IMPORTANT CHANGES AND LEGISLATION

Missing special needs support 'a national scandal'
Ofsted’s annual report raises concerns about SEND as well as setting out the progress it has noted. Link to Ofsted’s annual report below.
Link to BBC article with a summary of the concerns BBC article

Revised minimum standards for SENDIASS
The new Minimum Standards for Information Advice and Support Services (IASS, sometimes known as SENDIASS) were finalised in September 2018.
https://councilfordisabledchildren.org.uk/information-advice-and-support-services-network/resources/minimum-standards-iass

New measures to support children with complex needs and disabilities.
Councils will receive an additional £250 million over the next two years, on top of the high needs budget already allocated to provide support to children and young people with complex SEND. £100 million will also be provided to create specialist places in mainstream schools, colleges and special schools, through capital funding.
Link to secretary of state’s letter
Link to CDC article

New Leadership Board for SEND to be established
Following recommendations from CDC Director Dame Christine Lenehan’s 2018 report “Good Intentions, Good Enough”, a Leadership Board for SEND is to be established to improve the commissioning and delivery of services, and outcomes for children. This new expert board will include representatives of local health, social care, and education services, and will work closely with charities, school and families.
Link to letter outlining the boards role

National autism strategy to be extended to children
The Government last week announced plans to introduce an updated national autism strategy, which will cover people of all ages in England for the first time. The review will inform the new joint adults and children autism strategy to be published in autumn 2019.
Link to ministers letter
Link to NAS article
Review of services and support for autistic people is covering autistic children as well
Cambridgeshire and Peterborough health and care services set to receive from £145 million investment

Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, Matt Hancock, has announced a capital investment of £145 million for health and care facilities in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough.


Changes to Education Inspection Framework announced

Amanda Spielman, Her Majesty’s Chief Inspector, has announced details of planned changes to the way Ofsted inspects schools, colleges, further education institutions and early years settings from September 2019. In January, Ofsted will launch a consultation on the new inspection framework. Find out more:


Ceasing to maintain an EHCP

The Upper Tribunal set aside a decision of the First-tier Tribunal that the local authority was entitled to cease to maintain an EHC plan of a severely disabled young person. There are numerous reasons why it may be necessary for a local authority to continue to maintain an EHC plan, and the question is not simply whether the outcomes in the plan have been achieved. A proper assessment of whether a pupils special educational needs can be met if the plan is not maintained should be carried out. Before deciding to cease to maintain an EHC plan, local authorities should make sure they have sufficient up-to-date information about the young person, and ask whether it is necessary to maintain the plan. The local authority should have regard to the range of considerations explained above, not only to whether the outcomes in the plan have been achieved, and it is not sufficient to rely on a recent Care Act assessment.


NATIONAL NEWS

How do you solve the trickiest problems in the workplace? Employ more autistic people

Neurodiversity can be a huge advantage for companies, yet people on the spectrum have often been marginalised. Now some firms are specifically seeking them out.


The shop where it’s OK to be different

Two brothers on the autistic spectrum were looking for work when one had the idea of opening a comic shop. Their shop in Huntingdon turned out to be an inspired choice.

https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/stories-46236942

Exam changes for autistic students

GCSEs are stressful and difficult for most students. Autistic students may face additional challenges, such as sensory overload and unclear or ambiguous questions and instructions. Having recognised these challenges, the DfE commissioned the Autism Education Trust (AET) to develop guidance around accommodations to help teachers and exam officers support autistic students to demonstrate fully their
knowledge and skills in qualifications. The guide was written specifically to support autistic students being entered for GCSEs, but the principles and good practice examples can be applied to all public examinations.  
https://www.autismeducationtrust.org.uk/shop/aet-exam-accommodations/

The Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) publishes requirements for the most common access arrangements for GCSEs etc. Access arrangements include reasonable adjustments that are needed to make exams accessible for candidates who have disabilities. A reasonable adjustment may be unique to that individual and may not be included in the JCQ’s list of available access arrangements. 
https://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/access-arrangements-and-special-consideration

Ofsted and the CQC to revisit failing Local Authorities
Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission (CQC) have been conducting inspections of SEND provision in Local Authorities across the country since May 2016. 72 reviews have been carried out to date, and in 34 cases – nearly half – inspectors have identified “serious concerns”, requiring those local areas to produce a written statement of action (WSoA) to detail how they would address “significant areas of weakness in the local area’s practice”. In November 2018, the Department for Education announced a programme of revisits to the local areas which have been asked to produce a WSoA.  

Children and young people with a disability more likely to feel lonely
The Office for National Statistics report ‘Children’s and young people’s experiences of loneliness: 2018’ found ‘...those who reported no long-term illness or disability were more likely to report lower levels of loneliness, with 44.8% reporting that they hardly ever or never felt lonely. By comparison, only one-fifth (19.3%) of those with a long-term illness or disability reported hardly ever or never feeling lonely.’ Link to report below.  
https://www.ons.gov.uk/.../childrensandyoungpeoplesexper…/2018

Health Foundation article raising the concern loneliness is a key risk factor for the future health of young people  
https://www.health.org.uk/.../loneliness-is-a-key-risk-factor...

Sharp rise in number of young people seeking help for anxiety
According to Childline there has been a sharp rise in the number of young people seeking help because of anxiety as they struggle to cope with the demands of modern life. The NSPCC said Childline counsellors delivered 11,700 sessions to children and teenagers complaining of anxiety in 2015-6. That number rose to 21,300 in 2017-18. At least 88% of the support they provided was for girls.  

Councils reminded of their duty to provide alternative education
The Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman reminded council school attendance teams that their duty to provide alternative education may arise for reasons other than exclusion and illness. West Sussex County Council has been told to apologise for not considering whether it should provide alternative education and support for a girl when she could not attend secondary school because of her high levels of anxiety.
Data released by the government reveals the performance in 2017/2018 of every state-funded primary school

https://www.compare-school-performance.service.gov.uk/

Link to Cambridge Evening News article

Government commits to reform the Mental Health Act

The government will introduce a new Mental Health Bill to transform mental health care, following publication of the final report from the Independent Review of the Mental Health Act 1983. The government is accepting two of the review’s recommendations to modernise the Mental Health Act.

Link to government announcement

Link to independent review report

The courage to talk: Childline annual review 2017/18.

Summary of Childline’s activities in 2017/18 and analyses what children and young people contacted Childline about. The top three concerns young people were counselled about were mental and emotional health; family relationships; and suicidal thoughts and feelings.


Bercow: Ten Years On

It is now 10 years since John Bercow published his influential report on services for children and young people with speech, language and communication needs. The link below will take you to the review 10 years after this report and the government’s response.

https://www.bercow10yearson.com/

Developing and sustaining an effective local SEND system: a practical guide for councils and partners

The Local Government Association has commissioned a practical guide for councils and partners, which includes good practices in developing and sustaining an effective local SEND system.


Children’s mental health services are showing signs of improvement

Analysis shows children’s mental health services are showing signs of improvement – but a seismic shift in ambition still needed to meet demand

One in eight of five to 19 year olds had a mental disorder in 2017

One in eight (12.8%) of children and young people aged between five and 19, surveyed in England in 2017, had a mental disorder according to a major new report which provides England’s best source of data on trends in child mental health.


Mental health: waiting times to be capped under 10-year NHS plan

New waiting-time targets for mental health treatment and stronger support for young adults with difficulties will be an important part of the government’s long-awaited 10-year NHS plan to be launched on Monday.


Anxiety in Children and Teens: How to Find Calm and Courage

Anxiety in children and teens can make everyone feel helpless. It can come from anywhere and nowhere, and often it makes no sense at all. This is because anxiety is a primitive, instinctive response, not a rational one. Anxiety is driven by a strong, beautiful, healthy brain that is doing exactly what brains are meant to do – protect us from threat. Sometimes though, they can work a little too hard and have us avoiding the things that we’d be better moving towards.


Depression in girls linked to higher use of social media

Research suggests link between social media use and depressive symptoms was stronger for girls compared with boys.

Link to article on the findings
Link to findings

Screen time not intrinsically bad for children, say doctors

Spending time looking at screens is not intrinsically bad for children’s health, say the UK’s leading children’s doctors, who are advising parents to focus on ensuring their children get enough sleep, exercise and family interaction rather than clamping down on phones and laptops.

Link to article
Link to Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health (RCPCH) guidance

OTHER NEWS...

Health and social care

SEND Tribunal – national trial
The SEND Tribunal are running a 2-year trial period whereby its powers are extended beyond disputes in relation to education, to include health and social care issues too. This is referred to as the "National Trial". IPSEA have collated their experiences to date and created a series of FAQs to help parents and young people navigate the National Trial process.
https://www.ipsea.org.uk/Pages/FAQs/Category/national-trial-faqs

**Health visitors should take greater role in getting children school ready**

Health visitors should have a greater role in preparing disadvantaged young children for school and ensuring they do not fall behind their peers, according to a report by the Early Intervention Foundation.

**Maltreatment of children hinders cognitive development**

Findings from a study of 6,830 students found that the cognitive functioning of students who experienced maltreatment was lower than that of their peers who had not experienced maltreatment at the time of testing.

**Mental illness 2.69 times higher in maltreated children**

Mental illness was 2.69 times higher in the maltreated group with large differences in mood and anxiety disorders and suicidality; the odds of having an injury or poisoning diagnosis were 3.45 times higher; they were also less likely to have been immunised but had lower rates of diagnosis across almost all major physical disease categories.

**NICE guidelines on decision-making and mental capacity.**

Guidelines on decision-making in people aged 16 years and over who may lack capacity now or in the future. The guideline aims to help health and social care practitioners support people to make their own decisions where they have the capacity to do so. It also helps practitioners to keep people who lack capacity at the centre of the decision-making process.

**Care and Support Jargon Buster**

Care and Support Jargon Buster is an A-Z directory of Plain English definitions of the most commonly used words and phrases in health, social care and housing.
https://www.thinklocalactpersonal.org.uk/Browse/Informationandadvice/CareandSupportJargonBuster/

**Children in need: review**

The Department for Education (DFE) has published interim findings from its review on how children in need can achieve high educational standards, which includes children with disabilities. The report
Outlines how professionals who work with vulnerable children can better identify children in need, and help these children have a positive experience of education.

Link to DfE interim findings

**Maltreatment of children affects cognitive development**

Presents findings from a study of 6,830 students in Minnesota enrolled in the 2008 academic year, who had child maltreatment experiences including neglect, physical abuse, sexual abuse, and emotional abuse. Examines the relationships between maltreatment timing and three domains of cognitive functioning (knowledge, comprehension, and analysis). Finds that the cognitive functioning of students who experienced maltreatment was lower than that of their peers who had not experienced maltreatment at the time of testing.


**Maltreated children 2.69 times more likely to have mental illness**

Study comparing both mental and physical health profiles of 406 children diagnosed as maltreated and 406 well-matched youth without maltreatment in a large healthcare system. Findings: mental illness was 2.69 times higher in the maltreated group with large differences in mood and anxiety disorders and suicidality; the odds of having an injury or poisoning diagnosis were 3.45 times higher; they were also less likely to have been immunised but had lower rates of diagnosis across almost all major physical disease categories.


**NHS England Guide: Commissioning for transition to adult services for young people with SEND**

This Quick Guide is intended to help local areas develop their transition processes for young people with special educational needs and disability (SEND) from childhood to adulthood. It works in conjunction with other existing national guidance. The format is based on the ten key transition principles published by the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) in 2016. Local areas can use this as a resource to inform their own practice.


**State of Care Report from the Care Quality Commission**

This annual report is an assessment of the state of health and social care in England. It looks at trends, shares examples of good and outstanding care, and highlights where care needs to improve. This year's report finds that most people get a good quality of care. You can search on a map to see how local health and care providers, such as GPs, care homes and hospitals, are rated by the CQC


**Early years and childcare**

Awareness of 30-hour offer lower among poorer families, DfE survey finds
Around a third of parents on low incomes are unaware of the government's 30-hour free childcare offer, a Department for Education survey has revealed.


Shared reading: new free resources from LuCiD for parents and practitioners

LuCiD (the ESRC International Centre for Language and Communicative Development) has produced a range of new free resources aimed at parents, caregivers and early years practitioners to help support families with shared reading activities. The resources can be accessed at


Early years provision: LGA survey results June 2018

The Local Government Association has published local authority survey responses on recent central government changes to funding and policy in the early years sector. The survey focused on the 5% cap on central spend, maintained nursery schools, early years entitlements, provision for disadvantaged children and early years practitioners. The results can be found at


Need help around childcare?

Resources that may help if you're struggling to find childcare for your child. Include information on how to find childcare, help to cover childcare costs and what you can do if you're refused childcare, where you'll find our template letters. You can also download a guide for parents on Moving into work.

Finding childcare
Help with childcare costs
What to do if refused childcare
Moving into work guide

Schools and colleges

Work experience for young people on SEN support

DFE have produced a rapid evidence assessment focused on young people with less complex special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), who are enrolled on vocational or technical programmes. The assessment identifies evidence on the benefits (or otherwise) of work experience for these young people as they prepare to enter paid employment.

Link to government report

Enabling technology for dyslexic learners

Simple adjustments can help children and young people to learn in school and at home.

https://senmagazine.co.uk/home/articles/senarticles-2/enabling-technology-for-dyslexic-learners
Focussing on phonics
Practical ideas to support the evaluation of phonics provision in class
https://senmagazine.co.uk/news/uncategorised/focussing-on-phonics

Teenagers who are victims of bully more likely to self-harm
Teenagers who are victims of neglect, bullying, crime, family violence and sexual exploitation are more likely to self-harm and have suicidal thoughts, a study from King's College London finds. The report says the picture is complex, with other pre-existing vulnerabilities like low self-esteem or an unsupportive home also playing a part. But it says schemes to stop adolescents becoming victims may lower the risks.
https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/education-46525638

Being bullied associated with feelings of loneliness
The Office for National Statistics (ONS) has published its inaugural report on children's loneliness in England and Great Britain. Key statistics include: 11.3% of children said they were "often" lonely; 19.5% of children living in a city reported "often" feeling lonely, compared with 5% of those living in rural areas. Recommendations for avoiding loneliness include: joining in sports, clubs and activities; use of social media to maintain connections and develop new ones; purposefully reaching out and talking to people.
Link to report

Government research shows link between mental health issues and bullying
The report found:
- children with a mental health disorder were more likely to have been bullied, been bullied online and bully others
- children with a mental health disorder spent more time on social media sites and had more negative feelings about being online (particularly relating to comparing yourself to others). This was especially the case for girls.
https://files.digital.nhs.uk/F6/A5706C/MHCYP%202017%20Summary.pdf

Mental health and wellbeing provision in schools: review of published policies and information.
DfE examination of the extent to which the current content of schools' published mental health policies and other information demonstrates relevant approaches and activities to promote pupils' mental health and wellbeing, and to protect them from bullying. Includes a chapter on special educational needs and disabilities.
Link to DfE report

Advice for teachers on what to do if they suspect a child they teach may be autistic
Discussion on various issues from potential signs of autism, how to broach the subject with parents, the diagnostic process and strategies to support autistic children with or without a formal diagnosis.
Autism and social communication skills in the classroom
Exploration of the social communication difficulties of autistic students in the mainstream classroom and some strategies to support them.

Disclosing an autism diagnosis in school or college
Ideas on how to support a young person in deciding whether to disclose their autism diagnosis at school or college.

Telling my classmates about autism for the first time...
Link to film of pupil sharing her diagnosis with her classmates

Top tips on raising awareness of autism
Schools top tips on supporting autistic students and helping other students understand autism including student group who lead on this.

Autism awareness – helping everyone to understand
Helping children and young people to understand autism can be the key to peer acceptance and can lead to a reduction in bullying. This web page includes has materials that can help you to plan a lesson or school assembly on autism awareness.

Autism and Bullying
Autistic children and young people can be more vulnerable to bullies for a number of reasons. They may have difficulty communicating, lack the expected social skills and/or find it harder to predict other people’s behaviour. Bullying can lead to an increase in anxiety at school and school refusal.

Why foreign languages have a place in autism education
Senior Advisory Teacher for Speech, Language and Communication Needs, explores the benefits of learning modern foreign languages for autistic children.

New approach to assessing complex needs in primary schools
The assessment will replace P scales 1 to 4 and will be based on the ‘7 aspects of engagement’, an assessment approach that focuses on pupils abilities in specific areas like awareness, curiosity and anticipation.

**Link to government announcement**

**Learning accessibility tool making online learning more accessible for SEND students**

EdPlace has launched a new toolbar that enables students to customise their online learning experience. The customisable options are designed for students who have been diagnosed with specific learning difficulties, and aims to address pressure points for schools and parents.

[http://www.edplace.com/blog/inclusive?utm_source=CDC+Newsletters&utm_campaign=3222e81e1e-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2018_12_18_03_20&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_14015fa80f-3222e81e1e-320984045&mc_cid=3222e81e1e&mc_eid=3afb0846a5](http://www.edplace.com/blog/inclusive?utm_source=CDC+Newsletters&utm_campaign=3222e81e1e-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2018_12_18_03_20&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_14015fa80f-3222e81e1e-320984045&mc_cid=3222e81e1e&mc_eid=3afb0846a5)

**Helping children with Dyspraxia get ready for secondary school**

[https://senmagazine.co.uk/home/main/static/stepping-up-with-dyspraxia](https://senmagazine.co.uk/home/main/static/stepping-up-with-dyspraxia)

**Literacy in the early years**

Ofsted’s Bold Beginnings report on Reception teaching was controversial, but it may ultimately serve to open some eyes and minds suggest Debbie Hepplewhite MBE in SEN Magazine article.

[https://senmagazine.co.uk/home/articles/senarticles-2/literacy-in-the-early-years](https://senmagazine.co.uk/home/articles/senarticles-2/literacy-in-the-early-years)

**Money, benefits and finance**

**Amber Rudd warns of further delays to universal credit**

The work and pensions secretary, Amber Rudd has signalled she would consider further policy changes and rollout delays to restore public confidence in universal credit, telling MPs her priority was to make it safe for vulnerable claimants.


**Carer’s Allowance earnings limit to increase to £123 per week from April 2019**

Carer’s Allowance is the main benefit for carers. You can still get it even if you are working, so long as your earnings are no more than a weekly amount known as ‘the earnings limit’. The government has announced that the earnings limit will be going up to £123 per week from April 2019.


**Link to Contacts free factsheet on Carers Allowance**

**New benefit rates for 2019/20 announced**
The Department for Work and Pensions have just published the new benefits and pensions rates from April 2019 onwards. While many working-age benefits remain frozen, most disability and carers benefits are to see small increases in line with inflation. You can download full details from the GOV.UK website.


Government gives 50p for every £1 saved

A new government scheme was launched last week to help working families on tax credits or Universal Credit build up savings. The new Help to Save scheme rewards savers, with the government giving you 50p for every £1 that you manage to save.

https://www.gov.uk/get-help-savings-low-income

Help with heating bills

Now that winter is upon is it is worth finding out if you can get £140 off you’re your winter fuel bill.


Money Matters – information for parents of disabled children

https://www.contact.org.uk/media/1390131/money_matters.pdf

Advice on claiming Disability Living Allowance (DLA)

https://www.contact.org.uk/media/1212211/claiming_disability_living_allowance_for_children.pdf

General Special Educational Needs and Disabilities

Wheelchair friendly schools

Parents article on the steps her daughters school took to ensure it is wheelchair accessible

https://senmagazine.co.uk/home/uncategorised/wheelchair-friendly-schools

Thinkuknow toolkit.

Toolkit for using the Thinkuknow website - thinkuknow.co.uk - as an engaging learning resource for young people aged 11 and over. Aims to help young people to develop confident, healthy approaches to sex, relationships and the internet; to identify any negative behaviour they encounter, and respond resiliently; to find out where to access advice, guidance and help on these issues.

https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/professionals/resources/thinkuknow-toolkit/

CDC Factsheet: Monitoring and Evaluation participation

How do you know if the participation you run is effective? Read CDC’s new factsheet to find out how to properly monitor and evaluate your participation work.

https://councilfordisabledchildren.org.uk/help-resources/resources/factsheet-7-monitoring-and-evaluation

Accessibility Matters
AccessAble, with Cambridgeshire County Council, have launched a new, FREE online accessibility guide where anyone can check out everything from parking to hearing loops, walking distances and accessible toilets in over 2,000 places across Cambridgeshire. See link below to access the search for what you are looking for and the area you would like it.
https://www.accessable.co.uk/?utm_medium=email&utm_source=govdelivery

School transport as special educational provision
When preparing an EHC plan, local authorities will need to consider whether the child or young person has transport-related special educational needs and whether the provision of transport is required to fulfil those needs. Previous decisions which suggested that transport cannot amount to special educational provision can no longer be relied upon in relation to plans prepared under the 2014 Act.

Developing a Supportive Environment
For children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) to reach their full potential, they need effective, flexible support in a wide range of areas. While these support needs will differ for each individual, all good support starts in an environment in which all adults, children and young people see support as a positive element of a child or young person’s life. This resource has been co-produced with children and young people to provide guidance on developing an environment which is responsive to disabled children and young people’s support needs, and views them in a positive light. It consists of two mutually reinforcing aspects: ‘building a supportive environment’ and ‘talking about support needs’.
https://councilfordisabledchildren.org.uk/help-resources/resources/making-participation-work-factsheets

Loneliness for new parents of disabled children
Being a parent of a disabled child keeps you extremely busy and changes the patterns of your lifestyle in ways that are hard to anticipate. You may not have the same access to your social circle as you used to, and many new parents say they feel socially isolated and lonely.
https://click.clickrelationships.org/content/all-issues/loneliness-for-new-parents-of-disabled-children/

Events, training, groups and consultations

Annual consultation of Admission Arrangements and Co-ordinated Schemes for admission in 2020 – 2021
The School Admissions Regulations 2012 require local authorities to publish annually information regarding the co-ordinated admission schemes for normal and in-year admissions to Cambridgeshire primary and secondary schools and children living in the Cambridgeshire local authority area. Cambridgeshire County Council, as the admissions authority for all community and voluntary controlled schools in Cambridgeshire, are also required to consult on any proposed changes to the admission policy for these schools.

Autism Training coming to Cambridgeshire
The Curly Hair Project (CHP) is an award-winning social enterprise founded by autistic author and entrepreneur Alis Rowe. Our aim is to help those with autism learn to understand themselves and their needs and ultimately be able to self-manage with our work being largely about acceptance, understanding and empathy for different world experiences. The CHP new series of Autism Learning Days and Mental Health Days will be available in Cambridgeshire for the first time next year.

https://thegirlwiththecurlyhair.co.uk/training/events/?search=1&event=&region=East+of+England&chp_date=

Contacts ‘Helpful guide for families with disabled children’
The latest version of this useful and informative publication is now available free to parents. Link below to order a copy.


Department for Education SEND Newsletters
The Department for Education's 0-25 Special Education Needs and Disability Unit publishes a newsletter for anyone working in special educational needs and disabilities – statutory and voluntary agencies across education, health and social care; and users of the system, such as children, young people and parents.

https://councilfordisabledchildren.org.uk/help-resources/resources/department-education-send-newsletters

BBC comedy drama about family life with a child with severe learning disability
Comedy drama on BBC4 about a family looking after their daughter who has a severe learning disability. It was written by someone who has had this experience and is called ‘There she Goes’

https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b0bp2zq4