

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



Department
for Education

REACH
Reaching Excellence and Ambition
for all Children

The SEND and AP Improvement Plan

In 2019, the Government reviewed the SEND 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 then 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 were many issues with the system, such as:

- ❖ Failing to deliver improved outcomes for children and young people with SEND
- ❖ 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 Change Programme?

The Government's vision is to create a more inclusive society that is built around the **right support at the right time** and 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 parent's and carers' trust** by having an accessible and easy to navigate system of help.

We want to **provide financial sustainability** by having our local leaders make the best use of budgets to meet the needs of children and young people and improve outcomes.

The Change Programme gives us an opportunity to test **system level reforms** and to **build confidence** and deliver the **right changes in the right way at the right time**.

We are testing reforms to gather evidence about what does and does not work. This will help the Department for Education understand and learn what will be needed to help local areas make the change to the new SEND and AP system.

We want to **test our big ideas** to make sure they will work and **make things better** for families and children and young people with SEND or who need support from AP.

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.

The Change Programme reforms

Until March 2025, the Change Programme is testing a package of reforms that focus on how SEND and AP services work in local areas. We have four reform areas:

- ❖ **Enablers:** These reforms are focussed on establishing the foundations to enable the SEND and AP system to work.
- ❖ **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.
- ❖ **Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCP):** We want these reforms to improve the quality of EHCPs, improve the experience of getting an EHCP and improve outcomes for children and young people with EHCPs.
- ❖ **Standards and Commissioning:** These reforms focus on making structural changes to the system and setting out national standards.

Testing the reforms does **not** change any statutory rights of child, young person, parent or carer.

The Change Programme reforms are **based on current legislation**. There have been **no changes to the law** or changes to decisions about individual children and young people.

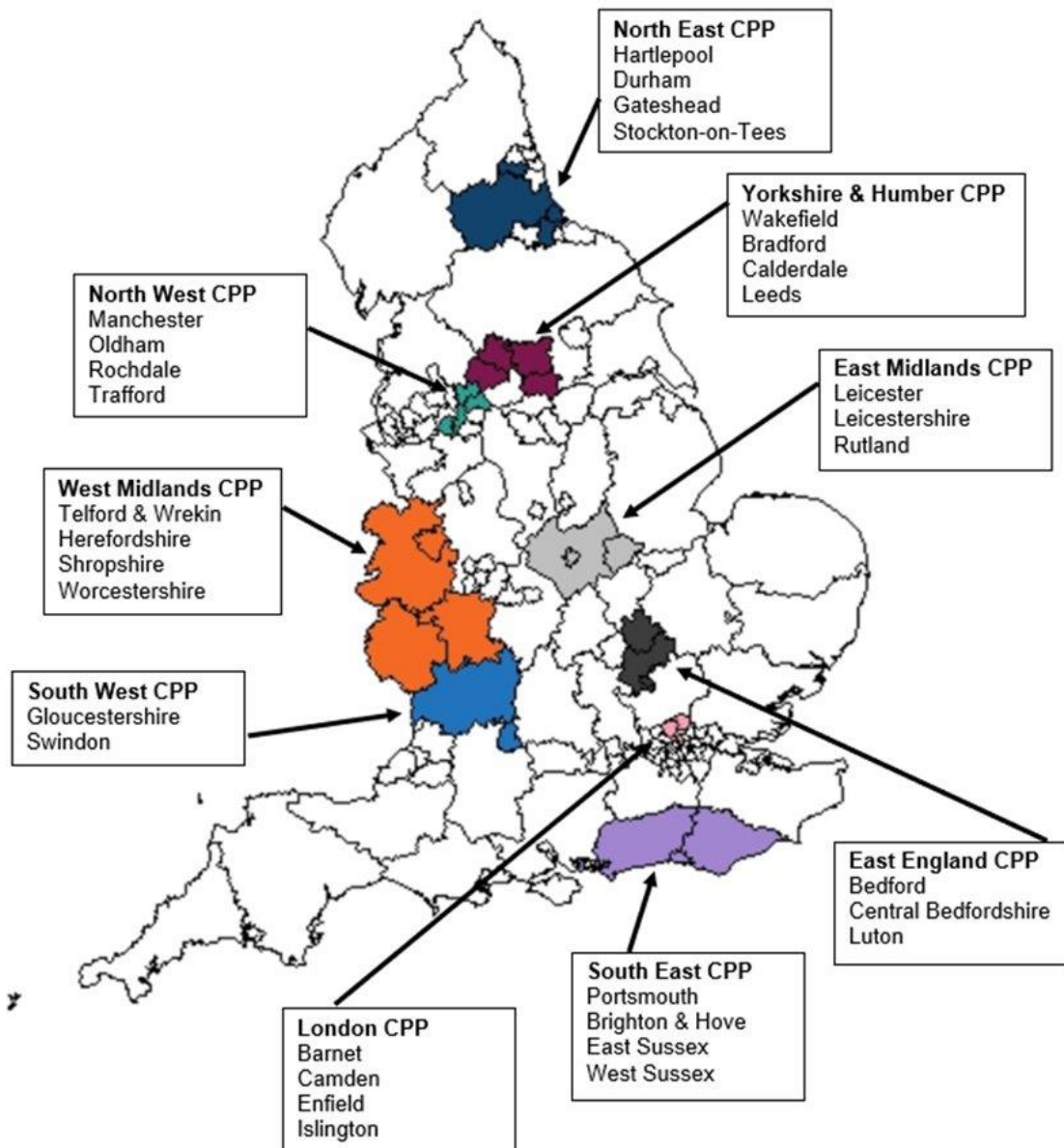
The Department for Education **has no targets for reduction** of SEND services or support (for example the number of EHCPs, nor of the number of cases going to tribunal).

Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Information Advice and Support Service (**SENDIASS**) are fully aware of the Change Programme and will continue to provide support when requested by parents, carers and young people.

Where are we testing the Change Programme reforms?

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.

Our 32 areas can be seen on the map below:



How are we including parents, carers and families?

We want parents, carers and families to be fully involved in the Change Programme. Co-production and engagement are at the heart of this process.

Each CPP has a 'steering group' and each steering group has strong representation from parent groups and forums, such as the National Network of Parent Carer Forums (**NNPCF**), who represent families and make sure the voices of parents, carers and families are heard.

We want Local Areas to also engage with a wide range of parents, carers and families that may not be on the steering groups. This includes those whose children are on SEN support, or who are in AP, and children and young people themselves.

We will be working closely with parents, carers and families when collecting feedback and during the evaluation, too. We want to know how the reforms are affecting you

Local Parent and Carer Forums (PCFs) can provide feedback from their local parent carer community to inform the reforms. You can find out about your local PCF group and how to contact them [here](#).

We have appointed ICF Consulting Services to carry out an independent evaluation of the proposed SEND and AP policy reforms. They will be working to capture perspectives of children and young people with SEND, their families, LA staff, health professionals, and education providers.

Our delivery partner REACH (made up of PA Consulting, IMPOWER, Council for Disabled Children and Olive Academies) also have a **monthly newsletter** with updates and insights from the Change Programme. You can sign up [here](#).