



Devon Parent Partnership Service
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We provide independent and impartial support to parents who have children with additional educational needs (age 0-19 years).

WHAT'S NEW FOR YOU IN SEN?

When the Government commissioned the Lamb Inquiry in March 2008, its aim was to look at how parental confidence in the special educational needs (SEN) system could be improved. Sir Brian Lamb's final report was published in December 2009 and the Government at the time accepted all of the 51 recommendations – but with a new Government now in place and an uncertain economic climate, what can parents and carers expect as they work to get the right education for their children?

Reassuringly, ministers are still focussing on children with additional needs. Speaking at an every Disabled Child Matters event in June 2010, Sarah Teather (Children's Minister) stated that she would be launching a Green Paper this autumn to look at a wide range of issues for children with SEN and disabilities. She intends to take account of Ofsted's recent review of SEN and will be listening to the views of parents, carers, schools and other organisations with an interest in this area. Her aim is to make the SEN system more transparent and family-friendly so that "parents don't feel they have to battle to get the best education for their child."

In the meantime, however, what changes have already been implemented following the Lamb Inquiry and how might they impact on you? The recommendations in the final Lamb report covered four key areas:

- Putting outcomes for children at the heart of the SEN process
- Giving parents a stronger voice
- Ensuring that local systems are in tune with children's needs
- Increasing accountability around children's progress

In practice, some of the main changes you might now be experiencing include:

- From September 2010 parents now have the right of appeal if the Local Authority decides not to amend a statement after an annual review
- OFSTED has a specific duty to report on the quality of education provided by schools for children with SEN or disabilities
- The Local Government Ombudsman can now take on parental complaints about the Local Authority
- Strengthening the role of Parent Partnership Services (PPS)

Lamb specifically recognised the important role played across the country by parent partnership services in enabling parents to engage with schools and other services. He realised that PPSs were a valuable resource in supporting parents and providing them with good information.

At Devon Parent Partnership Service, we are taking on board Lamb's recommendation to raise our profile and we are working hard to ensure that as many parents, carers and professionals as possible are aware of our service and the support we can offer. We have a new poster which we have sent out to all schools in Devon – if you are part of a support group and would like a copy of our poster to display, contact us with your request. We will be happy to attend parent events, conferences and groups to meet as many of you as we can. Please contact us if you have an event that we could attend to promote our service or to offer an information session about any aspect of SEN and current developments.

In addition, we have recently revised our logo and, in response to parent feedback, we are now colour-coding our leaflets to make it easier for you to select the most relevant information. Our two new leaflets, 'What does your child think?' and 'Transition from school to adult services' are the first to incorporate the change.

Most importantly, all our Parent Partnership Officers will soon be benefiting from further national training in SEN law to enable us to keep you fully aware of any developments.

We can give you or your support group more information about these changes – just contact us on **01392 383080** or **parentpartnershipservice-mailbox@devon.gov.uk**