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

How we plan to improve support and services for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities and in alternative provision.

Contents

About this plan 5

In 2019 we reviewed the SEND and alternative provision system 7

What people thought of the ideas 8

What is going to happen next 11

1. We will set standards for the support children and young people should receive 13

2. Making decisions about support 15

3. Making sure things work as planned 17

4. Showing how services are working 20

5. Places where children and young people learn 22

6. Early support for children who might need alternative provision 24

7. Education, Health and Care Plans 27

8. Choosing where children and young people learn 29

9. Preparing children and young people for change and for adulthood 31

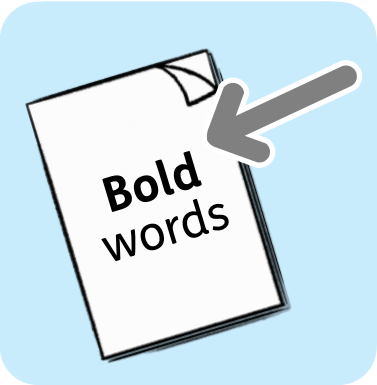
10. People who work with children and young people 33

11. Wider support for children and young people 35

12. Making sure that money is used in the best way 37

Would you like to know more? 38

What the words mean 39



In this Easy Read document some words are in **bold**. We explain what these words mean in the next sentence.

There is also a list of difficult words at the end.

Some words are blue and underlined. These are links which will go to another website which has more information.

About this plan

This plan was written by the **government.**

Government is a group of people who make decisions for a country.

The plan is about how we will make support and services better for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities and in alternative provision in England.

We say a child or young person has **special educational needs and disabilities** if:

- they have a learning difficulty or a disability and

- they need special educational provision where they learn, such as in nursery, school or college.

We call special educational needs and disabilities **SEND** for short.

Alternative provision helps some children and young people who need extra help to stay in their mainstream school.

Or it provides a specialist place for them to learn.

We explain more about alternative provision and different types of schools and colleges in Chapter 5.

In this plan, when we talk about children and young people, we mean:

- children and young people who have SEND

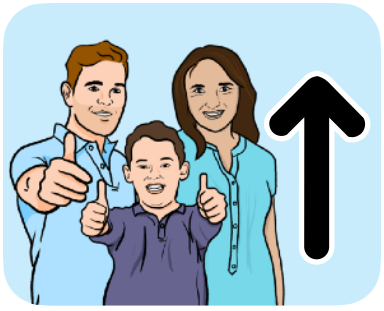
- children and young people who are in alternative provision.

In 2019 we reviewed the SEND and alternative provision system

A **review** means looking at how something is working.

In 2022 we wrote a paper about what we found.

We called this the SEND and Alternative Provision Green Paper. It is available on the government website, GOV.UK. [SEND Review - right support, right place, right time publishing.service.gov.uk)]



The paper had ideas about how to make support and services better for children, young people and their families.

We spoke to children, young people, families, and those who support them, about these ideas.

What people thought of the ideas

People told us what they thought of the ideas by answering questions online.

We also spoke to lots of people face to face, on the telephone and by email.

We spoke to:

- Children, young people and their families

- People who work in schools, colleges and nurseries

- People who provide other types of support to children and young people such as health workers.

We found there are certain challenges in the SEND and alternative provision system. Lots of people agreed with what we thought these challenges were.

Some families said:

- they do not always get the right information quickly enough

- they struggle to get support to meet their child's needs.

Some people were worried that some of the ideas could make it difficult for children and young people to get the help that they need.

Some people liked the ideas and wanted to hear more about how they work.

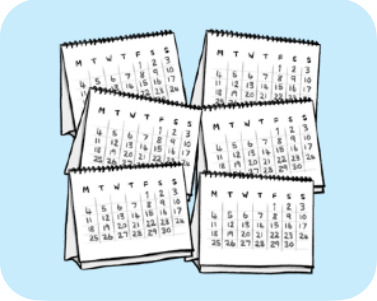
We listened carefully.

We have used what people told us to make our ideas better.

What is going to happen next

Now we have made our ideas better, we want to make them happen.

We will work with areas across the country to make some of these things happen now.



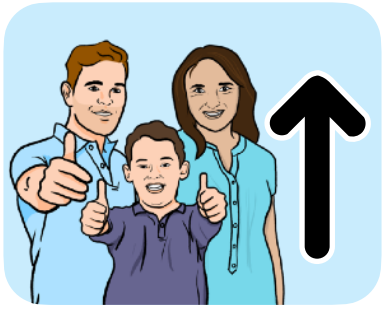
Some are more difficult and will take longer.

This is because we want to try them out first to make sure they work properly.

We are going to use something called a **Change Programme** to try out the difficult ideas to make sure they work well.

After we develop the ideas, we will put them into action.

We will continue to work with children, young people and their families to develop these ideas.



The rest of this plan tells you how we are going to make support and services better for children and young people.

1. We will set standards for the support children and young people should receive

We found that support and services for children and young people are different depending on where they live.

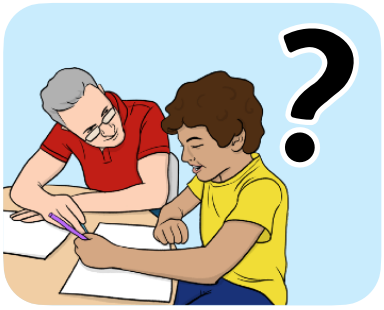
We want support and services to work the same way across the country.

This is so that children and young people get the support they need no matter where they live.

And families know what support they should get and who they should get it from.

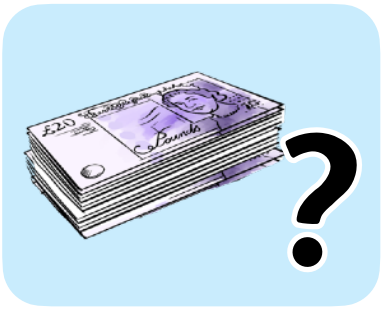
We will make sure every area in the country works in the same way by writing **National Standards** for SEND and Alternative Provision.

The **standards** will explain:



- what support should be available

- who should provide it



- who should pay for it.

We will work together with children, young people, families and other people to write these standards and make sure they are fair.

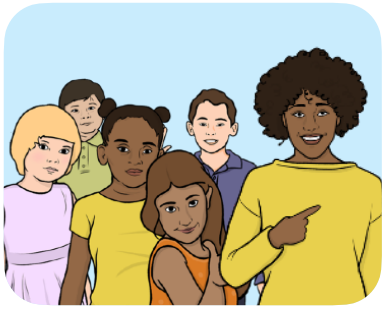
2. Making decisions about support

It is important that the right people are involved in making decisions about support.

We want to make it easier for people to work together to support children and young people properly.

We will set up groups of people in each local area to support children and young people.

We will call these **partnerships**.



Partnerships will include:

- children and young people

- their families

- education settings

- health and care services

- **local authorities**.

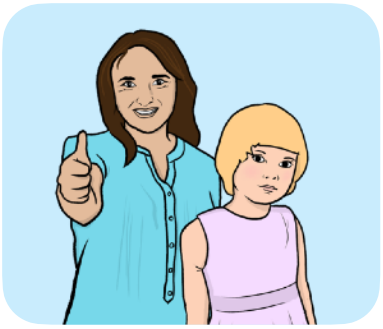
For SEND and alternative provision, **local authorities** are responsible for bringing together the people who deliver services to children and young people.

One of the things that local partnerships will work together on is making something called a **local inclusion plan**.

A **local inclusion plan** will explain how the needs of children and young people will be met in a local area.

3. Making sure things work as planned

SEND casework teams are groups of people who work for a local authority.



Their job is to make sure assessments are made and to organise the support that children and young people with SEND need.

They do this by working closely with different people such as:

- teachers

- health workers

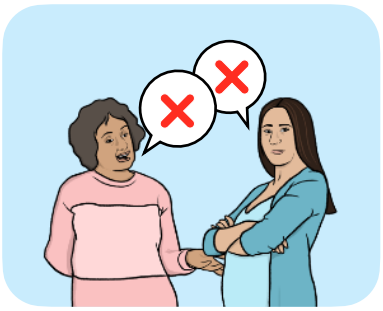
- and families.

Families told us they feel like they don't always get the right information quickly enough from the SEND casework team.

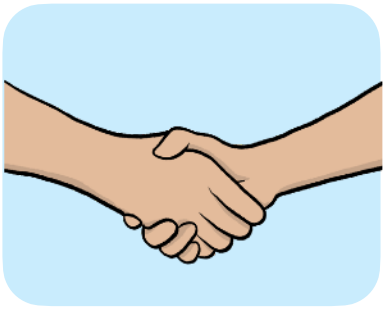
We will look closely at the skills and training that SEND casework teams need and see how to improve this.

We want to improve this so children and young people and their families have better experiences and support.

When families and local areas disagree



We know that sometimes families and local areas don't agree on some things.



We want to make it easier and quicker for people to speak to each other and come to an agreement that works.

Mediation is a way for families to work through disagreements that could come up about their child's support.

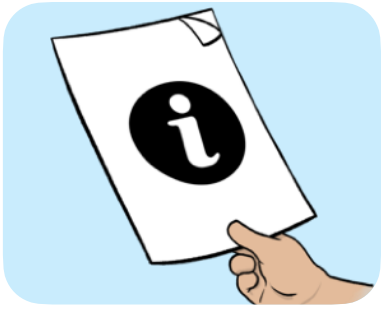
We will make mediation better so that when families disagree with decisions they are supported to find a solution.

4. Showing how services are working

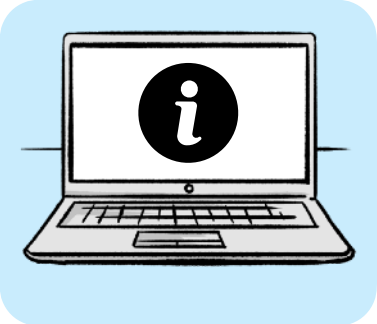
We want to make sure services are giving children, young people and their families the support they need.

We want to give children, young people and families a way to see how well the services in their area are working.

We want local areas to see how their services compare to other areas so they can see where they need to improve.



To do this, we will collect information about how services are working.



We will put all of this information on something called ‘national and local inclusion dashboards’.

You will be able to read the information on the dashboards.

When people or services don’t work in the right way, we will find out what is wrong and help them to do better.

5. Places where children and young people learn

Most children and young people with special educational needs go to **mainstream schools or colleges**.

A **mainstream school or college** is a school or college that teaches children and young people from the local area with different types of need.

Some children and young people go to a **special school or college**.

A **special school or college** teaches children who need more support.

Some children and young people spend time in **alternative provision**.

Alternative provision helps children who find school difficult, maybe because they feel anxious or struggle with their behaviour.

We want to make sure that children and young people can go to a special or alternative provision school if they need it.

We will open up new special and alternative provision schools.

6. Early support for children who might need alternative provision

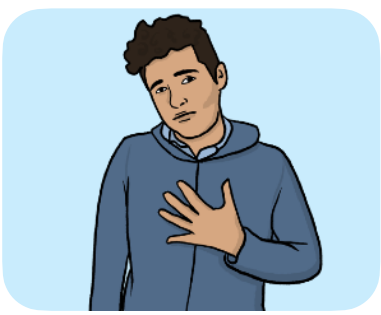
Alternative provision helps children and young people who need extra help to stay in their mainstream school.

Or it provides a specialist place for them to learn.

The children and young people in alternative provision may need extra help for different reasons.

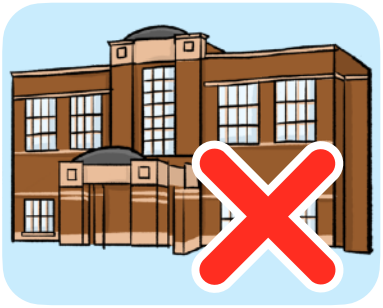
For example they may:

- feel anxious about school



- struggle with their behaviour

- have been suspended



- or excluded from school.

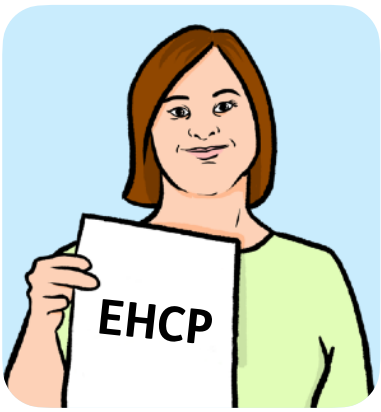
We want to make sure children and young people get help earlier so they can stay in their school.

But if a child or young person does need to go to an alternative provision school we want to help them return to their mainstream school quickly where that is the right thing for them.

We will ask local authorities and alternative provision schools to help children and young people early so they can stay in their mainstream school.

Or if they spend some time in an alternative provision school, help them to return to their mainstream school as soon as they can.

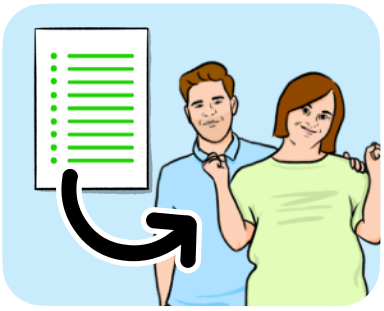
7. Education, Health and Care Plans



Some children and young people who require a lot of additional support have an **Education Health and Care Plan**.

It is sometimes called an **EHCP** for short.

An **EHCP** lists a child or young person's education, health and care needs.

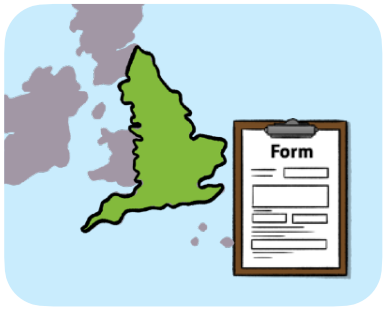


An EHCP says how to support someone at nursery, school or college.

We want to make EHCPs easier for people to read and use.

This includes children and young people, their families and the people who support them.

We will:



- make all EHCP forms the same across the country.

- help local authorities to use their computer systems better to make EHCPs.

Also:

We want to make it easy to understand how decisions are made about help, even if you do not have an EHCP.

We want families to feel confident in the decisions that are made.

We will bring together all the services that help children and young people. They will be part of a **panel** which is a group.

A **panel** will help the local authority make the best decisions.

8. Choosing where children and young people learn

We want to help families to decide which school or college will best meet the needs of their child.

We want to give families a list of local nurseries, schools and colleges that can help their child.

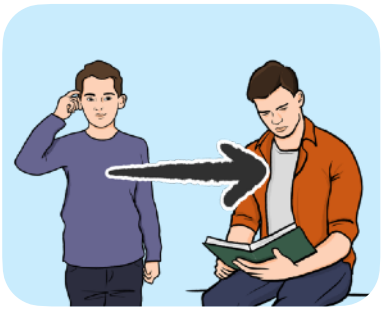
Families will use the list to choose the nursery, school or college they want their child to go to.

We want to make sure this works properly, so, we will continue working on this with children, young people, their families and others who support them.

It’s really important that we get this right.

So we are using the Change Programme to try it out first to make sure it works.

9. Preparing children and young people for change and for adulthood



We want to make sure children and young people are supported as they move from early years, to school, to college and/or to training.

We also want to make sure they are supported as they move into work and adulthood.

We want these changes to be smoother and less stressful for children and young people.

We want young people to be supported to live independently, be healthy and be part of their communities.

To support this, we will give guidance on how to best support children and young people through these changes.

We will also help young people to be better prepared for starting a job.

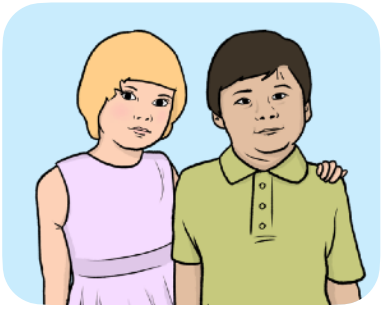
For example, young people with EHCPs can do a **supported internship**.

In a **supported internship** young people are given the chance to try out a job.

During their supported internship we make sure someone gives them special support to help them do the job well.

This helps to prepare young people for work.

10. People who work with children and young people



Each child or young person might need slightly different support to help them do their best.

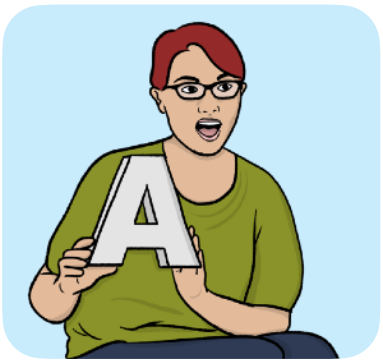
We will:

- give better training and guidance to people who teach and support children and young people in nurseries, schools and colleges.

- introduce a new qualification for **SENCos** who work in schools.

  SENCo is short for **special educational needs co-ordinator**.

They are teachers who support children and young people with SEND and their teachers.

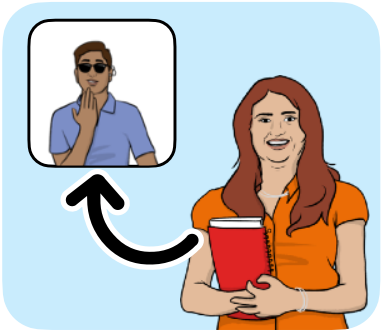


Some children and young people might need support from **specialists**.

Specialists are experts who help people with more specific needs such as speech and language needs.

We want more children and young people to get specialist help when they need it.

We will:



- think about ways to increase the number of specialists who can teach children and young people who have difficulties with vision or hearing.

- train more specialists called **educational psychologists**.

  Educational psychologists are experts in supporting children and young people with SEND.

11. Wider support for children and young people

Sometimes children and young people need other help to support their learning such as health and care.

We want to support them to get all of this help more easily.

We can do this by improving the way different services work together.

We will ask local authority and health staff to work more closely to make sure children and young people can get the health services they need.

We will make sure this is happening by inspecting local areas.

The inspections will focus on if children and young people are receiving the right support they need.

Social care services help support children and families who need extra help

We want families to know what support disabled children and young people should receive from **social care services**.

We want families to know how to get support.

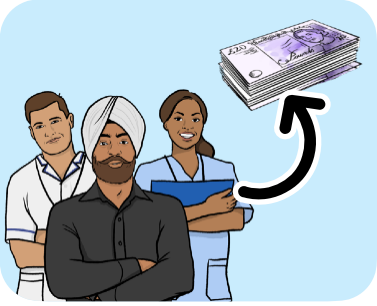
We want **local authorities** and health staff to know what support they should provide to disabled children and young people, and who is responsible for it.

We will make it clearer what the law says about the **social care services** that disabled children and young people should receive.

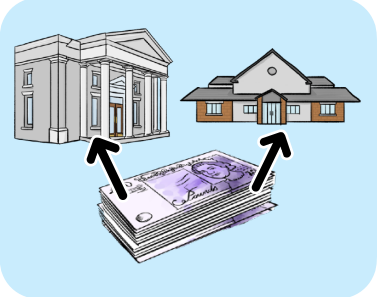
12. Making sure that money is used in the best way

We need to make sure that money for children and young people is used fairly so everyone can get the support they need.

We will explain:



- how much services should cost



- how to spend money to support children and young people well.

We plan to make sure this is fair for everyone.

It's really important that we get this right, so we are trying it out first to make sure it works.

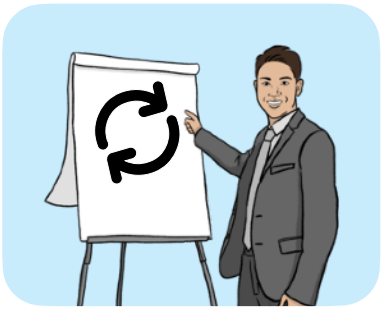
Would you like to know more?

More information about what we are doing is available on our website: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/send-and-alternative-provision-improvement-plan

What the words mean

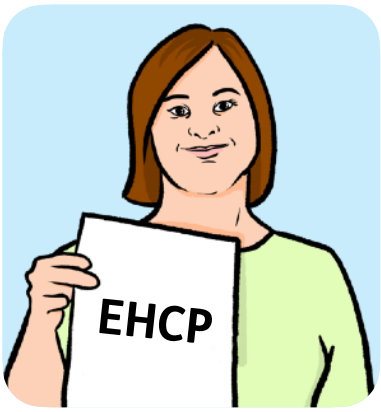
Alternative provision helps children and young people who need extra help to stay in their mainstream school.

Or it provides a specialist place for them to learn.



The **Change Programme** will help us work out how to do the things we are planning to well.

Educational psychologists are experts in supporting children and young people with SEND.



Some children and young people who require a lot of additional support have an **education health and care plan**.

It is sometimes called an **EHCP** for short.

An **EHCP** lists a child or young person's education, health and care needs.

An **EHCP** says how to support someone at nursery, school or college.

Government is a group of people who make decisions for a country.

For SEND and alternative provision, **local authorities** bring together the people who deliver services to children and young people.

A **mainstream school or college** is a school or college that teaches children and young people from the local area with different types of need.

Mediation is a way for families to work through disagreements that could come up about their child's support.

Partnerships are groups of people in each local area that we are going to set up to support children and young people.

A **review** means looking at how something is working.

SENCo is short for **special educational needs co-ordinator**.

They are teachers who support children and young people with SEND and their teachers.

SEND casework teams are groups of people who work for a local authority.

Their job is to organise the assessments and support that children and young people with SEND need.

Social care services help support children and families who need extra help.

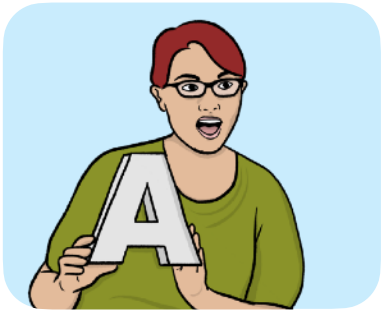
We say a child or young person has **special educational needs and disabilities** if:

- they have a learning difficulty or a disability and

- they need special educational provision where they learn, such as in nursery, school or college.

We call special educational needs and disabilities **SEND** for short.

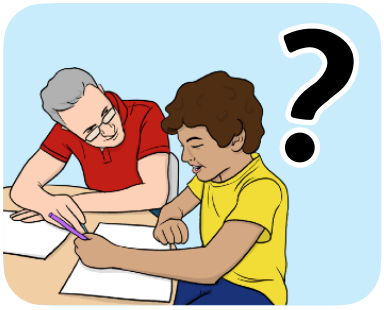
A **special school or college** teaches children who need more support.



Specialists are experts who help people with more specific needs such as speech and language needs.

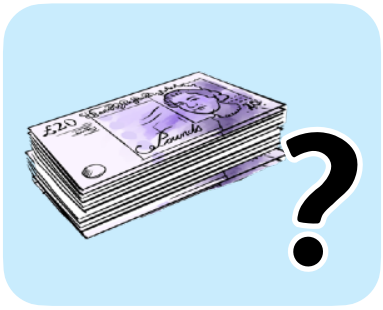
We are going to write something called **national standards** to make sure every area in the country works in the same way.

The **standards** will explain:



- what support should be available

- who should provide it



- who should pay for it.

In a **supported internship** young people with EHCPs are given the chance to try out a job.