



Department
for Education

SEND reform: education otherwise than at school

Government consultation

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Respond by 18 September 2026

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Glossary and key terms

Alternative provision: under section 19 of the Education Act 1996, local authorities have a duty to arrange suitable education for children of compulsory school age who may not otherwise receive suitable education because of exclusion, illness or other reasons. Education arranged under this duty is referred to by the Department as alternative provision. Schools may also arrange off-site provision to support pupils to improve their behaviour, and this is also known as alternative provision. In practice, education of this type is commonly delivered through alternative provision outside the child's mainstream school, including in alternative provision schools, hospital schools or non-school alternative provision.

Early years/early years settings: early education and childcare for children aged 0–5, including childminders, maintained nursery schools, school-based nurseries and private, voluntary and independent (PVI) nurseries.

Education Otherwise Than At School (EOTAS): under section 61 of the Children and Families Act 2014, local authorities may arrange special educational provision outside a school or further education setting where it would be inappropriate for that provision to be delivered in a school or further education setting. The Department refers to these arrangements as Education Otherwise Than At School (EOTAS) and they are set out in an Education, Health and Care plan (EHCP). Some stakeholders, especially those who advise on the SEN law, refer to such arrangements as Education Otherwise Than *In* School (EOTIS); we will use the term EOTAS in this consultation to describe current and also potential future arrangements. The provision often involves education in non-school alternative provision (NSAP) settings alongside therapeutic and health support, such as speech and language therapy.

Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP): a statutory document outlining the education, health and social care support that is to be provided to a child or young person who has special educational needs (SEN) or a disability.

Further Education (FE) Settings: Ofsted inspects FE settings under the [Education Inspection Framework](#). This includes General FE colleges, Sixth Form Colleges, 16-19 Academies, Specialist Colleges, Specialist Post-16 Institutions (SPIs), and Independent Training Providers (ITPs). A full list can be found here: [Inspection information for further education and skills providers](#) .

Individual Support Plan (ISP): as proposed in the SEND consultation proposals, an Individual Support Plan is intended to be a record of need and provision for any child or young person receiving targeted, targeted plus or specialist support.

Non-school (unregistered) alternative provision (NSAP): NSAP provides alternative provision and special educational provision to children and young people as arranged by schools and local authorities. It is a diverse sector, comprising of many localised and often small providers, delivering training, vocational education and work experiences, which takes place in a variety of settings including work environments or outdoors. The sector also includes tuition, much of which takes place in a child or young person's home or in the community, and non-accredited online providers.

Online Education Accreditation Scheme (OEAS): to support quality and safeguarding, in 2023 the Department established a voluntary [accreditation scheme for online education providers](#). The scheme is for providers of full-time online education.

Outcomes: specific goals or achievements set out for a child or young person to measure progress and success.

SEN: special educational needs.

SEND: special educational needs and disabilities – a broader term than SEN.

Special schools: schools designed to meet the needs of children with SEND.

Specialist Provision Package: as proposed in the SEND consultation, Specialist Provision Packages (SPP) are descriptions of specialist support provision for children and young people with the most complex needs, who require long-term specialist provision – those whose needs cannot be met within the Universal, Targeted or Targeted Plus layers of the reformed SEND system. They are based around the provision required to meet the needs of groups of children and young people who share similar characteristics and who require similar support to meet their needs. They are not based around specific diagnoses, and it will not be necessary for a child or young person to hold a diagnosis to access a Specialist Provision Package.

Comparison of EOTAS Special educational provision and alternative provision

Type of arrangement	Special educational provision via EOTAS arrangements	Alternative provision
Who arranges?	Local authorities. In some cases, parents manage EOTAS arrangements through the use of personal budgets.	Local authorities and schools.
Why?	Where the local authority is satisfied that it would not be appropriate for a child or young person's <u>special educational provision</u> , as set out in their EHCP, to be delivered in any school or further education setting. Any school includes special and alternative provision schools.	When a child of compulsory school age is not receiving <u>suitable education</u> , because of exclusion, illness or 'other' reasons which can include being new to area.
Where?	EOTAS packages often include education delivered in non-school alternative provision settings or through an online education accredited provider, arranged alongside therapeutic and health provision, such as speech and language therapy.	Alternative Provision can take place in an alternative provision unit/inclusion base within a school, alternative provision school, non-school alternative provision setting, independent school, further education setting or through an online education accredited provider.
Which age range?	Children and young people 0-25	Children of compulsory school age. Age 5-16
Relevant legislation	Section 61 of the Children and Families Act 2014.	Section 19 of the Education Act 1996.

Introduction

Our recent consultation, [SEND Reform: Putting Children and Young People First](#), set out our plan to ensure every child and young person benefits from high-quality, inclusive education close to home, where they can learn, make friends, and participate in their community. For those who need specialist support, they will receive it promptly and with dignity, clarity and care.

We know this is not the current reality for many families, including for families of children and young people who are educated outside a school or further education setting – a cohort of children and young people with diverse and complex needs. More and more families each year are relying on education other than at school. At its best, this education can deliver much needed flexibility, with high-quality support for the child or young person's health, including mental health, education and wellbeing.

However, through our ongoing engagement on SEND, including the National Conversation, we have heard from many families about having to fight to have their child's needs recognised and met, going long periods without suitable support, and being offered provision unsuitable for the complexity of their child's needs. For some families, this can lead to a gradual breakdown in their child's relationship with education, one which starts long before the child or young person is moved onto arrangements where education is delivered outside a school or further education setting. Parents often describe feeling responsible for holding together their child's education because of a failure of adequate support, creating significant emotional and practical pressures. These children and young people have been badly let down by an unresponsive system, causing significant distress for them and their families. The increasing number of children and young people relying on EOTAS arrangements is a reflection of these wider challenges. For some, EOTAS becomes necessary not only because of the complexity of their needs, but because effective support was not available early enough to prevent difficulties from escalating.

We must tread a carefully considered path to get these children and young people the timely, high-quality provision they deserve, and to make sure that our future system works to prevent these distressing experiences. Our first priority is to create a system that identifies and responds to needs earlier and more effectively, so that more children and young people receive the right support at the right time and fewer families

experience the circumstances that can lead to unmet need, placement breakdown and EOTAS arrangements becoming necessary. Through the wider SEND reforms we want to build greater capacity and expertise within mainstream and specialist provision, strengthen local planning and accountability, and ensure there is a continuum of support available to meet children's needs before difficulties become acute. We want mainstream and specialist settings to provide a supportive, welcoming, and nurturing environment for children and young people on EOTAS arrangements to return to.

Attending a school or further education setting provides children and young people with access to positive peer relationships, a broad and balanced curriculum, enrichment opportunities, and preparation for adulthood. Our SEND reforms are designed to make this possible for more children and young people by ensuring they receive the support they need to succeed and thrive.

Where provision outside a school or further education setting is required, we want to ensure that arrangements are consistently high-quality, with a clear focus on outcomes, a broad and ambitious curriculum offer and meaningful progression for children and young people. We must do better to support this group of children and young people. Working with parents and other key stakeholders, we want to take action so that all children are learning in the most appropriate environment which best supports them to achieve long-term outcomes.

Through this consultation, we want to understand more about the needs of children and young people in EOTAS, to help develop proposals on how we best support them through our overall SEND reforms, when they come into effect in 2029/30. We know these proposals need to be carefully developed, shaped by the lived experiences of children and young people, and parents. This consultation is part of our ongoing engagement to explore how the education system can better identify and meet needs earlier, strengthen inclusive practice, and ensure that alternative arrangements are high-quality, focused on long term outcomes, and support progression. To support this, we will undertake research to understand more about the drivers of the use of EOTAS provision, and the outcomes and wellbeing of children and young people on EOTAS provision.

We want to reassure families of children and young people who are already on EOTAS arrangements: we know stability will be crucial, especially given the distressing

experiences families may have been through. For those children and young people of secondary school age or older than 16 with an existing EOTAS arrangement in 2029/30: we will seek views on protecting that arrangement until they leave the education system. This accounts for the vast majority of children on EOTAS arrangements. For the small number of children on EOTAS arrangements in early years or primary school age, we want to make sure there are clear opportunities to consider whether, with the right support, different forms of provision could better meet their needs and support long term outcomes. We propose to reassess their need at the end of primary phase, and either support them through one of the new Specialist Provision Packages – which could include EOTAS arrangements – or through a supported transition arrangement overseen by an alternative provision school, helping to coordinate support and, where appropriate and achievable, facilitate a return to a school. We are seeking views on these proposals and how best to support the outcomes of these children.

This consultation focuses on children and young people who receive special educational provision outside a school or further education setting as set out in their EHCP through EOTAS arrangements, and on children who receive alternative provision because their health needs cannot be met in school. Although related, these are two distinct forms of education provision, underpinned by different legislation. The consultation also explores how schools and local authorities use accredited online education providers when arranging alternative provision. There can often be confusion between these different types of arrangements, and terminology used across the sector has developed inconsistently over time. To provide clarity at the outset, we have provided a clear definition of them both, along with other key terms in the Glossary section on page 4.

Responses to the consultation will inform the approach to EOTAS and alternative provision under the SEND reforms, which we intend to implement through primary legislation in the Education for All Bill, with changes coming into effect from 2029/30.

Until any changes are implemented, the current statutory framework remains in place. Local authorities will therefore continue to be able to arrange education otherwise than at a school or further education college under section 61 of the Children and Families Act 2014 where they are satisfied that it would be inappropriate for the special educational provision specified in an EHCP to be made in a school or college.

About this consultation

This consultation seeks views on children and young people receiving special educational provision through EOTAS arrangements, education for children receiving alternative provision because of health reasons, and children receiving alternative provision from accredited online education providers. In particular:

Improving education otherwise than at school arrangements (chapters 1 and 2)

Chapter 1 explores how EOTAS special educational provision for children and young people should be used, managed and quality assured as part of the proposed new SEND system from 2029/30.

Chapter 2 explores how children and young people with existing EOTAS arrangements should be supported as our proposed SEND reforms are introduced.

Supporting children with health needs to remain engaged in education (chapter 3)

This chapter explores how responsibilities between schools and local authorities could be clarified and improved for children whose health needs cannot be met in school and require alternative provision. It focuses on reducing delay, supporting continuity of education, and enabling children to engage in learning and reintegrate into school where appropriate.

Children receiving alternative provision from accredited online education providers (chapter 4)

This chapter explores how schools and local authorities use accredited online education providers when arranging alternative provision.

Who this is for

We would welcome responses from anyone with an interest in EOTAS and/or alternative provision (AP). This includes, but is not limited to:

Children and young people who have received EOTAS and/or AP, and their parents/carers¹, or associated representative groups.

People who work in education settings (including early years settings, mainstream, independent, special, AP schools and colleges) who arrange or make decisions about EOTAS and/or AP:

- Academy Trust leaders
- Headteachers or those in other leadership positions (such as Designated Safeguarding Leads)
- FE leaders
- Teachers
- School governors or academy trustees
- Support staff (including teaching assistants, pastoral care and family liaison officers, SENCOs)
- Early Years leaders

People who work in local authorities who arrange or make decisions about EOTAS and/or AP, including:

- Directors of Children's Services
- Relevant local authority leads (including SEND, inclusion, alternative provision, attendance, admissions, children missing education)
- Virtual School Teams
- Social workers and early help workers

People who operate or work in non-school alternative provision and/or provide EOTAS and/or AP, including:

- Those in leadership roles in non-school alternative provision settings
- Those employed by non-school alternative provision settings

¹ Please note that in this consultation we use the term parent to encompass parents and carers

- Organised bodies representing or collectively overseeing individual settings or groups of settings delivering non-school alternative provision settings
- Other groups who provide education other than at school or college

Other professional parties with experience of supporting children and young people, parents, commissioners or providers of EOTAS and/or AP including:

- Health professionals, leaders, and commissioners such as those within speech and language therapy and mental health services
- Sector bodies
- Charities
- Union representatives
- Think tanks

Issue date

The consultation was issued on 10 July 2026

Enquiries

If your enquiry is related to the policy content of the consultation you can contact the team at EOTAS.CONULTATION@education.gov.uk

If your enquiry is related to the DfE e-consultation website or the consultation process in general, you can contact the DfE Ministerial and Public Communications Division by email: Consultations.Coordinator@education.gov.uk, or by telephone: 0370 000 2288, or via the [DfE Contact us page](#).

Additional copies

Additional copies are available electronically and can be downloaded from [GOV.UK DfE consultations](#).

The response

The results of the consultation and the department's response will be [published on GOV.UK](#) in Autumn 2026.

Respond online

To help us analyse the responses please use the online system wherever possible. Visit [DfE consultations on GOV.UK](#) to submit your response.

Other ways to respond

If for exceptional reasons, you are unable to use the online system, for example because you use specialist accessibility software that is not compatible with the system, you may request an alternative format of the form.

By email

EOTAS.CONULTATION@education.gov.uk

By post

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Department for Education
4th Floor
20 Great Smith Street
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Deadline: Friday 18 September at 11:59pm

Chapter 1: Reforming education otherwise than at school

Background

Children and young people supported through EOTAS arrangements have a wide range of different needs, and their reasons for entering EOTAS arrangements can be equally varied, often following periods of disrupted education. This can include prolonged periods without suitable education, unmet needs, and breakdowns in relationships with education settings. These experiences can be deeply distressing and, in some cases, have undermined trust in the system. The significant growth in the number of children and young people receiving EOTAS arrangements raises important questions about how effectively needs are being identified and met across the wider system. For some children and young people, EOTAS is not only a reflection of the complexity of their needs, but also evidence of late identification and intervention alongside a lack of suitable provision. We must do better for this group.

- **Size of cohort:** Around 16,000 children and young people, representing a 90% increase over the last four years
- **Age Profile:** 0.5% aged 0 to 5, 9.2% for aged 5 to 10, 35.7% for aged 11 and 54.6% aged 16 to 25
- **Primary SEN need:** 39.7% Social and Emotional Mental Health, 35.4% Autism Spectrum Disorder
- **Ethnicity:** 72.4% were from a White British background or 76.3 from a white background, 6.6% where from a mixed ethnic background, 3.7% were from a Black background and 2.9% from an Asian background. 9.5% of ethnicities were unclassified
- **Gender:** 65.0% are male

Source: [Education, health and care plans - Explore education statistics - \(2025/2026\)](#)

The SEND reform consultation was clear about our determination to go further to improve the wellbeing and attainment of all children and young people with SEND. Children and young people on EOTAS arrangements are no exception. We want them

to benefit from an inclusive school and FE system that supports them to achieve and thrive. Attending a school or further education setting means young people can access peer relationships, a broad and balanced curriculum, enrichment opportunities and preparation for adulthood. Our SEND reforms are all in pursuit of this goal. However, we recognise that some children and young people with more complex needs will continue to require EOTAS arrangements at times, where their needs cannot be best met in a school or further education setting.

In these cases, it is essential that provision is personalised, high-quality and designed to support positive outcomes and progression. Too often current arrangements do not deliver these aims, with inconsistent quality and variable oversight. There are weaknesses in the curriculum offer and a lack of clarity about intended outcomes. In some cases, families report feeling isolated and unsupported, and we know breakdown in relationships with education settings can foster distrust in the system. We are also concerned that some children and young people are placed into EOTAS arrangements due to delays in accessing suitable provision elsewhere, rather than because professionals and families agree it is the right way to provide their education. This is not acceptable. Our reformed system aims to improve the provision available within local areas, but we will also explore options to hold local authorities to account where EOTAS is arising because a place in a school, including specialist school, or further education setting cannot be found to support the child or young person's special educational needs.

We want to use this consultation to understand how we can ensure children and young people are in the best learning environment which will drive improved wellbeing and positive outcomes.

Supporting children in early years

We recognise that the early years landscape is different to that of schools and further education settings. While the number of children receiving EOTAS arrangements in the early years is small (around 80 children) and forms a very small proportion of the overall cohort (0.5%), it is important that any future arrangements work effectively for them. We will therefore use responses to this consultation, alongside engagement with early years providers, local authorities and families, to consider how the proposals set out in this consultation should apply in practice in the early years. Our aim is to ensure that any

future arrangements are proportionate, workable for the sector and, most importantly, support children's individual needs and outcomes

Throughout this document, references to schools and post-16 settings reflect the fact that most EOTAS arrangements relate to children and young people of school age or above. However, EOTAS can also apply to children below compulsory school age, and early years settings should be considered included in these references where relevant.

How our proposed SEND reforms can better meet the needs of children and young people

Our SEND reform consultation outlined our ambition for an inclusive education system where children and young people's needs are identified early, barriers to participation are addressed before they escalate, and relationships between families and settings are strengthened. Through our proposed measures, we expect more children and young people to have their needs met in mainstream, special and alternative provision schools and further education settings.

This includes building capacity in schools and further education settings through the Experts at Hand service, bringing Educational Psychologists, Speech and Language Therapists, Occupational Therapists and specialist teachers' expertise to children and young people before needs become acute. It also includes strengthening local planning and accountability, ensuring there is the continuum of provision locally to meet the needs of all children and young people. In addition, a key part of our reforms is strengthening specialist provision through new Specialist Provision Packages (SPPs)². These will provide comprehensive and evidence-based packages of support for children and young people with the most complex needs, as set out in their EHCP. They will be developed by an independent panel of experts and tested with parents. The Specialist Provision Packages will be delivered in a school or further education setting which will likely be a setting that has not previously supported the child or young person.

² [The SEND reform consultation: Putting Children and Young People First](#) sought views on the proposals for Specialist Provision Packages (SPPs) to support children requiring an EHCP. The consultation has now closed. We will respond to the consultation, including on these proposals, in due course. See glossary for more detail about Specialist Provision Packages.

A reformed approach to EOTAS within the context of specialist provision packages

We want to ensure that EOTAS arrangements are aligned with our SEND reform proposals and the envisaged introduction of Specialist Provision Packages. This chapter explores how EOTAS arrangements for children and young people entering the new SEND system from 2029/2030 should operate, centred around three core expectations:

1. **Clear eligibility criteria:** EOTAS will continue to be available for children and young people with the most complex SEND who have been assessed as needing a Specialist Provision Package and an EHCP.
2. **Improved quality of provision:** Special educational provision delivered outside of a setting should support the child or young person's long-term outcomes by being high-quality, safe, appropriately tailored to the child or young person's needs, and underpinned by a strong curriculum with progression.
3. **Decision making needs to be closer to the child or young person:** the responsibility for managing the provision should sit with the setting responsible for delivering the specialist provision package. Local authorities should continue to have an oversight role, including on matters of redress, and we are interested in whether they should, for example, retain a role in making a decision with the setting on whether some or all of the provision may need to be delivered through EOTAS arrangements. Together, this means the system is working together to ensure high-quality arrangements are made that are flexible to the needs of the child or young person.

For those children and young people who are not eligible for a Specialist Provision Packages but are unable to continue their education in a formal setting, for example because of health needs, it is important there is a clear pathway of support, so they benefit from the most appropriate provision which best meets their needs. Chapter 3 explores how we can strengthen current arrangements where, under section 19 duties, local authorities must ensure these children continue to receive suitable education whilst longer term arrangements are secured, providing an important safety net for them. We expect local authorities to work with the child's school as well as alternative provision providers and relevant services to arrange a time-limited package of

alternative provision focused on re-engagement with education (which may include off-site provision), with the provision set out in the child or young person's Individual Support Plan (ISP). Arrangements should be regularly reviewed and underpinned by a clear reintegration or transition plan, including to another school, with the aim of supporting progression into the most appropriate educational setting where that supports children and young people's needs and outcomes. Beyond the duties prescribed by section 19, we are interested in how we can best support the needs of these children.

Q.1. How can we best support the needs of children and young people who are not eligible for a Specialist Provision Package but are unable to continue their education in a formal setting?

Provide any information you consider helpful (optional, up to 250 words).

Identification and management of EOTAS arrangements from 2030

Proposal

We are seeking views on how responsibilities should be shared across the system, once proposed legislation has come into effect, expected from 2029/30, and whether the proposed approach strikes the right balance between using local knowledge and ensuring oversight sits close to the child or young person. Under this model:

- The local authority undertakes a needs assessment and determines that a child or young person requires a Specialist Provision Package, with provision set out in their EHCP. As part of this process, the local authority could make a decision about whether some or all of the provision may need to be delivered otherwise than in a school or further education setting. This would draw on their local knowledge of need and provision. We are interested in whether this would provide reassurance about oversight of provision to families
- A school or further education setting responsible for delivering the Specialist Provision Package would take on the role from the local authority of managing any EOTAS arrangements. The setting – typically a specialist one and different to the one the child or young person previously attended – will have

demonstrated it has the expertise and capacity to meet the needs of children and young people receiving that package

This model, which is set out in full in Visual 1, would place oversight and delivery with the named school or further education setting which has the legal responsibility to deliver the special educational provision in the Special Provision Package. The child or young person would be on the roll of the school or further education setting, even where some or all of the provision is delivered elsewhere. The setting would:

- Oversee the child or young person's education and safeguarding, including regularly checking provision delivered outside of the setting is suitable
- Work with families, local authorities, and external providers to ensure provision remains appropriate and responsive to need
- Be able to arrange EOTAS provision, following engagement with the local authority and family, where this is considered the most appropriate way of supporting the child or young person's long-term outcomes
- Maintain a clear focus on progression including, where appropriate and achievable, supporting reintegration into a school or further education setting

Again, local authorities could retain a role in overseeing significant changes made by the school or FE provider to the child or young person's EOTAS arrangements, including where a provider wants to arrange EOTAS provision or to cease it.

Alternatively, we could explore a model in which the local authority does not have a formal role in determining whether some or all of a child or young person's provision should be delivered otherwise than in a school or further education setting. Instead, responsibility for this decision would sit with the named setting overseeing delivery of the Specialist Provision Package. The setting would determine whether EOTAS arrangements are required to deliver the package effectively and would be responsible for the day-to-day management of those arrangements. Having the school or further education setting act as the sole commissioner would establish a single point of accountability for commissioning and delivery, providing greater clarity for parents and supporting more timely and responsive decisions about a child or young person's provision.

We are not proposing to retain the current arrangements, under which local authorities are responsible for arranging and managing EOTAS provision. This reflects concerns about variability in current practice, including the [Ofsted and CQC thematic review](#) which identified examples where EOTAS arrangements did not consistently reflect children and young people's needs or support effective outcomes. We are interested in views on which model could support a higher quality education offer for children and young people educated outside a school or further education setting, and which could improve outcomes and experiences for families. We recognise that many specialist schools and AP settings already have experience of commissioning and managing provision beyond their own setting. However, we also want to understand what additional support, capacity or safeguards may be needed for the named setting, as well as the local authority, to undertake their roles effectively.

Q.2. Which approach to commissioning and overseeing EOTAS arrangements do you think would work best?

Select one option:

- Responsibility should be shared between the local authority, who would decide whether EOTAS is arranged as part of any package, and the named school or further education setting who would manage EOTAS provision on a day-to-day basis
- Responsibility should sit with the named school or further education setting. The setting would determine whether EOTAS is required as part of the child or young person's package of support and would oversee and manage the provision on a day-to-day basis
- Another approach (please specify)
- Don't know

Provide reasons for your answer (optional, up to 250 words)

Q.3. Under your preferred approach, what support, capacity or safeguards would be needed to enable the named school or further education setting and/or local authority to undertake their roles effectively?

Provide reasons for your answer (optional, up to 250 words)

Q.4. What safeguards should be in place to support consistent, needs-led decisions about when Education Otherwise Than At School (EOTAS) is the most appropriate way to meet a child or young person's needs, including where suitable school or further education provision may be limited or unavailable?

Provide any information you consider helpful (optional, up to 250 words).

Appropriate transition into and out of school or further education setting from 2029/30

As part of our ambition to create a more inclusive education system, we want to ensure that children and young people receiving special educational provision through EOTAS arrangements under the proposed SEND system from 2029/30 can, where appropriate, transition or re-integrate into school or further education settings when this supports their long-term outcomes. Transition arrangements for children and young who are already receiving EOTAS provision in 2029/30 are set out in Chapter 2, where we propose that all children and young people in secondary and post 16 phases retain their existing arrangements.

We recognise that returning to a formal setting can be distressing for some families, often reflecting previous placement breakdowns that have damaged trust in the system. While we want to reduce such breakdowns, we do not want past relationships to prevent a child or young person from moving into a setting where this would be beneficial.

Decisions about transition are complex and must reflect individual needs. Poorly planned or unsupported moves can disrupt progress and make future transitions harder. We also recognise that, for some, continued provision outside a formal setting may remain the most appropriate option.

Case study: supporting transition through alternative provision

River Tees Multi Academy Trust works closely with local authorities to support children and young people receiving EOTAS provision to transition back into school including mainstream provision.

Where children and young people are receiving personalised EOTAS packages, the Trust's alternative provision academies work with local authorities to identify opportunities for transition into commissioned places as they become available. Before a placement begins, staff assess the young person's needs and progress, review available information and work with families and professionals to plan the next steps. This helps identify opportunities for reintegration into mainstream education where appropriate.

Through strong partnership working, pupils have successfully moved from home tuition and non-school alternative provision into alternative provision academies, enabling them to access qualifications, rebuild confidence and progress towards formal education.

For a small number of pupils with particularly complex needs, the Trust and local authority use a multi-agency approach that combines education oversight, regular review and coordinated support from other professionals, helping young people maintain engagement with learning while working towards longer-term educational placements.

Through this consultation, we want to better understand what effective reintegration planning looks like within a continuum of support, including the conditions, safeguards and support needed to enable successful transitions and sustained positive outcomes. This could include how children, young people and families are involved in planning from an early stage, how readiness for transition should be assessed, how receiving settings can be supported to meet need, and how reintegration plans can be reviewed and adapted over time to ensure they remain in the child or young person's best interest. We are also keen to understand the role of other agencies and services that may already be involved with a child or young person, and how effective multi-agency working can support successful reintegration. Finally, we are interested in

understanding when reintegration may not be appropriate and how decisions should be made in those circumstances.

Q.5 What factors are important for effective reintegration planning for children and young people receiving EOTAS provision?

Provide any information you consider helpful (optional, up to 250 words)

Q.6 What safeguards are needed to ensure reintegration planning best supports progress and the child or young person's long-term outcomes?

Provide any information you consider helpful (optional, up to 250 words)

Appealing decisions regarding EOTAS arrangements

Proposal

As set out in the SEND consultation, every child or young person with EOTAS arrangements will have the same SEND Tribunal appeal rights as other children and young people with an EHCP. The parent of a child or the young person would be able to appeal to the Tribunal where they disagree with a local authority's decision about needs assessment, eligibility for an EHCP, the specialist provision package or packages identified for the child or young person, the named placement, or changes (or not) made to an EHCP following review.

There will no longer be appeal rights over the individual SEN and SEP set out in an EHCP, as these will form a central part of the specialist provision package eligibility criteria for an EHCP and will inform placement decisions taken by the local authority. Information about a child or young person's SEN or special educational provision will be considered as part of appeals about Specialist Provision Packages or placements as appropriate, rather than being separate. Additionally, more detailed information on the specific SEN and SEP required will be included within a child or young person's ISP. This means that parents and young people will not be able to appeal to the Tribunal specifically about whether a child or young person should receive EOTAS arrangements.

Where a school or further education setting proposes changes to EOTAS arrangements already in place, we propose that parents or the young person, should be able to request an early review of the EHCP. This would provide a timely opportunity to consider whether the existing arrangements remain appropriate and are in the child or young person's best interests.

Under this approach, the local authority would consider whether it remains inappropriate for provision to be made at a school or further education setting, taking into account the child or young person's needs, progress and wider circumstances. Where the review concludes EOTAS arrangements should continue, the child or young person will continue to receive EOTAS provision with the necessary support updated to meet the child or young person's needs and future pathway. Parents and young people would be involved throughout the early review process. In line with the wider approach to address set out in the SEND consultation, there would be no right of appeal to the SEND Tribunal against the local authority decision to change or cease EOTAS arrangements.

Given the importance of decisions to change or cease EOTAS arrangements, we are interested in whether children, young people and families should have the ability to trigger an early review of the EHCP where such changes are proposed.

Q.7 What arrangements are needed to provide parents with a clear route to resolve disputes if decisions are made: about whether new EOTAS provision should be put in place; or to change or cease EOTAS provision that has already been put in place?

Provide any information you consider helpful (optional, up to 250 words)

Quality assurance and regulation of EOTAS provision

We want to ensure children and young people receiving EOTAS provision continue to benefit from high-quality education to boost their long-term outcomes and wellbeing. It is important that parents also have confidence that EOTAS provision is suitable, safe, and high-quality. In 2025, the government [published a set of measures](#) to address this, including [voluntary national standards](#) for non-school alternative provision³ providing

³ See glossary for full definition

alternative provision which set clear expectations on: safeguarding, support and guidance for children and their families, and quality of education. Under the published measures, we also proposed that local authorities will be responsible for quality assuring NSAP against the new national standards, while schools will ensure that placements meet individual needs.

However, these do not explicitly cover circumstances where non-school alternative provision is used to deliver special educational provision under EOTAS arrangements, albeit many providers support children receiving both special education provision EOTAS as well alternative provision. Whilst many local authorities already have well developed quality assurance frameworks, there is evidence from Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission's [review into children not in school](#) which identified examples of ineffective quality assurance arrangements. This can leave children and young people's education, wellbeing and safety at risk. We want to build on existing best practice so that it is more consistently applied and widespread.

Proposal

We are interested in views on:

- extending national standards to non-school alternative provision settings delivering special educational provision as part of EOTAS arrangements. These standards could become mandated, though we are keen to understand how this could be applied without creating unnecessary burdens
- whether local authorities should quality assure such provision, with commissioners only allowed to use provision on approved lists
- clarifying the role of schools or further education settings responsible for specialist provision packages in ensuring placements are appropriate to need, coherent and focused on outcomes

Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission currently consider local area partnerships' approaches to EOTAS as part of area SEND inspections. We will work with Ofsted and Care Quality Commission to explore how any future changes might be reflected in inspection frameworks.

Following consultation feedback, any proposals taken forward may require the Department to undertake a new burdens assessment, to establish the scale of any potential costs prior to legislation.

Quality assurance of EOTAS provision for young people over the age of 16

We want to increase visibility of how post-16 EOTAS arrangements operate in practice (including how it is arranged, overseen, and quality assured) with clear and consistent national expectations. Robust quality assurance is important and we want to work closely with the sector to build a clearer understanding of current practice and to explore whether the approach out in this section should apply to young people aged 16 to 25. Where proposals are not considered appropriate, we want to understand what alternative quality assurance and oversight arrangements may be more appropriate. In particular, we are interested in how to ensure that provision remains high-quality, supports progression into adulthood, reflects the diversity of appropriate destinations for this age group, and is subject to appropriate oversight and accountability.

Q.8. Do you agree or disagree that non-school alternative provision delivering EOTAS special educational provision to children of compulsory school age should be required to comply with new national regulatory standards?

- Yes, I agree
- No, I don't agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Don't know

Provide any additional information you consider helpful (optional, up to 250 words)

Q.9. Do you agree or disagree that local authorities should be responsible for quality assuring non-school alternative provision delivering special educational provision EOTAS for children of compulsory school age?

- Yes, I agree
- No, I don't agree
- I agree there should be regulation quality assuring non-school alternative provision delivering special educational provision for children of compulsory school age, but I don't agree it should be undertaken by the local authority.
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Don't know

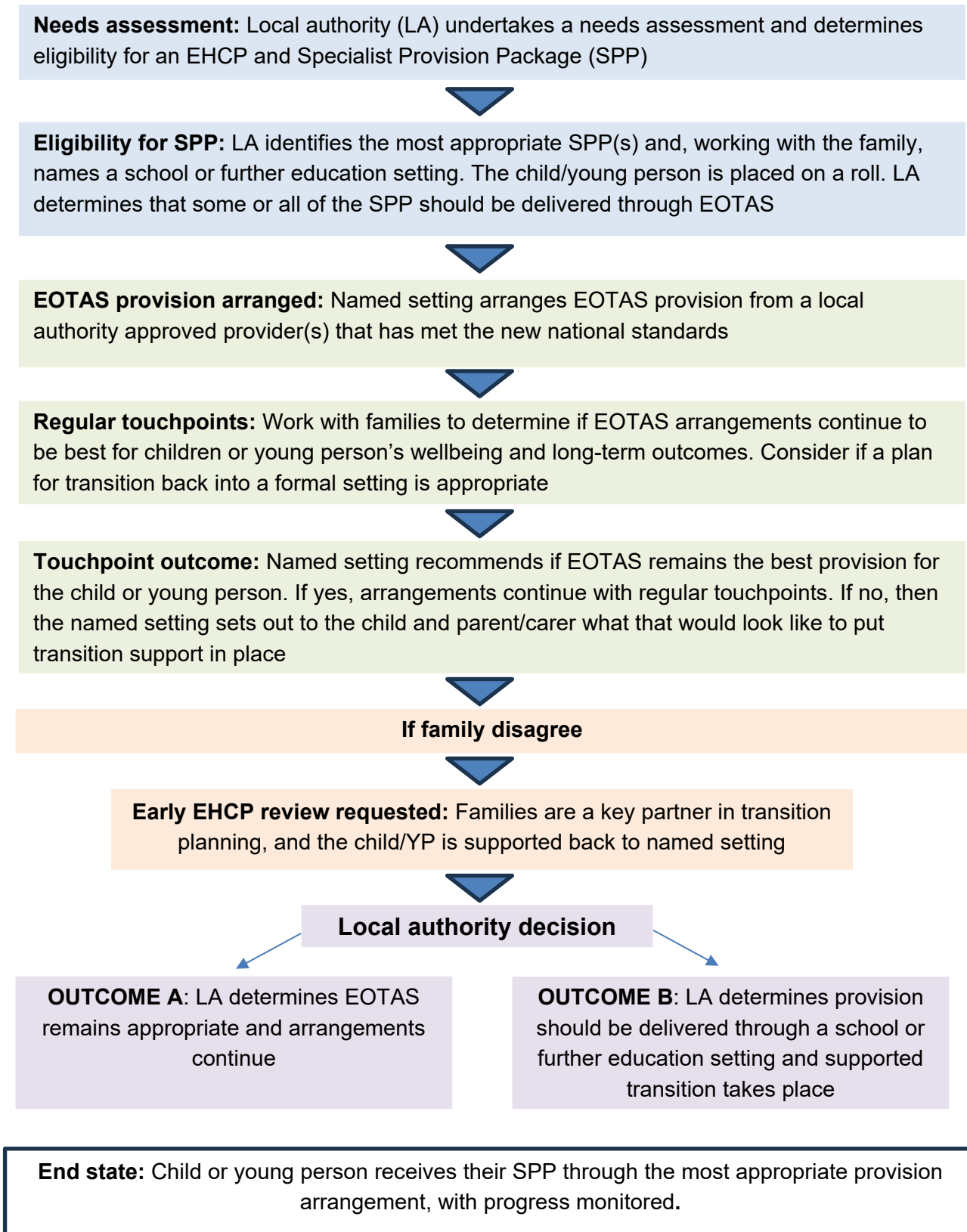
Provide any additional information you consider helpful (optional, up to 250 words)

Q.10. For young people aged 16-25, should quality assurance and oversight arrangements of EOTAS provision align with the approach proposed for children of compulsory school age?

- Yes, I agree
- The quality assurance arrangements should be different (please specify)
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Don't know

Provide any additional information you consider helpful (optional, up to 250 words)

Visual 1: step by step process for children and young people entering new EOTAS arrangements from 2029/30



Chapter 2: Supporting children and young people on existing EOTAS arrangements

Background

This chapter considers how any changes might affect children and young people who are already receiving support through EOTAS at the point reforms are introduced, expected from 2029/30.

We recognise that many children, young people and their families value the provision they currently receive and may feel anxious about the prospect of change. Many have experienced challenges within the education system, including difficulties having their needs understood and met, periods of instability and, in some cases, a breakdown in relationships with education settings. We are mindful of the impact this has had on trust and are keen to ensure that any future approach takes account of these experiences.

At the same time, we are concerned that some children, sometimes from the age of five or younger, could remain educated outside school or further education settings until adulthood. We want to ensure there are structured opportunities to look at whether a supported return to attending a formal setting, which we would expect to be a specialist setting or alternative provision school, would be in the best interests of these children and young people. These opportunities would involve education and health professionals working with parents and children and young people themselves.

Our ambition is that our reforms will strengthen the focus on outcomes and improve the quality and oversight of EOTAS provision. We want to ensure that these improvements benefit not only those entering new EOTAS arrangements from 2029/30, but also children and young people already receiving support.

Supporting effective transitions

The SEND reform consultation proposes that, once new legislation has come into force, children and young people with an EHCP in mainstream settings will undergo a needs assessment at end of phase transition points (i.e. the end of primary or secondary school). Local authorities will assess, under the new framework, whether a child or young person requires a Specialist Provision Package. Where they do, a new EHCP will be issued, structured around that package(s) and where they do not, they will work with

families and settings to move the record of their support to an Individual Support Plan. Children and young people who are on roll at a specialist school setting in September 2029 will be able to their right to have a special school place, unless they choose to move to a mainstream setting.

We recognise that transition arrangements may present distinct challenges for those receiving EOTAS. Provision is often highly personalised and may have been put in place following multiple placement breakdowns or periods of disrupted education. As a result, transitions are likely to require a more tailored and carefully managed approach.

We are therefore seeking views on how those currently receiving EOTAS should be supported when the proposed new SEND reform arrangements come into effect, expected from 2029/30. We want to understand the potential benefits and challenges of different approaches, including how they might affect continuity for families, clarity of responsibility, and outcomes for children and young people.

In particular we are interested in whether different approaches may be needed depending on the age and circumstances of the child or young person. For children and young people in secondary and post-16 phases, who may have spent many years in the same arrangements, often after a series of placement breakdowns, stability may be the priority where EOTAS provision is established and working well. For younger children, including those in early years and primary phases, there is a stronger case for ensuring regular opportunities to consider whether, with the right support, different forms of provision could better meet their needs and support long term outcomes.

Proposal

We are considering how oversight and support should operate for different cohorts. In doing so, we think it is important that any approach:

- **Retains a clear focus on outcomes over time**, including whether support continues to meet the child or young person's needs
- **Maintains stability** for children, young people and their families, particularly where provision is working well
- **Ensures there are opportunities for a supported transition where appropriate**, particularly for younger children, including where, with the right support, they may benefit from transitioning into school.

A clear focus on outcomes over time is critical for all children and young people and will continue to be the main priority guiding any reforms. Recognising that older children are likely to need a greater focus on stability to secure positive outcomes, we are interested in views on the following approach:

- Children in early years and of primary school age receiving EOTAS arrangements would have their needs assessed at end of the primary phase. Those who are eligible for a specialist provision package will have a new style EHCP drafted and receive support with their arrangements in line with the proposals set out in Chapter 2. For those who are not eligible for a specialist provision package, we are interested in views on what alternative arrangements might be appropriate, recognising that many will need a more stable transition following previous placement breakdowns in mainstream settings. This could include structured transition planning, and the potential role of schools, or alternative provision in overseeing and supporting these arrangements
- For those in secondary and post-16 phases at the point reforms are introduced, existing arrangements would continue, i.e. they will keep their existing EHCP and the rights and duties associated with it, with local authorities retaining oversight for the remainder of the child or young person's education. For those who wish to return to a school or further education setting (for example as identified through an annual review of the EHCP), the local authority should provide a voluntary reintegration offer, setting out how the child or young person would be supported to transition to the most appropriate provision

We are seeking views on what the appropriate expectations should be around reviewing EOTAS arrangements for those who are reviewed at the end of primary and do not meet the eligibility criteria for a Specialist Provision Package. Our priority here is to ensure that there are effective and well managed transitional arrangements in place. Rather than moving children without an EHCP back into a mainstream setting, one proposal is that the child moves onto the roll of an alternative provision school. The alternative provision school will oversee the education provision and support the child and facilitate a return to a school (alternative provision or mainstream), when this is appropriate and achievable. See visual 2 for step by step process

We would expect this to include regular or structured review points, for example every three months, to assess at whether the current arrangements remain the most suitable option to avoid children and young people remaining in alternative provision for longer than is necessary. Reviews could involve the child or young person, their parents, the alternative provision school, the receiving or school or college, and any relevant health, social care or other professionals already involved in supporting the child or young person. These reviews would consider progress towards agreed outcomes, what more may be needed to support reintegration or transition into another setting where this is appropriate, and whether the current package of support remains appropriate. There would be no fixed timeframe for a when a child should be supported back into a school. Instead, we are seeking views on how systems can support children to access the right provision at the right time, with decisions based on their individual circumstances.

Q.11. When should assessment take place, if at all, for children and young people on existing EOTAS arrangements?

(Select one option)

- Assessment at key transition points for all children and young people
- Assessment at key transition points for younger children (those in early years and primary phase)
- A different approach should be taken (please specify)
- Don't know

Provide any additional information you consider helpful (optional, up to 250 words)

Q.12. If a needs assessment takes place and a child of primary age is assessed as eligible for an EHCP, do you agree that they should move onto a Specialist Provision Package, with any EOTAS arrangements managed in line with the proposals set out in Chapter 1?

- Yes, I agree
- No, I do not agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Don't know

Provide any information you consider helpful (optional, up to 250 words)

Q.13. If a need assessment takes place, what should be the next step for those who are not eligible for an EHCP?

(Select one)

- Move onto a structured transition plan receiving support from a school, alternative provision school or further education setting
- Continue EOTAS arrangements and review annually (as part of annual review)
- A flexible, case by case approach
- Other (please specify)
- Don't know

Provide any additional information you consider helpful (optional, up to 250 words)

Q.14. Which factors best support stable transitions and progression for children receiving EOTAS, including return to education where appropriate?

Provide any information you consider helpful (optional, up to 250 words).

Quality assurance for existing EOTAS provision

As set out in Chapter 1, we are seeking views on how quality assurance for provision delivered outside a school or further education setting could be strengthened.

We intend for the same quality assurance arrangements to apply to both new and existing EOTAS provision. To avoid duplication, we are not repeating those questions here.

Refer to Chapter 1 (Quality assurance and regulation of EOTAS provision) and respond to those questions in relation to new arrangements, existing arrangements or both.

Visual 2: Step by step process for children and young people on existing EOTAS arrangements in 2029/30

Early years and primary

End of primary review
At the end of the primary phase, the local authority undertakes a needs assessment

Eligibility for SPP
The LA determines whether the child is eligible for an EHCP and Specialist Provision Package (SPP)

Eligible

New SPP and EHCP:
Child moves into SPP and receives a new style EHCP (see visual 1 for full process)

Named setting responsible: LA names a school or further education setting responsible for delivering the SPP

EOTAS may continue:
Where appropriate, some or all of the SPP may continue to be delivered through EOTAS arrangements managed by the named setting

Not eligible

Supported transition arrangement: Child moves onto supported transition arrangement overseen by school, most likely an AP school

Coordination: AP school coordinates support and works with the family to plan future provision

Regular touchpoints:
Provision is checked regularly to assess progress, support needs and readiness for transition to another educational setting where appropriate

Secondary and post 16 phase

Existing EOTAS arrangements continue

Child or young person remains on their current EHCP and retains existing rights and protections. Child or young person receives provision in a setting that has met quality standards.

Annual reviews continue

LA continues to oversee arrangements through existing annual review processes. Where the child or young person wishes voluntarily to explore a return, the LA provides a voluntary reintegration offer and support

Outcome: The child or young person receives provision through the arrangement that best meets their needs, with support and progress reviewed regularly to secure positive outcomes

Chapter 3: Children receiving alternative provision because their health needs cannot be met in school

Background

There has been a significant increase in the number of children who are unable to attend their school because of health needs and who instead receive alternative provision (AP)⁴. This includes children with complex physical health conditions, medical treatments or recovery needs that significantly affect their ability to attend school, and children whose mental health difficulties prevent them from attending school.

These children can spend prolonged periods out of education before appropriate alternative provision is put in place. This can occur when support is not identified and provided early enough, and where there is a lack of clarity about the respective responsibilities of schools and local authorities in responding to a child's needs.

We know periods out of education can be detrimental to children's ability to achieve and thrive, whilst placing increased pressure on their families. We want to eliminate or minimise these periods of disengagement with education where possible.

As set out in guidance, [Arranging education for children who cannot attend school because of health needs](#) and [Supporting pupils with medical conditions at school](#), schools are expected to continue to educate children with health needs who are able to attend school, with appropriate adjustments and support. In many cases, a child's health needs can be managed within the school setting without the need for the intervention of the local authority.

Where children are still able to learn but schools are struggling to support a child with health needs, they should look to access outreach support from their local alternative provision school through the local Experts at Hand offer to prevent decline in attendance. If, following this intervention, schools are still struggling to meet the child's health needs and provide a suitable education, schools should engage early with the

⁴ In the 2025/26 academic year, there are 28,723 in school-arranged alternative provision placements. Of those 5,709 are for medical health needs (+6.1% from the previous year) and 722 are for physical health needs (+15.2% from the previous year). Source: [Schools, pupils and their characteristics - Explore education statistics](#)

local authority so that alternative provision can be put in place without delay so that the children can continue to receive a suitable education. Appendix 1 outlines the current process in more detail.

Whilst guidance details how these circumstances should be managed, we want to build a clearer understanding of what works well in practice. To help develop proposals to ensure that children with health needs are not missing out on high-quality education, we are seeking more information on how to identify children's needs earlier; improve the quality of the educational offer; and how we can support more effective joint working between schools, local authorities and health partners.

Support needs to be met earlier and more effectively

Parents can face a confusing and disjointed system which results in delayed action until children's needs become more acute, rather than being tackled when their health problems first emerge. Where early support is not put in place, short-term absence can escalate into prolonged disengagement from education, placing additional pressure on families and increasing the risk of a breakdown in relationships between children, parents and schools.

We want to ensure the SEND consultation's emphasis on building capacity in mainstream schools through outreach and short-term placements sufficiently supports the needs of these children. Appendix 2 sets out our proposed three tier AP model. We are seeking information on the barriers that can prevent schools, working with local authorities, from responding early and effectively to minimise the negative effects arising from children's ill health. We want to resolve any uncertainty about where responsibility sits between schools and local authorities; who should fund any support; the limited guidance for schools on how to manage health-related absence; and the lack of clarity about what reasonable adjustments or flexible arrangements should be put in place before alternative provision is considered. To help address these barriers, the Department will produce practical guidance on reasonable adjustments under the Equality Act 2010, working collaboratively with the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC), to provide clearer and more practical support to help the sector fulfil its legal duties to disabled pupils.

Improving the suitability of provision

When AP is required to support a child whose health needs cannot be met in school, the way provision is planned and delivered is critical to whether children remain engaged and can return to school.

An [alternative provision thematic review by Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission](#) raised concerns about the quality and consistency of AP arranged by local authorities, noting that there is not always sufficient available provision to meet the diversity of children's needs. This is corroborated by feedback from stakeholders who have noted that provision is often focused on ensuring that some education is in place, but that provision may not always be sufficiently tailored to the child's circumstances or to the aptitude of the child and the content of the courses they are studying, making it difficult to achieve the aim to re-integrate back into mainstream education. This means children with health issues may not always be benefitting from the most appropriate, high-quality educational provision. Concerns were raised that some provision is limited or isolated, especially where it is delivered away from peers or without clear links to a school, which risks entrenching disengagement, negatively impacting the child's mental health rather than supporting recovery, confidence-building and a return to formal education.

Over time, where support is not timely or well matched to need, children and young people can remain in alternative provision for longer than is necessary, with limited oversight and reduced connection to the wider education system. It is important that there is continuum of support, with regular review and clear accountability to ensure that provision remains appropriate, responsive to changing needs, and focused on securing the best possible outcomes.

Case Study: Wandsworth Hospital and Home Tuition Service

Wandsworth Hospital and Home Tuition Service (WHHTS) supports children whose physical or mental health needs prevent them from attending school. The service includes hospital education, home tuition, therapeutic community classes, reintegration programmes and outreach support for schools, helping children remain engaged in education and return to school wherever possible.

Support is delivered in a range of settings, including hospital schools, home tuition, community sites and mainstream schools. Provision is tailored to each child's educational, wellbeing and wider support needs, and can include academic learning, therapeutic support and reintegration planning.

A key feature of the service is its preventative outreach model. WHHTS works with schools, health services, educational psychologists and families to identify and respond to needs before absence becomes prolonged. This includes training, support for children returning from hospital, a multidisciplinary pathway for children experiencing emotional barriers to attendance, and a practical toolkit for schools to respond effectively.

The service also supports children and young people with EHCP who may otherwise require EOTAS arrangements, helping them avoid isolation, remain engaged in education through targeted support, social engagement and building strong links with their next school.

The role of schools and system coherence

We want to reduce the periods of disengagement from education that children with health needs can experience by supporting earlier intervention, improving the quality of the educational offer and strengthening joint working across the system. Achieving this requires a clearer and more coherent approach to how schools, local authorities and health partners work together, with a shared understanding of their respective roles and responsibilities and stronger accountability for ensuring that children receive timely and appropriate support.

We recognise schools are often well placed to understand their pupils' needs and to maintain continuity in their education. Closer involvement from schools in securing and

overseeing provision has the potential to support earlier intervention, reduce disruption to learning, maintain relationships while a child is out of school, and support more effective reintegration. Wider collaboration between relevant services is essential to delivering effective education for children with additional physical or mental health needs. These services might include SEND and CAMHS services, health commissioners and integrated care boards (ICBs), education welfare and attendance improvement services, educational psychologists and social services. These stakeholders, along with a school's mental health support team and AP providers (including hospital education) can also play a key part in supporting children with their reintegration back to their home school.

There are examples where local authorities, schools and health are working well together, for example where local authorities are producing guidance and toolkits to help schools better support children with medical needs in their own school, enabling them to continue accessing education alongside their peers wherever possible. We are seeking more information about the barriers preventing these approaches from being applied more consistently and how the expectations around roles and responsibilities can be made clearer.

Q.15. How effective is the current system in enabling schools to put in place early support for children whose health needs affect their participation in education, before requiring the local authority to arrange alternative provision?

- Highly effective
- Somewhat effective
- Neither effective nor ineffective
- Somewhat ineffective
- Highly ineffective
- Don't know

Provide any additional information you consider helpful (optional, up to 250 words)

Q.16. How could roles and responsibilities between schools, local authorities and health services be clarified to support more timely and effective support for children who are unable to attend school due to health reasons and require alternative provision?

Provide any information you consider helpful (optional, up to 250 words)

Q.17. Where an alternative provision placement is required to meet health needs, how can children be better supported to transition back into a school?

Provide any information you consider helpful (optional, up to 250 words)

Chapter 4: Children receiving alternative provision from accredited online education providers

Background

Online education is being used to support a growing number of children and young people, including those receiving alternative provision as well as special educational provision through EOTAS arrangements. When used appropriately, online provision can support continuity of learning for limited periods and support a return to in-person education in a school or further education setting.

To support quality and safeguarding, in 2023 the Department established a [voluntary accreditation scheme for online education providers](#). The scheme is for providers of full-time online education and to date 16 online education providers have achieved accreditation under the scheme. The scheme sets minimum standards covering areas such as leadership, curriculum, safeguarding and pupil support, and provides one source of assurance at the point of accreditation. However, accreditation is not intended to operate as a regulatory regime, nor does it provide ongoing monitoring of providers once accredited.

Online education accredited providers were outside the scope of recent reforms to non-school alternative provision. As a result, local authorities can arrange alternative provision in the setting on a full time and longer-term basis, and children are not required to remain on the admission register of a school or further education setting.

Areas for consideration

We want to consider whether additional safeguards may be needed to strengthen oversight, review and accountability where schools and local authorities arrange alternative provision through online education accredited providers under their Section 19 duties. In doing so, we are also interested in whether the approach should reflect the recent non-school alternative provision reforms, including whether children should remain a school admission register and whether that provision should be time limited. This would mean placements are either:

- short-term (for 12 weeks or less) and for up to five days a week, with the pupils returning to their schools at the end of that period

- or longer-term part-time, for up to two days, or four sessions, per week, with the pupils spending the rest of their time attending school

There will be flexibility for the duration of placements to be extended in exceptional circumstances

We believe this approach will support the ambition that the use of online provision, including in online education accredited providers, should be:

- purposeful and appropriate to a child's circumstances
- subject to clear oversight and accountability
- delivered in a way that ensures children and young people ordinarily remain on the school or further education setting's admission register
- time-limited where appropriate
- reviewed regularly with a focus on progression and, where possible, reintegration into in-person education

These proposals are intended to complement the use of online education accredited providers to support children and young people receiving special educational provision through EOTAS arrangements, which are covered in chapters 1 and 2.

Q.18. What approach, if any, should be taken to the duration of placements for children receiving alternative provision through Online Education Accredited Providers?

- Placements should be time limited, with extensions in exceptional circumstances
- Placements should not be time limited
- The duration should depend on individual circumstances
- A different approach should be taken (please specify)
- Don't know

Provide any additional information you consider helpful (optional, up to 250 words)

Q.19. Should children receiving alternative provision through Online Education Accredited Providers remain on the admission register of a school?

- Yes
- No

- It should depend on individual circumstances
- Don't know

Provide any additional information you consider helpful (optional, up to 250 words)

Appendix 1 – supporting children with health needs

Schools are expected to continue to educate children with health needs who are able to attend school, with appropriate adjustments and support. This is set out in guidance: [Arranging education for children who cannot attend school because of health needs](#) and [Supporting pupils with medical conditions at school](#)⁵. In many cases, a child's health needs can be managed within the school setting without the need for the intervention of the local authority. Where schools are struggling to support a child with health needs, they should access Tier 1 outreach support from their local alternative provision school to provide preventative support. If, following this intervention, schools are still struggling to meet the child's health needs and provide a suitable education, schools should engage early with the local authority so that alternative provision can be put in place without delay so that the children can continue to receive a suitable education. There is no absolute legal deadline by which local authorities must start to arrange education for children with additional health needs. However, as soon as it is clear that a child will be away from school for 15 days or more because of their health needs, the local authority should arrange suitable alternative provision. The 15 days may be consecutive or over the course of a school year. The provision is commonly delivered through alternative provision outside of a child's mainstream school such as in an alternative provision school, a hospital school or NSAP, including home tuition and online provision.

⁵ The Department carried out a consultation on updates to guidance to strengthen how schools support pupils with medical conditions from 5 March 2026 to 15 May 2026. The Government response can be found at [Proposal on support for pupils with medical conditions at school](#).

Appendix 2- alternative provision 3 tier model

The SEND consultation set out a three-tiered model of alternative provision, which has been tested through the SEND Change Programme, and encouraged all alternative provision schools to provide support across the three tiers.

Alternative Provision 3 Tier Model

Tier 1: Outreach into mainstream schools for specialist teachers and leaders in alternative provision schools and to offer preventative support.

Tier 2: Time limited placements which will offer pupils a short time in an alternative provision school or special school for social and emotional special educational needs, allowing for their needs to be assessed and addressed, which we expect will then enable them to return to their mainstream school.

Tier 3: Longer term placements, where a child has been assessed as needing one of the Specialist Provision Packages commissioned in the alternative provision school. Such placements will focus on supporting pupils into a more sustainable educational placement, with a particular emphasis on ensuring progression to appropriate post-16 provision and employment

Appendix 3- Summary of consultation questions

Part A – Consultation questions

Chapter 1: Reforming Education Otherwise Than At School

Q.1. How can we best support the needs of children and young people who are not eligible for a Specialist Provision Package but are unable to continue their education in a formal setting?

Q.2. Which approach to commissioning and overseeing EOTAS arrangements do you think would work best?

Q.3. Under your preferred approach, what support, capacity or safeguards would be needed to enable the named school or further education setting and/or local authority to undertake their roles effectively?

Q.4. What safeguards should be in place to support consistent, needs-led decisions about when Education Otherwise Than At School (EOTAS) is the most appropriate way to meet a child or young person's needs, including where suitable school or further education provision may be limited or unavailable?

Q.5. What factors are important for effective reintegration planning for children and young people receiving EOTAS provision?

Q.6. What safeguards are needed to ensure reintegration planning best supports progress and the child or young person's long-term outcomes?

Q.7. What arrangements are needed to provide parents with a clear route to resolve disputes if decisions are made: about whether new EOTAS provision should be put in place; or to change or cease EOTAS provision that has already been put in place?

Q.8. Do you agree or disagree that non-school alternative provision delivering EOTAS special educational provision to children of compulsory school age should be required to comply with new national regulatory standards?

Q.9. Do you agree or disagree that local authorities should be responsible for quality assuring non-school alternative provision delivering special educational provision EOTAS for children of compulsory school age?

Q.10. For young people aged 16-25, should quality assurance and oversight arrangements of EOTAS provision align with the approach proposed for children of compulsory school age?

Chapter 2: Supporting Children and Young People on existing EOTAS arrangements

Q.11. When should assessment take place, if at all, for children and young people on existing EOTAS arrangements?

Q.12. If a needs assessment takes place and a child of primary age is assessed as eligible for an EHCP, do you agree that they should move onto a Specialist Provision Package, with any EOTAS arrangements managed in line with the proposals set out in Chapter 1?

Q.13. If a need assessment takes place, what should be the next step for those who are not eligible for an EHCP?

Q.14. Which factors best support stable transitions and progression for children receiving EOTAS, including return to education where appropriate?

Chapter 3: Children receiving alternative provision because their health needs cannot be met in school

Q.15. How effective is the current system in enabling schools to put in place early support for children whose health needs affect their participation in education, before requiring the local authority to arrange alternative provision?

Q.16. How could roles and responsibilities between schools, local authorities and health partners be clarified to support more timely and effective support for children who are unable to attend school due to health reasons and require alternative provision?

Q.17. Where an alternative provision placement is required to meet health needs, how can children be better supported to transition back into a school?

Chapter 4: Children receiving alternative provision from accredited online education provision

Q18. What approach, if any, should be taken to the duration of placements for children receiving alternative provision through Online Education Accredited Providers?

Q19. Should children receiving alternative provision through Online Education Accredited Providers remain on the admission register of a school?

Part B – About you

Q.20. What is your name?

Q.21. What is your email address?

Please note: It is helpful to have your email address if we want to contact you about your answers to the questions in this consultation. You do not have to give your email address, and your views will be considered whether or not you give your email address.

Q.22 Are you happy to be contacted directly about your response?

(Options: Yes; No)

Please note: The Department may wish to contact you directly about your responses to help our understanding of the issues. If we do, we will use the email address you have given above.

Q.23 Would you like us to keep your response confidential? [See Privacy information: members of the public for more details].

(Options: Yes; No)

Q.24. Are you responding as an individual or on behalf of an organisation?

(Options: Individual; Organisation)

Q.25. If you are responding on behalf of an organisation, which of the following best describes who/which part of the sector your organisation represents?

(Options: Early years, primary mainstream, secondary mainstream, special schools, alternative provision school, non-school alternative provision, general further education college, other FE setting, local authority, healthcare body, professional association, representative organisation; other: please specify)

Q.26. What is the name of your organisation?

Q.27. What is your role within the organisation?

Confidentiality

Information provided in response to this consultation, including personal data, may be subject to publication or disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, the Data Protection Act 2018, or the Environmental Information Regulations 2004. If you want all, or any part, of a response to be treated as confidential please explain why you consider it to be confidential. If a request for disclosure of the information you have provided is received, your explanation about why you consider it confidential will be taken into account, but no assurance can be given that confidentiality can be maintained. An automatic confidentiality disclaimer generated by your IT system will not of itself be regarded as binding on the Department for Education.

Privacy Notice

The personal data (name and address and any other identifying material) that you provide in response to this consultation is processed by the Department for Education as a data controller in accordance with the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) and Data Protection Act 2018, and your personal information will only be used for the purposes of this consultation.

The Department for Education relies upon the lawful basis of article 6(1)(e) of the UK GDPR to process this personal data as necessary for the conduct of this consultation, which is a task carried out in the public interest. Your information will not be shared with third parties unless the law allows or requires it. The personal information will be retained for a period of 12 months following the closure of the consultation period, after which it will be securely destroyed. You can read more about what the Department for Education does when we ask for and hold your personal information in our [Personal information charter](#).

Statement on Use of AI in Consultation Analysis

We will be using Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools to assist in analysing responses to this consultation. The purpose of using AI is to identify themes, trends, and insights more efficiently and accurately, ensuring that all feedback is considered in a structured and transparent way. AI will not make decisions; it will support our analysis process, which will be reviewed and validated by our team to maintain fairness and integrity.



Department
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