



Department  
for Education

**REACH**

Reaching Excellence and Ambition  
for all Children

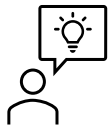


**The Special Educational Needs and Disabilities  
(SEND) and Alternative Provision (AP) Change  
Programme**

# The Special Education Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and Alternative Provision (AP) Improvement Plan



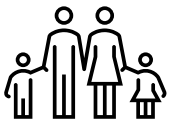
In 2019, the Government reviewed the SEND and AP system and concluded their findings in a paper published in 2022.



This paper, called the SEND and Alternative Provision Green Paper, shared ideas on how to make services and support better for children, young people and their families.



The Government spoke to children, young people and their families about the Green Paper. They also spoke to school, college and nursery staff, and health care workers.

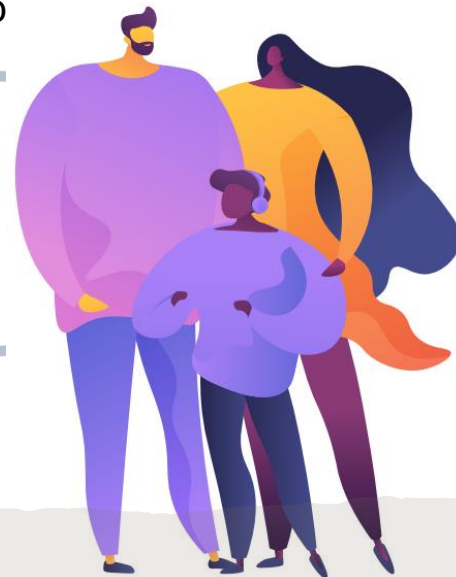


It was apparent that there was multiple issues with the system, such as:

- Families not getting information quick enough
- Families struggling to get support to meet their child's needs



After listening to parents, carers and families, we produced a plan to improve the system. This is known as the SEND and AP Improvement Plan. We are using **The Change Programme** as a way to test our ideas and make sure they work well in the real world and improve the lives of children and young people and their families.



# What is the SEND and AP Change Programme?

- ❖ The Change Programme gives us an opportunity to test changes to the way the **whole SEND and AP system** works.
- ❖ It gives us a chance to make changes that will **build confidence** and deliver the **right support at the right time in the right place**.
- ❖ The Change Programme is paving the way for a **nationally consistent system** of support for disabled children and young people, and children and young people with SEN or who need help from alternative provision wherever they live in the country.

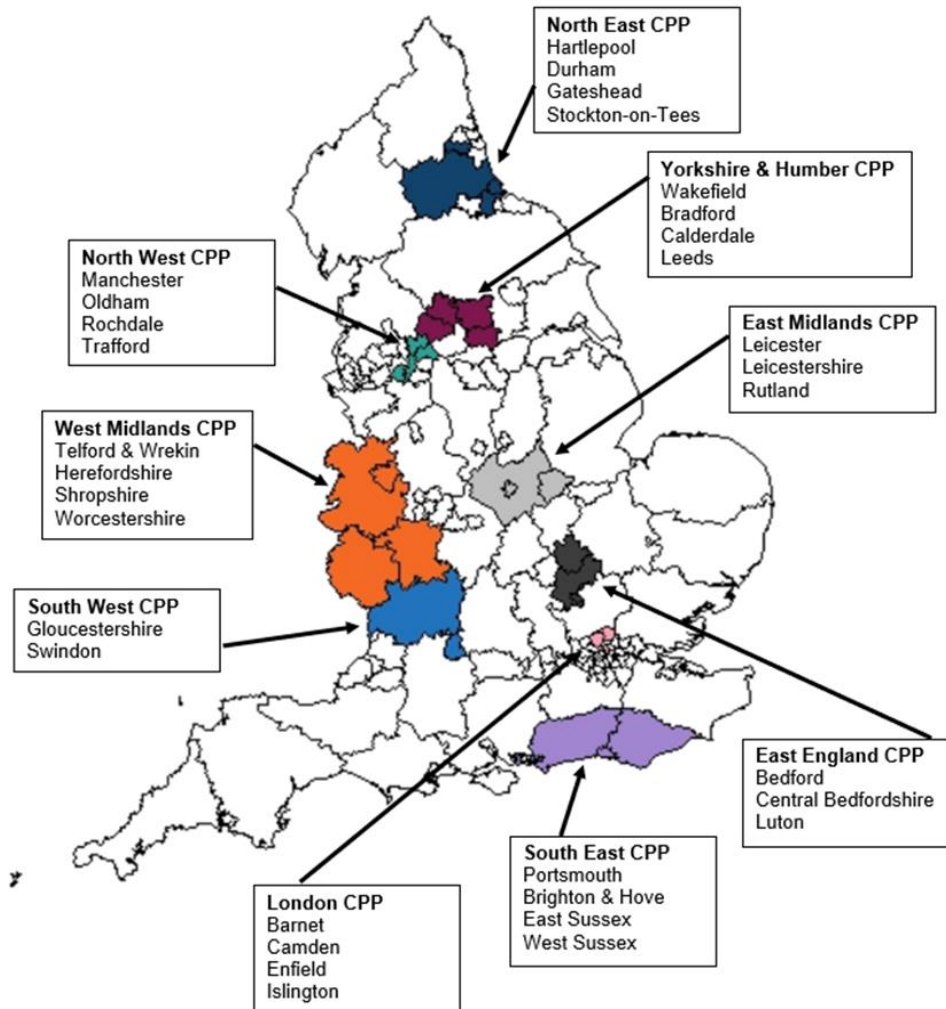


# Our vision for a better SEND and AP system

- ❖ By delivering the **right support, at the right time, in the right place**, the Government wants to achieve its vision for a **more inclusive society** with high aspirations for all children and young people
- ❖ We want **to fulfil children's potential**, so children and young people can enjoy their childhood, achieve good outcomes and are well prepared for adulthood
- ❖ We want to **build parents' and carers' trust** by having an accessible and easy to navigate system of help
- ❖ We want to **provide financial sustainability** by helping our local leaders make the best use of budgets to meet the needs of children and young people and improve outcomes



# How does the Change Programme work?



- ❖ The Change Programme is working in 32 local areas. These are organised into 9 regions in England and are called Change Programme Partnerships, or CPPs for short.
- ❖ CPPs are made up of local authorities, health professionals, schools and families.
- ❖ All CPPs will be testing the same thing. We are testing reforms to gather evidence about what works and what does not work. This will help the Department for Education understand and learn what it will take to make a change to the SEND system.
- ❖ Local Integrated Care Boards are also working with us to test Early Language Support for Every Child (ELSEC) in selected local areas.



# How are parents, carers and families involved in the Change Programme?

- ❖ We want parents, carers and families to be fully involved in the Change Programme throughout the 2 years it is being tested. Co-production and engagement are at the heart of this process.
- ❖ Each CPP has a 'steering group'. These are groups that provide leadership to oversee the development of the Change Programme and monitor the progress being made. They consist of key stakeholders including parents and carers, health and schools.
- ❖ As a minimum, each steering group will have representation from the National Network of Parent Carer Forums (NNPCF).
- ❖ We also want Local Areas to involve parents from local representative groups in local SEND and AP partnerships.
- ❖ Many parents and their children will be directly involved in testing the reforms. Those starting the EHCP process will help us to test the new standardised templates, or a child with speech, language and communication needs in early years may benefit from our Early Language Support for Every Child.
- ❖ Testing the reforms does **not** change any statutory rights of the child, young person, parent or carer.
- ❖ We also will be working closely with parents, carers and families when collecting feedback and during the evaluation. We want to know how the reforms are affecting children and young people, and parents, carers and families – good or bad.



# What reforms are we testing on the Change Programme?

- ❖ Until at least March 2025, the Change Programme is testing a package of reforms that focus on how SEND and AP services work in local areas
- ❖ The Department for Education needs to know about how each reform works and what it takes to make it happen. We also want to know how the reforms work together and influence outcomes in local systems.
- ❖ The reforms will all be tested over the next two years but are all in different stages of development.
- ❖ There are four main areas of reforms. Each one has a number of policy changes to test:

## Enablers

*These reforms are focussed on establishing the foundations to enable the SEND and AP system to work.*

- ✓ National and Local Inclusion Dashboards
- ✓ Local SEND and AP Partnerships and Local Area Inclusion Plans
- ✓ Improving Transitions in Early Years and Post-16 Institutions

## Ordinarily Available Provision

*These reforms are focused on ensuring and extending access to provision which should be ordinarily available, so that needs are identified and support is provided as early as possible.*

- ✓ AP 3-tier Service
- ✓ AP Specialist Taskforce Model
- ✓ Early Language Support for Every Child (ELSEC)

## EHC Plan Reform

*These reforms are focused on increasing the consistency between local authorities' processes to ensure that those who need more specialist support can get it faster and in a more joined-up way.*

- ✓ Standardised EHCP template
- ✓ Standardised advice templates (TBC)
- ✓ Multi-agency panels
- ✓ Advisory Tailored Lists
- ✓ Strengthened mediation

## Standards and Commissioning

*These reforms focus on making structural changes to the system and setting out national standards.*

- ✓ National Standards
- ✓ Bands and Tariffs

# What support is available on the Change programme for parents, carers and families?

- ❖ The Department for Education are working with a delivery partner called **REACH** (Reaching Excellence and Ambition for all Children).
- ❖ REACH are a team of 4 organisations, each with expertise and experience in working with parents and carers and the government. The four organisations are:
  - PA Consulting
  - IMPOWER
  - Council for Disabled Children
  - Olive Academies
- ❖ REACH have a monthly newsletter that includes information and updates on the Change Programme. You can sign up for it [here](#).
- ❖ Local Parent and Carer Forums (PCF) can provide feedback from parent carers to inform the reforms. You can find out about your local PCF group [here](#). We also are working closely with the National Network of Parent Carer Forums (**NNPCF**). Regional NNPCF Representatives are part of each Change Programme Partnership steering group and their role is to represent families and make sure the voices of parents, carers and families are heard.
- ❖ Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Information Advice and Support Service (**SENDIASS**) are fully aware of the Change Programme and they will continue to provide support when requested by parents, carers and young people.





# Enabler reforms: Local SEND and AP Partnerships and Local Area Inclusion Plans (LAIPs)

## Why do we need this reform?

- ❖ Local planning helps to ensure that there are good levels of high-quality and accessible provision in a local area that will meet the needs of children and young people with SEND and those who need alternative provision.
- ❖ SEND and AP Partnerships will bring together education, health, and care sectors. These sectors will work collaboratively to meet their statutory responsibilities of children and young people with SEND and those who need alternative provision.
- ❖ We will be testing a new model for SEND and AP partnerships which will hold professionals accountable in decision making.
- ❖ We will have a new national template that brings together all existing documents to create a single local area inclusion plan (LAIP)

## How does this affect parents, carers and families?

- ❖ Schools and parents and carer forums were included in developing LAIPs across each local area, to make sure your views were taken into account.
- ❖ Having good partnerships will result in good outcomes. Currently there are problems with all sectors interacting with each other, and we hope to change this.
- ❖ By helping schools, health and care professionals collaborate and hold each other to account, we are avoiding the duplication of work, and we are ensuring that children, young people and their families are receiving the best possible support and outcomes.



# Enabler reforms: National & Local Inclusion Dashboard

## Why do we need this reform?

- ❖ We want to increase the access and transparency of SEND and AP performance data for 0-25 provision across education, health and care.
- ❖ The dashboard brings together multiple SEND and AP performance metrics into a single platform. It can be used to help to identify best practices, allow Local Authorities to benchmark nationally, regionally and locally, to monitor progress of reforms and changes made locally as well as wider implementation of reforms in SEND and AP.
- ❖ The aim of the dashboard is to be a starting point to gather information easily and quickly and **not** a tool to compare 'good' or 'bad' areas in the UK.

## How does this affect parents, carers and families?

- ❖ The dashboard is fully accessible online to the public. Parents, carers and families have access to the information and can view SEND and AP data independently in their local areas and compare this to the national picture.



# Ordinarily Available Provision reforms: Alternative Provision 3-Tiered Model

## Why do we need this reform?

- ❖ The 3-tier model for AP is based on earlier identification of need, offering targeted support in mainstream settings to identify needs early and reduce preventable exclusions (Tier 1).
- ❖ The model also offers a structure for enabling high quality time-limited and transitional placements (Tiers 2&3) and draws on findings from the DfE's AP Specialist Taskforces pilot, which involves co-locating specialist workforce onsite in a school or AP setting.

## How does this affect parents, carers and families?

- ❖ The 3-tiered model provides support to keep children and young people in mainstream education.
- ❖ Early identification of needs, and providing the right support as early as possible will prevent needs from escalating and becoming more complex which will improve the wellbeing of children and young people, and the improve the experiences of the SEND and AP system for children and young people and their families.



# Ordinarily Available Provision reforms: Alternative Provision Specialist Taskforces (APST)

## Why do we need this reform?

- ❖ The Alternative Provision Specialist Taskforce (APST) is a workforce model which involves multi-disciplinary teams of specialists from education, health, social care, youth work and youth justice who are co-located and providing wraparound support to pupils and families.
- ❖ It is designed to put necessary capacity and skills in alternative provision to help enable the 3-Tier model.
- ❖ APST involves multi-disciplinary teams (or taskforces) of specialists that are co-located onsite in school, building trusted relationships and delivering co-ordinated and child-centred support.

## How does this affect parents, carers and families?

- ❖ Specialists work together, build relationships with pupils and within schools, and can be responsive to children and families' needs.
- ❖ APST can ensure children's needs are more fully understood and supported early on, so they have the best possible outcomes (whether remaining in/returning to mainstream school, or positive transitions post-16).
- ❖ Through APST there will be increased access to mental health support for children and young people, and more educational psychologists.
- ❖ We have been testing the APST since 2021 in 22 AP schools in England. We have already found that APST is beneficial through fewer missed appointments, more effective assessments, and easier co-ordination with other services.
- ❖ **It is not a requirement that parents, carers and families test APST, it is a suggestion.**

# Ordinarily Available Provision reforms: Early Language Support for Every Child (ELSEC)

## Why do we need this reform?

- ❖ The DfE and NHSE are working collaboratively and improving learning and communication across the sectors to deliver ELSEC
- ❖ We want more community-based professionals to identify Speech, Language and Communication needs quicker in early years and primary settings.
- ❖ We want to recruit and train more people to deliver speech and language therapy to help with waiting lists and the shortage of professionals.
- ❖ Only a few local authorities are testing ELSEC. For now, this isn't being trialed in all 32 areas.

## How does this affect parents, carers and families?

- ❖ Children and young people will receive the right support at the right place at the right time.
- ❖ Needs will be identified at the earliest opportunity in early years or primary schools enabling support and intervention to be delivered faster.
- ❖ By having more staff and reducing waiting time children and young people won't fall behind their peers.



# EHCP reforms: Standardised EHCP template

## Why do we need this reform?

- ❖ We want to establish a single national EHCP system by 2025 which makes best practice common practice in producing and maintaining an EHCP.
- ❖ This will improve the experience of creating an EHCP but will also improve the quality of plans and thus better supporting children and young people to enjoy the best possible outcomes in adulthood. It will also make it easier for partners and professionals to work in consistent ways with shared language, especially those who work across different local areas.

## How does this affect parents, carers and families?

- ❖ The DfE have consulted extensively with partners across education, health and care, as well as families and to develop the new template. We will continue to work with families and those delivering plans to ensure it is fit for purpose.
- ❖ The EHCP template is designed to raise the quality of EHC plans, by making the section on a child's strengths and ambitions more positive robust, by embedding the golden thread between need, provision and outcomes more clearly, and embedding prompts to help LAs produce lawful, specified and quantified plans.
- ❖ We want the EHCP templates to be easier to understand. We also want the plan to focus on understanding the child or young person more, making sure they are better understood in the eyes of a professional and improving their outcomes.
- ❖ The template and process being tested is based on the **current** legal framework, with all the current protections of an EHC plan.





# EHCP reforms: Multi-Agency Panels (MAPs)

## Why do we need this reform?

- ❖ We want to improve the quality and consistency of decision making on EHC and build the confidence and understanding of parents/carers and education settings in the decisions, as well as next steps regarding support.
- ❖ The Change Programme will also gather examples of good practice that go beyond the minimum requirements being tested.
- ❖ We expect improvements to the use of Multi-Agency Panels to work alongside other changes we are testing to the EHC process, including the standardised EHCP template, strengthened mediation and providing parents with an advisory tailored list.
- ❖ The role of the MAP is to ensure :
  - decision-making is suitably transparent, well informed, open to challenge, and focused on the needs of the child/YP;
  - decisions and next steps regarding support are clearly communicated to the parent/carer and setting;
  - learning from the panels is used as a tool for continuous improvement.

## How does this affect parents, carers and families?

- ❖ Multi-agency panels will bring together local representatives from across the SEND sector to ensure high quality advice helps inform the LA's decision making.
- ❖ Areas will integrate parent carer voices to this process, according to local preference, and following discussions with their parent carer forums.
- ❖ Areas will offer to discuss any decision not to issue or assess, as well as decisions to cease EHC plans with parents, carers and families, along with their education setting, to explain the rationale for the decision and appropriate next steps to support the young person.



# Enabler reforms: National & Local Inclusion Dashboard

## Why do we need this reform?

- ❖ We want to support parents to express an informed preference for a placement in their child's EHC plan by providing them with an advisory tailored list of settings that are likely to be suitable to meet the child's special educational needs.
- ❖ **The list is advisory.** Families' rights in law, to express a preference for a setting, remain in place and are unaffected – there have been no changes to the law.
- ❖ Families of eligible children in the local area will have the right to opt-out of receiving an advisory tailored list when the list is explained following a decision to assess.

## How does this affect parents, carers and families?

- ❖ Advisory tailored lists involve parents, carers and families from the beginning of the process and allow you to make an informed decision on the best suited support that is available to your child.
- ❖ Lists will be tailored to the child's individual needs, reflecting discussion of the views, wishes, and feelings of the child and their parent or carer.
- ❖ Lists could include mainstream, specialist or independent settings, as appropriate. However, whilst testing the reforms, a school or other educational setting being included on a list will not be a guarantee that a placement will be possible.
- ❖ For now, whilst we are testing this reform, advisory tailored lists will not be offered to young people (inc. those in school sixth forms, 16-19 academies, sixth form colleges, general Further Education colleges or special post-16 institutions)
- ❖ At this stage, advisory tailored lists will only be given to parents of eligible children of compulsory school age, i.e. those undergoing an EHC needs assessment or those preparing to move to a different setting with an existing plan.

# Enabler reforms: National & Local Inclusion Dashboard

## Why do we need this reform?

- ❖ We want local areas to be able to compare the quality, cost and family experiences of mediation against other areas.
- ❖ We want to improve the speed of mediation, and encourage the participation of local authorities in pre-mediation activities.
- ❖ We want to **strengthen mediation** to improve understanding and resolving disputes.
- ❖ Strengthening mediation **does not change the legal rights of parents** to challenge decisions made by local authorities.
- ❖ The DfE has **no targets for reduction in the number of EHCPs**, nor of the number of cases going to tribunal.

## How does this affect parents, carers and families?

- ❖ Parents and carers will have improved access to information on mediation. We are working with the Council for Disabled Children to produce new joint-family friendly mediation guidance and are working with the Civil mediation Council and the College of Mediators to review and build on the SEND mediation professional standards.
- ❖ We want to ensure mediation happens within 30 days
- ❖ The use of high-quality mediation should result in:
  - Children and young people's needs being met faster by avoiding the current year-long wait associated with the First-tier Tribunal (the Tribunal).
  - Families experiencing a less stressful and adversarial route for resolving disagreements.



# Standards and Commissioning: National Standards

## Why do we need this reform?

- ❖ The DfE want to create a new set of SEND and AP standards for identifying and meeting the needs of children and young people.
- ❖ National Standards will focus on setting out clear expectations for the types of support that should be ordinarily available and holding those responsible accountable for providing this.
- ❖ These standards will explain what support should be available, who should provide it and who should pay for it.
- ❖ This reform will cover early years, schools and post-16 provision.
- ❖ The DfE are committed to testing three practitioner standards by 2025. These are: Early Years Speech, Language and Communication Needs; Autism; Social, Emotional and Mental Health.

## How does this affect parents, carers and families?

- ❖ This reform will make sure that all children and young people and their families are getting the right minimum standard of support that they are entitled to.



# Standards and Commissioning: Bands and Tariffs

## Why do we need this reform?

- ❖ The DfE want to improve consistency in the SEND system and make sure that similar provision is given for children and young people with similar needs across England, no matter where they live.
- ❖ We want support and services to work the same way across the country.
- ❖ We are not testing this reform at the minute, but we will begin data collection soon.
- ❖ We want to test any bands and tariffs policies first to make sure we do not create unintended consequences for families.

## How does this affect parents, carers and families?

- ❖ This reform will make sure that all children and young people and their families are getting the right minimum standard of support that they are entitled to, no matter where they live in the UK.

