthood.

Website: <https://www.mencap.org.uk/advice-and-support/our-services/learning-disability-helpline>

Snap Cymru

Snap Cymru has a helpline which can be contacted for advice and support. They also have a free and independent disagreement resolution service with trained mediators and provide a separate advocacy service.

Website: <https://www.snapcymru.org/get-support/>

Disagreement Resolution Service: <https://www.snapcymru.org/mediation/>

Advocacy Service: <https://www.snapcymru.org/our-services/advocacy/>

Other Resources

All Wales Forum

This website lists local community support groups for parents and carers of people living with learning disabilities. Once you have identified your local group, you can search for them directly. Alternatively, you can contact the All Wales Forum for more information.

Website: <https://www.allwalesforum.org.uk/>

Version Control

Version	Author	Date	Changes
1.0	Sarah Bowell	27/03/2023	First draft