

#ADDITIONAL *Not* SPECIAL



Birmingham
City Council

By The RISE
Youth Forum



An information guide for educators
by The RISE Youth Forum!



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Our Campaign

The RISE Youth Forum was launched in February 2020. 12 young people aged between 12 - 18 years from mainstream secondary schools in Birmingham, all of whom are on the SEN register have come together to:

- Promote pupil voice and ensure that young people's views are being heard.
- Participate in discussions and decisions about local and national policies and practices, which are affecting their lives.

The group, formerly known as The SEND Youth Forum, have started a campaign for change! Proposing to move away from the term "Special Educational Needs" in the Children and Families Act (2014) and Code of Practice (2015) which they feel is outdated and inaccurate. The forum is suggesting that this be replaced by the more appropriate term "additional needs" as this is more fitting when describing children and young people who require extra help within their education.

The forum has lodged a petition with the UK Government to put forward their proposal for considering moving away from the term 'Special Educational Needs'.

"The term special is used in a negative way, in using the term additional needs there's no negative spin that can be put on it - it's a safer word. We tend to use additional because that's what it is - 'additional'."

Mathilda

"I feel as though you are being discriminated for who you are when the term SEND is used."

Marium

"It really boxes us in and there's a large lack of knowledge."

Harry

"I think we speak for the majority of SEN students and so it's really important that we try, because it isn't good that we all feel like this."

Grace



The SEND Timeline

The year that gave us Lego people, Garfield and Reese's Pieces! The year when a pint of milk cost 11p and a loaf of bread was just 20p. The average cost of a house was £13,820!

1978

1978 Warnock Report – 'Special Educational Needs – Report of the Committee of Enquiry into the Education of Handicapped Children and Young People.'

Warnock Report 1978

1981 The Education Act – paved the way for the integration of children with 'special needs' during the United Nations International Year of Disabled People. Education Act 1981 (following the 1978 Warnock Report): gave parents new rights in relation to special needs.

The Education Act 1981

Corona Virus entered our vocabulary.....
The average house price: £256,000
A pint of beer £3.94
A loaf of bread £1
A pint of milk £1
Yet the terminology "SEND" is still widely used and accepted.

2021

The Children and Families Act became law on the 13th March 2014.

Children and Families Act 2014

"Nothing in life is to be feared. It is only to be understood" Marie Curie

**The Disabled Persons
(Services, Consultation and
Representation) Act 1986**

– this Act gave disabled people greater control over services provided to them by local government bodies.



The Disabled Persons Act 1986

In June 1994 representatives of 92 governments and 25 international organisations formed the World Conference on Special Needs Education, held in Salamanca, Spain. They agreed a dynamic new Statement on the education of all disabled children, which called for inclusion to be the norm. It outlines that mainstream schools would accommodate all children regardless of their physical, intellectual, social, emotional, linguistic or other conditions.

Salamanca Statement 1994



**Special Educational Needs and
Disability Act (SENDA) 2001** –
extended disability discrimination
legislation to schools, colleges
and universities and gave disabled
children many more rights in
mainstream education.



SENDA 2001

**The Disability
Discrimination Act 1995**
made discrimination against
disabled people illegal and
was an important step
forward in the campaign
for full civil rights for all
disabled people.



The Disability Discrimination Act 1995



We prefer Additional Needs !!

The Warnock Report (1978) introduced 'special educational needs' to identify a child needing extra or different support. In 2014 the SEND Code of Practice introduced major reforms which aimed to be less confrontational, raise aspirations and fully involve children & families. However, in continuing to use the outdated term 'SEND', members of the Birmingham Youth Forum believe they are negatively discriminated against and not treated equally in relation to their additional educational needs.

The SEND Youth Forum would like the year 2021 to be the year when the term special educational needs is replaced by the term "additional needs."



Why We Don't Like The Term SEND

SEND stands for Special Educational Needs and Disabilities.

Children with SEND often have a difficulty in at least one of the following four areas:

1. Communication and Interaction
2. Cognition and Learning
3. Social, Emotional and Mental Health
4. Sensory and/or Physical needs

We feel that...

The term special is used in a negative way, in using the term additional needs there's no negative spin that can be put on it - it's a safer word. We tend to use additional because that's what it is - 'additional'.

Originally it was appropriate because we do have additional needs, but it does have a stigma now and its used as an insult. In P.E someone used it in a rude way by describing themselves as 'spec' short for 'special'.

Young people are afraid to get a diagnosis, as they're are scared of the discrimination.

We have additional needs tailored to learning, being called special doesn't make you feel part of the group. It makes you feel different and it makes you feel anything but 'special'.

The term now has a stigma, and a derogatory meaning, some people may say "spec" as a way of insulting others.

We are different or unique and we have a different perspective, but we can still accomplish loads of stuff in life just like everyone else.

It makes it seem like it's a bad thing instead of it being a celebration.

You are being discriminated for who you are.

Words to avoid using

Avoid passive, victim words. Use language that respects disabled people as active individuals with control over their own lives.

Avoid	Use
(the) handicapped, (the) disabled	disabled (people)
afflicted by, suffers from, victim of	has (name of condition of impairment)
confined to a wheelchair, wheelchair-bound	wheelchair user
mentally handicapped, mentally defective, retarded, subnormal	with a learning disability (singular) with learning disabilities (plural)
cripple, invalid	disabled person
spastic	person with cerebral palsy
able-bodied	non-disabled
mental patient, insane, mad	person with a mental health condition
deaf and dumb; deaf mute	deaf, user of British Sign Language (BSL), person with a hearing impairment
the blind	people with visual impairments; blind people; blind and partially sighted people
an epileptic, diabetic, depressive, and so on	person with epilepsy, diabetes, depression or someone who has epilepsy, diabetes, depression
dwarf; midget	someone with restricted growth or short stature
fits, spells, attacks	seizures

Does having a diagnosis mean people have a fixed view of you?

A diagnosis is defined as the process of identifying a disease, condition, or injury from its signs and symptoms. A health history, physical exam, and tests, such as blood tests, imaging tests, and biopsies, may be used to help make a diagnosis.

The Youth Forum would like you to think about once the diagnosis is given to a young person, do you have a preconceived view of the young person?



"Once you get a diagnosis people tend to treat you differently and its unfair, you start to feel lonely depending on who knows. People should have a better understanding about the diagnosis."

"There's such a large spectrum, you can't have people who are exactly the same. Having the label means that people think everyone is the same, but it's relative to the person. We shouldn't concentrate so much about labels, but more focus on diagnosis. Mental health is the same as well; just because one person fits the textbook description of a certain diagnosis, it doesn't mean that everyone who has the same diagnosis will act exactly the same."

"It really boxes us in and there's a large lack of knowledge."



Does having a diagnosis mean people have a fixed view of you?

"For some people a diagnosis isn't useful but for some it is. Before my diagnosis I didn't get any help, but since my diagnosis which was only recently, I have received a lot more support from school and outside of school.

Before the diagnosis I didn't get the support because the SENCo didn't believe I had anything, so my mum got a report and the process started and I started to get support."

"I have been treated differently because of my diagnosis."

"Once a diagnosis is given, at times I feel teachers treat all with that diagnosis the same. No two people are the same."

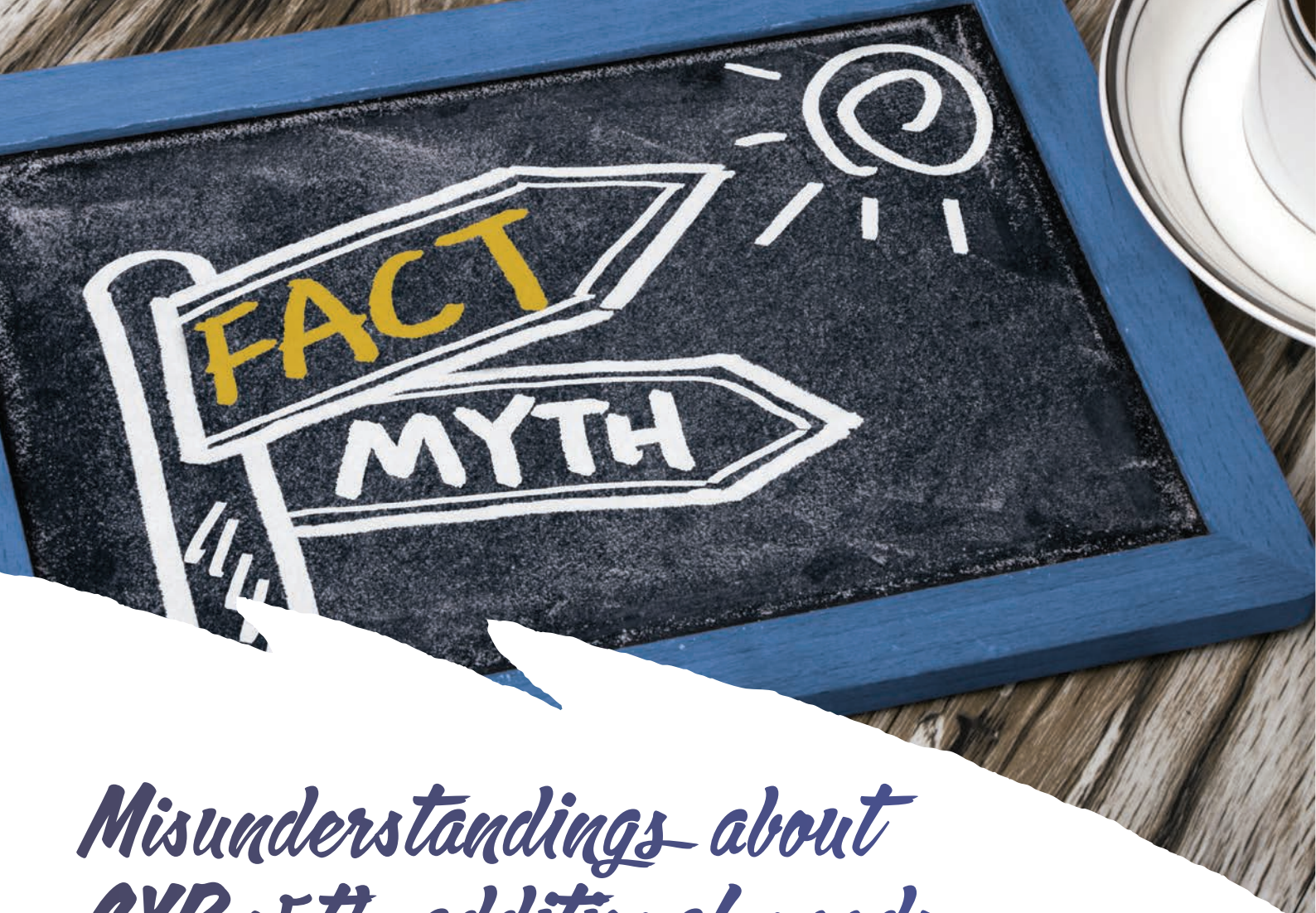
"Sometimes diagnosis is given too young, with time a diagnosis can change. However, teachers will just concentrate on that diagnosis and not on the issues which have developed more recently."

How to improve people's understanding of young people with additional needs

- I struggled to make friends and maintain friendships. I don't want this repeated for anyone else. I am the one who has to educate my peers instead of this being the responsibility of an adult.
- Despite training teachers/support staff receive, they often struggle with understanding the emotional needs of some students.
- I don't want to be patronised I just want a little extra help.
- We don't all fit into one category and we all have our own individual needs.
- Teachers should not be focusing on labels but focusing on successful people who have additional educational needs or a disability.



“Nothing in life is to be feared. It is only to be understood” Marie Curie



Misunderstandings about CYP with additional needs

- I don't want to be academically challenged.
- I enjoy being taken out of lessons for additional assessments.
- I don't want teaching staff to know about my medical problems and what I have to go through every day.
- I don't want friends
- I like being on my own
- I don't want to be involved in meetings which support my education.

"It can ruin your self-esteem and it could make you feel as though you are not classed as being 'normal'".

How to help all young people fulfil their potential?

Young people require support and encouragement for them to reach their full potential. While empowering young people is important also encouraging them is crucial too.

This can be done by:

- Reassurance, encouragement and support.
- Be honest even if something is not possible.
- Educate other pupils to raise awareness.
- To have faith and patience that we will reach our full potential.
- Not being told how to start but just to give some kind of guidance.
- Given an option of different levels of support which is required.
- For all school staff to know what support is appropriate.
- All staff being aware of the pupils one-page profile.
- Talking with the teaching staff and helping them to understand my condition and how it affects me.
- Use a normal tone of voice, don't patronise or talk down to students.
- Don't be too precious or too politically correct – being super-sensitive to the right and wrong language and depictions will stop you doing anything.
- Never attempt to speak or finish a sentence for the person you are talking to.
- Address disabled people in the same way as you talk to everyone else.
- Speak directly to a disabled person, even if they have an interpreter or companion with them.
- Do not give labels.

How to support and empower young people

Empowering youth means to:

- Include youth in decision-making processes.
- Honor the youth voice.
- Understand and implement their honest opinions and ideas.
- Be willing to share your adult power and privilege in order to make the community a better place for both young people and adults alike.

What can you do?

- Help young people to find their passion.
- Recognise all students who participate and share their thoughts.
- Teach to a young person's learning style, do not expect a young person to adapt to your teaching style.
- Encourage debate and expression of ideas and opinions.
- Explore ideas with students.
- Have patience.
- Education of others.
- Encouragement – it does not matter how big or small.
- Be honest even if somethings not possible.
- “We don't take away we ADD. #ADDitional needs, not special”.

What's working well in the classroom

- Enable students to support other students within the classroom. A lot of support and positivity comes from other students when they're made aware of other's needs.
- Teachers not making your needs too obvious.
- Large rooms - not too small with simple layouts.
- Having space in the classroom and between chairs.
- Being able to leave class a little early.
- Having a familiar face/key worker/named person
- When SLT give me time to talk and they listen.
- Quality first teaching.
- Always stand in the same place when giving instructions.
- Keep instructions brief, simple and straight to the point.



"Those who know, do, Those that understand, teach" Aristotle



What's working well at school?

- Lunch and Breakfast clubs in a safe space.
- Having access to an inclusion room.
- A film club.
- Football opportunities during breaks and lunch.
- Use of the library.
- Being able to use the lifts.
- Signs to navigate the building.
- Sensory Rooms.
- Use of a Safe Space to Calm Down.

Hey teacher, it helps me when...

- I have access to a trusting, familiar adult who I can go to when I need to.
- My teacher explains clearly what I need to do.
- Support Resources are easy to use and find.
- Time out passes are made available.
- Ear plugs/ear defenders are made available.
- Teacher exhibits good behaviour management in my class.
- The pace of the class teaching is right for me.
- Teachers understand me because they have read my personal profile.
- Teachers are flexible.
- My teacher does not over praise me in front of my class mates for small things.
- My teacher makes learning fun.
- My teacher is interested in the subject that they are teaching.
- You give me time to explain what I mean.



← OLD WAY
NEW WAY →

What's not working?

- It is hard to ask for help in class especially when you feel too embarrassed. Teachers may be too over the top or just ignore your needs, so they need to find a balance.
- I feel stigmatised, particularly as sometimes teachers can be patronising.
- Food queues are too busy.
- Double lessons are too long and it's hard to concentrate for long periods of time.
- The terminology "SEND" we prefer Additional Needs.
- Some teachers are a little lenient on reasonable adjustments which could be given to students.
- Assemblies to raise the awareness do not pinpoint issues
- Clocks not available in all classrooms.
- I think that teachers sometimes assume they know what you need, and they are not prepared to listen to you. For example, a teacher tried to help me by printing work on larger paper, but it wasn't the size that bothered me, it was the background colour.
- I appreciated the teacher trying, but a lot of times instead of listening they assume they know and then support you in ways that don't really help.
- My friends are also the ones who support me rather than the 'adults'.

"In an ideal world where everyone got it right and teachers were listening."

Idealistically

- All school notice and display boards were dyslexia friendly
- There was something in my planner I can use to ask for help
- I can choose where I wanted to sit within the classroom
- I can express what reasonable adjustments I feel I need
- More flexibility on options (GCSE) and foreign languages made available
- Communication is better between schools and young people
- Peers understand our needs and awareness given throughout the whole school year
- In an ideal world it would be more feasible to help with symptoms and access for help with symptoms. Unless you have an official diagnosis or for people that don't have severe symptoms you'll get put aside. The symptoms themselves need to be looked at rather than the title of the diagnosis.

Glossary

- CYP – Children & Young People
- RISE – Respect, Inclusive, Support, Equate
- SENCO – Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator
- SLT – Senior leadership Team

With special thanks too...

The Rise Youth Forum

"Thank you to Mrs Vaughan and all the amazing, supportive teachers at KNGS. I have learnt that I am more than my label, allowing me to help others."

Mathilda Cannon

"Special thanks to my mummy, for looking out for me and attending to all my needs and understanding me in ways others don't 😊❤️."

Fatima Abbas

"Thank you, mom, dad and jo, for always supporting me."

Lewis Forster

"Thank you to my mom for always helping me and trying to do what's best for me."

Amelia Jordon

"I would like to thank Mrs Shannon and all my mentors at School. Thank you."

James Sneade

"Thank you to my family and school for always supporting me and helping me to reach my potential."

Harry Horton

"Thank you to all of the Holte school pupils and staff for understanding my condition and being considerate it really helps. A big thank you to Ms Hunt and Miss Hussain for always helping me and pushing me to do my best 😊."

Marium Tarajrat

"Thanks to everyone who has supported me, helping me become as resilient as I am today and who has advocated for me and believed in me to allow me now to go on to advocate for and help others."

Grace Lasky

"Junayd Hussain :- special thanks too my mom for always supporting me with everything and making sure my voice gets heard and I have the same opportunities as everyone else."

Junayd Hussain

"Thank you Davina for always listening to me and making sure everything is OK."

Millie White

"To my mom, dad John and my little nan. You have always been amazing, always there when I need you no matter what. My mom is my world and always will be. Thank You! I Love you all love."

Mason Dugmore

"Thank you."

love Gracie Brandon Oddy





Find more information about us on
www.localofferbirmingham.co.uk

If you have any questions please email us at
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