Next steps for SEND in Leeds

October 2026



LEEDS PCF

PARENT CARER FORUM

Some of the topics we talk about today may feel upsetting, particularly for parent carers with lived experience.

Please feel free to:
•step away at any point;
•take a break; and
•look after yourself in whatever way feels right for you.

If this session brings up difficult feelings and you need support, help is available in Leeds:

•**NHS 111** – call 111 and choose the mental health option (24/7, local crisis support)
•**BRIGHT text service** – text BRIGHT to 85258 (free, 24/7 mental health support by text)
•**Dial House (Leeds)** – out-of-hours crisis support, including support for parents.
Call 0113 260 9328 or text 07922 249 452 from 6pm
•**Samaritans** – call 116 123 (free, 24/7)
•**Mindmate** – www.mindmate.org.uk

In an emergency, or if you're in immediate danger, call 999.
You're not alone, and it's okay to reach out.



Overview

SEND Reform

Inclusion bases

ISPs

What this means for EHCPs

Experts at Hand

Ofsted Inspection

Findings

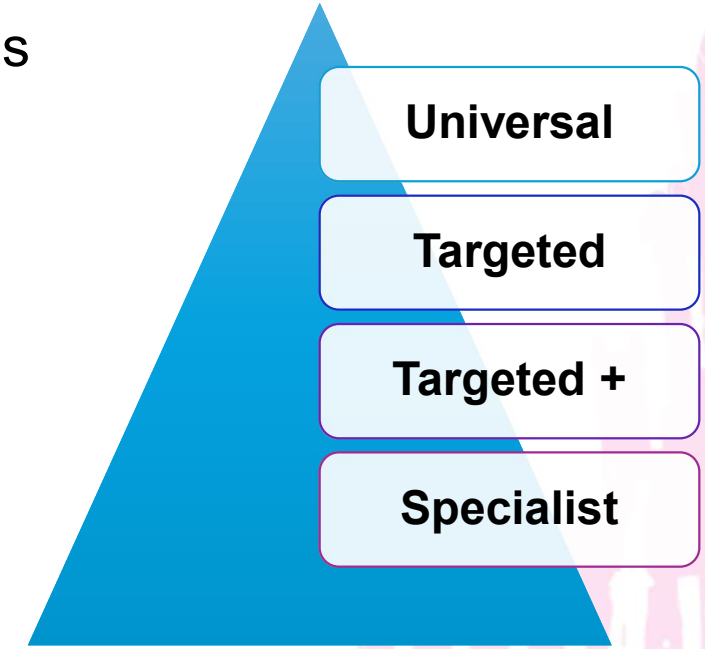
Actions to improve SEND services

Priority Action Plan

SEND reform plan

SEND reforms: proposals

- Shifting the emphasis of SEND support towards greater inclusion in mainstream settings.
- Introducing a new tiered approach to support
- Increasing specialist support for schools (Experts at Hand).
- Ensuring all schools and other educational settings create digital individual support plans (ISP) for any child or young person with identified SEND.



Early → Local → Fair → Effective → Shared

Inclusion bases

The government, through SEND reforms are encouraging the development of mainstream inclusion bases.

There are two types of bases, on the continuum of support. The difference is whether the base is school commissioned (support base) or local authority commissioned (specialist base).

Support bases

Commissioned by individual schools or academy trusts. No formal agreements with the LA and don't receive funding through the high needs block (other than that allocated to fund provision in a child or young person's EHCP).

Specialist bases

Formally recognised and commissioned by the LA and typically receive high needs funding through a service level agreement, combined with a service specification.

Inclusion bases

- Are provisions within mainstream settings for children and young people with additional needs.
- Will support children and young people with SEND, or those requiring support for behavioural or pastoral reasons.
- Are part of the mainstream setting and are not registered separately.
- Will likely require a dedicated space in the setting, which might be separate classes, specialist facilities, or a base where professionals are located.
- Deliver specific interventions, teaching, or support, often in place of or in addition to mainstream classes.
- May be accessed by children and young people for a specific period, or access might be ongoing.
- Will normally be designed with a specific cohort or provision offer in mind.

Individual Support Plans

The introduction of ISPs means that they will…

- Be for every child or young person with SEND, ensuring a guaranteed baseline of support.
- Become a legal requirement, with a national framework of evidence-based interventions.
- Will provide three layers of support
- Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) retained with transitional protections, with changes to EHCPs not beginning until 2030.

What this means for EHCPs

- EHCPs and ISPs will both be digitised to reduce bureaucracy and increase transparency.
- The school complaints process will be updated, with an independent SEND expert added to the complaints panel, where there are concerns around a school granting an ISP, or the content of the ISP.
- The legal entitlement to support in an EHCP will be based on a specialist provision package, like clinical pathways used in health to improve the quality and consistency of support across the country.
- In every classroom, in every school, teachers and support staff will be trained to meet the needs of children and young people with SEND, based on the latest evidence, and backed by £200 million of investment.

What will happen to existing support?

Triple lock protection to ensure no loss of existing support

1. Every child or young person who has a special school place in 2029 will keep it if they want it until they finish education.
2. Transition for those with an EHCP in mainstream, who will best be supported by an ISP, rather than an EHCP in future, will only begin from 2030, once the new inclusive mainstream system has been fully built and only as children and young people naturally move between key phases.
3. ISPs will be in place for those who are transitioning from an EHCP before they move to the new system, so there's no break in support.

Support set out in ISPs should be easily available, without a fight. EHCPs will remain and improved under the government's plans. EHCPs will offer a wider legal entitlement beyond the ISP to more intensive or complex support than schools can routinely provide.

What rights will parents/carers have?

Triple lock protection to ensure no loss of existing support

1. Transitional protections mean that no child in Y3 now, or older, will move on to an ISP if they don't want to until the end of secondary school.
2. Parents/carers of children and young people in mainstream transitioning from an EHCP to an ISP as they move from primary to secondary should be able to choose the school they wish to move to. This will, importantly, provide families with assurance that they have a preferred school place banked.
3. The SEND tribunal will continue as an important legal backstop in the system, with parents retaining the ability to appeal decisions like whether a child or young person should be assessed for a specialist provision package; which specialist package of support the child should receive and which school they should attend.

Experts at Hand

Provide defined route for mainstream education to access specialist support

- Mainstream education settings to access specialist support, including from a range of experts:
  - Educational psychologists
  - Speech and language therapists
  - Occupational therapists
  - Specialist teachers and outreach from specialist settings
- Increased group-based models and whole setting advice and support.
- Deliver evidence-based support and intervention with greater impact and value, ensuring needs do not escalate.
- Children and young people with complex needs can still access individualised and tailored support to meet their needs.

Provision of additional education specialists (EPs and specialist teachers).

Additional outreach from alternative provision, special schools and post-16 institutions.

Additional clinical health professionals (S&LT and OT).

Include new speech and language therapists advanced practitioners in every ICB area.

National agenda: SEND & AP reforms

All children and young people	**Universal**	Newly trained, upskilled teachers. National Inclusion Standards
Children and young people who have SEND and/or other needs.	**The new offer**	Child or young person's experience

Layers of support

Children and young people who require some additional support from their setting, e.g. personalised materials, outlined in an ISP..	**Targeted**	High quality support, on demand, in mainstream: Individual Support Plans (ISP). Support for transitions.
Children and young people who require additional support from their setting, with input from education and health care professionals, e.g. EP, S&LT, OT, ST.	**Targeted Puls**	Improved access to external expertise: Inclusion Bases. Experts at Hand. Outreach.
Children and young people with the most complex needs, which cannot be met in the mainstream classroom.	**Specialist**	Specialist provision packages (EHCP): Mainstream (general or Inclusion Base) Specialist Inclusion Bases. Special School places.

Timescale for reforms

- The proposed reformed system of support for SEND would require changes to the law. This is not expected to come into effect until September 2029. Until then, the current system remains in place.
- No changes to support received through education, health and care plans (EHCPs) would take place before at least September 2030.
- In the meantime, wider support and funding for schools has been introduced to prepare for a reformed system.

Ofsted & Care Quality Commission: Local Area Inspection

Priority action

1. **Quality and timeliness of EHCPs:**
   a. Working together across education, health and care.
2. **Neurodevelopmental pathways**:
   a. Waiting times and support whilst waiting.
3. **Whole system improvement**:
   a. Joint commissioning and planning.
   b. Multi-agency data-sharing.
   c. Better overview of services and provision.

Areas for improvement

1. **Preparation for Adulthood and transitions**:
   a. Children to adults' services.
2. **Equity of health provision**:
   a. Quality and effectiveness of services.
3. **Oversight of AP**:
   a. Monitoring provision for vulnerable groups.
   b. Quality assurance.
4. **Communication**:
   a. Coproduction with parents/carers.
   b. Partners contributions and feedback.

SEND & AP Strategic Plan: priority action plan

- Our SEND Integrated Plan brings together the key priorities for the Leeds SEND & Alternative Provision (AP) partnership to ensure improvements are delivered and the local area is meeting the challenges of the SEND reforms throughout the transformation period.
- The SEND & AP Improvement Board will ensure that progress is made and captured through:
- **Performance**: data that shows how the system is changing. This will be done through data dashboards and reporting.
- **Perceptive data**: subjective insights or children, young people and families, capturing feelings, satisfaction rates, views and experience. This will be done through things such as, surveys, discussions, feedback, focus groups and case studies.

SEND & Alternative Provision: reform plan

Building blocks

Building block 1: Strengthening inclusion across education settings

Building block 2: Access to specialist support and local placements

Building block 3: System leadership, local partnership collaboration and co-production

Building block 4: Encouraging inclusive culture and behaviours

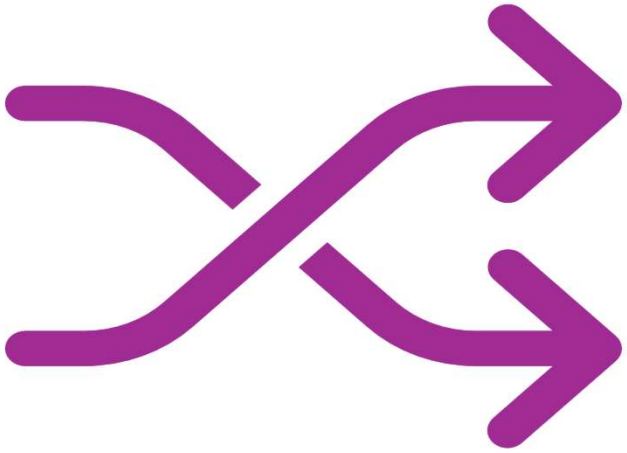
Local SEND Reform Plan

- Key delivery and accountability vehicle for collaborative commitment to put in place the groundwork for national reform.
- Plan submitted on 19 June.
- Delivery of the plan has begun.

Next phase

Buisiness as usual

Transformation



Experts at Hand design stage, with delivery on the horizon.

Supporting schools/settings for all aspects of transformation.

Post inspection priority action plan approved and in action.

Service delivery and existing priorities.