

# MAJOR REVIEW INTO SUPPORT FOR CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

Five years on from reforms introduced to better support children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), the review aims to improve the services available to families who need support, equip staff in schools and colleges to respond effectively to their needs as well as ending the 'postcode lottery' they often face.

The review comes a week after the government announced a major funding boost of £700million in 2020/21 for pupils with the most complex needs, delivering on the Prime Minister's pledge to ensure every pupil can access the education that is right for them.

It will conclude with action to boost outcomes and improve value for money, so that vulnerable children have the same opportunities to succeed, as well as improving capacity and support for families across England.

Education Secretary Gavin Williamson said:

I want parents to know that we're committed to boosting outcomes and ensuring the right support is in place for children with special educational needs, by breaking down the barriers to a good education and making sure the system works for families. That is why the Prime Minister committed to providing an extra £700 million next year, an 11% increase, to make sure these children can access the education that is right for them.

Our reforms in 2014 gave vital support to more children, but we know there have been problems in delivering the changes that we all want to see. So it's the right time to take stock of our system and make sure the excellence we want to see as a result of our changes is the norm for every child and their families.

Education Health and Care plans, launched in 2014, mean that now more than 350,000 children and young people aged 0-25 with the most complex special educational needs are receiving the tailored support they need to thrive and receive a world-class education. Of those in schools around half (130,000) are continuing in mainstream education.

The new review will look at the how the system has evolved since then, how it can be made to work best for all families and ensure quality of provision is the same across the country. Recognising the importance of joined-up support, it will also explore the role of health care in SEND in collaboration with the Department of Health and Social Care.

Last week the Government set out plans to invest over £14 billion in primary and secondary education between now and 2022/23, including £700 million extra for children with SEND in 2020/21. This investment delivered on the Prime Minister's pledge to ensure every pupil can reach their potential – including looking at the support in schools for children with less complex special educational needs.

To complement this, the review of support for children with SEND will look at and put forward new actions on:

- the evidence on how the system can provide the highest quality support that enables children and young people with SEND to thrive and prepare for adulthood, including employment;

- better helping parents to make decisions about what kind of support will be best for their child;

- making sure support in different local areas is consistent, joined up across health, care and education services, and that high-quality health and education support is available across the country;

- how we strike the right balance of state-funded provision across inclusive mainstream and specialist places;

- aligning incentives and accountability for schools, colleges and local authorities to make sure they provide the best possible support for children and young people with SEND;

- understanding what is behind the rise in education, health and care (EHC) plans and the role of specific health conditions in driving demand; and

- ensuring that public money is spent in an efficient, effective and sustainable manner, placing a premium on securing high quality outcomes for those children and young people who need additional support the most.

Minister for Care Caroline Dinenage said:

The support and care for people with special educational needs and disabilities is one of my top priorities. The SEND review will be crucial in widening our knowledge of the parts of the system which are working well and the areas which need improvement.

The Department for Health and Social Care will play a key role in the review so we can ensure that high quality healthcare support is available for all throughout the country.

Secretary of State for Work and Pensions Amber Rudd said:

Children with special needs and disabilities need to get the right educational support and health care so they can thrive.

This review will help make sure all families get the support they need so every child, young person and their parents feel extremely positive about their future.

The government also announced today that Tony McArdle, Lead Commissioner in Northamptonshire County Council, will be the new chair of the SEND System Leadership Board, which brings together sector leaders across Education, Health and Social Care to drive improvements. He will also act as an independent advisor to the review, alongside Education Endowment Fund Chair Sir Kevan Collins and Anne Heavey, National Director of Whole School SEN.

Tony McArdle said:

Delivering better SEND outcomes will require consistent, strong leadership across a range of partners. I look forward to ensuring that this Board equips the sector with what it needs to bring that leadership to bear.