

Information on SEND reform for parents and carers of children receiving SEND support in mainstream schools and colleges

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 and failing Local Authorities.

Parents have told us they often do not feel listened to and want to be recognised as experts on their own children. They have also told us stronger accountability will be essential to putting the system right.

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.

This factsheet is specifically about improvements to make all mainstream settings inclusive. You can find more information about EHCPs and Individual Support Plans, specialist settings, and more in our other factsheets and parent guides.

For mainstream education, the new SEND system will have:

- A truly inclusive mainstream education system, backed by £4bn of investment
- Targeted and specialist support easily available in a three-layer system
- Individual Support Plans for all children and young people with SEND
- Improved EHCPs for complex needs
- Parents and carers recognised as experts on their children, and treated as partners
- Early intervention, and collaboration across schools and services

Your child will not lose the support they currently have. In fact, you should notice a better overall offer within their school.

This factsheet is specifically about improvements to make all mainstream settings inclusive. You can find more information about EHCPs and Individual Support Plans, 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 engage with you on what will work for you and your child. We will share information with you as proposals develop further, based on the consultation responses.

What's changing

The new system:

- All schools will be inclusive. Mainstream schools will have the resources and funding they need to support all children, including those with SEND – we're calling this our universal offer. There will also be an expert offer there, ready for your child when they need it
- Three levels of support. Children will be able to easily move between layers as needs are identified and developed - they are not sequential. These are:
 - Targeted – small group interventions or adjustments based on evidence, delivered by school and college staff
 - Targeted Plus – a new Experts at Hand service, bringing expert advice and services like speech and language therapists and occupational therapists into mainstream schools
 - Specialist – 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 (ISPs) for all children with SEND. These are a digital record of the child's needs and day-to-day support, developed with parents and updated when needs change
- EHCPs will remain and be improved for those with the most complex needs
- Children with existing EHCPs will see no changes before September 2030 at the earliest, and transitions will only happen naturally at the end of phases of education – you can find out more in our EHCP factsheet

Improvements to schools and colleges

- Training to adapt their teaching for children and young people with special educational needs
- Dedicated funding specifically for supporting children with additional needs
- Quicker access to health and education professionals like speech and language therapists and educational psychologists
- Inclusion bases in every secondary school and many primaries, with trained staff providing expert support to children and young people when they need it
- School and college buildings will be made more accessible
- National Inclusion Standards will be introduced, with approaches that are known to work for identifying and meeting needs
- Schools working together in local groups, sharing resources and improving support
- A more effective school complaints process with clearer timeframes, and independent SEND experts involved
- A requirement to publish an Inclusion Strategy, which will detail their plan to meet all pupils' needs and how they are using their funding to become more inclusive
- Ofsted inspections will include how well schools and colleges are including and supporting all children

Changes to local partnerships:

- Local area SEND partnerships will bring together local authorities, healthcare services (through Integrated Care Boards), and system partners, including the voluntary community sector providers and parent carer representatives
- These partnerships will have to develop a Local SEND Reform Plan, holding them to account on delivery of the new system
- Local partnerships will get funding to develop new provision and investment in new specialist staff like educational psychologists and speech and language therapists
- There will be standardised and digitised templates for the improved EHCPs
- Local authorities will have to provide more information on options for families
- Importantly, they will also be held to account better with improved mediation processes, improved compliance with their duties, and SEND tribunals remaining as a legal backstop

What you and your child will have in the new system

- Better communication about your child's progress and the support they're receiving
- A digital Individual Support Plan developed with you, setting out how your child's school or college is identifying and meeting their needs. This will improve communication between the school and you, and support transitions between settings
- Access to the new Experts at Hand offer
- Independent guidance to help you understand changes and your child's support
- The right for your child to be educated in a mainstream setting of your choice
- Clear expectations and timeframes for responding to and resolving complaints. We'll also be exploring digital options for handling complaints, and how complaints panels can be stronger, more effective, and independent
- Greater focus from all staff on understanding and meeting children and young people's needs, backed by evidence
- You will still be able to appeal to the SEND Tribunal if your child's school or college has failed to make reasonable adjustments for any disability they have. Your rights relating to disability discrimination remain unchanged
- Improved mediation processes with local authorities

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.
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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](#)