



SEND REFORM SERIES | FOR SCHOOL LEADERS
The 2025 White Paper has already rewritten your inclusion offer.

 **SEND RAPID RESPONSE**

ARTICLE 01 OF 09

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The 2025 White Paper Has Already Changed Your School. A School Leader's Read Of The SEND Reset.

Picture the head teacher's office at the end of a busy term. The Year 3 teacher has just left in tears because she does not know what to do with the child who cannot sit on the carpet. The SENCo has a parent waiting outside about an EHCP that the local authority has refused to assess alongside three other parents wanting to know when their EHC application will be submitted. The deputy is on the phone with the local authority finance office about the pupil premium return.

Then someone slides the 2025 Schools White Paper across the desk and says, you need to read this.

Most school leaders have read the headlines. Few have read the paper line by line. The detail is the part that will reshape your inclusion offer.

What the White Paper says about SEND, line by line

The 2025 SEND Reform Schools White Paper sets out a three-tier model.

- **Tier 1** is high-quality inclusive teaching as the universal expectation.
- **Tier 2** is the new Individual Support Plan (ISP), a non-statutory framework for children who need targeted support but do not meet the EHCP threshold.
- **Tier 3** retains the EHCP for children with the most complex needs. The transition will be completed by September 2030. Source: SEND Reform Schools White Paper 2025.

The paper also signals a sharper Ofsted focus on inclusion through the National Inclusion Standards. Inclusion stops being a SENCO responsibility. It becomes a whole-school accountability.

What this means for your funding

EHCPs carry money. Section 42 of the Children and Families Act 2014 places a statutory duty on the local authority to fund the provision specified in Section F of the plan. ISPs do not carry that duty. When you support a child under an ISP, the cost sits in your notional SEN budget unless you can evidence needs that meet the new EHCP threshold.

Worked example: In one academic year, I drafted EHC applications at a primary school in East London that secured £155,000 of high-needs funding in that single year. That money paid for specialist staff time, specialist provision and external commissioning. Without that drafting work, the same provision would have come from pupil-led budgets.

What this means for your inclusion offer

The Tier 1 expectation is the part most schools have under-read. Inclusive teaching is no longer a paragraph in the SEND policy. It is a daily classroom expectation that every teacher must be able to evidence. **The graduated approach**, set out in chapter 6 of the SEND Code of Practice 2015, becomes a teacher's responsibility, not a SENCo responsibility.

Action: Walk into any classroom in your school on Wednesday at 10am. Ask the teacher to describe how they assess, plan, do and review for the children with SEND in that room. If the answer is, the SENCO does that, your Tier 1 offer is not yet built. If the answer is a confident, week-by-week description, you are ready for the new system.

Three actions for the next twelve months

1. Audit your current EHCP pipeline. Submit every application that meets the current threshold before the new framework tightens. The bar will rise. Funding secured under the present statutory route is the cheapest funding you will ever lock in for the children on your roll.
2. Design your ISP framework before the local authority designs it for you. Decide what an ISP looks like in your school, who writes it, who reviews it and what evidence sits behind it. Schools that wait become reactive. Schools that lead become the model.
3. Train every teacher, not just the SENCO. Build the graduated approach into performance management, lesson planning and classroom monitoring. Inclusion is a whole-school competence.

The strategic question

If an Ofsted inspector arrives in twelve months and asks your Year 4 teacher to describe how the graduated approach works in their classroom, what will she say. The honest answer to that question is the truest measure of how ready your school is for the post-2030 system.

Where SEND Rapid Response fits

If your SENCO is sat on a stack of EHC applications that have not gone out, SEND Rapid Response clears the backlog as a paid service for the school.

Visit www.sendrapidresponse.co.uk and request a school services call.

At one East London primary the same approach unlocked £155,000 of high-needs funding in a single academic year.

Written by Rebecca Nyamah, May 2026

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Sources

Children and Families Act 2014, Part 3, especially section 42.

SEND Code of Practice 2015, chapters 6, 9 and 10.

SEND Reform Schools White Paper 2025, three-tier model and transition timeline.

Equality Act 2010, sections 20 and 85.

SEND Regulations 2014, regulation 20.