

COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW OF THE SPECIAL NEEDS ASSISTANT (SNA) SCHEME

TERMS OF REFERENCE

September 2016

The Minister for Education and Skills, Richard Bruton, T.D., requests the NCSE to lead a comprehensive review of the SNA scheme, in consultation with other relevant Departments and State Agencies, including the National Disability Authority (NDA) and in that context to:

1. Identify and recommend how, in the future, the additional care needs of students, over and above those needs that could be reasonably expected to be managed by teaching staff, should be met and
2. Identify and recommend the most appropriate form of support options to provide better outcomes for students with Special Educational Needs who have additional care needs, having regard to the significant amount of State investment in this area.

The Minister also requests the NCSE, as part of the review, to:

1. Examine whether the SNA scheme continues to meet its purpose as set out in Circular 0030/2014.
2. Consider whether the scheme is being used to meet needs, other than care needs, and if so, what are those needs, taking into account the primary and secondary care needs outlined in Circular 0030/2014.
3. Provide advice on appropriate SNA qualifications and training levels
4. Evaluate the role of professional reports in providing a robust basis for the allocation of additional care supports under the scheme
5. Conduct a detailed analysis of the current allocation and distribution of SNAs focussing on what support is being given, to whom and why?
6. Define and examine outcomes of students under current arrangements, taking into account the findings of the Altered Provision Pilot Project
7. In preparing its report, to have regard to the commitments set out in the programme for a Partnership Government in relation to the introduction of an in-school speech and language service.
8. In preparing its report to take account of the findings and recommendations of the Report on the Role of the Special Needs Assistant which was published by the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Education and Social Protection in January 2016.