

Working Together Strategy 2023-2025



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Introduction – What is the Working Together Strategy?

The Working Together Strategy outlines how the Lancashire SEND Partnership will communicate, engage, encourage participation and partnership working with children, young people, their parent carers and practitioners in order to improve outcomes for families.

The Strategy was co-produced by children and young people with additional needs, their parent carers and practitioners who participated in:

- 'Think Send' virtual events in 2021(160 participants)
- face-to-face engagement events across Lancashire in 2022
- a participation workshop with 20 parents in September 2022
- Online consultation events with 26 parent carers in 2023

We would like to thank all those who have reviewed, contributed, and provided feedback for this strategy, including children, young people, parent carers, members of the SEND Partnership and Lancashire and South Cumbria Integrated Care Board, and other partners.

Sam Jones,
Chair Lancashire Parent Carer Forum

Background

Lancashire County Council and Lancashire and South Cumbria Integrated Care Board (ICB) are working in partnership with educational settings, other partners and families to improve the outcomes for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) in Lancashire

Following the final monitoring visit by the Department for Education (DfE) and Care Quality Commission (CQC) of our services for children and young people in September 2021 and the resulting co-production and development of the SEND Plan 2021-2025, the Lancashire SEND Partnership has been implementing a major improvement programme across the county

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What we mean by 'Working Together'

'Working Together' is statutory guidance published by the Department for Education in 2018, that describes how partner agencies must work together to support all children, young people and their families.

'Working Together' shows how we can improve outcomes for children and young people in Lancashire by working together with partners.

When we work with children, young people and their families, we will take time to listen and ensure everyone has a chance to put their views across in a way that works for them.

It is important that children and young people have a safe space where they can communicate confidentially. We will only ever break confidentiality if we think a child or young person is unsafe, because we have a statutory duty to do this.

Why do we need a Working Together Strategy?

The Children and Families Act 2014 makes it clear that the Local Authority SEND Partnership must:

- listen to the views, wishes and feelings of children and young people, with Special Education Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and their families.
- recognise the importance of children, young people, and their families, enabling them to participate in decisions relating to them.
- ensure children, young people and their families, are provided with the information and support necessary to enable participation in those decisions.
- support children, young people and their families to facilitate their development and help them achieve the best possible educational and other outcomes.

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This strategy is intended for parent carers and practitioners working with children and young people with SEND. An easy read abridged version will be made available in due course.

The main ways that we will work together are through:

- The SEND Partnership
- Engaging on the SEND delivery plan
- Lancashire's SEND Local Offer
- The Graduated Response
- A Family Centred approach through engagement, participation and co-production

What is The Lancashire SEND Partnership?

The [Lancashire SEND Partnership](#) has a legal duty to support children and young people of Lancashire with SEND, from birth up to 25 years of age.

Lancashire SEND Partnership brings together all the agencies in Lancashire which provide special educational needs and disability (SEND) services for children, young people, their parents and carers, with representatives from those who use the service.

Who is involved in the SEND Partnership?

- POWAR, the participation forum for children and young people with SEND, representing the voice and views of children and young people of Lancashire.
- Lancashire Parent Carer Forum representing the voice of parent carers.
- Lancashire County Council who has responsibility for SEND including representatives from Specialist Teaching, Educational Psychology, Children's Social Care (including the Designated Social Care Officer (DSCO), Early Help (including the Children and Family Wellbeing Service - CFWS) and Public Health
- Education settings and schools – including Head Teachers and SENCO's
- Voluntary, Faith and Community organisations

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- NHS Integrated Care Board (Previously known as Clinical Commissioning Groups) - responsible for health services for children and young people in Lancashire with SEND
- NHS Healthcare Providers (GPs, Hospitals, Community Services, Mental Health, Specialist Services)
- Additional Healthcare Providers (0-19 Community Services)
- Designated Clinical Officers (DCO) for SEND
- Lancashire SEND Information Advice and Support Team (SENDIAS)

The SEND Partnership Vision

Everything we do is centred around children, young people and their family and we aim to establish a fully inclusive culture within the SEND Partnership, where everyone is valued.

The Lancashire SEND Partnership has a clear vision and focus: **'Improving the lives of children and young people with SEND'**.

The SEND Partnership Values

We share these values as the basis of our work together to support children and young people.

Inclusion: Belonging and involvement

Integrity: Honesty, trust and fairness

Respect: Value, regard and reliability

What is The SEND Plan?

[The SEND Plan 2021-2025](#) supports our continuing growth as a partnership, with children, young people and their families at the centre of all that we do. It sets out our vision, priorities, and ways of working, ensuring that the voices of children, young people and their families are heard as we reshape services to meet their local needs.

The Plan was co-produced using information and feedback provided by parent carers, local authority staff, healthcare and teaching practitioners

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through 'Think SEND' events held in April and May 2021.

At the events, it was agreed that SEND is everyone's business, and that children and young people need to be at the heart of everything we do.

Our partnership across education, health, and care services, together with the Children and Young People's SEND Board and Lancashire Parent Carer Forum, has strengthened over recent years, and we continue to improve the ways we work together.

What is Lancashire's Local Offer?

Every local authority must identify education, health and social care services in their local area provided for children, young people and families who have SEND.

The [Local Offer](#) is set out in one place, so children, young people, their families and professionals have access to the same information about services available in their area. The Local Offer can be found by searching Lancashire County Council/SEND on the internet and by searching Lancashire Local Offer on Facebook. People who do not have internet access will be able to access this at public libraries throughout the county.

The Local Offer is not a guarantee that a particular service will be available, but it is a guide to what you can expect to find and how you can access it. It should give a broad range of information about the support available.

The [SEND Local Offer Directory \(lancashire.gov.uk\)](https://www.lancashire.gov.uk/SEND-Local-Offer-Directory) provides information, advice and activities for children, young people with SEND, their families, organisations, providers, and services in Lancashire (and national, if relevant).

To keep the Local Offer useful, relevant, and collaborative, we will involve children and young people with SEND and their parents in:

- Adding content to the Local Offer
- Reviewing the Local Offer
- Making comments and providing feedback about the

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Local Offer

As we develop and improve the Local Offer, we will ensure it is:

- Collaborative
- Accessible
- Comprehensive
- Up to date
- Transparent

There is a space on the Local Offer website for feedback and there is also information about our complaints and compliments process

What is The Graduated Approach?

The Graduated Approach informs how the SEND Partnership meet the educational needs of children and young people with SEND. The additional needs of most children and young people can be met by inclusive quality first teaching and reasonable adjustments, through the funding and resources that are 'ordinarily' available in their mainstream school or setting. The SEND Code of Practice calls this '**ordinarily available**' provision.

All schools and teachers are responsible and accountable for the progress pupils make. Learners are entitled to high quality, inclusive teaching that enables all learners including those with SEND to make good progress. For most children and young people this will be enough, and they will have their needs met through this.

In Lancashire, we are confident that schools do their best to deliver inclusive practice in accordance with the principles of the "Right Support, Right Place and Right Time". Schools have access to advice and guidance, including the [Teaching And Learning Toolkit: Ordinarily Available Provision](#)

- Some pupils may require support that is additional to or different from this universal support. This is called [SEN Support](#) and is included within school provisions.

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- The Graduated Approach requires the school or setting to use assess, plan, do, review cycles, to identify the support children and young people with SEND require.
- The Inclusion Service works closely with schools to help develop their capacity to deliver inclusive practice; through the work of the Specialist Teaching Service, Educational Psychology Teams and SEND team.
- A small minority of pupils may require specialist support, and this is when an Education, Health and Care Needs Assessment may then be considered.

How does The Graduated Approach link to Early Help?

Lancashire is committed to ensuring services are offered as early as possible and are co-ordinated, integrated, accessible and personalised to the needs and strengths of individual children, young people, and families. Our Graduated Approach is aligned to the principles of Early Help. [The Early Help Assessment and Plan - Lancashire County Council](#)

This commits us to deliver services in an integrated way, breaking down professional barriers and adopting a 'family centred' approach to how we will work with children, young people and parent carers.

What is communication?

Effective communication is key to embedding our vision and values into our practice.

Here's what you can expect when we communicate with you:

- Listening and sharing ideas
- Plenty of time and chance to speak up
- Clarity
- Friendliness
- Confidence
- The opportunity to give criticism without judgement
- Empathy
- Feedback
- Honesty and respect
- Open-mindedness to other people's views and perspectives

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We will do this through:

- Face to face meetings – we provide opportunity to meet face to face, as this often helps to get a better understanding of how you are feeling and helps us to connect with you.
- The Local Offer communication tools – including The Local Offer website www.lancashire.gov.uk/SEND and the Local Offer facebook page. Search "Lancashire Local Offer" on Facebook.
- Family Information Network Directory (FIND) newsletter - is a free quarterly newsletter to keep families informed about services and support which may be relevant to them.
- Digital – we use various social media and digital platforms, including the Council Website, the Local Offer, the SEND Directory, LPCF and SENDIAS Facebook pages, WhatsApp, Microsoft Teams and Zoom, to keep you updated.
- Schools and colleges – we liaise with all education settings that support children and young people with SEND, to keep them and the children, young people and families they serve informed.
- Lancashire Parent Carer Forum– work within the SEND Partnership as our strategic partner for parent carer engagement, participation and co-production. The independent, parent led Forum makes sure that both the SEND Partnership and the Forum hold regular parent carer engagement events to gain feedback on services and to provide information around services and support.
- Children and young people's engagement events – we hold regular engagement events with children and young people to hear their views and ensure their voices are at the heart of all we do.
- healthyyoungmindspsc.co.uk/home – offers advice, guidance and support related to children and young people's mental health and emotional wellbeing
- Education, health and care (EHC) plan annual review survey - Lancashire County Council –This survey is designed to be completed after the annual or six monthly (for younger children)

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review of a child or young person's EHC plan. This review looks at a child or young person's progress towards the outcomes in their education, health and care plan and what they hope to be able to do in the future.

Through engagement events with children, young people, parents and carers, the SEND Partnership aspire to:

- Put the child or young person at the heart of what we do
- Ensure the voices of children, young people and parent carers are included in our work
- Ensure timely and responsive services
- Being compassionate and understanding about the experience families have on their SEND journey
- Make sure criteria for access to services are available and clearly communicated
- Ensure information on Lancashire's SEND Local Offer is freely available online
- Ensure regular SEND engagement events and workshops are available throughout the year

What is co-production?

The NHS England Co-Production Model (2016) states that to co-produce with children, young people and parent carers, we must ensure:

- Ownership, understanding and support of co-production by all
- A culture of openness and honesty
- A commitment to sharing power and decisions with citizens
- Clear communication in plain English (or translated materials where requested)
- A culture in which people are valued and respected

Co-production can happen at different levels. The Lancashire SEND

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Partnership is working towards co-production at:

- **an individual level** for each child, young person and their family in schools and colleges, with health and social care partners. At an individual level, users of services might be supported to make their own decisions about the support and services they receive.
- **an operational level** to help shape and improve individual services for children and young people with SEND, one service may do a survey about their service to make improvements in response to the views of their service users.
- **a strategic level** where representatives of those who use services are invited to work in partnership with practitioners to design, develop, improve and deliver services and ensure the public pound is spent wisely.

Effective co-production is based on the principles of accessibility, diversity, equality and reciprocity. It is important that we listen and make decisions together in an equal relationship.

Through co-production, the SEND Plan identified 5 priorities that are important to children, young people, their families, and the practitioners who support the SEND journey. The Lancashire SEND Partnership aims to improve the lives of children and young people with SEND by implementing these priorities.

- **Improving the child or young person's journey** - Families understand what is happening, when it is happening, and what that means for them. Staff support families on the journey and know where they fit in alongside other services and other sectors.
- **Preparation for the adulthood that the child or young person and their family wants for them** – children and young people access opportunities right for them and their needs.
- **Accessible services delivering what is needed, when it is needed** – services are available and deliver what children and young people with SEND need.
- **Listening and talking to each other** – it is important that we all have greater understanding of what is happening, what needs to happen, and what changes need to be made for the child or young

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person, for families, and for staff. We all need to talk to and listen to each other.

- **Taking ownership of any mistakes and putting them right at pace** – families need to be able to trust the staff they encounter on the SEND journey and know that any mistakes will be resolved at pace. Staff need to know they are supported.

What is participation?

The word 'participation' means taking part and expressing yourself in decisions that affect you, being listened to, being understood and your view being considered.

Our vision is that all children and young people have equal opportunity to meaningfully participate in the decisions that affect them. Children and young people will be empowered by developing the skills and knowledge required to be decision-makers in their own lives, and their capacity to make informed decisions.

Our aim is to embed the [Children and Young People's Participation Strategy](#) across the local authority, including in schools and services.

How will we measure our success?

This Working Together Strategy supports the **Lancashire SEND Partnership Continuous Improvement Plan 2023 – 2024** which sets out our strategic approach. We will seek to measure our success by working with children, young people, POWAR, parent carers, the LPCF, and all stakeholder groups to develop the outcome measures to:

- ensure the Local Offer continues to be appropriate and accessible in meeting the needs of children, young people and their parents.
- deliver higher achievement among pupils who have special educational needs and disabilities
- have fewer pupils in segregated provision and greater inclusion in the local community
- reduce exclusions, children out of school and those Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) population
- ensure better use of specialist provision and increased confidence in mainstream schools and the local authority SEND system
- reduce the number of SEND appeals and tribunals

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- reduce SEND-related complaints
- promote a better trained workforce
- listen to feedback from parents, pupils and school staff
- ensure better access to information and support they feel more supported by education, health and social care
- improve pathways that support transitions and prepare young people for adulthood