

Information on SEND reform for those working in Post-16 settings

The Department for Education has published our schools white paper, *Every Child Achieving and Thriving*, alongside a consultation on SEND reform, called *Putting Children and Young People First*. These documents set out our plan to improve the lives of all children and young people. Our reforms will build on existing good practice to further improve inclusivity and support in post-16 education and training.

We're developing clearer pathways of support that match each young person's needs, goals and ambitions.

Some evidence suggests that young people with SEND are 80% more likely to be not in education, employment or training (NEET) than their peers. The aim is to create a system that helps all young people succeed in a fast-changing world and move confidently into adulthood, further education, training or employment, and succeed in a fast-changing world.

What's changing

- A system of three layers of support for young people with SEND, with access to support across layers, and flexibility to move between them:
 - Targeted – small group interventions based on evidence-informed strategies, delivered by college staff
 - Targeted Plus – which includes a new Experts at Hand service, bringing expert advice and services from education and health professionals (such as speech and language therapists and occupational therapists) into mainstream schools
 - Specialist – which will provide support through nationally defined Specialist Provision Packages (SPPs). The provision set out in a SPP will underpin the entitlements in an EHCP
- New Individual Support Plans for all young people with SEND: a digital record of the learner's needs and day-to-day support
- The use and quality of Individual Support Plans and SEND provision will be part of Ofsted inspections
- EHCPs will be retained and improved for those with the most complex needs, over and above what can be routinely provided in mainstream education. Learners with existing EHCPs will see no changes before September 2030 at the earliest
- Improved transition processes from school to college, beginning at least 12 months in advance so that young people are supported to access further education from day one

- Stronger focus on preparing young people with SEND for adult life, employment, higher education and independent living, as appropriate
- As set out in the Post-16 Education and Skills White Paper, we are introducing a new 16to-19 level 1 stepping stone qualifications as a preparation for GCSE, to better support lower prior attaining students to progress. These new qualifications will consolidate foundational skills and knowledge to prepare students with lower prior attainment (grade 2 and below) for successful GCSE resits
- Rather than unnecessary repeated exam entries, students will also receive structured support to build confidence and competency before progressing to GCSE the following year

What you'll receive

- A share of the £1.6 billion Inclusive Mainstream Fund over three years to embed inclusive practice at your college
- A share of £3.7 billion of capital investment from this year to 2030 to improve the accessibility of buildings, create new special setting places, and create tens of thousands of new places in Inclusion Bases in mainstream settings
- All staff will benefit from national SEND training, backed by over £200 million over three years. You will be supported to develop skills and create inclusive learning environments to meet the needs of your students
- Access to the new Experts at Hand service, which brings expertise from education psychologists, speech and language therapists, and occupational therapists into mainstream settings without the need for statutory processes for those in the target plus layer of support
- A digital system to record needs and support in an Individual Support Plan, improving communication and supporting effective transitions
- Expansion of Mental Health Support Teams to all colleges by 2029 to 2030

What's expected of you

- Continue to work with schools and local authorities to design effective transition planning
- Create bespoke or cohort-based transition packages for students with SEND
- Ensure young people can choose suitable, aspirational study programmes and are supported from day one
- Develop Individual Support Plans collaboratively with young people and their families

- Engage with national training to ensure learning is accessible for all
- Demonstrate how inclusion funding is used in accountability agreements

Timeline

Repair and reform to this new system will be gradual with support in place before changes are made.

Phase one: 2026 to 2028 Investment and building new system	• Workforce training programmes for all staff. • Schools, colleges and early years settings receive Inclusive Mainstream Fund. • Experts at Hand comes on stream for all settings. • Specialist Provision Packages published. • National Inclusion Standards published.
Phase two: 2028 to 2029 Improved support	• We will continue to invest in and build-up the new system • New legislation expected to come into effect from September 2029
Phase three: School year 2029/30 onwards Future system	• School year 2029/30: First assessments of children take place under reformed system. • EHCP, National Inclusion Standards and Individual Support Plan legislation enacted. • First children using Specialist Provision Packages. • 60,000 new school places for children with SEND will have been created in special schools and inclusion bases.

Have your say and more information

Visit gov.uk/dfe/send-reform

- [Every Child Achieving and Thriving Schools White Paper](#)
- [SEND Consultation](#)
- [Further information and fact sheets](#)