

Special educational needs and disability (SEND) reforms 2014 – FAQs

Why are the changes being made to the SEN System?

The government is transforming the system for children and young people with special educational needs (SEN) including those who have disabilities, so that services consistently support the best outcomes for them.

The Children and Families Act extends the SEN system from 0-25 years, giving children, young people and their parents/carers greater control and choice in decisions and ensuring needs are properly met. As well as a new Code of Practice for SEN there are also changes to the way SEN is funded as part of the Government's school reform. More information about SEN funding can be found in our Changes to SEN funding leaflet.

Do schools have to follow the new SEND Code of Practice?

All schools must follow the Government's SEND Code of Practice, which covers all matters to do with children and young people's SEN and disability.

Every school has a member of staff responsible for children with SEND – the special needs co-ordinator (SENCO). The SENCO can keep you informed of your child's needs and progress.

The new Code of Practice is planned for September 2014. All schools have to comply with the Code of Practice including academies and free schools.

Will statements still be issued now that the system is changing?

Statements will stop being issued from September 2014 and Education Health Care (EHC) plans will take their place. EHC plans will have the same legal status as statements.

What will happen to School Action and School Action Plus?

In the new draft Code of Practice, School Action and School Action Plus will be replaced by a single school-based category for children needing additional help. This is SEN support. Interventions and expected outcomes for these pupils should be set out, and their progress reviewed, each term.

Schools will need to inform parents when pupils without EHC plans are receiving additional SEN support.

What will happen to my child's statement in September 2014?

From September there will be a transitional period, which may take up to three years, during which time existing statements will be transferred into EHC plans.

A statement will remain in place until an EHC plan has been developed.

Will EHC plans have the same legal duties as statements?

EHC Plans will have specified and quantified special educational provision just like statements do now. This will have to be delivered by the local authority and can continue up until the age of 25 if a young person needs to complete their education or training.

What happens to my child's statement if they don't meet the criteria for an EHC plan?

The criteria for EHC plans will be the same as those for Statements previously. This means that an EHC Plan may be issued if the special educational provision necessary to meet a child or young person's needs cannot be reasonably provided through the funding normally available to mainstream schools and early years settings.

Does my child need an EHC plan to get help?

No. Resources are divided up on the basis of an individual child's identified needs, but they don't need a statutory assessment or EHC plan to access these resources.

Statutory assessments still have a role in identifying the most complex needs and will be carried out if required.

What can I do if I am concerned about the arrangement for my child?

You should always contact the school first, either your child's class teacher and/or the special needs co-ordinator. If after that you are still not reassured, speak to the head teacher. If you need help with this contact SEND Information Advice and Support.

Where can I get more information?

From September 2014 local authorities will have to publish information about what can be expected to support children and young people with SEND (0-25) across education, health and social care. This is called the Local Offer and on the Isle of Wight the Local Offer will be available through the Isle of Wight Council website www.iwight.com. This will set out the support available for children and young people with SEND, including those who have an EHC plan and those who do not.

If you need further information, please contact

SEND Information, Advice and Support Service 11 Orchard Street, Newport, Isle of Wight, PO30 1JZ.

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