

Local Government Reorganisation

Drop-in session with Forums

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22 September 2026

This session focuses on listening and exploring options for limited preparation during the government review.



The Pause – Where are we now?

Government review creates uncertainty on LGR.



Local Government Reorganisation Summit (LGR): Council leaders spoke of the *emotional toll of change*

- Be kind to yourselves and each other
- Recognise change fatigue
- Focus on what is useful and within our control

*“It’s OK
to feel
like this”*



**How are you feeling about
LGR
at the moment?**



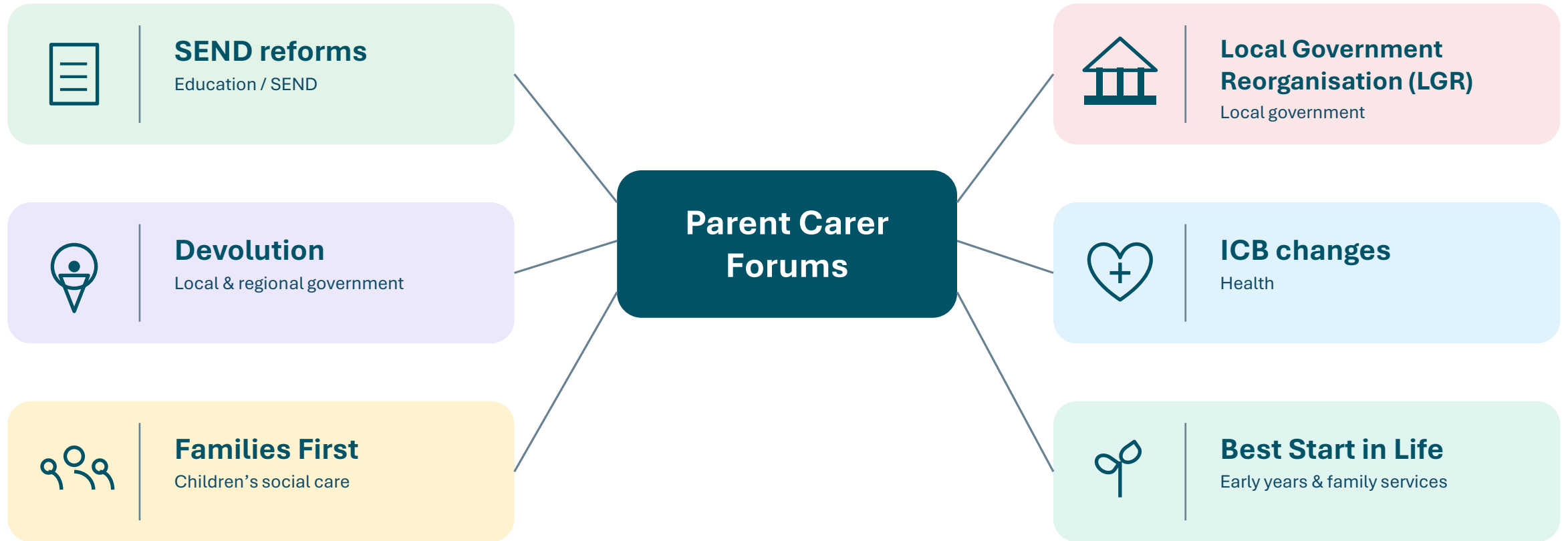
**Where would you say your
forum is
at the moment?**

Forums can make use of the [CIC Assistance Programme](#)



A changing landscape

Multiple reforms are underway, with different timelines and implications for families and forums.



The position changed on 7 September

What do we know about the LGR pause?

Government review

Ministers are reviewing the LGR programme following updated legal advice.

Decisions for Essex, Hampshire, Norfolk and Suffolk were withdrawn.

Ministers will update Parliament on the timetable of the Review in October.

Plans paused

Plans for 14 other areas plus Cambridgeshire & Peterborough, and West Sussex, are being reviewed and paused while the review takes place.

Government published information via Local Govt Association [FAQs 14 Sept](#)

Advice is to continue 'cross cutting activity'

May 2027 elections

Scheduled elections will go ahead on existing council boundaries.

Surrey is outside this review, LGR is going ahead.



A pause changes the pace, but there is still a need for readiness

How could Forums prepare for different outcomes?

Contact's approach: no change

- Decisions about future structures, governance or membership:
 - shaped by forums and their members
 - in response to their local circumstances.
- Contact can provide information, facilitate conversations and help forums explore the implications
- Contact's recommendation to DfE is to continue with one grant for each future local authority area. **Awaiting DfE Decision.**

'Cross-Cutting Activity'

- Keep relationships with neighbouring forums and local partners active
- Map plausible boundary scenarios and their implications
- Record questions, capacity needs and transition costs
- Keep families informed about what is known
- Continue to gather evidence on service performance (preparing for transition).



Contact can help forums prepare for local decisions

Support sits within the current 2026/27 contract and available capacity.

Support	How it can help	To be aware
Participation adviser and governance support	Support forums to review governance, membership and implications of possible decisions. Community Matters can advise Forums.	Advice is tailored to local circumstances. Local voluntary sector development agencies can help
Facilitated conversations	Help neighbouring forums or hosts explore options and working relationships.	Useful to build relationships with neighbouring Forums involved in potential changes.
Priority grant	Support urgent, temporary collaboration or additional workload.	A limited, one-off fund; not intended to sustain permanent new arrangements
Specialist signposting	ACAS or Community Matters Forums can seek their own or suitable local HR and legal advice	Contact cannot provide specialist HR or legal advice



DRAFT FOR DISCUSSION: A practical 'readiness checklist'

During the pause, the aim is to gather evidence and explore options.

1

Map

Current and possible boundaries, neighbouring forums, hosts, partners and health footprints

2

Review

Constitution or governing documents, membership eligibility and representation

3

Listen

What current members need, hearing from neighbouring forums, reaching out to families in borderline areas

4

Assess

Staffing, volunteer capacity, data, banking, communications and relationship-building workload

5

Record

Assumptions, risks, decisions, estimated transition costs and questions for Contact or DfE



Future arrangements will fit the local context

A range of options already exist for Forums, including the following

Separate forums

A forum for each future local authority area, with its own governance and membership.

Working Together Across Forums

Distinct local forums coordinate through a shared layer while retaining local voices.

Shared host support

One host or umbrella body supports more than one forum while representation remains locally rooted.

Sharing resources and activities

Forums remain separate but share staff, systems, meetings or specific pieces of work.

Forums in LGR areas may wish to consider: representation, independence, local relationships, governance, capacity, cost and grant conditions (subject to the Government's review of LGR).

We are seeking clarification from DfE about if there are any preferred routes that they would advise and will share this with forums when we have more detail.



Discussion: what would help your forum now?

We want to use the pause to shape practical support around forums' real questions.

- 1 What is known in your area, and what work should continue?
- 2 What remains undecided and which decisions do not yet need to be made?
- 3 Where would Contact support be most useful over the next few months?

Get in touch: Email mary.mulvey-oates@contact.org.uk or speak to your advisor

Please share emerging local intelligence, risks and examples.

Contact will continue to reflect forum concerns to DfE.

