

# SIMS7 Combined Release Notes

Version 7.226



**NOTE** Please read these notes carefully before installing or upgrading your software. Do not attempt any installation or upgrade without first making a fully restorable backup of your SIMS7 system (SIMS7 and FMS6). For Upgrade support, please refer to the [SIMS7 and FMS6 Upgrade Support](#) article.

## Ideas Portal

Our ideas portal is the perfect place to raise any new ideas or enhancements to the existing functionality you may have. Take the opportunity to view, vote and promote ideas that you feel would make the most difference to your experience in SIMS7.

We have streamlined the multiple SIMS7 Product Ideas portals into a single portal. There are two links, one for those who only wish to submit ideas and the other for those who wish to view and vote on ideas.

**NOTE** If you have previously registered, your username has been migrated, however, you will need to reset your password using the forgot password link.

The links below will take you to the Product Idea and Feedback Submission Portal, where you can submit your ideas, view the suggestions from others and vote for the ideas that are most important to you.

Our product team will have access to all your submissions. Your ideas and votes will help to prioritise future changes in the software.

### Quick Submission (no registration required)

You can use this method to provide feedback or ideas without registering.

Click [here](#) to submit your idea.

### Detailed Submission (registration required)

Use this method to log in, submit your idea or view and vote for other users' ideas.

Click [here](#) to log in, submit your idea, view or vote.

## Satisfaction Survey

The SIMS7 Satisfaction Survey is your direct opportunity to provide feedback to the product team on your experiences and views of the software itself. The short questionnaire will give you a chance to detail your thoughts on the modules, rate the user experience and evaluate the latest additions. This can be completed anonymously should you wish.

You can access the satisfaction survey:

- SIMS7: Tools | SIMS Satisfaction Survey
- Online: <https://www.ess-sims.co.uk/user-survey>
- Support Portal (You do not need to log in to the support portal to access the satisfaction survey.)

## SIMS Next Gen Early Adopter Programme

Get early access to new cloud-based modules and features. Work directly with the product team to shape their development before general release.


Click [here](#) to register your interest.

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# SIMS7.226 Release Notes

Each functional area displays a set of icons indicating the school type(s) to which the content relates. Icons that indicate a link to the applicable handbook(s) and New Feature videos are also displayed.

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- EP** Content applicable to English Primary and Northern Ireland Primary schools
  - ES** Content applicable to English Secondary and Northern Ireland Secondary schools
  - WP** Content applicable to Welsh Primary schools
  - WS** Content applicable to Welsh Secondary schools
  - IN** Content applicable to independent schools
  -  Hyperlink to Support Article / Handbook
- 

## Announcements

**EP ES WP WS IN**

### Satisfaction Survey <sup>NEW</sup>

Applicable to all Schools

The Satisfaction Survey prompt in SIMS7 has been updated to include three embedded hyperlinks promoting NextGen functionality, and the background count has been reset to ensure users are re-prompted to complete the survey 10 days after upgrading to the Autumn 2025 release. This change applies across all regions and phases, with no modifications to the survey content itself, and excludes Safari browser support.

### SIMS NextGen Enablement – Phase 2 <sup>NEW</sup>

Applicable to all Schools

**Focus | Pupil / Student | Pupil / Student Details**

**Focus | Attendance / Lesson Monitor | Take Register**

With each release, new module and record-level navigation buttons are being added to SIMS7, providing direct routes to corresponding areas in NextGen. Users should expect to find these navigation enhancements in the browser and record view screens, with further expansion planned for additional modules and workflows. This approach allows users to become familiar with NextGen features while maintaining access to legacy SIMS7 functionality, supporting both current operations and future upgrades.



## GDPR – Update of ICO Guidance in Download Data Agreements <sup>UPDATE</sup>

Applicable to all Schools

[Routines](#) | [Data Out](#) | [Person Data Output](#)

[Tools](#) | [Housekeeping](#) | [Document Management Server](#) | [Maintain Bulk Documents](#)

This SIMS7 release introduces updated GDPR guidance links, improved display and tracking of alternative curriculum codes in lesson registers, and the addition of a Country of Birth field for Northern Ireland applicants. For teachers, these enhancements mean clearer and more accurate attendance records for students involved in alternative activities, easier compliance with data protection requirements directly within SIMS7, and more complete applicant information at the point of entry. As a result, teachers benefit from reduced administrative burden, improved data accuracy, and greater confidence in meeting statutory and safeguarding obligations.

## Fees Billing

[EP](#) [ES](#) [WP](#) [WS](#) [IN](#)

### SIMS7 Oauth Enhancement <sup>NEW</sup>

Applicable to all schools

[Tools](#) | [Fees Billing](#) | [Parameters](#) | [Email Settings](#)

The Autumn 2025 release enhances validation by providing clear, user-friendly error messages when authentication between SIMS7 and Office 365 fails or expires, guiding users to re-authenticate as needed. All authentication attempts—both successful and failed—are now logged in detail, including the values entered and the outcome, ensuring traceability and easier troubleshooting. Additionally, changes to OAuth-related fields (such as Client ID, Tenant ID, and Sign in Email) are recorded in the system's change log for full auditability. Users gain a more secure, reliable email process with streamlined setup, better feedback, and improved compliance through detailed audit logs.

### Transactions Batch Details – calculate VAT when importing Bills or Credit Notes <sup>NEW</sup>

Applicable to all schools

[Focus](#) | [Fees Billing](#) | [Transactions](#) | [Process Transaction](#)

The Batch Details Entry Method includes a new Import Transaction Batch option, which when selected, includes Bill and Credit Notes in the Transaction Type options. When one of these options is selected, the VAT Code and GL Account details will be in the Transaction Details and the VAT Code is editable.

### Exporting Journal reports <sup>UPDATE</sup>

Applicable to all schools

[Focus](#) | [Fees Billing](#) | [Periodic](#) | [Transfer Bills](#) | [Journal](#) | [Export](#)

[Focus](#) | [Fees Billing](#) | [Transactions](#) | [Process Transactions](#) | [Journal](#) | [Export](#)

[Focus](#) | [Fees Billing](#) | [Transactions](#) | [Update Payers](#) | [Journal](#) | [Export](#)

The exported journal reports now include the Total, Date/Time and Operator information



## Automated Debtor Letters from Homepage Alert <sup>UPDATE</sup>

Applicable to all schools

[Focus](#) | [Home Page](#) | [My Reminders](#) | [Unpaid Bills](#)

[Reports](#) | [Fees Billing](#) | [Generate Letters](#)

The SIMS7 home page Unpaid Bills or Outstanding Debts links on My Reminders section, has a new button to Generate Letters. This button takes users to the Fees Billing Generate Letters screen.

## Generate Letters option to rename debtor letter attachments <sup>UPDATE</sup>

Applicable to all schools

[Reports](#) | [Fees Billing](#) | [Generate Letters](#)

[Reports](#) | [Fees Billing](#) | [Logs](#) | [Changes](#)

When emailing the letter to the bill payer the PDF attachment name has changed to the Template name and payer reference, and if required, the Pupil Reference making the PDF file more user friendly for the recipient.

## Students

EP ES WP WS IN

### Record-Level Navigation <sup>NEW</sup>

Applicable to all schools

[Focus](#) | [Pupil Profile](#)

After selecting a specific student or class record in SIMS7, users can now click the "View in SIMS NextGen" button at the record level to open the detailed record directly in SIMS NextGen. This navigation route is available from within the record view screens in SIMS7, providing immediate access to the corresponding detailed view in SIMS NextGen.

### Additional Learner Needs (ALN) Reform – Student ALN <sup>NEW</sup>

Applicable to Welsh schools

Terminology updates across SIMS7 replace all references to Special Educational Needs (SEN) with Additional Learning Needs (ALN), in line with Welsh Government reforms. This ensures consistency and compliance across student-related modules:

- Student Details
- Student – Linked Adults / Agencies
- Student – Basic Details
- Student – Reviews
- Student – Events
- Student – Statements
- Student – Provisions
- Links Panel
- SEN / ALN Setup Label Changes
- Student List Reports
- Student – Messages



- Alerts Reminder
- Student PDO Label Changes
- Discover

## School Census Spring Return – Statutory Returns

EP ES

### Key Dates <sup>NEW</sup>

**Census Date** 15/01/2026

**Attendance** collected from Start of Autumn term to 31/12/2025

**Exclusions** collected from 21/04/2025 to 31/12/2025

**Alternative Provision Placements** collected from 02/10/2025 to 15/01/2026

**Funding and Monitoring** collected from 01/08/2025 to 15/01/2026

**Learner Support** collected from 01/08/2025 to 15/01/2026

**Free School Meals** collected from 03/10/2025 to 15/01/2026

### Qualified Teacher Status Date for UI Validation

[Focus](#) | [Person](#) | [Staff](#) | [Staff Details](#) | [Professional Details](#)

The new Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) Date field is updated with validation and reporting enhancements.

### Amended Staff Ethnicity lookup descriptions

[Tools](#) | [Lookups](#) | [Maintain](#) | [Staff](#) | [Ethnicity](#)

Ethnicity lookup descriptions for Staff have been updated to be in line with CBDS.

- **REFU** – Refused
- **NOBT** – Information not yet obtained

### Nursery Phase – 4-Year-Olds Inclusion

Data collection for nursery-aged children to include all eligible 4-year-olds for E1, E2, N1, N2 for Early Years Pupil Premium Receipt (EYPPR).

## PLASC Return

WP WS

### Key Dates <sup>NEW</sup>

**Census Date:** 20/01/2026

**Reference Date:** 31/08/2025



## Staff Item Removal

Recruitment and Retention panels have been removed from the PLASC return screen to streamline staff data entry. Panels following these have been renumbered to maintain logical order.

## ALN Changes

Special Educational Needs (SEN) references are replaced with Additional Learning Needs (ALN) throughout the system, including XML tags, report headers, and validation messages. SEN-specific data items and reports are removed, and ALN terminology is now standard. SEN pupils in class and additional support data are no longer collected or reported in PLASC from 2026. XML tags and report columns have been updated to use ALN terminology, and related reports reflect these changes.

## Personnel Wales – ALN Contract Allowance

A new ALN Allowance value is added to the Service Term – Allowance Category lookup, allowing users to assign this category to staff contracts. The value can be activated, edited, or made inactive as needed.

## SWAC Staff Role Lookup Descriptions Amended

Staff role descriptions in the SWAC lookup are updated for clarity and compliance with Welsh Government requirements. These changes are reflected in the SWAC return screen, staff details, and related reports.

## Change Supply Staff Display Order

The display order of supply staff values in the SWAC panels and reports is updated to match Welsh Government specifications. The XML output also reflects the new sequence for consistency.

## SLASC Return

[Routines](#) | [Statutory Returns](#) | **SLASC**

**Census reference date:** 15/01/2026

**Age at date:** 31/08/2025

## ISC Return

[Routines](#) | [Statutory Returns](#) | **ISC**

**Census reference date:** 15/01/2026

**Age at date:** 31/08/2025

## New category of Unknown in Teacher

[Routines](#) | [Statutory Returns](#) | **ISC**

Panel 21 'Full Time Teaching Staff Changes' now includes a new 'Unknown' category at the bottom; the values entered into these cells are added to both columns' totals.



# SIMS Upgrade Support

## Important Information – Please read before upgrading

If you are performing an upgrade spanning more than one release, you must read the release note associated with each version.

**IMPORTANT** For more support on performing the SIMS Upgrades please refer to the SIMS Upgrade support article.

## Upgrading using SOLUS

The SIMS Online Update Service (SOLUS) enables you to download and run SIMS releases and patches via the Internet. This is achieved using SOLUS3.

For instructions on carrying out an upgrade with SOLUS3, please refer to the SOLUS3 for Schools or the SOLUS3 for Local Authorities handbook.

## Support for SQL Server

SIMS7, FMS6 and Discover, Partnership Xchange, SOLUS, and InTouch run on SQL Server 2012, SQL Server 2014, SQL Server 2016 SP3 and SQL Server 2019.

### SQL2022 Update

The SQL Migration tool has been updated to enable users to upgrade their current SQL instance to SQL 2022 (taking SIMS7\FMS6\Discover from SQL 2012, SQL 2014, SQL 2016 or SQL 2019 to SQL 2022).

For more information on support for SQL Server and Windows environments, please refer to the [SIMS Minimum Hardware and Technical Roadmap](#) on the support portal.

## General

Schools using both Fees Billing and FMS6 must upgrade SIMS7 and FMS6 at the same time.

## Backing up SIMS7 and FMS6

Where SIMS7 Personnel is used to generate Salary Projections in FMS6, SIMS7 and FMS6 backups should be carried out at the same time. If one of the databases needs to be restored, the other database must be restored to the same point, i.e. if you restore the SIMS7 database, you must restore the FMS6 database to the same point and vice versa.

**IMPORTANT** Backups are no longer zipped, because of the number of issues caused by zipping backup files. Recent operating systems now allow the use of compressed folders, which are recommended for automatically compressing backups. Please refer to your operating system documentation for instructions on applying compression to a folder.



## Important Information Regarding the Upgrade of SIMS and Discover

You must upgrade to the SIMS7.220 Release before upgrading Discover. If you upgrade Discover before upgrading SIMS, data will not be transferred between the SIMS and Discover databases until SIMS has been upgraded.

### Auto-Deployment of SIMS and Discover

If SOLUS3 auto-deployment is enabled for Discover, we recommend that Discover auto-deployment settings start later than the SIMS auto-deployment start time plus the timeout.

The screenshot shows the SOLUS3 Settings page with the 'Updates' tab selected. The 'UPDATES' section includes: 'Check updates every' set to 10 minutes, 'Task time out' set to 30 minutes, 'Rollback on failure' checked, and 'Auto download' checked with a time range of 13:22 to 15:23. The 'AGENTS' section shows 'Concurrent downloads' set to 5 and 'Auto download' checked with a time range of 13:22 to 15:23. The 'AUTO DEPLOYMENTS' section is a table with columns for Products, time ranges, and days of the week (Mon-Sun).

Products	Between	and	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> FMS	11:00	23:00	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SIMS	11:00	23:00	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SIMS Discover	13:00	23:00	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SOLUS	11:00	23:00	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

A 'Save' button is located at the bottom right of the settings area.

If the times are not set like this, and the Discover deployment starts before the SIMS deployment, then the data transfer between SIMS and Discover will not work until the SIMS upgrade is completed.



## Where to Find More Information?

### Via SIMS...

For the software handbooks, navigate to the SIMS Home Page, then click the Documentation button to display the SIMS Documentation Centre.

### Via the Support Portal...

User documentation is also available from the [support portal](#)

**NOTE** If you don't already have a Support Portal account, please [register](#) before you open the Support Portal.

If you are unable to obtain the required handbook using any of these methods, please email us ([publications@parentpay.com](mailto:publications@parentpay.com)) and we will be pleased to send a copy to you.

### Permissions

The permissions spreadsheet, which lists all permissions relating to SIMS7.218, is available from the Documentation Centre. To access the SIMS Documentation Centre, click the Documentation button on the SIMS Home Page.

In the support portal, open the [SIMS Permissions Spreadsheet](#).

### Support for B2B

Personnel ended with the release of One version 3.74 (Spring 2021). The B2B: Personnel table previously present in these release notes has been removed.





 @SIMS\_ESS

 SIMS

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