

Question 9: To what extent do you agree or disagree that we should introduce a new mandatory SENCo NPQ to replace the NASENCo? Strongly Agree, Agree, Neither Agree or Disagree, Disagree, Strongly Disagree – If you selected Disagree or Strongly Disagree, please tell us why.

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SNJ's response to Question 9

1. It seems that many teachers do support the idea of an NPQ to bring it into line with other qualifications
2. However, it is important not to throw out the esteemed academic qualification that can only lead to better standards and may be a progression for a SEND teacher who has achieved the NPQ
3. As our SENCo columnist, Hannah Moloney commented: *"Too often SEND Provision is 'bolt-on, rather than built-in'. Rebranding the NASENCO as an NPQ helps to unify the SENCO qualification with other school professional development courses. It is, however, an extraordinarily*

challenging role which requires high levels of academic and pastoral skill, along with enough time to enact the role. The quality of the award must be kept and further support for SENCOs must be recognised. The SENCO role is the key protagonist in the SEND reforms. They must be protected to be able to carry out their legal and moral duties.”

This is a view with which we wholeheartedly agree.

4. To strengthen the NASENCO, we understand that LLENDiC was commissioned by the DfE, through Whole School SEND, to draw up revised Learning Outcomes. We are told that a complete set of revised learning outcomes, maintaining the L7 nature of the award, while having a stronger leadership element and being aligned with the language and focus of NPQs, was presented to the DfE in 2020. We would like to know what action the DfE has taken on these.
5. This question also raises the issue of SEND training in general. For too long the Initial Teacher Training Core Framework has ill-prepared newly-qualified teachers for being a teacher of children with SEND as it says in the SEND Code of Practice 2015. This MUST be rectified as soon as possible.
6. The ITT must reflect the same wording of “every teacher is a teacher of children with SEND” and every aspect of the curriculum must be developed with this in mind. What’s good for children with SEND is good for every child - and after all, it is highly likely teachers will have children with undiagnosed additional needs that they will be ill-equipped to identify or support. This only leads to greater needs developing, children falling behind their own true potential, possibly becoming disaffected and disengaged. This can snowball into mental health issues, school anxiety and perhaps exclusion - for want of a nail the shoe was lost. In other words, noticing support is needed early, and then giving it effectively can make a massive difference.
7. But it’s not enough to train SENCOs in SEND itself. They must have a firm grasp of the surrounding legal framework to ensure that statutory duties are met for the benefit of children (and this is where an admin would certainly be supportive) This training must be included in both the NPQ and NASENCO
8. We would like to draw [your attention to this survey of SENCOs](#) about the proposed changes to the NASENCO award and the introduction of an NPQ, which appears to confirm our own views that both awards could exist without difficulty.

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 agree strongly to strengthen the qualification. They should hold a teaching qualification with experience with SEND. This qualification should also have refresher days annually.
2. Sencos should only be employed for that role alone and have administration time included in their timetable.
3. Sendcois should make mandatory observations termly on their SEND pupils, reviewing provision and outcomes.
4. More meetings with parents and professionals.
5. It should be made law that schools/nurseries MUST work with parents with IEP/targets
6. A Walsall school have been completing targets in-house without even talking or working with parents
7. Parents are their advocates, we know our children better, this should not be the case
8. Progress meetings are so important everybody should be working together
9. Sendcos should also be accountable for working with TAs and training them.



1. I think it's a good idea that teachers get proper SEND training, however, I do not know if a new qualification is what is needed. I suggest that the current system could be improved and offered to all teachers. I think probably not enough training is offered to enough teachers currently due to lack of funding. More funding for more and better (and on-going) training is what is needed whatever the title of the qualification.



1. It depends on the quality of the training. Without seeing what is included it is impossible to comment.



1. The current NASENCo is not satisfactory and changes do need to be made. In particular, the qualification must include rigorous training on the law so that SENCOs know what children are entitled to and what the school and LA are required to do.
2. However, an NPQ is a much lower level qualification than the current NASENCo, which is a graduate-level qualification. Downgrading to a less rigorous qualification makes no sense.



1. Without understanding what each of these qualifications entails this is difficult to answer. What we can tell you is that nowhere near enough training is being given to teachers with SEND. This often leads to them viewing children with SEND as a burden, not understanding the wide spectrum of SEND (in particular ASD) and applying strategies with a blanket approach rather than understanding each child. Lack of understanding, training and time, leads teachers to force children to comply with impossible targets and makes them feel a failure when they do not understand or cannot meet what is expected of them. It leads to sentiments of isolation and a sense of failure and low self-esteem which leads to the collapse of their mental health.

2. We appreciate that the wide variety of needs of each child is difficult and teachers are overburdened. Perhaps then, you should consider again why parents seek a Specialist (not special) placement for their child, with neurodiversity is the norm and teachers are there because they want to be and children thrive with their own kind.
3. Teachers must be educated to accept that FINE IN SCHOOL does not mean fine at all. Teachers would expect their own needs and mental health to be accounted for and acted up, so they do not have the right to see children with SEND and their parents as a nuisance.



1. Don't feel qualified to answer this. But it should be part of any Senco's role to have a suitable qualification not working towards. Teacher training should also include SEN provision.



1. I think the NASENCO should be improved rather than replaced. Teachers with NASENco qualifications could then top up training on any new elements included rather than having to retrain. Teacher shortages would be reduced if it became mandatory for qualifications to be in place before the role is started.
2. If the changes to be made to systems are far-reaching and the content of the NASENCO is mostly irrelevant then it should be replaced.



1. Strongly Disagree.
2. Lowering the level needed to achieve SENDCo status is not going to lead to better-qualified SENDCos or make them more respected within the SLT. How will the standards of training be monitored across the country?