

Easy Read Guide **SEND Reforms**

September 2026

The most important thing to know



The law is not changing yet.

The legal framework will not change until 2030 at the earliest.



Current EHCPs still matter.

Existing EHCPs and their legal protections remain valid while the future system is being developed.

What are the SEND Reforms?

1

The Government wants to change the SEND system.

The main aim is to improve support and inclusion in mainstream nurseries, schools and colleges.

2

More support should be available earlier.

The reforms aim to help children and young people get support more quickly, including before they have a diagnosis.

3

Some children will still need specialist support.

Children and young people who need specialist support through an EHCP may still be supported in mainstream or specialist settings. It is expected the number of EHCP's will reduce.

Experts at Hand

- **Experts at Hand is a new type of support.**
It is intended to bring more specialist help into education settings.
- **Specialists may include:**
SEND practitioners, educational psychologists, occupational therapists, and speech and language therapists.
- **A diagnosis will not be needed.**
The aim is to spot needs and provide help earlier, before difficulties get worse.
- **It does not replace current support.**
Experts at Hand is additional support. It does not replace SEN Support duties or EHCPs.

What else do families need?

- ! **The reforms do not cover everything SEND families rely on.**
Work needs to continue to improve social care, diagnosis pathways, mental health support and support after education.

When could things change?

2026

Build and prepare

During 2026 to 2028, work includes SEND workforce training, funding for mainstream settings, National Inclusion Standards, Experts at Hand and Ordinarily Available Provision

2028

Possible changes to the law

A new legal framework will be developed 2028 to 2029, including four tiers of support, Individual Support Plans and Specialist Provision Packages.

Later

Future system

existing EHCPs and legal protections remain fully valid until the new legal system is rolled out.

Concerns that have been raised



Legal rights

There are concerns about how families could hold settings and local authorities to account if support in an Individual Support Plan is not delivered.



EHCP criteria

There are concerns that the criteria for EHCPs could become tighter.



Enough specialist staff

There are concerns about whether there will be enough specialist staff to deliver Experts at Hand.



Pressure on education settings

There are concerns about putting more responsibility on settings that already have limited capacity.

What is happening in Shropshire now?



Local SEND Reform Plan

Shropshire has developed a Local SEND Reform Plan and it is awaiting approval.



Experts at Hand

Local work has started. At first, support is expected to include small groups, whole-class interventions, staff coaching and light-touch assessments. PaCC is involved in this work

Parent and family carer survey

PaCC, IASS Shropshire, Shropshire Council and the local NHS Integrated Care Board have co-produced a survey about confidence in the SEND system and the planned reforms.

Ordinarily Available Inclusive Provision

Information is being updated to make it clearer what support should normally be available to children in education settings. PaCC is contributing to this work.

Inclusion funding

Nurseries, schools and colleges have received additional funding to support inclusion and remove barriers without waiting for a formal diagnosis.

Inclusion Strategies

Settings must publish an Inclusion Strategy by 31 December 2026 and should work with SEND families on how additional funding is used. PaCC is encouraging schools and colleges to work with families on their Inclusion Strategies.

How can families have a say?



Share your questions.

Questions about the SEND Reforms can be sent to enquiries@paccshropshire.org.uk.



Families can complete the **Shropshire survey** about their confidence in the SEND system and planned reforms.

CLICK HERE

More information will follow.

The next PaCC SEND Reforms Newsletter is planned for January 2027 and will focus on Inclusion Bases in mainstream settings.