

SEND Reform Roundtable

**Crawley
16th May 2026**



Today's Agenda

09:30-10:00 – Introduction

10:00-10:30 – Feedback Session 1

10:30-11:00 – Feedback Session 2

11:00-11:30 – Feedback Session 3

11:30-12:00 – Feedback Session 4

12:00-12:30 – Report Back

Each feedback session will focus on one of the following: EHCPs, mainstream settings, specialist provision, and rights & resolution.



Why change things?

The current system for SEND was not designed to meet the current level of demand or the increasing numbers of complex cases.

As a result, the system is:

- ▶ Complex and difficult to navigate
- ▶ Increasingly slow
- ▶ Produces inconsistent decisions
- ▶ Is no longer affordable

Without action, the system will collapse.



Five principles for reform

- ▶ **Early** support when identified, not after a long fight
- ▶ **Local** learning, close to home
- ▶ **Fair** settings resourced to meet commonly occurring needs, legal right and national standards
- ▶ **Effective** evidence-based approaches that work
- ▶ **Shared** education, health care and family support working together



Mainstream provision

- ▶ Build a 'universal offer'
- ▶ Invest £4bn with dedicated funding for children with SEND
- ▶ Training for all staff to ensure best-practice awareness of SEND
- ▶ Capital investment to change school facilities to meet needs and inclusion bases
- ▶ Individual Support Plans and improved EHCPs for complex needs
- ▶ National Inclusion Standards, school inclusion strategies and Ofsted
- ▶ Parents and carers recognised as experts on their children and treated as partners
- ▶ 'Experts at Hand' Fast-access to wrap-around specialist support
- ▶ Schools working together in local groups



Special school provision

- ▶ Protected places for any child with a special school/college place in Sept 2029
- ▶ If you decide your child would be better located in a legal setting, legal right to ask your local authority for a mainstream place
- ▶ New investment in specialist places, with 60,000 new places in special schools and inclusion bases by 2029/30



ISPs/EHCPs

- ▶ EHCPs retained and improved, giving a legal entitlement to more support than mainstream settings can routinely provide
- ▶ Specialist Provision Packages set out this provision nationally, evidence-based, developed by independent experts and with a more inclusive assessment system
- ▶ Individual Support Plans introduced for all children with SEND, setting out day-to-day support needed, designed in collaboration between education professionals and parents/carers and changing as needs change
- ▶ Changes phased-in, to ensure new arrangements in place before any shift
- ▶ Continuity of provision for existing children until at least Sept 29 and only then changing when children change schools



Rights and resolution

- ▶ EHCPs provide statutory protection for complex needs
- ▶ Individual Support Plans are a legal obligation for education providers
- ▶ EHCPs retain tribunal as a backstop
- ▶ More widely, school complaints systems updated to complaints about SEND are heard by a panel including a SEND expert independent of school
- ▶ Mediation and dispute resolution to avoid lengthy legal process
- ▶ Ofsted will provide accountability through inspections assessing whether right support is in place and expectations being met and intervention when LAs and ICBs fail



Key dates

- ▶ **Starting now:** Early investment – £3.7bn for new SEND places, £4bn for earlier identification needs and support
- ▶ **2026/27:** National SEND training programme begins for staff, Best Start Hubs, draft Specialist Provision Packages
- ▶ **2027/28:** Final Specialist Provision Packages, with new assessment based on drawing on the experiences of children, families and experts
- ▶ **2029/30:** Changes phased-in. New needs assessment used for first-time assessments from Sept 2029. Transition for those with EHCPs from 2030 when they move to Secondary or College. Children with special school places complete education in specialist provision.



Feedback groups

- ▶ The purpose of today is to capture the town's feedback on the proposals and feed that into the consultation process
- ▶ Four feedback groups, covering each area in turn
- ▶ Appoint a person to record and report back
- ▶ Focus on the proposals, what's good, what's bad, and any alternative suggestions
- ▶ Be conscious that there will be sensitive areas for some people
- ▶ Try to include everyone
- ▶ We will submit all the points captured today

