

September 2030 is four academic years away.

 SEND RAPID RESPONSE

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FOR SCHOOL LEADERS

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**SEND
Rapid Response**

The Road To September 2030. A School Leader's Transition Plan For The SEND Reset.

A school leader I spoke with last week described her position in one sentence. We have four years to redesign SEND in this school and we are running it on the same budget we ran last year. That is the transition challenge for every primary and secondary leader in England.

September 2030 is not a far-off horizon. It is four academic years away. The children on your school roll today will be the children who finish the transition with you.

What the transition window requires of you

The 2025 Schools White Paper confirms a phased move from the current EHCP-centred system to the three-tier model by September 2030. Tier 1 inclusive teaching becomes the universal expectation. Tier 2 ISPs absorb the children who currently sit on SEN Support and a portion of children who would, today, qualify for an EHCP. Tier 3 EHCPs remain for the most complex needs. Source: SEND Reform Schools White Paper 2025.

Existing EHCPs are protected through the transition. Section 37 of the Children and Families Act 2014 secures the statutory weight of any plan in force. New EHCPs issued before 2030 carry the same weight. The shift sits at the threshold for new plans, not at the legal status of plans already in place.

Why most schools are running late on the transition

Three things are slipping under most school leaders' radar.

First, annual reviews. Regulation 20 of the SEND Regulations 2014 sets a two-week deadline for the school to send the review report to the local authority and a four-week deadline for the LA to issue its decision letter. Most schools I audit are missing the two-week mark on at least a third of their reviews. Every late review is a tribunal risk and a transition risk.

Second, EHCP quality. Section F provision in many existing plans is vague. Vague Section F is unenforceable Section F. When the new framework tightens, vague plans get rewritten on transition and can lose specificity. Cleaning up Section F now is cheaper than defending it in 2029.

Third, evidence trails. Tier 2 ISPs will require schools to evidence Wave 2 intervention rigorously. Most schools have provision maps. Few have outcome data tied to the provision map. When the LA panel asks why the child is not progressing on Tier 1, the answer needs to live in your school's data system.

Three actions for this academic year

1. Audit every existing EHCP on your roll for Section F specificity. Mark each one as fit for transition, needs amendment, or needs full review. Build a written plan to clear the amendment pile by July 2027.
2. Bring the annual review backlog inside statutory timescales. Map every review due in the next twelve months. Set a calendar deadline four weeks before each statutory date. The four weeks gives you slack for parent and LA delays.
3. Build your evidence trail for ISP-eligible children today. Every child currently on SEN Support needs an evidence file by July 2027 that shows what was tried, what worked, what did not and what the school plans next. The file becomes the ISP draft when the framework lands.

The case for acting now

Worked example. At a primary school in East London I drafted EHC applications across one academic year that secured £155,000 of high-needs funding. The window for that route narrows every year between now and 2030. Funding secured today buys you three to five years of provision under current statutory protection. Funding deferred to 2029 has to clear a higher bar and a sharper LA panel.

The strategic question

If you stop reading this article, walk to your SENCO's office and ask one question, ask this. How many of our annual reviews due this term will go out inside statutory timescales. The answer is the truest measure of your transition readiness.

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. That could be your school

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.