

Introduction to the Change Programme

The Change Programme is a national programme that aims to test and improve some of the policy changes that were proposed in the [Special Educational Needs and Disabilities \(SEND\) and Alternative Provision \(AP\) Improvement Plan](#) that was published in March 2023.

The Department for Education (DfE) has a vision for a nationally consistent SEND & AP system that provides the right support, at the right time, and in the right place for disabled children and young people and children and young people with Special Educational Needs (SEN) or who are in alternative provision, wherever they live in the country.

To realise this vision, the new system aims to:

- **Fulfil children's potential:** Children and young people with SEND or those attending alternative provision enjoy their childhood, achieve good outcomes and are well prepared for adulthood and employment;
- **Build parents' trust:** Parents and carers experience a fairer, easily navigable system (across education, health and care) that restores their confidence that their children will get the right support, in the right place, at the right time;
- **Provide financial sustainability:** Local leaders make the best use of investment in the high needs budget to meet children and young people's needs and improve outcomes, while placing local authorities on a stable financial footing.

The Change Programme provides an opportunity to test the SEND & AP Improvement Plan's proposed reforms in local areas before enacting the reforms nationally.

The project is being delivered by Change Programme Partnerships (CPP) in nine regions of England, including the North West partnership that includes Manchester.

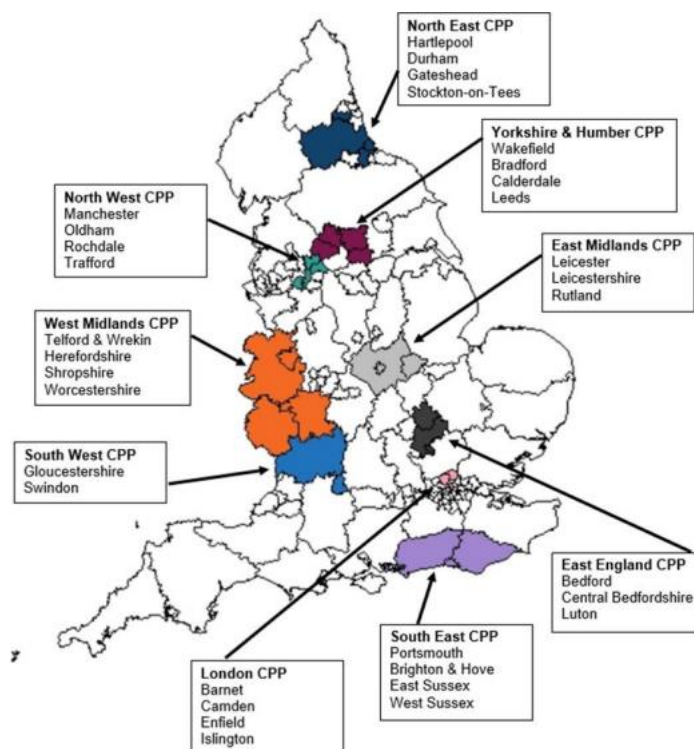


Figure 1. CPP Regions (Source: DfE and REACH)



What are the government's proposed reforms to the SEND and AP System?

The proposals that were outlined in the SEND & AP Improvement Plan are categorised into four reform areas and include:

1. Enablers

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

2. Ordinarily Available Provision

- Alternative Provision (AP) 3-Tiered Model
- AP Specialist Taskforces
- Early Language Support for Every Child (ELSEC)

3. Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) Reforms

- Standardised EHCP template and advice templates
- Multi Agency Panels in EHCP decision-making
- Advisory Tailored Lists in EHCPs
- Strengthened Mediation

4. Standards and Commissioning

- National Standards for SEND provision
- Bands and Tariffs

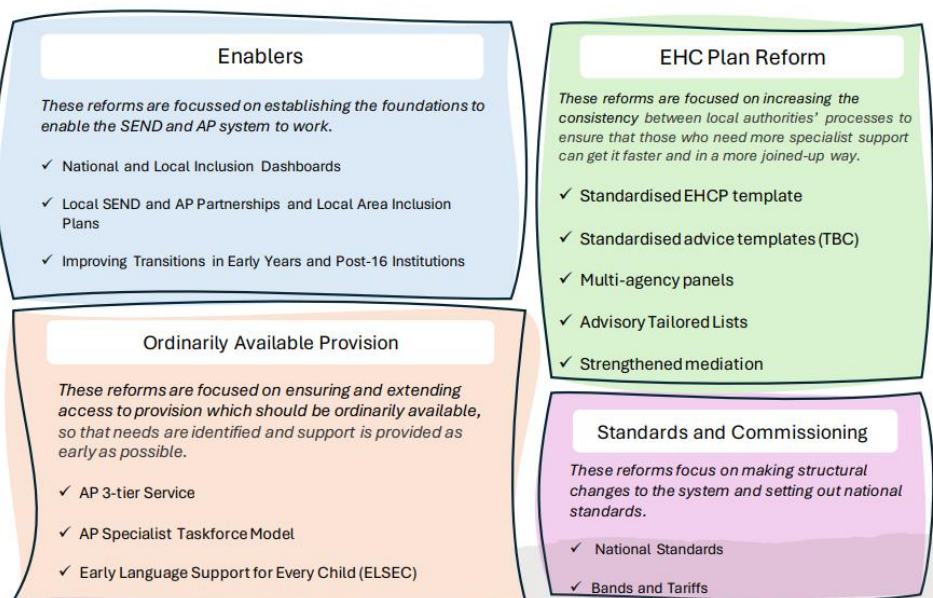


Figure 2. Four Areas of Reforms (Source: DfE and REACH)



What does this mean for Manchester?

The Change Programme Partnership for the North West region includes Manchester, Oldham, Rochdale, and Trafford – with Manchester City Council as the lead authority.

In the spirit of co-production, we expect the Parent Carer Forums (PCF) in each of these areas to be treated as equal partners within the CPP, working closely with partners across Education, Health and Social Care. As always, we PCFs will bring parent/ carer voice in all the local and regional activities and discussions that we're involved with.

How will this affect you and your child?

First and foremost, please remember that **the law hasn't changed**. Children, young people, or parent and carers will not be required to surrender any statutory rights to take part in testing the reforms.

Some of the changes that you might notice may include:

- **A different EHCP template** : The proposed new template is designed to raise the quality of EHCPs, by making the section on a child or young person's strengths and ambitions more robust; by embedding the "golden thread" between need, provision and outcomes more clearly; and by embedding prompts to help LAs produce lawful, specified and quantified plans. If you feel that the new template doesn't accomplish these aspirations, we encourage you to send feedback to us and/or to Manchester City Council's EHCP Team.
NOTE: The new template will only be used in a proportion of new EHCP requests. Parents/carers will be given a chance to opt-in to this upon discussion with the EHCP team.
- **The use of "Advisory Tailored Lists" in the draft EHCP** : This means that your draft EHC Plan will include a list of schools or other settings that are likely to be suitable to meet your child's Special Educational Needs. The list is purely *advisory*. Your rights to express a preference for a setting remain in place and are unaffected.
NOTE: The Advisory Tailored Lists will only be offered in a proportion of new draft EHCPs. Parents/carers will be given a chance to opt-in to this upon discussion with the EHCP team.
- **More information and encouragement to access mediation when you don't agree with a decision related to your child's EHCP** : The government wants local areas to consistently provide families with access to high quality support to resolve disputes earlier and provide a more positive route for families pursuing their complaint. This does not change the legal rights of parents to challenge decisions made by local authorities.

Most of the reforms being tested are at a "system level" and may not necessarily be felt at an individual or family level. However, we will share with you any other potential changes that might affect families directly, as and when we know more about the programme.



Get Involved

Your voice is important in influencing the reforms that we are currently testing. Together, we can help shape the best possible version of the national SEND and AP system that our children, young people and families so greatly deserve.

If you notice any of the above changes happening, please let us know and send your feedback to us and/or to Manchester City Council and/or to the SEND Information, Advice and Support Service (SENDIASS).

We will share other opportunities for parents and carers to get involved, as and when they come. Please follow us on social media ([Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#)) and subscribe to the [SEND Local Offer newsletter](#) to keep updated with what's happening related to the Change Programme and other SEND matters.

If you know parents/carers of children and young people with SEND, or those who go to an AP, in any of the other participating CPP areas, please encourage them to reach out to their local Parent Carer Forum about the Change Programme.

More Information

To learn more about the Change Programme and the CPP, please visit <https://bit.ly/change-programme-manchester> or go to <https://www.manchester.gov.uk/sendlocaloffer> then search "Change Programme".

To learn more about the SEND and Alternative Provision Improvement Plan, please visit <https://bit.ly/send-ap-improvement-plan> or visit [this Gov.uk link](#) for a downloadable easy-read version.



Figure 3. Scan this QR Code for more info

