

STOP THE ATTACK ON DISABLED STUDENTS' RIGHT TO EDUCATION

NOW

Disabled students must have the right to inclusive education

But in 2017 the UN Disability Committee said that the UK's austerity plan is causing a "human catastrophe" for Disabled people, including pupils & students. Since then:

- More Disabled pupils and students face segregation within the education system as a result of disability-related discrimination and human rights breaches caused by funding cuts and a fixation with league tables and graduate employment rates.
- Disabled pupils are at least twice as likely as their peers to be bullied, excluded from school, off-rolled from mainstream education and placed into alternative provision.
- Changes to Disabled Student's Allowance have made it more difficult for Disabled students to access higher education.
- 82% of mainstream schools reported insufficient funding for reasonable adjustments or SEND provision for Disabled pupils.
- Colleges and universities report it is now more difficult to provide the support Disabled students need to participate in learning.

The evidence clearly shows that in 2018 disability discrimination is at record levels. On this National Day of Action Against Disability Discrimination, ALLFIE is calling for:

More support for education staff

Funding cuts are negatively affecting those working in education. Education staff also highlight the need for better SEND training. A lack of funding for good training that supports inclusion of Disabled pupils & students has meant staff lack the confidence and ability to make reasonable adjustments in educational settings:

"We had three major sessions at college but it wasn't practical enough in helping you deal with six SEN children with very different needs in a class of 29 with very little TA support!"

"We are concerned that if councils do not receive sufficient funding to cover high cost SEND, they will not have the resources to allocate extra funds to highly inclusive schools [and] may be reluctant to accept or keep pupils with SEND." (LGA 2017)



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Working to end segregation and promote inclusion within the education system

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Reasonable adjustments

Education providers are struggling not just with making reasonable adjustments for Disabled pupils and students around support and equipment, but also with their access to accredited courses. The government's obsession with league tables has created unhelpful competition between schools, disincentivising inclusive education practice.

"Removal of children from subjects seems to be routine now for children they (the school) do not think will pass GCSE[s]. My son is now mainly in a [separate] classroom..." (parent interviewed by ALLFIE, 2018).

GCSE reforms mean exam bodies are less able to make reasonable adjustments, so Disabled students may be unable to demonstrate their learning, and fail to achieve the required grades:

"... a pupil who had shown a good knowledge and understanding of, for example, history – but who had spelling problems due to dyslexia – could well end up with a worse grade than a good speller who had done less well on the history questions."

Review of building regulations

Recent revisions to education building standards mean that fewer educational establishments will be accessible to many Disabled students.

"There are real concerns about government plans to reduce the size of classrooms... the Building Bulletin 102, which is around access for disabled people into mainstream schools, and they're now saying it's not really relevant, which is pretty poor."

Despite the UNCRPD, there is still no legal requirement in the UK for educational institutions to incorporate inclusive design principles to address the discrimination that Disabled students face daily when seeking access to education.

We are therefore asking politicians to pledge support for the following changes, which are desperately needed to stamp out disability discrimination in our educational system by:

- Making inclusive education a right in education law
- Including time limits in which to implement reasonable adjustments under the 2010 Equality Act
- A comprehensive review of building regulations to ensure they meet the requirements of Disabled pupils & students.



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