

2 December 2025



We are the department for **opportunity**

Dear colleagues,

I am writing to you today to launch an important [national conversation](#) on the future of SEND. This builds on a year of engagement and expert leadership and will help us make sure our proposals for reform are rooted in the experience of children and young people, parents and all the teachers, support staff and professionals who are supporting them.

For too long, we have seen a system where too many children are not accessing the support they need to thrive. I know that this is not because of a lack of commitment or care from teachers, SENCOs, and support staff. Every day, you and your colleagues go above and beyond for children and young people with SEND, often in very challenging circumstances. When I talk about a system that isn't working, I'm talking about the structures and processes around you, not the dedication of professionals in our settings.

I have seen some of the brilliant work going on in schools across the country – people showing extraordinary leadership to deliver inclusion and go the extra mile for children. Our plans will be built from the pioneering work happening in mainstream and special schools to support children with SEND, and we want to hear your ideas.

I know that many of you are feeling the effects of a system that is under extreme pressure, and I want to take this opportunity to thank you for everything you do, often in the face of considerable challenges. You are our partners in this work. Your insights and experience will be vital in shaping reforms that truly work.

What we're doing

We're determined to build reforms that last – clearing the barriers that make your job harder, simplifying systems and reducing conflict, not adding to it. We're committed to delivering a SEND system that stands

the test of time and delivers positive outcomes for all children and young people.

Building from the over 100 engagement events Ministers and advisers have done over the last year, five key principles are guiding our approach to reform. These are:

- **Early:** Children and young people should receive the support they need as soon as possible.
- **Local:** Children and young people with SEND should be able to learn at a setting close to their home.
- **Fair:** Every setting should be resourced and able to meet common and predictable needs, including when they change over time.
- **Effective:** Reforms should be grounded in evidence.
- **Shared:** Education, health and care services should work in partnership with local government, families, teachers, experts, and representative bodies.

Early next year, we will publish the Schools White Paper and our plans for improving SEND support, making sure every child and young person can thrive. This will be followed by a period of formal public consultation and engagement.

But ahead of that, we want to build on the engagement already done – including through the thoughtful work led by expert advisers Tom Rees and Dame Christine Lenehan, for which I'd like to thank them. I want to hear from families and carers, teachers and staff, health and care practitioners, and local authority workers – to ensure reforms reflect lived experience and practical insights. This is a direct line to the people who know the system best and want it to work better.

Get involved

Starting in Bristol today, my ministerial colleagues and I will travel to every region of England, holding events across the country.

I'll also be hosting five online events with SEND experts, each focusing on one of our guiding principles of reform. There will be an opportunity to share views and ask questions. You can book onto as many of these as you like.

We have developed a toolkit for those who want to organise their own events to speak to young people, families, or education staff – you can find that under 'related' on our [website](#).

I hope you will join us in this vital conversation and encourage your colleagues and the parents and families of children and young people with SEND in your setting to take part in whatever way suits them best. Above all, we are keen to hear the voices of children and young people themselves and how they want to be supported by our education system.

Every child deserves the opportunity to achieve and thrive in their setting. That's exactly why we are opening the doors to every parent, carer, teacher, and practitioner who wants to drive change. Every voice will help shape the system our children and young people deserve.

Yours sincerely,



Georgia Gould OBE MP

Minister for School Standards



Department
for Education

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