

PRESS RELEASE

For immediate release

my AFK welcomes the House of Commons Education Committee's new report "Special Educational Needs and Disabilities", released today

The report highlights many very serious shortcomings in the implementation of the system of support for disabled children and young people in England, introduced in 2014.

Graham Duncan, Chief Executive of **my AFK – Working With Disability** welcomed the Committee's report saying:

"The 2014 reforms were a desperately needed, once in a generation, change in the way that disabled children and young people are supported. The Committee is absolutely right to conclude that "the reforms were the right ones".

"It is vital that we do not lose sight of this crucial point, however disappointed we are that the reforms have been so badly implemented.

"We fully endorse the Education Committee's warning to the Government to resist "the temptation to address the problems within the system by weakening or watering down duties or making fundamental changes to the law."

As well as submitting written evidence, my AFK was delighted to support two young people, Simran and Kashifa, to provide their own, very powerful, oral evidence to the Inquiry. The Committee's insistence on hearing directly from young people and their families is one reason that the Report has been able to cast so much light upon the current state of SEND provision. Their experiences clearly demonstrate that the system's shortcomings carry a very real human cost.

Amongst the Report's recommendations, my AFK particularly welcomes calls for:

- a “culture change within schools and local authorities and Government” to ensure that funding is used to full effect;
- “More to be done to include children and young people in the writing of their [Education, Health and Care] Plans and decision-making about the support they receive”;
- improvement in the way that children and young people receiving SEN Support (those who do not have an Education, Health and Care Plan) are supported and the way that such support is funded;
- “a ministerial-led cross-departmental working group to develop more employment and training opportunities for post-16 young people”.

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Note for Editors:

About my AFK

my AFK (formerly known as Action For Kids) is a national charity supporting disabled children, young people and their families. Its mission is to support disabled young people into paid employment through the provision of job coaching, work experience and work skills training.

my AFK also provides mobility equipment not available on the NHS to disabled children and young people up to age 25 across the UK.

For more information on my AFK: www.my-afk.org

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my AFK is the operating name of Action For Kids Charitable Trust, a charity registered in England and Wales, no. 1068841 and a company limited by guarantee, no. 3487626.

