



Lancashire SEND Partnership Improvement Board

7 July 2025 – 10.00-13.00

In person Meeting

Meeting Minutes

Board Members Present
<p>Kathryn Boulton, Independent Chair.</p> <p>Jacqui Old, Executive Director of Education and Children's Services, Lancashire County Council.</p> <p>Paul Turner, Director of Education, Skills and Culture, Lancashire County Council.</p> <p>Vanessa Wilson, Director of Children, Young People and Maternity, NHS Lancashire and South Cumbria Integrated Care Board.</p> <p>Dave Carr, Director of Policy, Commissioning and Children's Health, Lancashire County Council.</p> <p>Mairead Gill-Mullarkey, Director of Adults Community social Care, Lancashire County Council.</p> <p>C. Cllr. Matthew Salter, Cabinet Member for Education and Skills, Lancashire County Council.</p> <p>C. Cllr. Simon Evans, Deputy Leader & Cabinet Member for Children and Families, Lancashire County Council.</p> <p>C. Cllr. Samara Barnes, Shadow Cabinet Lead for Education & Skills, Lancashire County Council.</p> <p>Cerys Townend, Head of SEND and Inclusion, Lancashire County Council.</p> <p>Clare Smith, Youth Policy Strategic Lead, Lancashire County Council.</p> <p>Michelle Pye / Miranda Hyman, Co-Chairs, Lancashire Parent Carer Forum.</p> <p>Oliver Moores, SEND Young Advisor.</p> <p>Philippa Perks, Early Years Private, Voluntary and Independent Sector representative.</p> <p>Natalie Sinclair, Early Years Federation group representative.</p> <p>Jenny Birkin, Primary Heads in Lancashire representative.</p> <p>Diane Booth, Blackpool Teaching Hospitals Trust representative.</p> <p>Louise Haymer, Department for Education (DfE) SEND Case Lead.</p> <p>Cath Hitchen, Department for Education (DfE) Appointed SEND Advisor.</p> <p>Lindsey Marlton, National Health Service England (NHSE) Advisor.</p>
In attendance
<p>Jennifer Ashton, Manager of the SEND Partnership, Lancashire County Council.</p> <p>Lauren Jackson, Head of SEND and Complexities, Integrated Care Board.</p> <p>Helen Keaveny, Trust Lead for SEND, Lancashire and South Cumbria NHS Foundation Trust</p> <p>Pagan Haworth, Young Advisor and member of Youth Parliament.</p>
Apologies
<p>Sakthi Karunanithi, Director of Public Health and Wellbeing, Lancashire County Council.</p> <p>Louise Anderson, Director of Children's Services, Lancashire County Council.</p> <p>Peter Chapman, Interim Associate Director for SEND & Complexities, NHS Lancashire and South Cumbria Integrated Care Board.</p> <p>Oliver Handley, Lancashire Secondary Schools Headteacher Representative.</p> <p>Marie Haworth, Further Education representative.</p>

Andrea Hardyman, Lancashire Teaching Hospitals Trust representative.
Paul Jebb, Lancashire and South Cumbria NHS Foundation Trust representative.
Ian Carden, Lancashire Special Schools Head Teachers Association Representative.
Victoria Hampson, East Lancashire Hospitals NHS Trust representative.
Rachel Lomax, University Hospitals of Morecambe Bay Trust representative.
Rebecca O'Shea, Department for Education (DfE) Regional Lead.

Agenda Item	Minutes:
1. Welcome, Introductions and Apologies	The Chair welcomed all partners to the third meeting of the new SEND Improvement Board, particularly our young people and full complement of county councillors. New members included County Councillors Simon Evans and Samara Barnes, and Pagan, a Young Advisor and member of the Youth Parliament.
2. Minutes and actions from the previous meeting	Minutes were received by all members to review prior to the meeting. Minutes were reviewed and accepted as accurate. Minutes will be published on the SEND Partnership webpage as soon as possible after the meeting.
3. Action Tracker	<p>Actions were reviewed and are in progress or completed.</p> <p>Updates and actions from this meeting will be added to the action log following the meeting.</p> <p>Members discussed the development of an outcome's framework and impact on children and young people.</p> <p>Action 1: Chair suggested that the partnership hold a development session in September/October to explore how data is used to measure impact.</p>
4. Children and Young People's input and update	<p>Kathryn welcomed Olly and Pagan to the board. This was Pagan's first meeting, however as an elected member of the Youth Parliament, shared that her manifesto included advocating for an improved education system, holding workshops and volunteering in her community.</p> <p>Councillor Salter welcomed Pagan and thanked her for her service to the children and families committee where she was an active member.</p> <p>Clare shared updates and plans to improve engagement with children and young people with SEND. Clare met with education providers and the parent carer forum in June 2025, to explore how to better capture child voice, how to re-design the survey and how to promote this. Plans include workshops, assemblies and analysis from qualitative feedback.</p> <p>Partners attending the SEND Partnership Development Day were asked for suggestions about how to develop and support the plans, in addition to how the partnership can support the growth of POWAR Youth forum and suggest</p>

improvements for the SEND survey to make it more accessible and meaningful for children and young people.

Clare explained that from September 2025, POWAR face to face meetings will expand, to include the north of the county, in addition to the online offer.

Challenge: Board members emphasised the importance of understanding local variations as it is about where children identify they live. The partnership needs a nuanced approach and equity across the county is essential to achieving this. There are risks taking a district view, as it doesn't reflect the needs of all young people. It is important to offer a fully accessible offer that is place based.

Response: The SEND Survey will be co-produced with a clear plan for capturing voice and shaping impact and development across health, education and social care.

Challenge: Philippa stated that younger children also need to be heard and involved.

Response: It was acknowledged that the partnership also need to capture the voice of those in the early years.

Action 2: Clare will work with early years providers to explore ways to capture what's important to younger children.

Challenge: All children need to have a platform where they can have their views heard.

Response: Plans also outline ways to broaden access for individuals interested in becoming Young Advisors, including identifying the support they may need to succeed in these roles. Additionally, POWAR SEND Youth Forum is exploring further methods to engage children and young people in the SEND Improvement Board. One such suggestion is the introduction of an Assembly, based on the TV series that features neurodivergent individuals interviewing well-known British celebrities, which would encourage more young people to participate. However, to ensure meaningful involvement in the SEND Improvement Board, a preparatory meeting would be held beforehand to review the agenda and determine which items are relevant, interesting, and beneficial for them.

Action 3: Clare will continue to work with partners including education providers and parent carer forum to ensure accessible options for children and young people to participate in POWAR are available across the county.

<p>5. Lancashire Parent Carer update</p>	<p>Board members had received a written summary report from Michelle and Miranda, Co-chairs of Lancashire Parent Carer Forum (LPCF) prior to the meeting for consideration. The forum continues to grow and expand its membership, with more families contributing by providing feedback.</p> <p>Miranda shared an overview of the summary report with members and explained that additional reports contained detailed feedback from families, on various service provisions, including Break Time, health provision, the ARFID Pathway, and social services.</p> <p>Challenge: Communication remains top of the agenda with feedback from families highlighting frustration, that without clear plans and actions, faith cannot be restored in the system.</p> <p>Response: Board members acknowledged trust needs to be rebuilt, and are committed to doing that through consistent, respectful responses to improve communication.</p> <p>Challenge: Families lived experiences do not recognise the improvements being made as progress is lagging and will take time for them to feel the impact.</p> <p>Response: It was recognised that impact isn't being felt yet by families and will need close monitoring by the board. These detailed reports need to be shared with the SEND Operations Board, with key messages included in the parent carer forum report for SEND Improvement Board, along with the actions the partnership is taking in response to them.</p> <p>Action 4: Cerys agreed to develop a clear protocol for how we respond to the suggestions made for improvement by parent carer forum, which will be reported back to the Improvement Board.</p>
<p>6. Highlight Report and Priority Action Plan Tracker</p>	<p>The highlight report and the Priority Action Plan tracker was shared with members prior to the meeting.</p> <p>Paul presented the highlight report, noting further commissioning of educational psychology services to progress needs assessments, although concerns remain about the overall capacity of the system and its ability to meet growing demand. This includes the need for early intervention and effective planning for specialist placements. It is essential the partnership identify the risks within the system and are able to implement appropriate mitigations, such as increased funding, to ensure long-term sustainability and improved outcomes.</p> <p>Challenge: Diagnosed needs such as autism spectrum disorder (ASD), Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH), and Speech, Language and</p>

Communication Needs (SLCN) are rising in Lancashire at rates above the national average.

Response: The number of Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plans continues to increase, reflecting a system that has struggled for many years, as highlighted in previous SEND inspections. This trend emphasises the urgent need for reform and a more proactive approach to supporting children and young people in Lancashire.

The upcoming White Paper in the autumn is expected to reinforce the importance of mainstream inclusion at a national level. This aligns with the need for a graduated response to support in Lancashire.

Challenge: Providing the right support, at the right time and in the right place is critical for children and families. Achieving this requires earlier investment in the process and a commitment to inclusive environments. While inclusive practice is a key principle, there are questions about how effectively the SEND Partnership is implementing this in practice. Children should be able to access appropriate provision without needing an EHCP, and schools need a full spectrum of strategies to support them.

Response: The Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) and shared commissioning arrangements will explore these issues in greater depth to inform future planning. These challenges will be addressed within both the re-organisation and area recovery plans.

Challenge: Health services such as Speech and Language Therapy (SLT) and Occupational Therapy (OT) are currently overwhelmed, which adds further strain on schools. Many schools are purchasing external services such as SLT and Play Therapy to meet children's needs. It is important to identify which interventions are most impactful in helping children remain in mainstream education. SLT and OT services are central to this transformation and must be adequately resourced and integrated into planning.

Response: The SLT commissioning group is currently identifying gaps in provision, and focused conversations with schools are planned to improve inclusivity and reduce permanent exclusions. The partnership must also explore innovative approaches to redesign the system and deliver better outcomes for children and families.

Challenge: The partnership must also consider how to strengthen early help and mainstream inclusivity. This includes focusing on the views and experiences of families, rather than just the processes. Children's needs are not solely educational, and reasonable adjustments should not necessarily increase costs for schools. Many families are unsure where to access support,

	<p>and stigma around Family Hubs and parenting programmes like Triple P remain a barrier. Better marketing of Family Hubs is needed to improve accessibility.</p> <p>Response: Clarifying what constitutes “ordinarily available provision” is essential, as schools vary in their inclusivity and ability to meet needs. It is vital that all offers and initiatives are cohesive and equitable. Training needs should be identified, and case studies analysed through the Quality Assurance Framework to highlight gaps in support. It was acknowledged that consistent support for children and young people must be a shared responsibility, with schools’ expertise informing ongoing dialogue. The local offer should be readily available to all.</p> <p>Action 5: The partnership to provide assurance to the Board that support offers are joined up and use fresh thinking to improve the system. Dave to report recommendations from JSNA in September.</p> <p>Challenge: Schools require more support from early help services, particularly with the recruitment and training of Teaching Assistants. Support for children and young people must be delivered collaboratively, with targeted and specialist services working together. The partnership must identify and deliver the necessary work, as current efforts are fragmented across various workstreams. Early intervention must be multi-faceted, and there is a strong case for a “spend to save” approach.</p> <p>Response: It was acknowledged that there is a need for targeted conversations about consistent support across local areas, linking back to joint commissioning and shared outcomes.</p> <p>Challenge: Schools should be consulted on the support they need and the services they are outsourcing, to understand gaps and costs. The current EHCP consultation process places significant pressure on schools and does not always lead to the best outcomes for children.</p> <p>Action 6: Schools should be actively involved in dedicated sessions to explore all of these issues, with a focus on aligning decision-making and reducing reliance on EHCPs. Jenny to schedule a workshop for this.</p>
7. Report by exception on performance and data including analysis.	<p>Performance and data presentation was shared with members before the meeting to enable scrutiny and preparation of questions.</p> <p>Dave and Lauren presented an overview of performance and data. A comprehensive data dashboard is being developed for the partnership to improve analysis and how we measure impact. The Transformation Programme data group is being broadened to develop this action. EHC Needs</p>

	<p>Assessment (EHCNA) requests continue to increase with delays in meeting the 20-week timeliness persisting despite more staff being recruited.</p> <p>Challenge: The Board asked for a robust recovery plan that shows clearly the timescale for improved timeliness. The partnership need to be sighted on the longest waits and a solution developed for this.</p> <p>Response: Recovery plans are being developed to address the delays, but it was recognised that the increased staffing will take time to show a positive difference to families. Place planning information is gathered from various sources including attendance data, national and local data, but the system doesn't allow for the automated analysis of how many children are waiting for a special school place.</p> <p>Challenge: The partnership need to work together more effectively to improve outcomes for children and young people with SEND, and their families.</p> <p>Response: A wider partnership recovery plan is needed not just for the timeliness of EHC Needs assessments, with support from the DfE requested.</p> <p>Action 7: The partnership to develop a workshop to explore how to better use data and measure the impact and difference made to families more effectively (links to Action 1). Jenny to arrange this for September / October.</p>
<p>8. Governance and Reporting update</p>	<p>Cerys Townsend shared a new structure showing the groups that are being set up to progress actions in the priority action plan. The governance structures were reviewed to align with improvement priorities.</p> <p>These include Data Analysis, EHCP Improvement, Communication and Engagement, ND Pathway groups, Workforce Development and Training, and Preparation for Adulthood and transitions.</p> <p>Challenge: These groups must serve a purpose and drive forward change and improvement. It was emphasised that the governance structure must integrate voices of children, young people and parent carers. Early Years and primary schools representatives asked how they could be involved.</p> <p>Response: Draft Terms of Reference have been written. Representatives from partners including parent carer forum, have been invited to the groups. The actions in the priority action plan will be aligned with the SEND Strategy and each group will provide progress reports to the SEND Operations Group, which will feed into the SEND Improvement Board for monitoring and scrutiny.</p>

	<p>Action 8: Jenny will contact education representatives to nominate representatives for the groups. Draft Terms of Reference will be shared with Board members and the governance structure updated to integrate voices of children, young people and parent carers.</p>
<p>9. Communication update (Area for improvement 1)</p>	<p>Cerys Townsend provided an overview of the report provided to board members. The Communication and Engagement Strategy is being revised to include shared principles and a programme for communication, including the SEND Roadshows in Family Hubs across the county, 'Let's Talk' sessions with families, and Development Day's with all partners, to drive forward the who, what, when, why and how we will communicate.</p> <p>Challenge: Families want to see real progress and better communication.</p> <p>Response: We will focus on consistent messaging with open, transparent communication, and improve Local Offer accessibility.</p>
<p>10. Neurodevelopmental (ND) Pathway update (Priority Action 3)</p>	<p>Lauren presented a summary of actions taken so far to progress the ND Pathway. This includes setting up four key workstreams plus a digital group. The Lancashire and South Cumbria Foundation Trust pathway has closed, although other partners are being consulted to reduce the inequity across the county whilst waiting.</p> <p>Challenge: Support needs to be made available earlier and be more inclusive. A partnership approach to support is required pre and post diagnosis, and that the pathway needs to include wider partners, not just health.</p> <p>Response: The ND Pathway focuses on early support and reducing waiting times, to improve equity across the county. Short term funding has been secured but the ND Pathway is a three year transformation programme, so it will take time for families to see a positive difference. Actions will improve the inequity together with the learning from other areas.</p>
<p>11. Risk register and governance update</p>	<p>The risk register had been received by board members prior to the board meeting. The risk register was reviewed by the Board as a standing item.</p> <p>It was acknowledged that more needs to be done to ensure that we have a risk register that is robust with clear actions that can be taken by decision makers to mitigate the risks. Board members agreed that NHS Reforms needed adding.</p> <p>Action 9: Paul and Vanessa to refine risk register wording to reflect system pressures and capacity issues.</p>
<p>12. Forward Plan</p>	<p>It was agreed that standing items include quality assurance and data.</p> <p>Agenda items for September include recovery plan, JSNA, QA update and communications deep dive, including a review of LPCF feedback, linked to the</p>

	Let's Talk sessions. New emerging themes will need to be brought to the Board and progress tracked against them.
12. AOB	None.
13. Close and Date of Next Meeting	<p>Kathryn acknowledged the contribution of all partners and reminded members that although there was no Board meeting in August, updates would be shared via the highlight report and Priority Action Plan tracker.</p> <p>15 September 2025 1-4pm in person - Floor 2, County Hall, Please send apologies to sendpartnership@lancashire.gov.uk</p>
<p>Summary of actions</p> <p>Action 1: Kathryn suggested that the partnership hold a development session in September/October to explore how data is used to measure impact.</p> <p>Action 2: Clare will work with early years providers to explore ways to capture what's important to younger children.</p> <p>Action 3: Clare will continue to work with partners including education providers and parent carer forum to ensure accessible options for children and young people to participate in POWAR are available across the county.</p> <p>Action 4: Cerys agreed to develop a clear protocol for how we respond to the suggestions made for improvement by parent carer forum.</p> <p>Action 5: The partnership to provide assurance to the Board that support offers are joined up and use fresh thinking to improve the system. Dave to report recommendations from JSNA in September.</p> <p>Action 6: Schools should be actively involved in dedicated sessions to explore inclusive practice, with a focus on aligning decision-making and reducing reliance on EHCPs. Jenny to schedule a workshop for this.</p> <p>Action 7: The partnership to develop a workshop to explore how to better use data and measure the impact and difference made to families more effectively (links to Action 1). Jenny to arrange this for September / October.</p> <p>Action 8: Jenny will contact education representatives to nominate representatives for the groups. Draft Terms of Reference will be shared with Board members and the governance structure updated to integrate voices of children, young people and parent carers.</p> <p>Action 9: Paul and Vanessa to refine risk register wording to reflect system pressures and capacity issues.</p>	