

# Policy Briefing

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## The Down Syndrome Act Call for Evidence Frequently Asked Questions

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### What is the Call for Evidence?

The Call for Evidence is the Government's consultation process. They are interested in hearing the views, experience and evidence of a wide range of people and organisations to inform the development of statutory guidance for people who have Down's syndrome. Developing this guidance is one of the requirements of the Down Syndrome Act 2022. This Act aims to ensure that a number of relevant public bodies (such as health services and schools) follow appropriate steps to meet the needs of people who have Down's syndrome.

### Who is running the Call for Evidence?

The Call for Evidence is being led by the Department of Health and Social Care.

### Is there more than one Call for Evidence/Consultation happening?

No – there is only one Call for Evidence, which is led by the Department of Health and Social Care. Some organisations and networks (including the DSA) may be running activities and events which ask their members for views and ideas, but all information must be submitted to the official Call for Evidence for it to get considered in the development of future guidance.

### What kind of information is the Call for Evidence looking to gather?

The main categories the Call for Evidence covers are the same as those listed in the Down's Syndrome Act – Health services, Social Care, Housing and Education. However, the Call for Evidence is also interested in hearing about other public services that people think should be covered in future guidance. They are also keen to hear views on whether the guidance should cover the needs of people with other genetic conditions.

## **Who should respond to the Call for Evidence?**

The Department of Health and Social Care are keen for as many individuals, groups and networks as possible to engage with the Call for Evidence. There are specific sets of questions for:

- People who have Down's syndrome
- Families and carers
- Professionals
- People with other genetic conditions, including a learning disability.

The DSA will be engaging with all of these groups during the Call for Evidence to ensure anyone who is interested is able to get their views heard. The professionals we expect to engage with will include teachers, local authority staff, health services, third sector organisations and more.

## **How can I feed into the Call for Evidence?**

There are a number of ways people can feed into the Call for Evidence – you can do it as an individual, as part of a local or national organisation, or both! The Call for Evidence website allows people to submit information through an online survey, and/or you can submit written proposals by email - [dsactguidance@dhsc.gov.uk](mailto:dsactguidance@dhsc.gov.uk) or post.

## **Do I need to answer all of the questions in the Call for Evidence?**

No – you can respond to all of it, or you can just answer the questions where you have something to say. Responses can be short and to the point too, you don't need to add additional data or research for example. The DHSC want to hear a range of views, and they are especially keen to hear from those with lived experience.

## **How long will the Call for Evidence last for?**

The Call for Evidence was launched on Tuesday 19 July. It will be open for 16 weeks, with will end at 11:45pm on 8 November 2022.

## **When will the final guidance be ready?**

At the end of the Call for Evidence the Department of Health and Social Care will analyse all the information they have received and will draft an initial version of the Down Syndrome Act statutory guidance. This will then go out for public consultation for further feedback and opinions. Once this process is finished a final version of the Guidance will be launched - we expect this final version to be ready at some point in 2023.

## **What are the DSA doing during the Call for Evidence?**

We have two key priorities during this 16-week consultation process:

- We want to ensure our members and the wider Down's syndrome community are aware of the Call for Evidence, and understand how they can respond.

- We will work with a range of stakeholders (including our members, local groups and partner organisations) to ensure our call for evidence response is robust, evidence based and reflects the needs and diversity of all people who have Down's syndrome.

In order to fulfil these objectives we will be developing and sharing resources, holding workshops and webinars and engaging directly with our members, especially those who have Down's syndrome, on all aspects of the Call for Evidence.

### **What is the Down Syndrome Act?**

The Down Syndrome Act is a piece of legislation which received royal assent in April 2022. It is through this that we have the opportunity to develop statutory guidance for people who have Down's syndrome. We have lots of information, including an FAQ and a legal overview, [about the Act on our website here](#).

#### **Contact us**

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