



SEN Support in Further Education (FE) Colleges and Providers

RANi Need to Know Guides | SEND support Advisory sheet 3

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A comprehensive guide for young people, parents and carers

Overview

Young people aged 16–25 with special educational needs (SEN), but who do not have an Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plan, are still entitled to **SEN Support** in further education (FE) settings, including:

- FE colleges
- Sixth form colleges
- Independent specialist colleges
- 16–19 academies and training providers

This guide explains:

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- What SEN Support is in FE
 - Legal duties on colleges and providers
 - Types of support available
 - Funding and how provision is arranged
 - What to do if support is not in place or not working
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Legal Duties on FE Providers

FE settings have legal responsibilities under the **Children and Families Act 2014** and the **SEND Code of Practice 2015**, even where the student does **not** have an EHC plan.

Key duties include:

→ Identifying and assessing SEN

Colleges must identify students with SEN and assess their needs.

→ Putting in place SEN Support

Colleges must use their best endeavours to secure the special educational provision a young person needs (Section 66, Children and Families Act 2014).

→ Involving the young person

Support should be person-centred and based on the young person's views, wishes, goals and aspirations.

→ Publishing an SEN policy and Local Offer

Colleges must publish information on their SEN provision and support arrangements.

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→ **Making reasonable adjustments**

Under the Equality Act 2010, colleges must make reasonable adjustments for disabled students, including providing auxiliary aids and services.

What is SEN Support in FE?

SEN Support in FE is **additional or different help** from the standard offer to enable a student to:

- Access learning
- Make progress
- Participate in college life
- Prepare for adulthood

This support **does not require an EHC plan**.

Common examples of SEN Support in FE:

- One-to-one or small group learning support
- Specialist teaching support (e.g., dyslexia tutors)
- Study skills support or mentoring
- Use of assistive technology or communication aids
- Additional time in exams or coursework extensions
- Mental health or counselling support
- Access to therapies (e.g. speech and language)

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- Structured transition planning
 - Access to a learning support assistant
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How Is SEN Support Arranged?

SEN Support should follow a **cycle** of:

1 Assess

- The college identifies the student's needs and strengths.

2 Plan

- A support plan is created with input from the young person.
- Goals or outcomes should be agreed.

3 Do

- Support and interventions are put in place.
- A key person usually coordinates the support.

4 Review

- The plan is reviewed regularly to check progress.
- Support is adjusted based on what's working or not working.

This is known as the “**graduated approach**.”

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Funding for SEN Support in FE

FE providers receive funding to support students with SEN from their general budget. There are three levels of funding:

◆ Element 1

Core funding for all students – used for standard teaching and resources.

◆ Element 2

Up to **£6,000** per student, per year, from the provider's budget for additional SEN Support.

◆ Element 3 (Top-Up Funding)

If a student has an **EHC plan** and their needs exceed £6,000 of provision, the local authority provides top-up funding.

👉 You do not need an EHC plan to access Element 2 support. But Element 3 requires an EHCP.

Transition Support into FE

Students with SEN (with or without an EHCP) should receive **good transition support** when moving into FE, including:

- Transition meetings with school and college
- Taster days or visits
- Transition plans based on individual needs
- Information sharing between settings

The **local authority** and the **college** should work together to ensure a smooth and supportive move into FE.

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What if SEN Support Is Not in Place?

If you or the young person feels support is:

- Not in place
- Inadequate
- Not helping the student to make progress

You can:

1. **Speak to the college's SEN coordinator or learning support team**
2. **Request a written SEN support plan and regular reviews**
3. **Ask for involvement in planning and reviewing support**
4. **Ask the local authority for an EHC needs assessment** if needs are significant
5. **Use the college's complaints process**
6. **Contact your local SENDIASS** (SEND Information, Advice and Support Service)

EHC Needs Assessment in FE

A young person (or their parent, if they are under 16) has the right to request an **EHC needs assessment** if:

- They have or may have SEN
- They may need special educational provision through an EHC plan
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An EHC plan may be appropriate if:

- The young person needs high levels of support
 - They are not making progress despite SEN Support
 - Their needs are complex or require input from multiple services
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Involving the Young Person

Young people aged **16 or over** are presumed to have the **mental capacity** to make their own decisions about education and support unless proven otherwise.

Colleges must involve young people in:

- Planning their support
- Reviewing their progress
- Making decisions about their education

Parents still play an important role, especially for younger students or those who want support with decision-making.

Key Points

- Colleges must provide SEN Support for students without an EHCP
- Support should follow the Assess, Plan, Do, Review cycle
- FE providers must use their best endeavours and make reasonable adjustments
- Students can request an EHC assessment if their needs require more support
- Young people aged 16+ have rights to be involved in decision

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Support and Resources

You can get further support from:

- **RANi** – Help with advice, support and impartial information
- **Local Offer** - Help with advice, support and impartial information
- **SENDIASS** – Local impartial information and advice service for parents and young people www.iasmanchester.org
- **IPSEA** – Independent Provider of Special Education Advice: www.ipsea.org.uk
- **Contact** – A national charity supporting families with disabled children: www.contact.org.uk

If you'd like help preparing your request or understanding your appeal options, RANi can provide guidance and templates

Remember:

Always keep a copy of all correspondence you send, along with proof of postage or delivery. If you send documents by post, we recommend using a **signed-for** service. If sending by email, request a **read receipt** if possible.

Get in Touch

If you need more information or have a question, we're here to help.

Email us: info@rani.org.uk

Please include:

- Your name
- Your child's name
- Your child's date of birth
- Your query

Or, if you prefer, you can fill out our online **contact form** and we'll get back to you as soon as possible.

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