

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am writing to you in my capacity as a parent of 2 children who have special education needs and have been statemented either throughout their education (in the case of our son), or for the majority of their post primary education, (in the case of our daughter).

I have read with interest the new SEND Code of Practice which has been adopted into legislation within England, and I wished to understand the Assembly's position in relation to adopting the support provision for post 16 education for those most vulnerable within our education system.

We have two children aged 13 and 14, and our 14 year old is facing a transition from secondary education into college, however, there has been no clear planning in relation to what education the children should accomplish, nor focus on with regards to the college system. It appears to be an arbitrary selection on behalf of the school as to what qualifications the child may be selected for, and is limited in relation to what the school itself may offer by way of GCSE courses, vocational courses or entry level qualifications.

In continuing the education at college level, again, there appears to be little consideration given to preparing the future career or ambition or interests or ability of the child. As a parent, I have little information in relation to the opportunities that could be provided for either of my children, and indeed, there appears to be little consideration given to 'continuing' education, - at its harshest it appears that one educational institution passes responsibility onto another, without due care or regard being given to the needs of the child.

I am very concerned, that as a society we appear to be washing our hands of these children, we give up in relation to their potential, and do so by applying measures which define them as adults, however, in reality they remain vulnerable and in need of support and direction.

I would be really grateful if you would be able to give me comfort that the measures adopted through the SEND Code of Practice would be carefully considered and implemented in NI to afford post 16 yr olds the correct educational intervention as well as a consistent joined up approach with regards to all the social support providers. This would include employability, assisted living, housing, education etc - without this knitted and joined up approach, as a society we are pushing the burden onto these vulnerable 'adults' and on to the parents to represent their children.

Kind regards,