

**LANCASHIRE SCHOOLS FORUM**  
**Date of Meeting: 18 October 2022**

**Item No: 8**  
**Title of Item: Inclusion Hubs**

**Appendices A**  
**Executive Summary**

This report provides an update on the work of the Inclusion Hubs.

**Recommendations**

**The Lancashire Schools Forum is asked to:**

- a) Note the report.**
- b) Express any initial views on the Inclusion Hub report.**



## **Background**

Members requested further information about De-delegation for Primary Inclusion Hubs which are again proposed in 2023/24.

A copy of the report for Primary Inclusion Service de-delegations is attached as Appendix A.





## **District Inclusion Hub evaluation project 2022**

We want to thank all of our schools for their continuous hard work and dedication in supporting our most vulnerable children, particularly throughout the past few years of unique challenge. Additionally, we want to extend specific thanks to those school colleagues who took the time to respond to the survey and share their thoughts and views with us.



## Executive summary

i. It is difficult to obtain an accurate estimation of schools' participation in the work of the District Inclusion Hubs for all districts, although more than half of the District Inclusion Hubs reported schools' engagement in excess of 75% during the last academic year. ii. Over 400 children have been provided with direct support via the District Inclusion Hubs in 6 districts. iii. The District Inclusion Hub model varied across areas although most offered networking and training events and direct support for individual pupils at different levels, including out-reach and in-reach support iv. The proportion of pupils with education, health and care (EHC) plans that attended schools participating in the District Inclusion Hubs has increased over the last four years in ten districts. District Inclusion Hub schools generally showed lower percentages of EHC plans when compared to all mainstream schools within their districts.

- v. Suspensions generally reduced for schools participating in the District Inclusion Hubs. vi. Exclusions generally reduced for schools participating in the District Inclusion Hubs.
- vii. Schools who participated actively in the District Inclusion Hubs saw lower exclusion rates than those who did not.
- viii. All participating schools shared a good understanding of the vision and aims of the District Inclusion Hubs, although emphasis seems to have been more on support for schools where children presented with behaviour that challenges. ix. Many schools within the District Inclusion Hubs felt that the hubs were beneficial and that their schools benefited from the support provided by them.
- x. District Inclusion Hubs valued what their hub could offer, including training, access to immediate expert advice/input, sharing of knowledge and supervision and the use of alternative provision. xi. District Inclusion Hubs discussed ways to improve the impact of their hubs, including more training, greater access to specialist professionals, more varied physical spaces (e.g. sensory rooms), greater funding and additional PRU/SSS involvement.
- xii. A more systematic approach to data collection in the future is likely to be helpful.

### 1.1. Inclusion Hubs - background

De-delegation of funding to support Inclusion Hubs was first agreed by the High Needs Block Working Group in October 2019. The purpose of these Inclusion Hubs was to promote inclusion and reduce exclusions in mainstream primary schools through the creation of:

- Local training and collaboration networks
- Local systems for advice and support
- Networks to support inter-district collaboration



It was also anticipated that schools within each district would develop a local response to the particular challenges encountered within their geographical area. It is also the case that different approaches have been adopted to reflect the resources available within a particular district and which included for example support from neighbouring pupil referral units/short stay schools, special schools and other service providers.

Schools Forum and District Inclusion Hub leads sought an evaluation of the effectiveness of the Lancashire District Inclusion Hubs in meeting the pre-determined objectives identified above. The project was completed by colleagues within the Educational Psychology teams with support from colleagues across Lancashire, including the head of the Inclusion Service, data services, the Education Improvement team, and colleagues within the District Inclusion Hubs.

## **1.2. The Offer**

A number of the districts have organised and/or are in the process of organising conferences for all primary schools within the district with a view to publicising and involving schools in the development of the offer. These events also provided/provide an opportunity for networking, inter-school support and the sharing of good practice. Some districts have also developed their use of online tools, such as Padlet, to share training resources as well as information about District Inclusion Hub events, the support available via the hub and referral mechanisms

Most of the District Inclusion Hubs offered training and resources accessible to all schools within a district. These included for example nationally accredited training programmes, with their own evidence bases, such as ELSA and ELKLAN as well as more bespoke training packages targeting specific aspects of development such as social skills or executive functioning. Other training programmes offered focused on methods that could be used to monitor progress and development, or support the identification of approaches to intervention, and which included for example training on the PSED PIVATs or functional behavioural analysis.

Different consultation models were used by districts, either separately or in combination, to assist with the identification of support for individual children by external specialists as well as support meetings organised across different clusters of schools within a district and less formalised school to school support meetings.

In addition, support was provided for individual pupils in different ways. There were examples of support being offered as part of early intervention with a view to preventing the escalation of need. Other District Inclusion Hubs offered an approach that included a rapid response, often provided by external specialists, where a child/school was considered to be in crisis.

The support was provided in different ways that included the observation and assessment of a child by external specialists, which were either provided directly or schools were supported with funding to commission their own. Graduated packages of support that could include out-reach work were offered by many District Inclusion Hubs, as well as time-limited respite placements in special or short stay schools, where these were available to local schools. Many of the respite placements also included support with reintegration as well as training for staff within the venue of the special or



short stay school provider and/or within the originating school. Some District Inclusion Hubs had developed links with local secondary schools and at least one secondary pupil referral unit was offering support with transition into the secondary phase of education for some of the most vulnerable pupils at the upper end of key stage 2.

Much of the support provided at individual pupil level was subsidised to a greater or lesser extent through the funding made available to the District Inclusion Hub. It is also perhaps worth mentioning that academies within at least one of the District Inclusion Hubs contributed directly in order to be able to access the resources and support available.

### **1.3. Methodology**

The evaluation comprised two elements. The first of these considered data relating to participating District Inclusion Hub schools in comparison with all schools within the district, focusing on the inclusion of pupils with EHC plans within the mainstream schools, suspensions and exclusions and attendance.

The second part of the evaluation used an online survey, created using Microsoft Forms (see Appendix 1), that was distributed via Hub Leads who were asked to cascade to member schools. The survey was open for approximately three weeks from the beginning of July. It comprised of a range of open and closed questions around the themes of 'hub vision', 'currently used resources/interventions', 'what is helpful' and 'progress trackers'. The survey link was distributed on email via the schools' portal. Prospective participants were prompted with reminders on three occasions. It should be noted that whilst best endeavours took place to ensure maximum response rates, the survey was distributed relatively late within the school year and as such, response rates were somewhat muted.

The closed questions of the survey were tallied, and basic analyses were conducted. Responses to the open-ended questions were subject to a shortened thematic analysis approach, where overarching key themes were extracted without prior reference to the survey questions.

### **1.4. Results Local authority collated data**

Colleagues within data services, alongside school improvement, supported the gathering and analysis of data collected in relation to EHC plans, suspensions and exclusions. It is also important to note that the relatively small number of exclusions may have affected disproportionately affect the presentation of the data. These data sets were considered alongside the District Inclusion Hub attendance data that was collected up to the end of the 2019/20 academic year and more recently from the District Inclusion Hub evaluation reports were produced separately in 2021/22 and provided by 6 of the 11 District Inclusion Hubs.

The data from the first of these sources is very limited. It is, however, the only information that is available for all of the District Inclusion Hubs and so has been used as the comparator for the quantitative analyses presented in the tables below. Any interpretation of these results must be approached with caution because of the limited data available and because some of it was collated during the time of the pandemic. Furthermore, the variability of the offer and the extent to which individual schools have



accessed different levels of support makes it difficult to generalise outcomes and thus to provide an entirely accurate appraisal of the impact of the District Inclusion Hubs at the current time. This is an area for development in the future.

### ***Schools' participation in District Inclusion Hubs***

It is possible to confirm 81 schools' engagement in District Inclusion Hubs up to 2020, although it is probable that far more schools supported and were supported by the work of the hubs. Furthermore, it seems likely that schools' participation will have been affected by the pandemic and the reduced attendance of pupils in schools from March 2020. In addition to the numbers presented above, representatives from three special schools and one short stay school also attend the District Inclusion Hub forums. Stepping Stones Short Stay School is part of the District Inclusion Hub support network for Hub 1 (Lancaster) and Kirkham Pear Tree School supports Hub 4 (Fylde), Kingsbury School is part of Hub 8 (West Lancashire) and Cribden House School supports Hub 14 (Rossendale).

Data obtained from the 6 District Inclusion Hubs that provided reports indicates that at least 75% of schools were involved at some level in their local District Inclusion Hub and that the majority of schools attended District Inclusion Hub conferences, where these were held, cluster consultation or network meetings and/or training events. It is possible to confirm that direct support was provided for 424 children attending schools within these District Inclusion Hubs at varying levels, as described above in Section 1.3, with District Inclusion Hub 7 (South Ribble) confirming that over 1,900 hours of support has been provided in the last year.

### ***Inclusion of pupils with EHC plans***

The information provided in the table below shows the percentage of pupils with EHC plans in participating schools in comparison with the percentage of pupils with EHC plans in all primary mainstream schools within each district, up to 2020. It can be seen from the presented data that the proportion of children with EHC plans in participating schools is generally below that of all schools within a district. The only exceptions to this are Hub 2 (Wyre) and Hub 7 (South Ribble) where there has been an increase and Hub 4 (Fylde) where the two figures are the same. The District Inclusion Hub reports, where these were provided, indicates that where direct support for children was provided this was almost always for children presenting with behaviour that challenges, rather than for those with EHC plans, which might provide some explanation for the reduced numbers. It is also perhaps worth noting that although inclusion was one of the original aims of the District Inclusion Hub project, the number of pupils with EHC plans supported within schools, at best can only be considered to be a proxy indicator and not one that was made explicit from the outset.

The table does also show that, except for two districts, the percentage of pupils with EHC plans supported in mainstream hub participating schools has increased between 2017/18 and 2020/21. Further analysis of the data does not provide evidence of any correlation between the number of participating schools or number of pupils on roll in these schools and the percentage of pupils with EHC plans.



District	District hub number	District EHCP % hub schools	District EHCP % all schools	EHCP % 2017/18 vs 2020/21
Lancaster	1	1.3	2.1	0.42
Wyre	2	1.7	1.3	0.09
Fylde	4	2.2	2.2	0.56
Preston	6	0.9	1.7	-0.24
South Ribble	7	2.3	1.6	0.13
West Lancs	8	1.4	1.5	0.07
Chorley	9	2.0	2.1	0.74
Hyndburn and Ribble Valley	11	1.4	1.5	0.58
Burnley	12	1.3	1.9	0.28
Pendle	13	1.4	2.4	0.72
Rossendale	14	1.7	2.0	-0.29

### Exclusions and suspension

Generally, the number of suspensions and exclusions within the districts (for the schools listed as participating in the District Inclusion Hubs up to the end of the 2019/20 academic year) gradually declined between 2017/18 and 2020/21 (see Figure 1 and Figure 2).

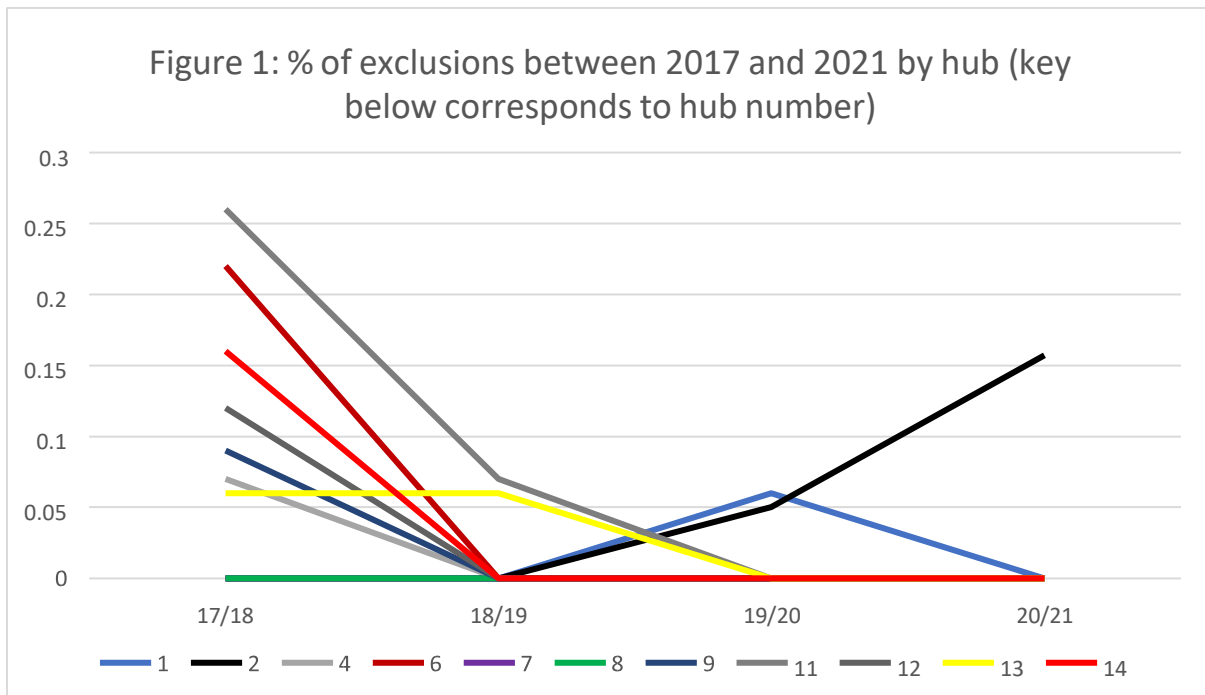
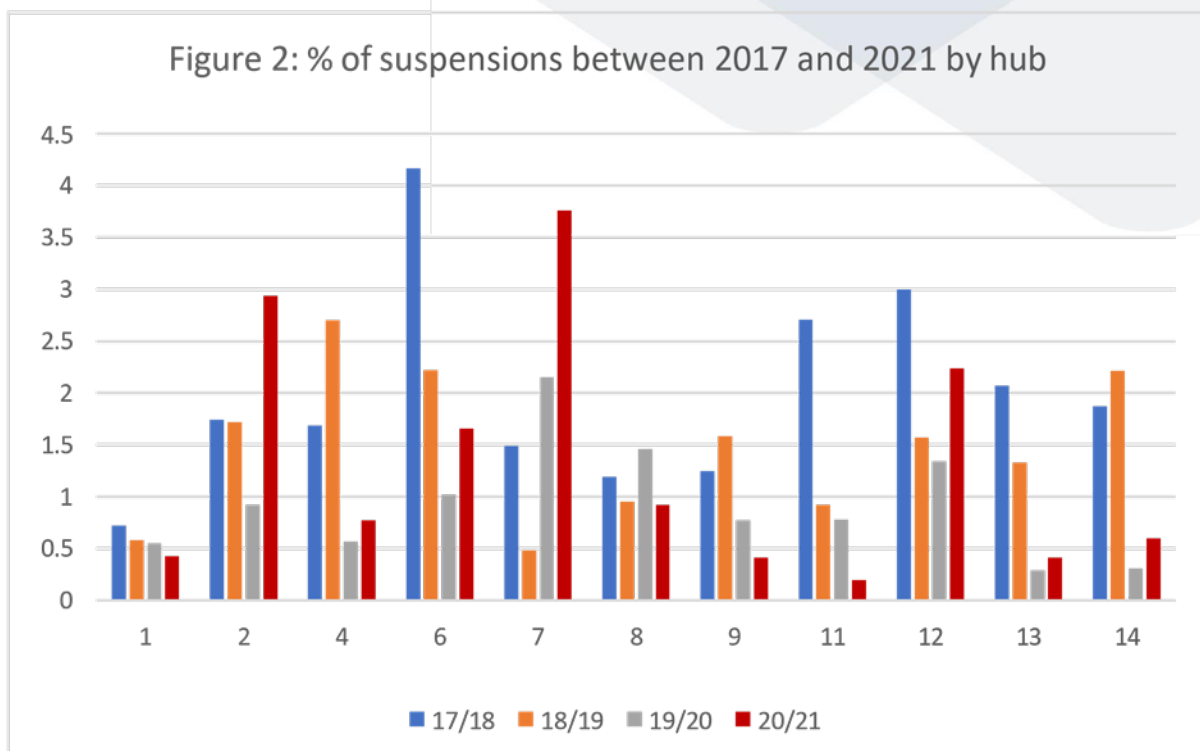


Figure 1 shows that exclusions generally reduced within the District Inclusion Hubs. In 2019/20, Hub 1 (Lancaster) and Hub 2 (Wyre) were the only districts to exclude a child. The remaining hubs did not exclude any children permanently. This picture remained the same in 2020/21 with Hub 2 (Wyre) being the only district to record an exclusion.







The picture for suspensions is less straightforward. Hub 2 (Wyre) and Hub 7 (South Ribble) show increases in comparison with 2017/18 and over the last four years. Hub 6 (Preston), and Hub 12 (Burnley) showed larger increases in suspensions than other districts in comparison with other years but not overall.

### ***Suspensions and exclusions in district vs. Inclusion Hub***

Information in table below shows the trend of suspensions and exclusions within the Inclusion Hub (of the schools that were listed as attenders up to the end of 2019/20) when compared with all the schools in the district. Generally, schools who attended and participated in the hubs saw reduced exclusions, despite increases in suspensions. Hubs 1 (Lancaster), 2 (Wyre) and 3 (Fylde) appeared to receive the least impact of attendance at the Inclusion Hubs.

Hub	Suspensions	Exclusions
Lancaster (1)	□	□
Wyre (2)	□	□
Fylde (4)	□ then □	□
Preston (6)	□	□ (none in neither district nor hub)
South Ribble (7)	□	□
West Lancs (8)	□	□



Chorley (9)	□ then □ (from 2019)	□
Hyndburn and Ribble Valley (11)	□	□
Burnley (12)	□	□
Pendle (13)	□ then □ (from 2019)	□ then □ (from 2019)
Rossendale (14)	□ then □ (from 2019)	□

## 1.5. Survey outcomes

A total of 35 responses were received, with each hub being represented except Hub 2 (Wyre). The hubs with the most responses were Hubs 6 (Preston), 7 (South Ribble) and 8 (West Lancashire); (Q1). 80% of respondents stated that they currently regularly attend hub meetings (Q2) and the majority stated that they had a secure understanding of the hub's vision and how effective it was. With 69% (24 out of 35) members stating that the hubs were 4 or 5 (completely) effective on a scale of 1 to 5 (Q4).

Generally, hub members felt that they had a secure understanding of what the hubs offered in their district and how to access such support (89%; Q6). With a smaller majority reporting that they felt they had an influence over the kinds of support their hub offered (69%; Q7).

The shortened thematic analysis approach highlighted that most members had a strong understanding of the hub's vision (Q3), which was in-line with the original purpose of the Inclusion Hub model to enhance inclusion and reduce exclusions. At least one member from each hub (that responded) included a response that noted 'increased inclusion' and 'reduced exclusion'. For example, Hub 7 (South Ribble) said "for schools to be inclusive settings to reduce exclusions". Similarly, Hub 11 (Hyndburn and Ribble Valley) stated that their hub's vision was to "provide training and support to schools with implementing universal high-quality teaching which promotes inclusion. Reduce fixed term and permanent exclusions". A number of respondents spoke specifically about the children that they felt the hub aimed to support, including those with "behaviour challenges" Hub 7 (South Ribble), those "on the autistic spectrum" Hub 9 (Chorley) and Hub 8 (West Lancashire), those in "KS1", Hubs 9 (Chorley) and 8 (West Lancashire) and those with "social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) difficulties" Hubs 14 (Rossendale) and 6 (Preston). Two responses felt that they were not clear on the hub vision, these were from Hubs 6 (Preston) and 8 (West Lancashire).

### ***Currently used resources/interventions***

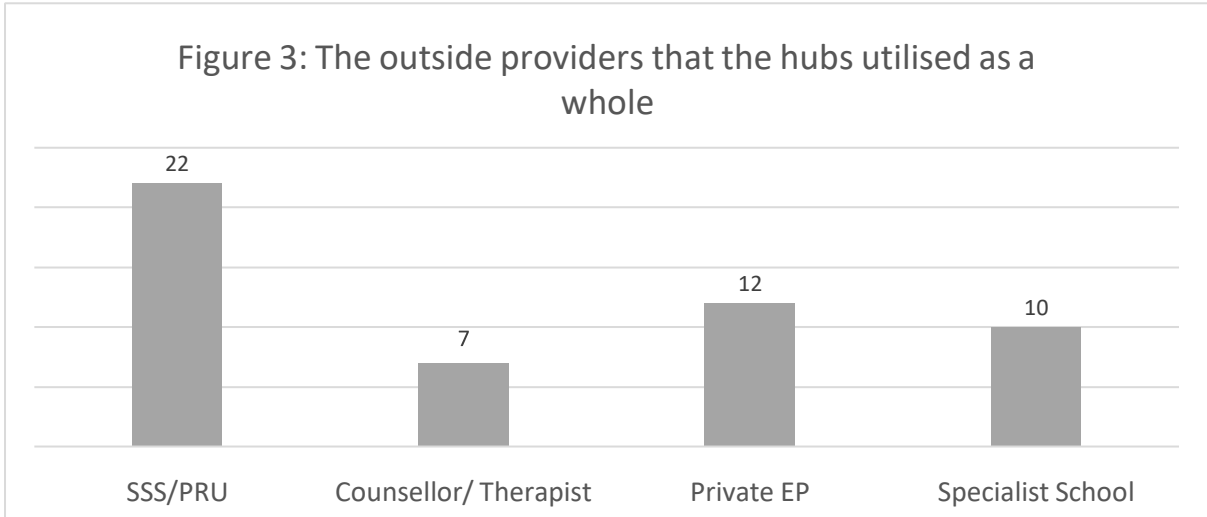
Participants reported that 9 hubs utilised instances of 'managed moves' within their schools (Q8 & Q9). Within the past academic year (2021-22) schools indicated that at least 15 children had been subject to a 'managed move', with some schools noting that in previous years "lots of children" were supported in this manner.

424 children were helped directly in the previous academic year (2021-22) using funds from the District Inclusion Hubs (Q13). Whilst some children may not have been helped directly, one school noted: "no individuals, but all classes have benefitted from staff



training in inclusion and universal high quality teaching practices" Hub 11 (Hyndburn and Ribble Valley).

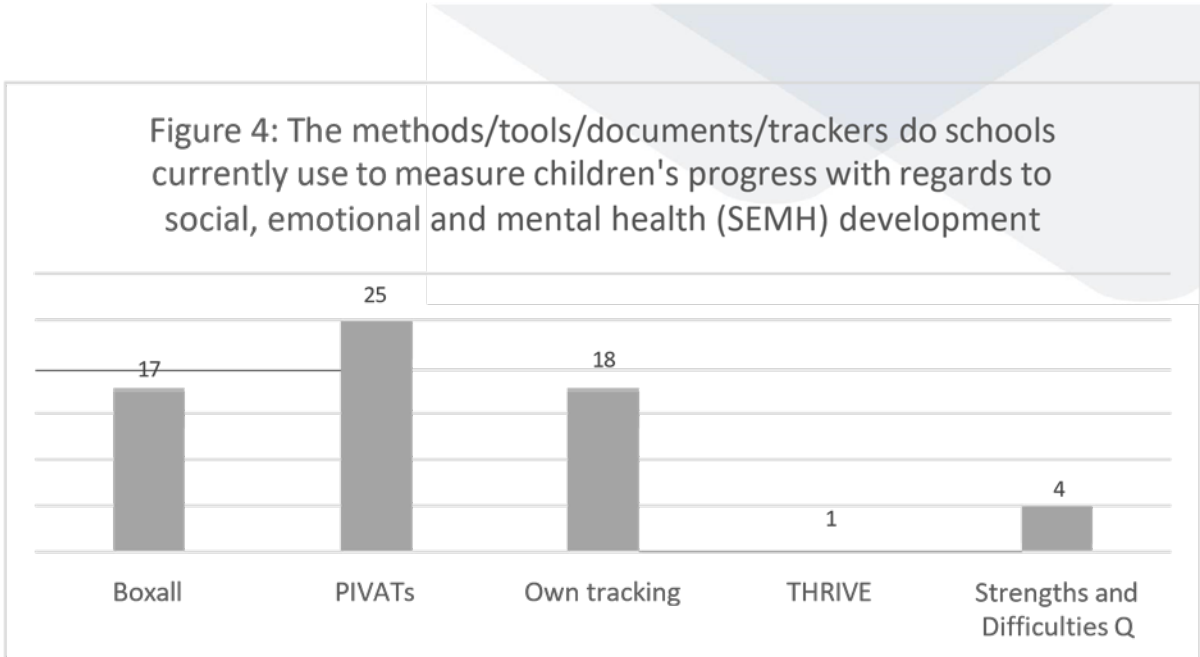
Participants were asked to state the outside providers that they utilised (Q10 & Q11; Figure 3). Hubs also stated that they in addition to the suggested options, they also utilise "specialist TA's", "Child and Family Wellbeing support services", "local authority advisors", "the specialist teaching service" and "educational partnership officers".



**Progress trackers**

Participants were asked about the methods, tools, and trackers they use to measure children's development with regards to SEMH. The results are seen in Figure 4 (Q14).

Schools noted that generally their hubs did not promote a specific tool (Q15 & Q16), and if they did, they were unaware of what that was. Of the hubs that noted that there is a promoted tool, the majority were encouraged to use a mix of PIVATs, the PSED tool, THRIVE and the Boxall. Some participants interpreted 'promote' as 'subsidised' and this was true in the case of THRIVE, which one school noted was paid for by the hub.



## ***What is helpful?***

The shortened thematic analysis approach highlighted what schools felt was most helpful when working towards the hub's vision (Q12). The responses roughly split into five categories:

- Access to immediate expert advice/input.
- Training and CPD for staff.
- Sharing of knowledge and supervision.
- Use of alternative provisions.
- Awareness and running of the hub.

*Access to immediate expert advice/input* concerned school's ability to utilise hub connections and finances to gain timely support from educational psychologists, funding for additional support staff and support from colleagues specialising in SEMH needs to "prevent exclusions" Hub 12 (Burnley).

*Training and CPD for staff* focussed on upskilling whole school staff to develop their awareness, confidence, and skills in and of "extreme behaviours", Hub 8 (West Lancashire) and "PIVATS", Hub 14 (Rossendale) / "Cognition and Learning", Hub 7, (South Ribble). More general "training" was also noted as helpful.

*Sharing of knowledge and supervision* was noted specifically by Hub 7 (South Ribble) as important. Particularly the use of "discussion [of cases] in a supervision style solutions focussed way".

*Use of alternative provisions* particularly revolved around access of alternative provisions in a swift manner, as well as in a preventative way following a placement at an alternative setting. For example, Hub 8 (West Lancashire) noted that the hub was helpful in providing support during a time where "services [are] sporadic and unpredictable".

Finally, *awareness and running of the hub* focussed on hub's suggestions that it has been helpful when hub meetings are "face to face", Hub 7 (South Ribble), when new SENDCos/ head teachers are introduced to the hub upon arriving in post, Hub 6 (Preston). Other respondents reported it was better when "more schools use the service", Hub 9 (Chorley) and that it can be "frustrating" when hubs work hard to be inclusive but are unable to access alternative provisions when they are needed due to non-attending schools "taking up places", Hub 6 (Preston).

## ***What hubs said would help them reach their vision***

The remaining data was considered using a shortened thematic analysis approach. A considerable proportion of the codes fell under the theme 'what we need more of/ what would be helpful'; this is particularly the case for responses to Q5, Q12, Q18 and Q19. The responses to these questions are presented here in a combined format as the overarching theme of 'what hubs said would help them reach their vision' emerged independent of question-specific coding. There were six principal areas where schools identified what might help them:

- Staff training.
- Access to and support from specialist professionals.
- PRU/SSS involvement.
- The wider SEND system.
- Physical spaces.
- Funding.



- Needing more.
- Wanting funding to return to a school level.
- Better funded and more pupil referral units/short stay schools. -  
A better whole-county strategic plan.

*Staff training* was a point made across a range of hubs, including Hub 7 (South Ribble), Hub 8 (West Lancashire) and Hub 11 (Hyndburn and Ribble Valley). Schools felt that they required additional staff training in areas such as "nurturing approaches", "positive relational approaches", "emotion coaching", "ACES" and "managing behaviour".

*Access to and support from specialist professionals* tended to focus on the desire for further involvement from educational psychologists, specifically. Other specialist professionals included specialist teachers and "specialist behavioural support". Often the word 'specialists' was used with a request for 'more', rather than specific specialists requested.

A few schools noted the need for enhanced *PRU/SSS involvement*. Including the requirement for support from these provisions, as well as the ability to access and place children within their provisions, if needed. Schools spoke about PRU/SSS involvement as a key facet to avoiding exclusion. For example, Hub 6 (Preston) noted that "PRU support to keep children in school who are at risk of exclusion". Some schools felt that schools who were not active within the hub were, at times, "blocking spaces", for example, Hub 1 (Lancaster).

Schools raised several concerns around *the wider SEND system*. Including those within LCC and external agencies, such as ELCAS/CAMHS. Schools felt that often children do not receive timely and appropriate mental health support from mental health professionals, leading to many schools opting to pay for counselling support services. For example, Hub 14 (Rossendale) noted that "many are permanently excluded or become home educated", due to difficulties with mental health. Others felt that it would be helpful for the SEND service to be more "supporting" and be better at "listening", Hub 11 (Hyndburn and Ribble Valley).

A number of schools spoke about the difficulties they face with the physical environments of their provisions. One school spoke about a desire to "enhance the facilities we have for children with sensory needs", Hub 11 (Hyndburn and Ribble Valley). Similarly, another discussed a want to develop "an additional room (sensory or just calming) for our autistic pupils", Hub 6 (Preston). In addition, one school shared their hopes for developing a nurture provision, Hub 9 (Chorley). Finally, Hub 1 (Lancaster) discussed a need for "higher fences around school, more break-out rooms-counselling for parents". In addition, this school spoke about a desire for greater parental understanding of the SEND system and its challenges.

With regards to *funding*, it will be considered in four key areas:

- *Needing more*. Most hubs expressed a desire for a net increase in monetary funding for their hubs and schools. For example, Hub 6 (Preston) said "it would be extremely helpful to further extend the financial support as our budget is already stretched to capacity".
- *Wanting funding to return to a school level*. Two participants in Hubs 11 (Hyndburn and Ribble Valley) and 9 (Chorley) expressed a desire for funding to be removed from the hub and given back to their school as they felt this would better meet the needs of their individual children. For example, "I would like to



keep the money that goes to the hub- I can spend it on the support my children need", Hub 9 (Chorley).

- *Better funded and more pupil referral units/short stay schools.* Hubs across the county expressed a need for increased places at pupil referral units/short stay schools. Hub 8 (South Ribble) felt strongly that they require a district pupil referral unit as a matter of urgency. Additionally, Hub 12 (Burnley) expressed a concern that there are limited options for children in their district for short term placements now that Hendon Brook short stay school has closed.
- *A better whole-county strategic plan.* Schools across the county noted that they felt their districts, and therefore hubs, did not have equality of access to SSS provision due to their location, Hub 8 (West Lancashire). Additionally, Hubs 6 (Preston), 7 (South Ribble) and 8 (West Lancashire) felt that the local authority should provide consistent and stable funding for the hubs, as well as an offer that matches the needs of each district. For example, "appropriate financial commitment from the LA", Hub 6 (Preston), "the money to be maintained and not voted on annually so we know we can develop the provision", Hub 7 (South Ribble) and "accurate costing of interventions based on the needs of the children in the district", Hub 8 (West Lancashire).

Many participants used the survey to voice wider concerns including concerns around the "tremendous pressure" schools are under, Hub 14 (Rossendale) and a feeling that they are "sticking plasters", Hubs 12 (Burnley) and 14 (Rossendale). Concerns about the District Inclusion Hub offer and lack of perceived equality of services were raised by respondents from the Hub 8 (West Lancashire). Many schools noted that they felt that the availability of quality alternative provision was limited, and they felt uncomfortable about the choices they had to make to pay private providers for example "why are the inclusion hubs paying for private providers? They are making money from our vulnerable children, and this does not feel right", Hub 14 (Rossendale).

## **Praise**

Six hubs were expressive in their praise of the work their colleagues within schools and those within the wider District Inclusion Hubs do. Hub 7 (South Ribble) felt that their "hub runs exceptionally well with a clear plan for the coming academic year". They said that "the hub works well for us", "they are amazing!", "the support the hub has brought has been substantial". Additionally, a number of schools praised the work of the SENDCos and headteachers, Hubs 9 (Chorley), 14 (Rossendale), and 11 (Hyndburn and Ribble Valley). Some schools recognised the benefits of the hub in providing easy and timely access to support and services, including specialist professionals.





1. Which hub are you part of (please give name of hub or number)?
2. Do you attend hub meetings and/or liaise with your hub lead/other members at

## Appendix 1

- least twice a year? Yes/no.
3. Please summarise what you feel that your hub's vision is for your area in a maximum of two sentences.
  4. Based on your understanding of your hub's vision, please rate from 0-5 (0= not at all, 5= completely), how effective you feel that the hub is in terms of working towards the vision?
  5. Is there anything else that would be helpful to you in achieving the hub's vision?
  6. Do you feel that you have a good understanding of the support your hub offers and how you can access this? yes/no.
  7. Do you feel that you have some influence in the kind of support that your hub offers? Yes/no.
  8. Have you made use of a 'managed move' system of supporting any of the children within your school? Yes/no.
  9. If so, how many children has this intervention been used with?
  10. Please select any outside providers that your hub partners with as part of the offer. If you select 'other', please state what this is. Options: Private EP, Private clinical psych, Special school, PRU/SSS, Counsellor/therapist.
  11. Using the providers given in question 9, please state below the support and number of hours delivered, and whether this is provided directly to your setting, or to the inclusion hub systemically, e.g., Private educational psychologist-individual assessment with child-5 hours, Private clinical psychologist-attachment training to the hub-2 hours. Some forms of support may be individual assessment, short term placement at PRU, counsellor, training for school staff, training for inclusion hub, staff supervision, support for families.
  12. Of the things listed above, please list which are the most helpful to you in working towards the Inclusion Hub's vision.
  13. How many children within your school have been offered direct support using funds from the district inclusion hub?
  14. What methods/tools/documents/trackers do you currently use in school to measure children's progress with regards to SEMH development? Examples may include PIVATs, Boxall Profile, own tracking document.
  15. Does your inclusion hub promote a tool for measuring children's progress with regards to SEMH, and if so, what is this?
  16. Do you use their recommended tool? Yes/no.
  17. If not, why not?
  18. Is there anything that would help your setting to be more inclusive?
  19. Any other comments.

