

Lancashire Local Area Partnership Local SEND Reform Plan

June 2026



Annex A: Local SEND Reform Plan

Developing a Local SEND Reform Plan is an important first step for local areas to set out how they will lay the foundation for reform, and design an approach tailored to their local context. A shared plan which focuses on co-designing the local approach as system partners and with children, young people and families will help foster collective responsibility for delivering the reforms.

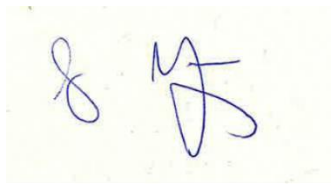
It is critical that all system partners, including health, education and childcare settings, work together to design and deliver the Local SEND Reform Plan, under the local authority's leadership. It is also crucial that representative family carers e.g. the local Parent Carer Forum, are involved in the development of the plan.

The expectation is that this plan is discussed, agreed, and signed off at your relevant SEND Governance Board. As a minimum, the plan must be formally signed off by the Local Authority Chief Executive (CEO), the Integrated Care Board (ICB) Chief Executive, the Local Authority Director of Children's Service (DCS), the Integrated Care Board NHS Place Director, and the Local Authority Chief Financial Officer (CFO/Section 151 Officer). We encourage other colleagues and partners who have contributed to also review and sign-off the plan, particularly early years, school, college and trust leaders.

Name of Local Authority:	Lancashire County Council
Name of Integrated Care Board:	Lancashire and South Cumbria ICB
Local SEND Reform Plan SRO:	Paul Turner, Director of Education & Skills

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Executive summary

A brief summary of your local system 'change story' – your local context, where you are now, where you want to get to in the next 3 years, how you know you are succeeding and how you will know you have achieved your vision for the next 3 years. Please include a brief qualitative summary. This summary should also include your assessment of current and forecast performance against the headline metrics.

Please structure your 'change story' using the following aims:

- *Build a 0-25 system where children and young people receive support to achieve and thrive through (a) more inclusive settings and (b) stronger local partnerships*
- *Improve capacity and capability of the mainstream and specialist workforce to identify and meet need*
- *Improve confidence of children, families, and stakeholders in reform and readiness of the system*
- *Stabilise finances and improve value for money*

Lancashire is a diverse county spanning 12 districts, encompassing cities, rural areas, and coastal towns. We have a strong social care system, a strong early help offer centred around our 12 **Best Start in Life Family Hubs**, and an improving SEND system. The SEND Partnership has responded to the latest Ofsted inspection with urgency. Our vision is that all children and young people with SEND thrive in a nurturing, inclusive environment where they will be safe, happy and healthy, achieving their potential, with the support they need, when they need it.

Our Lancashire SEND strategy is built around five priorities -

- Children and young people will have their needs identified as **early** as possible.
- Children and young people will have their needs met as close to home as possible (**local**).
- Children and young people are prepared for adult life from the earliest years.
- Children, young people and their families will feel valued and heard through communication, collaboration and co-production (**shared**).
- Children, young people and their families will have better outcomes and experiences (**effective**).

Over the next three years we will build a system that is **early, local, fair, effective, shared** and **sustainable** –

We will build a system where children and young people receive support to thrive through inclusive settings and stronger local partnerships. We will strengthen mainstream support, utilise existing specialist expertise and create additional capacity through a high-quality **Experts at Hand (EaH)** offer. Our focus will be on enhancing mainstream inclusion, including developing **Specialist Bases** in mainstream schools to provide support closer to home and reduce reliance on independent placements.

We will improve capacity and capability of the mainstream and specialist workforce to identify and meet need. We will develop a stronger offer for mainstream settings, including high quality training and support, focused around local SEND clusters. This will include creating free at the point of delivery support



for mainstream settings to build skills and resilience. Whilst Educational Psychologist support will be key, other high impact professionals such as Speech and Language experts, Occupational Therapists and Counsellors will be available to all children who require their specialist inputs (**fair**).

We will improve confidence of children, families, and stakeholders in readiness of reform to the system. Too many families have lost confidence in services due to long delays in receiving support or timely assessments. Although this has now been improved due to significant investment in staffing, we can make this even better.

We will stabilise finances and improve value for money. The additional funding from **Inclusive Mainstream Fund (IMF)** and **EaH**, together with reviewing and increasing **specialist bases** will reduce pressure on the High Needs Block (HNB), with clear monitoring and reporting to ensure best value that improves outcomes for children and families.

We will know that we are succeeding when we see greater integration of children and young adults with SEND, reduced exclusions, increased attendance and attainment, and a pattern of declining HNB spend which is **sustainable**, reflected in an in year deficit position that is reducing and stable.

500/500 words

Section 1: Vision and goals

1. What the local area partnership is trying to achieve?

Please set out your goals for your local system. These should be clear, aligned to the vision set out in the Schools White Paper, small in number and measurable. These goals should include clear reference to:

- Outcomes for children
- Confidence of parents, carers and young people in the system
- Management of finances to secure value for money

Our vision is that all children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities thrive in a nurturing, inclusive environment where they will be safe, happy and healthy, achieving their potential, with the support they need, when they need it and -

- Have their needs identified early, and receive the **right support, at the right time**, through the **Experts at Hand** offer.
- Have their needs met in a mainstream school or specialist provision **close to home** or within easy travel distance, where they feel safe and connected to their school environment, make friends, and participate and engage in their local community.
- Experience **good physical, social, emotional and mental health** so they are prepared for a fulfilling adult life.
- Are stretched to achieve their ambitions and develop their independence through a **shared**, inclusive system **supported by all partners** that reduces the disadvantage gap, starting with achieving a good level of development and on to better outcomes as young people prepare for adulthood.
- Are supported by parents/carers who have **confidence** in a system where an EHCP is not required to access the high-quality support they need.

This will achieve:

- A level of EHCPs in line with national figures as our reform provides **early** needs led support.
- Reduction in:
 - Children and young people accessing INMSS.
 - Exclusions.
 - Commissioned full time PRU placements.

- Moves to special schools from mainstream at key transition points (enabled through specialist support via **Experts at Hand**).
- High Needs Block spend and the DSG deficit.

250/250 words

Section 2: Strategy

2. Where the local area partnership expects to be in the next 3 years

A description of what your local system would look like in the next 3 years in line with the national vision set out in the Schools White Paper and set within the context of where you are starting from as a local system.

In particular, as commissioning system partners, you should reflect on and agree what your fully fledged **Experts At Hand Offer** model should be and how this will be deployed via mainstream settings and providers (including those not based in your area – e.g. further education colleges attended by your young people) to build their capacity as well as identify and meet the needs of children and young people earlier and without the need for a statutory assessment for Education, Health and Care.

To help you fully consider the scope and scale of change required, you may find it useful to structure your response using these 4 building blocks of an inclusive system, reflecting on what is working well in your system, what you are most worried about, what needs to change, and how the enablers will help you achieve your 3 year vision.

When summarising where your local area partnership currently is, please include an assessment of where you are in reference to the core minimum requirements above and how you bridge the gap, referring to and attaching additional documents that provide underlying evidence for your summary.

Strengthening inclusion across education settings– organising places and provision to meet as many needs as possible, as close to home as possible, with all settings and providers moving towards a shared understanding and consistent practices around inclusion.

System leadership, local partnership collaboration and co-production – putting in place the enabling conditions across a local area that ensures planning and provision reflects the local area & is joined up, including strategic co-production with parent carers and children and young people.

Access to specialist support and local placements – improving collaboration between settings and deploying expertise from a range of specialist and expert sources, to support schools and settings to meet the needs of children and young people earlier and locally.

Encouraging inclusive culture & behaviours – using funding and shared accountability towards a system that works for children and families while achieving value for money.



Local blueprint for the next 3 years	Where we are: <i>Short summary of where you are now including a reflection on what is working well, what needs to change and the status of the enablers that underpin your system.</i>	Where we will be in the next 3 years: <i>Short summary of the vision for your local system in the next 3 years including the system enablers, reflecting how your Experts at Hand Offer model will underpin this vision, helping you scale and enhance what is working well and change what is not working so well.</i>
Building block 1: Strengthening inclusion across education settings and ensuring that the graduated approach is well-embedded.	We have used the Maturity Matrix to outline our current position and our desired future state. <u>What is working well in our system</u> There's a strong partnership response to champion and encourage attendance at school in Lancashire and guidance and support is proving successful. For the latest published year's school absence figures (2024), we track better than all comparators and for all cohorts: primary 5.47%, secondary 8.96% and special schools 11.9%. Absence is higher in special schools overall, but that can be expected, given the categories of the cohorts, e.g. with a high level of medical needs. Persistent (32.9%) and severe persistent absence (52.8%) in special schools remains significantly lower than all comparators. Children Missing Education (CME) numbers are reducing, and we have improved processes for ensuring that children are tracked and an appropriate educational provision secured as quickly as possible. Most schools and settings in Lancashire, when inspected by Ofsted, are rated as having a good quality offer and are seen as inclusive in their approaches. We have seen a reduction in the rates of permanent exclusion in this academic year. Our approach to early support in some schools has resulted in some children maintaining their educational placements in the schools closest to their homes. This has been the result of wrapping funding and professional support around settings to provide bespoke offers, such as our enhanced reception year provision. <u>What we are most worried about?</u> Requests for EHCP Needs Assessments are rising after the announcement of potential changes to the national SEND system.	We have used the Maturity Matrix to outline our current position and our desired future state. <u>What our system will be like in 3 years</u> In 3 years, we will have a more dynamic, inclusive system that allows a diverse range of learners to be educated in mainstream schools. Exclusions will have reduced, as will the use of full-time placements in Pupil Referral Units and Alternative Provision providers due to the use of the 3-tier approach to alternative provision. Our vision is for an inclusive system, and a support offer to help bridge the gap between what a mainstream setting can currently provide for children and young people, and what the local area partnership need is. This will be focused on a district model, underpinned by analysis of need depending on local demographics. The offer will be based on early identification of need and will not require an EHCP to be in place, preparing the way for the use of individual support plans and universal, targeted and targeted plus provision. Our Early Years offer will align fully with the Best Start in Life Family Hubs, offering services to boost and support parenting and home learning environments, to support school readiness, school attendance and early support for children with SEND. Schools/settings will be supported by more targeted support at the whole school/setting or trust level, and they will be fully embedded as strategic partners, benefitting from the support of SEND clusters and local inclusion hubs to share expertise and resources. Within three years, we expect to have better join up between colleges and the LA to support more accessible opportunities, post-16. This will ensure we have better outcomes and more young people in education, employment and training, accessing bespoke pathways. Special school placement requests will have started to change, with increased professional and parental confidence in the ability of



Elective Home Education (EHE) numbers are rising due to a stated dissatisfaction with the educational provision in some circumstances.

For some families there is a lack of trust and confidence related to schools identifying and supporting their child's needs.

The proportion of schools returning a negative response to EHCP consultations is high in some areas of the county. There is therefore a corresponding high demand for special school placements.

There is an over-reliance upon Alternative Provision (AP) as a permanent destination for some children and schools often state that there is limited capacity in the system.

In some parts of the county there are gaps in provision for children with autism and SEMH needs, as there is not equality across all the districts in respect of the location of specialist provision.

What needs to change?

- a) There is a need to change perspectives on how to utilise AP most effectively by being creative and seeing it as a route to reintegration back into mainstream schools.
- b) Exclusion is too high and AP is unevenly distributed across the county.
- c) There is inconsistency of advice being provided by schools for the EHC needs assessment process. This may be affecting decision making as information received is not always specific, so clarity about needs and provision is compromised.
- d) Schools still need a better understanding of early identification and the support that is required, i.e. Ordinarily Available Provision and AP.
- e) Despite having an AP approved provider list, there is a lack of understanding around what AP is available for some children in some areas.
- f) Funding needs to be made available for earlier intervention and support rather than simply through an EHCP.
- g) Where required, we need to provide specialist places in areas of the county that have very few.

mainstream schools to meet the needs of more children, and therefore less need for independent placements as we can more effectively meet need in community schools **closer to a child's home**.

Mainstream schools will have started to build real expertise in meeting diverse needs.

Our **Experts at Hand** offer will be fully embedded and schools and settings will have confidence in how to access and use this offer.

Our Universal Offer / Ordinarily available provision

Our universal officer will be based on our co-developed, annual update of the data that highlights our system and the needs of the children and families within it. The extent of our universal offer is already agreed with all stakeholders and settings through our SEND partnership development days, our SEND board, our Education Board and our joint consultative group. As we move forwards this will be signed off by our Parent Carer Forum and representatives from all key groups, including PCF, ICB, MATs and young people.

How we will change what is not working well

- a) We will issue revised guidance on our expectations of how alternative provision should be used, and commissioned, based upon the **three-tier** approach to AP.
- b) Through the Inclusion Hubs we will work with schools to reduce the level of exclusions and commission alternative provision settings in the parts of the county that have limited coverage.
- c) We will work with SENCOs to provide support and training for submitting high-quality information to contribute to EHCPs.
- d) By creating **Specialist Base** places in mainstream schools, we will reduce the reliance upon independent special school placements. This will be supported by the **Experts at Hand** model, who will support mainstream school placements to be successful.
- e) The Educational Psychology service and the **Experts at Hand** teams will be able to support schools to enhance their understanding of what can be delivered at a **universal level**, preventing the escalation of need.
- f) We will create an Alternative Provision directory for each area, with our **Experts at Hand** Directory of Provision running alongside this.

How Experts at Hand funding will underpin this

This means there is an intention to commission specialist **Experts at Hand** teams that include education, health and early help support to:

1. Support education settings to upskill, providing an offer that assists them with this, so they can take more responsibility for SEND.
2. Create a multi-disciplinary/multi-agency team to deliver enhanced specialist support for:
 - a. Early years (EY) education settings.
 - b. Mainstream schools.
 - c. Further education (FE) colleges.
3. Train, advise and provide direct support for specific issues.
4. Provide time-limited support to find **sustainable** solutions that can then be taken forwards by skilled professionals in settings.

Support will be deployed through our SEND clusters where each half-term local areas will come together to decide what the local need is and how it can be best met. Resources will then be deployed and monitored through the commissioning workstreams groups, answerable to the SEND board and the ICB board.

This will reduce escalation into out-of-area placements with significant travel-assistance requirements, meaning that children are educated in high-quality environments, closer to home.

Local blueprint for the next 3 years

Where we are: *Short summary of where you are now including a reflection on what is working well, what needs to change and the status of the enablers that underpin your system.*

Where we will be in the next 3 years: *Short summary of the vision for your local system in the next 3 years including the system enablers, reflecting how your Experts at Hand Offer model will underpin this vision, helping you scale and enhance what is working well and change what is not working so well.*

Building block 2:
Access to specialist support and local placements to ensure that children can be educated as close to home as

We have used the Maturity Matrix to outline our current position and our desired future state.

What is working well in our system

Currently, there is an Inclusion Hub model operating in all districts, led by school leaders through local partnerships and Lancashire has

We have used the Maturity Matrix to outline our current position and our desired future state.

What our system will be like in 3 years

Our system will be underpinned by an effective network of specialist settings (**expanded only where there is limited local capacity**) and practitioners, clearly signposted and easily accessible through a locality

possible in a high-quality educational setting.

also confirmed one **Best Start Family Hub** in each of the twelve districts.

We have a high-quality specialist teacher service, and this is heavily used, and currently oversubscribed.

Our network of special schools, PRUs and alternative provision settings provide high-quality support to our school community, although this is limited in scope due to the size of the county.

Our programme to increase the availability of specialist places, in mainstream schools and specialist settings, has released some high-quality provision for our most vulnerable children.

Increased control over the independent sector offer, through an innovative approach to commissioning and block purchasing, has enabled more children to access placements quickly and successfully, although there is more to do.

What we are most worried about?

The demand for specialist settings is still rising.

There is a gap between the commissioning of speech and language therapy (S<) services and the budget, resulting in challenges relating to value for money.

There is a mixed commissioning landscape, and bordering councils have different models and contributions to S<.

Discrepancies across the local area between predicted need and actual population need result in resource inequity.

Pace of delivery for the capital plan can be slow, due to the willingness of settings to adapt environments, and this needs boosting.

Lack of qualitative, quantitative and outcome data leads to gaps in data to inform us about children and young people's experiences, the effectiveness of services and to make robust commissioning decisions.

Our capacity to carry out annual reviews to ensure plans reflect current needs requires addressing. This is currently leading to EHCPs being out of date and not reflective of need.

What needs to change?

directory and a team of skilled system navigators who will advise local leaders on the best support and how to access it. There will be greater local capacity in our **mainstream** schools so that parents can make an easier choice to educate their children closer to home, or more easily find a local specialist placement within an easy travel distance. **Experts at Hand** will develop and build upon this capacity and ensure a joint, coordinated offer, and work within our local **SEND clusters**.

In addition to providing improved and more targeted support, **investment in school environments** will mean that they are built to effectively support children and young people with SEND. This will include delivery of a broad vision for childhood; from birth to transition to adulthood. This will mean that high-quality mainstream environments **reduce reliance upon special schools and independent settings**. We will **only commission such provision if those settings can meet the needs of their local area and be representative of the pupil population**. This will be assured by high-quality SEND advisor support and peer support and outreach from the specialist sector.

Our ambition for high-quality education will start in the early years, where the foundations of future success are laid. This will be supported by a full range of professionals, including through **Experts at Hand** and associated support.

Speech and language therapy will be delivered based on true identified needs. The model for delivery will reflect different areas and the prevalence of need. Any plans must reflect local context and the intricacies of deprivation, rurality and falling rolls. Where we have vacant premises, or falling rolls, we will seek to utilise such spaces to generate additional local capacity.

How we will change what is not working well

a) We will produce a new commissioning framework that enhances the level of available provision and improves access to this provision. The **Experts at Hand** funding will allow us to commission additional expertise and expert provision so that access is simplified. This will be based around a locality footprint to ensure that access is equitable across all Lancashire's districts.

b) We have commissioned support from three external agencies to ensure that our data is robust and that we have a longitudinal outlook, based on both published data and visible need. This will inform high-quality commissioning decisions.



	a) Lancashire has a good range of specialist services, but these are not as accessible as they could be. Capacity and level of need do not allow for the right balance of availability of some services. b) Forecasting and planning is not always done far enough in advance and can often be reactive rather than proactive. c) Our response to data needs refining to ensure we can address needs at the earliest stages and to target early support. Currently some services are traded, and this gets in the way of early identification and support. d) SEND place planning processes are not yet in place for the 16-19 age range. e) The effectiveness and quality of provision in SEND Units/resourced provision needs improved monitoring to ensure it offers efficient use of resources. f) Consistency of provision across the county needs to be more fully implemented and targeted to the needs of districts. g) Joint consultation/planning with social care and health requires more focus to ensure that the impact of education placements is considered alongside the capacity of health provision to support them. <i>NB – We will only create more specialist places if we need to reduce the reliance on independent placements in areas where there is little maintained special school capacity.</i>	c) We will make the majority of services free at the point of contact, if possible. d) We will put in place a post-16 place planning process. e) Expert guidance, co-produced with our specialist settings, PRUs, our Educational Psychology service and our Experts at Hand teams will be provided to all schools and settings that have Specialist Bases / SEND units / resourced provision to ensure high-quality and robust monitoring and quality assurance. f) We will use specialist SEND advisors and our specialist settings to ensure that we develop real consistency of provision across all our districts, working alongside the Experts at Hand offer. g) We will reinforce our joint commissioning structures and processes to ensure that health provider capacity is integrated into our commissioning discussions and decision making. <u>How Experts at Hand funding will underpin this</u> The Experts at Hand offer will be commissioned by the LA and available to Early Years settings, mainstream Primary and Secondary Schools, with an offer for post 16 provision. This will encompass children and young people in schools placed outside of Lancashire. The offer will be supported by investment to build capacity and deliver the right level and range of specialist services to get it right for children and young people. This will comprise: • Building capacity through workforce skills and knowledge. • Promoting and delivering improved early identification of need. • Supporting the creation of inclusive settings through improving whole-setting approaches using supportive check and challenge. • Offering specific support and influence including: ○ Training: Upskilling staff in targeted SEND approaches and interventions focused on presentation of need. ○ Advice: Providing expert advice and support for settings to better meet needs through SENDIAS and skilled practitioners.
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		○ Direct delivery: Delivering direct SEND support to enable settings to better meet the needs of children and young people at the group and individual level.
Local blueprint for the next 3 years	Where we are: <i>Short summary of where you are now including a reflection on what is working well, what needs to change and the status of the enablers that underpin your system.</i>	Where we will be in the next 3 years: <i>Short summary of the vision for your local system in the next 3 years including the system enablers, reflecting how your Experts at Hand Offer model will underpin this vision, helping you scale and enhance what is working well and change what is not working so well.</i>
Building block 3: <i>System leadership, local partnership collaboration and co-production to ensure that our systems meet local needs and is able to dynamically support children and families.</i>	We have used the Maturity Matrix to outline our current position and our desired future state. <u>What is working well in our system</u> Due to focused work since the local area inspection, partnership governance structures are in place and leaders have a strong understanding of their roles and accountabilities. Some strategic leads have changed but mitigations were in place to ensure continuity and the senior structure in the LA is stable. Regardless of status, leaders have a good understanding and real commitment to local area SEND priorities. The new Education Board brings together leaders from the education sector with local authority representatives. This will enable more strategic joint working to promote inclusive practice. Our agreed co-production model (Four Cornerstones) and our youth participation model (Lundy) have enabled some effective co-production activity to occur. Parents, carers, children and young adults feel more involved in developing new processes and practices and informing commissioning decisions. We capture parent and carer voices through our PCF and our SEND youth group POWAR. POWAR and our youth council regularly present to SEND Board and to our council scrutiny committee and to the ICB board. Our SEND partnership board, Education Board and Joint Consultative Group provide robust challenge and insight into the county's systems, successes and areas for improvement. As a partnership we have had two good stock-take meetings with the Department for Education and NHS England that have evidenced	We have used the Maturity Matrix to outline our current position and our desired future state. <u>What our system will be like in 3 years</u> Our system will have matured into an effective partnership system where shared accountability and commissioning responsibility is central to everything that we do. Co-production will be at the centre of the decisions that we make and how we commission services in our local areas. We aim to have a system that is collaborative, transparent and owned by all partners equally, through mature relationships and commitments. There will be a system, owned by all, representing our shared view of priorities and direction. An understanding of the impact of our arrangements for children and young people through accurate and targeted data will inform our plans to improve their experiences and outcomes continually. Better planning and consideration of co-production opportunities will be embedded and implemented on a wider scale. Area level education and SEND groups that focus upon effective co-ordination of inclusion in their districts will work hard to embed the changes and make them successful. Expertise will be shared through local SEND clusters. Medium to long-term ICB commissioning will be aligned with the NHS 10-year plan – Community, Prevention, Digital. This will be reflected in all our joint commissioning, as it aligns with the SEND reforms, the Best Start in Life Family Hubs, and the Families First programme. <u>How we will change what is not working well</u>

	good progress in improving the strategic grip and oversight on the system. <u>What we are most worried about?</u> Changes within the ICB are affecting their capacity to commission and to maintain a strong focus on SEND Local Government reorganisation potentially creating significant change. <u>What needs to change?</u> a) There is some sense of change in parent/carers' feedback, related to views being taken seriously and acted on. This includes at the ICB level and within LA SEND and inclusion services. However, feedback from parents/carers is not consistently being considered to the fullest effect and acted on across the partnership, e.g. at the Trust level across hospitals, and still emerging in social care. b) All indications are that the system is developing overall, although there are still some issues with the right representation at all meetings, due to capacity. There is also a lack of clarity that means universal understanding for how the strategic and operational elements interact is not as developed as it needs to be. c) Communication is working better at the strategic level, but this doesn't always filter down to front line staff, and a communication strategy has been developed to tackle this. d) Co-production is not always considered with enough time for it to be meaningful.	a) We will enhance and improve our approach to "you said, we did" and embed the learning from the feedback that we receive from parents and carers, and report this to the SEND board to inform future decision making and hold partners to account. b) We will reconstitute the SEND board to ensure that we have absolute clarity on the reforms and how we will hold each other to account to guarantee their success. c) The communication strategy will be rolled out and pressure tested to ensure that communication is effective. d) A schedule for co-production will be devised and implemented, with a robust timeline for each activity to be productive and generate meaningful change and improvement. We will ensure a minimum co-production benchmark (based on NHSE guidance) and self-assess against it in year one, identifying improvement actions where needed. <u>How Experts at Hand funding will underpin this</u> The Experts at Hand offer will focus on promoting inclusive practice and supporting the local system to collaborate, share knowledge and enable effective leadership of the joint commissioning of services that map onto the real needs in each area. There will be specialist Inclusion Bases in many secondary schools, commissioned by the LA, with robust SLAs and admissions criteria, and a support package provided by specialist teachers. Staff will be able to access Experts at Hand when required. SEND clusters, with directories of support, will effectively signpost the right support, at the right time, to the children and families who need it, building upon the Experts at Hand offer, and the work of our specialist teachers.
Local blueprint for the next 3 years	Where we are: <i>Short summary of where you are now including a reflection on what is working well, what needs to change and the status of the enablers that underpin your system.</i>	Where we will be in the next 3 years: <i>Short summary of the vision for your local system in the next 3 years including the system enablers, reflecting how your Experts at Hand Offer model will underpin this vision, helping you scale and enhance what is working well and change what is not working so well.</i>
Building block 4: <i>Encouraging</i>	We have used the Maturity Matrix to outline our current position and our desired future state.	We have used the Maturity Matrix to outline our current position and our desired future state.



*inclusive culture
and behaviours*

What is working well in our system

Best Start in Life Family Hubs are creating a more preventative, collaborative system that strengthens communities and reduces inequalities.

10 out of 12 of the nominated 'Best Start Family Hubs' are in the top 30% most deprived wards in England. This equates to:

- 83% in the top 30% most deprived in England
- 67% are in the top 10% most deprived in England
- 17% are in the top 1% most deprived in England

These new **Best Start in Life Hubs** are already effective in providing high-quality support to many families across Lancashire and will be even stronger under the new model, with more co-located services and support for the communities in which they are located. They sit within a wider network of 29 family hubs and 27 neighbourhood centres.

We have a highly effective specialist teacher service that is in great demand and often reaches its capacity for support early in the school year. This works alongside our excellent Educational Psychology service. We have managed to recruit additional staff into these areas and reduced the reliance upon traded income into the specialist teacher service. We have also made our SENCo network free to any setting that wishes to access this, improving the coverage of high-quality information to our schools and settings, increasing consistency.

What we are most worried about?

Permanent exclusions in Lancashire remain significantly above national levels, although we have seen improvements in this academic year. In 2024/25, 542 pupils were permanently excluded (88 primary; 454 secondary). This equates to 0.3 pupils per 10,000 pupils, between two and three times the national rate of 0.13. Lancashire also has over twice the national proportion of pupils in PRU provision following exclusion (0.37% vs 0.2%).

High exclusion levels are driving increased reliance on Day 6 provision and the wider AP / EOTAS offer, which currently spans

What our system will be like in 3 years

Our network of expert practitioners, supported by our **Best Start in Life Family Hubs** will support parents, carers and professionals to enable productive education and educational placements, facilitating the early building blocks of childhood and encouraging productive growth towards adulthood. We will have a shared understanding of inclusion, what practice is and is not acceptable, and hold each other to account for very high standards, with inclusion right at the heart of everything that we do.

The partnership approach we currently have will be strengthened so that parents/carers, schools and settings have a stronger oversight and influence on system effectiveness. This will be built on evidence-based practice and will help to shape the culture of inclusion.

Our strategies will become more aligned so that, ultimately, shared ownership is secured for the local area, and all partners have a stake in influencing and shaping the system to get the best outcomes for children, young people and their families. Areas will jointly own the data and the targets on inclusion and will be able to shape outcomes collaboratively.

We aim to work with PRUs and special schools so they can provide targeted outreach for pupils with identified SEMH needs and who are at risk of exclusion. Our reintegration model will be focused on returning pupils to mainstream provision, post PRU intervention. The model will also support skills development in mainstream schools in identifying behaviour triggers and de-escalation techniques.

To manage the increased capacity required to upscale the number and range of **Best Start in Life Family Hubs** Programmes and services that will be on offer, we will move to a total of 34 Family Hubs from the current number of 29.

We will do this by upgrading the role of five of our current Family Centres. This will ensure that 10 out of 12 (83%) of the Best Start Family Hubs in Lancashire will sit within the 30% most deprived areas.

How we will change what is not working well

a) We will more fully fund inclusion hubs in each district that are accessible by every school, no matter what their status, increasing the allocation of funding to ensure that we see real impact. The **Experts at Hand** model will be based around this inclusion hub structure, making the offer truly **local** and nuanced to focus upon each district's actual

	around 85 providers. This is creating sustained pressure on PRUs, EOTAS capacity, specialist placements and the associated budget. <u>What needs to change?</u> a) Primary Inclusion Hubs operate in each district but, due to funding being taken from the de-delegation of maintained school budgets, they have only been accessible to maintained primary schools until this financial year. These are now funded for all schools through a retained 0.5% of the school's block, as agreed by Schools Forum. b) Schools and settings need to develop a wider range of more effective alternative provision offers, in partnership with our specialist settings and the Experts at Hand teams so that there is not so much of a reliance upon external alternative provision, more fully utilising the three-tier approach to AP.	need. We will hold them fully to account for their effectiveness, against a robust SLA that outlines expected actions and scope. b) We will work with all settings to embed sustainable models of Alternative Provision, based upon utilising the three-tier approach to AP, utilising the Experts at Hand teams to ensure that children receive more than simply a change to their educational environment, enhancing the work of existing specialist teacher teams and our Educational Psychologists. <u>How Experts at Hand funding will underpin this</u> Our Experts at Hand model will be fully embedded across the education system, co-delivered through effective and accessible systems, helping us to pave the way for the introduction of the National Inclusion Standards.
Local blueprint for the next 3 years	Where we are: <i>Short summary of where you are now including a reflection on what is working well, what needs to change and the status of the enablers that underpin your system.</i>	Where we will be in the next 3 years: <i>Short summary of the vision for your local system in the next 3 years including the system enablers, reflecting how your Experts at Hand Offer model will underpin this vision, helping you scale and enhance what is working well and change what is not working so well.</i>
Enablers		
<i>Financial sustainability.</i>	<i>We have used the Maturity Matrix to outline our current position and our desired future state.</i> <u>What is working well in our system</u> A recovery plan to complete 2000 EHCPs has recently been completed, adding to the total number of EHCPs and the demand for special school and INMSS places. To help meet these demands, there has been, for the first time, a transfer of 0.5% from the school's block to the high needs block. We have also utilised a percentage of the Early Years grant to fund additional support for children with the highest needs, without them requiring an EHCP. A new banding document has been implemented from April 2026 for the element 3 (Top Up) of EHCPs. This has brought greater clarity to decision making and more transparency for schools and settings.	<i>We have used the Maturity Matrix to outline our current position and our desired future state.</i> <u>What our system will be like in 3 years</u> Our financial journey will be long, but in 3 years we will begin to see the signs of financial sustainability, as patterns of spending will have moved away from reactive, crisis-driven commissioning, into well thought out, collaborative commissioning based on our shared understanding of what works for children and families and what is the best use of valuable public funds. There will be improved financial oversight and governance, including forecasting and planning for mitigations. There will be a more specific focus on monitoring and better commissioning of independent non-maintained special schools (INMSS) to ensure value for money. Commissioning arrangements will lead to better overall planning through block purchasing and a newly formed Access to Resource Team (ART) will be in place, reducing the reliance upon expensive INMSS

We have implemented a new approach to commissioning independent school placements which delivers better value for money, although this is in its early stages. <u>What we are most worried about?</u> Financial sustainability: The local area faces significant financial pressures and sustained high levels of demand across SEND and inclusion services and this impacts on all partners who have experienced similar increased levels of demand. There was an 11% increase in Education, Health, and Care plans (EHCPs) during the last published year (24/25) and this has also placed pressure on budgets related to the high needs block (HNB) and associated costs such as increased demand for council organised home to school transport. Requests are still increasing. <u>What needs to change?</u> a) The current projected cumulative deficit for 2026-27 financial year is £252m; This is the projected mitigated deficit, with the in-year deficit on HNB driving the overspend due to insufficient funding to meet the demand in EHCPs. b) We need to reduce the high spend on independent special school placements. c) We need to ensure that funding is available to support needs early on, to avoid escalation to high-cost provision and services which are often provided too late.	placements when local, maintained special school placements would be more suitable. The <i>Inclusive Mainstream Fund</i> and the additional <i>High Needs Capital allocation</i> will be used to ensure that we can meet the needs of more children and reduce or limit the overspend on the High Needs Block. The <i>Early Years Inclusion Fund</i> will ensure that children have their needs met as early as possible, supported by excellent programmes delivered by our <i>Best Start in Life Family Hubs</i>, which focus upon home learning environment and support for parenting. The high needs block will be monitored consistently, and forecasting will be an ongoing feature so we can see what is expected. This will allow for a flexible approach that can target future needs and create mitigations to avoid over-spending. Our new banding systems will be embedded, and support and provision will be better aligned, resulting in financially sound decision making. Early intervention and early support funding in Early Years settings and YR and Y1 in the primary phase will reduce the need for EHCPs early in a child's life. An increase in mainstream <i>Specialist Bases</i> and general inclusion, reducing external cost pressures. <u>How we will change what is not working well</u> a) We will reduce unit costs in the High Needs Block as much as possible through a dynamic purchasing system and block contracting with independent special school providers. b) Through the use of the <i>High Needs Capital</i> funding allocation we will build a limited amount of additional specialist places, but we will place a heavy reliance upon mainstream specialist bases and the adaptation of mainstream learning environments to ensure that more children and young adults can be educated close to their homes. c) We will use the <i>Experts at Hand</i> funding to commission the right amount of expert support, and release funding from the High Needs Block to facilitate the earliest possible, most effective local support. <u>How Experts at Hand funding will underpin this</u> Joint commissioning will be strengthened, allowing service capacity to better reflect the needs of localities. This includes higher retention of the
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		early years block for central services, which will enable significant investment in early years support in quality assurance of provision, training and early intervention. The system will be more effective because we will have the necessary expertise in local areas, able to effectively support those who most need it.
Local blueprint for the next 3 years	Where we are: <i>Short summary of where you are now including a reflection on what is working well, what needs to change and the status of the enablers that underpin your system.</i>	Where we will be in the next 3 years: <i>Short summary of the vision for your local system in the next 3 years including the system enablers, reflecting how your Experts at Hand Offer model will underpin this vision, helping you scale and enhance what is working well and change what is not working so well.</i>
Capital investment strategy across EY, mainstream, FE.	We have used the Maturity Matrix to outline our current position and our desired future state. <u>What is working well in our system</u> Our investment over the last three years has allowed additional specialist capacity to be made available, in both specialist settings and in mainstream schools. We have a published SEND capital strategy that has been co-produced, and this encompasses a good balance of additional specialist places and high-quality mainstream places. Our SEND units and resourced provisions have been well received, and their designs have been influenced by the prevailing need in the areas which they have been located. Immersive sensory suites and breakout spaces have enabled children to cope more effectively and reduce the need for moves to different provision. <u>What we are most worried about?</u> Costs for independent schools outside of the maintained sector are higher than our maintained settings and outcomes are not always as good. The number of places we need outside of our maintained and Academy schools has increased by 49% since 2021/22. Lancashire currently has 1,233 children in INMSS settings (as of 8/6/26), around 7% of all pupils with an EHC plan. The council is working with over 100 different providers, making it difficult to maintain consistent oversight, manage quality or influence cost.	We have used the Maturity Matrix to outline our current position and our desired future state. <u>What our system will be like in 3 years</u> Our system will have the robust foundations laid by 5 years of sustained investment in our mainstream and specialist environments. We will be moving onto the next stage of developing mainstream inclusive environments based upon our learning from what has worked with the initial projects that we commissioned. Projects detailed in our capital plan are on track to be realised over the next three years and include: - Increasing capacity in our existing Special Schools if it is required to reduce the reliance upon independent settings, ensuring that provision reflects the current and forecast mix of needs and ensures capacity to reduce the need for INMSS. We have so many children in independent settings that it would not be possible to reduce these costs without strategic increases in maintained specialist provision. - Continued development of specialist bases and additional support in mainstream settings with circa 1126 new places created. - Improving accessibility of settings and creating inclusive environments across mainstream settings, including maintained nursery schools. - Developing settings for high-quality post 19 provision.

	The average cost in an independent school has gone up by 58.6% since 2021/22. The SEND Capital Plan sets out a framework for capital investment of £57 million over the next three years as well as proposals for the £23m of High Needs Capital funding recently allocated by the DFE. <u>What needs to change?</u> a) We know that sufficiency of special school places is an area of pressure in Lancashire. We have developed a sufficiency plan, which will create more places using funding from the government through the high needs provision capital allocations grant and funding from the High Needs Block. b) Parents and children need to have greater confidence in the mainstream settings to meet the needs of their children, and the buildings need to be adapted to ensure the highest possible quality of provision. c) Mainstream settings need to be adapted to meet a greater range of needs.	• Creation of EY specialist bases and assessment places. • Mainstream adaptations to school environments. • Specialist sensory provision in mainstream environments. Through the capital programme, service level agreements will include service specifications and quality assurance systems to ensure environments are accessible and encourage participation in learning, the development of independence, and resilience in children and young people. This will build on universal and targeted provision to meet needs. Specialist training and development for SENCOs will be included in this commissioning and outreach offer. <u>How we will change what is not working well</u> a) Using the additional High Needs Capital funding that we have been allocated by government, we will create a limited number of additional specialist places but place the greatest emphasis upon creating specialist bases in mainstream settings. b) We will use the expertise of the sector and the Experts at Hand to design and build the most effective, proven provision in our mainstream schools, utilising the most up to date methods and technology, to ensure that as many children and young adults as possible can have their needs met in a mainstream setting. c) We will use High Needs Capital funding to adapt mainstream settings to be more inclusive and create low-arousal, sensory spaces. <u>How Experts at Hand funding will underpin this</u> Learning from the Experts at Hand we will ensure that the provision is commissioned and built in a way that is most effective. These settings will be ideal for professionals to base themselves in to provide the necessary support and therapy, when required.
Local blueprint for the next 3 years	Where we are: <i>Short summary of where you are now including a reflection on what is working well, what needs to change and the status of the enablers that underpin your system.</i>	Where we will be in the next 3 years: <i>Short summary of the vision for your local system in the next 3 years including the system enablers, reflecting how your Experts at Hand Offer model will underpin this vision, helping you scale and enhance what is working well and change what is not working so well.</i>
Data/digital systems.	We have used the Maturity Matrix to outline our current position and our desired future state.	We have used the Maturity Matrix to outline our current position and our desired future state.



What is working well in our system

There is a new EHCP parental portal for new assessments.

The use of AI to produce the high-quality synthesis of information that is required for excellent EHCPs.

A new education management system that integrates school attendance, SEND, EHE, exclusions and many more categories of data into one easily interrogatable database.

Integration of education and social care systems.

New processes for commissioning independent school places and visualising the current capacity and future projected need across the county.

A new Local Offer website.

Digital integration of support services surrounding our **Best Start in Life Family Hubs**.

Place-planning projections through MIME and Lancaster University.

What we are most worried about?

Local Government reorganisation may mean that systems need to be re-set, and this may take a considerable amount of time to reach a place where they work effectively over new footprints.

What needs to change?

a) Digital data/systems: Currently there are many systems in place that do not allow for interaction and, therefore, data is dependent on multiple layers of interpretation. There is an over-reliance on spreadsheets and manual input, which means the system is vulnerable and lacks accuracy and requires cleansing.

What our system will be like in 3 years

We will have an embedded EHCP portal, digital local offer and **Experts at Hand** directory, signposting parents, carers and practitioners to what is available in each locality. Our digital **Best Start in Life Family Hubs** offer will be embedded and will be integral to, and complimentary to, our SEND offer.

Building on an improved JSNA and SEF, data and local intelligence will detail the needs of the local 0-25 population with SEND and who may need AP. This will enable effective commissioning of the **Experts at Hand** offer. These outline where we are as a local area partnership, and the intended strategic outcomes for improving the lives of those with SEND in the local area. This will align with the provision and services across education, health and social care that need to be commissioned to address needs. It will be characterised by a 'front door' model, with resources based in district areas and supported by **SEND clusters** and **Experts at Hand** staff.

The use of SEND pupil place planning data will provide even more reliable forecasting and effective planning of school places.

The EHCP parental portal will be further developed to allow the integration of annual reviews.

Integrated HUB and finance systems will be able to actively control the expenditure through accurate forecasting and cost analysis.

How we will change what is not working well

a) Single datasets will be provided within the next year as we release our new education management system with integrated overviews of education, SEND and social care, with regular updates from health providers.

How Experts at Hand funding will underpin this

The innovation strand of the **Experts at Hand** funding will allow us to think outside the box in commissioning new services and allowing prompt and easy access to these services through our new digital platforms and information management systems.

Local blueprint for the next 3 years	Where we are: <i>Short summary of where you are now including a reflection on what is working well, what needs to change and the status of the enablers that underpin your system.</i>	Where we will be in the next 3 years: <i>Short summary of the vision for your local system in the next 3 years including the system enablers, reflecting how your Experts at Hand Offer model will underpin this vision, helping you scale and enhance what is working well and change what is not working so well.</i>
Workforce.	We have used the Maturity Matrix to outline our current position and our desired future state. <u>What is working well in our system</u> Workforce: Expansion is underway for statutory SEND services as part of the SEND Recovery Plan, both through increased capacity and service redesign for longer-term sustainability. This has been done through >£7m investment to increase capacity significantly to address statutory performance. Workforce development programmes, including induction, continuing professional development (CPD) and service days, embed co production principles and legal requirements, ensuring officers work collaboratively with children, young people and families. Workforce development opportunities through the SEND Academy are available for all partners related to statutory processes. The academy is a structured approach to delivering workforce development opportunities for all partners. This includes training and support at different levels from induction programmes to statutory and mandatory skills development. <u>What we are most worried about?</u> There is a possibility that we will not be able to recruit as many specialist staff as we require in a large county. The coverage of the training that we can provide may not be sufficient. We may lose skilled practitioners from the school workforce who have chosen to work as expert advisors. <u>What needs to change?</u> a) Workforce priorities related to health remain, e.g. capacity to deliver commissioned services such as neurodevelopmental pathways. The links with providers do not always enable a strong	We have used the Maturity Matrix to outline our current position and our desired future state. <u>What our system will be like in 3 years</u> Our workforce will be better trained, highly skilled and more effective at meeting the needs of a wide variety of children. We will have grown the specialist workforce to include a wide range of professionals who will be able to effectively support and advise in relation to more effectively meeting a wider range of needs in a mainstream environment. <u>How we will change what is not working well</u> a) Clarify the commissioning landscape with ICB colleagues and health provider networks. Ensure that we have robust recruitment pipelines so that we can recruit as many high-quality staff as possible to support our Experts at Hand offer. b) We will work with university providers to strengthen the Educational Psychology recruitment pipeline and change the work that Educational Psychologists complete, moving away from simply assessing need, to actively working with schools and families to secure a sustainable pathway for each child. We will ensure that we have assistant and trainee Educational Psychologists in our workforce. <u>How Experts at Hand funding will underpin this</u> Through the Experts at Hand approach there will be a developed high-quality offer for continuing professional development across the education sector, free at the point of need. Focussing on a universal/targeted/specialist approach. This will be promoted through system leadership in trusts, SEND clusters and localities. Because of this, there will be a strengthened workforce across all settings who will share expertise and joint accountability at a locality level. This will lead to sector-led improvement. The expanded team will also support post-16 providers to build confidence in inclusive practice,

	direction regarding local area priorities, e.g. if some areas are not specified but are only part of block contracts. b) The pipeline for Educational Psychologist recruitment is not strong enough and we have a reliance upon agency workers to meet the need for assessments.	ensuring young people's needs are met effectively without unnecessary continuation of statutory plans. With increased capacity from the Workforce Plan, the service will take a more proactive approach to reviewing post-16 support. This will help identify when young people no longer need statutory oversight and ensure any changes are made through a planned, high-quality Preparation for Adulthood process. We will strengthen dispute resolution and decision-making processes so system partners can address issues early and consistently, supported by transparent escalation routes and increase SENDIASS capacity, locating them in Best Start Family Hubs.
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Success measures (drawing on metrics from the accompanying data template)

Metrics	Baseline (outline the baseline for your success measures reflecting where you are now; these should be drawn from the metrics in the data template)	Target Metrics (outline the target metrics that will demonstrate you have achieved the vision summarised above: these should be drawn from the metrics in the data template)
Building block 1: Strengthening inclusion across education settings		
% of children with EHCPs educated in mainstream settings	In 2025 there were 7,114 children in mainstream provision, including post 16 and specialist bases in mainstream. There were 14,744 total EHCPs, meaning 48.3% of EHCPs are CYP in mainstream setting	By 2029 there is projected to be 12,126 children in mainstream provision, including post 16 and specialist bases in mainstream. There is projected to be 21,503 total EHCPs, meaning 56.4% of EHCPs are CYP in mainstream setting.
Number of specialist base places in mainstream settings	304 specialist base places for 2025/26 academic year	Delivery of planned expansion, increasing specialist base places to 1,350 by 2029/30 academic year
Permanent exclusion rate for pupils with an EHCP	Permanent exclusions in Lancashire remain above national levels . In 2024/25, 542 pupils were permanently excluded (88 primary; 454 secondary).	A reduction in primary exclusion by 20 by 2028/29 (-10 2026/27, -10 2027/28). A reduction in secondary exclusions by 90 by 2028/29.

	This equates to 0.3 per 10,000 pupils, between two and three times the national rate of 0.13.	
Number of EHCNA requests	3,630 requests in 2025	Reduction year-on-year to 2,756 by 2029
Number of assessments resulting in EHCPs	2,747 new EHCPs in 2025	Reduction in line with demand to approx. 1,943 by 2029
% of total pupil population with EHCPs	At the end of December 2025 there were 14,744 EHCPs. Currently 6.5% of school aged population has an EHCP.	EHCPs are projected to continue to grow over the next few years, this is in line with national expectations. With the planned mitigations the growth is expected to grow at a slower rate. By 2029 there is anticipated to be 9.4% of the school aged population requiring an EHCP.

Success measures *(drawing on metrics from the accompanying data template)*

Metrics	Baseline <i>(outline the baseline for your success measures reflecting where you are now; these should be drawn from the metrics in the data template)</i>	Target Metrics <i>(outline the target metrics that will demonstrate you have achieved the vision summarised above: these should be drawn from the metrics in the data template)</i>
Building block 2: Access to specialist support and local placements		
% of CYP with EHCPs placed in INMSS / independent sector	Current baseline is 1,115 (7.6%) children and young people in INMSS or independent schools.	It is projected that planned mitigations will start to take effect over the next three years. By 2029, the proportion of children in INMSS will remain at a similar level to current 8.6%. This is because the EHCP cohort is growing, and we need time to develop our mainstream inclusion model to reduce the reliance on INMSS.
Current and planned workforce FTE EP, OT and SALT	Baseline FTE for 2025/26: 64.0 Speech and Language Therapists and support workers 29.3 Occupational Therapists and support workers 26 Educational Psychologists and support workers.	Investment into the experts at hand offer will increase the workforce for these specialist roles in year one. This investment is: £1.2 million for EPs, trainees and assistants £1.8 million for therapy service roles

Annual spend on agency EPs.	£6.054 million spent on agency EP workers in 2025/26 financial year to support capacity for completing statutory EHCP work.	The expenditure on agency EPs is projected to reduce by 2029 as mitigations begin to impact the number of requests for EHCPs.
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Success measures (drawing on metrics from the accompanying data template)

Metrics	Baseline (outline the baseline for your success measures reflecting where you are now; these should be drawn from the metrics in the data template)	Target Metrics (outline the target metrics that will demonstrate you have achieved the vision summarised above: these should be drawn from the metrics in the data template)
Building block 3: System leadership, local partnership collaboration and co-production		
Tribunal appeal rate	The baseline tribunal to appeal rate is currently around 2.5%	For 2029, expect this to remain at a similar rate whilst parents grow confidence in mainstream schools.
% Families/children stating that their needs are being met in their school/setting	SEND Survey results: In 2025 (n=556 Feb-Aug) 46% reported they always, mostly or sometimes had the education support their child needs, 49% (n=148 Sept-Dec 2025) rising to 60% (n=240 Jan- April 2026).	Annual survey shows >50% families feel their child's SEND needs are being met in their school/setting.
Building block 4: Encouraging inclusive culture and behaviours		
Permanent exclusion rate for pupils with an EHCP	Permanent exclusions in Lancashire remain above national levels . In 2024/25, 542 pupils were permanently excluded (88 primary; 454 secondary). This equates to 0.3 per 10,000 pupils, between two and three times the national rate of 0.13.	A reduction in primary exclusion by 20 by 2028/29 (-10 2026/27, -10 2027/28). A reduction in secondary exclusions by 90 by 2028/29.
% of CYP with EHCP in alternative provision	The proportion of CYP in Alternative Provision in 2025 was 0.6%	This proportion is projected to be 0.7% by 2029.

Additional Documents

- Lancashire Experts at Hand
- EaH model

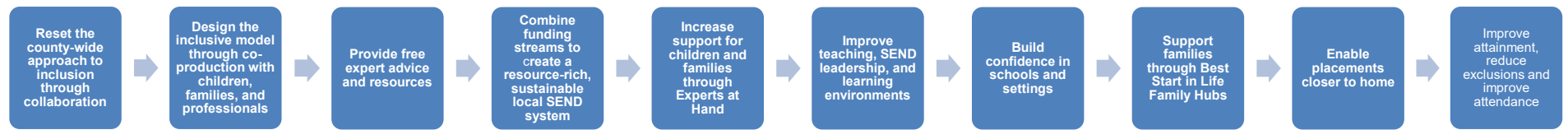
3. What is the local area partnership's strategy for delivering on the above?

A brief summary of your local system's theory of change or reform strategy. Reflect on the output of your **Local Partnership Maturity Assessment Tool**, particularly your *Local System 'change story.'*

Our theory of change (see embedded document) is built around increasing the support for children and families and increasing the confidence in our schools and settings to **reduce the reliance upon independent school placements**. This will happen through improving teaching and learning, improving SEND leadership, and enhancing the environments in which children are educated. This requires a greater emphasis to be placed upon collaboration and facilitating high-quality educational provision through **expert advice** and resources. Our approach will be data rich and informed, building sustainably on the strong foundations that already exist, putting in place solutions that respond to local need. Inclusive practice will be strengthened across the whole system.

Supported by the **Mainstream Inclusion Fund**, **Early Years Inclusion Fund** and the **Experts at Hand** funding, schools and settings will feel better supported, and able to create a sustainable SEND system in their local areas. This will mean that placements will be available closer to a child or young person's home, maintaining peer group relationships, and reducing unnecessary school moves, reducing the distance that children must travel.

Supported by high-quality **Best Start in Life Family Hubs**, each local area will have a supportive range of services that will make sure that parents and carers have all that they need to facilitate effective educational engagement for their children. Creating such a dynamic system will only be possible through co-production with children, families and professionals and integrating initiatives into a clear and coherent strategy, wrapping around children and families.



246/250 words

Additional Document

- Theory of Change

Please upload a completed copy of the Local Partnership Maturity Assessment Tool.

- Maturity Assessment Tool submitted as an appendix

4. What is the local area partnership roadmap for the next 3 years?

Reflecting on the broad timescales and expectation for deliverables set out in the Schools White Paper, key documents and core minimum requirements set out in this document, please provide a high-level roadmap for the next 3 years. Please highlight key milestones and a trajectory to the target metrics identified above, including leading indicators.

In the 2026-27 column, in particular, please reference how you plan to meet the core minimum requirements in your narrative, including details and evidence in supporting documents.

You can insert or upload supporting documents including graphics/visuals that illustrate your data trajectory.

Local roadmap for the next 3 years			
Building Blocks	2026/2027	2027/2028	2028/2029
Building block 1: Strengthening inclusion across education settings.	Define and implement our Ordinarily Available Provision (OAP) framework as part of the updated resource allocation system for SEND. Develop the Experts at Hand model through coproduction with partners so that the local inclusion support offer focuses on early identification and intervention. Audit and review the local offer to ensure it has the prerequisites for developing the system further. Issue revised guidance on our expectations of how alternative provision should be used, and commissioned, based upon the three-tier approach to AP. Pilot approach for Experts at Hand in selected districts. Re-launch Wellcomm in Lancashire settings. Scope costs of licence for Widget.	Structurally redesign alternative provision commissioning to implement the 3-tier approach to social, emotional and mental health needs (SEMH). Enhance opportunities for young people with SEND to access further education, supported internships, and employment, ensuring they are fully supported in achieving their career aspirations. Implement Year two of Experts at Hand. Review new inclusion standards and embed this in school improvement models of support. Review and develop further the workforce plan. Coproduce the workforce CPD opportunities for new teachers. Enhance the work of the Inclusion Hubs to reduce the level of exclusions further. Commission alternative provision settings in the parts of the county that have limited coverage.	The Experts at Hand system, will be fully embedded. It will mean that children and young people can flourish in their local school/setting, therefore, reducing costs related to their community inclusion and future outcomes and life as a local resident. Schools and settings will have confidence in how to access and use this offer. The Best Start in Life Family Hub centre of excellence will also be embedded in each district, aligned with Experts at Hand. Ordinarily available provision will be reviewed again to ensure the continued effectiveness of the offer and subsequently improved further based on the outcome of the review. Support use of ongoing national and international surveys to monitor children and young people's sense of belonging and engagement, in all schools (up from 60% of schools in 2026).

		Work with SENCOs to provide support and training for submitting high-quality information to contribute to EHCPs. Create additional specialist base places in mainstream schools, to reduce the reliance upon independent special school placements. Create an Alternative Provision directory for each area, with our Experts at Hand Directory of Provision running alongside this.	Exclusions will have reduced, as will the use of full-time placements in Pupil Referral Units and Alternative Provision providers due to the use of the 3-tier approach to alternative provision. Schools/settings will be supported by more targeted support at the whole school/setting or trust level, and they will be fully embedded as strategic partners, benefitting from the support of SEND clusters and local inclusion hubs to share expertise and resources. There will be better join up between colleges and the LA to support more accessible opportunities, post-16. This will ensure we have better outcomes and more young people in education, employment and training, accessing bespoke pathways. Special school placement requests will have started to change, with increased professional parental confidence in the ability of mainstream schools to meet the needs of more children, and therefore less need for independent placements as we can more effectively meet need in community schools closer to a child's home. Independent placements will begin to reduce as we grow the mainstream offer. Mainstream schools will have started to build real expertise in meeting diverse needs.
Success measures	Support and training for submitting high-quality information to contribute to EHCPs is available. Ordinarily available provision toolkit has been further reviewed and reissued.	The Best Start in Life Family Hub centre of excellence is embedded in each district, aligned with Experts at Hand. An Alternative Provision directory for each area, with our Experts at Hand Directory	There is early identification of need that leads to increased SEN support in mainstream, so needs are met earlier. Schools are fully embedded as strategic partners, benefitting from the support of

	Schools/settings are supported by more targeted support at the whole school/setting or trust level Improved join up between colleges and the LA to support more accessible opportunities, post-16. Ordinarily Available Provision (OAP) framework designed and implemented. Local offer audited and reviewed. Support and training for submitting high-quality information to contribute to EHCPs is available.	of Provision running alongside this, is available. Revised guidance on our expectations of how alternative provision should be used, and commissioned, based upon the three-tier approach to AP is issued. Wellcomm is re-launched in Lancashire settings. New inclusion standards are developed and embedded in school improvement models of support. The workforce plan is reviewed and reissued. CPD opportunities for new teachers are coproduced and available. Additional specialist base places in mainstream schools, to reduce the reliance upon independent special school placements, are available. An Alternative Provision directory for each area, with our Experts at Hand Directory of Provision running alongside this, is available. Ordinarily available provision toolkit has been further reviewed and reissued. Providers use the 3-tier approach to alternative provision. Schools/settings are supported by more targeted support at the whole school/setting or trust level Alternative provision settings in the parts of the county that have limited coverage are commissioned.	SEND clusters and local inclusion hubs to share expertise and resources. Increased professional parental confidence in the ability of mainstream schools to meet the needs of more children. Our Experts at Hand offer will be fully embedded. Enhanced opportunities for young people with SEND to access further education, supported internships, and employment. The Experts at Hand system is fully embedded. Schools are fully embedded as strategic partners, benefitting from the support of SEND clusters and local inclusion hubs to share expertise and resources. Increased professional parental confidence in the ability of mainstream schools to meet the needs of more children, Less need for independent placements as we can more effectively meet need in community schools closer to a child's home. Mainstream schools will have started to build real expertise in meeting diverse needs. National and international surveys to monitor children and young people's sense of belonging and engagement, in all schools are regularly used. Full-time placements in Pupil Referral Units and Alternative Provision are reduced.
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		New inclusion standards are developed and embedded in school improvement models of support.	
Local roadmap for the next 3 years			
Building Blocks	2026/2027	2027/2028	2028/2029
Building block 2: Access to specialist support and local placements.	Coproduce the local expectations and guidance for Specialist Inclusion Bases (commissioned places) and Support Inclusion Bases (schools' own population). Invest Experts at Hand funding to enhance existing routes to access specialist input at the earliest stage. The delivery model will ensure integration with other services and offers that are currently funded differently, e.g. specialist teacher traded services. Review funding for the current model of delivery for specialist teachers to support effective move to a new financial model. Continue to delivery of our SEND Capital Plan which sets out a framework for capital investment of £57 million over the next three years as well as proposals for the £23m of High Needs Capital funding recently allocated by the DFE. Development of secondary specialist Inclusion Bases in mainstream. Audit potential use of assistive technology approaches, e.g. AV1 Robots. Use attendance, SEND and vulnerability data from all schools in the area to build intelligence about the needs of schools and identify the cohorts, schools, and neighbourhoods /towns on which to focus	Commission outreach from high-quality specialist providers. This will be a core part of the system. This will align with existing services such as specialist teachers. Experts at Hand year two delivery: Develop the confidence of mainstream staff, through delivery of a better training programme and access to Experts at Hand, to enhance the experiences of children and young people. Develop the second phase of funding for mainstream environment adaptations and development of Inclusion Bases across EY, school age and post 16. Delivery of EY, primary, secondary and post 16 specialist Inclusion Bases in mainstream; adaptations to special schools to better support more complex profiles of need, including strong oversight and monitoring to ensure high quality. Potential investment in a range of assistive technology. Specialist Inclusion Base service level agreement produced, aligned with SEND reform strategy. Review joint funding arrangements with the ICB for high-cost placements.	Develop the network of high-quality local provision that meets the requirements of children and young people. Schools/trusts will be part of the governance of alternative provision, which will be structured in line with the Tiers of Provision, and this will allow for better reintegration into mainstream provision. There will be a focus on stronger outcomes in AP. Delivery of next phase of EY, primary, secondary and post 16 Specialist Inclusion Bases in mainstream; adaptations to special schools to better support more complex profiles of need and satellite site for more local placements. There will be greater oversight and quality assurance of specialist Inclusion Bases with a target of all being rated as good or better. Our system will be underpinned by an effective network of specialist settings and practitioners, clearly signposted and easily accessible through a locality directory and a team of skilled system navigators who will advise local leaders on the best support and how to access it. Special school outreach will strengthen the system, sharing local expertise within SEND clusters.

	efforts and resources to support early identification and inclusion. Publish a longitudinal data outlook, based on both published data and visible need to inform high-quality commissioning decisions. Put in place a post-16 place planning process. Expert guidance, co-produced with our specialist settings, PRUs, our Educational Psychology service and our Experts at Hand teams will be provided to all schools and settings that have Specialist Bases / SEND units / resourced provision to ensure high-quality and robust monitoring and quality assurance.	We will produce a new commissioning framework that enhances the level of available provision and improves access to this provision. The Experts at Hand funding will allow us to commission additional expertise and expert provision so that access is simplified. This will be based around a locality footprint to ensure that access is equitable across all Lancashire's districts. We will make the majority of services free at the point of contact where possible to ensure that we have equity of access and a responsiveness to emerging need. We will use specialist SEND advisors and our specialist settings to ensure that we develop real consistency of provision across all our districts, working alongside the Experts at Hand offer. We will reinforce our joint commissioning structures and processes to ensure that health provider capacity is integrated into our commissioning discussions and decision making.	There will be greater local capacity in our mainstream schools so that parents can make an easier choice to educate their children closer to home, or more easily find a local specialist placement within an easy travel distance, reducing reliance upon independent settings. Experts at Hand will develop and build upon this capacity and ensure a joint, coordinated offer, and work within our local SEND clusters. In addition to providing improved and more targeted support, investment in school environments will mean that they are built to effectively support children and young people with SEND. This will include delivery of a broad vision for childhood; from birth to transition to adulthood. Speech and language therapy will be delivered based on true identified needs. The model for delivery will reflect different areas and the prevalence of need.
Success measures	Coproduced local expectations and guidance for Specialist Inclusion Bases (commissioned places) and Support Inclusion Bases (schools' own population). A post-16 place planning process is in place. Reviewed joint funding arrangements with the ICB for high-cost placements.	Commissioned additional expertise and expert provision so that access is simplified, based around a locality footprint to ensure that access is equitable across all Lancashire's districts. Experts at Hand funding enhances existing routes to access specialist input at the earliest stage. Attendance, SEND and vulnerability data from all schools in the area is used to build intelligence about the needs of schools and identify the cohorts, schools, and	Reduced reliance upon independent schools. A network of high-quality local provision that meets the requirements of children and young people is available. Specialist SEND advisors and our specialist settings have developed real consistency of provision across all our districts, working alongside the Experts at Hand offer.



	New commissioning framework that enhances the level of available provision and improves access to this provision.	neighbourhoods /towns on which to focus efforts and resources to support early identification and inclusion. Published longitudinal data outlook, based on both published data and visible need to inform high-quality commissioning decisions. Commissioned outreach from high-quality specialist providers. Specialist Inclusion Base service level agreement produced, aligned with SEND reform strategy. Expert guidance, co-produced with our specialist settings, PRUs, our Educational Psychology service and our Experts at Hand teams will be provided to all schools and settings that have Specialist Bases / SEND units / resourced provision to ensure high-quality and robust monitoring and quality assurance Investment in a range of assistive technology.	Greater local capacity in our mainstream schools so that parents can make an easier choice to educate their children closer to home, or more easily find a local specialist placement within an easy travel distance. Speech and language therapy will be delivered based on true identified needs. The model for delivery will reflect different areas and the prevalence of need. Effective network of specialist settings and practitioners, clearly signposted and easily accessible through a locality directory and a team of skilled system navigators who will advise local leaders on the best support and how to access it, is available. EY, primary, secondary and post 16 specialist Inclusion Bases in mainstream.
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Local roadmap for the next 3 years

Building Blocks	2026/2027	2027/2028	2028/2029
Building block 3: System leadership, local partnership collaboration and co-production	Strengthen engagement and participation in key strategic governance systems. This will shape the direction of the system, including at the locality level. Strengthen local strategic governance to ensure more school/setting involvement. Work with Parent Carer Forum to better understand the lived experiences of children, young people and families and how this relates to services. Include children, young people and families in coproduction of quality assurance methods and expectations for SEND related provision. Provide strategic leadership and oversight regarding the speech and language therapy and occupational therapy elements of the Experts at Hand offer. We will enhance and improve our approach to "you said, we did" and embed the learning from the feedback that we receive from parents and carers, and report this to the SEND board to inform future decision making and hold partners to account. We will reconstitute the SEND board to ensure that we have absolute clarity on the reforms and how we will hold each other to account to guarantee their success.	Review neurodevelopmental pathways to ensure they are effective and that there are support mechanisms built into the system for families who are waiting. Strengthen ties with local providers of AP. Develop a plan for 'growing our own' specialists including Specialist Teachers, Education Psychologists and Speech and Language and Occupational Therapists. Develop a tactical method to increase speech and language therapy routes to a sustainable system, e.g. student placements through building relationships between universities, education settings and speech and language therapy services. This will feed into the sustainability of services and foster consistency of skills in the local area. The communication strategy will be rolled out and pressure tested to ensure that communication is effective. A schedule for co-production will be devised and implemented, with a robust timeline for each activity to be productive and generate meaningful change and improvement.	Review the impact of the reform transformation to date and consolidate system learning with a view to sustainability for the areas that are most effective. Review funding implications and sufficiency for ongoing system requirements. Develop the next phase of Experts at Hand based on learning from reviews, with a fully coproduced offer (local leaders, parents/carers and providers). Our system will have matured into an effective partnership system where shared accountability and commissioning responsibility is central to everything that we do. Co-production will be at the centre of the decisions that we make and how we commission services in our local areas. Area level education and SEND groups that focus upon effective co-ordination of inclusion in their districts will work hard to embed the changes and make them successful. Expertise will be shared through local SEND clusters.

Success measures	Strengthened engagement and participation in key strategic governance systems. Strengthened local strategic governance to ensure more school/setting involvement. Children, young people and families are included in coproduction of quality assurance methods and expectations for SEND related provision. Strategic leadership and oversight regarding the speech and language therapy and occupational therapy elements of the Experts at Hand offer is in place. The SEND board is reconstituted, providing absolute clarity on the reforms and how we will hold each other to account to guarantee their success. We have started to 'grow our own' specialists including Specialist Teachers, Education Psychologists and Speech and Language and Occupational Therapists. Area level education and SEND groups that focus upon effective co-ordination of inclusion in their districts are working hard to embed the changes and make them successful. Expertise will be shared through local SEND clusters.	Better understanding of the lived experiences of children, young people and families and how this relates to services. A fully centralised quality assured list of Alternative Providers and AP Framework and Network in place. Enhance and improved approach to "you said, we did" and the learning from the feedback that we receive from parents and carers is embedded and reported to the SEND board to inform future decision making and hold partners to account. Learning from the feedback that we receive from parents and carers is embedded and reported to the SEND board to inform future decision making and hold partners to account. Implemented a tactical method to increase speech and language therapy routes to a sustainable system, e.g. student placements through building relationships between universities, education settings and speech and language therapy services. The communication strategy has been rolled out and pressure tested to ensure that communication is effective. A schedule for co-production has been devised and implemented, with a robust timeline for each activity to be productive and generate meaningful change and improvement.	Reviewed neurodevelopmental pathways. Co-production will be at the centre of the decisions that we make and how we commission services in our local areas. Revised funding structure which is sustainable. SEND partnership board is mature and drives change and accountability in the county. Co-production is at the heart of everything that we do as a partnership. Local SEND clusters are embedded as a way of working and are successfully driving inclusive practice.
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Local roadmap for the next 3 years			
Building Blocks	2026/2027	2027/2028	2028/2029
Building block 4: Encouraging inclusive culture and behaviours.	Develop the delivery approach for Experts at Hand, building on the rationale for multi-agency working, i.e. to enable joined up support to map onto local schools/settings. This is underpinned by a commitment to align resources to create an inclusive system. There will be a clear stakeholder participation/communications plan to ensure we listen to feedback, identify barriers and involve everyone in decision making on a consistent basis.	The partnership vehicle for collaborations will be defined in a service level agreement. This will include accountability, performance measures and how this will be assured. Schools' Inclusion Base strategy, guidance and best practice coproduced with school leaders and SENCos. Targeting early years support to ensure the offer avoids the need for special school placement at KS1 (this builds on HNB mitigation proposals at phase I). We will more fully fund inclusion hubs in each district that are accessible by every school, no matter what their status, increasing the allocation of funding to ensure that we see real impact. The Experts at Hand model will be based around this inclusion hub structure, making the offer truly local and nuanced to focus upon each district's actual need. We will work with all settings to embed sustainable models of Alternative Provision, based upon utilising the three-tier approach to AP, utilising the Experts at Hand teams to ensure that children receive more than simply a change to their educational environment, enhancing the work of existing specialist teacher teams and our Educational Psychologists. To manage the increased capacity required to upscale the number and range of Best Start in Life Family Hubs	Multidisciplinary professional support services will be jointly commissioned at a group/area level to address needs efficiently. Increased access to multi-agency support through streamlined referral systems as part of Experts at Hand. Local leadership results in joint commissioning of services in partnership across localities and with specialist services. Our network of expert practitioners, supported by our Best Start in Life Family Hubs will support parents, carers and professionals to enable productive education and educational placements, facilitating the early building blocks of childhood and encouraging productive growth towards adulthood. We will have a shared understanding of inclusion, what practice is and is not acceptable, and hold each other to account for very high standards, with inclusion right at the heart of everything that we do. The partnership approach we currently have will be strengthened so that parents/carers, schools and settings have a stronger oversight and influence on system effectiveness. This will be built on evidence-based practice and will help to shape the culture of inclusion.

		Programmes and services that will be on offer, we will move to a total of 34 Family Hubs from the current number of 29. We will do this by upgrading the role of five of our current Family Centres. This will ensure that 10 out of 12 (83%) of the Best Start Family Hubs in Lancashire will sit within the 30% most deprived areas.	Our strategies will become more aligned so that, ultimately, shared ownership is secured for the local area, and all partners have a stake in influencing and shaping the system to get the best outcomes for children, young people and their families. Areas will jointly own the data and the targets on inclusion and will be able to shape outcomes collaboratively. Our reintegration model will be focused on returning pupils to mainstream provision, post PRU intervention. The model will also support skills development in mainstream schools in identifying behaviour triggers and de-escalation techniques.
Success measures	Number of specialist Inclusion Bases increases. The delivery approach for Experts at Hand is in place. Clear stakeholder participation/communications plan ensures we listen to feedback, identify barriers and involve everyone in decision making on a consistent basis. The partnership vehicle for collaborations is defined in a service level agreement. This includes accountability, performance measures and how this will be assured. Schools' Inclusion Base strategy, guidance and best practice has been coproduced with school leaders and SENCos.	Targeted early years support ensures the offer avoids the need for special school placement at KS1 (this builds on HNB mitigation proposals at phase I). Inclusion hubs are available in each district that are accessible by every school, no matter what their status, increasing the allocation of funding to ensure that we see real impact. Embedded sustainable models of Alternative Provision, based upon utilising the three-tier approach to AP, utilising the Experts at Hand teams to ensure that children receive more than simply a change to their educational environment, enhancing the work of existing specialist teacher teams and our Educational Psychologists. Increased access to multi-agency support through streamlined referral systems as part of Experts at Hand.	Parents/carers, schools and settings have full oversight and influence on system effectiveness, built on evidence-based practice and will help to shape the culture of inclusion. Our strategies are more aligned and shared ownership is secured for the local area. All partners have a stake in influencing and shaping the system to get the best outcomes for children, young people and their families. Areas jointly own the data and the targets on inclusion and can shape outcomes collaboratively.

	34 Family Hubs are available ensuring that 10 out of 12 (83%) of the Best Start Family Hubs in Lancashire will sit within the 30% most deprived areas. Multidisciplinary professional support services are jointly commissioned at a group/area level to address needs efficiently. Parents/carers, schools and settings have a stronger oversight and influence on system effectiveness, built on evidence-based practice and will help to shape the culture of inclusion. Our strategies are more aligned and shared ownership is secured for the local area. All partners have a stake in influencing and shaping the system to get the best outcomes for children, young people and their families. Areas jointly own the data and the targets on inclusion and can shape outcomes collaboratively. Our reintegration model is focused on returning pupils to mainstream provision, post PRU intervention. The model support skills development in mainstream schools in identifying behaviour triggers and de-escalation techniques.	Joint commissioning of services in partnership across localities and with specialist services. Our network of expert practitioners, supported by our Best Start in Life Family Hubs supports parents, carers and professionals to enable productive education and educational placements, facilitating the early building blocks of childhood and encouraging productive growth towards adulthood. We will have a shared understanding of inclusion, what practice is and is not acceptable, and hold each other to account for very high standards, with inclusion right at the heart of everything that we do.	
Local roadmap for the next 3 years			
Enablers	2026/2027	2027/2028	2028/2029
<i>Financial sustainability.</i>	There will be improved financial oversight and governance, including forecasting and planning for mitigations and this will be regularly reported to Schools Forum.	Analysis of future needs to create the next phase of mitigations to avoid over-spending.	The High Needs block will be monitored, and forecasting will be an ongoing feature so we can see what impact the reformed system is having.

	Work with the ICB to review the financial contribution from health in relation to supporting children's health needs in schools (Children's Continuing Care). Agreeing a placement policy with children and adult's social care. We will use the Experts at Hand funding to commission the right amount of expert support, and release funding from the High Needs Block to facilitate the earliest possible, most effective local support.	Implementation of mitigations identified by CIPFA. Financial mitigations are put in place, following review and agreement at Schools Forum. We will reduce unit costs in the High Needs Block as much as possible through a dynamic purchasing system and block contracting with independent special school providers. Through the use of the High Needs Capital funding allocation we will build a limited amount of additional specialist places, but we will place a heavy reliance upon mainstream specialist bases and the adaptation of mainstream learning environments to ensure that more children and young adults can be educated close to their homes. The high needs block will be monitored consistently, and forecasting will be an ongoing feature so we can see what is expected. This will allow for a flexible approach that can target future needs and create mitigations to avoid over-spending.	There will be improved financial oversight and governance, including forecasting and planning for mitigations. There will be a more specific focus on monitoring and better commissioning of independent non-maintained special schools (INMSS) to ensure value for money. Commissioning arrangements will lead to better overall planning through block purchasing and a newly formed Access to Resource Team (ART) will be in place, reducing the reliance upon expensive INMSS placements when local, maintained special school placements would be more suitable. Our new banding systems will be embedded, and support and provision will be better aligned, resulting in financially sound decision making.
Success measures	Improved financial oversight and governance, including forecasting and planning for mitigations, regularly reported to Schools Forum. Implementation of mitigations identified by CIPFA. Financial mitigations are in place, following review and agreement at Schools Forum. Reduced unit costs in the High Needs Block through a dynamic purchasing	Reviewed financial contribution from health in relation to supporting children's health needs in schools (Children's Continuing Care). Placement policy in place with children and adult's social care. The Experts at Hand funding is used to commission the right amount of expert support, and release funding from the High Needs Block to facilitate the earliest possible, most effective local support.	The in-year deficit position has reduced and is stable. The market provides value for money regarding any independent special school placements that are commissioned. Commissioning and place planning are fully integrated and effective. Settings all understand how placements are funded and the funding adequately meets needs.

	system and block contracting with independent special school providers. Block purchasing and a newly formed Access to Resource Team (ART) are in place, reducing the reliance upon expensive INMSS placements when local, maintained special school placements would be more suitable. The high needs block is more effectively monitored, and forecasting will be an ongoing feature so we can see what impact the reformed system is having. Improved financial oversight and governance, including forecasting and planning for mitigations. Our new banding system is embedded, and support and provision are better aligned, resulting in financially sound decision making.	Through the use of the High Needs Capital funding allocation, we will have built a limited amount of additional specialist places, but we will place a heavy reliance upon mainstream specialist bases and the adaptation of mainstream learning environments to ensure that more children and young adults can be educated close to their homes. There is a more specific focus on monitoring and better commissioning of independent non-maintained special schools (INMSS) to ensure value for money.	
<i>Capital investment strategy across EY, mainstream, FE.</i>	New special school places and expansions of existing special schools to manage the pressure on statutory duties on current cohorts who do not have access to places, only if it reduces the need for independent school placements. Funding for mainstream environment adaptations and development of Inclusion Bases across EY, school age and post 16.	Expansions of existing special schools to include EY assessment spaces and provide places to replace reliance on ISS for complex needs. Using the additional High Needs Capital funding that we have been allocated by government, we will create a limited number of additional specialist places but place the greatest emphasis upon creating specialist inclusion bases in mainstream settings, to reduce the need for independent school placements. We will use the expertise of the sector and the Experts at Hand to design and build the most effective, proven provision in our mainstream schools, utilising the most up	Review funding for mainstream environment adaptations and development of Inclusion Bases across EY, school age and post 16. We will start to see any new specialist places available for pupils to occupy. Mainstream adaptations will be commonplace, and more children will have their needs met in mainstream settings.



		to date methods and technology, to ensure that as many children and young adults as possible can have their needs met in a mainstream setting. We will use High Needs Capital funding to adapt mainstream settings to be more inclusive and create low-arousal, sensory spaces and reduce the need for independent school placements.	
<i>Success measures</i>	We have an agreed capital strategy that places mainstream inclusion before all other developments. We have an agreed funding route for mainstream adaptations, which is accepted by the sector as being sufficient.	Special schools include EY assessment spaces and provide places to replace reliance on ISS for complex needs. We will have used High Needs Capital funding to adapt mainstream settings to be more inclusive and create low-arousal, sensory spaces.	Funding for mainstream environment adaptations and development of Inclusion Bases across EY, school age and post 16 has resulted in successful provision. We will have used the expertise of the sector and the Experts at Hand to design and build the most effective, proven provision in our mainstream schools, utilising the most up to date methods and technology, to ensure that as many children and young adults as possible can have their needs met in a mainstream setting. Any new specialist places will be available for pupils to occupy.
Local roadmap for the next 3 years			
Enablers	2026/2027	2027/2028	2028/2029
Workforce.	A workforce strategy will be commissioned and coproduced. This will include analysis of what is needed in the local area across education, health, social care and parent/carer development.	Develop training packages to improve the offer for mainstream schools/ settings, enabling them to become more inclusive. We will work with university providers to strengthen the Educational Psychology recruitment pipeline and change the work	Create a model that capitalises on the expertise within the system that is currently untapped, i.e. outreach from special schools, alternative provision and strong SENCos.

	There will be investment in specialist teachers for autism and additional capacity for speech, language and communication needs. We will clarify the commissioning landscape with ICB colleagues and health provider networks. We will ensure that we have robust recruitment pipelines so that we can recruit as many high-quality staff as possible to support our Experts at Hand offer.	that Educational Psychologists complete, moving away from simply assessing need, to actively working with schools and families to secure a sustainable pathway for each child. Neurodiversity in schools will be supported through a better offer from EaH.	Our workforce will be better trained, highly skilled and more effective at meeting the needs of a wide variety of children. We will have grown the specialist workforce to include a wide range of professionals who will be able to effectively support and advise in relation to more effectively meeting a wider range of needs in a mainstream environment.
Success measures	A workforce strategy is commissioned and coproduced. This includes analysis of what is needed in the local area across education, health, social care and parent/carer development. There is investment in specialist teachers for autism and additional capacity for speech, language and communication needs.	Neurodiversity in schools is supported through a better offer from EaH. Clarified commissioning landscape with ICB colleagues and health provider networks. We have robust recruitment pipelines so that we can recruit as many high-quality staff as possible to support our Experts at Hand offer. Training packages have been developed to improve the offer for mainstream schools/ settings, enabling them to become more inclusive. We will have worked with university providers to strengthen the Educational Psychology recruitment pipeline and change the work that Educational Psychologists complete, moving away from simply assessing need, to actively working with schools and families to secure a sustainable pathway for each child. We will have created a model that capitalises on the expertise within the	Our workforce is better trained, highly skilled and more effective at meeting the needs of a wide variety of children. We have grown the specialist workforce to include a wide range of professionals who will be able to effectively support and advise in relation to more effectively meeting a wider range of needs in a mainstream environment.



		system that is currently untapped, i.e. outreach from special schools, alternative provision and strong SENCos.	
Data/digital systems.	Strengthen the use of benchmarking against regional and national averages and statistical neighbour local authorities and to identify outlying trends. Improved forecasting of children with SEND will provide more robust pupil place planning The EHCP parental portal will be further developed to allow the integration of annual reviews.	Data will be used to target specific areas of investment related to district locality needs. Single datasets will be provided as we release our new education management system with integrated overviews of education, SEND and social care, with regular updates from health providers. Building on an improved JSNA and SEF, data and local intelligence will detail the needs of the local 0-25 population with SEND and who may need AP. These outline where we are as a local area partnership, and the intended strategic outcomes for improving the lives of those with SEND in the local area. This will align with the provision and services across education, health and social care that need to be commissioned to address needs. Resources will be based in district areas and supported by SEND clusters and Experts at Hand staff.	Digital systems will be improved and will reflect the local area partnership. We will have an embedded EHCP portal, digital local offer and Experts at Hand directory, signposting parents, carers and practitioners to what is available in each locality. Our digital Best Start in Life Family Hubs offer will be embedded and will be integral to, and complimentary to, our SEND offer. Integrated HUB and finance systems will be able to actively control the expenditure through accurate forecasting and cost analysis.
Success measures	Strengthened use of benchmarking against regional and national averages and statistical neighbour local authorities and to identify outlying trends.	The use of pupil place planning data will have provided even more reliable forecasting and effective planning of school places. The EHCP parental portal will be embedded. Data is used to target specific areas of investment related to district locality needs.	We have a digital local offer and Experts at Hand directory, signposting parents, carers and practitioners to what is available in each locality. Integrated HUB and finance systems are able to actively control the expenditure through accurate forecasting and cost analysis.



		Single datasets are provided with integrated overviews of education, SEND and social care, with regular updates from health providers. An improved JSNA and SEF, combined with data and local intelligence detail the needs of the local 0-25 population with SEND and who may need AP. This follows the <i>Experts at Hand</i> model and supports joint commissioning. Our digital Best Start in Life Family Hubs is embedded, integral to, and complimentary to, our SEND offer.	
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5. What will the local area partnership deliver in the first year?

Please outline the key workstreams, milestones and trajectory your local area partnership will deliver and achieve in 2026-27 as well as how you plan to spend the investment allocation that will help fund this year's delivery. Please share key milestones and anticipated dates, success measures, cost breakdown and category. These should incorporate the core minimum requirements, be mapped to the building blocks above and should reflect a more detailed trajectory to the narrative, milestones and target metrics outlined in the 2026-27 column above.

2026-27 Local delivery plan	Q2 (Jul-Sep 2026)			Q3 (Oct-Dec 2026)		Q4 (Jan-Mar 2027)	
Workstream outline, mapped to building block Outcome: what you want to achieve with this workstream Success measures: how you measure progress drawing on metrics from the accompanying data template	Responsible workstream lead: accountable for the delivery of the workstream and identified outcome.	Milestones per workstream What key milestones will enable you to achieve your targeted trajectory	Target trajectory per workstream Where do you expect your data to be?	Milestones per workstream What key milestones will enable you to achieve your targeted trajectory	Target trajectory per workstream Where do you expect your data to be?	Milestones per workstream What key milestones will enable you to achieve your targeted trajectory	Target trajectory per workstream Where do you expect your data to be?
Building block 1: Strengthening inclusion across education settings.							
Outcome: There is a strong offer of support for schools/settings, and this leads to consistent, high-quality inclusive practice and early identification and intervention.	Experts at Hand Director of Education and Inclusion Mainstream inclusion and ordinarily available provision Head of SEND	Experts at Hand Identify capacity for the Experts at Hand model. Develop the Experts at Hand offer. Mainstream inclusion and ordinarily	The % of CYP with and EHCP educated in mainstream places is projected to increase to 50.1%. 304 specialist base places in	Experts at Hand Pilot approach for Experts at Hand in selected districts. Analysis of district demographics to drive the level of required support	The % of CYP with and EHCP educated in mainstream places is projected to increase to 50.8%	Experts at Hand Extend pilot approach to remaining districts. Mainstream inclusion and ordinarily available provision	The % of CYP with and EHCP educated in mainstream places is projected to increase to 51.6%

Success measures: % of children with EHCPs educated in mainstream settings Number of specialist base places in mainstream settings Permanent exclusion rate for pupils with an EHCP Number of EHCNA requests Number of assessments resulting in EHCPs % of total pupil population with EHCPs	<u>Alternative provision</u> Head of SEND <u>Communication and Engagement</u> Head of SEND	<u>available provision</u> Define and implement our Ordinarily Available Provision (OAP) framework. <u>Alternative provision</u> Analysis of district demographics to drive the level of required support based on targeted identified need. <u>Communication and Engagement</u> Audit and review the local offer. Release early comms on expectations around ordinarily available provision, Experts at Hand and inclusive mainstream environments.	mainstream setting. 0.3 per 10,000 Permanent exclusion rate for pupils with an EHCP. Average of 894 EHCNA requests per quarter. Average of 719 assessments resulting in EHCPs per quarter. This follows backlog clearance in Q1. 6.5% of total pupil population with EHCPs	based on targeted identified need. Pressure test Experts at Hand capacity. <u>Mainstream inclusion and ordinarily available provision</u> Re-launch Wellcomm in Lancashire settings. Hold sessions with SENCOs to confirm expectations and align to request to assess. <u>Alternative provision</u> Produce a local AP overview for each district. <u>Communication and Engagement</u> Publish comms update on successful initiatives that are making a difference in the schools' approaches. Also include an update	328 specialist base places in mainstream settings 0.3 per 10,000 Permanent exclusion rate for pupils with an EHCP Average of 894 EHCNA requests per quarter. Average of 719 assessments resulting in EHCPs per quarter. 6.5% of total pupil population with EHCPs	Observe high-quality settings and establish the SEND clusters to ensure that each setting has support to embed the expected level of provision. <u>Alternative provision</u> Start the commissioning activity that will ensure equity across districts. <u>Communication and Engagement</u> Share further good practice examples and updates on Experts at Hand.	328 specialist base places in mainstream settings 0.3 per 10,000 Permanent exclusion rate for pupils with an EHCP Average reduces to 815 EHCNA requests per quarter. Average reduces to 579 assessments resulting in EHCPs per quarter. 6.5% of total pupil population with EHCPs
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				on Experts at Hand.			
2026-27 Local delivery plan	Q2 (Jul-Sep 2026)			Q3 (Oct-Dec 2026)		Q4 (Jan-Mar 2027)	
Workstream outline, mapped to building block Outcome: what you want to achieve with this workstream Success measures: how you measure progress drawing on metrics from the accompanying data template	Responsible workstream lead: accountable for the delivery of the workstream and identified outcome.	Milestones per workstream What key milestones will enable you to achieve your targeted trajectory	Target trajectory per workstream Where do you expect your data to be?	Milestones per workstream What key milestones will enable you to achieve your targeted trajectory	Target trajectory per workstream Where do you expect your data to be?	Milestones per workstream What key milestones will enable you to achieve your targeted trajectory	Target trajectory per workstream Where do you expect your data to be?
Building block 2: Access to specialist support and local placements.							

Outcomes: Children and young people will have access to education through specialist provision in mainstream schools and innovative approaches. Success measures: % of CYP with EHCPs placed in INMSS / independent sector Current and planned workforce FTE EP, OT and SALT Annual spend on agency EPs.	<u>Mainstream inclusion and ordinarily available provision</u> Head of SEND <u>Experts at Hand</u> Director of Education and Inclusion <u>Place planning</u> Head of SEND <u>Performance analysis group</u> Director of Policy, Commissioning & Children's Health <u>Preparing for adulthood</u> Head of SEND	<u>Mainstream inclusion and ordinarily available provision</u> Coproduce the local expectations and guidance for Specialist Inclusion Bases (commissioned places) and Support Inclusion Bases (schools' own population). Review funding for the current model of delivery for specialist teachers. Audit potential use of assistive technology approaches, e.g. AV1 Robots. <u>Experts at Hand</u> Invest Experts at Hand funding to enhance existing routes to access specialist input at the earliest stage, preparing for the pilot phase. <u>Place planning</u> Required number of settings identified for	7.9% of CYP with EHCPs placed in INMSS / independent sector Current and planned workforce FTE 26 EP, 29.29 OT and 64.00 SALT £0.76 mill per quarter on agency EPs.	<u>Mainstream inclusion and ordinarily available provision</u> Share the expectations with settings so that they can begin their planning. <u>Experts at Hand</u> Agree consistent benchmark approach for existing therapy services and map through all pathways with NHS providers and education settings. Agree recruitment of specialist teachers for autism. Purchasing of assistive tech; training of internal and school staff. Develop an agreed referral process and triage system for Experts at Hand. Expert guidance, co-produced with our specialist settings, PRUs, our Educational Psychology service	8.1% of CYP with EHCPs placed in INMSS / independent sector Current and planned workforce FTE 32 EP, 36.29 OT and 81.00 SALT £0.76 mill per quarter on agency EPs.	<u>Mainstream inclusion and ordinarily available provision</u> Work collaboratively to ensure that the first inclusive mainstream provisions are quality assured and successful. Share the learning with the sector so that they can build upon the best practice. <u>Experts at Hand</u> Agree place based joint commissioning model for SLT and OT and delivery plan for an end-to-end service - co-produced with PCF, POWAR, Education settings and NHS providers. Agree recruitment of additional speech, language, communication specialist support.	8.4% of CYP with EHCPs placed in INMSS / independent sector Current and planned workforce FTE 38 EP, 44.29 OT and 98.00 SALT £0.76 mill per quarter on agency EPs.
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		specialist Inclusion Bases in mainstream, including EY and FE. <u>Performance analysis group</u> Use attendance, SEND and vulnerability data from all schools in the area to build intelligence about the needs of schools and identify the cohorts, schools, and neighbourhoods /towns on which to focus efforts and resources to support early identification and inclusion. <u>Preparing for adulthood</u> Put in place a post-16 place planning process.		and our Experts at Hand teams will be provided to all schools and settings that have Specialist Bases / SEND units / resourced provision to ensure high-quality and robust monitoring and quality assurance. <u>Place planning</u> Development of secondary specialist Inclusion Bases in mainstream and release of funding to settings. <u>Performance analysis group</u> Share the revised data with the sector and the representative groups. <u>Preparing for adulthood</u> Use the process to make initial decisions about what provision is required, and where.		Develop and recruit the advanced practitioner role and support team based on the jointly agreed delivery plan (Pan-Lancashire post with resource to support place). <u>Place planning</u> Agree further projects based upon the assessment of the initial projects. <u>Performance analysis group</u> Publish a longitudinal data outlook, based on both published data and visible need to inform high-quality commissioning decisions. Provide SEND clusters and Inclusion Hubs with a comprehensive data set for their areas. <u>Preparing for adulthood</u>	
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						Scope any additional provision that is required and start the process of commissioning.	
2026-27 Local delivery plan	Q2 (Jul-Sep 2026)			Q3 (Oct-Dec 2026)		Q4 (Jan-Mar 2027)	
Workstream outline, mapped to building block Outcome: what you want to achieve with this workstream Success measures: how you measure progress drawing on metrics from the	Responsible workstream lead: accountable for the delivery of the workstream and identified outcome.	Milestones per workstream What key milestones will enable you to achieve your targeted trajectory	Target trajectory per workstream Where do you expect your data to be?	Milestones per workstream What key milestones will enable you to achieve your targeted trajectory	Target trajectory per workstream Where do you expect your data to be?	Milestones per workstream What key milestones will enable you to achieve your targeted trajectory	Target trajectory per workstream Where do you expect your data to be?



accompanying data template							
Building block 3: System leadership, local partnership collaboration and co-production.							
Outcome: There is a coordinated SEND system which has effective governance, shared accountability, and this is underpinned by accurate data-led decision making. Success measures: Tribunal appeal rate % Families/children stating that their needs are being met in their school/setting	<u>Communication and engagement</u> Head of SEND <u>SEND partnership board</u> Director of Education & Inclusion <u>Joint Commissioning</u> Director of Policy, Commissioning & Children's Health	<u>Communication and engagement</u> Publish comms on the SEND reform plan and the Experts at Hand offer. Issue comms on the proposed revisions to the governance and the SEND board. Work with Parent Carer Forum to better understand the lived experiences of children, young people and families and how this relates to services. Coproduction of quality assurance methods and expectations for SEND related provision. <u>SEND partnership board</u> Strengthen engagement and participation in key	3.9% Tribunal appeal rate Over 50% Families/children stating that their needs are being met in their school/setting	<u>Communication and engagement</u> Update comms on the changes to the SEND board and governance and the projects which are underway. Identify additional support for parent/carer forum capacity. Carry out focused work with the PCF to explore lived experience through case studies. <u>SEND partnership board</u> Recruitment of Experts at Hand District Leads is approved and begins. We will enhance and improve our approach to "you said, we did" and embed the learning from the feedback that we receive from parents and	3.7% Tribunal appeal rate Over 50% Families/children stating that their needs are being met in their school/setting	<u>Communication and engagement</u> Updated comms on Experts at Hand, SEND clusters and mainstream inclusion. Establish the coproduction timelines and project plan for the next two years. <u>SEND partnership board</u> Create EHCP markers on all local NHS provider systems to improve future data reporting. Establish Pan-Lancashire Therapies oversight board and associated governance arrangements.	3.5% Tribunal appeal rate Over 50% Families/children stating that their needs are being met in their school/setting



		strategic governance systems. Strengthen local strategic governance to ensure more school/setting involvement. We will reconstitute the SEND board to ensure that we have absolute clarity on the reforms and how we will hold each other to account to guarantee their success. <u>Joint Commissioning</u> Provide strategic leadership and oversight regarding the speech and language therapy and occupational therapy elements of the Experts at Hand offer.		carers, and report this to the SEND board to inform future decision making and hold partners to account.			
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2026-27 Local delivery plan		Q2 (Jul-Sep 2026)			Q3 (Oct-Dec 2026)		Q4 (Jan-Mar 2027)	
Workstream outline, mapped to building block Outcome: what you want to achieve with this workstream Success measures: how you measure progress drawing on metrics from the accompanying data template		Responsible workstream lead: accountable for the delivery of the workstream and identified outcome.	Milestones per workstream What key milestones will enable you to achieve your targeted trajectory	Target trajectory per workstream Where do you expect your data to be?	Milestones per workstream What key milestones will enable you to achieve your targeted trajectory	Target trajectory per workstream Where do you expect your data to be?	Milestones per workstream What key milestones will enable you to achieve your targeted trajectory	Target trajectory per workstream Where do you expect your data to be?
Building block 4: Encouraging inclusive culture and behaviours.								
Outcome: Multidisciplinary professional support services will be jointly commissioned at a group/area level to address needs efficiently. There will be increased access to multi-agency support through streamlined referral systems as part of Experts at Hand. More effective joint commissioning of services in partnership across localities and with specialist services. Experts at Hand will be underpinned by a commitment to align resources to create an inclusive system. There will be a clear stakeholder participation/communications plan to ensure we listen to feedback, identify barriers and involve everyone in		<u>Mainstream inclusion and ordinarily available provision</u> Head of SEND <u>Experts at hand</u> Director of Education and Inclusion <u>Communication and engagement</u> Head of SEND	<u>Mainstream inclusion and ordinarily available provision</u> Process underway for allocation of funding to mainstream settings for delivery of Inclusion Bases and adaptations to the environment. Link the OA toolkit to the Experts at Hand offer. <u>Experts at hand</u> Develop the delivery approach for Experts at	0.3 per 10,000 Permanent exclusion rate for pupils with an EHCP. 0.6% of CYP with EHCP in alternative provision	<u>Mainstream inclusion and ordinarily available provision</u> Inform the successful settings that they will receive some funding to adapt their environments. Re-launch Wellcomm in Lancashire settings. Hold sessions with SENCOs to confirm expectations and align to request to assess. <u>Experts at hand</u>	0.3 per 10,000 Permanent exclusion rate for pupils with an EHCP. 0.6% of CYP with EHCP in alternative provision	<u>Mainstream inclusion and ordinarily available provision</u> District SEND boards created to monitor the implantation of the reforms and to share good practice. Fully align OA provision with the Experts at Hand offer. <u>Experts at hand</u> Allocated funding for district SEND boards. <u>Communication and engagement</u> A clear stakeholder participation/communication plan is in place to ensure we listen to feedback from all parties.	0.3 per 10,000 Permanent exclusion rate for pupils with an EHCP. 0.7% of CYP with EHCP in alternative provision

decision making on a consistent basis. Success measures: Permanent exclusion rate for pupils with an EHCP % of CYP with EHCP in alternative provision		Hand, building on the rationale for multi-agency working, i.e. to enable joined up support to map onto local schools/settings. This is underpinned by a commitment to align resources to create an inclusive system. <u>Communication and engagement</u> Detailed comms on Experts at Hand produced.		Establish routine reporting in line with the SEND reform request. <u>Communication and engagement</u> Comms on Experts at Hand updated as the system matures.			
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2026-27 Local delivery plan	Q2 (Jul-Sep 2026)	Q3 (Oct-Dec 2026)	Q4 (Jan-Mar 2027)
Projected investment spend per quarter: Please specify funding source for each category.			
Experts at Hand transformation and commissioning support	£200,000	£500,000	£400,000
Funding Source: Experts at Hand and Local Authority SEND Transformation Fun			
Experts at Hand administration	£100,000	£200,000	£600,000
Funding Source: Experts at Hand and Local Authority SEND Transformation Fun			

Experts at Hand workforce capacity: education (specialist teachers, EPs).	£800,000	£1,500,000	£1,500,000
Funding Source: Experts at Hand and Local Authority SEND Transformation Fun			
Experts at Hand workforce capacity: education (OT/SaLT).	0	£800,000	£2,000,000
Funding Source: Experts at Hand and Local Authority SEND Transformation Fun			
Capital	200,000	800,000	£10,000,000
Funding source: High Needs capital allocation			
Total Spend	£1,300,000	3,000,000	£14,500,000

6. How will the local area partnership deliver the first-year plan?

Please set out how you will ensure the required capacity and capability is in place from organisational corporate functions to support implementation of the plan. This could include reference to how you plan to build or bring in project delivery capability to manage delivery against the plan, support prioritisation, and effective use of resources; and how you plan to build the capacity and capability in data and analytics to support effective tracking against the measures in the plan and reporting that informs decision making.

Year one delivery will be overseen by a dedicated programme management team that has clear and consistent governance and oversight. A dedicated transformation project is in place, led by a senior responsible officer and supported by programme management capacity. This will provide effective oversight of the implementation of the reforms, aligned with our existing SEND Priority Action Plan objectives which are monitored by DfE and NHS England. This will include performance monitoring, risk management, and regular reporting to the Local Area SEND Partnership Board and the wider council and ICB governance systems, aligned to the need for financial recovery and sustainability, ensuring resources are focused on inclusion, early intervention and reducing an escalation of need that often culminates in high-cost placements.

Targeted investment has provided significant additional workforce capacity, with investment in enablers including, finance, digital, project management and data capability. This has included the development of a shared multi-agency SEND/Inclusion dashboard, enabling real-time tracking for key indicators, e.g. AP, exclusions, EHCP demand, performance, placement trends and financial sustainability. Organisational

functions, including finance, HR and commissioning, are integrated into the programme to support workforce planning, resource allocation, market development and joint commissioning.

Operationally, there will be creation of posts that support the Experts at Hand model, which will be district based so that unique communities have a targeted approach to their needs. This will include deployment of SEND Practitioners to work closely with schools, strengthening specialist outreach (EP, S<, OT, Specialist Teachers), and aligning existing services around district-based working.

249/250 words

7. Other funding **Local Authorities**.

Block Transfers: If you have made a block transfer (Schools Block to High Needs Block) for 26-27, please set out how your plans for this funding align with the activities outlined above.

Lancashire's strategic approach to mitigating High Needs Block (HNB) pressures, utilising the agreed 0.50% transfer from schools' block to HNB (c 5.5m) has been agreed by Schools Forum. This centres around mitigations that aim for financial sustainability and improved outcomes for children and young people with SEND and vulnerable learners.

The mitigations funded by the block transfer include:

1. Inclusion hubs (to convert to **Experts at Hand** hubs in future).
2. Outreach support for social, emotional and mental health (SEMH), including utilising PRU specialist staff (Experts at Hand).
3. Specialist Teaching Service new delivery model around transition support, focused support and sensory support (Experts at Hand).

Strategic objectives

- Early identification and intervention: Prevent escalation of needs through proactive support and reduce unnecessary escalation to EHC needs assessment request and subsequent EHCPs.
- Enhanced SEN support: Strengthen support for children without EHCPs.
- Inclusive cultures; Engage school leaders, SENCOs, and parents in shared goals.
- Ensure sufficiency and development of additional local specialist places, commissioned places through service level agreements (SLA) with mainstream schools and SEND unit places.

All these mitigations align with the Experts at Hand system that will improve inclusion and access to local specialist support as early as possible, so they are good building blocks for the next couple of years whilst we transform the system. The learning from this limited use of funding will enable us to build upon the lessons learned and to move to a sustainable system in future years.

242/250 words

Capital: We have announced at least £3 billion in high needs capital between 2026-27 and 2029-30 to support children and young people (CYP) with SEND, or those requiring alternative provision (AP). This funding is intended to support place delivery across the full 0-25 age range, including early years and post-16. We expect funding to support the following outcomes:

- a. Inclusion at the core of high needs sufficiency strategy, resulting in more children and young people with SEND accessing suitable places in mainstream settings, across all phases of education
- b. Every child or young person who needs a place in an Inclusion Base can access one
- c. Fewer children and young people with SEND needing to travel a long way to access a suitable placement
- d. Improved suitability of the mainstream estate to support children and young people with SEND, with adaptations to improve inclusivity and accessibility of the physical environment

We also welcome innovative uses of high needs capital to drive inclusion, for example, investment in assistive technology for use in mainstream settings.

Please outline your strategy for how this funding will meet the outcomes above, with reference to the core minimum requirements and other workstreams in this reform plan where appropriate. We would like to see detail around your plans to increase capacity for Inclusion Bases (formerly known as SEN units, resourced provision and pupil support units – SU/RP/PSUs), such as schools, colleges or early years providers identified, engagement with relevant settings and trusts, and target cohort of needs.

If your plans include increases to places in special schools or specialist post-16 institutions, please include a clear rationale, showing the need that is being met, and why it cannot be met through other types of provision, such as Inclusion Bases. If you are receiving additional capital funding to replace one or more planned special or AP free schools, please set out how this funding will meet need in your area, and plans for engaging relevant trusts in your sufficiency planning.

Inclusion is central to our high needs sufficiency strategy, ensuring more children and young people with SEND access suitable places in mainstream settings across all phases. Our capital plan prioritises increasing mainstream inclusivity, with most planned investment directed to Specialist Inclusion Bases, outlined below. All plans remain subject to formal governance approval.

a) Every child or young person who needs a place in an Inclusion Base can access one

- We have a very ambitious mainstream inclusion programme that include the plan to allocate approximately £35 million over the next four years to the creation of **Specialist Inclusion Bases** in mainstream schools to build on the existing network created over the last three years. We expect this to be able to deliver Inclusion Bases in around 48 more school and additional provision in post 16 and Early Years, so that there are sufficient Inclusion Bases across all districts, **reducing the reliance upon independent settings**.

b) Fewer children and young people with SEND needing to travel a long way to access a suitable placement

- Alongside the development of **Specialist Inclusion Bases** there is still work needed to ensure that all special schools in Lancashire can support the full range of pupils with complex SEND needs who will require a special school.
- Currently too many children and young people with SEND who require a special school cannot attend the specialist setting closest to them. This includes adaptations such as additional hygiene suites and sensory spaces for schools which have historically had a largely ambulant, MLD cohort without self-care needs and ensuring that designated co-educational schools can physically accommodate all genders.
- There also remain gaps in provision in the Lancaster district for pupils who have SEMH needs and require a specialist setting. Currently, the local authority must either rely on independent special schools or the children and young people must travel significant distance. To resolve this we are planning to build one new special school to meet this need. In addition, to further reduce reliance on independent provision, we will create some limited additional special school places by working with existing special schools to expand and develop satellite sites for pupils who need a more local solution.

c) Improved suitability of the mainstream estate to support children and young people with SEND, with adaptations to improve inclusivity and accessibility of the physical environment

- We plan to allocate a total of £8 million over the next four years towards funding for mainstream settings, including nurseries and post 16, to ensure their environments can support the needs of as many children and young people as possible. This will include, for example, acoustic and lighting adaptations, sensory and regulation spaces and hygiene suites. In addition, we plan to use approximately £500,000 to fund AV1 robots as a key aspect of assistive technology to support SEND pupils to continue to access their mainstream classes and to support reintegration following exclusion and/or prolonged absence.

485/500 Words

8. System partner and stakeholder engagement, and co-production.

Please outline how the local area partnership plans to engage system partners and stakeholders to develop and implement the plan – include planned engagement with schools and early years settings, alternative providers, FE and post-16 providers (including those your young people attend that are not within your local area), Parents and Carers and children and young people with SEND, with reference to the core minimum requirements. Consider changing roles and responsibilities in the context of the Schools White Paper and how you work collaboratively to manage the transition. Please indicate where additional support is required to engage partners or stakeholders - senior officials at the Department for Education will be available to contribute to summer term events with education leaders and parent carer forum leaders.

The Lancashire SEND Partnership Communication and Engagement Strategy outlines how we will communicate and engage in partnership working. The strategy has been co-produced with children, young people and their families. In it, we outline how we will:

- Value relationships and work in partnership to ensure support is coordinated and of high quality.
- Make sure lived experiences help us to shape services and are making a positive difference.
- Ensure children and young people and their parents/carers are fully involved in decision making at an individual and strategic level.
- Encourage innovation and digital enhancements.
- Communicate well with our families, communities and partners.
- Have clear monitoring and accountability processes to ensure we review whether we are making a difference.

Engaging system partners and stakeholders

As a trusted and strategic partner representing the voice of parent carers across the region, the Lancashire Parent Carer Forum plays a central role in facilitating open, two-way communication, ensuring that lived experiences inform strategic decisions. Stakeholders engaging with the SEND Partnership are encouraged to connect with the forum early in the process to foster collaboration, build trust, and ensure that co-production remains at the heart of service development and delivery.

POWAR are a strategic partner and are the first point of contact with children and young people. POWAR is a participation group for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities, who influence decision making and make a difference to young people's lives.

Changing roles and responsibilities

Engagement with schools and education settings is central to effective delivery of the reforms. We will work through established education leadership networks, SENDCo forums, and locality-based clusters to create and implement the right model and culture to deliver Experts at Hand and support to develop inclusive practice and mainstream inclusion hubs. Schools/settings will play a dynamic role in defining expectations, testing delivery models, and leading on accountability. Early years providers will be engaged through targeted networks, collaboration and training.

To ensure we are progressing throughout the transformation period, our focus includes:

- Broadening reach to underrepresented families.
- Creating consistent, two-way communication channels.
- Enhancing the SEND Local Offer website and other channels.
- Promoting co-production in all areas of service improvement.
- Growing the Parent Carer Forum.

We will do this through:

- **Insight:** Gathering data and feedback.
- **Co-production:** Working together on solutions.
- **Influence:** Building trust and shared understanding.
- **Feedback:** Closing the loop and showing impact.
- **Resilience:** Supporting communities to thrive
- **Increased funding** for Parent Carer Forum.

405/500 Words

9. Risks and mitigations

What are the key risks that could affect the successful implementation of your Local SEND Reform Plan, and what mitigation strategies are in place to manage these risks? Please include a maximum of 5 risks with impact and likelihood RAG for each risk. See Annex C for suggested risk matrix.

Risk	Impact	Likelihood	RAG	Mitigation	Residual RAG
Local government reorganisation remains unconfirmed and the options being considered for Lancashire may diverge from the plans of other Local Area Partnerships involved in the process. This creates uncertainty around future governance arrangements, decision making structures and the alignment of reform priorities across the wider area.	Critical	Very likely	Red	Design new system based on locality districts to ensure prompt action if the LA is reorganised into more districts. Working across our local area SEND partnership and with our partners in Blackpool and Blackburn will assist in ensuring that we are able to continue the positive momentum that we have built up.	Yellow
Available capital and revenue funding may be insufficient to address geographical disparities, rising levels of need, and access to specialist provision. This could limit the pace and equity of sufficiency improvements across the county..	Moderate	Possible	Yellow	Use locality level demand modelling to prioritise investment where need is greatest, ensuring transparent criteria are embedded in all capital and commissioning decisions. Build a phased delivery plan that aligns spend with the highest impact areas and maximises external funding opportunities.	Green
Engagement from schools and academy trusts may be inconsistent, limiting the development of mainstream Inclusion Bases. Perceived Ofsted implications may further deter participation, reducing the availability of high-quality inclusive places	Moderate	Possible	Yellow	Undertake targeted engagement with trust CEOs and system leaders to co-design the Inclusion Base model, supported by clear evidence of impact and alignment with Ofsted expectations. Develop an incentives and support package to increase confidence and secure early adopters.	Yellow
Reduced ICB capacity and variation in commissioned health provision may constrain the development of a consistent, integrated SEND offer, leading to inequitable access to therapies and health support across localities.	Critical	Possible	Red	Agree a joint work programme with the ICB that prioritises SEND transformation, using grant funding to protect capacity for key pathways. Establish a shared provider forum to align health offers, reduce variation and ensure all partners contribute to the new system design.	Yellow
Delays to national SEND legislation may prolong current statutory requirements, potentially increasing	Critical	Likely	Red	Embed strengthened early help and graduated response practice so families experience improved support without	Yellow



requests for EHCPs and placing additional pressure on the system during transition.				needing statutory plans. Use consistent decision making panels and quality assurance to maintain proportionality while national reforms progress.	
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10. Dependencies

Please detail the key areas of the local area partnership's proposed SEND future state and roadmap that may be impacted by wider reforms nationally and locally and outline how you will manage these. We expect these will include but not be limited to:

- NHS reforms
- Local Government Re-organisation
- Reforms to Children's Social Care
- Best Start in Life, including Family Hubs
- Best Start in Life Strategy
- Curriculum and Assessment Review

Delivery of the SEND reforms has dependencies associated with several national and local legislative and strategic priorities. Work has been done to establish links between key activities to ensure maximise potential impact and plan for mitigating activity.

Potential changes to local authority structures through **local government reorganisation** will have an impact on governance, leadership, capacity, and service delivery models. This is an inevitable consequence of creating new Local Authorities. Equally, local government reorganisation will mean that budgets are redefined, along with roles and responsibilities. Maintaining a strong focus on locality-based delivery will be paramount in this agenda. The local area partnership will mitigate this through clear planning and programme governance, which will be maintained, whatever the future landscape looks like. Our Plan ensures that, whatever structural changes occur, new local authorities will have a basis for continuing to move forward through the strategies agreed.

Changes within the Integrated Care Board (ICB) are currently having an impact on the capacity and availability of strategic partners and, whilst this is being managed, it does create challenges that are ongoing. Despite the challenges, there has been a considerable amount of work done to ensure that services are maintained. This includes commissioning of health services and putting in place mitigation measures when these are at risk due to provider capacity, an example of which is the neurodevelopmental pathway.

To ensure the partnership continues to strengthen links between key organisations, joint commissioning arrangements have been reviewed, resulting in a joint commissioning group being established.

Regardless of any key changes, the SEND reform programme will remain a strategic priority, with governance and oversight maintained at the senior leadership level to ensure stability through any fundamental changes. This will be supported through consideration of the needs of districts which will remain, regardless of whether and how the overarching local area is partitioned.

The development of the Best Start in Life programme and changes to social care are seen as positive as they will present opportunities to more fully integrate SEND, Family First, early help and safeguarding structures. Family Hubs and the Best Start in Life agenda are considered key enablers of earlier identification and intervention.

The partnership will continue to align SEND reform with social care transformation through linking key parts of the system through the Experts at Hand model and by strengthening pathways, improving joint working between all specialist services and ensuring that the needs of children and young people and localities are fully understood. This will mean that emerging needs are identified earlier with the appropriate level of intervention being made accessible to support them. This will include integrated pathways to support aimed at reducing escalation through unmet aspects of need.

National changes to curriculum and assessment influence how schools meet diverse needs and ensure inclusion. This aligns with the intentions of the reforms and is seen as positive. The partnership will strengthen closer links with schools, trusts and education settings to prepare and respond to changes, ensuring that inclusive practice remains fundamental.

500/500 Words

Section 3: monitoring and evaluation

11. How will the local area partnership know delivery is on track?

Please set out how you will monitor and track progress referencing:

- **Monitoring tools and processes** - the specific tools, systems, and data you will use to track delivery milestones and measure the impact on outcomes.

Some Local Area Partnerships hold data in a central SEND operational dashboard. This is used by teams on a weekly basis to identify trends in demand or inform conversations with local school or setting leaders.

In some Local Area Partnerships, a view of the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) is reviewed monthly by a SEND Board to take decisions on prioritisation, resourcing and delivery of services informed by regular data.

Please set out how you will use data to track demand (e.g., EHCP applications for assessment), Service delivery (e.g., Speech and Language Specialists deployment; places created), Service quality (e.g., parental satisfaction) and outputs (e.g., pupil attendance; pupil exclusions)

- **Feedback and adaptation mechanisms** - what feedback loops and stakeholder input you will use to review progress and adjust your approach.

The SEND reform plan is a high-level overview of key milestones and activities for the local area partnership's SEND transformation programme to implement the reforms. It covers improvement activity from the Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission's (CQC) inspection of services, in December 2024, building on the subsequent priority action plan.

Monitoring of progress will include:

- Monthly reporting to the SEND Improvement Board to reflect any changes to the programme timelines, actions, vulnerabilities and successes. This will include development and monitoring of a data dashboard, directly linked to the actions outlined.
- Quarterly formal review of key performance indicators, to be reported corporately (at council and ICB strategic level).
- Feedback loop approach to reporting to partners.
- Regular scrutiny, check and challenge at key governance system meeting, workshops and corporate audit and review mechanisms.

- Lived experience will be built into service design and delivery, i.e. Experts at Hand will have a specific reporting approach to gather the views of schools/settings, children, young people and parents/carers. This will include surveys, case studies and workshops to gather views.
- An annual CPD training schedule, with a consistent way of gathering feedback and acting on this (feedback loop) to ensure training is achieving its intended aims.
- Creating an outcomes framework that incorporates agreed outcomes used across health, education, and social care partners to enable consistency of approach for what is being measured, and why, across teams, services schools and settings. This needs to be agreed by partners, with a reporting cycle to the SEND Improvement Board. Reporting needs to be aligned with nationally published data and linked to key priorities. The proposal is:
 1. **Every board meeting:**
 - Update on the latest statutory performance for statutory processes at every board meeting.
 2. **Quarterly:**
 - Update on health data, including, waiting lists for therapies (speech and language, physiotherapy), waiting lists for paediatric services including neurodivergent pathways, numbers of children and young people open to CAMHS.
 - Outcomes report for overview of specific indicators (that will be identified through an agreed scorecard).
 3. **Annually:**
 - Headline report, including analysis of the latest full year data in comparison to national, regional and statistical neighbours, following publication of the SEN2 data return.
 - Educational outcomes report, following publication of the latest data by the DfE for the last full year.
 - Joint Strategic Needs Assessment update.
 4. **On request:**
 - Items asked for by the board for a specific focus.

Whilst the approach outlined above focuses largely on reporting to the SEND Improvement Board, reports will also be made available for various other boards/meetings, as required, e.g. cabinet and scrutiny.

430/500 Words

12. Reporting to DfE

Using the attached data template, the local area partnership is required to provide quarterly data returns to DfE against selected key metrics. DfE will, in turn, provide quarterly data reports with visualised analysis and benchmarking that will support your local delivery, monitoring and evaluation. This will include data the department holds on **Attendance**, **Exclusions**, and **Unauthorised absence**.

Please use the attached data template to upload your initial data return to DfE.

- SEND Reform Plan Data Template has been submitted as an appendix

Section 4: Governance

13. How will the local area partnership ensure delivery of plans remain on track?

Please outline the governance structures in place to oversee delivery. Clearly set out who is responsible for overseeing reform delivery, what each governance group or individual is accountable for, and how these arrangements ensure progress is monitored and decisions are made transparently. Please identify where the named SRO for the Local SEND Reform Plan sits within the governance structure and ensure your response incorporates the core minimum requirements.

Governance mechanism: <i>This may be a governance group, or an individual (e.g. SRO).</i>	Purpose/ responsibilities: <i>What is the function of this governance mechanism? What are they accountable for overseeing? What information is reported to this governance mechanism?</i>	Membership: <i>Who does this governance mechanism comprise of? [should include health and PCF representation] What stakeholders are represented at this governance mechanism? Please indicate who chairs this (include n/a if an individual).</i>	Cadence: <i>How regularly does this governance mechanism meet?</i>	Decision rights: <i>What decisions can this governance mechanism make?</i>	Escalation route: <i>Where can this governance mechanism escalate issues or decision to?</i>
Governance groups					
Governance and accountability for the SEND Reform Plan will be delivered through the Local Area Partnership Board, supported by a clear multi-tier governance structure including the SEND Improvement Board, SEND Operations Board and Transformation Board, providing strategic oversight, delivery monitoring and escalation routes. A single named Local Authority Senior Responsible Officer (SRO) – Director of Education and Inclusion - will be accountable for overall delivery of the reform programme, supported by workstream SROs across key areas, with defined reporting patterns,					

clear escalation processes and oversight of budgets and funding arrangements to ensure effective use of resources and delivery against agreed outcomes.

Lancashire County Council Cabinet	High level strategic decision making for Lancashire County Council.	This Constitution sets out how Lancashire County Council operates, how decisions are made and the procedures which are followed to ensure that decision-making is efficient, transparent and accountable to local people. The county council is made up of councillors who serve everyone's interests who lives or works in Lancashire. Health provision aligns with this, and joint issues often raised through council.	Monthly	Strategic and financial High level decision-making and sign-off	N/A
Integrated Care Board Executive	High level strategic decision making for Cumbria and South Lancashire Integrated Care Board.	Oversight of the join up of health and care services to improve people's health and wellbeing. The ICB also oversee how money is spent and make sure health services are working well and are of high quality. In addition, the Lancashire & South Cumbria NHS Provider Collaborative also brings together five provider NHS trusts in Lancashire and South Cumbria who are working together as a collaborative, delivering joint priorities to improve health and healthcare.	Monthly	Strategic and financial High level decision-making and sign-off	N/A
SEND Improvement Board	Oversees strategic direction, impact and accountability of the SEND Partnership. Acts as a mechanism for multi-agency collaboration at the strategic and organisational level. Check and challenge to key priorities and workstreams.	Chair: Kathryn Boulton (independent) Member partners: Senior Leaders from education, health and care, Lancashire Parent Carer Forum and POWAR SEND Youth Forum representatives to provide strategic scrutiny and accountability.	Monthly	Strategic	Council and ICB Executive Boards
SEND Operational Board	Oversees operational delivery of the SEND Partnership priorities (including ensuring progress against the Priority Action Plan	Chair: Paul Turner	Monthly	Operational	SEND Improvement Board

	(PAP) and alignment with improvement workstreams. Acts as a forum for multi-agency collaboration, addressing barriers and escalating issues to the SEND Improvement Board when needed.	Deputy Co-Chairs: Peter Chapman / Paula Green, Member partners: Operational Leaders from education, health and care, Lancashire Parent Carer Forum and POWAR SEND Youth Forum representatives.			
SEND Transformation Board	Oversees and drives delivery of SEND transformation priorities from Lancashire County Council perspective. Acts as a mechanism for ensuring capacity, collaboration and alignment of key strategy related to the range of children's services priorities.	Chair: Jacqui Old Member partners: Local authority transformation, education and commissioning representatives.	Monthly	Strategic	LCC Executive Leadership Team

Governance mechanism: This may be a governance group, or an individual (e.g. SRO).	Purpose/ responsibilities: What is the function of this governance mechanism? What are they accountable for overseeing? What information is reported to this governance mechanism?	Membership: Who does this governance mechanism comprise of? [should include health and PCF representation] What stakeholders are represented at this governance mechanism? Please indicate who chairs this (include n/a if an individual).	Cadence: How regularly does this governance mechanism meet?	Decision rights: What decisions can this governance mechanism make?	Escalation route: Where can this governance mechanism escalate issues or decision to?
Supporting workstreams					
ND Pathway workstream meetings	Oversight and direction for key areas aligned to Priority Action Plan Priority 3. Needs Led Support Digital Workstream Communication Workstream Transformation Workstream Training Workstream	Chair: ICB associate director of SEND Member partners: Partners from Local Authorities across the LSCICB footprint, education providers, health providers, and Parent Carer Forum representatives	Half termly	Strategic and operational	SEND Operations Board

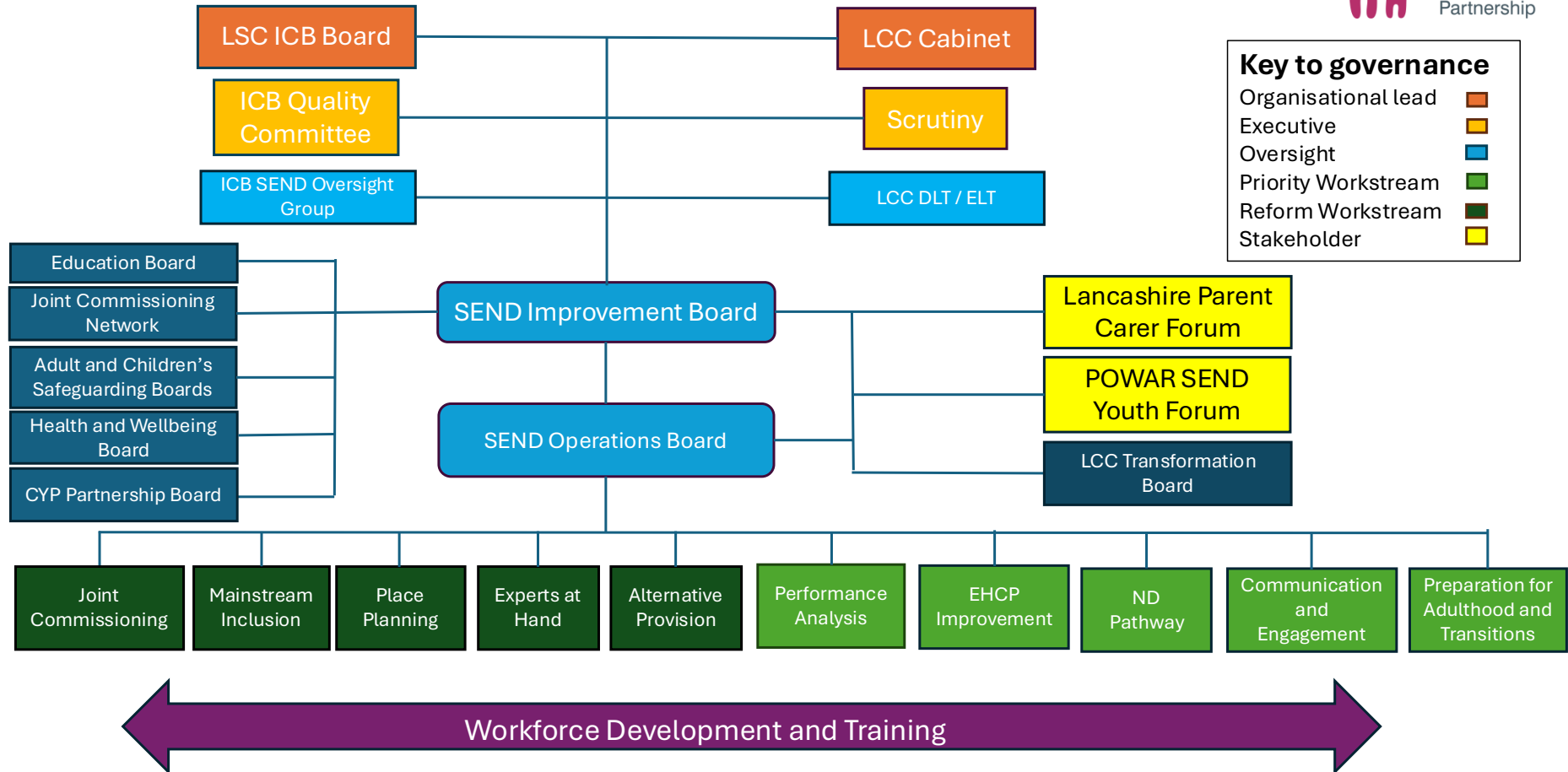
Preparing for Adulthood Strategic Group	Oversight and direction of key areas of focus for PfA / AFI 2.	Chair: SEND Consultant Member partners: Partners from education, health and care, LPCF and POWAR. Representatives from schools and post 16 providers.	Half termly	Strategic and operational	SEND Operations Board
Performance Analysis Group	Oversight and direction for key areas aligned to Priority Action Plan Priority 1 and the SEND Reform Plan. Provides clear, robust, and timely analysis of performance information across the SEND system and what this means to families.	Chair: Head of SEND Member partners: Partners from education, health, care, and Lancashire Parent Carer Forum Representatives.	Half Termly	Strategic and Operational	SEND Operations Board
EHCP Improvement Group	Oversight and direction for key areas aligned to Priority Action Plan Priority 2. Provide operational and strategic oversight of the full EHCP process including QA, assessment, planning, annual reviews, audit activity, digital developments, tribunal learning and family experience.	Chair: Senior Manager SEND Member partners: Partners from education, health, care, education and health providers, Lancashire Parent Carer Forum and POWAR Representatives.	Monthly	Strategic and Operational	SEND Operations Board
Communication and Engagement Group	Oversight and direction for key areas aligned to Priority Action Plan and SEND Reform Plan.	Chair: SEND Partnership manager Member partners: Partners from education, health, care, education and health providers, Lancashire Parent Carer Forum and POWAR Representatives.	Monthly	Strategic and Operational	SEND Operations Board
Joint commissioning Group	Oversight and direction for joint commissioning and ensuring that local need is met in the most cost-effective ways.	Director of Policy, Commissioning & Children's Health	Monthly	Strategic and Operational	SEND Improvement Board
Mainstream inclusion and ordinarily available provision Group	Oversight of Ordinarily Available provision documentation and specifications for mainstream inclusion provision.	Head of SEND	Monthly	Strategic and Operational	SEND Operations Board

Place planning Group	Oversight and direction for mainstream and SEND place planning and building projects.	Director of Education and Inclusion	Monthly	Strategic and Operational	SEND Improvement Board
Experts at Hand Group	Oversight and direction for the Experts at Hand offer. Linked to joint commissioning group.	Head of SEND	Monthly	Strategic and Operational	SEND Improvement Board
Alternative provision Group	Oversight and direction for alternative provision and the 3-tier approach. Linked to joint commissioning group.	Head of SEND	Monthly	Strategic and Operational	SEND Operations Board

Governance mechanism: <i>This may be a governance group, or an individual (e.g. SRO).</i>	Purpose/ responsibilities: <i>What is the function of this governance mechanism? What are they accountable for overseeing? What information is reported to this governance mechanism?</i>	SRO: <i>Who takes responsibility for this area?</i>	Decision rights: <i>What decisions can this governance mechanism make?</i>	Escalation route: <i>Where can this governance mechanism escalate issues or decision to?</i>
Senior reporting officers				
SRO: Experts at Hand	Oversight of strategic planning and delivery of the workstream for developing the Experts at Hand offer, across the council (education, early help and social care) and the ICB/providers.	Director of Education and Inclusion	Advisory. Makes recommendations to boards and through corporate decision-making routes.	SEND Improvement Board Transformation Board
SRO: Mainstream Inclusion	Oversight of strategic planning and delivery of the workstream for developing mainstream inclusion (practice and support for early identification and support).	Head of SEND	Advisory. Makes recommendations to boards and through corporate decision-making routes.	SEND Improvement Board Transformation Board
SRO: Place planning	Oversight of strategic planning and delivery of the workstream for creating specialist places within mainstream inclusion and developing special schools.	Director of Education and Inclusion	Advisory. Makes recommendations to boards and through corporate decision-making routes.	LCC Executive Leadership Team Transformation Board
SRO: Finance	Oversight of strategic planning and financial management required to enable sustained SEND support and provision.	S151 officer	Advisory. Makes recommendations to boards and through corporate decision-making routes.	LCC Executive Leadership Team Transformation Board

If you have a diagram to show the relationship between these governance mechanisms, please upload this here.

Governance Structure 2026-7



Section 5: Central government support

14. How can we help you?

Please outline any practical support you need from central government to implement your plan effectively.

This may include:

- Access to specialist expertise or advisory support
- Help with workforce development or recruitment challenges
- Tools or templates to support data collection, reporting, or evaluation
- Facilitation of peer learning or regional collaboration
- Support with system-level coordination across education, health, and care
- Guidance on navigating regulatory or policy barriers

Coordination of key issues being raised across local authorities, regional and statistical neighbours is imperative as all are working under the same pressures in trying to reshape support and provision. Whilst there is appetite for positive change, this needs to be fully thought out and all risks identified. We are looking at reforms because the original Children & Families Act and the SEND Code of Practice had significant flaws that have now been realised. We do not want to be in this position in future.

Financial implications need to be at the forefront of all aspects of implementation. Without the appropriate level of resource, the reforms will be compromised. LAs, health partners and schools/settings have been working under restricted budgets for many years. It is too easy to say that deficits are a result of inefficient management. This needs to be fully understood. To keep this under review, grant funding for commissioning external support would be beneficial. This will enable better capacity to ensure financial aspects are accurate and realistic.

A consistent approach to data collection related to performance measures and use will be invaluable. Tools and templates related to this will need to reflect what is common across all local areas, whilst allowing for local divergence that relate to each area's specific plans.

Specialist expertise to check and challenge all aspects of the SEND reform plan will be a benefit.

231/250 Words

Annex B: Supporting documents

Document	Link
The Schools White Paper	Every Child Achieving and Thriving
SEND Consultation Document	SEND reform: putting children and young people first.
LA and Schools Budget 2026-27	Schools Operational Guide 2026-27
Local Partnership Maturity Assessment Guidance and Tool	Included in commission pack
Local SEND Reform Plan – Data template	Included in commission pack
Local SEND Reform Plan Quality Assessment Framework	Included in commission pack
Local Inclusion Partnership Grant 2026-27	To be published Spring 2026
Experts at Hand Guidance	To be published Spring 2026
High Needs Capital Allocations 2026-27	To be published Spring 2026
Guidance on Inclusion Bases	To be published Spring 2026

Annex C: Risk matrix

IMPACT DESCRIPTION	IMPACT LEVEL	PROBABILITY/LIKELIHOOD				
		<u>≤ 10%</u>	>10% - <30%	>30% - <60%	>60% - <90%	>90%
		Very Unlikely	Unlikely	Possible	Likely	Very Likely
Cannot deliver Reform Plan; Failure of mission critical activity.	Crisis					
Significant impact to objectives; Significant and sustained disruption to activity.	Critical					
Delivery targets are compromised; Project delay / budget overrun.	Moderate					
Limited impact on delivery targets; Deviations from project resource, timescale or targets.	Marginal					
Minimal impact on delivery targets; Minimal impacts to project / programme efficiency.	Negligible					