

## The National Council for Special Education

### *Working to deliver a better special education service*

This is one in a series of leaflets designed to give basic information on the role and operations of the National Council for Special Education in delivering a better special education service to students, parents, schools, the health sector and organisations representing persons with disabilities.

## The National Council for Special Education

### Q. What is the National Council for Special Education?

- A. The Council is a statutory body set up under the Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act 2004. Our role is to help improve the standard and delivery of services to children with special educational needs.

### Q. Who is on the Council?

- A. The Act provides for the appointment of 13 persons to the Council by the Minister for Education & Science. All persons appointed have a special interest in or knowledge relating to the education of persons with disabilities with special educational needs.

A list of current Council members is available on the Council website [www.ncse.ie](http://www.ncse.ie)

### Q. Is the Council completely independent of the Department?

- A. The Council is an independent body established under statutory legislation (the Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act, 2004).

The Council acts in accordance with Department of Education & Science policy in relation to the level of resources and the nature of services to be provided. The Council will, however, carry out fully independent research and provide advice to the Minister on how best to provide an effective special education service for children with disabilities with special educational needs.

### Q. What are the principal functions of the Council?

- A. The Council provides a service to parents and children through the co-ordination of the delivery of services between the health sector and schools. This facilitates the inclusion of the child in the school system. The Council provides advice to the Minister for Education & Science on effective policies for the provision of special educational services. The Council also conducts, commissions and publishes research on matters relevant to its functions.

**Q. How does the Council operate?**

- A. There are 80 Special Educational Needs Organisers (SENOs) working nationwide. These SENOs are the local contact points for parents of children with disabilities. Their role is to assist parents in securing education services for their children in their journey through the education system. SENOs are assigned responsibility for schools within a particular geographical area. They will work closely with all stakeholders, including children, parents, schools and the health services in working to provide a better education service.

**Q. How does the National Council for Special Education help parents of children with special educational needs?**

- A. The local SENO is available to parents who have children with special educational needs and those who have concerns that their children may have special educational needs. They provide information and assist parents on issues in relation to the child's education at pre-school, primary school and post-primary levels.

**Q. How does the National Council for Special Education help schools?**

- A. The Council through the Special Educational Needs Organiser works with schools to deal with issues such as:
- the intake and transfer of children with special educational needs
  - the provision of resources to the school to meet the needs of these children
  - liaison with the health sector in relation to the support services they provide

**Q. How does the Council's research function operate?**

- A. The Council's research programme covers a range of special education issues and includes gathering information on the prevalence of special educational needs throughout the country. The Council will also examine current resourcing policies at primary and post primary levels. This will identify problem areas and allow the Department to plan provision generally. The Council will coordinate its research with other relevant bodies such as the National Disability Authority and the Health Research Board.

**Q. Where can I obtain further information?**

A. The list of the contact numbers for SENOs is available on our website at [www.ncse.ie](http://www.ncse.ie)

Alternatively, you can contact your local school or the school in which you intend enrolling your child, to get the contact details of your local SENO.

The Council Headquarters address is: The National Council for Special Education, Mill Street, Trim, Co Meath. Telephone Number: 046 948 6400, Fax Number: 046 948 6404, email: [info@ncse.ie](mailto:info@ncse.ie).

A further leaflet on the role of the Special Educational Needs Organiser is also available and may be obtained from your local SENO on request.