

# Barnet Children's Partnership Board Report

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**Title:** SEND and AP Change Programme.

**Meeting Date:** 13 July 2023.

**Author:** Karen Flanagan, Director SEND and Inclusion

**Service/ Dept.:** Barnet Education and Learning Service

**Report to be Presented By:** Karen Flanagan

## 1. Summary of Key Information.

- Following widespread concerns at a national level, the DfE published a Green Paper in March 2022 'SEND Review: Right Support, Right Place, Right Time'<sup>1</sup>.
- A year later in March 2023 the DfE published its SEND and Alternative Provision (AP) Improvement Plan<sup>2</sup>. This included a set of key proposals which will be piloted on a national basis across the 9 DfE regions (Appendix 2).
- In each region there will be a Regional Expert Partnership (REP) made up of 3 or 4 LAs led by a lead Local Authority.
- High performing Local Authorities in each area were asked to submit an Expression of Interest (EOI).
- Following Barnet's EOI (Appendix 1) we have been selected to be the Lead Local Authority for the London Regional Expert Partnership (REP) (Appendix 3).
- Our other London partners who have been invited to be part of the London REP are Enfield, Camden and Islington.
- The national launch event is scheduled for the 19 September 2023.
- Further detailed information can be found in sections 2 – 4 below; risks and mitigations are set out in section 5.

## 2. DfE. SEND and AP improvement Plan: context.

1.1 The Children and Families Act<sup>3</sup> (CFA) was enacted in 2014. Part 3 of the Act relates to children and young people in England with Special Educational Need and/or Disabilities (SEND). The aims of the reforms were for children's needs to be identified earlier; families to be more involved in decisions affecting them; education, health and social care services to be better integrated; and support to remain in place up to the age of 25 where appropriate.

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<sup>1</sup> SEND Review - right support, right place, right time ([publishing.service.gov.uk](https://publishing.service.gov.uk))

<sup>2</sup> Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and Alternative Provision (AP) Improvement Plan ([publishing.service.gov.uk](https://publishing.service.gov.uk))

<sup>3</sup> [Children and Families Act 2014 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://www.legislation.gov.uk)

1.2 Since then, there has been much criticism about the system from families, Councils and wider professionals<sup>4</sup>. This has included the National Audit Office report into SEND 2019 and the Inquiry by the House of Commons Select Committee.

1.3 In response to the widespread concerns and findings, the DfE published a Green Paper in March 2022 'SEND Review: Right Support, Right Place, Right Time'<sup>5</sup>. A year later in March 2023 the DfE published its SEND and Alternative Provision (AP) Improvement Plan<sup>6</sup>.

1.4 The Green Paper set out its vision with regard how to support children and young people with SEND and improve the system for families. The Improvement Plan sets out how and when it will achieve this.

1.5 Key proposals include the introduction of

- **National standards to increase consistency at a national level.**
  - These are wide ranging and include what provision should be in place for different need types, identification of need, casework, communication, complaints, what is ordinarily available for children and young people with SEND but who do not have Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs), Alternative Provision, transitions, co-production, as well as standards such as decision making, annual reviews and mediation which the DfE proposes to make mandatory.
- **Establish SEND and Alternative Provision (AP) Partnerships.**
  - To ensure the right people at the right level undertake a needs assessment of the local area and produce a Local Inclusion Plan which clearly sets out what is available and will be commissioned.
- **Introduction of a standardised EHCP and Digitise the process.**
- **Provide tailored lists to parents of suitable placements.**
- **Improve staff training.**
- **A three-tiered approach to AP**
  - Direct support in mainstream, short term intensive off-site placements in a Pupil Referral Unit (PRU), longer term placement in PRU with the focus on reintegration into mainstream or Further Education (FE).

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<sup>4</sup> National Audit Office report in SEND 2019. <https://www.nao.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/Support-for-pupils-with-special-education-needs.pdf>

Local area SEND inspections: one year on', Ofsted and Care Quality Commission, October 2017;

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/ofsted-annual-report-201920-education-childrens-services-and-skills>

Ofsted Annual Report 2019/20: education, children's services and skills', Ofsted, December 2020

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/ofsted-annual-report-201920-education-childrens-services-and-skills>

Inquiry by the House of Commons Select Committee October 2019

<https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201919/cmselect/cmeduc/20/2002.htm>

<sup>5</sup> SEND Review - right support, right place, right time ([publishing.service.gov.uk](https://publishing.service.gov.uk))

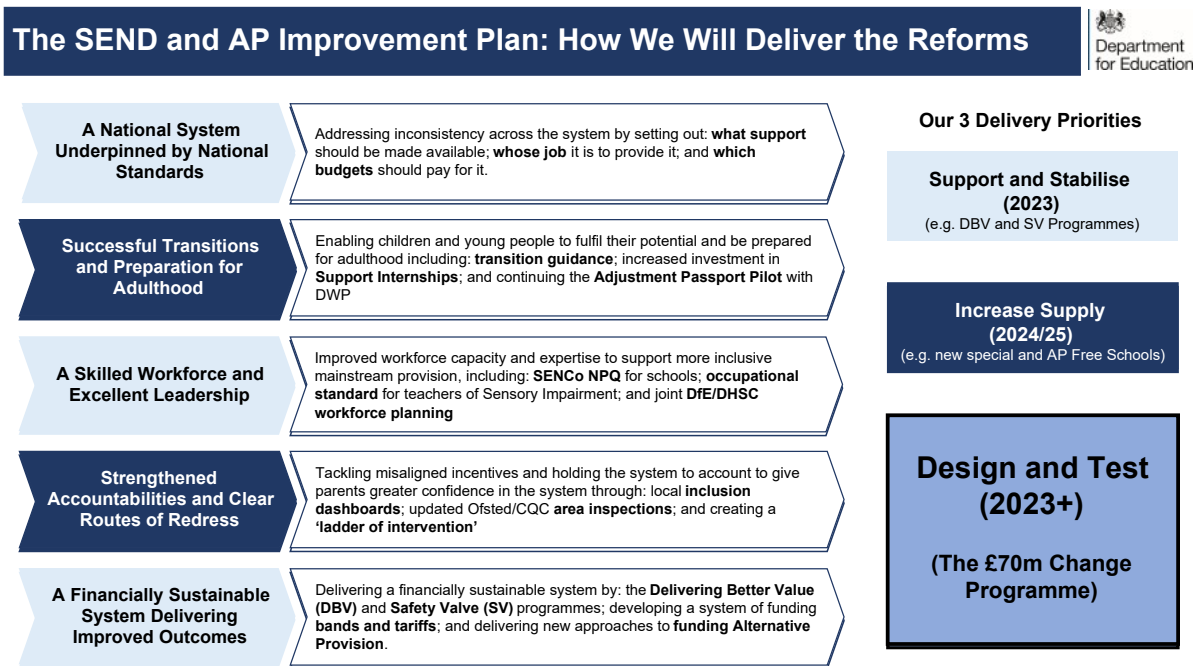
<sup>6</sup> Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and Alternative Provision (AP) Improvement Plan ([publishing.service.gov.uk](https://publishing.service.gov.uk))

- Introduction of Inclusion dashboards so parents and professionals can see how the SEND system is performing at local and national level.
- Introduce a new national framework of banding and tariffs for funding matched to levels of need and types of education provision set out in the national standards.

### 3. DfE £70m SEND and AP ‘Change Programme’.

3.1 The DfE is investing £70m nationally for selected areas to test and trial the proposals for reform as set out in the SEND and AP Improvement Plan.

#### Slide 1. The key areas of proposed reforms.



3.2 In order to test out the proposals for reforms the DfE identified the top high performing LAs in each region and asked them to submit an Expression of Interest (EOI) to be the lead partner for a Regional Expert Partnership (REP) area.

3.3 The successful lead LA will work in partnership with the other DfE chosen Authorities in its region and will receive funding of £5.8m over 2 years to use across its REP to support the testing and evaluation of the proposals.

## Role of Lead LA: Expertise to Deliver Change

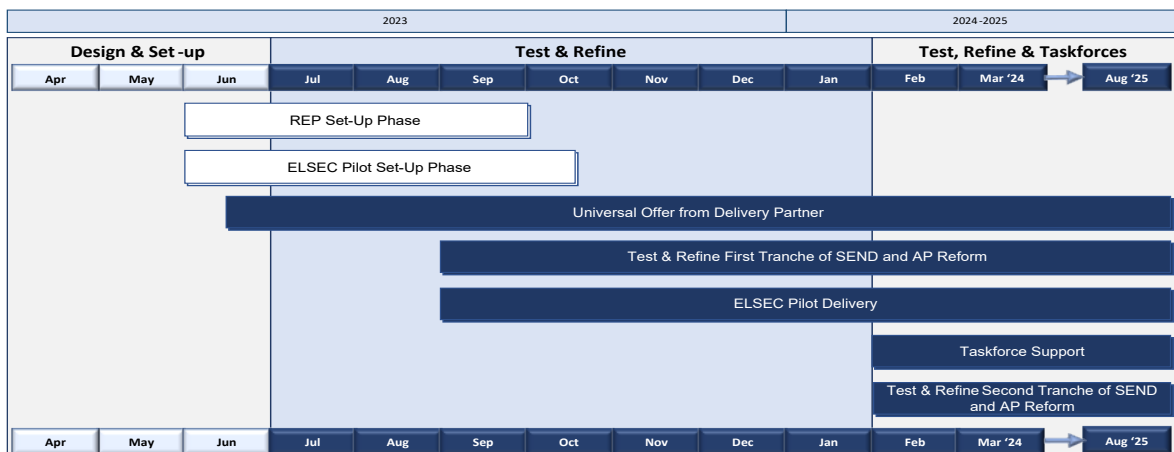
We want LAs who can use their experience of delivering effectively within the current SEND system to lead the testing and refining of the SEND and AP reforms across each REP. Working closely with the Department, lead LAs will have a key role in shaping the direction of the Change Programme.

Provide leadership across the REP	Drive change and share practice and learning	Delivery and monitoring progress
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Set up and lead local REP Steering Group/ Board and develop the partnership</li> <li>Ensure consistent testing across the REP to help us test for a national system</li> <li>Facilitate the provision of experts from across the REP for expert groups and co-production e.g. National Standards</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Facilitate REP participation in a feedback loop with DfE - providing continuous insights on learning from testing</li> <li>Take a lead role in helping influence and refine the SEND and AP reforms</li> <li>Use expertise and strong practice to support other LAs in the REP and, in the Taskforce phase, other LAs in the Region.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Development of the REP Strategic Delivery Plan</li> <li>Monitoring and maintaining progress against the Strategic Delivery Plan.</li> <li>Identifying and resolving or escalating barriers or challenges to delivery</li> <li>Managing and monitoring the use of funding</li> </ul>

#### 4 EOI Outcome.

- 4.1 Following the submission of its EOI, the DfE have contacted Barnet to confirm we have been successful (Appendix 3).
- 4.2 The DfE has contacted 3 other LAs in the region to ask them to be part of the REP for which Barnet will be the lead LA. An information session for the partner LAs was held on the 12<sup>th</sup> of June. The proposed partners for the London REP are Barnet (Lead LA), Camden, Enfield and Islington.
- 4.3 There has been a delay to the start of the programme, the design and set up phase, which will now continue into September 2023. The London launch event has been scheduled for the 19<sup>th</sup> of September 2023.
- 4.4 It is still expected that the first tranche of pilots will begin in the autumn term of 2023 with a focus on partnerships, Local Area Inclusion Plans (LAIPs), and testing the dashboard. LAIPs should set out how ordinarily available provision is going to be improved/delivered/put in place.
- 4.5 Further tranche of pilots are expected to start in February 2024.

## Timeline



5 Key risks, Mitigations and Support/Resources needed.

Risks	Mitigations	Resources/support needed
<p><b>Reputational damage</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>delays to the programme</li> <li>failure to deliver</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure local partners are kept informed about programme delivery and milestones.</li> <li>Communication strategy and comms that target overview of programme as well as specific aspects as appropriate for each pilot area and the stakeholders involved.</li> <li>Close monitoring to ensure any barriers are highlighted to the DfE straight away date.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>DfE to provide a clear communication strategy.</li> <li>Support from Barnet Comms team for local communication.</li> <li>Support from Barnet’s policy team.</li> <li>Use of DfE funding to ensure sufficient staffing to deliver and oversee the programme and support area to keep on track.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Damage to partnerships</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>parents</li> <li>colleagues and partners across education, health and care</li> <li>London partners</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Communication strategy</li> <li>Schedule regular meetings to keep all parties informed.</li> <li>Feedback re appropriate boards: SEND and AP Strategic Board, CYP Board, Health and Wellbeing board.</li> <li>Schedule on-line and in person information sessions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use of DfE funding to ensure sufficient staffing for project manager and Admin.</li> <li>DfE for Comms materials.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Confusion with local direction for identified areas of improvement, for example recommendations from the High Needs Block Review/NCL Review</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work with DfE evaluation partner, external consultants and the ICB to ensure clarity of improvements already in place and those planned to avoid duplication, crossover or opposing aims.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>DfE implementation team; BELS and Family Services SMT and ICB</li> </ul>
<p><b>Confusion about the Pilot and what it means for schools/parents in the pilot area</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Detailed communication strategy.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>DfE to provide a clear communication strategy.</li> <li>Support from Barnet Comms team for local communication.</li> <li>Support from Barnet’s policy team.</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Clarity of baseline data</b>, so impact can be accurately measured, and key areas targeted.</li> <li>• <b>Clarity of baseline data</b> from other London Boroughs in the REP and wider</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Commission a data Analysis report from MIME for Barnet</li> <li>• Work with DfE evaluation partner and LIIA</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• From DfE funding</li> <li>• DfE implementation team and LIIA</li> </ul>
<p><b>Delays in funding arrangements</b> being confirmed leading to delays in recruitment.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lead officer to make clear to the DfE the impact of delays in funding.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Raised during initial meeting 21 June 2023.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Change of government</b> - the latest date a General Election can be held is the 28 January 2025.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lead officer to seek clarity over 'what if' scenarios, with the DfE if there is a change of government so we are prepared and can plan in contingencies.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Raised during initial meeting 21 June 2023.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Lack of clarity over programme detail from the start may lead to delays in implementation as we cannot plan for what we do not know.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lead officer to make clear with the DfE concerns and implications.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Raised during initial meeting 21 June 2023.</li> </ul>

## Appendix 1. Barnet's EOI

**2. Please provide evidence of your current performance against the criteria set out in the background requirements and any underlying reasons why this might be different to any previously published data.**

*We have is a strong SEND/AP offer as evidenced in our [inspection](#). This highlights the strength of our partnerships and authentic coproduction which "goes beyond consultation and collaboration". CYP and their parents/carers are positive about educational experiences. The next Inspection is due 2027, if successful this would allow capacity for trialling and learning and time to support other authorities in partnership with wider REPs to enable improved practice and readiness for Area SEND Inspections and/or Change Programme. We are working towards meeting the proposals in the SEND/AP Improvement Plan. [Parent representation on our decision-making panels](#) for EHCPs is well established and regarded. It has increased depth, quality and transparency of decision making. We have coproduced a refreshed [ToR](#) to ensure correct membership and governance, and to build on our offer to ensure greater local understanding, monitoring and accountability for the outcomes and experiences of CYP with SEND or who are educated in AP settings and their families'. Barnet is a high performing Borough, SEN pupils in Barnet [attain well](#). KS 2 progress for Reading and Maths is within the top 10% nationally and progress for EHCP pupils at KS4 is in the top 10% of LAs for all key measures. We acted swiftly to embed a post covid '[Recovery, Reset and Renaissance](#)' programme. Multiple projects have supported children's confidence, reading, vocabulary and experiences. The language Enrichment Programme has been particularly successful (slide 41/42). [Training sessions are also offered to parent/carers](#). Our NHS provider and LEP work together to ensure all programmes of support complement each other without duplication, placing Barnet in a good position to participate in the ELSEC programme.*

We have remained proactive in terms of our High Needs Block to ensure sustainability as evidenced [‘High needs budgets: effective management in local authorities’](#) . We cannot be complacent about funding and have already commissioned an Independent HNB specialist to review spend, provide external robustness and share recommendations for increased efficiencies. Our DCS leads on resources for ADCS and is a member of the DBV steering group. Both PRUs are good/outstanding and already working towards many of the recommendations through a strong outreach offer including mentors, respite placements for 'at risk' pupils and weekly CAHMS support on site to support well-being and mental health at the Pavilion. Good links between external agencies, the PRU and the mentoring programme supports reintegration. We are working to make that even better to ensure all pathways and support are transparent and easily understood by schools and families alike. [Permanent exclusion and suspension rates](#) are below national and outer London averages. We made good use of increased capital funding to develop specialist provision including working with the DfE to create a new all age special school for Autism. We continued to see an increase in demand for EHCPs, completion rates remain high, 98.3% compared to 59.9% for England and 65.6% for London. Annual review completion rates are starting to improve after an increase in staffing but remain low, we would welcome support in this area.

**3. Please provide details of your capacity to build and lead a Regional Expert Partnership and the approach you would take to utilise the three tiers of support available to you.**

Stakeholder buy in is crucial for robust testing at operational, strategic, regional and national level. Our BPCF, DfE advisor, schools and wider partners are very supportive of this EOI. We believe the strength of our partnerships, leadership and culture of coproduction, alongside the three tiers of support and funding as a REP means we can recruit the capacity needed to work as part of a national team. In particular we are welcoming of the support from the Delivery and Implementation team in terms of project management, evaluation, experience and feedback. We know that communication will be critical to successful local testing and welcome the support offered by the DfE to ensure there is sufficient understanding of any local testing (in the same way SENDT pilots to include non-binding recommendation for health and social care aspects of the EHCP) and dissemination. We fully understand the research methodology in terms of all REPs testing the same reform proposal simultaneously to promote validity of testing. We feel this approach lends itself to shared practice and real time learning. We believe that Barnet has staff and teams with the necessary leadership and specialist SEND and AP expertise and experience to support and add value to the national change programme. We would use the additional funding to

- Recruit staff to backfill across our regional expert partnership to bring both our existing expertise to the strategic oversight, development and implementation of the different tranches of testing, as well as to ensure there is no loss of service at the local level and continue to make our planned improvements.
- Recruit additional staffing to support the additional work in terms of:
  - data collection, analysis cleansing and reporting
  - project management
  - collaboration, partnership development and collaboration with health, REPS, Partner LAs, BPCF and wider
  - support implementation at a strategic and operational level (including specialist teachers/EP as appropriate)

- administration
- evaluation of impact
- dissemination and support ahead of, during and following testing, at a local, regional and national level targeting all key partners, organisations and stakeholders.

We are particularly supportive of the Change Programme approach of combining action and traditional research methods. This formative and solution focused approach combined with the theoretical research will enable participating REPs to

- learn from each other,
- share that learning, and
- test the replicability and impact to support systemic change across the national system.

We believe that we can contribute to that approach via the identification and sharing of good practice and methodology already evident in our region e.g.

- LIIA's [Resources and commissioning](#) priority work led by Barnet's DCS
- Islington's [Parent charter](#) for schools, alongside the strength of our production
- Recent Learning from Area SEND Inspection (Enfield)
- Our partnership work on improving the ordinarily available offer supported by our Specialist Inclusion Team, the NCL ICB [Community Services Review and Mental Health Service Review](#), funding approaches used in Camden for example which enables [access to additional funding without the support of an EHCP](#). The latter of which has been successful in reducing the number of EHCPs.

**4. Please provide evidence of the strength of your local partnerships with schools, providers, parent groups etc, as well as the relationships you have with neighbouring local authorities. Consider DfE & ICB boundaries and how you will work collaboratively to successfully lead a Regional Expert Partnership.**

Barnet has the [second largest population](#) in London and is a diverse and welcoming LA striving to be ['family friendly'](#). We have a proven track record for partnership, leading change and working collaboratively to improve provision at Borough level.

- "Leaders from education, health and care have an accurate view of the positive impact of their work. They know what works well and what needs to improve. This is underpinned by strong and trusting working relationships and effective communication between partners".

NCL Level.

- Barnet has taken the lead for our partner LAs in our local ICB for the Community Services Board. This has led to funding increases from the ICB and Council following the NCL review. This has reduced OT and Physio wait times from 31 to 18 weeks for OT and from 21 to 16 weeks for physiotherapy. SLT wait times remain too high.

Regional Level.

At a wider London regional level working with [LLIA](#) who have already set up a [SEND dashboard](#). Barnet was the lead authority for cross London development for [collaborative commissioning](#) high-cost low incidence placements with a focus on SEMH/ASD.

Our partnership with schools and settings is extremely strong. School Leaders sit on all strategic boards including the Board of Directors of BELS. There is also parent/carer representation on the Board of Directors.



*We take swift action to remedy identifiable gaps to engender change with demonstrable impact.*

- [Barnet has] “worked with partners, including parents and carers, to develop an integrated service that can better respond to these needs. This is starting to have an impact, with some reduction in waiting times”.*

*We have implemented an [annual satisfaction survey](#) in relation to the services offered to our schools and settings since 2017. The overall percentage rate for extremely satisfied or satisfied is very high at 96.25%.*

*One of our key strengths is authentic coproduction at a strategic and operational level which includes both professionals, professional by experience and our children and young people.*

*“Coproduction (a way of working where children, families and those that provide the services work together to create a decision or a service that works for them all) in Barnet goes beyond consultation and collaboration. Children, young people and parents/carers influence and help deliver improvements across a wide range of services”.*

*Examples of this include our [Down Syndrome Pathway](#) that was “developed in partnership with parents/carers, professionals as well as those with Down’s syndrome”. The pathway received national recognition as a pathway of excellence.*

*This was the same approach that we took to developing our [Autism Strategy Action Plan](#) and our [Ordinarily Available](#) document (the latter of which DfE’s National Standards Unit has already contacted us about).*

*“Autism team are really practical and helpful with ideas. Really good at working alongside parents and schools. Support for children is invaluable”.*

*“Excellent support provided for staff, pupils and families [from Barnet Inclusion and Advisory team (IAT)]. We had a SEND Review which helped to assess provision in place and next steps needed to support our SEND pupils”*

## **5. Please provide any additional details you think are well placed to why you should lead a Regional Expert Partnership.**

*Barnet is well placed to lead the REP with robust SEND systems already in place as well as strong and stable leadership in the Council. We are already working on developing a range of the proposals and feel we are in a good position to accelerate this locally so we can share and support other LAs from different starting points for both the SEND and AP Improvement proposals as well as area SEND inspections.*

*Our Parent Carer Forum is well developed and is leading on supporting other PCFs to develop participation at decision making panels.*

*We are in a good position to link this work to wider learning, for example through the development of regional commissioning for those children with the most complex needs and behaviours that challenge, in line with the recommendations of the [Hesley report](#) “improvements in forecasting, procurement and market shaping”.*

*We have a well-respected and valued specialist support team already in place which can be scaled up to support testing.*

*As one of the largest London boroughs we have geographical challenges and similarities to many LAs outside of London, as well as the credibility within the London region to develop and lead on such an extensive change programme.*

*We have a good partnership with the ICB who are also committed to working with us including delivery of the NHSE ELSEC Pilot if successful.*

*Our Lead member for Education, Cllr Pauline Coakley-Webb sits on the Health and Wellbeing Board (which is chaired by Cllr Moore, Barnet’s Mayor), the Children Partnership Board and School Forum ensuring robust oversight and governance at Cllr and LA level.*

*Our Alternative Provision pathways are strong. Funding is already provided up front for commissioned numbers. We have 2 PRUs who both share the same management committee which lends itself to a more cohesive AP offer without unnecessary duplication. The Pavilion is an all-age school (5- 18) offering on-ward provision, medical and school outreach, short- and longer-term education. Northgate (11-19) delivers in the adolescent inpatient unit (tier 4). It is well set up to trial specialist mental health support to schools, enhancing staff understanding and knowledge to identify signs of mental health earlier and thus reduce the numbers of admissions to tier 4 and or referrals to CAMHS. We welcome the opportunity to support the development and trialling of Bands and Tariffs and our Barnet PCF are supportive of the trialling of new approaches, including more controversial proposals. We are enthusiastic about the development of a Local Inclusion Plan and feel the national programme could help to inform both a recommended template (with scope for regional differences) and the experience to support the data analysis needed to inform those plans. We have a robust post 16 offer and [NEET figures](#) are low in Barnet. Although numbers of young people on supported internships are lower overall than we would wish, outcomes are strong. In 2021-2022 out of 35 learners only 4 have become NEET and 19 have gone onto employment.*

## Appendix 2: the DfE's 9 regions.

1. North East.	5. East Midlands.
2. North West.	6. East of England.
3. Yorkshire and the Humber.	7. South East.
4. West Midlands.	8. South West.
	9. London.

## Appendix 3: Confirmation that Barnet has been selected as the Lead LA for the London REP.



Department  
for Education

Date: 30 May 2023

Dear Karen

### **SENDAP Change Programme: Invitation to lead your REP.**

Thank you for taking the time to prepare and submit an expression of interest to lead the SEND and AP Change Programme in your region.

We have assessed your bid and I am delighted to let you know that we would like you to lead the London REP.

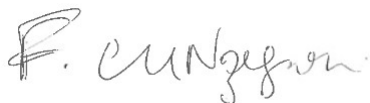
You don't need to take any immediate action as we are also writing to the local authorities we would like you to form a REP with to invite them to join our programme. For awareness in your region this will be Camden, Enfield and Islington. We will be hosting an online information session for them on 12<sup>th</sup> June but please also be prepared for them to approach you directly in the interim.

As soon as we have established our REPs we will be in touch again to bring together representatives from local areas, from our delivery partner and across DfE so we can develop a network of stakeholders, provide further detail on the reforms you will be testing and start planning for delivery.

Grant funding is subject to final approval. Please do not commit any resource or expenditure until confirmation of approval is received.

Thank you again for your engagement and support to date, I look forward to meeting you and working with you to shape the future SEND and AP system.

Yours Sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'F. Nzegwu'.

Fiona Nzegwu

Deputy Director, SEND and AP Local Accountability & Improvement Division