



April 2026

Dear MP

We are writing in our capacity as the parent carer forums responsible for representing the voices and experiences of parent carers of children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) in Sussex, with Amaze as our host and service provider to local families.

We want to let you know about our concerns regarding key aspects of the Government's proposed SEND reforms.

The 2026 SEND reforms white paper, "Every Child Achieving and Thriving," introduces several promising, long-overdue proposals, designed to improve early identification and support, seeking to reduce the adversarial nature of the current system. The ambition to make the SEND system more inclusive for all, proposals such as increasing access to experts at hand, and the commitment of additional funding are welcome. We will be sure to comment on these positive aspects when we respond to the public consultation, ahead of the 18 May deadline.

However having analysed the detail in the consultation document, we are concerned changes might not result in "a radical expansion of rights" as is being suggested but perhaps the opposite. We are concerned that the proposed reforms risk weakening:

- The right to provision based on a child's particular needs, through a shift to standardised Specialist Provision Packages (SPPs) into which individual children may not easily fit.
- The right to enforceable provision, as children potentially move from legally binding EHC plans to Individual Support Plans (ISPs) that appear, from the information currently available to us, to have no way of being enforced.
- The right to an EHC needs assessment and EHC plan, with unclear thresholds and restricted to children and young people with 'complex needs' that haven't been defined. We are concerned that this will create gaps in the system through which children may fall.
- The right for parents to request and secure a specific school or college that can provide the support their child needs, with more emphasis on containing costs than meeting children and young people's needs. We are afraid that the number of children without a suitable school place may actually increase under these proposals, resulting in more children and young people ending up without an education.

- The rights for children and young people with complex needs to thrive in mainstream, with the proposals leaning strongly towards these children and young people being placed in specialist provisions.

The system for supporting children and young people with SEND is clearly not working as it should, that is widely accepted. But we are concerned that the direction of SEND reform risks children and young people having to fit into whatever provision is available, or else missing out on education entirely. Crucially, the White Paper does not set out what these reforms will mean for children and young people who are already missing out on education and falling through existing gaps in the system. There is little clarity about how outcomes will improve for those currently failed or unsupported, including children and young people educated through Education Otherwise Than At School (EOTAS), those experiencing Emotionally Based School Avoidance (EBSA), those placed in Alternative Provision, or those without access to any suitable education at all.

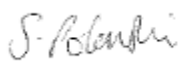
Also built into the new proposals is that schools themselves will hold more responsibility for handling complaints, leaving parents having to battle directly with very part of the system that is lacking capacity and resource, in order to get help for their child.

Legally enforceable protections for children and young people can't be replaced by reassurances that schools will provide what they need. If provision for every child in a mainstream setting improves – as everyone hopes that it will – then these protections will simply remain as a backstop, and the number of EHC plans, requests for special school places and appeals to the Tribunal is likely to fall naturally. Having a strong focus on accountability and inspection of the system to ensure it is working as intended would help.

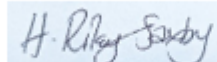
Further information on the proposals and the concerns we share with other charities and SEND advocates is available on the [IPSEA briefing for MPs](#). Further accessible information on reform proposals is available from the webinar Amaze ran for families in March – available online here <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iwxW4YYe8Vw>

We would be grateful for your support in asking the Government to avoid weakening or removing children and young people's current right to support that meets their individual needs. We might also suggest you could usefully ask questions about the role of health in the new system as this is not yet clear enough from the current proposals.

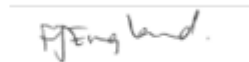
Yours sincerely



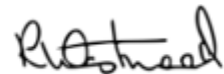
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