

Since 1991, UK statutes have reflected the United Nations
(http://www.unicef.org.uk/Documents/Publication-pdfs/UNCRC_PRESS200910web.pdf)
Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989), defining a child as below 18 years of age and
an adult as over 18. In 2012, reflecting neuroscientific evidence on emotional development,
the Department of Health adopted the UN's definition of a 'young person' as between 18
and 25 years, and an adult as over 25 years (Royal College of Nursing, 2014).

However, in the 0-25 SEND Code of Practice (2015), 'child' and 'young person' are defined in
terms of the end of compulsory schooling (age 16 years at the time of writing). The Council
for Disabled Children (2014) write: 'A child is a person under compulsory school age. A
young person is a person over compulsory school age but under 25 [years]. A person is no
longer of compulsory school age after the last day of summer term during the year in which
they become 16 ([Children and Families Act 2014,] section 83(2)).'

Reference:

Council for Disabled Children (2014) The Children and Families Act 2014 Part 3. Children and
young people with special educational needs and disabilities: *A briefing from the Council for
Disabled Children*. London: Council for Disabled Children [Online at:
[http://www.councilfordisabledchildren.org.uk/media/554523/ChildrenAndFamiliesActBrief.
pdf](http://www.councilfordisabledchildren.org.uk/media/554523/ChildrenAndFamiliesActBrief.pdf); accessed: 15.3.15]