

Specialist SEND support in every school and community

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Generational reforms to transform outcomes for children with SEND and end one size fits all approach.

Every child with additional needs will benefit from better, more tailored support, as government unveils landmark £4 billion investment to make every school truly inclusive and transform outcomes for children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

The investment comes with the government set to unveil its schools white paper, Every child achieving and thriving, a blueprint for opportunity for all children, including generational reforms to the SEND system.

Through the government's national SEND conversation which saw ministers speak with parents and teachers all around the country to inform the government's plans, as well as the evidence gathered by the Education Select Committee and a wide range of expert reports, the most consistent issue parents have raised is that SEND support is currently provided too late and even then, only after a fight.

To rebuild parents' confidence and make sure every child with SEND gets the support they deserve, today's investment includes a new Inclusive Mainstream Fund of £1.6 billion over 3 years, provided directly to early years, schools and colleges to make sure children get support where and when they need it.

This investment is about making the changes that put inclusion at the heart of every school, so that every pupil can thrive - from funding interventions like small group language support, to supporting staff to identify commonly occurring needs and introducing adaptive teaching styles, so that every pupil can thrive.

In addition, for the children who need a little extra help, the government will fund a new 'Experts at Hand' service, investing £1.8 billion over 3 years to create a bank of specialists like SEND teachers and speech and language therapist in every local area which schools can draw down from on demand, regardless of whether children have an education, health and care plan (EHCP) - meaning every child will be able to access these resources if they need them.

The investment - on top of a record increase for high needs of £3.5 billion in 2028 to 2029 over and above Autumn Budget 25 funding - paves the way for generational reforms, creating a sustainable SEND system that transforms outcomes for children with SEND and will end a one size fits all approach.

Taken alongside the building blocks the government has already put in place, including training for every teacher and 60,000 new specialist places, the government's reforms will end the postcode lottery of SEND support that too many families experience, making sure more children - regardless of need - can attend their local school.

Children shouldn't have to travel miles every day just because there isn't a good school that can meet their needs locally or be separated from learning with their friends because their needs can't be met in a mainstream classroom. This exactly what this government is turning around.

Prime Minister Keir Starmer said:

I've heard first hand the struggles and exhaustion faced by too many parents who feel they have to fight the system to get their child the support they need.

But getting the right support should never be a battle – it should be a given.

That means no more 'one size fits all' system that only serves children who fit the mould. Instead, families will get tailored support built around their child's individual needs, available on their doorstep.

Whatever their background, wherever they live - this government will do right by every child.

Education Secretary Bridget Phillipson said:

This government is fiercely ambitious for children and young people with SEND.

Children with SEND deserve a system that lifts them up, and that puts no limit on what they can go on to achieve.

That means brilliant teachers and experts providing support where children need it, when they need it – in their local school, without families having to fight.

These reforms are a watershed moment for a generation of young people and generations to come, and a major milestone in this government's mission to make sure opportunity is for each and every child.

To dramatically improve the support mainstream schools can provide for children with SEND, and rebuild families' confidence in the system, the government will:

- [NEW] provide £1.6 billion over 3 years across every early years setting, school and post-16 setting, equating to thousands of pounds extra every year on top of existing core SEND funding, to run targeted and small group interventions at the earliest signs of children having additional needs
- [NEW] invest £1.8 billion over 3 years for 'Experts at Hand':
 - every council working with Integrated Care Boards and health board will commission local professionals – educational psychology, occupational therapy, speech and language therapy and more – so they are routinely available in every area, whether or not children have an EHCP
 - special and alternative provision schools to provide expert training, direct interventions with children and short-term placements in their schools
 - once rolled out an average secondary school will receive over 160 days – around an additional full school year - worth of dedicated specialist time every year
- [NEW] invest over £200 million so every community's Best Start Family Hub provides a dedicated SEND outreach and support offer.
- [NEW] invest £200 million to ensure all local authorities can transform how they operate in line with our reforms while maintaining current SEND services
- train every teacher to be a teacher of children with SEND, with the biggest SEND training

offer ever seen in English schools – backed by £200 million – and a new requirement for all teachers to be trained to support children with SEND.

- create 60,000 new places for children with SEND, including the 10,000 places already delivered, backed by investment of over £3.7 billion

Taken together, from the foundations of local family outreach and teacher training, up to today's investment in expert classroom support, the government is building a SEND system unrecognisable from the one families experience today.

The requirement for schools to have an inclusion base will be delivered through the government's £3.7 billion capital investment. Bases will work differently in different schools, so every child has access to a local school that works for their needs.

The investment announced today are all about backing schools with the people and expertise to deliver the support that children need, without delay.

From widening access to specialists who can deliver targeted interventions on the ground, to making sure schools have advice and expertise as soon as needs arise, this government is taking the action to transform the life chances of children across the country.

Reforms to the SEND system sit within the government's wider vision for schools and its ambition to give every child the best start in life. The white paper cements this government's view that for too long, schools have been treated as islands rather than one part of their communities. The government's action to lift the two-child benefit cap, put a family hub in every local council and provide 30 hours of early years education are all critical to ultimately improving life chances for young people.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/specialist-send-support-in-every-school-and-community>