Department for Education

SEND Reform: Post-consultation actions and next steps

Autumn 2026 Update

Putting children and young people first



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Reforming the SEND system

What we heard and why we are reforming the system

- Earlier this year, we consulted on proposals to reform the SEND system to create a more inclusive education system that ensures all children and young people, including those with SEND, can achieve and thrive.
- We want to ensure every child across the country gets the right support, locally, early on and without a fight.

- Over the last year, we have listened to young people, parents and professionals across the country.
- Over 10,000 people responded to our consultation and 3,000 people attended events.

A wide-ranging consultation has shaped the direction of reform.

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Three layers of support to deliver better outcomes for all children and young people

Children & young people	The new offer	Experience
All children and young people.	**Universal**	• Newly upskilled teachers and support staff. • National Inclusion Standards.
	Layers of support	
Children and young people who require some additional support from their setting, e.g. personalised materials, outlined in an Individual Support Plan.	**Targeted**	High-quality support, on demand, in mainstream: • Individual Support Plans for all children and young people with SEND. • Targeted interventions, including small group support where appropriate (e.g. for language skills or pre-teaching key vocabulary to help access the curriculum). • Support for transitions.
Children and young people who require additional support from their setting, with input from education and health care professionals outside of their setting, e.g. a speech and language therapist.	**Targeted Plus**	Improved access to external expertise: • Inclusion Bases. • Experts at Hand. • Outreach from alternative provision and specialist settings.
Children and young people with complex needs.	**Specialist**	• Specialist provision packages. • EHCPs (in mainstream & specialist schools). • Specialist bases. • Special school places.

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Next steps following the consultation

Co-design, evidence and lived experience

Continuing to listen

- To ensure these reforms work in practice, we are committed to co-designing them with children, families and professionals, and testing and refining our proposals collaboratively.
- Following the consultation, we've continued to do this, listening and shaping our proposals in response to feedback. Ministers continue to meet regularly with campaigners and disabled children's organisations to hear a range of views and perspectives on the proposed reforms.

Expertise

- We have appointed a national panel of experts co-chaired by Tom Rees and Dr Anne Gordon to ensure that National Inclusion Standards and Specialist Provision Packages reform are informed by the best available evidence and expertise from across education, health and care.
- To support the panel, our new Parental Engagement Group will assist in ensuring that the experiences and perspectives of parents and carers inform the development of the National Inclusion Standards and Specialist Provision Packages.

Reforms will continue to be shaped collaboratively through expert and parental input.

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Supporting now, ahead of full reform

We are not waiting to begin improving support

In advance of any legislation, we are:

- Investing in and improving the system now, building capacity ahead of implementation from September 2029.
- Pressing ahead with plans to make sure every community has access to specialist expertise, teachers and leaders are better equipped to identify needs and support children and young people with SEND, and mainstream settings become more inclusive by design.

We are investing now in:

- **Workforce**
- **Mainstream capacity**
- **Specialist expertise**
- **Local delivery arrangements**

We are building the capacity needed to make the future system work.

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Laying strong foundations – SEND CPD

Building confidence and capability across the workforce

- We are introducing a national £200 million SEND training offer for all educators, representing our biggest overhaul of SEND teacher training. A new programme designed to equip teachers, leaders, support staff and early years practitioners with the skills and confidence to better support children and young people with SEND.
- Our offer includes free, practical and adaptable training resources. Developed by Ambition Institute, the materials will provide evidence-informed strategies that settings can use flexibly throughout the year, embedding inclusive practice in everyday teaching.
- The programme will support staff with practical inclusive approaches such as breaking learning into manageable steps, pre-teaching vocabulary, using visual supports, and adapting environments to meet diverse needs.
- In parallel, we have been working with a wider range of stakeholders to identify the core content that these courses will cover.

A phased CPD programme will support inclusive practice across early years, schools and further education.

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Inclusive Mainstream Fund

Putting Inclusion at the heart of every school

- In addition to equipping teachers with practical support for pupils with SEND, we are also dedicating funding to support educational settings.
- The IMF forms part of the government's commitment to support the development of a more inclusive mainstream system.
- We will set out over £500 million per financial year over the next three years to support schools, colleges and early years settings with additional upfront funding. This will help them move towards becoming inclusive by design and provide early support directly to children and young people with SEND.
- **Schools and 16–19 academies:** £400 million a year, through local authorities for maintained schools and directly to academy trusts.
- **Early years:** £47 million a year through local authorities via the Inclusive Early Years Fund.
- **Post-16:** £83 million a year, through local authorities for maintained settings and directly to other settings.

Supporting schools, colleges and early years settings to strengthen inclusive practice and establish a core offer for children and young people with SEND.

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Inclusive Mainstream Fund – Inclusion Strategies

Putting Inclusion at the heart of every school

A strategy for inclusive practice

We have set out how IMF and core funding strengthen the inclusive offer for all children, including those with SEND, on the GOV.UK website.

An inclusive strategy should identify common barriers across the cohort, evaluate evidence-informed activity to address them, provide intended outcomes. Settings should reflect on practice, consult families and partners, and prioritise adaptive teaching and early support.

The strategy should also show families how SEND funding improves support. Inspectors will consider how settings develop and deliver their strategy.

Seven principles of inclusion

1 **Leadership and governance** that embed inclusion.

2 **Evidence-based support** and early intervention.

3 **Adaptive teaching** and a curriculum for all learners.

4 **Enriching provision** beyond the classroom, accessible to all.

5 **A safe, respectful culture** supporting belonging, attendance and participation.

6 **Strong partnerships** with families and wider services.

7 **Inclusive environments** with continuous accessibility improvements.

Schools must publish their Inclusion Strategy by 31 December 2026.

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Inclusive Mainstream Fund – What schools need to do

Putting Inclusion at the heart of every school

Requirements

- All schools must develop and publish an Inclusion Strategy by 31 December 2026, as set out in the IMF conditions of grant.

What it should include

- Barriers to learning and participation across cohort.
- Approaches and activity funded by IMF and core funding to address those barriers.
- Intended outcomes.

What schools need to develop

- We recommend a template for schools that should follow a structured, ongoing planning cycle (aligned to Pupil Premium): **Identify→ Evidence →Strategy → Deliver→ Evaluate.**

Key expectations

- Reflect on existing practice.
- Consult with families and wider partners.
- Align activity with seven principles.
- Prioritise high-quality adaptive teaching and strengthening universal offer.

IMF Strategy Guidance guided by seven principles: Leadership, Evidence-based support, High-quality adaptive teaching, Enriching, accessible provision, Safe and respectful culture, Strong partnerships, and Inclusive environments.

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Local SEND Reform Plans

On 19th March 2026, The Secretaries of State for Education and Health and Social Care jointly commissioned all partnerships to develop a Local SEND Reform Plan (LSRP) in preparation for our SEND reforms. They were required to set out how they will pivot their systems to early intervention and greater inclusion ahead of legislative change, while strengthening current services.

Driving Local Change and Improvement

The Department monitors local area SEND provision using a 3-strand performance framework.

- Outcome data for children and young people.
- Local area partnership readiness and capacity.
- Assessment of delivery capacity of the partnership.

We deliver universal and targeted support programmes to support partnerships.

We also have statutory powers to intervene in local authority SEND provision. **These powers are for local authorities** but allow us to impose commissioners and improvement boards on LA SEND services if required.

Delivery against plans will be monitored by DfE and NHSE officials as well as advisers.

Investment

£1.8bn
for specialist workforces in mainstream schools.

£3.7bn
for additional specialist places.

£200m
for local authorities to design SEND provision.

DfE and NHS England will offer a more joined up approach to local SEND provision.

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Experts at Hand

Specialist expertise in mainstream settings, with a flexible multidisciplinary workforce and time to support earlier intervention.

Investment and workforce development

We are investing £1.8bn over 3 years for EaH

We want to shift SEND support from reactive, specialist-led intervention to proactive, inclusive, and embedded expertise within mainstream education.

EAH will map education practitioner skills and experience to tasks in the new system, identify gaps and consider new qualification routes.

It will also expand the use of apprentices, trainees, assistants and support workers, with robust supervision and redeployment.

Modes of support

Direct specialist support for pupils

Experts work with mainstream staff on time-limited group, whole-class and 1-to-1 interventions.

Building mainstream staff capability

Support, guidance and advice for staff.

Special school and AP outreach

Support for children and young people in mainstream to prevent escalation, plus extra help or temporary support in specialist settings to support mainstream integration.

Early Implementation

We have seen promising emerging year 1 strengths

Strong commitment to earlier intervention and inclusive practice.

Growing integration within wider SEND and system transformation programmes.

Stronger partnership governance across LAs, health partners and schools.

Strong local interest in community-based delivery models.

Improving outcomes while making the system sustainable

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We are continuing to listen

We will continue to engage with children, families, professionals, providers and sector partners, and draw on effective practice to shape our approach and understand how the reforms will work in practice as we move to the new system.

The reform journey will remain evidence-led, collaborative and grounded in effective practice.