

Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and Alternative Provision (AP) Improvement

Plan Right Support, Right Place, Right Time

March 2023



HM Government



Vision

Our ambition is to create a society that celebrates and enables success in a variety of forms, with the culture, attitudes and environments to offer every child and young person the support that they need.

We want the process of accessing support to be dignified and affirmative, focusing on a child's achievements, talents, and strengths.

Above all, we want to create a system where every child and young person can thrive and fulfil their potential. This starts with being able to access the right support, in the right place, at the right time.



Mission

We want all those working across education, health and care to work with local and central government to:

1. **Fulfil children's potential:** children and young people with SEND (or attending alternative provision) enjoy their childhood, achieve good outcomes and are well prepared for adulthood and employment.
2. **Build parents' trust:** families find it easier to navigate the system and access support. They have greater confidence in it, reporting better experiences of a system which is based on dignity and affirmation. Mainstream settings are seen as being high-quality and inclusive, valuing those with SEND. Specialist provision is seen to be delivering effectively and is available locally to those who need it.
3. **Provide financial sustainability:** local systems deploy their resources effectively such that spending shifts towards early intervention and away from costly specialist provision, where this is not required. Local authorities operate within their budgets and achieve value for money so that record investment in the high needs budget is used effectively and with evidenced outcomes that are financially sustainable. As a result, local authorities will be able to deliver high-quality services within budgets.



Values

Our single SEND and alternative provision system is based on 5 core values:

1. **Nationally consistent:** a system based on a suite of National Standards where children, young people and their families know what to expect and providers know what is expected and are accountable for that.
2. **Evidence-driven:** our reforms will ensure decisions around support and placements are driven by evidence of what works best for the child or young person.
3. **Responsive:** early identification of need, targeted support to address children and young people's individual needs and timely access to specialist services and support, including specialist placements where appropriate.
4. **Co-produced:** children, young people and their families will be involved in the decision-making process around the support they receive and in the development of the policy which drives those decisions.
5. **Inclusive:** build on the ambition of the Schools White Paper for high-quality, well-led and inclusive schools with fair access to excellent teaching of evidence-based curricula in calm, safe and supportive settings, where individual needs are identified and targeted academic, pastoral or specialist support is given.



Approach

Feedback from the consultation reflected there is both consensus on the urgency to secure improved outcomes and experiences for children, young people and their families and that bolder proposals for reform need to be carefully designed and tested in order to be successful and reduce the risk of unintended consequences.

We will deliver reform in three different ways:

1. **Support and stabilise:** we will support and stabilise the system, getting local areas working in the best possible way within the current system to ensure that the needs of children and young people are met, without escalating costs, and to ensure that local authority deficits are brought under control. This includes supporting local authorities with financial deficits through the Delivering Better Value and the Safety Valve programmes.
2. **Addressing supply issues:** in the short to medium term, we will take action to address supply issues – ensuring that there is sufficient support available for children and young people when they need it, in the most efficient way. This includes investing £2.6 billion between 2022 and 2025 to deliver new places and improve existing provision for children and young people with SEND or who require alternative provision, reducing the need for costly independent provision.
3. **Design and test for systemic reform:** our £70 million Change Programme will create up to nine Regional Expert Partnerships that will test and refine longer-term reforms including developing and testing National Standards, strategic partnerships and inclusion plans, the alternative provision service and tailored lists. This will build a strong evidence base to inform future funding and legislation.