

## The 2026 SEND Changes, Explained.

*What the government's reforms actually mean for your child.  
No jargon. Just the facts you need.*

### What's Changing

The government published its 'Every Child Achieving and Thriving' White Paper in February 2026. It introduces Individual Support Plans (ISPs) for mainstream SEN support and reserves EHCPs for children with 'complex needs.'

In practice, this means Local Authorities will begin contacting parents about moving their children from EHCPs to ISPs. Some councils have already started.

### What This Means for Your Child

If your child currently has an EHCP, your council may contact you about transitioning to an ISP. Here is what you need to know:

#### **You have the legal right to refuse.**

An EHCP is legally enforceable. An ISP is not. This is the single most important distinction.

An ISP does not carry the same statutory protections as an EHCP. If your child's support is written into an ISP and the school fails to deliver it, you have significantly fewer legal options.

The government has said that no child will lose support during the transition. Watch what your council does, not what the government says.

### What You Should Do Before Your Next Annual Review

- ✓ Request that your child's next Annual Review explicitly documents why EHCP-level support remains necessary.
- ✓ Ask the school to record the specific hours, therapies, and provisions your child receives and why each one is essential.
- ✓ Keep every letter, email, and document from your council and school.
- ✓ If they propose changes, ask for the proposal in writing.
- ✓ Never agree to anything verbally.

## Where to Get Help

If your council is already pushing for an ISP transition, or if you want to understand your rights before they do, these resources can help:

- ✓ Take our free SEND Rights Quiz: [sen.help/quiz](https://sen.help/quiz)
- ✓ Check your council's SEND track record: [sen.help/report-cards](https://sen.help/report-cards)
- ✓ Find a verified expert in your area: [sen.help/find-an-expert](https://sen.help/find-an-expert)
- ✓ Get matched with a professional: [sen.help/get-matched](https://sen.help/get-matched)