

Information on SEND reform for those leading and working in mainstream schools

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 set out our plan to improve the lives of all children and young people.

Our reforms will support mainstream schools to become truly inclusive. Schools should take a whole-school approach to inclusion, with a curriculum designed for all learners and accessible provision beyond the classroom. All schools must support children with additional needs in mainstream, ensuring they receive high-quality, adaptive, early support without the need for statutory process.

We will invest in schools and empower staff to identify and meet needs early, and provide calm, supportive environments with high-quality adaptive teaching and inclusive, ordinarily available provision.

We are rebuilding wider public services to support children so that schools can focus on education, knowing that experts are there to help children with complex needs. We will equip schools to put the right support in place for every child with SEND, and we will retain EHCPs for those with the most complex needs which cannot be met through the improved mainstream provision alone.

What's changing

- A system of three layers of support above the universal offer, with children able to access support across multiple layers and move up or down:
 - Targeted – which includes small group interventions based on evidence-informed strategies, delivered by school 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 (ISPs) for all children with SEND: a digital record of the child's needs and day-to-day support provided by their school and developed in partnership with parents
- Retaining and improving EHCPs for children with the most complex needs. Children with existing EHCPs will see no changes before September 2030 at the earliest, and transitions

will only happen at the end of primary, secondary or post-16, or until they choose to move to the new system

- Funding will go directly into school budgets through a new Inclusive Mainstream Fund, a grant to equip schools with resource to become inclusive. After legislation, funding will be rebalanced from the high needs block, giving schools greater control over how they support children with SEND
- New National Inclusion Standards will set out evidence-informed tools, strategies and approaches for educators to draw on to identify and support children and young people with additional needs
- Schools will come together in local groups to pool funding, share resources and improve support
- Secondary schools working with post-16 providers to improve transition into further education

What you'll receive

- A share of the £1.6 billion Inclusive Mainstream Fund over three years to embed inclusive practice at your school alongside your existing core funding for SEND. This will give you greater responsibility over funding
- Over time, there will be further rebalancing of funding from the high needs budget into schools. In the future, more funding for SEND will go straight into schools' and colleges' core budgets so they can respond to additional needs quickly and flexibly
- A share of £3.7 billion of capital investment from this year to 2030 to create tens of thousands of new places in Inclusion Bases in mainstream settings, improve the accessibility of buildings and create new special school places.
- All staff will benefit from national SEND training, backed by over £200 million over three years. You will be supported to 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 schools without the need for statutory processes
- A digital system to record needs and support in an Individual Support Plan (ISP), improving communication and supporting effective transitions

What's expected of you

- Develop Individual Support Plans collaboratively with parents for all children with SEND

- Implement evidence-based interventions within the new layers of support
- Engage with national training on adaptive teaching and creating calm classrooms, building on their inclusive practices
- For every secondary school to have an Inclusion Base, which can support those with more complex needs – either a Specialist Base offering Specialist Provision Packages, or a Support Base led within the trust or school
- Participate in local school groups to share resources and improve support for children with SEND
- Publish an Inclusion Strategy which sets out your plan to use inclusion funding effectively to embed inclusive practice based on the commonly occurring needs within your cohort
- Work collaboratively with the local authority-led local strategic partnership to guide the development of the Experts at Hand service so that it meets the needs of your children

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](#)