

SOUTHEND SEND AREA PARTNERSHIP

25th February 2026

Dear parent - carers,

The Government's Schools White Paper, [Every child achieving and thriving](#) was published this week (Monday 23 February 2026). This White Paper sets out proposed reforms to the schools and Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) system in England. We expect more detail to become available over the coming weeks and will share further information with you as soon as we can.

We understand that these announcements may create uncertainty for families of children and young people with SEND. We want to reassure you that nothing about the support you currently receive will change at this stage. These proposals are part of a national consultation, and no decisions have yet been finalised.

Leaders from Southend-on-Sea City Council and the Integrated Care Board will now take time to carefully review the proposals so we can understand what they may mean for our local area. We are encouraged that the reforms aim to improve help and support for children and young people with SEND, with a commitment to ensuring the right resources are in place to deliver this.

The improvement work the SEND Area Partnership has undertaken over the last three years places us in a good position to align with the principles set out in the reforms – early and fair support, delivered through collaborative working and shared accountability.

The Government's consultation on the proposed reforms is now open and seeks feedback from everyone with an interest in SEND, including parents, carers, young people, and professionals. You can read the proposals and share your views here:

[SEND reform: putting children and young people first - Department for Education - Citizen Space](#)

The Partnership fully agrees that the voice of families must remain central as we consider these proposals and prepare our response to the consultation.

As Southend's Parent Carer Forum, Southend SEND Independent Forum (SSIF) encourages parents and carers to engage with the consultation to share your lived experiences as these are vital in shaping a system that truly reflects the needs of our children and young people. Throughout the consultation, SSIF are hosting informal in-person drop-in sessions at Southend Civic Centre where you can share your views and ask questions.

Drop-in session dates:

- Friday 13 March, 9.30am to 10.30am Committee Room 2
- Tuesday 17 March, 9.30am to 10.30am Committee Room 2
- Monday 23 March, 12.30pm to 1.30pm Committee Room 3
- Thursday 23 April, 10.30am to 11.30am Committee Room 7
- Friday 1 May, 12.30pm to 1.30pm, Committee Room 7
- Monday 11 May, 10am to 11am, Committee Room 4

The Partnership will also host an in-person information session on Friday 17 April 2026 at Southend Civic Centre (Jubilee Room) from 9.30am to 10.30am. Find out more and book your place through Eventbrite: [SEND Reforms Family Engagement session](#)

A further online session will be confirmed shortly. We encourage you to follow SSIF and the SEND Local Offer social media channels for updates:

- www.facebook.com/TheSSIF/
- www.instagram.com/southendsendindependent
- www.facebook.com/SouthendCouncilSEND/
- www.instagram.com/southendcouncilsend/

It is important to note that the new system is not expected to be enacted until 2029. In the meantime, the Southend Area Partnership focus will remain on continuing the improvements achieved so far and ensuring children and young people in Southend receive the support they need.



Michael Marks
Executive Director
Children & Public Health
Southend City Council



Dr Giles Thorpe
Executive Chief Nursing Officer
Mid & South Essex ICB



Philomena Johnson
Strategic Lead for Education & Social Care
Southend SEND Independent Forum



Samantha Delve
Strategic Lead for Health
Southend SEND Independent Forum