NASUWT THE TEACHERS' UNION

F IS FOR... FUNDING

SEND SUPPORT

Podcast Companion Toolkit

FIX OUR FUTURE. FUND EDUCATION

F IS FOR...

FUNDING

SEND SUPPORT

EPISODE 3 PODCAST TOOLKIT

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PODCAST EP 3: DISCUSSION GUIDE

Use this discussion guide to stimulate conversation around issues raised in the podcast that are also occurring in your school and local area. You could do this in a formal setting, during a podcast screening, or informally if a colleague or friend mentions listening to the podcast.

Discussion around SEND often involves many stakeholders from different settings. For this episode, we have included differentiated questions for those in different groups. Some participants may belong to more than one group.

Questions for everyone (including SEND parents)

1. What is your lived experience of the SEND education system?
2. In your experience, how has the SEND education system changed in recent years?
3. The Government is proposing to change the way the SEND education system is resourced. What is the biggest challenge you face right now in relation to these reforms?
4. You are now the Education Secretary with the power to change the way SEND education is funded and run. What would you do, and why?

Questions for teachers and school staff

5. What is your current level of experience with SEND? Perhaps you work in a mainstream school with some SEND pupils, or in a specialist setting.
6. What training have you received in order to support SEND pupils? How did that training come about, and did you pay for it yourself?
7. What is your level of awareness of government plans for SEND reform? Do you know what is going to change? How would you describe the level of awareness in your workplace?
8. F is For... is set in a 'dream staff room', where the chairs are comfy, refreshments are plentiful, and teachers have time to connect and rest. What would be in your dream staff room, and why? Would you add anything extra to support teachers dealing with SEND? What about additions to support disabled staff members?
9. If you are a teacher with a disability, how has that impacted your work life? How have you been supported in your workplace?
10. Workplace issues may have been identified during this discussion. Can any of them be resolved through the Union? If you're not sure, contact your union rep or regional centre for advice.

Questions for SENCos

11. How long have you been a SENCo, and what drew you to the role?
12. Have you had any specialist training in order to become a SENCo? If so, what kind? Did you fund it yourself?
13. As a SENCo, what is your biggest challenge in the workplace right now?

ACTIVITY: UNDERSTANDING SEND RESOURCING IN YOUR WORKPLACE



AS A CLASSROOM TEACHER, I LACK THE SPECIALIST TRAINING TO SUCCESSFULLY DELIVER A SEND CURRICULUM – AND I EMPHASISE THE WORD "SUCCESSFULLY".

As more SEND pupils are accommodated in mainstream provision and funding for specialist provision becomes strained, it is more important than ever that teachers have a full understanding of what this means for them, and what can be done to improve all schools for teachers and pupils through activism.

Access to SEND-specific training and professional development varies considerably between schools and settings. This means that knowledge and understanding of SEND-related issues can vary significantly from one teacher to another.

In this section, you can:

- explore the ways SEND is (or isn't!) resourced in your workplace or local area and identify areas for improvement;
- learn how to improve SEND workload and resourcing in your workplace through different types of collective action.

How to use these resources to explore SEND resourcing in your workplace

- Print out the cards on page 5-8.
- In pairs or groups, go through the questions together, making notes on your answers.
- Come back together to compare your answers. You may choose someone to lead this discussion. Try to identify gaps in knowledge and areas where improvements could be made, either through individual or collective action. Use the suggestions for action to decide on next steps.
- **Tip:** if you can, organise this activity so that it includes teachers from specialist and mainstream settings together, so that everyone can learn from each other.

Card colour key

Blue – questions for teachers in all settings

Green – questions for teachers in mainstream settings

Pink – questions for teachers in specialist settings

Do you know how many pupils in your classes have EHCPs?

If pupils in your classes have EHCPs, do you have access to them for lesson planning? If you do not, who is your contact for obtaining curriculum guidance for these pupils?

How much PPA do you have?

Reminder: if your school follows the STPCD (as most do), you should receive at least 10% PPA.

Have you ever been in a situation where your PPA was altered based on your additional responsibilities, including SEND-related responsibilities? If so, what did that look like?

If you haven't been in this situation, is this something you think would be necessary for you to meet the needs of your pupils?

Are you clear on your responsibilities in and out of the classroom when it comes to SEND? What sits with you, and what sits with the SENCo or equivalent role in your workplace?

If you are the SENCo or SEND leader, is this distinction clear in your workplace? And is the workload balance manageable?

Besides you, who are the professionals in your classroom on a day-to-day basis?

Do you have the additional support you need? What would your ideal level of in-classroom support look like?

For SENCos: what are the challenges you face when seeking to bring extra or external support into school?

Do you have any specialist SEND resources or equipment in your classroom?

What would you like to have in the classroom for your SEND pupils?

Which specialist resources in your classroom do you get the most use out of? What do you need more of?

ALL SETTINGS



MAINSTREAM SETTINGS



ALL SETTINGS



ALL SETTINGS



ALL SETTINGS



MAINSTREAM SETTINGS



SPECIALIST SETTING



MAINSTREAM SETTINGS



What types of SEND provision exist in your school, and what is your engagement with them, if any?

Would you say that these provisions have the staff they need to run day in, day out?

How often is SEND resourcing discussed in your workplace on a formal basis?

How often do you discuss it with your colleagues on an informal basis?

For SENCos: do you have the time you need to have these discussions with colleagues? How is that time organised?

How often do you have training to support SEND pupils provided by your school?

Does this training meet your needs as an educator?

How does your employer support you to differentiate the curriculums you teach for different pupils' needs?

What would help you to differentiate lessons more efficiently or successfully?

How much notice do you get for a new pupil arriving? How are you supported by your employer when it comes to planning to meet the new pupils' needs in your classroom/school in this timeframe? If necessary, how could this be improved?

Thinking about your classes or cohort for the next academic year, how does your employer support you to prepare for new SEND pupils? How could this be improved, if needed?

How does your workplace differentiate between issues related to SEND, and issues related to behaviour?

What are the challenges that teachers in your workplace face when the differences between these two issues are not fully supported or understood?

What are the non-teaching tasks you are expected to undertake?

How do these tasks impact your workload?

If your workplace follows the STPCD, have you checked as to whether these tasks are required of teachers?

ALL SETTINGS



MAINSTREAM SETTINGS



ALL SETTINGS



ALL SETTINGS



MAINSTREAM SETTINGS



SPECIALIST SETTING



SPECIALIST SETTING



ALL SETTINGS



STARTING POINTS: ORGANISING AROUND SEND TO IMPROVE RESOURCING AND WORKLOAD

AS A TEACHER IN A SPECIALIST SETTING WITH A CLASS OF TEN PUPILS, I GET 20% PPA



Now that you have explored SEND resourcing and workload in your workplace, you will have a greater understanding of the challenges present and identified potential areas for improvement. But what might that improvement look like, in practice? And how might you achieve this through workplace action?

Below, you will find a selection of suggestions for collective action. Read through these suggestions and think about whether they could be useful steps towards improving issues in your workplace. You may wish to pursue more than one at a time if appropriate, but you do not need to pursue them all at the same time. If you need support to progress any of these areas, contact your Local Association or regional centre.

SEND is an issue that will affect every NASUWT member at some point. If you are a workplace rep – or thinking about becoming a workplace rep – remember that you do not need to act alone. Ask another member or group of members to take on aspects of organising alongside you, and work together to learn and support each other.

SEND Survey

A short workplace survey can be a useful starting point for organising. Use a small number of questions to identify members' main concerns around workload, staffing, role clarity, paperwork and resources. The results can then be used to identify one or two collective priorities to pursue with management. This could help move SEND pressures away from being treated as a series of individual problems and towards a collective organising and negotiating issue.

Secure meaningful union consultation on SEND changes

Reps should be consulted before decisions are made where SEND proposals affect staffing, duties, workload, working practices or health and safety. This could include Inclusion Strategies, new provision, staffing restructures and the use of new SEND funding.

Securing consultation starts with consulting members (through a meeting, survey, or both) and then meeting leadership for discussion and negotiation. If you are a rep and you have never consulted with school leadership before, contact your Local Association or regional centre for help with the next steps.

Negotiate protected time for SEND work

As a union rep, you could seek agreement that significant SEND-related activity, such as planning, reviews, meetings, support plans and liaison with families or other professionals, is properly accounted for within working time. A useful organising question to ask might be what new work is being required, when will staff do it and what existing work will be removed or reduced?

You may wish to ask for a workload impact assessment to be performed.

Ensure SEND provision is safely and appropriately staffed and clarify roles

Reps could raise whether staffing, premises, training and risk-management arrangements are adequate for the pupils the school is expected to support. Schools should be clear about the respective responsibilities of teachers, SENCOs, specialist teachers, TAs/HLTAs and pastoral staff. Reps should challenge situations where work is transferred without appropriate time, training, status or pay.

Require a workforce assessment before new SEND initiatives

Before introducing an Inclusion Base, expanding internal provision or making other significant changes, schools and trusts should consider the staffing, expertise, cover, SENCO capacity and other workforce implications. The principle is that there should be no inclusion plan without a workforce plan.

A useful organising question to ask might be: do we have the staff to support this new provision? What would the impact be on existing staff?

Challenge unnecessary SEND paperwork, duplication and data collection

Where new forms, trackers, plans or assessment systems are introduced, reps could ask what they are for, who is expected to complete them, whether the information already exists elsewhere and what action will result from collecting it. While some documentation is both necessary and legally required, we should seek to prevent duplication and compliance activity that adds workload without improving provision.

FURTHER RESOURCES

NASUWT's guide to managing SEND workload, including clarification of responsibilities

NASUWT's guide to SEND funding at local and national levels

Learn more about upcoming and proposed SEND reforms



Finding support and planning together

In a trade union, you are never alone. If you need support to improve SEND resourcing and workload in your workplace, start by getting in touch with your regional centre or Local Association.

It may be helpful for groups of local activists to plan how to use these resources together, especially if some members belong to the same academy trust or specialist school group. By planning together, you can take ownership of tailored strategies, fill gaps in knowledge, build confidence, and learn from each other's experiences.

Remember: if you use this toolkit to plan a successful meeting or activity, tell your fellow activists! Hearing about your positive experiences will motivate them to get involved.

DON'T FORGET TO SIGN THE PETITION!

As part of the Fix Our Future, Fund Education campaign, we're asking the Government to raise education funding to 6% of GDP. You can support this goal by signing the petition.

Please share this petition with colleagues, friends and family.

TOGETHER, WE CAN FIX OUR FUTURE

SIGN THE PETITION
FIXOURFUTURE.CO.UK

F IS FOR...

FIX OUR FUTURE.

FUND EDUCATION

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