



Norfolk County Council

Headteacher briefings May 2022

DfE SEND Review (Green Paper)





HM Government

SEND Review:

Right support

Right place

Right time



SEND Review:

Right support, right place, right time
Government consultation on the SEND and
alternative provision system in England

Presented to Parliament
by the Secretary of State for Education
by Command of Her Majesty

March 2022

Summary of the SEND review: right support, right place, right time

Published 29 March 2022

- Setting **new national standards across education, health and care** to build on the foundations created through the Children and Families Act 2014, for a higher performing SEND system;
- A **simplified Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP)** through digitising plans to make them more flexible, reducing bureaucracy and supporting parents to make informed choices via a list of appropriate placements tailored to their child's needs, meaning less time spent researching the right school;
- A new legal requirement for councils to introduce **'local inclusion plans'** that bring together early years, schools and post-16 education with health and care services, giving system partners more certainty on who is responsible and when;
- Improving oversight and transparency through the publication of new **'local inclusion dashboards'** to make roles and responsibilities of all partners within the system clearer for parents and young people, helping to drive better outcomes;
- A new **national framework for councils for banding and tariffs of High Needs**, to match the national standards and offer clarity on the level of support expected, and put the system on a financially sustainable footing in the future;
- **Changing the culture and practice in mainstream education** to be more inclusive and better at identifying and supporting needs, including through earlier intervention and improved targeted support;
- Improving workforce training through the introduction of a new **SENCo NPQ for school SENCos** and increasing the number of staff with an accredited level 3 qualification in early years settings; and
- A **reformed and integrated role for alternative provision (AP)**, with a new delivery model in every local area focused on early intervention. AP will form an integral part of local SEND systems with improvements to settings and more funding stability.

There are three key challenges facing the SEND system

Challenge 1: outcomes for children and young people with SEN or in alternative provision are poor

- Poorer attendance
- Make up 80% of pupils in state funded AP
- Only 22% reach expected standard in reading, writing and maths
- More likely to have mental health disorder (35.6% compared to 6.1%)
- By age 27 less likely than non SEND peers to be in sustained employment
- Greater risk of exposure to harms, including being a victim of crime

Challenge 2: navigating the SEND system and alternative provision is not a positive experience for children, young people and their families

- Low confidence in ability of mainstream schools can meet needs
- **SEND system = bureaucratic and adversarial**
- Multiple assessments and services
- Feel blamed and so do not seek support of SC
- Unequal – families with greater resources can secure support whilst others do not
- Parents of children in AP have no choice that they are there
- **Increasing tribunals with those "decided" finding 96% in parental favour**

Challenge 3: despite unprecedented investment, the system is not delivering value for money for children, young people and families

- **2/3rds of LAs have a DSG deficit (national deficit over £1 billion)**
- Unpredictable funding for AP
- Too much up the specialist end and not in early support or with mainstream

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We propose to reform funding for a strong and sustainable system

SEND Review:

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27. We propose funding changes to help make the most effective use of our investment in high needs funding, which will total £9.1 billion in 2022-23 and will increase further over the following two years of the spending review period. We want to work with local authorities to make the best use of this investment to deliver quality support for children and young people with SEND and, through the national system, enable local authorities to balance their high needs budgets. This alongside our broader changes to the national funding system will ensure money is targeted to where it's needed most and incentivise and equip settings to provide high-quality education provision thereby improving outcomes for children and young people with SEND.

28. As part of the new national SEND and alternative provision system, we propose the introduction of a new national framework of banding and price tariffs for high needs funding, matched to levels of need and types of education provision set out in the new national SEND standards. Bandings would cluster specific types of education provision (aligned to need) as set out by national standards. Tariffs would set the rules and prices that commissioners use to pay providers – for example, pricing attributed to specific elements of provision such as staffing. This tariff system would draw upon similar examples that are seen in local authorities and other services that cover broad spectrums of support, such as the NHS. Tariffs would ensure the right pricing structures are in place, helping to control high costs attributed to expensive provision. The bands and tariffs would be developed to appropriately reflect need, including the most complex needs and sufficiently meet the cost of provision. They will be designed to give providers clarity on how much funding they should expect to receive in delivering support or a service and enable commissioners to determine the cost of places or services.

We propose to reform funding for a strong and sustainable system

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30. The national bands and tariffs would apply across the breadth of education provision in the SEND system, including places in independent specialist provision, providing a more consistent basis for commissioning and funding of provision. All specialist providers will need to ensure the provision they offer is in line with the national SEND standards if they are to continue receiving placements funded by the local authority.

31. We do not underestimate the challenge and complexity of developing a national framework of bands and tariffs. That is why we will work with local authorities and stakeholders, drawing on their expertise, and propose to pilot approaches on a smaller scale, prioritising high-cost provision, before carefully sequencing implementation on a national scale.

32. We propose to set guidelines for who pays for support, and how local authorities set funding levels. Working with DHSC, DfE will set out joint funding guidance across education, health and care. We will also consult further on funding tariffs for education provision, including the extent to which local flexibility is required (for example, scope to fund lower or higher than the funding tariff) whilst remaining within the national SEND standards.

We propose to reform funding for a strong and sustainable system

34. The notional SEN budget is an amount within each mainstream school's overall budget that the school may set aside for its pupils with SEND. This amount is calculated by the school's local authority. We will move to standardise the calculation of schools' notional SEN budgets in the context of full implementation of the direct National Funding Formula (NFF) for mainstream schools – in which DfE, rather than local authorities, will determine budget allocations for individual mainstream schools through a single, national formula. This will help to underpin our objective to equip all mainstream schools, wherever they are in the country, with the resources they need to provide high-quality support for children and young people with SEND in their settings.

Schools' notional SEN budgets

35. In the short term, we will issue guidance to local authorities on how they should calculate their notional SEN budgets within their local funding formula to bring some consistency to what is currently a very variable approach taken by different local authorities. This will give schools more confidence in the funds that they are being provided with to help them support their pupils with SEND.
36. As part of the further consultations on the direct NFF, we will also consider options for calculating notional SEN budgets within the schools NFF. This will take into account the views expressed during the SEND Review and in the 2019 call for evidence, and an updated analysis of what schools should be able, and expected, to afford to spend on SEN support. In the context of the direct NFF, we will consult on options for how DfE, rather than individual local authorities, could determine notional SEN budgets for schools and agree how schools can demonstrate what they achieve with their budgets.
37. We are clear that there should continue to be a national expectation on how much of the additional costs of supporting pupils with SEN mainstream schools should meet from their formula funding, so that schools and local authorities can plan their budgets appropriately. While we are clear that some threshold should be retained, we will consider whether £6,000 per pupil, per year remains the right threshold beyond which schools can expect to draw down additional high needs funding. The appropriate threshold will be considered in context of the responsibilities that sit with mainstream schools under the new national standards, and we will consult before taking decisions on any changes to the level of the threshold.

A single national SEND and alternative provision system

Legislate for new national system for SEND & AP and set National standards (+ amended SEN COP) for:

- How needs are identified and recorded, assessments and who should be involved.
- Set out full range of appropriate types of placements for meeting different needs
- They will bring clarity to when a child needs an EHCP and additionally whether they require specialist (*inc* AP)
- Which partners should fund specific support / provision
- Accessing and reviewing support in mainstream
- Standards on co-production
- Standards for EHCP reviews with greater emphasis on **time bound support** and achieving individual outcomes
- Standards for managing transition

Mandatory multi agency panels for EHCP processes

- **Statutory panels** re: requests for EHCPs and placement and funding decisions
- Representation from settings, health, SC and p/cs.
- Make **recommendations** to LA re: decisions to assess, issue EHCP and whether provision specified is in line with the national model.
- LA **must** take these into account when making final decisions

Introduce Local SEND Partnerships

- Legislate for SEND Partnerships **convened by LAs**, which bring together all education settings + H&SC partners and others (i.e. youth justice).
- Responsible for needs analysis of local area and production of a co-produced **Local Inclusion Plan**: strategic plan setting out provision to be commissioned in line with National Standards
- The LIP will inform the LO.
- More regional based commissioning, *esp* for high needs / low incidence
- Required to work alongside LSCB and ICS for integration

Burdens Assessment as part of this proposal

- Will consider capacity of LA to manage delivery of the change, such as **training and development needs of LA SEN officer teams.**

A single national SEND and alternative provision system

Digitised and standardised EHCPs and streamlined processes

- National EHCP digi template + processes with professional and parental portal access.
- Tech enabled for pics and vids and to produce data
- Make it clear input required from different services in contributing to the EHCP, including defining SC so as a minimum families are signposted to universal support
- Streamline EHC and social care assessments following SC Independent Review
- Consider if H1 and H2 distinctions remain useful
- Will make it clear who is responsible for providing and funding what
- Standardise Annual Review process with requirement to discuss and record whether step down to targeted support and cessation of EHCP is more appropriate for meeting child's needs.
- Change timescales for issuing draft EHCPs following AR following recent high court judgement

Amend process for naming settings on EHCP

- Parents provided with a “tailored list” from the Local Inclusion plan across **all types** of settings
- LA to allocate **first available place** in order of parental preference
- Mainstream presumption protected
- Will not affect existing placements

Earlier redress through national standards and Mandatory Mediation

- National standards will set how complaints should be dealt with and by whom
- Review of effectiveness of DDA rights of recourse
- Greater clarity on role of SENDIASS
- **Requirement** for LA and p/cs to engage in mediation, not just consider – “decision makers” **must attend**
- Possible “**independent review**” mechanisms, prior to a Tribunal – possibly via the EHCP “Mandatory panels” who could make binding legal judgements
- Tribunals reserved **only** when arrangements not in line with national standards, and tribunal decisions must be in line with such.
- Extended Tribunal powers remain

Excellent provision from early years to adulthood

Identification of need early in Early Years

- Upskill EYs practitioners on the EYFS 2 year progress check
- Increase number of trained / qualified SENCOs in EYS and Level 3 SEND-qualified practitioners

Excellent teaching and curriculum standard in mainstream schools & new SENCO qualification

- Increase of total investment in schools' budgets by £7bn by 24/25.
- 90% of children to reach expected standards in RWM at end of KS2
- Parent pledge (School's White Paper) on evidence based support when children fall behind
- New research on SEND classroom based practice
- Transform teach development and CPD pathways (ITT, Early Career Framework, NPQ's)
- Guidance on **effective deployment of TAs** as part of national standards
- Introduce new Leadership SENCO NPQ and ensure protected time for work with children and via SEN COP strengthen relationship with SEND Governor

Support families at each stage of child's journey

- Family hubs in 75 LAs expected to help families of children with SEND by referring to agencies / services within the hub network
- Expectation LAs will integrate **SEND provision** into their 0-2 year old offer
- Expand Supporting Families Programme to support families to access multi agency support
- Respite Innovation Funds – £30m for 10,000 additional places

Timely access to specialist support

- Senior mental health lead training to all state funded school / college by 2025
- MHSTs roll out
- **200+ Trainee Ed Psychs over 3 years (2020-2022)**
- **Autism diagnosis investment** £2.5m per year as part of NHS long term plan
- DfE and DoH to review national picture of **demand for therapies** and from diagnostic workforce
- Further clarify role of DCO and rename Designated Health Officer
- Strongly encourage DSCOs via SEN COP
- Testing MDTs of specialists (MH workers, SaLTs, FSWs) in AP – focussed currently on 22 serious violence hotspots to inform evidence of what works in AP

Excellent provision from early years to adulthood

Invest in high quality specialist placements where needed

- £2.6bn capital for new specialist provision
- Prioritise LAs in need of further provision and where a new school will help them reduce DSG deficits

Timeline for specialist settings to join a “strong trust”

- As per Schools White Paper, all schools in strong Trusts, including Special and AP
- Choice of joining specialist or mixed MATs

Transition to FE and Preparation for Adulthood

- National standards will include standards for transition.
- Expand “Common Transfer Files”
- SEND quals for FE teachers
- SEND link Governor role

Too many yp with SEND are not in sustained employment or HE. They may remain in education setting for longer than is beneficial as there is not a viable opportunity for them to progress to. This places financial pressure on LAs, esp. when in EHCP is in place.

- Improved careers guidance via Careers Hubs and support Careers Leaders to lead design and delivery of CEIAG tailored for those with SEND.
- £18m for 72,000 further Supported Internships
- Review of Post 16 quals below Level 2 simplified and high quality
- DWP pilot for “adjustment passports” owned by the yp setting out the support they need in HE or employment

We recognise some yp with more complex needs require different support. If support is not there, it can result in EHCPs being retained beyond the point at which a yp can achieve more within an educational setting. We will keep our approach to transitions to ASC “under review” and consider recommendations of the Independent Review of SC.

A reformed and integrated role for alternative provision

Key Principles

A national vision for AP enabling local areas to ensure that cyp with **challenging behaviour** or **with health needs** get **targeted support** in mainstream settings, or access to **time limited or transitional places** in AP schools.

- All AP schools will be ambitious in supporting cyp to stay in, or return to, mainstream schools / colleges
- AP Schools will provide the **leadership and expertise** to develop capacity in mainstream schools, building on strong behaviour cultures
- A distinct purpose that's different to special schools, primarily supporting cyp to stay in or reintegrate back into mainstream education
- Should **not** be used simply because a child has SEND or they are waiting for an EHCP or because there is no capacity in special schools

Propose to establish a delivery model for AP based on a three-tier system of support:

- **Targeted support in mainstream schools:** (i.e. "on call" advice for mainstream schools, coaching, delivering of self-regulation classes for small groups of 1:1 support)
- **Time limited placements in AP:** for those who need more intensive support to address behaviour or **anxiety** and re-engage in learning. Schools to use "off site direction" and children to be dual registered.
- **Transitional placements:** for those who will not return to their previous school but will be supported to transition to a different school when they are able, or to post 16.

Builds on ambition of SWP for children to be taught in **calm, orderly, safe and supportive schools** and links to revision of the **Behaviour in Schools guidance and stat guidance on exclusions**.

For those children and young people for whom a strong behaviour culture alone is not sufficient, high-quality alternative provision will deploy evidence-led strategies to re-engage them in education, improving their attendance and behaviour. This will provide a coherent, national vision for alternative provision and establish a delivery model for achieving it in every area. Over time, this new system will reduce the number of preventable exclusions and expensive long term placements, as needs will be identified and supported early. More children and young people will remain in mainstream schools, improving their experience, wellbeing, and outcomes.

System roles, accountabilities and funding reform

Accountability for LAs and MATs

- DfE to establish new **Regions Group** by summer 2022 integrating DfE and ESFA functions to lead **systems regulation**, and to hold LAs and MATs to account for local delivery in line with new national SEND standards.
- DfE to “support” LAs in the development of LIPs as additional layer of QA, (evidence based, forward facing, trend responsive and co-produced).
- DfE and LAs to enter into new **“funding agreements”** for HNBS. Transparency, VFM, and clarity on how spending aligns to new national SEND standards and circumstances when DfE will **intervene**.
- DfE to monitor delivery of LIPs against national standards and where “not in line” DfE will **“take action”**.
- Ladder of intervention will build on Safety Valve’s and Delivering Better Value initiatives.
- Intervention similar to that for Safeguarding: improvement plans, LA improvement pairings, imposed conditions .
- In extenuating circumstances, **change in leadership** will occur to control HNBS and manage local delivery.
- Will also act as a regulator for MATs and will define what is expected of Trusts for c/yp with SEND

Accountability for Health

- Statutory guidance to be issued to Integrated Care Boards (which will replace CCGs) re: how statutory responsibilities on SEND should be discharged.
- Requirement for a Executive Leader for SEND to sit on the board.
- Intervention powers for NHSE where ICBs are found to be failing.
- New NICE guidance issued on supporting children with severe and complex needs to support commissioners in planning and securing services.

Better use of data

- Introduction of new **local and national inclusion dashboards** – clear performance data across E, H and C.
- Will be used by the local SEND Partnerships for monitoring, planning and delivering services.
- Will work with the SEND sector to inform which data set against the national SEND Standards to use at national and LA level based on:
 - Outcomes and experiences (attainment and absence, tribunals, exclusions, EET)
 - Identification of need - % of types of need, % of pupils with EHCPs, EHCP timeliness and access to community health service inc. waiting times
 - VFM – high needs spending, surplus/deficit and % on in and out of area/

System roles, accountabilities and funding reform

Performance metrics for education providers

There is a perception that schools that do welcome pupils with SEND become 'magnet schools' and see increasing numbers attending which becomes unsustainable over time. The issues are complex, with a range of incentives pulling in different directions. We will need to continue to strike a balance between ensuring that inspection and performance metrics for education provision adequately speak to the complexity of the SEND cohort and ensuring they offer a true picture of performance to hold schools accountable for the outcomes of children with SEND, and their role in delivering these outcomes.

- Updates to school and college performance table to include contextual information about school alongside their results to show more easily who is "doing well" by SEND.
- To achieve "Outstanding" setting must show children with SEND achieve exceptionally well.
- All schools and FEs to be inspected at least once by end of summer 2025 under the new EIF.

New area SEND and AP Inspection Framework

- New framework due to launch 2023 with ongoing inspections.
- Areas under WSOA will be revisited under current framework.
- Will build accountability for delivery of the SEND standards.

Schools' notional SEND budgets

- Guidance to be issued to LAs on how to calculate notional SEND budgets to facilitate national consistency
- Will consider how far DfE can determine notional SEND budgets rather than LAs
- Will reconsider the £6k SEND notional threshold as part of implementation of national SEND standards and national bandings / tariffs

Funding reform

- New national framework for **banding and price tariffs** for high needs funding, matched to levels of need and type of education provision set out in the new national SEND standards.
 - Bandings will cluster types of education provision (aligned to need) according to the national standards.
 - Tariffs will set the rules and process that commissioners use to pay provider (i.e. pricing attributed to specific elements such as staffing)
 - Will build on examples in LAs and already working in the NHS.
 - Tariffs will give providers clarity on how much funding they should expect to receive and enables commissioners to determine the cost of places or services.
 - Will provide national consistency.
 - Will apply to all education provision, including independent sector.
- All specialist providers will need to ensure the provision they offer is in line with the national SEND Standards if they are to continue receiving placements funded by the LA.....*
- Guidelines for who pays for support and how LAs set funding levels.

Early Years Funding

- Will consider whether changes to SEND Inclusion fund or EYS funding system are needed to implement the new framework for bands and tariffs.

List of consultation questions

1. What key factors should be considered when developing national standards to ensure they deliver improved outcomes and experiences for children and young people with SEND and their families? This includes how the standards apply across education, health and care in a 0-25 system.
2. How should we develop the proposal for new local SEND partnerships to oversee the effective development of local inclusion plans whilst avoiding placing unnecessary burdens or duplicating current partnerships?
3. What factors would enable local authorities to successfully commission provision for low-incidence high cost need, and further education, across local authority boundaries?
4. What components of the EHCP should we consider reviewing or amending as we move to a standardised and digitised version?
5. How should we ensure that the EHCP is a living document that is updated as the child's needs change?
6. How should we ensure that the EHCP is a document that is accessible to all children and young people with SEND and their families?
7. Do you consider the current remedies available to the SEND Tribunal for disabled children who have been discriminated against by schools effective in putting children and young people's education back on track? Please give a reason for your answer with examples, if possible.
8. What steps should be taken to strengthen early years practice with regard to conducting the two-year-old progress check and integration with the Healthy Child Programme review?
9. To what extent do you agree or disagree that we should introduce a new mandatory SENCo NPQ to replace the NASENCo?
Strongly Agree, Agree, Neither Agree or Disagree, Disagree, Strongly Disagree
 - If you selected Disagree or Strongly Disagree, please tell us why.

10. To what extent do you agree that we should strengthen the mandatory SENCo training requirement by requiring that headteachers must be satisfied that the SENCo is in the process of obtaining the relevant qualification when taking on the role?

Strongly Agree, Agree, Neither Agree nor Disagree, Disagree, Strongly Disagree

– If you selected Disagree or Strongly Disagree, please tell us why

11. To what extent do you agree or disagree that both specialist and mixed MATs should be allowed to coexist in the fully trust-led future? This would allow current local authority maintained special schools and alternative provision settings to join either type of MAT.

Strongly Agree, Agree, Neither Agree nor Disagree, Disagree, Strongly Disagree

– If you selected Disagree or Strongly Disagree, please tell us why

12. What more can be done by employers, providers and government to ensure that those young people with SEND can access, participate in and be supported to achieve an apprenticeship, including through access routes like traineeships?

13. To what extent do you agree or disagree that this new vision for alternative provision will result in improved outcomes for children and young people?

Strongly Agree, Agree, Neither Agree nor Disagree, Disagree, Strongly Disagree

– If you selected Disagree or Strongly Disagree, please tell us why

14. What needs to be in place in order to distribute existing funding more effectively to alternative provision schools, to ensure they have the financial stability required to deliver our vision for more early intervention and re-integration?

15. To what extent do you agree or disagree that introducing a bespoke alternative provision performance framework, based on these 5 outcomes, will improve the quality of alternative provision?

Strongly Agree, Agree, Neither Agree nor Disagree, Disagree, Strongly Disagree

– If you selected Disagree or Strongly Disagree, please tell us why

16. To what extent do you agree or disagree that a statutory framework for pupil movements will improve oversight and transparency of placements into and out of alternative provision?

Strongly Agree, Agree, Neither Agree nor Disagree, Disagree, Strongly Disagree

– If you selected Disagree or Strongly Disagree, please tell us why

17. What are the key metrics we should capture and use to measure local and national performance? Please explain why you have selected these.

18. How can we best develop a national framework for funding bands and tariffs to achieve our objectives and mitigate unintended consequences and risks?

19. How can the National SEND Delivery Board work most effectively with local partnerships to ensure the proposals are implemented successfully?

20. What will make the biggest difference to successful implementation of these proposals? What do you see as the barriers to and enablers of success?

21. What support do local systems and delivery partners need to successfully transition and deliver the new national system?

22. Is there anything else you would like to say about the proposals in the green paper?



Guidance

Sustainable high needs systems: learning from the 'safety valve' intervention programme

Updated 24 March 2022

The government recognises that, over recent years, significant pressures on high needs budgets have resulted in many local authorities accruing deficits on their Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG). The right response to tackling this is a multi-faceted approach which looks to the heart of the issues: significant increases in high needs funding nationally; targeted intervention for the local authorities which have struggled the most; and reform from the upcoming cross government SEND review. The SEND review is considering improvements to make sure the SEND system is consistent, high quality, integrated and financially sustainable for the future. Nevertheless, all local authorities must take responsibility for effective management of their high needs systems now.

Sustainable high needs systems: learning from the 'safety valve' intervention programme

The department has now entered into a further 9 agreements with local authorities with [high DSG deficits](#). These agreements, as above, will hold the local authorities to account for delivery of reforms to their high needs systems, so that they can function sustainably and therefore in the best interests of the children and young people they serve. These local authorities will be expected to reach an in-year balance on their DSG as quickly as possible, and over time eliminate their deficits. The agreements will be closely monitored, and if the conditions set in the agreements are not being met, we will not hesitate to withhold payments.

- Dorset
- Hillingdon
- Kirklees
- Merton
- Rotherham
- Salford

- South Gloucestershire
- Surrey
- York
- Bury

- Hammersmith & Fulham
- Kingston upon Thames
- Richmond up Thames
- Stoke on Trent

The local authorities with the highest DSG deficits have been invited to the safety valve programme, those with less severe but substantial deficits have been invited to the Delivering Better Value programme, and the remaining authorities will be contacted by the Education and Skills Funding Agency.

Sustainable high needs systems: learning from the 'safety valve' intervention programme

Early intervention focus

Early intervention, providing proactive support for children and young people is critical for ensuring needs are met and do not escalate unnecessarily. A number of the local authorities involved in the 'safety valve' programme were able to increase their focus on identifying and meeting children and young people's needs much earlier on. This can be more effective for the individual child or young person, and more widely supports a sustainable and well managed SEND system.

Increased SEN support offer

Similarly, increasing the support available for children on SEN support, or those without an EHCP, can reduce escalation of need and mean that the level of requests for EHCPs is also reduced. It is vital that this is supported with appropriate parental engagement, and that this increased support is reflected in the assessment process for EHCPs. For example, an increase in the Speech, Language and Communication Needs (SLCN) offer at SEN support level should result in a lower requirement for EHCPs for this type of need.

Review EHCP assessment processes and thresholds

Through the intervention programme, some local authorities highlighted a need to review their EHCP assessment processes and thresholds in order that they could better deal with requests for EHCPs. This included considering approaches taken by other local authorities to assessment and awarding thresholds. Taken holistically with an early intervention focus and an increase in the SEN support offer, local authorities could also consider a thorough review of EHCP cessations. This should be securely reinforced through a well-functioning annual review process, which should ensure EHCPs are fairly assessed for continued relevance and need.

The emphasis here was and should be on ensuring that children and young people's needs are met appropriately and through a sustainable model as they change and develop.

Sustainable high needs systems: learning from the 'safety valve' intervention programme

Culture change and work with school leaders

Hand in hand with a focus on early intervention and increased SEN support came the need to work closely with school leaders to create a shared goal for children and young people with SEND. While there is a clear need for strong leadership within a local authority to create this shared goal, the 'safety valve' local authorities demonstrated the need for this sense of common purpose to extend more widely to education, health and other partners. The schools forum, for example, is a key partner for delivering effective high needs systems and should be engaged in the broader aim. Other partners including the parent carer forum and practitioners, such as SENCOs, should also be engaged.

Many of the 'safety valve' authorities plan to invest in creating a more inclusive culture across their whole authority, including both their approach to provision mapping and their work in schools. The authorities identified that increasing the level of need that can be met appropriately in mainstream provision needed cultural reinforcement as much as any increased offer of support. This ethos reinforces and supports local authorities' ability to use appropriate and cost-effective provision in a truly considered way.

Appropriate and thorough provision mapping, with potential development of more local provision

The majority of the 'safety valve' local authorities also partly attributed their significant deficits to inappropriate access to or use of out of area provision – often an overreliance on independent or distant placements was driving up costs. It is therefore vital that local authorities take a strategic approach to planning provision driven by need, and invest available capital funding towards the creation of more local places where necessary and appropriate. This strategy can only be successful, however, if all education providers are able to work within a supportive and inclusive framework set by the local authority.

Changing an established pattern of provision is a long-term process rather than a rapid change, given the importance of continuity for children and young people. The 'safety valve' authorities facing this issue are taking a strategic approach, by focusing on transition points for their children and young people, and ensuring that appropriate local provision is available for them for the next stage of their education. Parents are a key partner in this work, as well as schools forum, and should be consulted throughout the provision mapping and development process.

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- Setting **new national standards across education, health and care** to build on the foundations created through the Children and Families Act 2014, for a higher performing SEND system;
- A **simplified Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP)** through digitising plans to make them more flexible, reducing bureaucracy and supporting parents to make informed choices via a list of appropriate placements tailored to their child's needs, meaning less time spent researching the right school;
- A new legal requirement for councils to introduce **'local inclusion plans'** that bring together early years, schools and post-16 education with health and care services, giving system partners more certainty on who is responsible and when;
- Improving oversight and transparency through the publication of new **'local inclusion dashboards'** to make roles and responsibilities of all partners within the system clearer for parents and young people, helping to drive better outcomes;

- A new **national framework for councils for banding and tariffs of High Needs**, to match the national standards and offer clarity on the level of support expected, and put the system on a financially sustainable footing in the future;
- **Changing the culture and practice in mainstream education** to be more inclusive and better at identifying and supporting needs, including through earlier intervention and improved targeted support;
- Improving workforce training through the introduction of a new **SENCo NPQ for school SENCos** and increasing the number of staff with an accredited level 3 qualification in early years settings; and
- A **reformed and integrated role for alternative provision (AP)**, with a new delivery model in every local area focused on early intervention. AP will form an integral part of local SEND systems with improvements to settings and more funding stability.