

Information on SEND reform for parents and carers who have children with EHCPs

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*.

We want to improve the lives of all children and young people, with a broad curriculum fit for the modern world, and ending the one-size-fits-all approach to education.

Throughout the process of developing these reforms, we have heard a clear and consistent message from families, professionals and children and young people themselves: the current system is not working. It is failing children, failing parents, failing schools and teachers.

Parents have told us they often do not feel listened to and want to be recognised as experts on their own children's needs. We have heard that there needs to be stronger accountability especially on local authorities and better national standards so if you get support in one part of the country, you get it everywhere.

We have listened to you. We are acting.

We will transform SEND provision so every child will get the right support earlier, when they need it, closer to home. Parents will not have to fight to get the education and results their children deserve.

In summary, the changes to the EHCP system are:

- EHCPs will be retained and improved. They will give a legal entitlement to more intensive or complex support than mainstream education settings can routinely provide
- New EHCPs will be based on new, national Specialist Provision Packages putting an end to the postcode lottery in support
- Alongside EHCPs, Individual Support Plans will be introduced for all children and young people with SEND, setting out the day-to-day support your child will receive at nursery, school or college
- Changes to EHCPs will move in lockstep with transformative improvements to SEND support in mainstream nurseries, schools, and colleges, which means more children will get SEND support, including more involvement of healthcare professionals like speech and language therapists and experts like educational psychologists
- These changes will be phased. For children having their needs assessed for the first time, the new needs assessment will begin from September 2029

- For children and young people with an existing EHCP, transition to the new system will begin from 2030, once the new inclusive mainstream system has been fully built
- Transitions will then only happen as children naturally move between primary and secondary school, or from secondary school to college
- Every child with a special school place in September 2029 will be able to stay in a special school until they finish their education

This factsheet is specifically about changes to EHCPs, and the new Individual Support Plans and Specialist Provision Packages. You can find more information about improvements to mainstream settings, specialist settings and more in our other factsheets and parent guides.

The SEND consultation is not the end of the reform process: we will continue to talk with you on what will work for you and your child. We will share information with you and your setting as proposals develop further based on the consultation responses.

What's changing in the new system

Individual Support Plans

- New Individual Support Plans (ISPs) will be introduced for all children and young people with SEND (including those with EHCPs). These are a digital record of a child's or young person's needs and day-to-day support, developed by nurseries, schools and colleges in collaboration with parents, and updated as children's needs change.
- Settings will have a legal duty to produce ISPs for every child and young person with SEND.

Specialist Provision Packages

- New Specialist Provision Packages will set out evidence-based support for children and young people with complex needs – for example, a physical disability requiring personal care assistance in mainstream education, or significant learning disability.
- Specialist Provision Packages will form the basis of future EHCPs to ensure that support is consistently provided across the country regardless of which local authority you live in.
- We will design a new needs assessment process based on the Packages, working with children, families and experts to ensure assessments involve professionals who know your child, that parents' voices are heard and there is nationally consistent process without parents feeling pressured to pay for extra assessments or costly diagnoses.

- These packages will be developed by an independent panel of experts, taking on the views of parents. Information on the packages will be published in draft in autumn 2026 and final versions in 2027 to 2028.
- Children with complex needs may require support from more than one Package.

EHCPs

- These remain, and work with Individual Support Plans, for children with the most complex needs.
- For children and young people with an existing EHCP, transition to the new system will begin from 2030, once the new inclusive mainstream system has been fully built. Transitions will only happen at the end of phases of education, when children move from primary to secondary school or secondary school to college.
- If a child has an EHCP in year 6 in a mainstream school they will have priority admission for their secondary school place, so parents can choose the right school for them. All secondary schools will by 2030 have an inclusion base.
- When parents make that application, we will also undertake a new needs assessment to see if a child needs the support of a Specialist Provision Package. If they do, they'll move to secondary school (in September 2030) with new EHCP based on a Specialist Provision Package. If they don't need the support of a package, they will still have a legally backed Individual Support Plan, which will set out their needs, the support they will get to meet them and what that support should help them achieve – this could include healthcare support from the Experts at Hand service, small group lessons, or time to regulate out of the classroom or in an inclusion base.
- We're investing almost £4bn over the next three years in building this system so it is ready to support children.
- Children in special schools will have that school place for the duration of their education unless they chose to move.

Local authority improvements

- Local authorities will be held to account better with improved mediation processes, improved compliance with their duties – enforced by government agencies – and SEND tribunals remaining as a legal backstop
- There will be standardised and digitised templates for the improved EHCPs
- Local authorities will have to provide more information on options for families

What you and your child will have in the new system

- If your child doesn't need the support of a Specialist Provision Package, they will have a legally backed Individual Support Plan, which will set out their needs, the support they will get to meet them and what that support will help them achieve. They will get one before they transition out of their EHCP. Your child's-maintained nursery, school or college will work with you to develop your child's ISP
- If your child can receive the support they need in the new inclusive mainstream system rather than a specialist setting, you will be able to ask for a specific mainstream school or college place
- If your child needs the support in a Specialist Provision Package and an EHCP, you will be provided with information about the package your child needs and a list of education settings that can deliver this support for you to choose from
- Assessments under the new system will be done in partnership with you and will decide whether your child can receive the support they need in the new inclusive mainstream system with an Individual Support Plan, or whether they need a Specialist Provision Package and an EHCP
- If you don't feel the setting is providing the right support, you will be able to access school complaint systems and Dispute Resolution Services. If you have concerns about your child's provision, you will be able to seek mediation and appeal to the SEND Tribunal

Transition timelines to the new system

- Transition to the new system will begin in September 2030 once the new inclusive mainstream system has been fully built
- Transitions will then only happen as children naturally move between phases, like primary to secondary. No one will move midway through a phase of education
- The first group of children to transition will have their needs assessed from September 2029 and then move on to the new system fully in September 2030.
- Key transition points will be end of primary and end of secondary – specialist provision and EHCPs will continue to be available for those between 18 to 25 who need it, as in the current system.
- The first children to transition from the old system to the new system will be in 2030.
- Every child with a special school place in September 2029 will be able to stay in a special school until they finish education

- Families of children in year 6 and 11 with EHCPs in September 2029 will retain the right to name their mainstream school or college of choice when they move – ensuring a smooth transition and providing assurance that they have a preferred school place

Year group in academic year 25/26	Age in years in 25/26	Year group in academic year 29/30	Age in years in 29/30	Academic year their plans will be reviewed under the new system	Date of expected transition to support under new system
Nursery/early years care	0/1	Reception	4/5	2034/35	2037/38
Nursery/early years care	1/2	Year 1	5/6	2033/2034	2035/2036
Nursery/early years care	2/3	Year 2	6/7	2032/2033	2034/2035
Nursery/early years care	3/4	Year 3	7/8	2031/2032	2033/2034
Reception	4/5	Year 4	8/9	2030/2031	2032/2033
Year 1	5/6	Year 5	9/10	2029/2030	2031/2032
Year 2	6/7	Year 6	10/11	2029/2030	2030/2031
Year 3	7/8	Year 7	11/12	2032/2033	2034/2035
Year 4	8/9	Year 8	12/13	2031/2032	2033/2034
Year 5	9/10	Year 9	13/14	2030/2031	2032/2033
Year 6	10/11	Year 10	14/15	2029/2030	2031/2032
Year 7	11/12	Year 11	15/16	2029/2030	2030/2031

The transition dates to the new system for children in mainstream education in 2029/30 are:

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 to 2030 onwards Future system	• School year 29/30: 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](#)