

14. SPECIAL SCHOOL OUTREACH UPDATE

INFORMATION

MAINTAINED SCHOOLS/ ACADEMIES/ MULTI ACADEMY TRUSTS / SCHOOL NURSERIES

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Changes to Special School Outreach Services

As part of our ongoing commitment to delivering high-quality, needs-led support for children and young people, we are working closely with our Special School Outreach (SSO) services to implement a revised model of delivery.

This change is designed to ensure that support is targeted more effectively and reaches those who need it most, at the right time.

What's Changing and when?

The revised model will see Special School Outreach services focusing primarily on children and young people with Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) who are currently placed in mainstream schools.

These are pupils whose needs, without timely and specialist intervention, may escalate to the point where a change of placement becomes necessary. We have heard from some schools about the challenges faced by some of the children who are currently waiting to transfer to a specialist provision or a special school.

We are aware of who these children are as they are placed on our Special School Placement Spreadsheet (SSPS). Therefore, from September 2025, we are prioritising allocation for SSO to those placed on the SSPS list.

We will be in contact with you to let you know who will receive special school outreach this term.

This targeted approach aims to:

- Prevent escalation of need by providing early, specialist input.
- Sustain placements in mainstream settings wherever appropriate.
- Ensure that Special School Outreach resources are used where they can have the greatest impact.
 - Build confidence and expertise in staff to meet the needs of these children, positively impacting upon the provision for these children and their peers

Why This Change is Needed

Feedback from schools, families, and professionals has highlighted the importance of timely, specialist support for children with complex needs.

By refining the focus of Special School Outreach, we can:

- Improve outcomes for children and young people.
- Reduce the risk of placement breakdown and support the child or young person to remain

in their current setting where this is appropriate.

- Ensure a more equitable and consistent offer across the local area.
- Reduced wait times to access support

Managing the Transition

We are committed to ensuring that this transition is as smooth as possible for schools, families, and pupils.

To minimise disruption: All new referrals to Special School Outreach services will now be made through the [Single Service Request form](#) and be considered through the usual triage process.

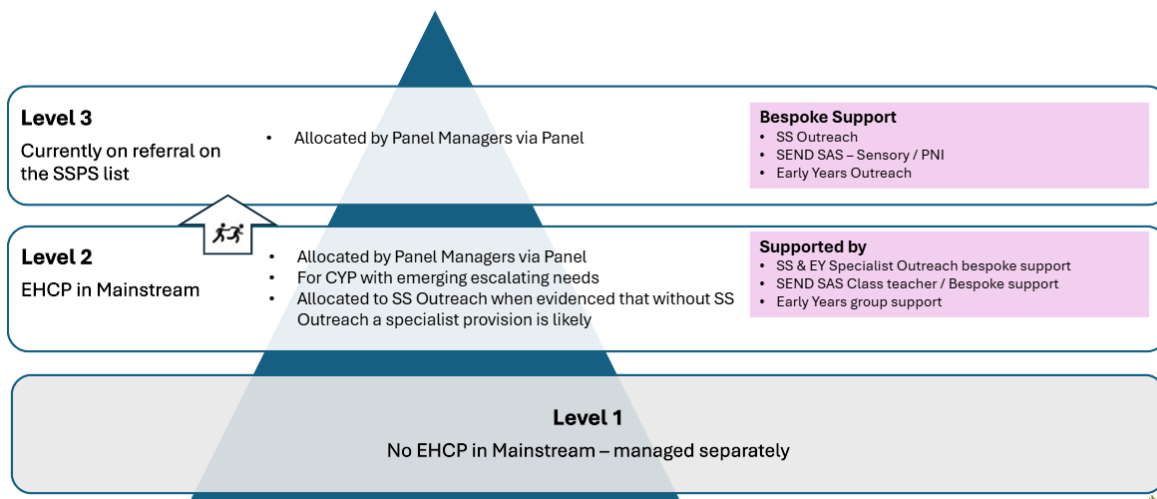
This will allow us to assess each referral and the need of the child and allocate the most appropriate support, service, or intervention.

Existing support arrangements will continue during the transition period to ensure continuity for children and schools.

If a child in your school is currently in receipt of SS Outreach this will continue as planned, however in some instances the service who provides the child or young person support may change if this is appropriate.

Below sets out what services are here to support children and young people from 0-16 years of age.

SEND Outreach



What This Means for You

Schools and settings should continue to raise concerns, referrals and seek support as needed, but should be aware that referrals for Special School Outreach will now be triaged centrally. Children and young people currently receiving SSO support will not experience any immediate changes to their provision.

However, in line with these changes we are in the process of updating our Service Level Agreements (SLAs) with the SSO providers.

From the 1st of April 2026 Special School Outreach will support children with EHCPs who require it exclusively. This means that from the 1st of January 2026 any child or young person who requires support will likely receive support through other existing services such as SEND Special Advisory Service (SENDSAS), Primary Support Bases (PSBs), Education Support Centres (ESC) etc. Parents and carers should be kept informed through schools and relevant professionals to ensure transparency and reassurance.

Who to contact and when

If you have a child or young person in your school who is currently on the SSPS list that you are worried about, and feel will benefit from further support please do make this request through the Single Service Request form.

The new Special School Outreach model is broken into quadrants and below sets out the panel manager who has responsibility for managing the allocation of Special School Outreach for each area:

Next Steps

We want to reassure you that this change is about enhancing the quality and timeliness of support, not reducing it.

Our goal is to ensure that every child and young person receives the right support, in the right place, at the right time.

We are working on expanding the number of special schools who are able to provide Special School Outreach, we will provide an update on this in the Spring term