

SEND Reform: Education Otherwise Than At School (EOTAS)

**Government consultation
10 July 2026 - 18 September 2026**

**Herts
Parent
Carer InVolvement**
www.hertsparentcarers.org.uk



Hertfordshire's Voice for SEND Families

HPCI is the parent carer forum for Hertfordshire.

We work to make sure that local service providers know what families with children and young people with SEND need.

We gather parent carer views and work in partnership to bring about positive change across health, education, and social care services.



Provide Feedback



Become a member

Housekeeping

You will receive a copy of the slides after the session and the HPCI response to the consultation.

We would encourage you to keep your camera on and ask questions or comment via the chat or by raising your hand.

We will be sharing some poll questions which are aligned with the consultation questions, and we would encourage you to please respond. All responses are anonymous.

Please keep any personal information shared today confidential.
The session will be recorded for note taking purposes only.

Agenda

This is a chance for you to **share your views** on the Government's **SEND Reform Proposals for Education Otherwise Than At School (EOTAS)**, either to inform your own consultation response, or to feed into the response that HPCI will be submitting as your parent carer forum for Hertfordshire.

The consultation contains 49 pages and there is an easy read version with 26 pages.

There are 19 consultation questions.

The Consultation

Includes four main areas:

1. Reforming education otherwise than at school (EOTAS)
2. Supporting children and young people on existing EOTAS arrangements
3. Children receiving alternative provision because their health needs cannot be met in school
4. Children receiving alternative provision from accredited online education providers

The consultation **does not** cover elective home education

Poll Question 1a and 1b

EOTAS - Background Information

- **Size of cohort:** Around 16,000 children and young people, representing a 90% increase over the last four years
- **Age Profile:** 0.5% aged 0 to 5, 9.2% for aged 5 to 10, 35.7% for aged 11 and 54.6% aged 16 to 25
- **Primary SEN need:** 39.7% Social and Emotional Mental Health, 35.4% Autism Spectrum Disorder
- **Ethnicity:** 72.4% were from a White British background or 76.3 from a white background, 6.6% where from a mixed ethnic background, 3.7% were from a Black background and 2.9% from an Asian background. 9.5% of ethnicities were unclassified
- **Gender:** 65.0% are male

Source: [Education, health and care plans - Explore education statistics - \(2025/2026\)](#)

Key Terms

EOTAS is a **highly personalised** form of education arranged outside school for children with an EHCP, while **Alternative Provision** is a broader category for **children unable to attend mainstream school** for various reasons.

Overview of Alternative Provision (AP)

Alternative Provision (AP) is designed for children and young people aged 5–16 who cannot attend mainstream school due to exclusion, illness, or social, emotional, and mental health (SEMH) needs. AP can be arranged by either local authorities or schools and typically includes **education support centres, specialist schools, or independent providers**. Most AP placements are temporary, intended to support children until they can return to mainstream education or transition to a more suitable setting. AP is usually funded under **Section 19 of the Education Act 1996**, which requires local authorities to provide suitable education for children out of school.

Overview of EOTAS

Education Otherwise Than At School (EOTAS) is a specific type of provision for children with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) whose needs cannot be met in any school or college setting. EOTAS is arranged by the local authority and is highly personalised, often combining **home tuition, online learning, therapy, vocational training, and life skills support**. Unlike AP, EOTAS is generally permanent for as long as the child's needs require it and is funded under **Section 61 of the Children and Families Act 2014**. Children on EOTAS are not on a school roll, and the local authority remains legally responsible for securing the provision.

1.Reforming education otherwise than at school

For children and young people **entering the new SEND system from 2029/2030** EOTAS would remain available only for children and young people who:

- are eligible for an EHCP
- have needs that cannot appropriately be met in a school or further education setting

Key proposed change

Responsibility for managing EOTAS would move from the Local Authority to the named specialist school or further education setting.

Poll Question 2

What help, **resources, staff, funding, training, or protections** would the school, college, or local council need to do their job properly and support the child/young person effectively?

How can we make sure that educating a child outside of a school setting **is chosen for the right reasons** and only when it is the best way to meet their needs?

Reforming education otherwise than at school

The consultation states that **where appropriate, children and young people receiving EOTAS should be supported to transition or reintegrate into school or further education, where this is in their best interests and supports positive long-term outcomes.**

What would help a child/young person move from EOTAS back into school?

Appealing decisions regarding EOTAS arrangements

- **Children and young people receiving EOTAS would retain the same SEND Tribunal rights as other children with an EHCP** which include:
 - Needs assessments,
 - EHCP eligibility,
 - Specialist Provision Packages (SPPs),
 - Named placements,
 - EHCP reviews
- **Key change:** There would **no longer be separate appeal rights for the SEN and special educational provision (SEP)** detailed in an EHCP. Detailed provision would be recorded in the Individual Support Plan (ISP) and managed by school
- **SEN and SEP would instead be considered through appeals about the SPP or named placement.**
- **Parents and young people would not be able to appeal specifically against a decision to provide, change or cease EOTAS**

Appealing decisions regarding EOTAS arrangements

Where a school or further education setting proposes changes to EOTAS arrangements already in place it is proposed:

- Parents or the young person **can request an early EHCP review.**
- **The review would consider whether EOTAS remains appropriate**, taking account of the child or young person's needs, progress and circumstances.
- **Parents and young people would be involved** throughout the review process.
- If **EOTAS remains appropriate**, provision would continue and be updated to reflect current needs and future outcomes.
- **No SEND Tribunal right of appeal against a decision to change or cease EOTAS arrangements.**

If parents **disagree with a decision about their child's education outside of school**, how do you think they should be able to **get it reviewed or challenge fairly?**

Quality assurance and regulation of EOTAS provision

This section of the consultation seeks views on:

- Extending **national quality standards to non-school providers** delivering EOTAS.
- Making these **quality standards mandatory**.
- Requiring Local Authorities to **quality assure EOTAS providers**.
- **Limiting use to approved providers**.
- **Clarifying the role of named schools and FE settings** in ensuring provision:
 - meets individual needs
 - is well coordinated
 - delivers positive outcomes.
- The consultation also seeks views on how to ensure EOTAS provision for **post-16 learners** supports preparation for adulthood and reflects a range of appropriate destinations

Poll question 3, 4 and 5

Supporting children and young people on existing EOTAS arrangements

Secondary & Post-16 Learners

Existing EOTAS arrangements would continue when reforms are introduced.

- Children and young people would keep their current EHCP, with all associated rights and protections.
- Local authorities would retain responsibility for oversight throughout the remainder of their education.
- Where a return to school or further education is identified (e.g. through an annual review), the local authority should offer voluntary, supported reintegration.

Poll questions 6, 7 and 8

2. Supporting children and young people on existing EOTAS arrangements

Children in Early Years & Primary

- Proposed end of primary phase review of needs
- Assessment to determine eligibility for a Specialist Provision Package (SPP).

When do you think this assessment should take place, if at all?

- Eligible: Receive a new-style EHCP aligned to the SPP.
- Not eligible: Alternative arrangements to support transition and ongoing provision

What support is required for a child not eligible for an EHCP?

What helps children who are educated outside of school (EOTAS) make good progress, have a stable education, and successfully move back into school or college if and when that is the right option for them?

3.Children receiving alternative provision because their health needs cannot be met in school

Increasing numbers of children are unable to attend school because of physical or mental health needs and instead receive **Alternative Provision (AP)**. This includes children with:

- Complex physical health conditions
- Medical treatment or recovery needs
- Mental health difficulties affecting school attendance
- The consultation recognises that too many children experience delays in accessing suitable education while responsibilities between schools, local authorities and health services are being determined.
- The aim is to ensure children continue to receive suitable education without unnecessary delay and, where possible, remain connected to their school.

Children receiving alternative provision because their health needs cannot be met in school

Where a child can still learn, schools should:

- Access **Experts at Hand outreach** support.
- Put additional support in place to prevent declining attendance.
- Work with health services where appropriate.

Where this is not enough:

- Schools should engage early with the Local Authority.
- Alternative Provision should be arranged without delay.
- Education should continue while supporting reintegration into school whenever appropriate.

Poll question 9

What can be done to make sure schools, councils, and health services work together better so children get support sooner?

What needs to be in place to help children feel supported, confident, and ready when returning to school after a period of education outside the usual school setting?

4. Children receiving alternative provision from accredited online education providers

The current requirement for online education providers to be checked as safe and high quality is:

- Voluntary.
- Provides assurance at the point of accreditation only.
- Does not provide ongoing regulation or monitoring.

The consultation therefore seeks views on strengthening oversight and accountability where schools and local authorities commission online education.

Children receiving alternative provision from accredited online education providers

The consultation proposes:

- Children remain on the admission register of their school.
- Online AP is normally used as a short-term intervention.
- Placements would usually be:
 - Up to 12 weeks full-time, or
 - Part-time (up to two days/four sessions per week) alongside school attendance.
- Extensions would only be available in exceptional circumstances.
- Placements should be:
 - Purposeful and appropriate.
 - Regularly reviewed.
 - Focused on progression and reintegration into face-to-face education where possible.

Poll question 10 and 11

Next steps

We will share these slides
and a summary of
discussions from both
sessions

We will use your feedback
to inform the HPCI
response (which we hope
to publish in advance of the
consultation closing)

We will feed all issues
discussed into the National
Network of Parent Carers
Forums

Use your feedback in our
day-to-day work in
Hertfordshire.

Keep in touch!



You can always provide feedback to HPCI, via



[our feedback form](#)



contact@hertsparentcarers.org.uk



07840 360245

If you are not a member, please join us! It's free and our voices are stronger together.

www.HertsParentCarers.org.uk

Back-up Slides

Useful Information – EOTAS Consultation

- The consultation contains 19 questions, some with multiple-choice response options and the opportunity to provide optional additional comments of up to 250 words.
- Download or access document for the consultation: https://consult.education.gov.uk/accountability-and-special-schools/send-reform-education-other-than-at-school/supporting_documents/send-reform-education-otherwise-than-at-schoolpdf-1
- Respond to consultation online: <https://consult.education.gov.uk/accountability-and-special-schools/send-reform-education-other-than-at-school/>
- Download or access the Easy Read version: https://consult.education.gov.uk/accountability-and-special-schools/send-reform-education-otherwise-than-at-school-chi/supporting_documents/send-reform-education-otherwise-than-at-school-easy-read-versionpdf
- Respond to Easy Read Consultation online: <https://consult.education.gov.uk/accountability-and-special-schools/send-reform-education-otherwise-than-at-school-chi/>
- You can respond via e-mail EOTAS.CONULTATION@education.gov.uk.
- You can request alternative formats and respond by post – details of this is listed within the consultation (page 12)
- Deadline: Friday 18 September at 11:59pm
- The results of the consultation and the department's response will be published on GOV.UK in Autumn 2026.