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### **Principles of Emerging Practice for Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND)**

*The following general principles apply across all aspects of SEND reform.*

#### **Partners**

1. **Parent-carers:** the participation of parents and carers is built in from the beginning of strategic and individual planning and development of support.
2. **Children and young people:** the participation of children and young people is built in from the beginning and informs developments at an individual and strategic level.
3. **Joint working:** there is joint working between health, education, (including early years providers, schools and post-16 institutions) and social care services to ensure the best support is available, to avoid duplication and maximize service impact.
4. **Voluntary sector and mainstream organisations:** there is voluntary and community sector engagement in strategic planning; design and delivery of support for all children and young people with SEND and their families.

#### **Processes**

5. **Evidence** is used to inform development. Local areas have clear process in place to gather and use evidence effectively to improve support.
6. **Transparency:** there is transparency, good communication and a shared understanding between all interested parties to ensure available support is understood and accountability is clear.
7. **Solutions and outcomes-focused:** there is a focus on solutions and outcomes and support from leaders for professionals to examine service development in this way alongside families and young people.
8. **Evaluation** is built in from the start of all support planning, is shared openly and is used to inform future activity

#### **Capacities**

9. **Leadership:** there is clear leadership and ownership of pathfinder activity and work to promote the change programme at

WORKING DOCUMENT

senior levels in all agencies.

**10. Capacity:** there is capacity to innovate at all levels and support for professionals, families and young people to engage in this reform process.

**11. Workforce:** the workforce has the necessary skills to understand and improve support to meet the needs of local families and young people.

<b>Test area</b>	<b>What every area may have to do in future</b> -i.e. requirements in the Children and Families Bill or indicative regulations -Subject to Parliamentary approval of legislation.	<b>Principles of emerging practice</b> -From the SEND pathfinders and previous programmes. -All pathfinders should consider these principles. -These principles are relevant to all areas considering implementation of the SEND reforms
<b>Joint planning and commissioning between education, health and social care</b>	<p>Local Authority and partner Clinical Commissioning Groups to make arrangements about the Education, Health and Care (EHC) provision for local children and young people with SEN.</p> <p>Joint commissioning arrangements must include arrangements for considering and agreeing—</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) the education, health and care provision reasonably required by the special educational needs of the children and young people concerned;</li> <li>(b) what education, health and care provision is to be secured;</li> <li>(c) by whom education, health and care provision is to be secured;</li> <li>(d) what advice and information is to be provided</li> </ul>	<p><b>Integrating multi-agency working practices and systems</b></p> <p>There should be clear links between the local Health and Wellbeing Board, Local Safeguarding Children’s Board and Children’s Trust arrangements which identify how a single assessment process and EHC Plans can become reality.</p> <p>Authorities should be clear about how their governance arrangements link into the Health and Wellbeing Board and how they are contributing to and using Joint Strategic Needs Assessments and strategic planning arrangements.</p> <p>Authorities should be clear about how they are engaging and communicating with commissioners across education, health and social care and how co-production is built into joint commissioning arrangements.</p>

WORKING DOCUMENT

about education, health and care provision;  
(e) by whom, to whom and how such advice and information is to be provided;  
(f) how complaints about education, health and care provision may be made and are to be dealt with;  
(g) procedures for ensuring that disputes between the parties to the joint commissioning arrangements are resolved as quickly as possible.

In particular, arrangements must be included for securing EHC needs assessments, securing the provision set out in EHC Plans and agreeing personal budgets.

These arrangements can be made as part of existing commissioning strategies and plans, or through legal agreements and Health Act flexibilities (such as section 75 agreements).

Local Authorities and Clinical Commissioning Groups should also carry out their functions in a way that promotes integration.

The Departments for Education and Health are working closely together to develop a package to improve commissioning and delivery of services and redress.

In the Bill, this includes measures to ensure provision of coordinated advice and information services by local authorities and clinical commissioning groups, and to require local authorities to consider what support parents might need through the assessment process, such as support to navigate through the assessment process.

WORKING DOCUMENT

	<p>The Government will ask Healthwatch and the Care Quality Commission (CQC), given their role in championing the needs of patients, to explore how they could hold the NHS to account for how well it meets the needs of children and young people with SEN.</p>	
<p><b>Local offer</b></p>	<p>Local Authorities will be required to draw up and publish a local offer (LO) covering both provision in their own areas and provision they use outside their areas for children and young people with SEN and their families.</p> <p>The provision described will cover education and training, health and social care, travel to schools and colleges, help in preparing for adult life and information on how to seek assessments for EHC Plans.</p> <p>Authorities will be required to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• involve children and young people with SEN and their parents in <u>reviewing the LO</u>;</li> <li>• <u>publish comments from them about the LO</u> and what action they will take to respond;</li> <li>• consult children and young people with SEN and their parents when <u>reviewing their provision</u>.</li> </ul> <p>Regulations will cover:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The information to be included in the LO (including information about sources of advice and support and where to complain/appeal);</li> <li>• how it is to be published;</li> </ul>	<p>The LO should be informed by effective data collection on the prevalence of specific SEN and disabilities in localities.</p> <p>The LO should be co-produced with parents and young people from the start, to ensure it is informative and helpful and reflects local needs.</p> <p>The LO should provide children, young people and families with opportunities to shape, develop and evaluate the services they use.</p> <p>The LO should make clear what services are available to meet the needs of children both with and without a formal EHC Plan and help them to make informed choices.</p> <p>The authority should fully involve services in the development and review of the LO (including schools, CCGs, the VCS and local health organisations).</p> <p>The LO should be holistic and cover 0-25 education, training, transport, social care, health and support for employment and independent living.</p> <p>The LO should be easy to understand, up to date and factual. It should use plain language and be available in a range of easily accessible formats and locations (i.e. website, leaflets, face to face).</p>

## WORKING DOCUMENT

- who is to be consulted; and
- how LAs are to involve children and young people with SEN and their parents in preparing the LO.

The LO should build on existing requirements such as short breaks services statements and the long standing requirement to publish details about what provision schools are expected to make from their delegated funds and what provision the LA will make from its funds.

It is helpful to make strong links between the Local Offer and wider reform i.e. the Health and Social Care reforms. The LO should make clear how it relates to school funding reforms in setting expectations of what schools and colleges provide before calls are made on the local authority's high needs budget.

The LO is cross cutting and needs to clearly describe the full range of services and support available - for example, accessible universal and community activities, the role of schools and colleges, practicalities which support children and young people with additional needs, information relating to key working, Early Support materials, the role of preparing for adulthood and the role of the parent partnership service and parent carer forums.

The LO needs to make clear how parents and young people can seek assessments and set out the process and timescales for the assessments and EHC Plans, including the option of a personal budget.

The LO should be empowering for parent carers and young people. It must support their understanding of what they can reasonably expect from services, explain how decisions are made and by whom and set out what to do if things go wrong.

The LO needs to be set within a strategic context - governance and management arrangements need to demonstrate clear lines of accountability and responsibility.

WORKING DOCUMENT

		<p>Information on needs and provision from EHC Plans should inform market development and the LO.</p> <p>The LO should make explicit the mechanism for filling identified gaps in the local market.</p> <p>It would be good practice to work in partnership with neighbouring LAs to ensure parents can access cross-boundary information (i.e. by making links to neighbouring local authorities' LOs on the website)</p> <p>LOs should be equality assessed.</p> <p>The LO should be a living document and kept constantly up to date.</p> <p>LOs should include contact details for people who can help – giving parents someone to ask if they have questions and concerns.</p> <p>LOs should have a range of search facilities and include a feedback facility, including provision for LAs to show how they are responding to feedback.</p>
<p><b>Coordinated assessment process and Education, Health and Care Plans</b></p>	<p><u>Requirements in Children and Families Bill and indicative regulations on <b>assessment</b>:</u></p> <p>Anybody can bring a child or young person to the local authority's attention as possibly having special educational needs (Clause 23). This makes the local authority responsible for the child or young person, and</p>	<p>Children, families and young people are at the centre of the assessment and planning process and should be partners in making decisions throughout, making it a co-produced process. The child/young person/family should be able to choose how, when and to what extent they would like to engage in the process to meet desired outcomes.</p>

WORKING DOCUMENT

<p>they must determine whether special educational provision may be needed and if so, whether an assessment should be carried out. The Bill also sets out an explicit right for parents, young people, schools and post-16 institutions to request an assessment.</p> <p>Authorities must give notice to child's parent or to a young person that it is considering an education, health and care assessment and that they have right to express their views and submit evidence and to receive a decision on whether to assess within 6 weeks. They must consult with parents/young people in making the decision.</p> <p>If an authority considers that special educational provision may need to be made above what is normally available, the authority will co-ordinate the single assessment process across education, health and care, underpinned by joint commissioning arrangements and duties to co-operate. The parents or young person must be consulted throughout the process.</p> <p>Authorities must inform the child's parent or the young person of the outcome of assessment, whether the authority proposes to draw up EHC Plan and the reasons why.</p> <p>Indicative regulations include further requirements about giving notice, expressing views, how assessments are conducted and advice to be obtained, who will be involved in the assessment process, timescales within which assessments should be carried out, and combining with other assessments. The total period from request</p>	<p>Assessment and planning should be an ongoing process which builds on previous assessments and continues to identify and meet the needs of children, young people and families as they develop.</p> <p>As a minimum, annual person-centred reviews should be carried out and should involve the parent/young person, and education, health and care services, as needed.</p> <p>As far as possible, there should be a 'tell us once' approach to sharing information, so families and young people don't have to repeat the same information to different agencies, or different practitioners/services within each agency.</p> <p>For children, young people and their family the assessment process should be co-ordinated, person centred, timely and without duplication. This can be done in a range of ways ranging from a single assessment event to co-ordination of a set of assessments which take place over time and in different contexts.</p> <p>Effective co-ordination should take place between education, health and care services, working together both to reach agreement on key outcomes with families and to secure the appropriate provision to deliver those outcomes.</p> <p>Practitioners should be engaged and committed to the co-ordinated assessment and planning process and where necessary, trained in person centred approaches.</p> <p>Families and young people should be supported through the assessment process by a single point of contact, particularly in more complex cases and during difficult transitional periods.</p>
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## WORKING DOCUMENT

from an assessment to issuing a final EHC Plan must be no more than 20 weeks, and as timely as possible.

### Requirements in Children and Families Bill and indicative regulations on the **EHC Plan**:

If required following assessment, authorities must secure that EHCPs are prepared and maintained. The parents or young person must be consulted throughout the process.

EHCPs must specify for the child or young person, in discrete and clearly labelled sections:

- their views, interests and aspirations;
- their special educational needs;
- the outcomes sought;
- the special education provision required. Where provision is to be delivered through a direct payment the plan should set the needs and outcomes to be met by the direct payment and how this will be done under the arrangements for the direct payment;
- any health and social care provision required;
- the name of any school or other institution under a duty to admit.

Further details on preparation, content and maintenance of the Plan are specified in indicative regulations.

Requirements cover when parents or young person and school, college or other institution must be consulted on drawing up and finalising the draft EHC Plan and naming a school or college.

EHC Plans should be person centred, evidence-based and focussed on outcomes (both short term outcomes and longer term aspirations for children and young people). Outcomes need to be specific, measurable, achievable and time-bound.

EHC Plans should be specific about the interventions identified to make a difference, including the provision needed to help secure those outcomes. EHC Plans should not be service-driven.

Decision-making in relation to the content of EHC Plans should be transparent and involve parents and young people themselves.

EHC Plans should be clear, concise, readable and accessible to parents, children and young people. EHC Plans should offer practical information for providers and practitioners. They should be able to be used on a daily basis, especially where high or complex support is required to meet the child's/young person's needs.

EHC Plans should support portability across geographical areas, particularly in relation to assessment information and agreed outcomes.

EHC Plans should support preparation for key transition points. Plans must be "forward looking" – e.g. anticipating and planning for key review and transition points, including transition to higher education, paid employment and / or independent living. Plans should be used to inform commissioning of future support and

WORKING DOCUMENT

	<p>The authority is under a duty to secure the special educational provision set out in any EHC Plan it maintains, and subject to the agreement of the Bill committee, health commissioners are under a duty to arrange the health services set out in EHC Plans.</p> <p>Schools and other institutions named in the EHC Plan are under a duty to admit.</p> <p>Requirements to review and re-assess EHC Plans, including at least an annual review. More detail is specified in the indicative regulations.</p> <p>Circumstances for ceasing an EHC Plan include where the special educational provision is no longer required, and LAs should have regard to whether the outcomes in the EHC Plan have been achieved. More detail is specified in indicative regulations.</p>	<p>provision.</p> <p>EHC Plans should not specify that parents will make a financial contribution towards the special educational provision identified in the EHCP.</p> <p>EHC Plans should explore how informal (family and community) support as well as formal support from statutory agencies can be used to achieve agreed outcomes.</p> <p>EHCPs should indicate how the child/young person’s learning and development is going to be monitored and promoted</p>
<p><b>Personal budgets and direct payments</b></p>	<p>Local authorities will be required to prepare a personal budget for children or young people with an EHC Plan (or for those they have assessed as needing a plan) if asked to do so by the parent or young person.</p> <p>Personal budgets may be direct payments to the parent or young person or a notional budget that the local authority spends on their behalf. A personal budget is an amount payable to secure particular provision set out in the Education, Health and Care Plan.</p> <p>When a personal budget is made available for education,</p>	<p>Personal budgets should be an integral part of the EHC Plan process in order to empower creative solutions.</p> <p>All decisions about personal budgets (including direct payments) should be made with the involvement of the family/young person.</p> <p>Personal budgets should reflect the holistic nature of an EHC Plan, which details agreed outcomes to be achieved across education, health and care.</p> <p>Personal budgets should allow families and young people to manage agreed elements of the additional and individual support</p>

## WORKING DOCUMENT

<p>it will be sourced from the non-delegated element of the high-needs block, <i>i.e.</i> funding for which the local authority has management responsibility. Funds that are delegated to schools and colleges will not normally be in scope for inclusion in a personal budget, unless the institution has previously agreed to this. A personal budget will not include the funding for a school place.</p> <p>During the assessment and planning process, local authorities will be required to provide specific advice, support and information on the use of personal budgets, including from independent providers.</p> <p>Local authorities must get the permission of a school or college before making any direct payments that might be used for services provided on their premises.</p> <p>Regulations will provide details about personal budgets, the information, support and advice available, and when, to whom, and on what conditions direct payments may or may not be made.</p> <p>The regulations will prohibit certain groups of parents from receiving direct payments (such as those subject to drug or alcohol rehabilitation orders).</p> <p>Regulations will require that direct payments are paid into a separate bank account that is only used for this purpose with parents/young required to provide information to local authorities on request, or at pre-agreed intervals, with regard to the use of the funds.</p> <p>Any regulations which authorise direct payments will</p>	<p>they need.</p> <p>Personal budgets should be based on clear agreed outcomes.</p> <p>The process for getting a personal budget should be transparent and challengeable.</p> <p>Personal budgets should support greater family resilience.</p> <p>Families and young people should have the opportunity to manage all, some or none of their personal budget - either themselves or with third party support.</p> <p>Where parents do not want a personal budget, other ways should be identified to offer them choice and control, so that they can exert influence on planning, review and provision effectively and within their capacity.</p> <p>Effective monitoring and audit arrangements should be established which are not onerous to families and which are not overly bureaucratic.</p> <p>Personal budgets should be underpinned by strategic commissioning principles that allow for greater choice in the market and support market development.</p> <p>Information and support should be available to support parents/young people who are interested in taking up and managing a personal budget, including information on sources of independent advice.</p>
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WORKING DOCUMENT

	<p>require the consent of the parent or young person concerned before any payments can be made. They will also require local authorities to cease payments should that consent be withdrawn.</p> <p>Provision purchased with direct payments will be treated as provision secured by the local authority for the purpose of fulfilling its duty on clause 21 to secure the special educational provision in an Education, Health and Care Plan.</p>	<p><u>Further sources of information</u></p> <p>Good practice on personal budgets, including how to include education and health funding streams, is available in the published IB research reports - including the recently-published final research report. The IB pilot ran over 3 years and was fully-evaluated to identify what works well. IB authorities have provided good practice examples of the infrastructure necessary to support the delivery of personal budgets which can be downloaded from the Department for Education’s research site at <a href="https://www.education.gov.uk/publications/standard/publicationDetail/Page1/DFE-RR145">https://www.education.gov.uk/publications/standard/publicationDetail/Page1/DFE-RR145</a></p> <p>The evaluation of the use of personal health budgets for adults was published in November 2012. This showed that personal health budgets worked best where individuals had flexibility around what they could use them for and how they were managed. A practical toolkit has been published which includes information on budget setting, information and support and different ways of managing budgets. Pathfinders can access draft documents by registering on the PHB learning network at <a href="http://www.personalhealthbudgets.dh.gov.uk">www.personalhealthbudgets.dh.gov.uk</a>.</p>
<p><b>Mediation and appeals</b></p>	<p><u>Provisions of the Children and Families Bill and indicative regulations on mediation</u></p> <p>Where a child’s parent or a young person intends to appeal to the First-tier Tribunal (SEND) about a decision of a local authority or about the content of a plan, other than in cases which are purely about educational placement, the parent or young person must contact a mediation adviser for advice about mediation before they can register the appeal.</p>	<p>The aim of mediation is to save families the stress of the appeal process whilst maintaining their right to register an appeal.</p> <p>Parents and young people will not be compelled to take up the offer of mediation if they do not wish to do so.</p> <p>In delivering an effective disagreement resolution service, local authorities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• should take responsibility for the overall standard of the</li> </ul>

## WORKING DOCUMENT

	<p>The notice the local authority sends to the parent or young person relaying its decision against which an appeal may be made must inform the parent or young person of the timescales for mediation; explain how they may contact the mediation adviser and give contact details of at least one mediation adviser.</p> <p>If during or following contact with the mediation adviser that parent or young person decides that they do not want to go to mediation then the local authority must issue a certificate within three working days. The certificate will say that the parent or young person has received mediation information and advice and with that the parent or young person can register an appeal with the Tribunal.</p> <p>If the parent or young person wants to go to mediation following the advice they will have received the adviser must notify the local authority, within 3 working days, the local authority must arrange mediation within 30 calendar days of being notified. The authority must inform the parent or young person of the date and venue of the mediation at least 5 working days before the mediation session. The parent or young person will be able to bring an advocate or supporter to the mediation and, if a child is party to the appeal, the child may attend with the agreement of the parent and the mediator or reasonable attempts must be made to get the views of the child.</p> <p>The mediator will have to issue a certificate to the parent or young person following the mediation so that if the parent or young person still wants to appeal they can</p>	<p>service;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• should have clear funding and budgeting plans for the service: parents and young people should not be charged for the use of this service;</li><li>• should ensure that the service is impartial and independent of the local authority;</li><li>• should ensure that the service has a development plan which sets out clear targets and is regularly reviewed;</li><li>• must make the arrangements for disagreement resolution and how they will work known to parents and schools in their areas and should make the arrangements known to others they think appropriate;</li><li>• should ensure that the independent persons appointed as facilitators have the appropriate skills, knowledge and expertise in disagreement resolution; an understanding of SEN processes, procedures and legislation; have no role in the decisions taken about a particular case, nor any vested interest in the terms of the settlement; are unbiased; maintain confidentiality; carry out the process quickly and to the timetable decided by the parties;</li><li>• should establish protocols and mechanisms for referring parents to disagreement resolution;</li><li>• should ensure that those providing the service receive appropriate initial and on-going training and development to enable them to carry out their role effectively;</li><li>• should establish a service level agreement for delivering</li></ul>
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WORKING DOCUMENT

	<p>register an appeal with the certificate. Final regulations will set out the steps a local authority must take to implement a mediated agreement.</p> <p><u>Provisions of the Children and Families Bill and indicative regulations on appeals</u></p> <p>A child’s parent or a young person may appeal to the First-tier Tribunal (SEND) about a number of local authority decisions in relation to carrying out assessments, the description of a child’s or young person’s SEN in a plan, the special educational provision set out in the plan, the school or other institution named on a plan, decisions to amend or not to amend plans and to cease them. (The full list is in clause 50 of the Bill).</p> <p>Local authorities must send notices to parents or young people within 7 calendar days of one of the decisions above setting out the reason for the decision, the right to appeal, the time limit within which to appeal, the availability of disagreement resolution arrangements and the details about mediation given above.</p> <p>The indicative regulations also set out the powers of the First-tier Tribunal when determining appeals, the time limits on local authorities to comply with Tribunal Orders and what happens when a local authority does not oppose an appeal.</p>	<p>the service which ensures sufficient levels of resources and training, and sets out the appropriate standards expected of, and the responsibilities delegated to, the provider. There should be appropriate arrangements for overseeing, regularly monitoring and reviewing the performance of the service, taking account of local and national best practice; and</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• should seek feedback from the service to inform and influence local authority and provider decisions on SEN policies, procedures and practices.</li> </ul> <p>When disputes do occur in the single assessment process and the drawing up of EHC Plans we will use examples pathfinders have of using mediation to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• See whether mediation is successful in resolving disputes without the need to go to Tribunal;</li> <li>• Road-test the arrangements for conducting mediation; Consider the implications for regulations;</li> <li>• Consider the additional costs (including financial and time costs) of mediation to local authorities and families.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Transitions and post 16</b></p>	<p>Provisions in the Children and Families Bill and indicative regulations set out that:</p> <p>Authorities must draw up EHC Plans instead of Learning</p>	<p>Young people and their parents should be at the centre of planning for their future and be fully involved at all stages.</p> <p>EHC Plans for young people aged 16-25 should be:</p>

WORKING DOCUMENT

	<p>Disability Assessments (LDAs) for those moving from school to Further Education (FE).</p> <p>Authorities should accept a young person's preference for the institution they want to attend, subject to the conditions in draft provisions.</p> <p>Authorities should cooperate with colleges, amongst others, when drawing up their local offer and EHC Plans.</p> <p>Authorities should make mediation services available to young people and their parents to resolve disputes.</p> <p>Authorities should offer to resolve disagreements between colleges and young people.</p> <p>Authorities should send final EHC Plans to colleges.</p> <p>Young people will be able to express a preference to attend an independent specialist provider (ISP) and that institution must admit them (unless it is unsuitable for their education or that of others).</p> <p>Young people on apprenticeships will be able to have an EHC Plan where appropriate.</p> <p>Authorities will be expected to maintain EHC Plans for young people who become NEET while of compulsory participation age (i.e. 16-18).</p> <p>Authorities will be able to review the EHC Plan of a 19-25 year old who becomes NEET and, where re-engagement in education is the right option, continue to maintain it.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• living documents that evolve to reflect the stage of development of the young person;</li> <li>• forward-looking rather than just focused on meeting immediate needs;</li> <li>• used to support the planning and commissioning of services;</li> <li>• person centred, aspirational and focused on life outcomes;</li> <li>• used from year 9 to inform future provision for young people;</li> <li>• designed around measurable outcomes, including at least one focused on progression in learning;</li> <li>• designed in a way that facilitates a smooth transition into adulthood. This includes support from adult health, social care and employment where necessary.</li> </ul> <p>Local areas should have plans in place that support young people to have choice and control over their lives and influence local commissioning and decision-making. This would include people with mental capacity issues.</p> <p>As far as possible, local authorities should secure the most appropriate FE place for the young person, including within an ISP. Decisions should be based on a robust assessment of need and evidence of what helps disabled young people (esp. those with learning difficulties and disabilities) to achieve paid work and independent living.</p> <p>Local FE colleges and ISPs should work together to develop blended support that builds local capacity to support all young people.</p> <p>Flexibilities created by programmes of study work, changes to</p>
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WORKING DOCUMENT

	<p>Youth Offending Teams are included in the cooperation duties so there are clear two-way duties for YOTs to work with authorities.</p>	<p>destination measures, schools funding changes and personal budgets should be used to create more personalised learning opportunities.</p> <p>As far as possible, there should be a good range of suitable provision offered locally, so that young people do not have to go out of their local area if they choose not to.</p> <p>Local authorities should use EHC Plans to agree with ISPs how the young person will be supported to make a successful transition back to their local area after their placement has finished. This should include re-integration into the local community; travel training; support to find employment and housing etc.</p> <p>Pathways to paid employment should be developed that are based on evidence-based practice. For example, raising aspirations, vocational profiling and curriculums in school, work experience in the local community, supported employment and supported internships, and support to set up their own businesses. This should all be clearly expressed through the LO, commissioned by local authorities and developed by the FE sector and allied services.</p> <p>A flexible package should be agreed with young people to achieve outcomes that might include distance learning, short break activity that involves acquiring work-related skills, and work experience, with or without a formal placement in FE provision.</p> <p>Authorities should test and implement more effective systems for sharing data between children and adult services.</p>
<p><b>VCS</b></p>		<p>Authorities should act in accordance with the principles set out in</p>

WORKING DOCUMENT

<b>engagement</b>		<p>The Compact (between the Government and civil society organisations) and particularly in accordance with the local compact which has been agreed in their area.</p> <p>Authorities should ensure that Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) organisations likely to have a view are involved from the start and remove barriers that may prevent them contributing.</p> <p>The VCS should be an equal partner in the pathfinder governance arrangements.</p> <p>Authorities should consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• the role that VCS organisations can play in person centred planning;</li><li>• what support the VCS can provide in terms of key working (for example, training in key working skills, providing practical and emotional support to the family and advocacy);</li><li>• how VCS organisations can offer challenge and support in the development of EHC Plans and in the development of the LO;</li><li>• how VCS organisations can build on the strengths of the family and community and develop family resilience;</li><li>• how VCS organisations can support the capacity of parents, carers and young people to engage in the reforms.</li></ul> <p>Where they do not already exist, it may be helpful to establish</p>
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WORKING DOCUMENT

		<p>voluntary sector forums to provide a safe environment for organisations to air and share their views.</p> <p>When working with VCS organisations, authorities should</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• share control and talk through what partnership means to both parties</li> <li>• look for common interests</li> <li>• keep focused on the outcome, not just the outputs</li> <li>• ensure everyone is up-to-speed and kept well informed</li> <li>• allow time for trust to develop</li> <li>• be open and honest about possibilities and limits on what can or cannot be done</li> <li>• value each other's perspectives as differences can bring innovative ideas</li> <li>• regularly review progress</li> <li>• celebrate achievements together</li> <li>• agree processes for ending or continuing partnership working after the first phase</li> <li>• ensure VCS partners are supported and resourced in a reasonable and fair manner</li> <li>• Consider providing feedback (to explain how VCS partners have influenced the design and development of policies, programmes and</li> <li>• services, including where respondents' views have not been acted upon.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Vulnerable children and young people</b></p>	<p>Authorities must meet their statutory duties with regard to children and young people with SEN and those in need of social care services (as per the Children Act 1989).</p> <p>Where there is an overlap, authorities must ensure that they meet both sets of duties so that vulnerable children</p>	<p>Integrated referral and assessment should take place so that vulnerable children picked up through social care channels (e.g. due to risk of neglect or abuse) are referred to the LA for SEN assessment, and vice versa.</p> <p>Although assessments should be co-ordinated across agencies,</p>

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	<p>don't slip between services.</p>	<p>provision of individual services should not be delayed when completing an EHC assessment. The EHC assessment and planning process may take up to 20 weeks from initial request/referral to issuing a completed EHC plan. Where particular services are assessed as being needed, such as those resulting from statutory social care assessments under the Children Act, 1989 or adult social care legislation, their provision should be delivered in line with the relevant statutory guidance and should not be delayed until the EHC Plan is complete.</p> <p>A 'one plan' approach should be taken, which serves different statutory purposes but gives a holistic account of the support a child/young person and their family is receiving.</p> <p>There should be close working co-operation between SEN departments and children's services, particularly in relation to the Virtual School Head (VSH) or equivalent for looked after children. This will ensure that looked after children receive services that meet their identified needs and experience joined up and timely services.</p> <p>Efficient and secure methods of data-sharing should be established across agencies to support early identification and intervention and integrated assessment, but with safeguards in place to protect particularly sensitive child protection data.</p>
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