

# SIMS 7 Combined Release Notes

Version 7.228



**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 SIMS system (SIMS and FMS). For Upgrade support, please refer to the [SIMS 7 and FMS 6 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 SIMS.

We have streamlined the multiple SIMS 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 SIMS 7 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:

- SIMS 7: 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.

## Contents

SIMS 7.228 Release Notes.....	1
Attendance.....	1
Fees Billing.....	2
School Census Summer Return - Statutory Returns .....	3
Welsh Secondary Attendance Collection Return .....	4
Welsh Primary Attendance Collection Return.....	4
SIMS Upgrade Support .....	5
Important Information – Please read before upgrading.....	5
Upgrading using SOLUS .....	5
Support for SQL Server .....	5
General.....	5
Backing up SIMS and FMS.....	5
Important Information Regarding the Upgrade of SIMS and Discover .....	6
Where to Find More Information? .....	7
Via SIMS.....	7
Via the Support Portal.....	7
Permissions .....	7
Support for B2B .....	7

# SIMS 7.228 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.

- 
- 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
- 

## Attendance

**EP ES WP WS**

### Preventing Use of Invalid Lesson Codes <sup>UPDATE</sup>

**Focus | Lesson Monitor | Take Register**

Attendance data integrity has been improved by preventing the use of inactive lesson codes in registers. When a lesson code is made inactive, users can no longer enter it when taking registers; instead, the system now prompts users to select only valid, active lesson codes. Inactive codes remain valid for historical dates before their inactivation, ensuring existing attendance records are preserved while preventing invalid data entry going forward.

### Multiple communication type <sup>NEW</sup>

**Focus | Communication**

A new "Multiple" value has been added to the Communication Type field to support Next Gen alignment and communication logging better. This value is available in the Communication area under Focus → Communication and is positioned as the final option in the Type dropdown. The updated Type field is consistently available when accessing Communications via Admissions → Enquiry, Admissions → Application, and Fees Bill Payer, ensuring a unified experience across all relevant access points. This enhancement improves flexibility when recording communications that span more than one method.



## Fees Billing

EP ES WP WS IN

### GDPR – Bulk Delete Inactive Bill Payers <sup>NEW</sup>

Applicable to all schools

**Tools | Housekeeping | Delete Fees Bill Payers**

A new GDPR-compliant Bulk Delete Fees Bill Payers feature allows authorised users to securely remove inactive fee payer records that meet defined retention criteria. Access is controlled by dedicated permissions, ensuring only approved users can perform deletions. The process enforces mandatory validation, includes clear confirmation and GDPR responsibility messaging, and runs safely in the background while progress and completion status are displayed. All deletions are logged for audit purposes, supporting compliance and improved data management.

### Matrix of Charges to reuse while applying the charges <sup>NEW</sup>

Applicable to all schools

**Tools | Fees Billing | Matrix of Charges**

The new Matrix of Charges feature allows schools to automate and standardise fee assignment by applying predefined charge matrices based on pupil criteria. Authorised users can create, manage, and reuse matrices to ensure consistent charging across groups of pupils, reducing manual effort and the risk of errors. Matrix usage is tracked, changes are logged for audit purposes, and the feature integrates directly with the Apply Charges process to improve efficiency and control in fees billing.

## School Census Summer Return – Statutory Returns

EP ES

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

**Census Date** 21/05/2026

**Attendance** collected from 01/01/2026 to 05/04/2026

**Exclusions** collected from 01/08/2025 to 05/04/2026

**Alternative Provision Placements** collected from 15/01/2026 to 21/05/2026

**Funding and Monitoring** collected from 01/08/2025 to 21/05/2026

**Learner Support** collected from 01/08/2025 to 21/05/2026

**Free School Meals** collected from 16/01/2026 to 21/05/2026

### Student and Applicant NHS Number Validation <sup>NEW</sup>

**Focus | Student | Student Details | Medical**

Validation has been enhanced for student and applicant NHS Numbers by introducing check digit validation. This helps prevent the entry of invalid NHS Numbers and improves data accuracy.

When enabled, the system validates the NHS Number format and prevents the use of invalid characters. If an NHS Number entered is already assigned to another student or applicant within the school, a warning message is displayed identifying the existing record. An NHS Number generator utility is also available to generate valid dummy NHS Numbers and to validate existing numbers. This functionality is switched off by default and is intended to be enabled when supporting functionality in SIMS Next Gen is in place.

### Missing Learning Aims Warning <sup>UPDATE</sup>

The warning for missing Post-16 learning aims and prior attainment has been improved for schools without a sixth form. Schools that do not have Year 12 provision will no longer see warning messages relating to missing Post-16 Programmes of Study or prior attainment during the Autumn School Census process. This ensures that census validation messages are only shown where they are relevant, reducing unnecessary alerts for applicable schools.



## Welsh Secondary Attendance Collection Return

WS

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

Age at Date 31/08

Collection Start Date 01/09/2025

Collection End Date 22/05/2026

## Welsh Primary Attendance Collection Return

WP

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

Age at Date 31/08

Collection Start Date 01/09/2025

Collection End Date 20/07/2026

# 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

SIMS, FMS 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 SIMS\FMS\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 FMS must upgrade SIMS and FMS at the same time.

## Backing up SIMS and FMS

Where SIMS Personnel is used to generate Salary Projections in FMS, SIMS and FMS 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 SIMS database, you must restore the FMS 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 SIMS 7.220 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 following configurations:

- UPDATES**
  - Check updates every: 10 minutes
  - Task time out: 30 minutes
  - Rollback on failure:
  - Auto download:  Between 13:22 and 15:23
- AGENTS**
  - Concurrent downloads: 5
  - Auto download:  Between 13:22 and 15:23
- AUTO DEPLOYMENTS**

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 green '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 SIMS 7.218, 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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