



Lancashire Local Area Partnership Priority Action Plan: One Year On

January 2026



Contents

Executive summary

Introduction

Part I: where we were

Part II: actions we have taken

Priority action I:

- Governance and oversight

Priority action II:

- Quality of education, health and care plans (EHCP)
- Quality and timeliness of annual reviews

Priority action III:

- Neurodivergent pathways

Area for improvement I:

- Communication strategies

Area for improvement II:

- Preparation for adulthood and transitions

Part III: Summary of progress

- Partnership strategic challenges
- Risks and mitigations
- Overview of PAP progress
- What's working well
- Impact
- Deliverables
- Summary
- Glossary



Executive summary

Following the outcome of the inspection, published on 12 February 2025, and approval of the PAP, the DfE issued an improvement notice to Lancashire County Council on 5 June 2025, in response to the areas for priority action and improvement highlighted in the report.

The Partnership has responded to this with urgency and putting the wellbeing of children and young people with SEND at the heart of the response. To check progress towards this, a monitoring inspection of the PAP response and impact is expected to be carried out within approximately eighteen months of the inspection to assess how the partnership responded to the issues raised. This suggests a return visit by Ofsted/CQC in summer 2026.

Fuelled by the partnership's ambition and by ongoing preparation for the upcoming Ofsted revisit, expected in summer 2026, there has been relentless focus on delivering the priority action plan (PAP).

To ensure this is captured, this One Year On report brings together progress and includes impact statements and a comprehensive bank of evidence to demonstrate progress since the PAP was approved.

The Local Area Partnership's efforts to transition from PAP delivery to 'inspection revisit readiness', continues with contribution from colleagues and participants across the partnership.

The Local Area Partnership focus remains on children, young people, and families being at the core of everything we do. Understanding what it feels like to be a child or young person with SEND growing up in Lancashire and what it feels like for their families is a key part of this.

In considering the reality for children, young people and their families, we endeavour to capture their experiences and outcomes, what the local area partnership is doing well and what needs to be improved further (over and above the PAP). Some of this is captured in this report.

We have several key coproduced strategies in place that detail our commitments to improving the outcomes and lived experience of children and young people across Lancashire. These are encapsulated within our:

- Lancashire SEND Strategy 2025 – 2028
- Lancashire SEND Strategy Implementation Plan 2025 – 2028
- Lancashire SEND sufficiency needs assessment and capital plan 2025 – 2030
- Lancashire Self Evaluation Framework Spring 2026

We also have our Local Offer, where key information, updates and signposting is held. We have an ongoing approach to encourage and welcome feedback and suggestions to improve this.



Introduction

The national SEND system has been recognised as a system that requires significant reform, as outlined in the recent report, 'Towards an effective and financially sustainable approach to SEND in England: an independent report by isos partnership commissioned by the County Councils' Network & Local Government Association'.

The publication of the report above aligns with the current position on SEND and inclusion being felt in Lancashire.

The report brings together the main challenges related to the SEND system, that are being felt nationally and are reflected in Lancashire, namely:

- More children and young people than ever before are being identified as having SEND.
- There are more children and young people than ever before whose needs are not being met in mainstream education and thus require specialist provision.
- More money than ever before is being invested in SEND, but it is significantly less than what is being spent on SEND by LAs, health services and education settings.
- Despite rapidly rising expenditure, outcomes of children and young people with SEND and families' day-to-day experiences of the system have not improved.

It is within this context that Lancashire local area partners have continued to make improvements to the SEND and inclusion system across the local area.

This report sets out the key activity, performance and impact the local area has taken over the period since the local area SEND inspection. It provides a co-produced summary of where we are as a local area and where effort is still required.



Part I: where we were

Lancashire's latest local area inspection took place from 9 to 13 December 2024. This was under the new Ofsted/CQC Area SEND Inspection Framework, which set out three potential inspection outcomes:

1. The local area partnerships arrangements typically lead to positive experiences and outcomes for children and young people with SEND.
2. The local area partnerships arrangements lead to inconsistent experiences and outcomes for children and young people with SEND.
3. There are widespread and/or systemic failings leading to significant concerns.

The Lancashire Area SEND Inspection resulted in the third category being the outcome for the local area partnership, i.e.

There are widespread and/or systemic failings leading to significant concerns about the experiences and outcomes of children and young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), which the local area partnership must address urgently.

This centered on three identified widespread and/or systemic failings leading to significant concerns about the experiences and outcomes of children and young people with SEND. In addition, there were a further two areas for improvement:

Priority areas:

Priority Area 1: Leaders from the local authority and ICB should urgently work together to improve their shared strategic governance, oversight, commissioning, support, challenge and planning of services for children and young people with SEND. They should implement and monitor effective strategies to improve the experiences for children and young people with SEND in education, health and social care across Lancashire.

Priority Area 2: Leaders from the local authority and ICB should significantly improve the process, timeliness, quality and oversight of EHC plans and annual reviews

Priority Area 3: Leaders from the ICB and local authority should continue to work together with urgency to address the delays and gaps in service provision within the current neurodivergent pathway. This is to meet the full range of needs of children and young people with SEND across Lancashire.

Areas for improvement:

Area for improvement 1: Leaders across the partnership should continue to improve their communication strategies at all levels. This includes communicating with children and young people with SEND and their families so that they are kept better informed about the support that they receive, plans in place to improve their outcomes and where to access support and guidance while waiting for assessment.

Area for improvement 2: Leaders across the partnership should continue to work collaboratively to ensure that young people with SEND from across the whole of Lancashire are well prepared for adulthood and transition.



Part II: actions we have taken

Priority action I: Leaders from the local authority and ICB should urgently work together to improve their shared strategic governance, oversight, commissioning, support, challenge and planning of services for children and young people with SEND. They should implement and monitor effective strategies to improve the experiences for children and young people with SEND in education, health and social care across Lancashire.

Key activities and progress

Delivery of the PAP is overseen by the Local Area Partnership SEND Improvement Board (the board), which meets monthly to drive partnership accountability, assess progress, monitor risks and celebrate impact.

The board is informed by key partners through the Local Area Partnership strategic groups, which brings together key workstreams, and links with the actions related to the SEND Strategy, 2025 - 2028.

The current strategic governance structure has been reviewed and has had a complete review and re-design as identified in the PAP. This has resulted in a much stronger system of monitoring and oversight.

Key governance-related work has progressed, with a review of governance arrangements taking place in January 2026.

A risk management processes has been initiated to ensure clearer differentiation between systemic and operational risks and improve escalation routes where appropriate.

Work to implement the data dashboard shows continued movement, with 80% of KPI's now flowing into the dashboard. Phases 1 and 2 are completed and final integration of external health data is scheduled for end of January 2026.

Although delays persist due to NHSE information governance issues and system access constraints, weekly collaboration between the local authority and the ICB have accelerated issue resolutions.

Data performance remains a standing item at both the Operations Board and Improvement Board.



The partnership has significantly strengthened its governance, accountability and oversight arrangements over the past year.

- The governance structure is in place and agreed by all partners. Strategically, the SEND Improvement Board (the board) was established with an Independent Chair appointed in May 2025 and meets monthly.
- The board is attended consistently by senior strategic leaders across education, health and care, alongside elected members, health and education representatives, the Lancashire Parent Carer Forum (LPCF) and POWAR (Children & Young People's Forum).
- Chair's updates and formal minutes from the improvement board are published on the Local Offer and other channels, including Local Offer and LPCF Facebook pages.
- The board has maintained a strong pace of progress with over 70 actions logged, each with a named owner, RAG rating and dated update.
- The action log shows regular updates from accountable officers, including recovery plan progress, JSNA and joint commissioning, outcomes framework and quality assurance.
- By the end of 2025, the partnership had established a coherent and regularly updated risk register, reviewed monthly at both SEND Operations and Improvement Boards.
- Each identified risk includes named owners, mitigations, revised risk scores and target trajectories to April 2026. The risk register is directly linked to priority actions.
- The board receives monthly performance dashboards, thematic analyses and qualitative feedback, integrating lived experience, outcome trends and service pressures.
- Senior leaders have engaged in thematic scrutiny sessions, including joint commissioning arrangements, tribunal themes, ND pathway redesign, communication and co-production and children not in education.
- The board is supported by the monthly SEND Operations Board, workstreams and partnership groups, enabling coordinated delivery across priority areas.
- Accountability for the PAP has been strengthened through the development of an evidence and impact focused Priority Impact Plan (PIP) Tracker.
- A governance review was completed in January 2026, with recommendations to redesign strategic structures and clarify reporting lines across boards and workstreams, including establishing:
 - a. Performance Analysis Group.
 - b. Joint Commissioning Group
 - c. EHCP Improvement Group
 - d. Refresh of the Communications and Engagement Group.
- All strategic groups and workstreams have clear terms of reference and membership expectations.
- Across the priority areas and areas for development, the tracker captured 95 milestones, each with a responsible officer and impact-based RAG rating.
- In January 2026, 83 of 95 milestones (88%) were on track or completed, demonstrating measurable, monitored progress.



Priority action II: Leaders from the local authority and ICB should significantly improve the process, timeliness, quality and oversight of EHC plans and annual reviews.

Key activities

- The Lancashire EHCP Quality Assurance Framework, including a tiered approach to quality assuring EHCPs including audits, multi-agency moderation, thematic dip samples, and multi-disciplinary quality assurance forums has been implemented.
- There is a system for routine sampling of new EHCPs and amended plans (following annual review. High return rates of audits ensure meaningful coverage, and we are approaching our ambitious target of sampling 5% of all EHCPs.
- Half-termly dip sampling of EHCPs allow us to look closely at how well a particular aspect, such as Preparation for Adulthood, is reflected within EHCPs. This provides a level of insight beyond what the general monthly audit can show.
- Dip samples:
 - a. Focus not only on the EHCP itself but also the underlying advice and information, helping to identify underlying issues affecting EHCP quality.
 - b. Routinely involve colleagues from education, health, social care, and other partners.
- Rollout of the Invision360 EHCP Audit Tool, commissioned in April 2025, provides standardised criteria, compliance scoring and national benchmarking.
- Introduction of 'closing the loop' for EHCPs graded as having significant gaps has been rolled out. SEND Senior Managers meet with the relevant practitioner and their manager within four weeks to review the audit findings and decide what actions will be undertaken to address concerns.
- Feedback from audit is accessible to managers and practitioners and is used to inform case supervision, reflective discussion and amendments of EHCPs.
- A multi-agency quality assurance forum has been established to provide a collaborative space to review audit findings, share insights, and drive positive changes in practice and service delivery.
- Annual Review audits (including Key Phase Transfer Year 6/11 Reviews), provides new insight into the quality of Annual Reviews and transition planning.
- Training has been delivered to a growing pool of over 200 multi-agency auditors across children and education services, education settings and health.



Impact of actions taken so far

Improvement activity is showing clear strengths in our EHCPs are emerging, such as Section A (the views, interests and aspirations of the child and their parents, or of the young person) and Section B (the child or young person's special educational needs).

This has been achieved through:

- Audit activity has significantly increased from previous years, from 110 in 2024/25 to 474 (as of January 2026) demonstrating system wide engagement in improving the quality of EHCPs.
- Growing multi-agency auditor representation has strengthened a shared understanding across the partnership.
- A collaborative approach to quality assurance activity supports reflective practice and strengthens cross agency consistency.
- Feedback and learning from audit are strengthening workforce training, SOPs and expectations.

Moderation ensures audits are measured against shared criteria, reducing variability between auditors and strengthening fairness and consistency in grading.

Evidence

In Quarter 3 (October to December 2025), 38% of EHCPs audited achieved silver or gold grading. This is an upward trend of 13% improvement from Quarter 1 to Quarter 3.

"The session (multi-agency quality assurance forum) was extremely informative, and I really appreciated the collaborative approach."

Practitioner, Lancashire 0-19 Service.

"Thank you for the opportunity to take part in the audit yesterday. I found it really interesting and helpful."

LPCF Representative.

"Your feedback is really useful. I am still new to auditing so it is good to receive feedback where things are inaccurate as well as the elements that were helpful."

Auditor, LCC Specialist Teacher.

"From this (completing an audit) I have looked at our internal processes regarding the information we put on the Annual Review Teachers Advice and the Review summary."

Deputy Headteacher, LCC Specialist School.



Priority Area III: Leaders from the ICB and local authority should continue to work together with urgency to address the delays and gaps in service provision within the current neurodivergent pathway. This is to meet the full range of needs of children and young people with SEND across Lancashire.

Key activities

Lancashire and South Cumbria ICB has begun a three-year transformation programme to redesign the neurodevelopmental (ND) pathway for children and young people.

The aim of the ND pathway is to ensure that the needs of children and young people are met from the earliest possible stage without a diagnosis being necessary to access support.

The plan will help people based on what they need, with or without a diagnosis, and will support people getting to the right service for them. The intention is that developments will improve the situation for everyone.

This initiative seeks to address the challenges that parents, carers, children and young people experience such as obtaining timely access for autism and ADHD assessments, integrating and joining up services, ensuring consistent post diagnostic support and ensuring that children and young people will have an equitable service across Lancashire and South Cumbria.

Operational activity includes:

- The neurodivergent (ND) pathway transformation continues to progress, with mapping of existing support offers near completion, development of a profiling tool through the digital workstream, and preparation for a digital front door pilot.
- Workstreams for the ND Pathway are fully established, led by ICB and local authority partners, with a focus on needs led support whilst waiting, single digital referral pathway, communication, training and workforce development.
- The partnership has improved reporting on ND waiting lists and pathways, supported by the integration of health data flows into the cross-agency dashboard.



Challenges

Whilst the Priority Impact Plan was demonstrating strong trajectory improvement, with the ND pathway on track for improvements, in January 2026, changes in referral pathways were necessary, due to Lancashire and South Cumbria NHS Foundation Trust (LSCFT) provider capacity.

The ICB and the LSCFT have had proactive conversations and have confirmed that the trust will continue to accept referrals for this service as the ICB works to confirm a commissioned framework by the end of February.

LSCFT will review the ICB proposed framework and assess the impact this will have on the current unacceptably long waiting times for children and young people. In partnership, the ICB will seek to address the long wait times and improve the service offer to children and young people.

There has been no change to the commissioned mental health pathway for children and young people who have a mental health need and require ADHD/ASD assessment and treatment.

The ICB and LSCFT remain committed to working in partnership and achieving a sustainable commissioned and funded framework to meet the needs of children and young people requiring ADHD/ASD assessments and treatment where there is no additional mental health need.

The Trust and the ICB have a shared ambition to positively transform services for children and young people who need assessment. They will continue to work closely with the Parent Carer Forums as important strategic partners.



Area for improvement I: Leaders across the partnership should continue to improve their communication strategies at all levels. This includes communicating with children and young people with SEND and their families so that they are kept better informed about the support that they receive, plans in place to improve their outcomes and where to access support and guidance while waiting for assessment.

Key activities

Communication with families has strengthened further through the Communication and Engagement Strategy, published on the Local Offer and launched at the Development Day on 6 January.

Engagement from parent carers continues to rise, due to the Lancashire Parent Carer Forum's monthly Let's Talk sessions, Family hub drop-in events and the delivery of regular Round Table events.

The partnership has progressed activity around participation, with the POWAR youth forum expanding its reach, delivering workshops to education providers across localities, and beginning co-production of the revised SEND survey.

Engagement sessions, together with the development of a CYP participation framework and refreshed Participation Strategy are underway, supported by increased visibility of young people's voice.

The Partnership Communication Protocol is near completion, to provide greater clarity about the roles and functions of services.

Results from the Communication and Training Survey Sept-Dec 2025 have been analysed, identifying the top three training needs as Neurodivergence, Speech and Language and practical strategies to support children with SEND.

The Partnership Workforce Development Strategy has been refreshed by the partnership group and a programme of SEND development sessions implemented to improve partnership working.

Impact of actions taken so far:

- SEND survey feedback Sept-Dec 2025 has been analysed for trends and shows early signs of positive change.
- Co production is becoming increasingly embedded across workstreams, improving shared understanding and ensuring that family perspectives inform decision making.
- The new communication protocol and partnership messaging have improved consistency of information sharing across the Local Offer and associated channels.
- Survey results and engagement data now inform agenda planning, improvement activity, and forward plans across governance groups.



Area for improvement II: Leaders across the partnership should continue to work collaboratively to ensure that young people with SEND from across the whole of Lancashire are well prepared for adulthood and transition.

Key activities

The PfA Strategic Group has been refreshed and is responsible for:

- Identification and implementation of the PfA strand of the SEND Strategy 2025-2028, through the underpinning implementation programme.
- Implementation of the PfA strand of the post Ofsted/CQC priority action plan.

The group meet regularly to track and monitor key actions and identify other opportunities for development. In doing so, improvement activity will result in positive outcomes for children, young people and families.

Following a thematic review of key PfA priorities the partnership now has clearer understanding of areas requiring improvement to meet Ofsted/CQC expectations around preparation for adulthood.

The PfA Strategic Group have agreed a strategic plan to take forward key actions and developments. This incorporates PAP actions and actions related to the wider PfA agenda.

A mitigation paper, seeking significant investment (circa 5m) in front line services was approved in December 2025. This means there will be an improved offer for schools/settings, which will be free at the point of delivery.

Services such as specialist teacher teams and support for vulnerable learners will be enhanced as a result, and this will lead to better transitions between key age phases.

Impact of actions taken so far:

- Dip sample audits are carried out to evaluate how well PfA is being addressed within EHCPs. A collaborative, partnership approach proving highly effective, and plan is to replicate the model for thematic dip sampling.
- Data has been incorporated into the SEND Data Dashboard, increasing visibility of PfA outcomes and enabling more effective planning.
- Updated commissioning arrangements support more coherent planning of post 16 opportunities including education, training and employment routes.



Part III: Summary of progress

Partnership strategic challenges

The partnership are managing significant change due to:

- The council managing within a busy period of activity related to the local government reorganisation.
- The ICB is going through reconfiguration due to NHS England being disbanded.
- Significant reforms to the SEND and education system are expected to impact on how the local area delivers for children and young people with SEND and vulnerable learners.
- In anticipation of the reforms, the high needs block funding for SEND is currently frozen due to the potential SEND reforms that the government are planning.

All these challenges are placing a unique set of challenges on the local area partnership and may lead to a wholly different landscape for SEND and inclusion over the next years.

Despite this, the local area partnership remain committed to making sure that children, young people's and parent/carer voices are heard and influence the next phase of development.



Risks and mitigations

Cross-system risks continue to affect progress of impact, although mitigations are being put in place to address these, most notably:

Area of focus	Mitigations
<p>Capacity and workforce constraints: Insufficient capacity across both the local authority and ICB threatens progress against the priority action plan, notably timeliness of assessments, finalisations of EHCPs, quality of advice, and support whilst waiting.</p> <p>Although mitigations are in place, including agency support through managed services, workforce sustainability remains a key concern.</p>	<p>The SEND workforce reorganisation consultation has been completed, and recruitment continues where approved, to ensure more sustainable delivery and a move to a relational model in April 2026.</p> <p>Multi-agency training is being rolled out to improve the quality of statutory advice and early help pathways.</p>
<p>Delays in digital infrastructure: Delays to the automated data dashboard and annual review portal continue to impact the partnership's ability to access real-time performance data. IG issues, system integration challenges, and manual reporting remain ongoing risks.</p>	<p>The data dashboard has weekly development oversight, with IG blockers escalated through system leadership. Manual dashboards and scorecards continue to provide interim performance oversight.</p>



Area of focus	Mitigations
<p>Children and young people not in education: The number of children out of school remains a significant strategic risk), with complex causes across SEND, social care, inclusion and wider school system demand. Capacity challenges and limited specialist provision impact reintegration and sufficiency planning.</p>	<p>Multi-agency risk processes have been strengthened, with new structures in place to provide joint scrutiny of children not in education. Section 19 and 61 protocols are in near-final form awaiting approval, with associated data tracking under development.</p> <p>Increased core offers to education providers have been developed by Educational Psychology and Specialist Teaching Services to promote inclusive practice in mainstream education providers.</p>
<p>Increasing demand and pressures on the ND pathway: Waiting times and pressures across the ND pathway remain high, affected by provider capacity, data gaps, and variability in pathway quality. Closure of some assessment lists has increased pressure on alternative routes.</p>	<p>ND pathway pressures are mitigated through the development of the needs-led support offer, the diagnostic hub model, improved triage, and the planned introduction of a digital front door to streamline referrals.</p>
<p>Sufficiency of specialist places: Demand for specialist placements outstrips capacity across the county. Combined with geographical challenges, there are growing numbers of children and young people who are waiting for specialist places.</p>	<p>A program to increase specialist places have been commissioned through the SEND Sufficiency Capital Plan.</p> <p>Increasing local provision: Expanding the number of special school places, resourced units, and Alternative Provision (AP) options to reduce reliance on more expensive independent and non-maintained special school (INMSS) placements.</p> <p>Joint commissioning: Reviewing and effectively commissioning high-cost placements, and joining this up across education, health and social care. Strategic leadership and planning: Investing in strong SEND leadership, within a sound structure for delivery, and using effective management strategies to inform local decisions and ensure funding is spent efficiently and sustainably.</p>



Overview of PAP progress

Progress against the Priority Action Plan shows 83 out of 95 milestones are rated on track or completed, reflecting sustained upward performance. There are ten milestones that are off track, although these have clear mitigations in place to ensure progress is made. One milestone is delayed and one is yet to start.

Steady progress continues in strengthening governance, improving data flows, enhancing communication with families, and accelerating delivery against the Priority Action Plan (PAP).

For the 'vulnerable' and 'at risk' actions and any other vulnerabilities around SEND and inclusion, a risk register is maintained. This requires periodic review to ensure that the right risks are being escalated, and mitigating action taken. This includes all high-level risks that the Local Area Partnership SEND Improvement Board need to be sighted on. All risks must have mitigating actions attached to them.



The SEND Operations Board has overseen a significant volume of activity, including updates from workstreams, refinement of partnership groups, and improved alignment between operational and strategic functions.

Next steps related to PAP delivery include:

- A core group of PAP owners regularly revisit all actions in the PAP to ensure they are smart and progress is being made. This includes:
 - Reviewing the senior reporting officers (SRO) to ensure they are the right named officers/partners to drive delivery of their named action.
 - Ensuring a set deadline for completion for every PAP action.
 - Identifying the KPI for all actions. This can be done through performance and perceptive data, including case studies, etc. for actions where less concrete numerical data is not suitable.
- Key actions/issues that require focus from the Local Area Partnership Improvement Board will remain in the PAP, which will continue to be owned and monitored by the board.
- Evidence of progress for each PAP action needs to be provided. Senior reporting officers need to be reviewed and amended to ensure that all actions have a responsible officer/partner overseeing progress and holding to account others who are involved in delivery.
- Ongoing monitoring of any outstanding PAP actions will be included within the high-level plan.



Working well

Communication and engagement

Communication and engagement with families continues to increase through Family Hub drop-in sessions, SEND Roadshows, Let's Talk sessions, development days, podcasts, SEND Survey responses and strategic communication planning. These approaches are helping to build trust and support early identification of concerns.

According to feedback from sector partners, there are signs of growing confidence in communication and engagement in all areas. Partners have reported notable improvements in communication, particularly over the last six months, with a focus on:

- SEND Briefings via Teams, which have been praised for their clarity and the opportunity to ask questions.
- Headteacher Briefings and SENCO networks, where partners feel able to raise issues and be heard.

Partners consistently referenced the quality of working relationships and increased responsiveness and culture of collaboration, including a strong sense of being heard. Feedback, through formal and informal mechanisms, shows that partners feel their voice is being taken seriously.

Partners describe positive experiences through inclusive forums, noting that opportunities to contribute are more visible and accessible. Particularly useful are:

- SEND Development Days.
- Operations Board involvement.
- Cluster meetings and locality groups.

“Communication has improved greatly recently.”

“Very helpful; the chat function provides a valuable opportunity to raise concerns and share feedback.”

“Regular updates via Teams give opportunities to ask questions.”

“I am able to have my voice heard at the headteacher networks across Lancashire.”

“Great communication from the inclusion service throughout.”

“Things have improved in the last six months so keep going as it is.”

“I attend the HT briefings and have the opportunity to ask questions.”

“Happy with communication of updates and information relating to SEND.”

“I feel that my voice is genuinely heard within the SEND partnership... there's a growing culture of collaboration and responsiveness.”

“Coproduction is great, best it has been in many years. Everyone genuinely wants to do things in a better way.”



Training

Partners highlighted a range of high-quality training that has directly supported their work. Multiple training sources were described as impactful, practical, and relevant to partner needs, including.

- RISE Partnership Training being described consistently as helpful.
- CDC training opportunities are widely valued
- NPQ/SENCO qualifications are described as very helpful, relevant and practical.

Respondents particularly valued:

- Inclusion Hub and EP cluster support (e.g., Elklan, behaviour/SEMH support).
- Accessible, bite-sized learning formats.
- Opportunities where training is directly connected to real daily challenges.
- Practical, accessible, and needs specific training had the greatest impact.

“NPQSEND and clusters are very helpful, relevant and practical.”

“The RISE Partnership Training is brilliant... always helpful.”

“CDC SEND training was helpful.”



Commitment to improvement

Across sectors, partners have expressed appreciation for visible efforts to strengthen the SEND system. Several comments acknowledged and appreciated:

- Visible progress, particularly in communication and engagement.
- Efforts to simplify systems.
- A clear direction of travel aligned with improvement priorities.

Partners awarded 'Excellent' scores in areas such as:

- Quality of communication from specific teams or partner groups; particularly Parent Carer Forum, education providers and Lancashire Council SEND support teams.
- Confidence in supporting children and young people with SEND.
- Access to certain resources or training offers.

These ratings reflect strong pockets of effective practice and positive user experience, which we aim to build on, as a local area partnership.

“We receive opportunities to contribute to meetings and development days“

My input is valued and acted upon.”

“Finally got Break Time hours after 3 years.”

“Thank you for all that is being done; the difference is so evident.”

“I really value the direction the SEND Partnership is taking; there’s a clear commitment to improvement.”

“My child attends nurture lunch group; this is working for him.”

“Break Time hours offered... Support for the family!”

“Our GP is supportive; CAMHS helpful when accessed.”

“The recent changes at ELHT are fantastic.”



Parent/carers SEND survey

A survey took place from Sept-Dec 2025 and out of 148 responses, we can summarise early signs of improvements being felt, including:

Services

- Inclusion Service praised for strong communication and supportive approach.
- Good EHCP practice where plans are clear, followed, and supported by staff.
- Strong early years support helping secure EHCPs and effective transitions.
- Positive experiences with ELHT ADHD specialist team.
- Compassionate individual professionals (paediatricians, nurses, key workers).

Community and family inclusion

- Local activities (dance schools, youth clubs) inclusive and accessible with the right adjustments.
- Break Time hours beneficial for many families.
- Family resilience and close-knit support networks.
- Families appreciate creative, sensory rich approaches.
- Key workers (Dynamic Support DB) helping families navigate services.
- Youth groups and clubs that understand SEND.
- Break Time support beginning to make a difference.
- Break Time, Play Inclusion Project, Mindjam, Forest Schools, and Scouts as valued community assets.
- Parents appreciate PA/direct payment support when available.



Mainstream schools

- Supportive mainstream schools, particularly where SENDCOs and teachers show understanding.
- Children beginning to thrive with small group learning and autism aware teachers.
- Nurture groups in schools supporting emotional regulation.
- Parents value consistent 1:1 support and teachers who adapt to individual needs.
- Nursery and Forest School settings described as exceptional (e.g., Into the Ark).
- Deaf aware teachers and schools adapting learning for sensory needs.
- Parents feel understood by individual teachers committed to adapting classroom strategies.
- Specialist units within mainstream schools supporting sensory and visual needs.
- Inclusive teachers encouraging independence.
- Parents value a mix of mainstream and specialist intervention.
- Teachers and SENCOs who listen, adapt and communicate well.

Special schools

- Specialist schools and early years placements offering structured support.
- Specialist schools, e.g. new placements, described as fantastic and helping children settle quickly.
- Families value compassionate environments that understand complex needs.
- Specialist schools providing stable, supportive learning environments.
- Skilled teachers and small settings help children feel safe.
- Specialist schools consistently praised for meeting complex needs.

“He’s a week into specialist school and it’s going fantastic.”

“School works well with us as parents.”

“Teacher is attentive, trained and understands deafness.”

“Support from Teach of the Deaf and new school has been excellent.”

“His school is amazing.”

“ADHD Northwest supporting in meetings with school.”

“Educational needs always met at specialist school.”

“Sensory support and visual learning helps best.”

“Nursery and Into the Ark Forest School; superb staff.”

“School are amazing.”

“Teachers are understanding; interventions in place.”



Impact

There is emerging evidence of positive impact across several areas.

The strengthened governance arrangements and introduction of a clearer reporting processes are improving accountability and joint ownership across the partnership. The regular presentation of data, thematic reviews, risk updates, and exception reporting is providing the Improvement Board with stronger assurance and enabling earlier identification of concerns.

The number of EP allocations has risen significantly, contributing to a steady reduction in the longest waits for advice and improved flow through the system. Families are beginning to see clearer communication around process changes including the EHC Portal launch, and updates made to information on the Local Offer.

Progress in the ND pathway is beginning to shift the system from diagnosis-led to needs-led support. Mapping of early help and pre-diagnostic support has identified gaps now being addressed through the needs-led workstream, with increased consistency across localities expected once the digital triage pilot launches.

Co-production work with parents/carers and young people continues to shape strategic planning. Feedback from families in the SEND Survey, September – December 2025, shows emerging improvement in:

- Awareness of services available to families (up 7%),
- Receiving the support needed (up 3%),
- Receiving support needed in education, (up 3%),
- Receiving support needed for next stage in life (up 12%).

POWAR's involvement in revising the SEND survey and participation in development days is helping ensure that children's voices inform service improvement.

The Local Offer survey findings have driven revisions to web content and improved accessibility initiatives, including increased frequency of the SEND Newsletter and the launch of the new Service Finder, creating a more responsive offer.

Early improvements in the quality of PfA content within EHCPs are evident, with audit data showing consistent inclusion of early adulthood outcomes for young people from Year 9 onwards.

Decision making has become more transparent, and data led, with boards receiving regular statutory performance updates, JSNA insights, and outcome data.

Meeting minutes and action logs demonstrate challenge, scrutiny, and follow through, supporting a culture of continuous improvement.

The introduction of shared governance and joint commissioning arrangements has improved alignment between local authority and ICB leadership, driving progress across education, health and care.



Deliverables

- **EHCP audits:** 317 EHCPs audited since April 2025 (3.13% towards 5% target), with quality improving from 25% good/better in Q1 to 34% in Q2 and 38% in Q3.
- **QA evidence:** Quarterly QA Forums (e.g., Section C & G focus), thematic dip samples, and increased multi agency audit participation.
- **SEND Strategy (2025–2028):** co-produced, approved by Cabinet in October and ICB in November, and finalised for publication in December 2025.
- **Joint Commissioning Strategy:** revised, aligned with the JSNA, and presented at the November Data & Impact Workshop and January Board meeting.
- **Capital Sufficiency Plan:** increased commissioned special school places from 3668 to 3823 and created 104 additional SEND Unit places, offering visible expansion of local capacity.

Evidence includes:

- **EHCP timeliness improvements:** Managed service introduced in September 2025, reducing the backlog and longest waits; 443 EP allocations made in September alone.
- **Annual Reviews:** 50% of reviews audited in July had clear PfA outcomes, rising from 44% earlier in the year, indicating gradual improvement in plan quality.
- **Participation and engagement:** Let's Talk parent carer sessions drew over 80 attendees across multiple sessions; workshops and development days engaged over 300 partners. Local Offer engagement reached 480 parent carers and 122 practitioners through school coffee events.
- **POWAR:** membership expansion rose to 29 active members, with new locality sessions launched in the North, East and South; co production of the revised CYP SEND Survey and input to the data/impact workshops.
- **ND pathway lived experience:** parent feedback incorporated into needs led support design.
- **SEND Survey feedback:** 556 parent carers responded between February and August and 148 between September and December 2025. Awareness of support services doubled, and increasing families shared the right support was in place more of the time, particularly in education (up 3%) and were more aware of next steps (up 12%).



Summary

Since the local area inspection partners have worked together to make improvements, at pace, in relation to all the priority actions and areas for development, identified in the inspection report. In addition, many improvements continue to be made under the SEND Strategy 2025 – 2028 and the underpinning implementation plan.

The pace of change has been significant and has not come without challenges. Despite the current and future challenges, buy-in across the partnership has been greatly improved, due to the strengthened governance work that has been carried out since the latest inspection.

All partners can reflect on the achievements over the last year and, despite a lot of work still to do, should take pride in their response to the inspection outcome.

We continue to work together as a partnership, wider than the PAP requirements to:

1. Keep abreast of all SEND and AP improvement activity, including the SEND reforms and related legislation changes, e.g. the school's white paper.
2. Ensure that we are learning from multi-agency audits, proactively reading and sharing multi-agency audit summary and full outcome reports.
3. Encourage partner curiosity, challenge and acknowledgement through communication, collaboration and co-production.

Ultimately, the partnership is in an improved position from the point of inspection and are now able to better demonstrate their shared governance of the Lancashire SEND system to ensure the best possible outcomes for children and young people.



Glossary

ADHD	Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder	EHCNA	Education Health & Care Needs Assessment
AP	Alternative Provision	EHCP	Education Health & Care Plan
APDR	Assess Plan Do Review	EHE	Elective Home Education
APP	Accelerated Progress Plan	EOTAS	Education Other Than at School
ARE	Age Related Expectations	EP	Education Psychologist
ARP	Additionally Resourced Provision	EPS	Educational Psychology Service
ASD	Autistic Spectrum Disorder	EY	Early Years
C&FA	Children & Families Act, 2014	EYF5	Early Years Foundation Stage
C&I	Communication & Interaction	FY	Financial Year
C&L	Cognition & Learning	HI	Hearing Impaired
CAMHS	Child & Adolescent Mental Health Service	HLTA	Higer Level Teaching Assistant
CCE	Child Criminal Exploitation	ICP	Integrated Care Partnership
CME	Children Missing Education	INMSS	Independent & Non-Maintained Special Schools
CPD	Continuing Professional Development	ISC	Intensive Support Centre
CPP	Change Partnership Programme	KS	Key Stage
CPS	Community Paediatric Service	LA	Local Authority
CSC	Children's Social Care	ICB	Lancashire & South Cumbria Integrated Care Board
CSE	Child Sexual Exploitation	LSCFT	Lancashire & South Cumbria NHS Foundation Trust
CQC	Care Quality Commission	LAIP	Local Area Inclusion Plan
CYP	Children & Young People	LCC	Lancashire County Council
CYPMHS	Children & Young People's Mental Health Services	LIPIB	Local Inclusion Partnership Improvement Board
DBV	Delivering Better Value	MHST	Mental Health Support Team
DCO	Designated Clinical Officer	MSI	Multi-Sensory Impairment (hearing and vision)
DSCO	Designated Social Care Officer	NATSIP	National Sensory Impairment Partnership
DfE	Department for Education	NEET	Not in Education Employment or Training
E1-3	Elements 1-3 of funding	NVC	Non-Verbal Communication
EAL	English as an Additional Language	Ofsted	Office for Standards in Education
EBSA	Emotionally Based School Avoidance	OoC	Out of County
EET	Education Employment & Training	OT	Occupational Therapy



PA	Persistently Absent
PAP	Priority Action Plan
PCF	Parent Carer Forum
PD	Physical Disability
PDA	Pathological Demand Avoidance
PEX	Permanent Exclusion
PfA	Preparation for Adulthood
POSC	Performance Overview & Scrutiny Committee
PRU	Pupil Referral Unit
PT	Physio Therapist
QTVI	Qualified Teacher of Visually Impaired
S<	Speech & Language Therapy/Therapist
SEMH	Social, Emotional & Mental Health
SENCo	Special Educational Needs Coordinator
SEN	Special Educational Needs
SEND	Special Education Needs and/or Disabilities
SEND CoP	SEND Code of Practice, 2015
SENDIASS	SEND Information Advice & Support Service
S&/orP	Sensory &/or Physical
SLCN	Speech Language & Communication Needs
TA	Teaching Assistant
ToD	Teacher of the Deaf
VI	Vision Impaired
YTD	Year-to-Date

