

NCSE Press Release 18th January 2017

NCSE welcomes a better and more equitable way of allocating teaching resources for special needs

The NCSE welcomed the announcement today by Minister for Education and Skills Richard Bruton on a better and more equitable way of allocating additional teaching resources for students with special educational needs, which will come into place in September.

In 2013, the NCSE advised the Minister that the model for allocating teaching resources for students with special needs was unfair and inequitable. For example, in order to access resource teaching, students required a diagnosis and there are long waiting lists for assessments. Families who could afford to pay for private assessments were able to avoid waiting lists to access resources, which disadvantaged those who could not afford to pay privately and have to wait.

The new approach announced today is broadly based on a proposal developed by an NCSE Working Group lead by the NCSE's Chairperson and former Chief Inspector, Eamon Stack. The proposal was successfully piloted by the Department of Education and Skills in 2015/16 and provides for a better and more equitable way of allocating these extensive resources.

Eamon Stack, NCSE Chairman said: "We are delighted that the DES agreed with our proposal for change and developed this new model for allocating resources, which will benefit students, parents and schools."

The new model will mean:

- Students will no longer have to wait to access extra teaching as a diagnosis is no longer necessary; long waiting lists exist for a diagnosis.
- Students won't have to be "labelled" with a disability just to receive extra teaching support.
- Parents will no longer have to pay large sums of money for a private diagnosis to bypass waiting lists.
- Schools will be able to support students as soon as difficulties begin to emerge as they won't have to wait for an individual diagnosis and application for resources.
- Schools will have less paperwork and administration without the need for individual applications for resources to the NCSE - of which there were an average of 17,000 a year.

Further information on the new model announced by Minister Bruton can be accessed on the DES website through this link <http://www.education.ie/en/Press-Events/>

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