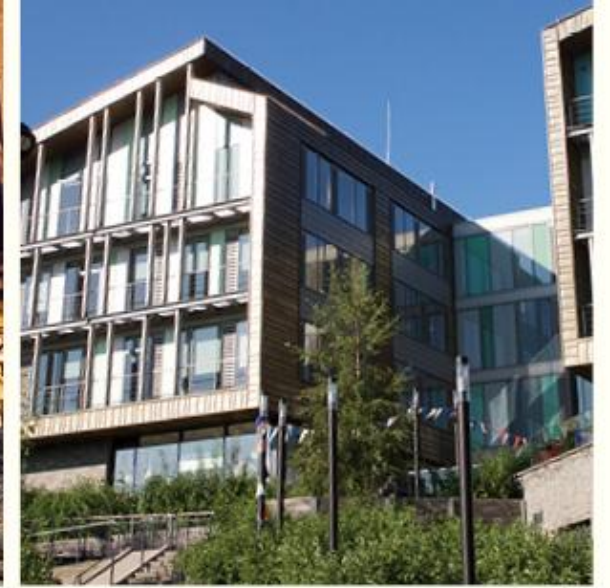

Overview of: Education White Paper Local SEND Reform Plan Maturity Matrix Assessment

May 2026

Bath & North East
Somerset Council

Improving People's Lives



Every Child Achieving and Thriving

SEND Reform: Putting Children and Young People First

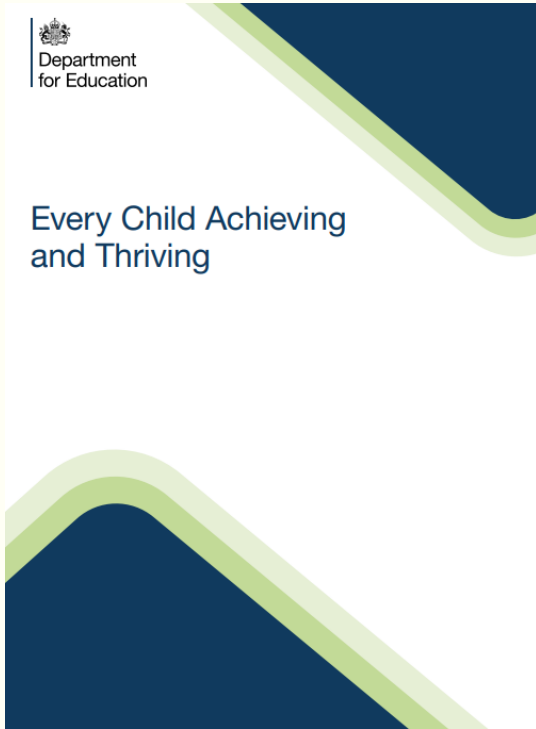
Government Consultation

Local partnership maturity assessment guidance

CP 1509

Introduction

- 1 x White Paper, 2 key docs:
 - Every Child Achieving and Thriving
 - SEND Reform: Putting Children and Young People first
- Local SEND Reform Plan
- Local Partnership Maturity Assessment Tool



Schools White Paper: Every Child Achieving and Thriving

- Published 23 February 2026
- Consultation runs until 18 May 2026
- [Every Child Achieving and Thriving Schools White Paper](#)
- [SEND Consultation](#) Putting children and young people first
- [Further information and fact sheets](#)
- [Sign up](#) for updates on DFE planned events for those working in education, focused on the proposed SEND reform for each phase of the 0 to 25 journey.

Our Vision

- The education and experiences we give our children today will shape tomorrow's society. It's **vital we prepare children to thrive in a rapidly changing, technologically-driven world.**
- Children thrive when the love and support they receive at home is built on by a **stretching, enriching, and inclusive school experience.**
- Great schools deliver this for every child, with teachers who challenge, support and stretch every learner to help them achieve and thrive, recognising **high standards and inclusion as two sides of the same coin**
- We are **rebuilding public services** to wrap around our children, to support healthy, happy childhoods and enable every child to achieve at school.
- Government must set the conditions which enable every family and every school to support children's success: **a partnership between all those with the responsibility to set our children up so they can achieve their ambitions and aspirations.**

This white paper is not simply a vision of the change we want to bring to our schools. It's a call to parents, schools, local services, and everyone working with children and young people to join us in building a future where every child can achieve and thrive, in school and beyond.

Setting every child up to succeed and building stronger foundations

Across government, we are rebuilding public services for our children, to support healthy, happy childhoods and enable every child to achieve and thrive. Our plans will wrap services around children and schools (Chapter 1).

Our reforms will deliver **three key shifts to transform education for all children from:**

- 1. Narrow to broad** (Chapter 2) - a rich and broad school experience, underpinned by a curriculum that builds knowledge and skills, that challenges and stretches every child and provides enrichment opportunities for all children.
- 2. Sidelined to included** (Chapter 3) - high standards and inclusion come together. Schools must be places where every child is included, where they are supported and challenged to achieve and thrive. This is especially true for those whose needs are often sidelined by the wider system – including white working-class children, children with SEND and those progressing but capable of more.
- 3. Withdrawn to engaging** (Chapter 4) – Our best schools know that children achieve most when they feel safe and connected to their school environment; they show that high expectations for academic excellence and deep pupil engagement go hand in hand.

Excellent individual practice can transform outcomes for individual children. But it takes an excellent system to transform outcomes for communities and generations of children. We need to **build stronger foundations to deliver change**. We will do this through:

- **Support and investment in quality staff** (Chapter 5)
- **Collaboration between schools and with other partners** (Chapter 6)
- **Enabling innovation and ambition** (Chapter 7)

The Schools White Paper sets out our vision to improve education for all children in England.

The Schools White Paper commits to the following key policies to ensure all children can achieve and thrive, supporting children to move **from a narrow to broad education, from sidelined to included, and from withdrawn to engaged.**



SEND

1. A formal consultation launching in February, concluding in May on SEND reform, incl. funding, mainstream inclusion and accountability.
2. A request to all local authorities to produce detailed Local SEND reform plans.
3. Proposals that funding for supporting mainstream inclusion will increasingly be integrated into core school budgets, with responsibility and accountability for the use of that funding sitting with schools.



School Trusts

1. A commitment that in time, all schools will be part of high-quality school trusts
2. A commitment to expand diversity in the trust landscape, by enabling LAs to establish trusts and revising co-operative articles.
3. A commitment to introduce new expectations for all trusts on collaboration and engagement, providing local communities access to trust governance.
4. A commitment that DfE will work with local partners (LAs, religious bodies, schools and trusts) to develop a school landscape that is right for their area.
5. A commitment to publish a new set of revised standards for trusts. These will inform new commissioning guidance from Regions Group that will underpin our decision-making on school groupings. They will also inform Ofsted in developing its future MAT inspection framework.



School Improvement

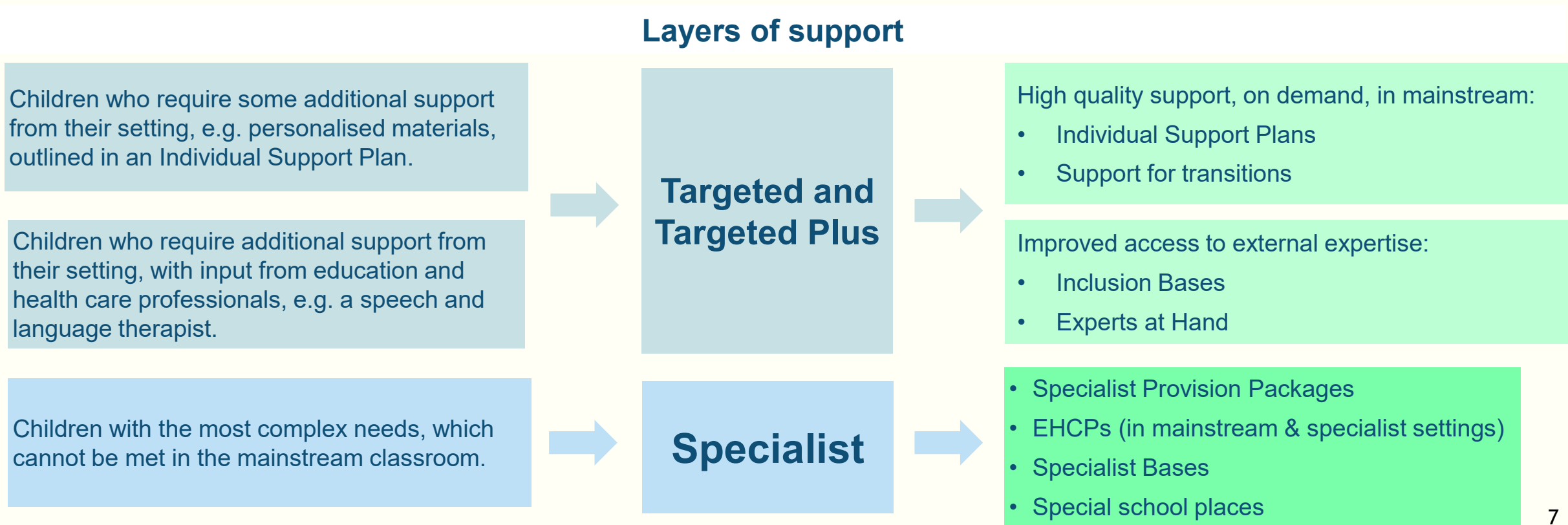
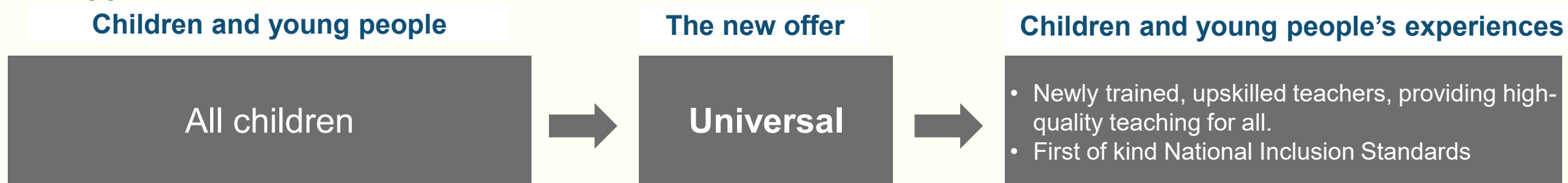
1. Confirmation that we will continue to roll out and define the Universal RISE service, through our work on the National Priorities, Universal+ and the new digital service.
2. Scaling up work on targeted RISE, through the expansion of RISE into RSI schools from September 2026
3. Changing our approach to intervention, shifting from a duty to convert failing maintained schools to academies to a power, and introducing inspection of and intervention in trusts.
4. Establishing a KS3 alliance to pioneer best practice on KS3.



Other reforms

1. Education Estates Strategy Published
2. Post-16 Qualification reform, following the consultation with the sector.

The reformed SEND system will ensure an improved Universal Offer, and three additional layers of support for those who need it built on the best of what works



We are investing heavily in the system so that children receive timely and appropriate support

We will invest an additional £4bn in reforms between 2026-27 to 2028-29 and £3.7bn in Capital (2025-26 to 2029-30)

Inclusive Mainstream Fund - £1.6bn

For to schools, colleges and early years settings, to spend on targeted support for children with additional needs, such as small group support for literacy or numeracy.

National training for all EY, School and Post-16 staff – over £200m

To ensure that all staff get new training to support children with SEND.

Experts at Hand - £1.8bn

For LA and health services to give EY settings, mainstream schools and colleges direct access to expert support - 40 days per average primary school and 160 days per average secondary school.

Education Psychologists and Speech and Language Therapists - over £40m

To fund training for over 200 more educational psychologists per year from 2026 and 2027 and ensure there is a SaLT advanced practitioner in every Integrated Care Board (ICB) area.

Support for local areas to deliver the new system - £200m

To transform local SEND services and build a cohesive, child-focused, inclusive system. This funding will strengthen LAs' strategic planning, commissioning, leadership capacity and engagement with the education sector.

Best Start in Life Family Hubs – over £200m

For every Best Start Family Hub to enable each hub to have a SEND practitioner to offer direct support to children and families.

High Needs Capital - £3.7 billion

To create 60,000 new specialist places, including tens of thousands of places in inclusion bases and new special school places.

1 single system – 4 Major reforms

Together these reforms describe a single system of early, inclusive, neighbourhood-based support for children and families, delivered through:

1. coordinated
2. multi-agency working,
3. across health, care and education.

3 major reforms with common challenges



3 major reforms with common features



- Focus on early identification and help
- Seeking to prevent the escalation of needs
- Stress the importance of multi-disciplinary working
- Emphasis on integrated systems and processes
- Neighbourhood based services

- separate sponsoring Departments, separate reforms and programmes, guidance cross references the three programmes but does not integrate them.
- It's going to be up to local areas to develop their integrated arrangements.
- Very busy systems

Local SEND Reform Plan

On 9 March, in a joint letter to LAs and ICBs, DfE confirmed that they were commissioning each local area partnership to develop and submit a **Local SEND Reform Plan** in June 2026, **underpinned by a Local Partnership Maturity Assessment**.

The ask is for these documents to clearly set out how we will improve and further strengthen our system, **tilting provision towards stronger inclusive practice and early intervention**, and ensuring that the conditions underpinning effective long-term outcomes are in place.

This will help to identify and spread best practice as we work collectively to reform our SEND system.

The Local SEND Reform Plan is the key accountability vehicle for this collaborative commitment, with expectations that are reviewed annually as proposed reforms rolls out.

Local SEND Reform Plan

- As a Local Area Partnership (health, settings, LA), we need to produce a “first iteration” of:
 - The SEND Reform Plan (“the Plan”)
 - 20-section Data Return
 - Maturity Matrix self-assessment – which will underpin the Plan
- DfE have requested the LA to be the “System Convener” taking the lead to bring partners together
- DfE expects that all partners will respond to the LAs’ leadership to fulfil their partnership responsibilities

Local SEND Reform Plan – Structure

- Vision and Goals – What are we trying to achieve
- Strategy – How we plan to achieve it
 - 3-year ‘Road-map’
 - 1-year Delivery Plan (More detailed. Can adapt.)
 - Funding plans
- Monitoring and Evaluation – How we will know delivery is on track
- Governance – What action will we take to stay on track
- Central Government Support – How the DfE can help up

Minimum Requirements

Experts at Hand Offer

Sufficiency and Place Planning

Effective Practice – Universal Offer

- Early Years (aligned to Best Start in Life plans)
- Post-16

Effective Partnerships

Effective Co-Production Practices

- Mediation

What's in the Local SEND Reform Plan?

Plan component:	What good looks like
<p>The Vision: What does the area want the system to become?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ A clear and realistic picture of the local SEND system in three years, grounded in evidence about current strengths and challenges. ➤ A defined end-state for the Expert at Hand Offer: who delivers it, how it operates across EY/schools/FE, and the scale of provision. ➤ A clear shift toward early intervention and mainstream inclusion, showing how universal and targeted support will improve over time. ➤ Alignment with wider strategies (Early Help, Inclusion, AP, place planning) and co-produced with families through meaningful engagement.
<p>The Strategy: How will the area get there?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ A credible theory of change showing how the area will move from its current position to the desired future state, informed directly by the Local Partnership Maturity Assessment. ➤ A sequenced three-year roadmap setting out the order in which major reforms will be delivered (EAHO rollout, workforce changes, data improvements, sufficiency plans). ➤ A strategy that tackles the area's actual problems, linking actions to known weaknesses and risks surfaced through LPMAT and local diagnostics ➤ A realistic approach to shifting spend from reactive, high-cost provision toward early and inclusive support.
<p>Year-1 Delivery Plan: What will happen first?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Clear, testable workstreams (e.g., EAHO workforce, inclusion bases, data architecture, governance) with quarterly milestones advisers can track in progress meetings. ➤ A credible investment plan that demonstrates how funding supports system change and contributes to long-term DSG sustainability. ➤ Realistic delivery capacity, with resourcing aligned to the ambition in Year 1 and clarity on who is accountable for each task. ➤ Early actions that establish the building blocks for reform, not excessive long-term commitments that cannot be achieved within the year.
<p>Monitoring and Evaluation: How will progress be tracked?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ A workable, proportionate system for tracking milestones and outcomes, aligned with quarterly monitoring and national data requirements. ➤ Ability to generate accurate, timely data, including health and ICB contributions, with a clear plan to address known data gaps. ➤ Clear links between delivery actions, outcomes, and financial impact, allowing progress to be assessed against both performance and sustainability measures.
<p>Governance: Who is responsible and can they deliver?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ A credible SRO with seniority, influence and clear accountability for driving the plan across all partners. ➤ Strong joint LA-ICB leadership, with clear roles, regular involvement of health partners, and agreed routes for escalation. ➤ Clear structures that support decision-making and timely issue resolution, including linked governance for inclusion, sufficiency, and early help. ➤ Meaningful co-production with Parent Carer Forums and engagement with EY, schools, FE and MATs, not token consultation.