

Question 10: To what extent do you agree or disagree that we should strengthen the mandatory SENCo training requirement by requiring that headteachers must be satisfied that the SENCo is in the process of obtaining the relevant qualification when taking on the role?

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SNJ's response to Question 10

1. The level of confidence amongst teachers in supporting children with SEND is low. In 2019, 41% of teachers reported that there is appropriate training in place for all teachers in supporting pupils receiving SEN support. This is a significant decrease since summer 2018 when 59% of teachers agreed with this statement.

2. At present, a SENCO only needs to have attained a NASENCO award within 3 years. This proposed change, that a head should "be satisfied" that training to be a SENCO is happening enough for someone to be appointed to the role? It's far too vague.
 3. For example, how far through should they be? How is a headteacher who potentially has no training in SEND, to make a value judgement? Isn't it more likely that a head, desperate for someone willing to fulfil the role, will take a relaxed view of "in the process of"?
 4. If a SENCO's role comes with protected time, few other non-SEND-related commitments, and a place on the senior leadership team with a salary to match, it will elevate it to a coveted reposition. This, in itself, will encourage more people to want to take on the role. At present, it does seem that only the most dedicated stick it out, or apply in the first place.
 5. If initial teacher training has a better SEND element, teachers would be better prepared to not only teach SEND but to want to train for an NPQ or a NASENCO.
 6. One of the drawbacks is the cost to the school. If the DfE is truly committed to having more children with SEND in mainstream, then it needs to invest and ensure that schools are funded to be able to afford a well-trained SENCo in a senior position.
 7. Creating a dedicated admin for the SENCO is an excellent idea - but again, the funding needs to match the ambition.
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Responses from parents/SNJ readers

NB: These views are those of parents for whom we have acted as a conduit for their response to the Green Paper. The views expressed from here are not necessarily those held by Special Needs Jungle.



1. I strongly disagree with the premise of this question. This proposal does not change the current position (SENCOs must already achieve the

national SENCO award within 3 years of appointment), and this is a pointless question.

2. A SENCO should be qualified before they take on the role. It should not be acceptable for a school to have an untrained and unqualified SENCO for up to three years, and potentially even longer - staff turnover is often high, especially in less-good schools, so that SENCO might leave within a couple of years and be replaced by another unqualified person. In this way, a school could go for many years without ever having a qualified SENCO in place.



1. I think all SENCOs should be qualified prior to getting the job. Also, SENCOs should be part of the school leadership team so they can ensure SEND is being considered at all levels. SENCOs need time set aside to carry out their role. The time allocated to this should be dependent on the size of the school, but for a 3-form junior school, I would expect the role to be full-time including teaching time with some of the most vulnerable SEN students one-to-one.
2. A dedicated admin for the SENCO is a good idea as applying for EHCPs is very time-consuming but an important part of the job. Currently, many SENCOs try to avoid helping with EHCPs as it is such a huge job to take on top of all the other work they have.
3. I do not think SENCOs should have other roles such as class teacher or year head as they simply won't have the time to look after SEN properly if they are pulled in other directions.



1. Strongly agree



1. Strongly agree. SENCOs should also be required to complete mandatory refresher training regularly. There should be a statutory requirement for SENCOs to be on a minimum grade and a member of the school's leadership/management team. Training should be mandatory for all school staff and teacher training should set aside much more than a single day for SEN.

2. I feel strongly that a SENCO should be fully qualified when starting the role, not working towards a qualification. Children with SEN's needs are complex and challenging, and they deserve to be supported by staff who are fully trained and ideally experienced. The qualification should be a national standard rather than the whim of a headteacher.
3. I feel that SENCOs should always be part of the school's leadership team to ensure that their voices are heard and that SEN is considered strategically by schools. In MATs, there should be a mandatory board place for a qualified SENCO, and this should not just be a token representation, rather they should have their ability to speak up for SEN enshrined in law.
4. I believe that SENCOs should, for the main part, be full-time dedicated to that role, and should not be expected to teach or carry out other duties other than being a member of the management team and what that involves. In some cases, the headteacher is also the SENCO, which is unacceptable. The evidence shows that levels of SEN are only increasing, and carrying out plan, do, assess, review, EHCP applications, providing monitoring, liaising with specialists, observing children in class, attending training and sharing best practice and educating colleagues on SEN etc is a full-time job. Central government should also provide adequate funding to cover the cost of this as well as admin support dedicated to the SEN team.



1. There is a huge turnover of sendcos partly because it is a demanding course - not all heads recognise either the demands of the job or the demands of the course - it is common practice to appoint inexperienced staff and not really care/ support the sendco undertaking the course as the head knows they can just get another sendco.
2. Since schools pay for the course "requiring that headteachers must be satisfied that the SENCo is in the process of obtaining the relevant qualification when taking on the role?" is irrelevant
3. Heads should be required to provide time for sendcos to undertake the role and undertake the course - no other teacher is required to give up 100s of hours of their time to keep their job

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1. Unqualified SENCOs have no place in schools. It should not be possible for anyone to become a SENCO unless they are fully qualified, and can show that they are participating in annual CPD - much in the same way that GPs must do to retain their registration and insurance.
 2. I spend a lot of time each week supporting and advising SENCOs and I am continually shocked by some of the ignorance and attitudes I come across towards children with SEND, especially those communicating their distress via behaviour, and that's even from those who have been qualified for some time and have, on paper, solid experience.
 3. SENCO training is imperative, and perhaps a new route through teacher training is required? I would also suggest an overhaul of teacher training so that ALL teachers start out as SEND teachers and then work back towards mainstream later on in their degrees/training pathways. Having a solid understanding of neuroscience, child development and SEND improves pedagogy and teaching quality for ALL children - everyone wins here. Current teacher training sets staff up to fail our children: if you want more children with SEND to have their needs met in mainstream, you are going to need to invest in vast amounts of training for their teachers. Where is this in the Green Paper? NOWHERE!

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1. Fully agree that headteachers should only employ people that have COMPLETED the qualification and have send experience. NOT just be obtaining.
 2. All people working with children should have mandatory training on SEND during their teacher training
 3. Children are unique.
 4. If teachers are trained in send better awareness and earlier diagnosis will help with our children's future
 5. Too many children are not supported quickly enough as teachers are not trained to identify children with additional needs



1. Yes, it should be strengthened, but a headteacher being satisfied is far too woolly a statement. Evidence should be made available to parents of the school children of each and every qualification pertaining to SEND that staff have or are working towards.



1. I disagree in that all Senco's should have the qualification to take the job.



1. I would disagree in that the suggested change is not enough. I believe a SENCO should be fully trained, not just "in the process". We would not tolerate part-trained teachers in a full-time position – why so with SENCOs?



1. SENCOs should be fully qualified before starting their post. My PGCE training contained a few hours of SEN lectures which were incorporated into anti-racism equal opportunities and various other areas of teaching. This was not enough to equip me to identify, teach and navigate a complicated SEN system. SENCOs must be part of the school leadership team so that it is considered strategically. A SENCO should also be primarily a SENCO with minimal other teaching duties so that reviews and assessments are timely and not conflicting with other responsibilities. They could also benefit from admin support which should be government funded and ringfenced to ensure that it goes to the correct department.



1. NASENCO training should be obtained before becoming a SENCo and it should be a legal requirement to have a set amount of protected time to complete work and carry out their role. It should also be a legal requirement that SENCOs are part of SLT not advisory.