

# Time to Talk

## Consultation Response Form

The closing date for this consultation is: 19  
October 2007

Your comments must reach us by that date.

department for  
**children, schools and families**

**THIS FORM IS NOT INTERACTIVE. If you wish to respond electronically please use the online or offline response facility available on the Department for Children, Schools and Families e-consultation website (<http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/consultations>).**

The information you provide in your response will be subject to the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and Environmental Information Regulations, which allow public access to information held by the Department. This does not necessarily mean that your response can be made available to the public as there are exemptions relating to information provided in confidence and information to which the Data Protection Act 1998 applies. You may request confidentiality by ticking the box provided, but you should note that neither this, nor an automatically-generated e-mail confidentiality statement, will necessarily exclude the public right of access.

**Please tick if you want us to keep your response confidential.**

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If your enquiry is related to the policy content of the consultation please telephone the Department's national enquiry line on 0870 000 2288 or email [info@dcsf.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:info@dcsf.gsi.gov.uk)

If you have a query relating to the consultation process you can contact the Consultation Unit on:

Telephone: 01928 794888  
Fax: 01928 794 113  
e-mail: [consultation.unit@dcsf.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:consultation.unit@dcsf.gsi.gov.uk)

Please select the category that best describes you.

<input type="checkbox"/> Parent	<input type="checkbox"/> Work with children and young people	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify)
<input type="checkbox"/> Parent/Work with children and young people	<input type="checkbox"/> Parent/Other (please specify)	<input type="checkbox"/> Work with children and young people/Other (please specify)

Please Specify:

Teacher (20+ years' experience in special and inclusive education) now director of Centre for Studies on Inclusive Education (CSIE). Also a parent.

Please note that in responding to this consultation the term 'disabled children' has been used to indicate those whom others refer to as 'children with special educational needs'. This is because of the widely held belief that 'needs' do not reside in a child; they arise out of an interaction between a child with or without impairments and the structure of the school which he or she attends. In this sense, a child who is considered 'normal' in one school may be considered to have 'emotional and behavioural difficulties' in another.

1 What have been your best experiences of support for children, young people and their families?

Comments:

- Seeing disabled children being genuinely welcomed as a valued and respected member of a mainstream class; for example, reading this comment by a class teacher and SENCo with 15 years' experience: "Seeing children with profound disabilities (such as severe cerebral palsy) (...) in a mainstream class has had a profound effect on me. Whereas previously I found it hard to imagine how children with severe needs could be successfully integrated in mainstream, I now believe that this can not only be achieved but is also often preferable."
- Seeing disabled and non-disabled children learn from one another; for example, friends of a 9-year-old boy with hemiplegia learning about determination and perseverance from their day-to-day experiences together.

2 What would you stop or improve about support for children, young people and families?

The following comments relate to issues of inclusive education that can serve to improve the educational experience of all children. They are put forward from a position which recognises belonging to one's local community as a basic human right.

- When considering the education of disabled children, constructive dialogue can be improved by engaging with all points of view. Above all, the voice of disabled adults who assert "Nothing about us without us" should be respected and observed. There is a strong voice within the disabled community, advocating that segregated provision does not serve the needs of disabled people.
- Mainstream provision can be improved through a thorough review, to ensure that the diversity of learners can be consistently catered for. Such a review should cover all aspects of strategic planning for inclusion; for example consistent and efficient funding arrangements and review of the statementing procedure, class sizes, deployment of Learning Support Assistants (who often act as main educators of disabled children) and support systems for staff and children.
- Staff training, both at Initial Teacher Training and In-Service Training levels, should also be improved. The United Nations Convention on the

Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006), which the UK government has signed, calls for an inclusive education system at all levels and makes specific reference (Article 24, 4) to the need to train staff, including training in disability awareness.

- For the above suggestions to be effective, it is imperative that staff at all levels have a sense of agency over suggested changes.
- A review of terminology can further support constructive dialogue. At the time of writing, the term “special educational needs” is widely thought to have outlived its purpose, while the term “inclusion” has recently undergone a mutation resulting in further ambiguity and confusion: some take this to mean belonging in one’s local community and others use it to indicate belonging in a special setting.
- It would be constructive to review the government’s commitment to special schools. If, as is often the case, these are primarily seen as places where “tailor-made provision” can be offered, people may remain reluctant to steer away from them. If, however, one takes “personalised learning” to apply to ALL children, there should be nothing that happens in a special school that cannot take place in a mainstream school. Additional cost, often put forward as a counter-argument, would be offset by eliminating running costs of special schools and other costs such as inflated budgets to transport some children long distances by taxi with an escort twice a day. CSIE believes that special schools should be seen primarily as segregating institutions which serve to separate some people from mainstream society. Their existence serves to perpetuate the habit of constructing identities of disabled people as more different than same, while setting them off on a path to live life in the margin.

3 What needs to happen so that support is tailored to meet the needs of individual children and young people?

Comments:

Those planning support need to listen to the voice of children & young people and their allies.

Planning for the disabled community without adequately engaging with the disabled community is a habit of little moral justification.

4 What do you think your role is and what more could you do for children to be happy, healthy and safe?

Comments:

CSIE campaigns for the right of all children to belong in the mainstream.

Disabled people were, in the past, intentionally removed from the mainstream of society. Nowadays they are in principle entitled to the same opportunities as non-disabled persons. CSIE believes it is up to us, non-disabled persons, to choose how to respond to the assertion that our established systems act as 'disabling barriers' for others. If mainstream schools do not open their doors to disabled children, the national and international move to include disabled people in their local communities will be little more than issuing a ticket and keeping the door locked.

5 What is the role of parents – mums, dads, carers - and what more support do they need?

Comments:

The role of parents includes seeking what is best for their children. In cases where they want to assert their child's right to belong to the mainstream, their position needs to be valued and they need to be treated with respect. Many parents report feeling treated like second-class citizens. This should not happen to anybody.

6 What is the role of the local community and what more could they do?

Comments:

Everybody should be educated to be more accepting of diversity.

Effort should be made to promote positive images of disability at all levels, including the media and entertainment industry. 'Bad' characters portrayed as disfigured and/or disabled is totally inappropriate and serves to perpetuate stereotyping.

7 What is the role of Government and what more could they do?

Comments:

The government is responsible for the structures within which people have to construct their lives. To fulfil this responsibility, it can:

- decide upon, and clearly and unambiguously articulate, its commitment to inclusion
- undertake a thorough and far reaching review of mainstream provision, including class sizes, funding and support systems
- invest in making mainstream education accessible to all
- invest in training the workforce, including disability awareness training
- review national policies and ensure compatibility
- review legislation

8 What more needs to happen to keep children and young people out of trouble?

Comments:

Value them and work with them to devise constructive uses of their time.

9 Do you have any further comments?



Comments:

Thank you for listening.

10 Please let us have your views on responding to this consultation (e.g. the number and type of questions, whether it was easy to find, understand and complete etc.).

Thank you for taking the time to let us have your views. We do not intend to acknowledge individual responses unless you place an 'X' in the box below.

**Please acknowledge this reply ✓**

Here at the Department for Children, Schools and Families we carry out our research on many different topics and consultations. As your views are valuable to us, would it be alright if we were to contact you again from time to time either for research or to send through consultation documents?

✓ Yes  No

All UK national public consultations are required to conform to the following standards:

1. Consult widely throughout the process, allowing a minimum of 12 weeks for written consultation at least once during the development of the policy.
2. Be clear about what your proposals are, who may be affected, what questions are being asked and the timescale for responses.
3. Ensure that your consultation is clear, concise and widely accessible.
4. Give feedback regarding the responses received and how the consultation process influenced the policy.
5. Monitor your department's effectiveness at consultation, including through the use of a designated consultation co-ordinator.
6. Ensure your consultation follows better regulation best practice, including carrying out a Regulatory Impact Assessment if appropriate.

Further information on the Code of Practice can be accessed through the Cabinet Office Website: <http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/regulation/consultation-guidance/content/introduction/index.asp>

**Thank you for taking time to respond to this consultation.**

Completed questionnaires and other responses should be sent to the address shown below by 19 October 2007

Send by post to:  
Consultation Unit - Area 1A  
Castle View House

Runcorn  
Cheshire  
WA7 2GJ

Send by e-mail to: [Timetotalk.CONSULTATION@dcsf.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:Timetotalk.CONSULTATION@dcsf.gsi.gov.uk)