



Collective Get T★gether

P★wer Hour – National Standards for Inclusion in Schools

Session Overview

This session introduced young people to the core **Principles of Inclusion** that were co-produced during *The Collective Power Hour*. The aim was to explore what these principles mean in practice and begin identifying the **minimum standards and expectations** needed to make inclusive education a reality for all children and young people.

The session focused on moving from abstract concepts to practical actions by helping young people define what inclusion should **look, feel and sound like** in schools. Through discussion and creative activities, participants identified the actions, behaviours, and systems that schools, teachers and wider services should put in place to ensure all young people can participate, learn, and thrive.

To support discussions, the following definitions were used:

- **Principles:** Ideas and beliefs that form the basis of how we think and act.
- **Inclusion:** Being able to fully participate and access opportunities.
- **Standards:** Expectations that help people understand what good practice looks like and how improvement can be achieved.

Prioritising the Principles

Young people revisited the Principles of Inclusion that had been co-produced in June and ranked in order of importance. This generated thoughtful discussion, with participants recognising that all principles are interconnected and collectively contribute to a genuinely inclusive education system.

The ranking exercise resulted in the following priorities:

Joint First Place

- Everyone is different, and everyone gets what they need to be treated fairly and with respect.
- All services work together to support young people to do their best.

Joint Second Place

- We listen to young people and their families, helping them have a say and be part of decisions about their lives and learning.
- We adapt teaching and remove barriers so everyone can take part and succeed in their learning.

Joint Third Place

- Everyone belongs here. We help all young people join in and be part of school life.
- A space that works for all to be ready and able to learn.
- Everyone working in places of education has training on SEND.
- We keep improving what we do to ensure the best outcomes for all, supported by strong leadership.

Interactive Activity: Building Bridges to Inclusion

The session was designed to be highly interactive and engaging. Seven small groups were each assigned one of the inclusion principles to explore in greater depth (with the principle relating to continuous improvement and leadership not covered during this session).

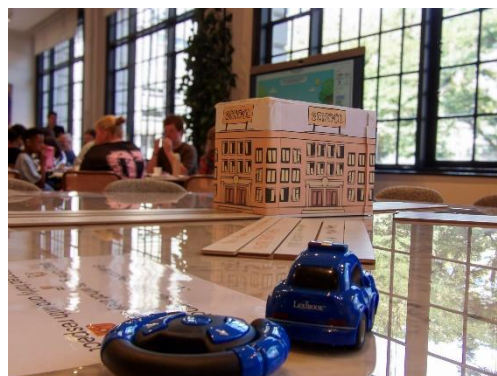
Young people considered:

- What schools could do differently.
- How teachers and staff could behave.
- What practical support should be available.
- What would help inclusion become visible in everyday school life.

Each group identified their **top five actions or requirements** needed to bring their assigned principle to life and wrote these onto wooden "planks".

The planks were used to create symbolic **bridges** connecting the inclusion principle to a model school.

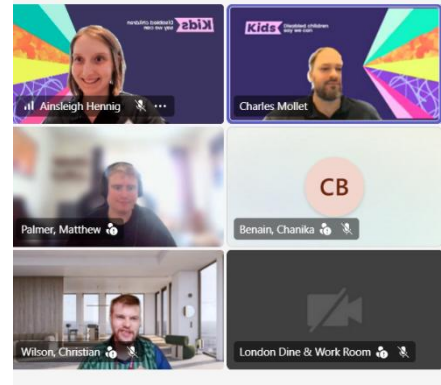
To bring the concept to life, a remote-controlled car represented a young person travelling towards the school. The activity demonstrated that the more inclusive practices and supports that were in place, the easier it became for the young person to access and engage with education.



This visual, hands-on approach showed participants that inclusion is not achieved through one action alone; it depends on multiple elements working together to remove barriers and create a clear pathway to success.

Online activity: Building Bridges to Inclusion

A similar session online via Microsoft Teams allowed those who were unable to engage in person to still contribute. During this, young people used a combination of methods (including voice, written and AAC devices) to explore the principles in greater depth, share minimum requirements to make the principles real, and what those look and feel like in practice.



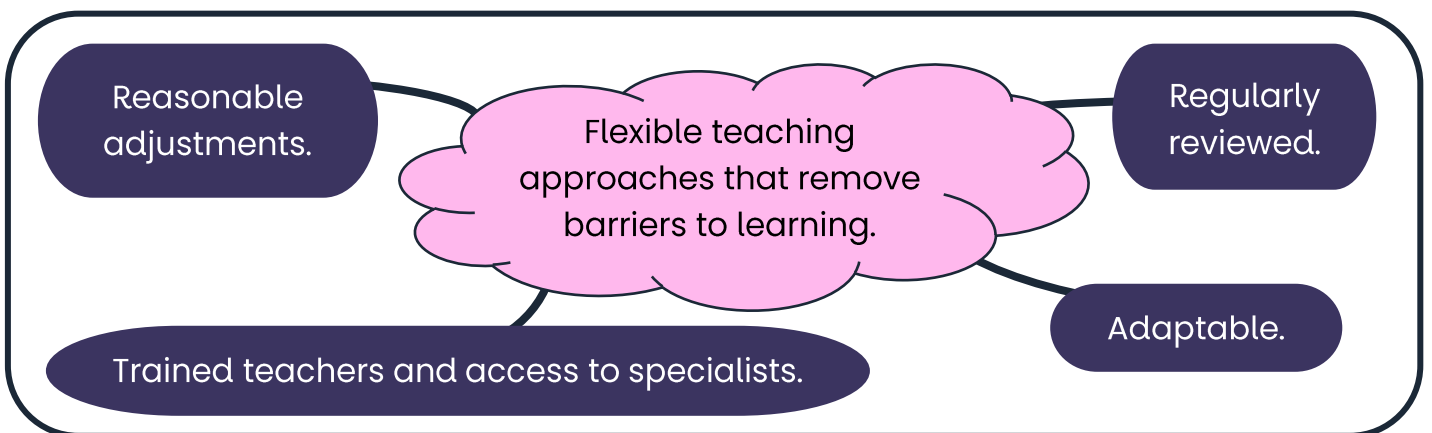
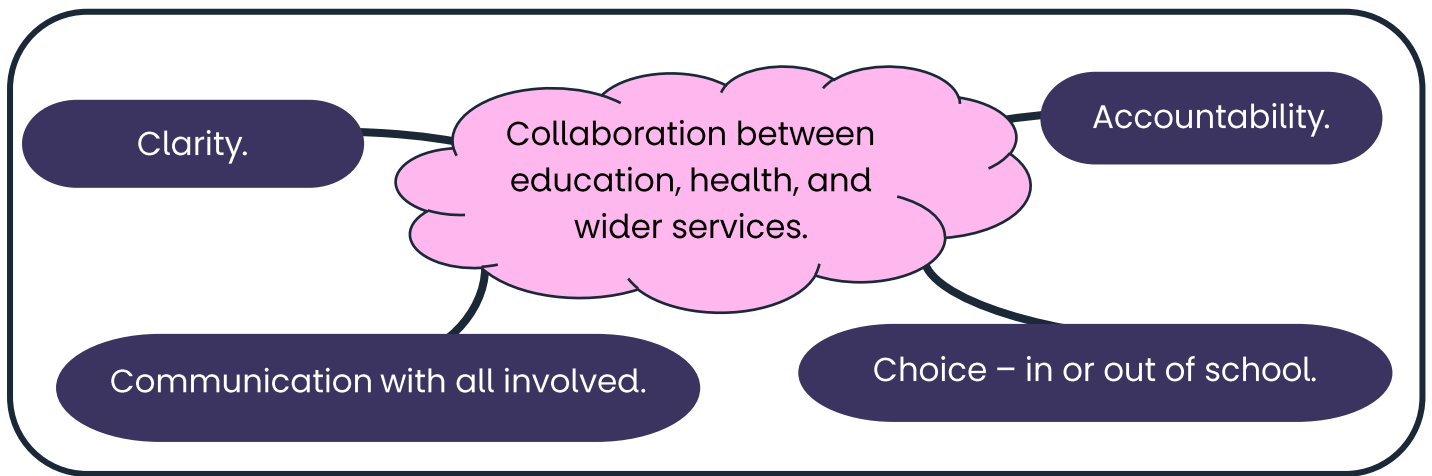
Young people had the option of engaging in a privately hosted online game, where they were able to label virtual building materials, and in cooperation with other young people, built a bridge to support a ball rolling across a gap.

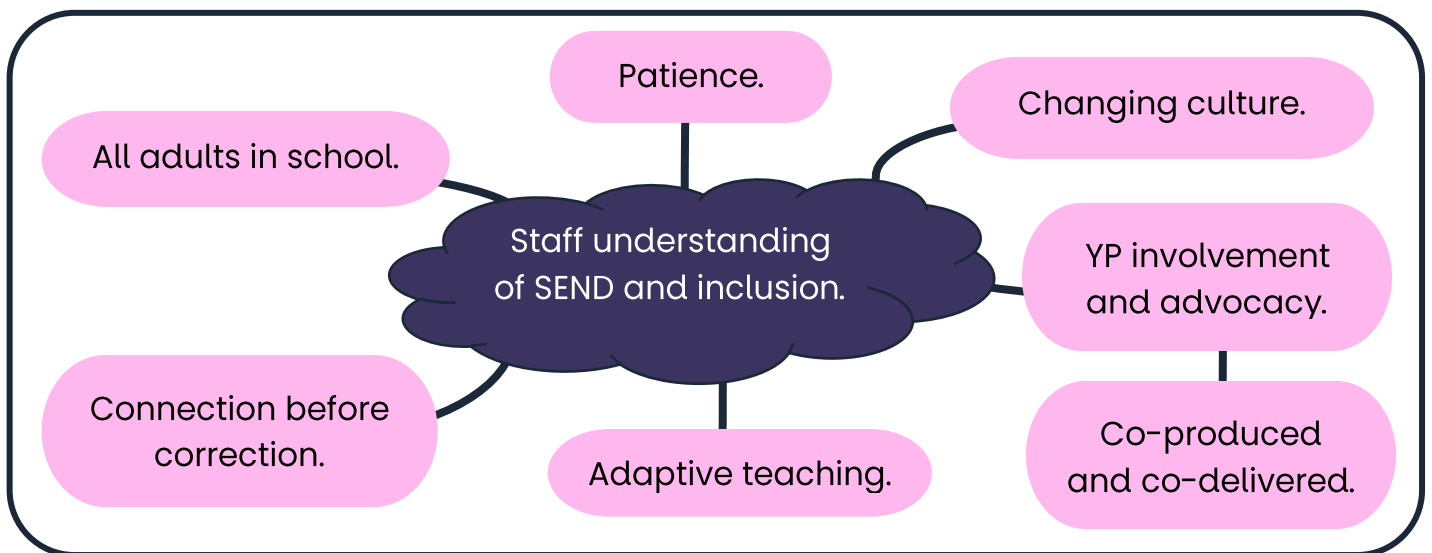


Key Reflections

The activities generated rich discussion and enabled young people to clearly articulate what meaningful inclusion looks like from their perspective. Participants consistently emphasised the importance of the following:







The creative bridge-building activity helped demonstrate the cumulative impact of inclusive practices and reinforced the message that every action taken by schools contributes to a young person's ability to access education and achieve positive outcomes.

Impact and Next Steps

The insights gathered during this session provide valuable youth-led evidence to support the Department for Education's work on the development of **National Standards for Inclusion**.

The ideas generated by participants will help inform thinking around:

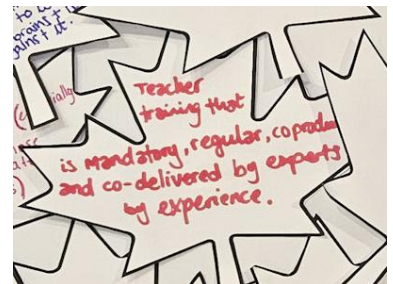
- The development of a **universal inclusion offer** that all schools should provide.

- The identification of core expectations and minimum standards for inclusive practice.
- Consideration of how additional, targeted support could be layered on top of universal provision to further improve inclusion and outcomes for children and young people with SEND.

The session demonstrated the value of meaningful co-production, ensuring that the voices and lived experiences of young people directly inform the design of future inclusion standards. The creative, interactive formats enabled participants to engage with complex policy concepts in an accessible and enjoyable way, while generating practical recommendations that can support system-wide improvement.

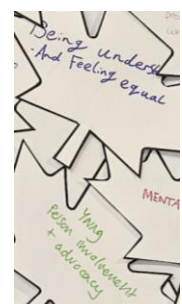
To close the session, young people were asked to name one action schools should take to make education more inclusive for children and young people with SEND. Their ideas were written on leaves and added to the tree, symbolising the actions and commitments needed for inclusion to flourish in education settings. Although a wide range of suggestions were shared, several clear themes emerged.

The strongest message was the need for **high-quality SEND training for all education staff**. Young people consistently highlighted the importance of regular, meaningful training that helps teachers understand different needs, mental health, communication differences and how to provide effective support. Participants felt that training should be co-produced and co-delivered with people who have lived experience of SEND.



Young people also emphasised the importance of **respect, understanding and positive relationships**. They wanted teachers and school staff to avoid making assumptions, recognise individual strengths, and work with young people rather than against them. Many highlighted the need to feel understood, listened to and treated as equals, with relationships based on mutual respect.

Another key theme was **meaningful involvement of young people and families in decision-making**. Participants called for greater co-production, stronger advocacy opportunities and improved communication with families, ensuring that support plans are developed collaboratively and that young people have a genuine voice in decisions affecting their education.





Young people also stressed the importance of creating **inclusive school cultures and environments**. This included ensuring access to the full curriculum and school activities, providing reasonable adjustments, supporting mental health and wellbeing, creating calm learning environments, and fostering a culture where everyone feels they belong.

Overall, young people's contributions highlighted that successful inclusion is about more than individual adjustments. It requires a culture of understanding, respect, participation, and accountability, supported by well-trained staff and a whole-school commitment to ensuring every child and young person can thrive.

Appendix – Collated actions or requirements

Principle: Everyone is different, and everyone gets what they need to be treated fairly and with respect

Online

- Young people highlighted conditions that would need to be in place to achieve this principle including:
 - Tolerance: Everyone should feel comfortable contributing to their school community; for those who need extra support, staff should make suggestions of what young people could try to contribute meaningfully.
 - Equity
 - Flexibility
- Strong relationships between schools and people with SEND help to make sure everyone gets what they need.
 - Young people recommended a consistent presence – a few trusted people who help young people to feel safe and relaxed to engage with curriculum. This could be a one-to-one TA or another specialist member of staff. One young person, who has graduated from secondary school, noted that he still has strong relationships with his teachers and TAs and keeps in touch with them even after he has left school.
 - Build and maintain strategies over time: Strategies should adapt and evolve over time based on the young person's needs but should not be taken away as soon as the young person starts to make progress.
 - School should be a safe space to test and learn. Staff should work closely with young people to trial new forms of support, discuss whether it is working, and make changes based on the young person's needs.
 - Young people's feelings must be considered and consulted when deciding any support.
 - Young people want to be valued and included: they should be consulted in decisions and should be given opportunities to



demonstrate their capabilities without fear of staff making assumptions about their abilities.

- Schools should make adaptations to ensure meaningful inclusion of pupils with SEND. For example, in PE, teachers should adapt the lesson to allow pupils with disabilities to be meaningfully involved – not just sitting on the sidelines.

In person

- Have more visuals and pictures
- More activities like games and sports
- More playing
- More teacher training – or conditions and needs
- Mental health support

Principle: All services work together to support young people to do their best

Online

- Young people listed some of the support they received in school:
 - Physiotherapy
 - One-to-one support from TAs
 - Paediatrician
 - Occupational therapy
 - Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) – specifically, an iPad with Speak Unique
- Multiagency communication
 - During a needs assessment, there must be regular communication between the school and NHS teams who are doing the diagnostic.
 - Professionals must feed back to the young person too – making sure they understand what's going on and are not surprised by sudden changes or new people observing them.
 - The process of securing a diagnosis can be scary, with lots of strange people coming in to observe, or being taken away from their normal routine. Clear communication of the diagnostic process (and subsequent next steps) can help to reduce anxiety and support engagement with the process.
 - Professionals should explain why something is happening. One young person gave an example of when they were taken out of lessons to receive occupational therapy. In the long term, the therapy greatly improved their fine and gross motor skills, but at the time, they were not aware of why they

were being removed from lessons to attend therapy, which was leading to falling behind in some lessons. Clear communication on the purpose of interventions, both with the family and the young person, can help to build buy-in.

- In-school communication – between teachers, SENCo, TAs etc is also important to make sure support is consistent in all parts of the school experience.



In person

- Make sure each service is doing what it is supposed to (accountability)
- Clarity of the role of each service
- Involved teachers in different services interventions
- Having the option to receive services independently of school

Principle: We listen to young people and their families, helping them have a say and be part of decisions about their lives and learning.

Online

- One young person noted that when she was younger, her mum would speak for her when working with consultants. As she got older, the young person preferred to speak for herself. She eventually felt valued and included in conversations. She said: "Disabilities mean we're human. Never judge a disability, always look at the capability and always give a person a chance." She gave an example of secondary school work experience, where the school planned to place her in the school library. She instead found herself a placement at a local charity shop, where she subsequently found long-term paid employment. While the school initially underestimated her capability, she was able to advocate for herself and find a meaningful placement.

- Another young person gave an example from primary school, when he refused to work because of fear of failure or judgement. Initially, teachers didn't stop to think about the causes of this behaviour. He highlighted the importance of listening to the young person and their family to understand whether there might be something happening under the surface that could be impacting behaviour.
- Another young person who uses adaptive communication gave a personal example of professionals failing to listen to his voice.



"In my own experience, I have faced many difficult and sometimes frustrating situations. The most frustrating of which must be, when people first communicate with me, they assume that I'm deaf! Which isn't an issue in the slightest, but it's just annoying. The most frustrating thing for me is when people especially practitioners don't know how to communicate with me. Often practitioners used to refer to my mother while communicating with me especially during appointments. This had got better over time since I've had my iPad with my Speak Unique accent on it. In terms of me communicating using my iPad, the challenges I face centre around one issue really; the amount of time it takes me to type out my responses. This is an example of what is known as Crip Time."

In person

- Regular meetings with parent carers and follow up meetings.
- Opportunities for co-production
- Holistic support for young carers and families
- Written feedback and timelines
- Inviting and calm meeting spaces and opportunities for casual conversations
- Communication and listening
- Space for lived experience
- Family support groups
- Calm, chilled space, where you can belong, informal – proactive not reactive
- More support for parents like the support for parents like the support for young carers. – More work can be done for young carers
- Holistic support
- SENCO's for SEND but everyone should have 1:1 support – things are being missed where needs appear to be lower.

- SENCO's need consistent policy, more opportunity for casual conversations around support, both for young people and parents.
- Co-production in the community helped understanding and being heard, this opportunity wasn't offered through school.
- Young voice panels in schools – making a difference.
- Shouldn't always feel like a fight – hard to build trust
- Written feedback from every meeting – accountability – timelines for feedback and next steps – preferably a week.
- Attendance is when they felt listened to 'why does it have to get that bad'

Principle: We adapt teaching and remove barriers so everyone can take part and succeed in their learning

Online

- One young person highlighted a lack of adaptability in support, particularly in university. He noted that support was taken away as he made progress, even though the support was what made progress possible, and was still necessary to allow him to continue to progress. Support must be sustained over time.
- One young person highlighted the need flexibility in assessment to demonstrate learning/understanding in the way that is best for you – for example, in a presentation instead of in writing.
- Teachers can learn from their students. One young person, who uses adaptive communication, said "There's a lot of ignorance, when it comes to the disabled experience. I have always thought that teachers can learn from their students, in the same way students can learn from teachers. In my experience, teachers have learnt so much from me! It's so important you have a constructive but productive relationship!"
- Some young people received special tools and adaptations to help them to access lessons, including special scissors, a pen with a grip, magnifying screens, and sitting at the front of the class.



- **Essential changes:**

1. Strong relationships
2. Adaptive assessments



In person

- Teacher training that is mandatory, regular, coproduced and Co delivered by experts by experience
- Regular reviews
- Reasonable adjustments. Like overlays
- Integrated movement breaks
- Specialist support tutors

Principle: Everyone belongs here we help all young people join in and be part of school life

- Stop putting me in isolation
- Ensure pupils in internal provisions access whole school curriculum and events
- Teachers speak and engage with students respectfully! There are no teachers' pets
- Cleaner toilets and if broken fix them.
- Don't be strict with toilets unless in dire need
- If students don't have stuff, try to raise money to get some things
- Don't target young people in care or SEND
- Some teachers to be nicer to students, no teachers pets
- Respect students and they'll respect you
- More mental health support where needed.
- Teachers to speak and engage with students respectfully.
- The behaviour system – isolation
- Access to assemblies, curriculum – GCSE's – reward events – extra curricular activities (sports day)

Principle: Everyone working in places of education has training on send

- All adults! Not just teachers
- Patience
- Conversational and reflective
- Changing cultures
- Young person involvement and advocacy
- Include – Conditions such as cerebral palsy, FM – How to support remote learning
- Disparity for teacher how much they do know and much they say they know. – confidence as a barrier to learning.
- SEND based behaviours – sensory based needs – regulation needs
- Segregation on Ofsted visit – challenging kids
- Good – different education skills – adaptive teaching.
 - Include YP in the training

- Restorative
- Non-verbal – include other adults
- Connection before correction – inclusive.
- Training for YP on Send

Principle: A space that works for all to be ready and able to learn

- Adapted uniform and food
- Calm environment
- Less physical barriers – lifts ramps etc
- Smaller class sizes
- Easier to navigate environment
- Calmer environment
- Less physical barriers – lift, ramp etc...
- Break out room
- Calm space indoors / outdoors
- Less angry, more understanding, clear communication
- Sensory friendly
- Appropriate changing spaces
- Calm spaces
- Sensory garden
- Smaller class sizes
- Easier to navigate environment
- Wellbeing animals
- Adapted uniforms / foods
- Clean environment