

News story: New measures to support children with SEND

New data published today (29 March) shows almost 222,000 children and young people with special educational needs or disabilities (SEND) have had their care reviewed, as part of the government's introduction of new Education, Health and Care (EHC) plans.

The new EHC plans provide tailored support for children and young people with SEND, bringing together their education, health and social care needs for the first time and replacing the old Statements of SEN.

These plans make sure all children have the opportunity to succeed in the future and tackle inequalities in the education system to ensure Britain is a country that works for everyone.

Children and Families Minister Nadhim Zahawi has also announced sponsors for 14 new special free schools across the country. The new schools will create more than 1,100 high-quality school places for children with multiple learning needs, including children with autism and mental health needs. The schools will open under the government's free schools programme to offer parents more choice and help raise educational standards.

The government has also launched a groundbreaking national trial to give the SEND Tribunal new powers, which give parents and young people new rights to appeal decisions on the social care and health parts of their plan, alongside their existing rights around education.

The SEND Tribunal hears appeals about EHC plans where there are disputes, but until now only had powers to look in to concerns on the education element of the plan, creating additional burdens for families or young people who had concerns about the health or social care elements.

Children and Families Minister Nadhim Zahawi said:

We want every child to have the support they need to unlock their potential, whatever their background and no matter what challenges they face. Our new Education, Health and Care Plans are putting the views of young people with special educational needs and disabilities and their families at the heart of the process so they can help shape the support they receive.

It's been a huge task to transfer every young person to one of these plans but local authorities have risen to the challenge with almost 222,000 cases reviewed and I congratulate them for it. We are now working with councils to make sure they carry out the remaining reviews and the new EHC plans are of the highest quality.

To complement this work we are also opening new special free

schools across the country that will provide tailored support for over a thousand children to ensure they have access to the excellent education that every child deserves.

On March 1, one month before the deadline, councils were on track to complete the vast majority of reviews on time, with 94 per cent having been completed. More reviews will have been completed in the intervening weeks.

EHC plans are a key focus of the new SEND system, ensuring, through a single plan, a more joined-up approach, bringing together services delivered by nurseries, schools, further education colleges, local health bodies and social services to meet the needs of all children and young people with SEND.

The plans also aim to support young adults in their long-term aspirations, preparing them for the world of work and living independently.

Amba, a member of our young people's advisory group 'FLARE' commented:

Since I had my diagnosis, I got an EHC plan put in place and I received very good support whilst doing my GCSEs and A levels which helped me to achieve 8 GCSEs.

Project Choice is a new fantastic initiative in Newcastle upon Tyne to promote the employment of children and young people with learning and physical disabilities to train and work in the NHS. I am starting Project Choice in September.

Christine Lenehan, Director of the Council for Disabled Children, said:

As the SEND reforms enter their next critical phase the Council for Disabled Children is particularly keen to support the SEND Tribunal national trial. We have long believed that a single EHC plan will be most effective combined with a single route of redress.

We see the trial as being a real opportunity to develop a baseline for clear and effective inter agency responsibilities and this alongside the promotion of some excellent joint commissioning models, in partnership with families, as a powerful way of embedding the cultural change, which will make the reforms a success.

Commenting on the work in her local area, Alison Jeffery, Director of Children's Services, Portsmouth said:

Colleagues across the city – professionals and families – have responded really well to the opportunity created by these reforms to make a difference to the lives of children and young people with SEND. There are lots of challenges but our co-produced, coordinated

Education, Health and Care Plans mean children are getting better support and achieving more.

Portsmouth Parent Voice Co-ordinator, Barbara McDougall added:

As a result of the reforms, families in Portsmouth are benefitting from professionals from health, education and social care coming together with parent carers, young people and the voluntary sector, talking in the same language around the SEND agenda with a clear sense of purpose.

The department will continue to monitor councils' implementation of EHC Plans, and provide ongoing support through funding, professional advice and a wide range of training and resources for education, health and social care professionals.

The new special free schools will include:

- Bedford Inclusive Learning and Training Trust will open a 200-place special free school for children aged 3-19 with profound and multiple learning difficulties in Kempston, Bedford;
- The East Blackburn Learning Community Trust will open a 48-place special school for children aged 10-16 with a wide range of social, emotional and mental health needs in Blackpool, Lancashire;
- East Cheshire Youth Achievement Free School Trust will open a 40-place special free school for children aged 4-16 with social, emotional and mental health needs in Crewe, Cheshire;
- Edmonton Academy Trust will open a 70-place special free school for children aged 11-19 with social, emotional, and mental health needs in Enfield;
- Prospere Learning Trust will open a 100-place special school for children aged 3-11 with profound and multiple learning difficulties and autism spectrum disorder in Blackley, Manchester;
- Astrum Multi Academy Trust will open a 64-place special free school for children aged 2-7 with speech, language, and communication needs and social, emotional, and mental health needs in Redbridge, Ilford;
- The Enable Trust will open a 122-place special free school for children aged 2-19 with profound and multiple learning difficulties and severe

learning difficulties in Alveston, South Gloucestershire;

- Orchard Hill College Academy Trust will open a 150-place special free school and nursery for pupils aged 2-19 with autism spectrum disorder in Croydon;
- Nexus Multi Academy Trust will open a 100-place special free school for children aged 5-19 with complex communication and interaction needs, autism spectrum disorder and other social and mental health needs in Doncaster. It has also been approved to open a 60-place special free school for children with autism spectrum disorder and social, emotional, and mental health needs in Sheffield;
- Catch22 Multi Academy Trust will open a 125-place special school for children aged 4-16 with autism spectrum disorder and social communication needs in Basingstoke, Hampshire;
- Samuel Ward Academy Trust will open two new special free schools: one with 60 places for children aged 3-16 with communication and interaction needs and social, emotional and mental health needs in Romford and one with 60 places for children aged 8-16 with autism spectrum disorder and social, emotional and mental health needs in Ipswich; and
- Barrs Court Academy Trust will open a 50-place special free school for children with severe and complex learning difficulties, including autism spectrum disorder in Hereford.

The government has recently given £29m to support local authorities with ongoing implementation, and today are providing an additional £200,000 for local authority regional SEND coordinators. The Department will also continue to provide specialist SEND advisers to work with local areas, a national SEND helpline for families, ongoing Ofsted/CQC local area inspections and are funding parent carer forums in 2018-19 and 2019-20 (at £2.3m per year).

Today, the findings of two related studies by IFF Research and University of Derby have been published, highlighting the factors that shape positive user experiences of the Education, Health and Care (EHC) planning process, and illustrate good practice in developing EHC plan content.

A SEND review tool to help schools identify priorities and build school to school approaches to improvement is now available at [\(insert link\)](#). This is supported by a number of tools to address any weaknesses identified by a review available at www.sendgateway.org.uk