

# SEND system reform: How can we build consensus and trust?

Contact & NNPCF Conference  
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# Three overarching messages from our report

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**The current “SEND system” is not working**

**Reform is essential, unavoidable and must be systemic**

**A new approach is possible – with inclusion at its heart**

# Two pillars of an effective and sustainable system

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## An effective and sustainable system

**Pillar 1: Holistic  
and inclusive  
approach to  
childhood and  
education**

Responds to changing needs, builds capacity and expertise pro-actively, ensures support is available at the point of need / access.

**Pillar 2: Statutory  
framework and the  
role of individual  
choice**

Ensures conditions for voice, choice, co-production, fair and equitable decision-making (including access to specialist support), and effective accountability.

# The two pillars: Why both are equally necessary

## Pillar 1: What would this look like?

- ❖ Inclusion as a fundamental value and guiding principle (not reduced to a type of provision).
- ❖ Central role of education within a broader, holistic approach to supporting childhood.
  1. Bedrock of new system = **vision, values, consistent expectations** of inclusive provision.
  2. A system that **enables inclusion** and provides **broader core offer of support** (without stat plan).
  3. Fundamental reform of the **wider education system** (all phases) **through a lens of inclusion** – funding, workforce, buildings, accountability, curriculum and assessment.

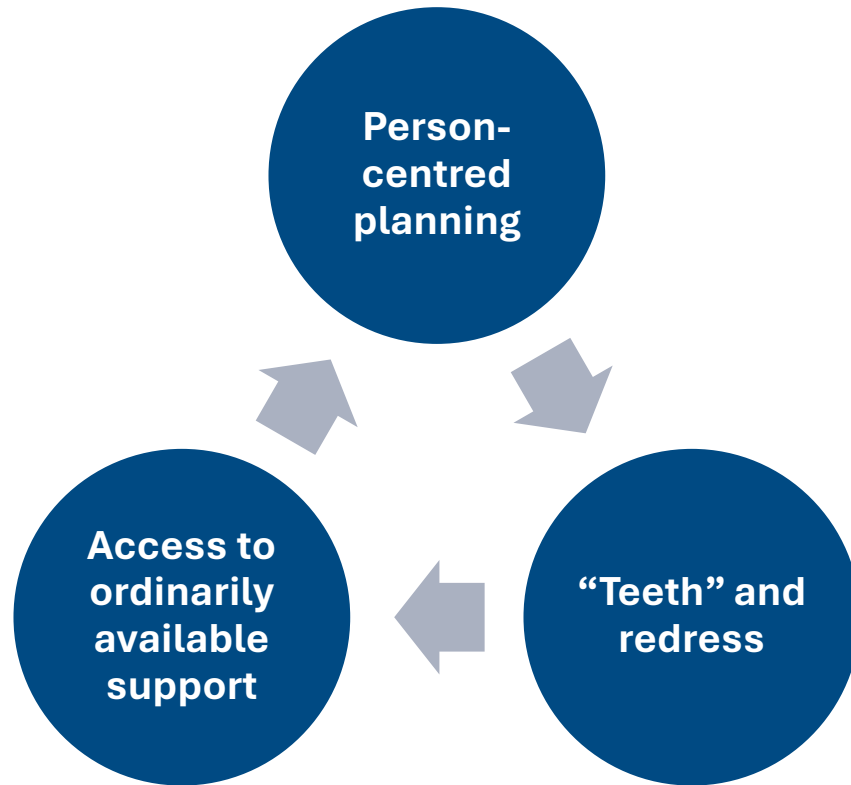
## Pillar 2: Why is this necessary?

- ❖ Some say, “**Just strengthen Pillar 1, and stop there – leave Pillar 2 alone.**”
- ❖ Recognise the concern, understand the risk ... but we would argue **reform of Pillar 2 is necessary.**
  1. Legal **definition** of SEND and **tests** for EHCNAs / EHCPs are circular and woolly.
  2. The **conflation of EHCPs** and **access support** → reduced support for those on SENK and EHCP.
  3. Roles, responsibilities and accountabilities are **misaligned** ... and thus **ineffective.**

## Pillar 2: Planning, support and “teeth”

In a future system in which access to support is not dependent on individual statutory plans, how can we ensure that young people benefit from good person-centred planning and that there are effective accountability mechanisms to ensure support is delivered?

Three key elements ...



The current system conflates the practice of person-centred planning with the process of accessing support. We proposed moving away from a system where access to support depends on individual statutory plans, and towards one where planning is valued in its own right and connects to a broader offer of ordinarily available support. **This has 3 core elements.**

1. **Person-centred planning** – more personalised, flexible, strengths-based planning; record of support.
2. **More support, ordinarily available** – broader offer of support available in all education settings and core offer targeted, multi-disciplinary support.
3. **"Teeth"** – first two elements necessary, but not sufficient. Need mechanisms of redress and accountability in individual cases to ensure support.

# The two pillars: Responses from system leaders

	Pillar 1: Holistic and inclusive approach to childhood and education	Pillar 2: Statutory framework and the role of individual choice
Overall responses from system leaders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>❖ Support ambition and principles ... <u>but</u>, how make expectations of inclusion concrete and “operationalisable”?</li><li>❖ Support idea of enabling core offer of support ... <u>but</u>, where is capacity for this?</li><li>❖ Support transformation of education system ... <u>but</u>, scale of change daunting.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>❖ Recognition of need to align Pillar 2 with Pillar 1 ... <u>but</u>, how to sequence the two?</li><li>❖ Welcome focus on partnership roles and accountability, ... <u>but</u>, question about best partnership models.</li><li>❖ Welcome regulation of independent sector, ... <u>but</u> how create local provision?</li></ul>
Responses from PCF leaders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>❖ Support for principle – inclusion as a value (not form of provision or “add on”).</li><li>❖ Building capacity and make it tangible is a pre-requisite for rebuilding confidence in education and preparation for adulthood.</li><li>❖ Welcome potential scope to redesign a more inclusive approach to education.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>❖ Recognition of flaws in current system – battle for EHCP, yet delivers little.</li><li>❖ Sequencing is vital – build capacity; avoid sense of loss of entitlement to support.</li><li>❖ New system needs “teeth” and redress.</li><li>❖ Competing view – “just follow the (current) law, funding, hold to account”.</li></ul>

# Building consensus and trust

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**There is a clear pathway to building a system that better supports children, young people and families who need extra help** – starting with vision and values, leadership capacity, and a national agreement about what support should be available in all settings and areas.

**This will require significant investment and up-front commitment to building the culture and capacity of the system** – making a new, more holistic and inclusive approach to education and broader child, young person and family services tangible.

**This new vision must be developed through open, inclusive dialogue with families** – a different, more open and inclusive way of working from national policy-makers, with young people, parents / carers and practitioners at the table together.