



Department
for Education



SEND Reform: Education otherwise than at school

Our consultation

10 July 2026 – 18 September 2026

Introduction



We want all children to be happy learning in the way that suits them best.

Some children and young people with **special educational needs** do not always get this chance.



They can learn in places outside a school or college.

This is called **Education otherwise than at school** or **EOTAS** for short.



This is our **consultation** to find out what you think about our plans for children and young people who learn outside school or college.

We will also do research to find out if children and young people who use EOTAS are getting on well and learning well.

Our consultation

Our consultation is in 4 parts:



1. Who decides how EOTAS happens and how to make it better.

2. How children and young people already in EOTAS can be supported.



3. Supporting children with health needs to stay in education.

4. How schools and local authorities can use online education.

We want to hear from:



- People who work in education, health or a local authority
- Parents, carers, children and young people

How to send your answers



Please answer the questions in the best way you can.

You can ask for a different version of the form by email

EOTAS.CONSULTATION@education.gov.uk



Write to this address:

EOTAS Consultation
Department for Education
4th Floor
20 Great Smith Street
London
SW1P 3BT



Please send your answers back by

18 September 2026

1. Making changes to EOTAS



Children and young people who are in EOTAS have lots of different needs.

Sometimes these needs are not met so well. This can be upsetting and difficult.

We need to do better at this.



We want families, local authorities and schools or colleges to work together.

This will help us know more about the special educational needs of children and young people.



Our new SEND plans should mean more children and young people with special educational needs are supported in school and other places.

More about making changes to EOTAS



School or college may not be the best place for all children and young people.

We will use this consultation to find out more about how to make their learning and support better.



We are making changes to **Special Educational Needs and Disabilities** or **SEND** for short.

These changes are called **reforms**.



We will bring in support packages for children and young people who have the most needs.

We will test this support with experts and parents.

More about making changes to EOTAS and SEND



We will

- Make it clear that EOTAS is still there for children who need it and cannot go back to school
- Always make special needs support outside of school good and safe
- Make sure decisions made are what the child or young person needs



More about making changes to EOTAS and SEND



Local authorities decide what education is best for children and young people with SEND. We want to find out if this should stay the same.

We think schools and colleges are in a better place to take charge of how children and young people in EOTAS learn.



Some children and young people would do better going back to school and college but it can be upsetting.

We want to find out how parents can

- work with schools and local authorities to work out what is best
- question decisions made about EOTAS

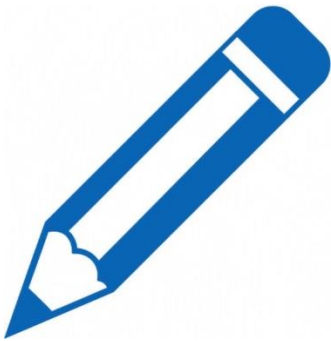


Question 1



How do we support the needs of children and young people who can't get a support package or be in school or college?

Please write your answer in the box





Question 2

Who should be in charge of running EOTAS?

Put a tick or mark in one of the boxes

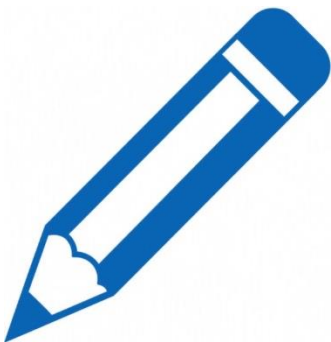
Shared between school and local authority

School or college

Someone else

I don't know

Please tell us more in the box if you want to



Question 2b



What support is needed to make sure EOTAS is delivered well?

Write your answer in the box

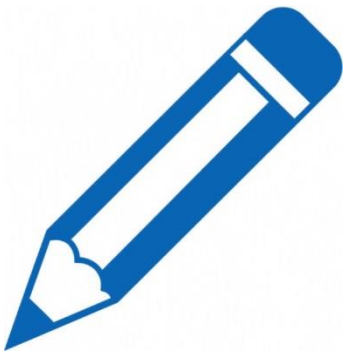


Question 3



How do we make sure EOTAS is only used when it is the best choice for the child or young person?

Write your answer in the box

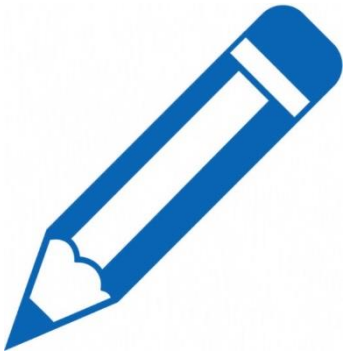




Question 4

What is the most important thing to think about when a child in EOTAS might move back into school?

Write your answer in the box

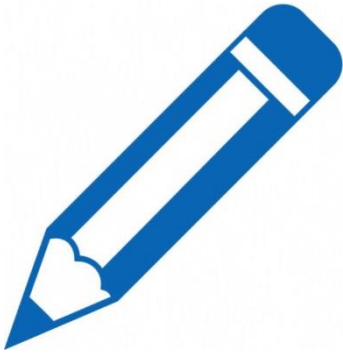




Question 5

How do we make sure that planning for a child to move back into school is the best decision?

Write your answer in the box

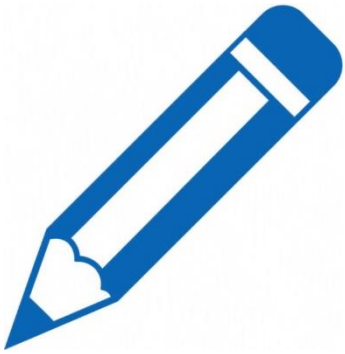




Question 6

How can parents be supported to challenge a decision about changing or not allowing EOTAS?

Write your answer in the box



1. Supporting children and young people on EOTAS



We want to make sure children and young people who are in EOTAS get the best education.

We want parents to know that EOTAS is safe and works well.



We need to make sure EOTAS children get the same care and safety as other children at school.

We want to make this happens for young people over 16 years old too.



Question 7

Do you think EOTAS special education should follow our new standards for school age children?

Put a tick or mark in one of the boxes



Yes, I agree



No, I don't agree



I don't know

Question 8



Do you agree or disagree that local authorities should make sure that EOTAS happens in a good and safe way?

Put a tick or mark in one of the boxes



Yes, I agree



No, I don't agree



I don't know

Question 9



Should EOTAS for young people aged 16-25 years old match what happens for school age children?

Put a tick or mark in one of the boxes



Yes



No



I don't know



2. Supporting children and young people on EOTAS

SEND reforms will start from **2030**.

We know a lot of children and parents might be worried about changes.

We want to find out if children who get EOTAS should be supported back into school when the SEND changes happen.



We want to find out what people think about the SEND changes for

- **Secondary school age children and young people who are over 16 years old who get EOTAS** – we are not changing EOTAS for these children
- **Primary school children and younger children who get EOTAS** – we want to see if it would be better for them to go back to school with extra support

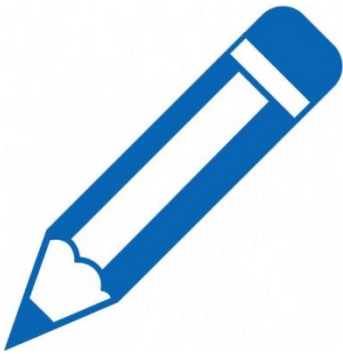


Question 10



Can you tell us the best ways to check if children and young people are ready to move back into school or college and how to support them?

Write your answer in the box



3. Supporting children and young people with health needs



Some children with health needs get their education in an **alternative provision** or **AP** for short.

Missing out on school can affect children and young people in a bad way. We want to stop this from happening.



Children learning in alternative provision should get the education that works best for them at the time.

It is important to plan how they can go back to school or college as soon as possible.



More about supporting children and young people with health needs



We want schools, local authorities and health services to work together to do what is best.

Schools should make changes for children with health needs or find a different way for them to learn.



This support should happen as early as possible.

We want our SEND reforms to make this better.

Question 11



Is our system doing well for children with health needs to get support early in education?

Put a tick or mark in one of the boxes



Yes



No



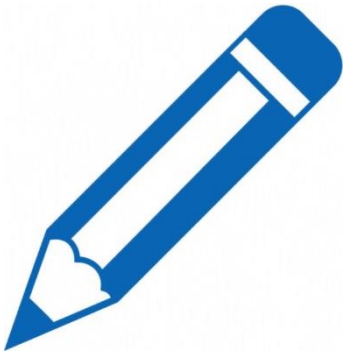
I don't know



Question 12

Please tell us more about how schools, local authorities and health partners could do better with support?

Write your answer in the box



Part 4 – Online education



Online education can be a great support for some children and young people who need alternative provision to learn.

But we need to make sure it is used in the right way.



We want to do everything we can to keep children and young people safe online.

We want to find out if we have the right systems in place to keep children and young people safe online.



We want children and young people to learn online for a short amount of time.

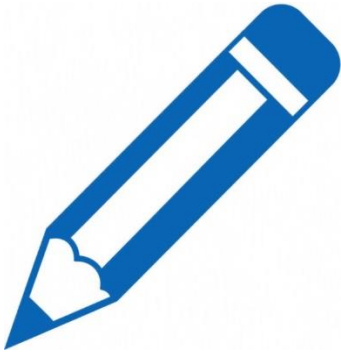
If children learn online, they will still be on the school register. They can go back to school when they are ready.

Question 13



Please tell us more about online education - for example, should it be for a set amount of time?

Write your answer in the box



Questions about the consultation



Our consultation runs from

10 July 2026 to 18 September 2026

You can send questions about the consultation to

EOTAS.CONULTATION@education.gov.uk

Email

Consultations.Coordinator@education.gov.uk

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Call this number

0370 000 2288

[DfE Contact us page](#)



Department
for Education

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