



## **Choosing a College**

Choosing a college that is right for your son or daughter is a big decision.

The new SEN reforms place all further education colleges on the same footing when it comes to funding.

For many young people, attending their local general FE college may well be the best choice for them and each college has information on their range of study programmes and how to apply.

For others, particularly young people with high needs, a specialist college may offer the appropriate learning environment and opportunities.

So this factsheet gives you information on what you need to do to get a place at a specialist college.

This advice comes from NATSPEC - the Association of National Specialist Colleges - of which Linkage College is a member. [www.natspec.org.uk](http://www.natspec.org.uk)  
The Natspec Specialist College Directory will give you more information about membership colleges, including Linkage College.

The Directory also has a special symbol next to most of the colleges - the S41 Symbol - meaning that the college is on the Secretary of State's Approved List. This list has been brought about as a result of the Children and Families Act and means the following:

- Local authorities must include information about S41 Approved colleges in their Local offer.

- Colleges on the S41 list must work with Local Authorities about their arrangements for young people with SEN
- Young people and/or their parents can name one of the S41 colleges on their Education, Health and Care Plan. The Local Authority must then secure the place and the college must admit them. This means that S41 colleges are being treated the same as any general FE college.
- This all means that when you are considering a specialist college, you have some additional rights if the college you choose is on the S41 list. The full list is on the NATSPEC website with a link on the Linkage website.

A young person age 16-25 who wants to go to college from September 2015 will now get an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP). These plans cover health and social care as well as education. They will be prepared by the Local Authority in which you live. You can find out more about how a plan is produced and what it should cover on the NATSEPC website and via the link on the Linkage website. You can request a place at a specialist college when this is the best place to meet a young person's needs. This will be written in the EHCP.

Each local authority will have its own approach to the funding process with their own forms and policies. They must include details of this in their Local Offer accessible through their website. The discussion about the funding is usually between the college and the local authority. However, you can get involved in some of the discussions about the details of the study programme and the type of support required. The amount of funding available to you will differ in each individual case and is a combination of Government and Local Authority monies.